SUSTAINING A DE FACTO STATE

The case of Northern Cyprus

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Executive summary

Northern Cyprus is a *de facto* state in the eyes of the international community. Its independence has been deemed illegitimate by the United Nations as it is seen as an occupied territory by Turkey. Therefore, Turkey is the only country in the world that recognizes the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The purpose of this research is to comprehend how Northern Cyprus has sustained its *de facto* statehood for forty years. In order to do so, qualitative research was conducted and both primary and secondary data were used. Secondary data was collected for the purpose of providing a basic framework of data for this research. Primary data was collected in the form of an interview. The research revealed that, *de facto* states are able to survive for a relatively long time due to the support from their patron states. It is clear that, *de facto* states generally have weak economies, weak state structures, and lack international recognition; as a result, the help of their patron states is needed. As patron states have helped *de facto* states to break away from their parent states, they now, support them with political, military and economic assistance. Moreover, the research showed that, the support of a patron state, contradicts the claim of independence of *de facto* states because they are heavily dependent on another state; therefore, it weakens their claims of independence. In the case of Northern Cyprus, they are heavily dependent on military and financial support provided by Turkey. Military support is provided for the safety of Turkish Cypriots. Financial aid is provided to support the Northern Cypriot economy as the state is isolated from the world and an international embargo is currently in place. Therefore, Turkey is their main trading partner in goods and services. Furthermore, a policy was created to facilitate and encourage Turkish nationals from Turkey to Northern Cyprus, in order to increase the population and to create an economy without Greek Cypriots. This led to the conclusion that Northern Cyprus is able to sustain its *de facto* statehood with the support from Turkey. Without Turkey's support, Northern Cyprus would not be able to survive its isolation and develop into the *de facto* state it is now. However, if Turkish Cypriots wish to engage more in the world and enjoy the rights *de jure* states have, it is necessary for them to push the negotiation process towards a settlement with Greek Cypriots. A reunification of the island would be the best option. To do so, the format of negotiation talks need to be changed by adopting a bottom-up approach to engage all interested parties in a settlement. Also, incentives need to be created so to make both communities need each other. This could be possible with material objects that both communities are reliant on. Such objects can be common electricity cables that go across the entire island, joint universities, joint airports, and joint ports where ships from both sides can enter. Thus, it is necessary to build an interdependent relationship between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

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Introduction

Imagine ordering something online from another country, however, you have to change your postal address because the country you live in does not exist. This happens to be the case for people living in Northern Cyprus since it is an unrecognized state in the eyes of the international community. Therefore, the international postal service does not recognize mail that is marked with Northern Cyprus. Instead, all international mail that goes to Northern Cyprus is rerouted through Turkey. No country in the world, except for Turkey, recognizes Northern Cyprus as a state. Turkey is the exception because they have militarily intervened Cyprus and occupied the northern part of the island. By doing so, Turkey became the patron state and currently supports Northern Cyprus with military and economic aid. Moreover, the island of Cyprus has been a member of the European Union since 2004, which is strange as Cyprus is a divided country with an unresolved conflict. It is seen as a problem which has been going on for too long. However, the problem concerns international politics and other states, among them European states, which have influenced the division of the island and the growth of the problem. Furthermore, Northern Cyprus is called a *de facto* state as it is an existing state, which is self-governing; however, is not legal. The United Nations has declared the state to be illegitimate due to the fact that it is an occupied territory by Turkey. Even though the international community does not recognize the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, it has existed for a relatively long time.

The purpose of this research is to find out how after forty years, Northern Cyprus is still an unrecognized state, and how it has been able to continue its *de facto* statehood for a rather long time. Therefore, the research question is: **How has Northern Cyprus sustained their *de facto* statehood?**

In order to answer the research question, a few sub-questions need to be answered. The sub-questions for this research are:

- What is a *de facto* state?
- How do other *de facto* states sustain themselves?
- What is the Cyprus conflict about?
- How has the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus come into being?
- How does the economy of Northern Cyprus look like?
- What are possible solutions to end this problem? A recognition of Northern Cyprus or a reunification with the Republic of Cyprus?

Literature Review

In order to answer the research question, a literature review is needed. The purpose of the literature review is to examine what other literature has said about the research in question. For this qualitative research was conducted and secondary data was used. Firstly, the literature review explains definitions and theories of *de facto* states. This is because Northern Cyprus is a *de facto* state. Then, the literature review looks into the relationship between *de facto* states and their patron states as patron states are an important factor in helping *de facto* states sustaining their statehood. Lastly, it is also relevant to review the literature on other *de facto* states as well. The focus will be on their economy, this in order to see how they sustain their statehood.

The concept of *de facto* states

Many authors from different disciplines have researched unrecognized entities and have used various terms such as *de facto* states, contested states, shadow states, para states, phantom states, etc. (Caspersen, Making Peace with De Facto States, 2017, p. 13). The term '*de facto* state' has been used most commonly. Thomas de Waal explains that "*de facto* describes a condition in which there is internal self-government and elements of domestic statehood but international rejection of its claim to *de jure* legitimacy" (De Waal, Sustainability of De Facto States, 2018). Therefore, the term *de facto* state is the most neutral term and will be further used in this thesis.

Nina Caspersen has described *de facto* states as unrecognized states that are "places that do not exist in international relations; they are state-like entities that are not part of the international system of sovereign states" (Caspersen, Unrecognized States, 2012, p. 1). They are state-like due to the fact that they are at least attempting to look like, yet also function as a state. Additionally, Caspersen has a more elaborative definition of unrecognized states that looks as follows:

- An unrecognized state has achieved *de facto* independence, covering at least two-thirds of the territory to which it lays claim and including its main city and key regions.
- Its leadership is seeking to build further state institutions and demonstrate its own legitimacy.
- The entity has declared formal independence, or demonstrated clear aspirations for independence, for example through an independence referendum, adoption of a separate currency or similar act that clearly signals separate statehood.
- The entity has not gained international recognition or has, at the most, been recognized by its patron state and a few other states of no great importance.
- It has existed for at least two years. (Caspersen, Unrecognized States, 2012, p. 11)

Scott Pegg has also repeatedly used the term *de facto* state and has defined it as follows:

> A *de facto* state exists where there is an organized political leadership which has risen to power through some degree of indigenous capability; receives popular support; and has achieved sufficient capacity to provide governmental services to a given population in a defined territorial area, over which effective control is maintained for an extended period of time. The *de facto* state views itself as capable of entering into relations with other states and it seeks full constitutional independence and widespread international recognition as a sovereign state. It is, however, unable to achieve any degree of substantive recognition and therefore remains illegitimate in the eyes of international society. (Pegg, 1998, p. 1)

The international system describes two kinds of states, namely, sovereign and non-sovereign. A sovereign state can also be named a recognized state. According to international law, to be a sovereign state, certain criteria need to be met. The 1933 Montevideo Convention states that a legal state which exists in the international system as *de jure* must have the following criteria's:

- A defined territory
- A permanent population
- Effective form of governance
- The ability to enter into relations with other states (Crawford , 1976, p. 111)

James Ker-Lindsay states that other factors will also be taken into account such as if the state in question has come about through illegal use of force and whether it truly is an independent entity on the international stage, rather than just a puppet regime of another state. Furthermore, the European Union has also laid out a number of human and minority rights norms that should be respected by a territory before it is recognized by its members. Nevertheless, states can decide themselves whom to recognize, when to do it and for what reasons. Eventually, they will recognize a territory by any criteria it chooses (Ker-Lindsay, Engagement without recognition: the limits of diplomatic interaction with contested states, 2015).

The reason that *de facto* states are denied recognition, according to Caspersen, is that "they are seen to violate the principal of territorial integrity" (Caspersen, Unrecognized States, 2012, p. 6). The principle of territorial integrity is an important part of international law and is enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. It states that:

> All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purpose of the United Nations. (United Nations, 2020)

This article does not affect individuals or peoples directly, but rather, the relations between states. Therefore, states "should not attempt to promote secessionist movement or to promote border changes in other nation-states, nor impose a border change through the use of force" (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2016) as that is seen as an act of aggression. Furthermore, the traditional

concepts of sovereignty, the principle of territorial integrity, and the policy of international recognition affect the common image of *de facto* states. The international community, together with the media and academic literature, mostly have a negative view of *de facto* states. Caspersen claims that "these entities are commonly viewed as anarchical badlands that are founded on aggression and frequently on ethnic cleansing". Therefore, they are viewed in contrast of stable, orderly, sovereign states. Consequently, this perception reinforces the case for non-recognition and *de facto* states are deemed undesirable entities that create security threat (Caspersen, Unrecognized States, 2012, pp. 20-21).

Nevertheless, these entities have been able to exist for a relatively long time. According to Pål Kolstø, *de facto* states generally have weak economies, weak state structures and lack international recognition (2006). However, he claims that the reasons these states have not collapsed are because

> they have managed to build up internal support from the local population through propaganda and identity-building; channel a disproportionately large part of their meager resources into military defense; enjoy the support of a strong patron; and, in most cases, have seceded from a state that is itself very weak (Kolstø, 2006, p. 723).

De facto states and their relationship with patron states

Most *de facto* states have gained their statehood by breaking away from their parent state through secessionist movements, which has caused them to be isolated in the international system. As a result, they are having trouble sustaining their statehood and are in need of external sources. Patron states are external sources as they are internationally recognized states that offer an inseparable combination of political, diplomatic, military, and economic assistance to *de facto* states (Hoch & Kopeček, 2020, p. 84). For this reason, unrecognized statehood can emerge as a stable outcome when a patron state is willing and able to persistently invest resources to sustain it (Buzard, Graham, & Horne, 2016, p. 578). Some reasons patron states choose to support *de facto* states are:

- As an efficient mechanism for imposing costs on the home state, for example, as Russia does to Georgia via South Ossetia and Abkhazia;
- Ethnic solidarity with the secessionists (e.g., Turkey's support of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus);
- Hope of eventual annexation of the disputed territory (e.g., Armenia's support of Nagorno-Karabakh's). (Buzard, Graham, & Horne, 2016, p. 586)

With the help of a patron state, *de facto* states can continue as independent entities, however, according to Caspersen (Unrecognized States, 2012), their dependence on a patron state can seem to undermine their claims of independence and therefore, contradict their strategy of gaining international recognition, making them seem like 'puppet states'. Consequently, their dependence affects both the external and

internal legitimacy of *de facto* states (Caspersen, Unrecognized States, 2012, p. 82). However, Tomáš Hoch and Vincenc Kopeček claim "that to see these entities as puppets in the hands of their powerful patrons would be an unacceptable simplification. All these *de facto* entities have their own inner logic and their performance is a result of a complex interplay of internal and external factors" (Hoch & Kopeček, 2020, p. 3). *De facto* states are indeed in need of external support that provide military, economic and political support to prevent reintegration into the parent state. However, Hoch and Kopeček argue that, the support of a patron state is just part of the complex phenomenon of sustaining a *de facto* state. As patron states often use *de facto* states to promote their own goals and interests, the capacity and ability of a *de facto* state to build its own political institutions is, therefore, important for them to survive as a distinct polity, and not being absorbed by its own powerful patron (Hoch & Kopeček, 2020, p. 159).

Sustainability of *de facto* states

Besides direct or indirect military and political support, *de facto* states are also in need of economic support. In this section, the sustainability of other *de facto* states than the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will be examined, with the focus on their economies. Four post-Soviet *de facto* states were chosen because they are similar to Northern Cyprus in the sense that they also emerged out of secessionist warfare, lack international recognition and are now dependent on a patron state. The four *de facto* states Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia all emerged in the post-Soviet space and are currently either influenced directly or indirectly by Russia. The countries are not next to each other; however, they do share a common element, which is that their territories are sandwiched between two countries. One of them is the parent state and the second one is the patron state which supports their separation. There is one exception, namely Transnistria, which is located between Moldova and Ukraine; hence, is separated from the patron country – Russia (Baar & Baarová, 2017, p. 271).

Nagorno-Karabakh

In the 1920's, the Soviet government established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region. While 95 percent of the population is Armenian, it is situated in Azerbaijan. However, there was no fighting until the end of the Soviet Union. When in 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, the autonomous region officially declared independence and war erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region. By 1993, Armenia controlled Nagorno-Karabakh and occupied 20 percent of the surrounding Azerbaijani territory and a year later Russia organized a ceasefire which has remained in place since. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is seen as a frozen conflict, yet tensions have remained high. Negotiation and mediation efforts are led by the Minsk Group, which is co-chaired by the United States, Russia and

France. They have successfully negotiated ceasefires, however did fail to produce a permanent plan and so territorial issues remain unsolved (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020).

As Nagorno-Karabakh, or Artsakh, as the state is called by the local Armenian population, is a self-proclaimed republic, it is not internationally recognized by any state and therefore is a *de facto* state. Baar and Baarová (2017) state that due to its international status and, especially, the war, its economy was severely damaged. An economic blockade was imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey and consequently its economy is heavily dependent on Armenian support. However, Baar and Baarová also mention that Nagorno-Karabakh's economy is the most successful among the *de facto* states. They claim that this is because it has a strong relation with Armenia, which wants to ensure that Nagorno-Karabakh is perceived to have a stable economy and thus be a successful state. The economic growth, in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, is significantly supported by remittances, such as investments, donations and other help, from compatriots working abroad in Russia and the European Union (Baar & Baarová, 2017, p. 283).

According to the Artsakh Republic National Statistical Service, a GDP of ca. 715 million USD is reported for 2019. In comparison to, for example, 2014 GDP of ca. 395 million USD (National Statistical Service of NKR, 2020). The statistics show that their economy is developing. The International Crisis Groups reports that their agricultural sector expands rapidly and that farming and the construction of small- and medium-sized hydroelectric power stations have significantly contributed to Nagorno-Karabakh's revenues (International Crisis Group, 2019). The Artsakh Ministry of Economy states that they have also built 13 small hydroelectric plants in the last ten years, therefore making it energetically self-sufficient (Armenpress, 2017). Moreover, tourism is developing as over hundred thousand tourists come to Nagorno-Karabakh each year and 16,000 of which come from other countries than Armenia (Baar & Baarová, 2017, p. 284). The airport in Stepanakert would help more, as it has been ready for operation since 2011, however, due to threats from Azerbaijan, the airport remains closed today (Political Holidays, 2020). According to Baar & Baarová (2017), the service sector in Nagorno-Karabakh is not very dominant compared to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, however it does make up almost 2/3 of their GDP. When it comes to foreign trade, due to its geographical position, Nagorno-Karabakh has a very high trade dependence on Armenia as almost 90 percent of exports and about 93 percent of import comes from Armenia. They also have a positive trade balance with Russia, albeit very small with 3.2 percent of export and 0.5 percent with import (National Statistical Service of NKR, 2015).

Transnistria

Transnistrian Moldavian Republic, also known as Transnistria, formally represents itself as an alternative Moldovan republic as it is one of its three languages, alongside Russian and Ukrainian. Although, in practice, it is mainly Russian speaking. During the Soviet period the region became a special industrial zone and was home for many Russians and Russian speakers. When in 1990 Moldova broke away from the Soviet Union, an emerging nationalist movement sought to join Romania. Because of this, the Russian speakers felt politically and culturally isolated in the new republic. They began to mobilize and, in 1990, declared independence hoping to establish a socialist republic and remain part of the Soviet Union (Mallonee, 2016). After two years, a war broke out between Moldova and paramilitary groups in Transnistria, however ended by the intervention of the Russian 14th Army in the same year (Isachenko, 2009, p. 62).

As stated by Baar and Barová, one of the reasons why Transnistria's economy is able to survive is due to subsidies from Russia, which have been ranging between 50-70% of the state budget. Most of the subsidies from Russia were also in the form of deliveries of gas, which Transnistria does not pay (2017, p. 279). Transnistria receives the gas for free via Moldova as the Russian company Gazprom sends the bill to the Moldovan company MoldovaGaz, which refuses to pay for its breakaway territory. Therefore, the unpaid bill is now estimated to exceed $6 billion (De Waal, Uncertain Ground: Engaging With Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 44). Nevertheless, according to the government website of Transnistria, they are and agro-industrial state. Industrial production plays the leading role in the Transnistrian economy. More than 37 thousands of people work in the sphere of industry such as electric-power industry, iron and steel industry, metallurgical industry (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PMR, 2020). A major source of income in Transnistria's economy is from export earnings. In 2012 the value of exported products was approximately 70 percent of the GDP (Calus, 2013, p. 3). Most of its export goes to Moldova and Ukraine, which have enacted the trade restriction in 2015, in order to reduce Russian influence and increase their economic integration into the European Union (Navanti Group, 2016). Another major source of income in Transnistria's economy comes from cash remittances from expatriate workers. Cash remittances are also essential for the economy because it provides opportunities for gaining foreign currency reserves. Between 66 percent and 86 percent of cash remittances is sent by residents of Transnistria working in Russia (Calus, 2013, pp. 3-4).

According to Kamil Calus, the Transnistrian economy is unstable and inefficient (2013, p. 1). He claims that this is because Transnistria has a very low demographic potential, small domestic market and lacks raw material resources. As a result, it suffers from an unceasing budget deficit and its economy is in need of external funds to survive (Calus, 2013, p. 6). Furthermore, Thomas De Waal describes

Transnistria as an industrialized, urban and relatively developed state, however, its economy is archaic and is in need of reform (2018, p.44).

Abkhazia

The Abkhaz are a distinct ethnic group and their homeland Abkhazia was during Soviet times an autonomous state inside Georgia. In the 1930's, the Abkhaz elite were arrested and executed by Soviet leaders. A Georgian script was imposed on the Abkhaz language and many ethnic Georgians resettled in Abkhazia, changing its demographics. By 1989, only 18 percent of the population was ethnic Abkhaz. In the same year, Soviet Georgia began to demand independence from Moscow whereas the Abkhaz wanted more autonomy from Tbilisi and to preserve the Soviet Union. A war ensued in 1992, but ended when Russian security forces together with North Caucasian volunteers won helping the Abkhaz. Hereafter, a ceasefire agreement was made (De Waal, Uncertain Ground: Engaging With Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 21). Abkhazia proclaimed independence in 1999; however, was not recognized by any state. Russia only recognized the region as an independent state after the Georgian-Russian war in 2008. Georgia responded by declaring the state of Abkhazia 'occupied' by Russia (BBC, 2020).

The International Crisis group states that when Abkhazia was recognized by Russia, it became more isolated in the world and their dependence on Russia's economic aid increased. Moreover, Russia remains the main trading partner of Abkhazia as Russian products comprised 80 percent of Abkhaz import in 2015-2016, whereas Abkhazia sent 60 percent of its exports to Russia in the same period (International Crisis Group, 2018). Despite isolation, the economy in Abkhazia advanced compared to the war-torn situation in the 1990's. Though, the improvement is due to Russia's budgetary assistance that is transferred in two ways. First, in an investment program which focuses on building and renovating infrastructure. Second, in socio-economic development aid, which covers regular expenditures of government activities, such as education, health, and police (Gaprindashvili, Tsitsikashvili, Zoidze, & Charaia, 2019, p. 12).

Tourism is supposed to be a locomotive for Abkhazia's economy as, according to the minister of tourism and resorts of Abkhazia, one million visitors come to Abkhazia annually (Gaprindashvili, Tsitsikashvili, Zoidze, & Charaia, 2019, p. 12). Apart from tourism, agriculture is also an important sector in Abkhazia's economy. According to their government website, Abkhazia was traditionally an agrarian republic. Subtropical crops such as citrus fruits (tangerines, oranges), tea, tobacco, walnut, hazelnut, corn, grapes and vegetables are grown. Most of the agricultural products are exported to Russia and Turkey (Administration of the President of The Republic of Abkhazia, 2015). Russia and Turkey are their main trade partners, which account for 82 percent of their total trade turnover in 2012. However, Abkhazia engages also with other countries when it comes to trade. The remaining percentage is divided

between the Baltic states (5 percent), Moldova (2 percent), Germany (2 percent), Ukraine (1 percent) and China (1 percent) (Abkhaz World, 2012).

According to the International Crisis Group, Abkhazia's economy is worsening. Abkhazia uses the Russian ruble and as it is depreciating, imports in Abkhazia is more expensive. Moreover, Russia's funding has decreased due to sanctions provoked by the annexation of Crimea and falling oil prices (International Crisis Group, 2018). Abkhazia now wants to build ties with the West to import European goods and export more of their own products, which can reportedly fetch almost five times the price in the West as they do in Russia (De Waal, Uncertain Ground: Engaging With Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 33).

South Ossetia

South Ossetia is, similar to Abkhazia, a breakaway territory of Georgia. Ossetians are an ethnic group from Ossetia, which is a region divided in two countries North Ossetia-Alania in Russia and South Ossetia in Georgia. In the 1920's the Ossetian land was divided between Russia and Georgia, this was because both countries belonged to the Soviet Union and creating boundaries meant little at the time. During the Soviet period, the South Ossetian Autonomous Region was created inside Georgia. However, nationalist groups in Georgia were rising and as a response the South Ossetian Popular front was created in 1988. A year later, the Popular front came into power in South Ossetia and stated that they wanted to secede from Georgia and become an autonomous republic. After several outbreaks of violence, they proclaimed independence in 1992 (Pike, 2020).

After the Georgian-Russian war in 2008, South Ossetia was also internationally recognized by Russia. According to Thomas De Waal, before the war, "South Ossetia used to earn its revenue primarily from selling agricultural projects in Georgia, and from being a conduit route between Georgia and Russia. Both those options have been shut down since 2008." (De Waal, South Ossetia Today, 2019) The border between South Ossetia and Georgia has been sealed, its population reduced due to the war and emigration, and South Ossetia is now completely dependent on Russia. According to Richard Foltz, South Ossetia essentially has no industry, and can scarcely benefit from its agricultural economy because of the bureaucracy involved in exporting produce to Russia. Nevertheless, due to Russian economic assistance, South Ossetia is a surprisingly well-developed country, with a hospital, a new university building and rebuilt government offices (Foltz, 2019).

The local economy is extremely small, it relies on a few businesses that produce mineral water, fruit and meat products. The region is almost entirely dependent on Russian economic assistance as 86 percent of their budget come directly from Russia (De Waal, South Ossetia Today, 2019). According

to Baar and Baarová, almost all foreign trade is realized with Russia, of which 20 percent takes place with North Ossetia-Alania. Furthermore, they explain that the South Ossetian economy is in poor condition. The industry has nearly collapsed and most of its businesses operate at less than ten percent capacity before the secession from Georgia. The tiny industrial production and agricultural products are still processed, although mainly for the needs of themselves. They furthermore point out that "the economic downswing is an evidence of how difficult the path is of independent development for a country sandwiched between two states, while it has completely closed boundary with one of them" and South Ossetia is the perfect example of this (Baar & Baarová, 2017, pp. 286-287).

Similar to Abkhazia, Russian funding is declining, this is especially hard for South Ossetia as their main source of revenue is Russian aid. Moreover, almost all foreign trade is realized with Russia as they are their only trading partner. Isolated to the outside world, South Ossetia is now trying, together with Abkhazia, to build ties with the West for formal trade opportunities (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Conclusion

Many authors have researched the concept of unrecognized entities and have used various terms to describe it. *De facto* state is the most neutral term to use as the international community rejects their claim to *de jure* legitimacy. Moreover, authors have had different definitions of *de facto* states. To summarize, they are state-like entities, that are able to function as a state, because they have an organized political leadership that is able to provide government services to their population and have a defined territorial area. Furthermore, *de facto* states view themselves as able to enter into relations with other states; however, are not recognized internationally. The reason that *de facto* states are denied recognition is because *de facto* states broke away from their parent states through secessionist movements and have violated the principle of territorial integrity. Consequently, it has given *de facto* states a negative name and they are deemed undesirable entities that could create a security threat. Nevertheless, they have been able to exist for a long time because of the help of their patron states, which give *de facto* states a combination of political, diplomatic, military and economic assistance. Although, the support of a patron state helps their maintenance of their *de facto* statehood, it also contradicts their claim of independence. Ultimately, it causes them to be in a vicious circle where the more they are dependent on their patron state, the more they also go away from international recognition.

The literature on the sustainability of *de facto* states focusses mostly on patron states as they are the main reason how *de facto* states are able to survive. There is not much literature on how *de facto* states sustain themselves economically. However, the existing literature seems to state that Nagorno Karabakh and South Ossetia are in terms of their economies much more internationally isolated than Transnistria

and Abkhazia. Looking at the numbers, Nagorno Karabakh and South Ossetia are more closely integrated into their patron states as they are their main trading partners and so international engagement with these two *de facto* states is very minimal. Abkhazia and Transnistria, also have other trading partners other than their patron state. Abkhazia's main trading partners are Russia and Turkey; however, the Baltic states, Moldova, Germany and Ukraine also are share a small percentage of trade. In the case of Transnistria, most of its exports go to Moldova and Ukraine, as they enacted their trade restriction to reduce Russia's influence. As a result, Abkhazia and Transnistria have little international engagement in the world of trade.

Methodology

The aim of this research was to investigate how Northern Cyprus has sustained its *de facto* statehood. That meant examining its historical background, the relationship with its patron state, the economy and the future of the state with possible solutions for the Cyprus issue. In order to do so, qualitative research was conducted, so to gain a deeper understanding of Northern Cyprus and their *de facto* statehood. The research contains both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was used to provide a basic framework of data and knowledge for this study. The data consists of books, journals, reports, statistics and articles. For example, reports from the PRIO Cyprus Centre were used as they are a bi-communal research center and have Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot researchers as well as individuals of other nationalities. Their reports were mainly about key issues that are relevant to an eventual settlement of the Cyprus problem.

To find an answer for the research question, first, it was important to study the Cyprus conflict, in order to understand how Northern Cyprus became a *de facto* state. For this chapter James Ker-Lindsay's The Cyprus Problem: What Everyone Needs to Know (2011) was the main source used, as it gives a comprehensive overview of the events leading up to 2011. Second, the sustainability of Northern Cyprus was examined and reports from the PRIO Cyprus Centre were used here, in order to investigate the Northern Cypriot economy and the Turkish military and financial support. For the final chapter, the future of Northern Cyprus was explored, and possible solutions for a settlement were discovered. In this chapter, an interview was conducted with Vasileios Karakasis for the purpose of collecting primary data. Vasileios Karakasis is a lecturer at Leiden University and has studied Turkish-Greek relations, as well as the Cyprus conflict. The conducted interview gave the opportunity to ask in depth questions on the Cyprus conflict, but also to ask his personal views on the future of Northern Cyprus and recommendations for a possible solution of the Cyprus conflict.

However, there were some research limitations as data about *de facto* states is limited. It was important to find data that was not bias as the Cyprus conflict is a sensitive subject and many sources in Turkish or Greek are prejudice. Similarly, when searching for data about the post-Soviet *de facto* states, which were used in the literature review, international sources were mainly used such as information from NGO the International Crisis Group. This was due to the fact, that the data was in English, as many sources from, for example, government websites, were only available in Russian or Armenian. Furthermore, when investigating the economies of the four post-Soviet *de facto* states and Northern Cyprus, it was important to note that reliable indicators, such as GDP, were also difficult to find. Therefore, the economic data found in this study, was used as an indication.

Results

The Cyprus conflict

Due to its strategic position, Cyprus has been conquered and ruled by many different civilizations such as the Persians, Egyptians, Romans, Byzantines and Arabs. In 1571, the Ottomans conquered Cyprus and the first members of the Turkish community arrived on the island. Overtime, a sizable Turkish community emerged and began living alongside the existing Greek community. With the end of the Ottoman empire, Cyprus became a British Crown colony in 1925 (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, pp. 11-17).

Rise of national movements

When Greece became an independent state in 1828, Greek Cypriots were very impressed by national movements in Greece. The national feelings of the 'motherland' spread among Greek Cypriots on the island due to their similarities as they shared a common culture, religion and language. Therefore, they also hoped that the transfer to the British administration would pave the way for the island to be united with Greece, this aspiration of political union with Greece is called *enosis*. In 1950, an unofficial referendum was held by the Ethnarchy Council, the church-led supreme leadership of the Greek Cypriot community, where about 96 percent of participating Greek Cypriots voted in favor of *enosis* (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, pp. 15-17). However, Britain rejected the idea of Cyprus uniting with Greece and in response an organization called the EOKA – National Organization of Cypriot Fighters, started a campaign of civil obedience backed with political violence, vowing to unite Cyprus with Greece by force (Papadakis, Peristianis, & Welz, 2006, p. 2). Initially, Turkish Cypriots were in favor of continuation of the British rule, however, as the EOKA campaign started to grow, Turkish Cypriots decided to form a countermovement to oppose *enosis* (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, p. 22). As they were not in favor of the union of the island with Greece, Turkish Cypriots responded with their own demand of *taksim,* which is the partition of the island between Greece and Turkey. They also set up their own organization called the TMT – Turkish Resistance Movement (Papadakis, Peristianis, & Welz, 2006, p. 2).

By 1958, the island was on the verge of a civil war as successive peace proposals had been rejected. In that same year, Archbishop Makarios, who was the head of the Greek Cypriot people and the Orthodox church, announced that independence rather than *enosis* would, for now, be an acceptable solution for Cyprus. Hereby, the representatives of the so-called 'motherlands', Greece and Turkey, opened discussion of the Cyprus issue in Zurich, where they discussed the concept of an independent state with powers divided between the Greek and Turkish communities on the island. That meant that *enosis* nor *taksim* would take place. This decision was confirmed later at a second conference in London, where

representatives of Britain and the two Cypriot communities were included. Britain also agreed to withdraw from Cyprus and in the following year, in 1960, the Republic of Cyprus was declared (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, pp. 24-25) (Sözen, 2004, p. 62).

Constitutional breakdown

The 1959 London and Zurich Agreements were the international treaties that led to the creation of the Republic of Cyprus. The republic was a consociation democracy and its structure was reflected in a system of power-sharing between the two communities on the island (Sözen, 2004, p. 62). To secure the political order established by the 1960 constitution, Britain, Greece and Turkey signed the Treaty of Guarantee and became the guarantor powers. This meant that they had the right to "guarantee the independence, territorial integrity and security of the Republic of Cyprus, and also share the state of affairs established by the Basic Articles of the Constitution" (Dodd, 2010, p. 61). Thus, the guarantor powers had the right to intervene if the political situation on the island was challenged. Archbishop Makarios became the island's first president, however, he saw independence as a temporary measure and tolerated the independence until Cyprus would formally become part of Greece. He decided to amend the constitution and made thirteen new proposals. Turkey rejected these proposals as they severely undermined the Turkish Cypriot political power in Cyprus (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, pp. 31-34).

In the following months, tensions have been building up between the two communities. In December 1963, fighting broke out in different parts of the island and the republic collapsed. To settle the violence on the island, the UN security Council adopted resolution 186 on 4 March 1964. The resolution suggested the establishment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and became operationally established on 27 March 1964 to patrol the United Nations Buffer Zone (United Nations, 2020).

As time went on, Makarios had decided to abandon the plan of *enosis* and was in favor of a more realistic approach. Since 1967, the military junta seized power in Greece by a military coup d'état. Makarios felt undermined by the Greek junta as he was no longer in favor of *enosis*. His new goal was to re-establish political stability in Cyprus and to safeguard the island from secessionist Turkish Cypriot demands. However, the radical Greek Cypriots, who were still in favor of *enosis,* felt betrayed by Makarios and with the support of the Greek junta, President Makarios was replaced with Nicos Sampson, a former EOKA member. In response, under the terms of the Treaty of Guarantee, Turkey intervened militarily on 20 July 1974 (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, pp. 41-42).

Division of the island

As required by treaty, the three guarantor powers met in Geneva for a formal peace talk. During the talk, the Turkish government had stated that the Turkish military would remain on the island until a political settlement was reached between the two communities. However, on 14 august, Turkey resumed its offensive and the second wave of the invasion began. Over three days, Turkey had occupied 36 percent of the island. As the first invasion is seen as legal under the terms of the Treaty of Guarantee, the second invasion was not, as it was contrary to international law (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, pp. 41-45).

Thousands of lives were lost in the conflict and around 160,000 Greek Cypriots were displaced from their homes in the north, while almost all Turkish Cypriots in the south had also lost their homes. Turkish Cypriots had settled in the houses that were abandoned by Greek Cypriots in the north, and vice versa. Therefore, property issues are an important part in this conflict as three-quarters of private land in the north, which is under possession of Turkish Cypriots, has still legitimate Greek Cypriot owners. As well as around one-eighth of private land in the south is still formally owned by Turkish Cypriots (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, pp. 50-51).

Northern Cyprus as a de facto state

The Turkish invasion, at first, was seen as temporary until a better solution was reached with Greek Cypriots. However, Turkish Cypriot leaders started to establish state institutions in order to maintain an independent administration on the island. In November 1983, the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş announced the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as an independent state. Turkey recognized it, whereas the United Nations declared it illegitimate in Security Council Resolution 541 (UN Security Council, 1983) (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 51).

Independence was not welcomed by everybody in Northern Cyprus. A left-right split among Turkish Cypriots had developed. Leftists and trade unionists were still in favor of a federal agreement with Greek Cypriots, whereas the rightists supported the independence or union with Turkey. Moreover, Leftist have condemned that the founding of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983, was the day that they closed their doors to the world. According to Thomas de Waal (2018), President Rauf Denktaş even expressed that the declaration of independence was meant for Turkish Cypriots to get a better offer in a political settlement. During a United Nations debate on Cyprus, Denktaş stated that they had accepted a bi-communal state, yet had been denied equal status by Greek Cypriots, which he had called "robbers". He expressed that,

> We are not seceding. We are not seceding from the independent state of Cyprus, from the Republic of Cyprus – if the chance would be given to use to re-establish a bi-zonal federal system. But if the robbers of my rights continue to insist that they are the legitimate government of Cyprus, we shall be as legitimate as they, as non-aligned as they, as sovereign as they in the northern state of Cyprus (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 51).

The international community hoped that an agreement between the two communities on the island would be reached before the accession of the European Union. A Cyprus reunification plan was made in 2004 by the United Nations. The Annan Plan, named after Kofi Annan, the secretary general, was a proposal that envisaged the establishment of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal republic. A single common state would be formed by two component states that held political equality (Ker-Lindsay, The Cypurs Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know, 2011, p. 64). Both communities held a referendum, where 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of the Annan Plan, only for Greek Cypriots to reject the plan. Paradoxically, the vote left the path clear for Greek Cypriots to join the European Union (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 49). A week later, the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the European Union while being a divided island. Today, the European Union considers the whole of Cyprus as EU territory. However, the northern part of the island is considered an area which is not under effective control of the Republic of Cyprus. Therefore, EU legislation is suspended until a settlement enters into force (European Commission, 2020).

Failure of negotiations

Since the partition of the island, both leaders of the two communities on the island have agreed to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation as the basis for a reunification. However, years of negotiations, with the United Nations as mediators, have not solved the Cyprus issue. Though, there was an important breakthrough for Cyprus, when in 2003, the Green Line, which was dividing the island, opened for ordinary people to cross. Cypriots on both sides have frequently visited their family homes, which they lost during the conflict of 1974 (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 52). Nevertheless, over 45 years have passed and still no settlement has been reached. During an interview with Vasileios Karakasis, he explained that the combination of material and intangible factors has been part of the complexity of the Cyprus issue and why it has not been solved yet. Karakasis points out, that to understand the problem, we need to use Thucydides, an ancient Greek historian, that explains three main reasons for any international problem motivating human behavior, namely, fear, interest, and questions of honor. The first aspect is fear, which exists in both communities on the island. Greek Cypriots fear that Turkish Cypriots are going to be treated as Turkey's Trojan Horse; therefore, do not trust them. On the other side, Turkish Cypriots

believe that Greek Cypriots intentions are to make them into second class citizens, to transform them from a community into a minority. So, both communities have a feeling of insecurity. The fears they have come from historical experiences. So, during reunification talks, when the issues of government systems, property rights and interventions rights are discussed, the basic fears both communities have, have been sustaining the conflict. The second aspect is interest. Karakasis explains that both communities have moved on with their lives and that there is no interdependent relationship with each other. Similarly, the conflict did not have any casualties for more than four decades. "If we had to face the reality where people would be losing their lives day by day, then the incentives to immediately resolve the conflict would be higher". The final aspect, is the question of honor. There is the absence of a common Cypriot identity in Cyprus. Karakasis explains that most people in Cyprus do not feel Cypriot. They share the music, traditions, parades, national anthems and flags of the "motherlands" (V. Karakasis, personal interview, June 2, 2020).

Sustainability of Northern Cyprus

Turkey's national cause

As the island of Cyprus was part of the Ottoman empire, it had historical significance for Turkey. Turkish Cypriots were seen as "blood brothers" that were in need of help. The sense of national solidarity towards Turkish Cypriots was called the "national cause" (*milli dava*) and became a matter of domestic concern for Turkey (Hatay & Bryant, From 'National Cause' to 'National Burden': Turkish Cypriots Within Turkey's Kinship and Diaspora Politics and Perceptions, 2019, pp. 75-76). Therefore, in order to help Turkish Cypriots, financial and military aid was provided to help Northern Cyprus become a fully developed and self-dependent state for them to compete in the world. However, Tufan Ekici explains that, several politicians in Turkey's parliament also emphasized the importance of Northern Cyprus for Turkey's security along with the importance of well-being the Turks on the island. He explains that Cyprus has a geo-strategic position in the Mediterranean and could be militarily dangerous for Turkey if the island was to be lost to "the enemy" (Ekici, 2019, p. 112). Thus, both humanitarian and strategic reasons were behind the financial and military aid. Overall, Northern Cyprus was seen as "the precious little child that was saved from Greek Cypriots atrocities and thus was to be protected at all costs". (Ekici, 2019, p. 115). Furthermore, after the division of the island in 1974, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot administration created a policy that facilitated and encouraged an immigration of Turkish nationals from Turkey. This policy was designed to increase the Turkish population on the island in order to create an economy without Greek Cypriots. Upon arrival, Turkish settlers received citizenship and Greek Cypriot houses. The first wave of migration brought agricultural labor to the island. Afterwards, settlers came on their own initiatives. The second wave, in the beginning of the 1980's, was comprised of professionals and skilled and semi-skilled workers to work in the

growing textile industries and in trade. The third wave, in the mid 1990's towards the 2000's, consisted of labor migrants to work in industry and construction. These migrants came from areas of Turkey that were hit hard by conflict; therefore, came in search for a better life (Hatay, Population and Politics in north Cyprus: An overview of the ethno-demography of north Cyprus in the light of the 2011 census, 2017, p. 16).

Northern Cypriot economy

According to the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, developments in the Turkish Lira and Turkish economy affect the Northern Cypriot economy more than global developments do. This is because, the currency used in Northern Cyprus is the Turkish Lira, and Turkey is the main trading partner for goods and services. Therefore, the Northern Cypriot economy relies heavily on export of services. Higher education and tourism are two main sectors for exporting services, with Turkey as their major markets (Amca, Süreç, & Çerkez, 2020, p. 6). Tourism is of great importance for economic development and is seen as one of the driving sectors. Turkey's support is, also, an important factor in helping the Northern Cypriot tourism sector as direct flights to Northern Cyprus go via Turkey. Furthermore, 90 percent of tourists come from Turkey, who would stay for a couple of days, whereas the other 10 percent are other tourists that visit for a week or more. Some Europeans even own holiday homes in Northern Cyprus, despite legal disputes over property (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 53). Additionally, large hotels in Northern Cyprus have casinos. The casino industry started in the 1990's, when gambling was prohibited in Turkey. Many tourists from Turkey, as well as from southern Cyprus, visit for the weekend to gamble. Even though, casino fees are substantial, the corporate taxes are not calculated properly and the net earnings of casinos are usually laundered outside the Turkish Cypriot economy. Therefore, it does not provide much for local economic development, except for employment opportunities (Ekici, 2019, p. 231). Another sector is that of higher education. Northern Cyprus has nine universities with a total of 63,000 students, of whom 13,000 are Turkish Cypriots. Along with 35,000 students coming from Turkey, and 15,000 international students, coming mainly from countries in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. What attracts these students are the relatively low costs. Even though, the universities are operating in a *de facto* state, they are accepted as members by educational organizations like the European Association of Universities and the International Association of Universities. Therefore, their diplomas and degrees are accepted by most universities around the world. This is because, the higher education board in Turkey certifies the Northern Cypriot documents. Due to students spending not only on tuitions but also on food, transport, travel and entertainment, the universities are also part of the leading sector of the Northern Cypriot economy (Güsten, 2014).

In 2012, the service sector, which includes public sector, trade, education and tourism, contributed 58.7 percent of the GDP. Additionally, agricultural (6.2 percent) and manufacturing (2.7 percent) sectors contributed as well (Centrial Intelligence Agency, 2020). Economic development is affected by the continuing Cyprus issue that has not been solved. Consequently, in 1994, the European Court of Justice prohibited the import of products into the European Economic Community of commodities produced in Northern Cyprus (Ekici, 2019, p. 220), making Turkish Cypriots more dependent on Turkey. Therefore, Turkey is their main trading partner as 40 percent of exports and 60 percent of imports come from Turkey (Centrial Intelligence Agency, 2020). Consequently, Turkish Cypriot businessmen are having difficulties in importing, exporting and transportation. Buying goods from other countries is not extremely difficult; however, the transportation to Northern Cyprus is. Due to international restrictions, goods are first shipped to Mersin in Turkey, and then being transported to Northern Cyprus, with additional expenses (Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce Brussels Representation, 2013).

Turkish aid

Turkish aid comes in the form of military and financial support. According to the Northern Cyprus government website, the presence of the Turkish army is "the most important factor which provides safety of the Turkish Cypriots until a just and viable settlement is reached between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides" (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). The Turkish military force is not under control of Northern Cyprus domestic government. However, Turkish Cypriot administrators have always welcomed and praised the presence of the Turkish troops. Moreover, the civilian police force is also under control of the Turkish military. Meaning, that the Turkish military is free from local government's control and enjoy full autonomy (Ekici, 2019, pp. 44-45).

Since 1974, the Turkish financial aid came in forms of loans and grants that were given without any interest. After 1993, financial aid was directly provided to the private sector in the form of low interest loans, and later, in 1998, was provided to the state. All aid had been managed by the office established in Nicosia under the name of TR Coordination and Development Office (Ekici, 2019, p. 105). However, there was almost no checks and balances, instead the Turkish government interfered in domestic matters. Turkey proposed measures for Northern Cyprus to follow the liberal economic direction they had adopted, so that Northern Cyprus could develop a strong economy. Both governments signed an economic protocol that required serious changes, such as, Turkish Cypriots products could now be exported to Turkey with zero customs duty as long as the product included at least 30 percent value added and at least 40 percent domestic input. Moreover, interest rates by banks would be equalized between Turkey and Northern Cyprus, and there would be a free flow of Turkish Lira and other foreign currency between the two countries. Northern Cyprus relies heavily on the imports from Turkey. Most

of the total financial aid, which are loans and grants, is used to buy goods and services from Turkey. Consequently, the money transferred by Turkey to Northern Cyprus ends back up in the Turkish economy (Ekici, 2019, pp. 113-115).

Turkish politicians complained that their financial aid was being misused by Northern Cyprus in the forms of excessive spending (high salaries, burden of civil services, ministerial Mercedes). However, as long as the Turkish Cypriot government did not criticize Turkey and their involvement in Northern Cyprus, they continued to receive financial support (Ekici, 2019, p. 117). moreover, whenever there was need for money, President Rauf Denktaş was very effective in extracting more financial aid from Turkey. Every time a government changed in Turkey; he would form strong bonds using the "national cause" as the key. However, when the AKP (Turkish abbreviation for the Justice and Development Party) came into power in Turkey in 2002, they were not willing to waste financial assistance and new protocols were made (Ekici, 2019, p. 116).

Two important protocols were the project of the water pipeline and the Coordination Office agreement. The first project was the undersea water pipeline that links southern Turkey with Northern Cyprus. The pipeline was meant for drinking supply and irrigation and appeared to be a humanitarian project. The project was called the "water of peace", which would open a path to reconciliation of the island (Bryant, 2015). However, it turned out that the sales of the water would be controlled by a firm selected by Turkey and that, if the water would be sold to another country, for instance the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey would be the sole owner. Additionally, the Turkish Cypriot government was not permitted to manage the distribution of water, because of their history of poor governance. The second protocol was the agreement of the Coordination Office that allowed Turkey to establish an office in Northern Cyprus that would coordinate cultural and social events. Many people were against this protocol as the intent of the office was to interfere with cultural and social life in Northern Cyprus and carry out the Turkification and Islamization goals of the AKP government (Ekici, 2019, pp. 118-119). The AKP thought Turkish Cypriots were degenerate and alienated form their Muslim roots, and had to be disciplined as Turks and Muslims. However, Turkish Cypriots showed resistance to such policies; thus, the AKP lost hope in reforming them, and instead turned their attention to the "other" Turks, the Turkish settlers (Hatay & Bryant, From 'National Cause' to 'National Burden': Turkish Cypriots Within Turkey's Kinship and Diaspora Politics and Perceptions, 2019, p. 87). Today, the traditionally secular Turkish Cypriots are concerned that the AKP's Islamization goals are being imposed on them. Thomas de Waal also argues that a mosque-building program in Northern Cyprus is a sign of Turkish growing influence due to the absence of other powerful countervailing actors (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 55).

Future of Northern Cyprus

Several countries have adopted a pragmatic approach to Northern Cyprus. For instance, France, the UK, and the United States have allowed Turkish Cypriots to travel abroad with their "TRNC" passports with visas that are issued by consular official based in Nicosia. Therefore, Turkish Cypriot passports are accepted as travel documents; however, not as identification from an official state (De Waal, Uncertain Underground: Engaging with Europe's De Facto States and Breakaway Territories, 2018, p. 53). Furthermore, the situation on the island is tolerable. However, negotiations have not solved the Cyprus issue and the two communities still live in uncertainty of their future together.

Possible solutions

As a reunification of the island is an idealistic point of view, a recognition of the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is for Vasileios Karakasis not an option (personal interview, June 2, 2020). He argues that, if Turkey would ask 50 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to *de jure* recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a state, they might be afraid that their own secessionist entities, within their own countries, might be recognized by other countries as well. Karakasis illustrates that, if for instance, Spain would recognize the TRNC, then Greece would recognize Barcelona as a state entity as well. Therefore, countries such as, Belgium, Poland and Spain might avoid a recognition of the TRNC as they also have separatist movements within their countries. Additionally, Turkey would be inconsistent with its own position on Crimea. Generally, Turkey and Russia have good relationships. However, if Turkey pushes for a recognition of the TRNC, Russia would demand Turkey to recognize their own state entity. Another option to solve the Cyprus issue would a permanent partition of the island. As Northern Cyprus is growing to be more dependent on Turkey, they could end up being a province of Turkey. Karakasis fears, that based on the situation now, it seems to be the probable scenario (V. Karakasis, personal interview, June 2, 2020). The current president of Northern Cyprus, Mustafa Akinci, also fears partition. After many years of failed negotiations, Akinci still pushes for negotiations on a reunification of the island. Tensions have grown between Northern Cyprus and Turkey as Akinci has disagreed with Turkey's vision of the relationship between the two countries as one of "mother and child". Akinci further explains that Northern Cyprus has to do more to make its economy less reliant (Harding, 2020).

Ultimately, a reunification of the island would be the best option. For Greek Cypriots, it would be a chance to return back home after all these years. For Turkish Cypriots, a reunification would end the decades long dependency on Turkey. Furthermore, a study by the PRIO Cyprus Centre calculated that the reunification of Cyprus would generate an average of 12,000 euros extra per year for each family on the island. It would create 33,000 new jobs and raise GDP growth by three percent. For instance, demilitarization, the removal of internal barriers to trade and transport, greater economies of scale and

the ability of the north to attract international investment would create great opportunities for Cyprus (Çilsal, Kyriacou, & Mullen, 2010). However, as many negotiations have failed, a new approach needs to be adopted. When asked what for different approach the negotiation process could adopt, Karakasis argues that the format needs to be changed. According to Karakasis, the people in Cyprus feel disconnected with each other. There are no incentives as Greek Cypriots do not need Turkish Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots do not need Greek Cypriots. For a reunification of the island, a bottom up approach is needed and linkages, that bring the people together, need to be created. For instance, common electricity cables that go across the entire island, joint universities, joint airports and ports that ships from both sides can enter need to be created. These material objects could make the relation between the two communities interdependent. A transformation of everyday life is needed because the general believe among the people is that they do not care what is happening. Therefore, the transformation of people's incentives is needed. If both communities see that their everyday life depends on the everyday lives of the others, they might change their incentives. Finally, Karakasis also mentions that the United Nations, as mediator of the negotiation process, should put the term "solution" out of their vocabulary and should try to see how to change the everyday lives of the Cypriots (V. Karakasis, personal interview, June 2, 2020).

Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of how Northern Cyprus is able to sustain its *de facto* statehood. *De facto* states are states that function as a state, yet are not recognized by the international community. It is clear from the existing literature that *de facto* states are denied recognition because they have broken away from their parent states through secessionist movements and have violated the principle of territorial integrity. With the help of Turkey, Northern Cyprus seceded from the Republic of Cyprus after a military coup by Greece in 1974. Turkey militarily intervened Cyprus and occupied the northern part of the island. In 1983, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus proclaimed its independence; however, the United Nations declared it illegitimate as it is seen as an occupied territory by Turkey. Therefore, Turkey is the only country that recognizes the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, the literature revealed that *de facto* states are able to survive for a long time due to the help of their patron states. *De facto* states generally have weak economies, weak state structures and lack international recognition; as a result, the help of external sources are needed. As patron states have helped *de facto* states to break away from their parent states, they now, also, support them with political, military and economic assistance. In the case of Northern Cyprus,Turkish Cypriots became Turkey's "national cause" and as a result, military and financial aid is provided by Turkey. Moreover, the literature states that, the support of a patron state, contradicts the claim of independence of *de facto* states because they are heavily dependent on another state; therefore, it weakens their claims of independence.

To build a state, it is, also, important to build an economy. Northern Cyprus was able to build an economy with the help of Turkey. Turkey and Turkish Cypriot administration created a policy that encouraged and facilitated immigration of Turkish nationals from Turkey, in order to increase the population in Northern Cyprus and to create an economy without Greek Cypriots. The Turkish settlers brought agricultural labor to the island and worked in industries, construction and trade. Event though, Northern Cyprus is isolated and an international embargo is currently in place, the literature states that they are part of the global economic marketplace; however, as consumers rather than producers. This is because, Turkey is its main trading partner for goods and services. When comparing the four post-Soviet *de facto* states, Nagorno Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it can be argued that Abkhazia and Transnistria are more relatable to Northern Cyprus. Abkhazia and Transnistria have little engagement in the world of trade as it has trading partners other than their patron states. However, when searching for data if Northern Cyprus also engages in trade, with other countries than its own patron state, no sources were found. Nonetheless, data has been found stating that Turkish Cypriot businessmen are having some difficulties importing goods from other countries as it needs to be transported to Turkey first before it can be sent to Northern Cyprus. So, it can be assumed that there is some sort of indirect goods imported from other countries. Moreover, international engagement in

Northern Cyprus comes in the two main sectors for exporting services, which are higher education and tourism. Even though, 90 percent of the tourist come from Turkey, the other 10 percent come from other countries. Additionally, 15,000 international students, coming mainly from countries in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, study in Northern Cypriot universities.

So, to answer the research question, Northern Cyprus is able to sustain its *de facto* statehood with the support from Turkey. There is no denying that without the financial aid and support from Turkey, Northern Cyprus would not be able to survive its isolation and develop into the *de facto* state it is now. There are some examples that countries such as France, the UK, and the US, which do not recognize the Northern Cypriot state, have a pragmatic attitude towards Turkish Cypriots. For example, their TRNC passports are accepted as travel documents, but not as identification from an official state. However, if Turkish Cypriots want to engage more in the world and enjoy the rights *de jure* states have, it is necessary for them to push the negotiation process towards a settlement with Greek Cypriots. It is clear that the international community will not recognize the Northern Cypriot state as it is illegal. Therefore, a reunification of the island would be the best option for both communities. Both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots will benefit from a reunification. Data has been found stating, that a reunification would generate 12,000 euros extra per year for each family on the island, 33,000 new jobs would be created and the GDP growth will be raised by three percent. Most importantly, Greek Cypriots would have a chance to return back home after all these years and for Turkish Cypriots it would mean an end of decades long dependency on Turkey. There are options to create a settlement such as changing the format of the negotiations by adopting a bottom up approach, creating incentives and building material objects to make the relationship of the two communities interdependent.

Recommendation

In order to reach a settlement for the Cyprus issue, a new approach is needed.

Initially, incentives for both communities need to be provided. As many negotiations have failed, both communities do not care anymore. People are disconnected from each other and believe that they do not need each other. Therefore, an interdependent relationship is necessary.

Next, to build an interdependent relationship of both communities, material objects, which both communities are reliant on, need to be created such as common electricity cables that go across the entire island. Also, joint universities, joint airports and joint ports where ships from both sides can enter are necessary. This way, the everyday lives of both communities are dependent on each other.

Finally, there needs to be a change in the format of the negotiation talks. A bottom-up approach needs to be adopted, to engage all interested parties in a settlement. Leaders should broaden the negotiation talks with inputs from Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, instead of elected leaders reaching a decision without the consent of their communities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: European Studies Ethics Form

Your name: Tamara Chatzisalma

Supervisor: Rik-Jan Brinkman

Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

(i) Title of Project:

  Sustaining a *de facto* state: the case of Northern Cyprus

(ii) Aims of project:

 To understand how Northern Cyprus sustained itself while being a *de facto* state and write a
     recommendation on how to move on forward.

**(iii)   Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews,
     group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that
     has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of
     conversations given to you by your Supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this
     question.)**

     YES

Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.

(i)   What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):

   A semi-structured interview was held on skype, where his opinions and recommendations on the
    topic were asked.

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?

 The participant used to be a lecturer at HHS and has studied the topic of the Cyprus conflict.
     Therefore, his participation will be a great asset for my thesis. I emailed him and he agreed to
     do an interview.

**(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate
     boxes and then state what they are in the space below?**

 Questionnaires[   ]; Pictures[   ]; Sounds [   ]; Words[   ]; Other[x].

 A set of questions was sent to the interviewee. In this way he was able to prepare for the interview.

(iv) Consent: <u>Informed</u> consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. By means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data?

To guarantee the confidentiality of the participants data, an informed consent form was sent to the interviewee to ensure that the interview was trustworthy. Permission was granted by him for recording the interview and to use the data of the interview in the thesis by referencing it with his name.

Student's signature: Tamara Chatzisalma **date:** 4-6-2020

Supervisor's signature: Rik-Jan Brinkman **date:** 4-6-2020

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

1) Project Title:

   Sustaining a *de facto* state: the case of Northern Cyprus

2) Project Description (1 paragraph):

   For my thesis, I chose to research how Northern Cyprus has sustained itself while being a *de facto* state. I did this by researching its historical background, the relationship with Turkey and its economy.

If you agree to take part in this study, please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

   All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

   Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher and relevant university assessors. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

   I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: Vasileios P. Karakasis **Date:**4.6.2020

Appendix 3: Transcript of interview with Vasileios Karakasis

How is it possible that, after all these years, the Cyprus issue has not been solved?

I think that it is a combination of material and intangible factors that explain both the protracted character of the Cyprus conflict as well as its seemingly intractable character. If we want to understand the problem, we need to use Thucydides, who explains three main reasons for any international problem motivating human behavior: fear, interest, and questions of honor. Let's start with fear: there is fear on behalf of both sides. Greek Cypriots fear that Turkish Cypriots are going to be treated as Turkey's Trojan Horse and that is why they cannot place any trust on them. On their part, Turkish Cypriots believe that Greek Cypriots want to make them second class citizens. They want to transform them from a community into a minority. So, what we understand of these fears is that all the problems that afterwards appear should be viewed under this lens, under this feeling of insecurity. So regardless of whether we talk about government systems or property issues, of intervention rights. These are the basic fears that have been sustaining the conflict. These fears are existential, it is not that they are crazy, that these people make these things out of their mind. There have been historical experiences that do justice to these fears. The second aspect is interest. In this case, what we have in Cyprus is the absence of what we call mutually hurting stalemates. It means that both communities have moved on with their lives and there have been no interdependent relationship with each other. So, it is like getting a divorce for 40 years, you managed to live on your own and of course you don't have any incentive, rational incentive at least, to get back to your husband or wife since you have already moved on with your life. So, what we have here in Cyprus is that we have a dormant, 'comfortable' conflict that has no casualties for more than four decades. If we had to face the reality where people losing their lives day by day, then the incentives to immediately resolve the conflict would be higher. In this situation, also, the big players, the big five, do not have any incentive to alter the existing configuration. Except for the US and the EU, it is mainly a matter of reputation, but it is not out of material incentives that drives them to change the character of the conflict. For instance, one member of the P5, of the big powers, like Russia, would have no incentive to change the situation. If they are benefiting the situation, why should they go for a different status quo. If your British and you have the sovereign basis, based on an existing status quo, you would be afraid that if you change the status quo, the agreements that have paved the way for these sovereign bases, might also change. So, you would be more cautious for these kinds of changes. Finally, there is the question of honor. What we have here in Cyprus is the absence of a common Cypriot identity. You go to the island and most people do not feel Cypriots. You can see that they share the music, the traditions, the parades, the national anthems and the flags of the motherlands. All these three factors explain, to a great or small extent, the intractability of the conflict, why the conflict has not been solved. At least, this is based on my research.

Do you consider Northern Cyprus to be a puppet state? What is your view on this term in general?

I don't know that my own view matters that much. But whether the dimensions that are part of the term puppet state are fulfilled when it come the case of Northern Cyprus. If there is a legal definition about puppet states, that puppet states have a particular criterion. For instance, that it is a nominally sovereign state that is affectively controlled by a foreign state, if we see this kind of definition in the case of Northern Cyprus then indeed, they fall in the category of a puppet state. In this case, the puppet state might have a name, a flag, an anthem, constitution, law codes and its own motto, what it actually does is that it operates as an organ of another state. In that particular case, if we take these criteria into consideration, I think that indeed Northern Cyprus fall into this category. However, in economic terms they are dependent on Turkey. So, every five, or ten years Turkey is providing them with an economic loan and they have to follow some policies in order to satisfy the agreements with Turkey. They do not have their own army, there is no Turkish Cypriot army, they rely on Turkey. So, in this case, you are de facto or de jure, a state that relies on the powers of a different state. All these qualities would render Northern Cyprus a puppet state.

Do you think that being, in this sense, a puppet state has a negative view on them? In the literature, the rest of world has a negative view on being a puppet state and being dependent on Turkey.

When it comes to international politics, our normative points of view do not matter that much. It doesn't matter if it is ethical or not, what matters is what is happening in reality. Although I do not like the term puppet state, if there is a legal definition of puppet state, unfortunately, I have to conform to this definition. If there would be a different term, I would say yes. I don't like to hear the term puppet state, but if is see it used in legal documents of public international law, I cannot say that I have to deviate from the definition.

Can Northern Cyprus survive without the help of Turkey?

The answer is no, Turkish Cypriots cannot survive without the help of Turkey. The only alternative for Turkish Cypriots would be to rely on Greek Cypriots and become part of the Republic of Cyprus. However, if I would be Greek Cypriot and I knew that Turkish Cypriots are not supported by Turkey, I would impose my own terms on them because they would not have the power to change their configuration. That is why this is a cynic world and a lot of things depend on the balance of power as well. So, that is why I believe that Turkish Cypriots would have no alternative rather than relying on Turkish economic and military help.

So, a recognition of the state of Northern Cyprus would not help?

I need to have a crystal bowl to invasion the future here. In my personal opinion, I want a reunification of the island. I have been to the island, I am not Cypriot, but I am Greek. However, since I live in the Netherlands and can cross the borders to Belgium, Luxemburg, Germany and France, I do not have to show my passport. It is quite strange for a small distance to cross from one side to another by passport. So, ideally, I would like to see a reunification of the island. But this is the idealistic point of view, which does not matter that much. When it comes to the future, everything depends on what kind of power configuration we are going to see in the future. So, I think that Turkey will go to the organization of Islamic conference and will ask the 50 countries that are members of the organization to de jure recognize the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a state. Afterwards, the countries would have to see their own calculations. If they recognize them, they might be afraid that their own secessionist entities within their own countries might be recognized by other countries as well. So, for instance, assume that you are Spain, and you decide to recognize the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In this case, what Greece will do is to recognize Barcelona as a state entity as well. So, that is why recognition of such state entities have so many legal implications and many countries like to avoid this. So, that is why I cannot see how the recognition might unfold. Because, if it unfolds, and is recognized by western countries, then, the western countries might deal with their own problems as well and might backfire them. If you are Belgium, Poland, Spain, you might avoid this kind of recognition. And Turkey knows that. Also, Turkey would be inconsistent when with its own position when it comes to Crimea. So, one of the issues in the, generally good, relationship between Russia and Turkey is the recognition of Crimea. In this case, if Turkey pushes for the recognition of the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Russia will come and say that now it's time for you to recognize my own state entity, since we also have good relationships. And if Turkey does that, it creates a bad precedent. The other aspect, which unfortunately gains ground day by day, might be a permanent partition. I think that right now, my fear, and this is the scenario that I do not want to entertain, is that Turkish Cypriots might become the 83rd province of Turkey. In my view this seems the probable scenario, based on now. It is quite difficult for me to not entertain the most pessimistic scenario. But, right now the reunification is collecting the smallest chances as a scenario in the near future. I hope that might gain ground again. Meaning that I want to see Cyprus reunified.

You say reunification would be the best option, however, they have been trying to for a long time with new negotiation processes. What would you recommend for them to do differently?

That's a good question. I think we need to change the format. When we had the 2004 Annan Plan, the big political parties in the Republic of Cyprus, either openly or discreetly, supported the plan. But the voters, of these two political parties, voted against the plan. The people had good reasons to vote against it. However, the problem in Cyprus is that the people feel disconnected with each other. The Greek Cypriot does not need Turkish Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot does not need the Greek Cypriot. If we do

not start with the bottom up approach and create a different momentum. If we, for instance, do not create a common electricity cables that is sprung across the island, if we do not run airports, if we do not have a joined university at the buffer zone, if we do not have any material object that could make our relation interdependent, would not have any incentive to be close to each other, because we, actually, do not care. So, if we do not start with a bottom up approach to see how we can transform our routings, our everyday life's in order to make them interdependent through electricity cables, through traffics, through universities, then I do not see any different outcome rather than the same continuous process. So, right now we need to see how we can start from a bottom up approach, how we can create some linkages in order to bring the people together. You cannot also rely on the good will of the people, saying, I miss the Turkish Cypriot or I miss the Greek Cypriot and we want to be back together, there are only a couple of people that believe that. But the general believe among the people is that they don't care what is happening in their neighborhood. So, in this case, if you do not transform the situation where the people have to care about them. For instance, if we have firefighters and there would be a fire on one side of the island and we have a support, that is something voluntarily. We need a particular instrument that could actually coordinate the moves of the two sides. Or we need an electricity cables that goes across the two sides, or we need an airport, or a port that could have ships from both sides, something that deals with everyday live. If you do not change these routines, I do not see how any future solution coming from the United Nations, coming from diplomats, coming from policy makers might find fertile ground on the people. Because the people will still not have any particular incentive to find a solution. If, on the other hand, the people see that their everyday life depends on the everyday life of the others, they might change their incentives. But if I was the United Nations, I would put the term solution out of my vocabulary, and I would try to see how it could lead to transformation to transform everyday life.

So, they would have to start working together?
Exactly, you need to find a way to make this the only viable choice. Otherwise, if I would be them, I would also say why should I care?