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and How Can it be Achieved?“

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1. English Abstract

Since the invasion of the Turkish army in 1974, Cyprus has been internally divided into two republics, the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), the latter recognized only by Turkey and itself. Since that year, many attempts have been made to reunite the island, but all have been unsuccessful. The aim of this master thesis is to understand what has prevented and continues to prevent the reunification of the island. Based on the problems identified in the first part, this thesis also develops a plan for a reunification process that could eventually lead to a lasting peace.

The methodology used in this thesis is a combination of literature review, participatory observation, and guideline interviews. In the first part i.e., the literature review, I discuss various topics related to the Cyprus issue, such as the geographical features, history, internal division, and efforts to reunify the island, as well as the influence of gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean on the Cyprus issue. To conduct the participatory observation and guideline interviews, I organized a two-month stay in Cyprus, during which I was in contact with local Greek and Turkish Cypriots, from whom I obtained information on their personal sentiments regarding the island's past, present, and future.

The results show that several aspects stand out as the main reasons for the impossibility of reunifying the island. These include the lack of a common life and language between the two sides, issues related to the Turks who moved into the homes of the Greek Cypriots after 1974, territorial questions, issues related to the division of executive power, to the presence of the Turkish army, the role of too passive or uncompromising actors, and the UN. The final chapter contains a proposal for a sustainable solution, emphasizing the importance of exchange and cooperation and presenting suggested solutions to each of the above problems.

2. German Abstract/ Deutscher Abstract

Seit der Invasion der türkischen Armee im Jahr 1974 ist Zypern intern in zwei Republiken geteilt, die Republik Zypern und die Türkische Republik Nordzypern (TRNC), wobei letztere nur von der Türkei und sich selbst anerkannt wird. Seit diesem Jahr wurden viele Versuche unternommen, die Insel wieder zu vereinigen, aber alle blieben erfolglos. Das Ziel dieser Masterarbeit ist es, zu verstehen, was die Wiedervereinigung der Insel verhindert hat und weiterhin verhindert. Ausgehend von den im ersten Teil dieser Arbeit ermittelten Problemen wird ein Plan für einen Wiedervereinigungsprozess entwickelt, der schließlich zu einem dauerhaften Frieden führen könnte.

Die in dieser Arbeit angewandte Methodik ist eine Kombination aus Literaturanalyse, teilnehmender Beobachtung und Leitfadeninterviews. Im ersten Teil dieser Arbeit, der Literaturübersicht, erörtere ich verschiedene Themen im Zusammenhang mit der Zypernfrage, wie z. B. die geografischen Merkmale, die Geschichte, die interne Teilung und die Bemühungen um eine Wiedervereinigung der Insel sowie den Einfluss der Gas- und Ölressourcen im östlichen Mittelmeer auf die Zypernfrage. Für die teilnehmende Beobachtung und die Leitfadeninterviews organisierte ich einen zweimonatigen Aufenthalt in Zypern, während dessen ich mit einheimischen griechischen und türkischen Zyprioten in Kontakt stand, von denen ich Informationen über ihre persönlichen Gefühle bezüglich der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft der Insel erhielt.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass mehrere Aspekte als Hauptgründe für die Unmöglichkeit einer Wiedervereinigung der Insel auffallen. Dazu gehören das Fehlen eines gemeinsamen Lebens und einer gemeinsamen Sprache zwischen den beiden Seiten, Fragen im Zusammenhang mit den TürkInnen, die nach 1974 in die Häuser der griechischen Zyprioten eingezogen sind, territoriale Fragen, Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der Teilung der Exekutivgewalt, Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der Präsenz der türkischen Armee und die Rolle von allzu passiven oder kompromisslosen Akteuren und der Vereinten Nationen. Das letzte Kapitel enthält einen Vorschlag für eine nachhaltige Lösung, in dem die Bedeutung des Austauschs und der Zusammenarbeit hervorgehoben wird und Lösungsvorschläge für jedes der oben genannten Probleme vorgestellt werden.

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4. Key terms and phrases

- Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
 - An exclusive economic zone (EEZ), according to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is a maritime area in which a sovereign state has special rights with respect to the exploration and exploitation of marine resources. These rights cover, for example, the generation of energy from water and wind. It extends from the coastline to 200 nautical miles off the coast of the state in question.
- Enosis (Ενωσις)
 - Greek term for “unification”. When this term is used in the context of Cyprus, it is generally a reference to the unification of the island with Greece, i.e., its annexation by its motherland.
- Greek Cypriot coup d'état
 - A coup organized in 1974 by Greek and Greek Cypriot nationalists to achieve “Enosis”. The purpose was to kill the Greek Cypriot president Makarios and reach a unification with Greece.
- “Native Turkish Cypriots”
 - Phrase used in this master thesis to describe the Turkish-speaking citizens currently living in the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), who identify not only as Turks but also as Cypriots. The term “native” is used because most members of this group were already living in Cyprus before the 1974 Turkish military invasion and before the 1983 declaration of independence of the TRNC.
- Northern Cyprus
 - Name for the Turkish-speaking northern part of the island, which emerged after the partition of 1974 and the creation of the Green Line. Northern Cyprus is synonymous with TRNC. See TRNC for more details.
- Republic of Cyprus
 - Officially, the Republic of Cyprus, founded in 1960, represents the whole island, does not recognize the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Cyprus) as an independent state and considers the presence of the Turkish army in Northern Cyprus a military occupation or colonialism. After the Turkish military invasion and the establishment of the UN Green Line in 1974, the name Southern Cyprus

appeared, which is, in practice, synonymous with the Republic of Cyprus. Therefore, in this master thesis, Southern Cyprus and Republic of Cyprus are used interchangeably when referring to the Greek-speaking area located south of the UN Green Line.

- Southern Cyprus
 - Southern Cyprus is synonymous with the Republic of Cyprus in this master thesis. See “Republic of Cyprus” for more details.
- TRNC
 - Name for the Turkish-speaking northern part of the island, which emerged after the partition of 1974 and the creation of the Green Line. The TRNC or Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) declared its independence in 1983 and is recognized only by Turkey and itself. Both phrases (Northern Cyprus and TRNC) refer to the same political and geographical area and are thus used interchangeably. The only difference is that it was only possible to speak of a Northern Cyprus as early as 1974, but of a TRNC only in 1983, since the state of “Turkish Federated Cyprus” was proclaimed for the period between 1974 and 1983.
- Turkish military invasion
 - This refers to the 1974 Turkish military invasion following the Greek Cypriot coup d’état, which was organized to protect the Turkish Cypriot population and led to the creation of the UN Green Line.
- “Turks living in Cyprus”
 - This phrase refers to citizens of the TRNC who identify solely as Turks who happen to live in Cyprus but do not feel any kind of attachment to the Cypriot identity. The majority of “Turks living in Cyprus” came to Cyprus after the Turkish military invasion in 1974, but some members of this group lived on the island even before that and began to identify more strongly with Turkey in the 1920s. More details about this identity formation will be given in “National identity formation of the Turkish Cypriot community”.
- UN Green Line
 - The UN Green Line was introduced in 1974 after the Turkish invasion and had as its main objective to freeze the conflict by creating a buffer zone between the north and the south. More details will be given in “Green Line”.

5. Introduction

Since the 1974 invasion of the Turkish army, Cyprus has been internally divided into two republics, the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), although the latter is only recognized by Turkey and itself. Since that year, many attempts have been made to reunite the island, but all without success. The purpose of this master thesis is to understand what has prevented and continues to prevent the reunification of the island. Based on the problems identified in the first part of this work, this thesis also develops a plan for a reunification process that might eventually lead to lasting peace.

In the first chapter, I will explain which methodology I intend to use to conduct this study. Here, the research question and its sub questions will be presented and explained more precisely. The second methodology to be used in this thesis is a combination of participatory observation and guideline interviews. More information on this will be given in the first chapter.

To provide an accurate, concise, and thorough analysis of the situation, the second chapter will describe the insular peculiarities of Cyprus. In this chapter, I will focus on the location of the island, its surrounding countries, and the current internal division. A description of the internal and external geographical features of the island will help the reader to understand who the main actors in the Cyprus issue are and to what extent they are able to influence or interfere in the island's situation.

The following chapter will present a deep and thorough analysis and summary of the existing literature on the past situation of the island, to understand how the island has come to the state it is in now. It is crucial to start with a comprehensive history to understand the current situation in Cyprus. Important periods such as the Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, Ottoman and British rule will be touched upon. Furthermore, critical events and matters such as the 1956 Cyprus Emergency, the 1960 Independence Constitution, the 1974 Turkish Military Invasion will be discussed.

In the next two parts of the literature review, I will examine the internal division of the island in political, economic, ethnic, cultural, and identity terms. To provide an impartial analysis of the situation, I will attempt to focus on both parts of the island in a balanced way. Thus, I will first explain the role of Northern Cyprus and Turkey in this matter. Then, I will analyze Southern Cyprus and Greece's impact on this issue. I intend to divide the analysis of the island this way for purely structural reasons, while being aware that it is complex to compare a de facto state with a de jure one. By focusing on both parts of the story, I will try to provide as

comprehensive an overview of the whole island as possible, which provides a more complete view of both sides of Cyprus. In this chapter, the opinion and view of the Cypriots on the topic is also investigated.

More precisely, in “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)”, I will highlight the role of the TRNC and Turkey in the Cyprus issue. In this part, it will be important to analyze to what extent citizens of the TRNC identify as Turks. It will also be crucial to look at whether citizens of Northern Cyprus support the regime of the TRNC and Turkey. Furthermore, I will analyze the political situation in the TRNC concerning its support for Turkey and, more specifically, for the current ruling party in Turkey and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In this part, it will also be important to review the political parties in the TRNC concerning their stance towards reunification or a two-state-solution.

After discussing the TRNC, it will be crucial to search for answers to similar questions concerning the southern part of the island: The Republic of Cyprus. In this part, comparable research questions will be raised regarding a common identity, this time shared with Greeks rather than Turks, and support for the regime of the Republic of Cyprus at the individual and political levels.

In “Reunification”, the efforts made so far for reunification are discussed and the factors preventing the reunification of Cyprus will be analyzed. Then, the prospects for reunification will be described by examining, among other things, the opinions of young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

In “Gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean”, I will discuss the current questions about the oil and gas deposits that exist around the island. This issue is related to the discovery of natural gas in Egypt’s Northeastern Mediterranean in 2003 which subsequently attracted the interest of several Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, and Lebanon. The discovery caused greater tensions between the Republic of Cyprus on the one hand and the TRNC and Turkey on the other, as discussions arose over who owns the gas fields around the island and the rights to exploit them. More details will be provided in this part.

Chapter “Participatory observation and guideline interviews” follows the literature review and is a shift to analysis of anthropological research I conducted for two months on the island. It will include interviews and the participatory research method.

Based on the research carried out for this thesis, a conclusion will be given, in which all the results of the previous chapters of the thesis are wrapped up and discussed. In this part, each research question will be presented and addressed using the context of the whole of the research.

Finally, a proposal for a sustainable solution will be presented, in which I will try to find a response to the problems that currently prevent the reunification of the island. In this part, previous settlement plans will also be referenced and used.

6. Methodology

6.2 Research question

During the course of this thesis, I will try to provide answers to the following research question and sub-questions in a way that is objective, accurate and as close to reality as possible.

What prevents Cyprus from reunification?

The main purpose of this thesis will be to understand what has so far made a reunification of the island impossible and what is still impeding it. In this context, various attempts at reunification, such as the negotiations in New York and Vienna, and the Annan Plan, will be highlighted and the reasons for their failure will be explained. Based on these earlier efforts, I will look at the current situation in Cyprus and analyze the (im)possibility of reunification by comparing the current state of affairs with the situation when the earlier attempts were made.

6.2.1 Sub-question 1

What attitude do Cypriots of each community adopt in terms of identity and politics?

It will also be crucial to look at the Cyprus question from the perspective of identity and politics. In this context, I will examine how the two Cypriot communities identify with either their respective motherlands, i.e., Turkey for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Greece for the Republic of Cyprus, or with a Cypriot identity. In addition, the political situation on both sides of the island and in both motherlands will be analyzed and described. So, it will be important to examine the position of current political figures such as Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the current president of Turkey, and Katerina Sakellariopoulou, president of the Hellenic Republic. In addition, the attitude of local political figures such as Rauf Denktash and Ersin Tatar (TRNC), and Nicos Anastasiades, Demetris Christofias, Tassos Papadopoulos, Nicolas Papadopoulos (Republic of Cyprus) will be verified as well. All of these political figures will each be analyzed on the basis of their political ideologies and public support from Cypriot communities.

6.2.2 Sub-question 2

What influence does the discovery of gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean have on the Cyprus issue?

The discovery of gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean in 2004 has resulted in much unrest in the region. Its influence on the Cyprus issue will be discussed in the course of this thesis. In this matter, one politician who clearly stands out from the above and is currently

attracting the attention of many media around the globe, while at the same time causing a lot of unrest in and around Cyprus, is the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan and Turkey's recent statements and operations regarding the Cyprus issue and the discovery of gas and oil deposits around the island have led to much controversy. These topics will also be analyzed in the course of this paper.

6.2.3 Sub-question 3

How can the reunification of Cyprus be achieved?

Based on the answers to the previous research question and sub-questions, I will attempt to suggest a sustainable solution to the Cyprus issue. In this proposal, a solution to each of the main issues currently preventing the reunification of Cyprus will be provided and discussed. In this section I will also refer to previous proposals and plans and try to collect and combine the solutions to each problem that are most likely to work.

6.3 Literature review

6.3.1 Literature review definitions

In order to provide the most complete answers possible to the research question and sub-questions, a literature review seems to be the most appropriate method for the first part of this thesis. While looking for a definition of a literature review, I came across Jesson et al.'s (2011) book, in which they explain that it is an analytical approach that objectively explains and examines what is already understood about a topic. What characterizes literature reviews are the secondary resources used to introduce new perspectives to the topic. Furthermore, this kind of research method is usually based on a critical approach that attempts to reach conclusions by examining and comparing the methodology and findings of individual primary research, while focusing on the background and content of its own topic (Jesson et al., 2011).

Wee & Banister (2016) define literature reviews as “a journal paper that provides a comprehensive overview of (or a selection of) the literature in a specific area, bringing together the material in a clearly structured way, and adding value through coming to some interesting conclusions.”¹ The added value will be discussed more in the following section. Furthermore, it is important to add that a literature review must have a clear rationale which implies a lot of reading for the researcher to get familiar with the topic (Wee & Banister, 2016, 279).

¹ Wee, B. & Banister, D. (2016): How to write a literature review paper?, p. 279.

By reading *Literature review and research design* (Harris, 2019), one finds that, when writing a literature review, it is essential to first understand what is expected, what the purpose is, and what one is trying to achieve with it. Furthermore, after having explained what the research question is, it is crucial to present these same points by bringing the literature (Harris, 2019, 145).

6.3.2 Added value

Another important point in writing a literature review is understanding how to focus on the project by using the available literature without focusing too much on oneself. On the one hand, it is important for the author to present his or her own reflections and develop his or her own project. On the other hand, it is important to remember that the work is based on the publications of others (Harris, 2019, 145). Therefore, literature reviews are important because they provide an up-to-date and clear overview of the existing literature on a particular topic and add value. The added value can come in different forms. For example, it can point out the research gaps that still exist, which can be very useful for readers who want to deal with similar topics for the first time. It may also discuss the benefits and drawbacks of the applied methods and the implications of the results. In addition, it can assist in refreshing a researcher's database after a period of absence from a topic (Wee & Banister, 2016, 278).

Regarding this thesis, it is important to point out that the fact that a lot of information and resources are already available on the Cyprus issue does not imply no added value can be provided. For new insights can be gained on any topic, as factors such as time and place, among others, can bring new variations to any topic. In addition, I believe I can add my own value to the topic of Cyprus for two further reasons. First, the fact that I am a citizen of Belgium, and by that I imply that because I have no ethnic link to Turkey, Greece, Northern Cyprus, Southern Cyprus or even the UK, that makes me a complete outsider. Second, I learned the languages of both sides of the island, which allows me to dig even deeper into the issue and obtain more details on the whole conflict. I believe that these two factors will be my two strengths that will enable me to put my own spin on this issue that has already been discussed often and in detail.

6.3.3 Selection of papers

It can be very helpful and enriching to explain the reasons for selecting specific material, as it will help the reader understand the process the author went through while doing the research (Wee & Banister, 2016, 283). In the case of Cyprus, as will be mentioned again below, it will be crucial to analyze and compare the narrative of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot authors,

as they often tend to describe the past (and the present) in different and sometimes even contradictory ways. In addition, it will also be interesting in the context of this work to use literature by authors who are not Greek, Turkish, Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot. This will help to get an outside view on the subject. The literature concerning the Cyprus issue will thus be selected and compared based on this theory.

In order to offer a wide and complete overview of the literature available on a specific topic, it is recommended for researchers to use databases such as Web of Science, SCOPUS, Scholar Google, and TRID (Wee & Banister, 2016, 283). In my literature review, I will mostly make use of the database “<https://usearch.uaccess.univie.ac.at/>” offered by the University of Vienna, which includes a very high number of resources on the Cyprus issue. However, other databases, such as Scholar Google will also be employed.

6.4 Participatory observation and guideline interviews

After analyzing the main issues related to the Cyprus question in the literature review, based on a knowledge that covers as much as possible about the main relevant issues of the island, in the second part of the research process of my thesis I will undertake a visit to Cyprus. In this part of the research, I intend to spend some time on the island to analyze the Cyprus issue in the field with all the knowledge acquired during the literature review.

6.4.1 Participatory observation

Besides the literature review, I will use a method called participatory observation, which is based on observational techniques. Originally, this method emerged to challenge the foundations and methods of traditional research and as a result of demands for more socially relevant research that allows traditional research subjects to include their own voices in the research process (Clark, et al., 2009, 345 ff.).

Participation has the capacity to include people in all dimensions of the research process. Indeed, participatory research is seen as a way to achieve a more “relevant,” and non-hierarchical research practice. In addition, some researchers go even further and define participatory observation as “researchers and local people work[ing] together as colleagues with different skills to offer, in a process of mutual learning where local people have control over the

process.”² However, some wonder whether research can ever reach such a status. (Clark, et al., 2009, 345 ff.)

Whereas some research tends to seek “knowledge for understanding,” much participatory research emphasizes “knowledge for action.” (Clark, et al., 2009, 345 ff.).In my master thesis, in a first step, I will use each method, i.e., the literature review, the interviews, and the participatory observation to try to find reasons why the island has not been successful in its reunification attempts, i.e. I will acquire “knowledge to understand”. In a second step, I will use the knowledge for action by transforming the information obtained through the participatory observation and interviews (see below into new ideas for a sustainable solution, which will be the last chapter of this thesis: “Proposal for a sustainable solution”.

As for the implementation of the participatory observation method in my research, I interacted with both Turkish and Greek Cypriots in an informal way. By living on the island for a period of two months, I tried to immerse myself as deeply as possible in the everyday “Cypriot life”, spending some time on both sides of the island to reach out to both communities. During these conversations, I informally discussed the Cyprus issue with the locals and asked them questions about their experiences with Cypriots on the other side, their travels to the other part of the island, or more generally about their wishes regarding a settlement of the issue. Afterwards, I summarized and evaluated the conversations I had with the locals and incorporated them into my master thesis.

6.4.2 Guideline interviews

During my stay in Cyprus, in addition to the method of participant observation, I conducted guideline interviews with both a Turkish and a Greek Cypriot. On the one hand, I thought it would be interesting to obtain knowledge from an academic point of view by interviewing a local expert. On the other hand, I assumed that knowing the opinion of “ordinary” Cypriots would also be beneficial for this work, as it would give me insight into the general ideologies of Cypriots who are affected by the conflict but have not dealt with the issue academically. Since members of both groups could make an enriching contribution, the choice between interviewing “ordinary” or “experienced” Cypriots was not of primary importance. However,

² Clark, et al. (2009, 346): Learning to see: lessons from a participatory observation research project in public spaces. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*.

contrasting the opinion of a Turkish Cypriot with that of a Greek Cypriot was more relevant which is why I decided to interview a Cypriot of both communities.

As far as the interview form is concerned, I decided to use guideline interviews. I believe that they are suitable for interviewing both experts and “ordinary” Cypriots because of their semi-structured form. They ensure that the results can be compared to a certain extent through the existing questions. Furthermore, they are also suitable because they are formulated in such an open way and accordingly allow a flexible handling of different answers and discussion processes. The flexibility of the guided interview based on open-ended questions is supported by Dannecker & Voßemer (2014, 159): “the formulation of the questions as well as the sequence of the topics is adapted to the dynamics of the conversation, which allows for a relatively open interview.” Another reason why I chose the guideline interview has to do with the fact that it allows one to quickly obtain results in a research field that one is already familiar with (Danneck & Voßemer, 2014, 158 ff.). For these two reasons, I concluded that the guideline interview was the most appropriate interview form for this work.

This part of the work was very enriching as it gave me the opportunity to look at the issue from the middle of the action rather than from a distance, and to get information live from people who have been impacted by the problem for years. In addition, unlike participatory observation, conducting formal interviews allowed me to delve deeper into complex topics by preparing guiding questions and informing interviewees in advance so they could prepare their responses as well.

7. Literature review

7.1 Geography and geopolitics

To understand the current situation in Cyprus, an accurate description of the island's geography, surrounding countries, natural features and location is of utmost importance.

7.1.1 Cyprus's surroundings



Looking at the countries closest to the island, one notes that Turkey (around 75 km), Syria (around 100 km), Lebanon (around 100 km) and Israel (around 225 km) are the nearest. As for Egypt, it is located about 350 km from Cyprus. Greece, however, appears to be much farther than the above-mentioned countries, except for Egypt, as it is about 280 km away (Stergiou, 2016, 377). It is therefore interesting to note that despite the apparent great distance from its motherland, Greece, the Republic of Cyprus still has a very close bond with that country. The reasons for this close bond will be explained in more detail in the following chapters, more specifically in “Historical overview”.

In this chapter, I will briefly describe the geopolitical relations between Cyprus and four major countries surrounding the island: Greece, Turkey, Israel, and Egypt. It should be noted that the

³ Pntr (2014): *World map of Cyprus* < <https://www.pntr.com/cyprus-map.html> >

relations between the Mediterranean island, and Greece and Turkey will not be examined in detail here, as they will be discussed in much more detail in the course of this thesis.

7.1.1.1 Greece

Concerning the geopolitical relations between Greece and Cyprus, as will be emphasized regularly in this thesis, it is important to analyze the situation in Northern Cyprus and Southern Cyprus distinctively.

As will become clear, the island of Cyprus is divided (unofficially) into the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) with its Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus with its Greek Cypriot community in the southern part of the island. As might be expected, Southern Cyprus maintains quite good relations with Greece, because it shares the same language, culture and ethnicity, and generally considers Greece its motherland. However, the same cannot be said about the Turkish Cypriots, whose relations with Greece have started deteriorating drastically in the 1960s, as will be explained in more details in “Historical overview”. Since then, there has been considerable tension between the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey on the one hand, and the Greek Cypriots and Greece on the other.

Since the Turkish Republic is recognized only by Turkey, Cyprus forms a unified country without division in the eyes of all other nations of the world. Therefore, if one looks at the geopolitical relations between Cyprus and Greece, one will find that they are theoretically very tight. Indeed, both countries have an embassy in each other’s capital, and Cyprus even has a consulate general in Thessaloniki. Furthermore, both countries are members of the EU, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Looking only at Southern Cyprus, one finds that the vast majority of its population indeed shares the same language, religion, ethnicity and heritage as Greece, resulting in very close relations between the two nations. Furthermore, concerning economic relations, Greece has traditionally been the major export and import partner of Cyprus. It will now be crucial to contrast these findings with Greece’s “political arch-enemy”, Turkey.

7.1.1.2 Turkey

As mentioned earlier, although Cyprus is officially a unified island, in practice it is divided into the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the Republic of Cyprus. Like in the analysis of relations between Cyprus and Greece, this division is also important to highlight in the discussion of relations between the island and Turkey. In contrast to its poor relations with Greece, Northern Cyprus enjoys close relations with Turkey for similar reasons as the ones

mentioned above. Here, too, the main factors are language, ethnicity, religion and origin. Nonetheless, as will be explained in “Identity split in Northern Cyprus”, the case of the TRNC is not as clear-cut as it seems, as there is growing tension between Turks and Turkish Cypriots. For example, the fact that the Turkish army has occupied the TRNC since the 1974 invasion is a source of concern not only to Greek Cypriots, but also to many Turkish Cypriots. An estimated 30 000 Turkish troops are in Northern Cyprus, making Cyprus one of the most militarized zones in the world. This high number of Turkish troops in the TRNC makes the island a potential crisis point in Greek-Turkish relations (Leonard, 2013, 334 ff.). Moreover, some Northern Cypriots, who do not identify as Turks at all, do not view the Turkish military occupation of the TRNC very favorably. Thus, it would be wrong to say that the relations between the Turkish Republic and Turkey are flawless.

Furthermore, it is striking that there have been and continue to be numerous tensions between Southern Cyprus and Turkey, especially since the Turkish military invasion of 1974, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. Looking at Cyprus as a united island, one finds that relations between Southern Cyprus and Turkey are very bad indeed and have been on the verge of serious conflict even in recent times. The discovery of “Gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean”, for example, shows clearly how fragile the relations between Cyprus and Turkey are.

Looking only at the relations between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey, one finds that the former is highly dependent on the latter’s support. Moreover, Turkey has a great influence on the politics of Northern Cyprus, which is why some experts consider the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to be comparable to a puppet state of Turkey. To obtain less biased information, I decided to look for and compare the opinion of authors of Turkish origin concerning whether the TRNC can be considered a “puppet state”.

The term “puppet state” has been used by many authors, including Assoc. Prof. Ersun Necati Kurtulus, professor at the University of Ankara of Turkish origin, due to the TRNC’s complete dependence on Turkey and the military control that Turkey exercises in Northern Cyprus (Kurtulus, 2005, 136 ff.). However, other experts disagree, arguing that the high degree of political independence in the northern part of the island and the tensions between the Turkish Cypriot and Turkish governments suggest that a puppet state is not the right definition for the TRNC. An example of an academician who holds this opinion is Dr. Tozun Bahcheli, professor of Turkish origin in the department of Political Science at the King’s University College in London. He and his colleagues argue that the TRNC was not fabricated by the Turkish

government. Moreover, ministers and government officials of Northern Cyprus are not designated by Ankara and disputes between the Turkish capital and the TRNC are not unusual. Thus, in the TRNC a “constitutional self-restraint” is to be found, which means that the country is constitutionally bound to no higher authority than that of its own constitution (Bahcheli et al., 2004, 24). Thus, it is notable that there is some disagreement between these two (groups of) authors, who are nonetheless (partially) of Turkish origin and living in Eastern European countries. However, it is undeniable that Turkey has a significant economic influence on Northern Cyprus due to its use of the Turkish lira and as its most important trading partner. In addition, Turkey also has a major impact on the TRNC in military terms, as it has around 30 000 armed forces stationed on the island.

Since no country other than Turkey recognizes the TRNC, the United Nations consider Northern Cyprus to be a territory of the Republic of Cyprus under Turkish occupation (Scott, 2007, 448). In addition, Pakistan and Bangladesh had initially recognized Northern Cyprus as an autonomous state but withdrew their recognition under U.S. pressure after the UN considered the declaration of independence to be illegal (Inner City Press, 2015) This led to Turkey being the only state to recognize the independence of the TRNC. To this day, Turkey shows its recognition of the independence of Northern Cyprus through, among other things, the presence of an Embassy of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in its capital Ankara and a Turkish Embassy in Nicosia. Today, Turkey holds firm to its position on the independence of the TRNC and pushes for a two-state solution rather than a reunification of the island.

7.1.1.3 Israel

Israel is also an important player in the eastern Mediterranean, which is why its relations with Cyprus will be briefly described here. This brief overview of the relations between Cyprus and Israel will serve to provide general information about the island. In addition, these facts will help to understand other issues related to the Cyprus question, especially the discovery of gas and oil deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Overall, Cyprus and Israel maintain relatively close relations in the military, cultural and political spheres. Cyprus has an embassy in Tel Aviv, while Israel has an embassy in Nicosia. Both states are members of the Union for the Mediterranean, United Nations, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization (The National Interest, 2012) & (Stergiou, 2016, 377 ff.).

Cyprus has played and plays an important role for Israel, as for many years, the latter has attempted to overcome its isolation from Arab countries by establishing stronger ties with non-Arab states. Moreover, during World War II, Cyprus was a transit point for many Jewish survivors of the Holocaust who were trying to reach the Mandate territory of Palestine even before the State of Israel was founded in 1948 (Stergiou, 2016, 377 ff.).

After the Second World War, Cyprus still maintained close ties with Arab countries. However, despite pressure from Arab countries, especially Egypt, Cyprus decided to initiate full and formal diplomatic relations with Israel as well. So, Cyprus maintained prosperous economic and trade relations with Israel, made considerable benefits from Israeli tourism, and received technical assistance from several Israeli institutions (Stergiou, 2016, 377 ff.).

7.1.1.4 Egypt

Like Israel, Egypt also plays a key role in the eastern Mediterranean. For this reason, its relations with Cyprus will be shortly described here. Overall, the bilateral relations between Cyprus and Egypt are friendly and strategic. They were marked by tripartite summit meetings with Greece as well as official visits by senior officials from both countries to both capitals. Moreover, it is important to add that Cyprus has an embassy in Cairo and Egypt has an embassy in Nicosia (English Ahram, 2014) & (Stergiou, 2016, 377 ff.).

Egypt played an important role in the struggle for Cyprus's independence, as it helped Greek Cypriots with arms shipments during their anticolonial fight against the British. Soon after Cyprus' independence, modern diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. In the 1960s, Cyprus sought to strengthen its relations with Egypt in order to gain the support of Afro-Asian and Arab states in the fight against Turkey at the UN. During the wars between Israel and Egypt that took place in the following years, Cyprus tended to view Israel as the aggressor rather than Egypt. To this day, the relations between Cyprus and Egypt are considered cordial (Stergiou, 2016, 377 ff.).

A more recent decisive event that influenced relations between the island and Egypt was the discovery of natural gas and oil deposits in the eastern Mediterranean, which led to new geopolitical issues between Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Cyprus and Greece, which will be discussed in more details later in this thesis (Stergiou, 2016, 377 ff.).

7.1.2 The island of Cyprus



After analyzing Cyprus's neighboring countries, I will now focus on the island itself and, more specifically, on the internal divisions that characterize it.

As one can see on the map, in 1960, Cyprus was made of communities spread across the island, without any clear division between ethnicity, language or religion. Furthermore, communities with a majority of ethnic Turks seemed to be able to live right next to communities with a majority of ethnic Greeks, without any clear border separating them. However, if one looks at the same map today, one finds that the island, made up of intermingled communities, seems to have disappeared. Indeed, a clear border now separates the northern from the southern part based on the people's ethnicity, who are either ethnic Turkish or Greek. The border separating both communities is called the UN Green Zone and will be described in more detail below. In addition, it is important to mention the presence of British military bases on the island, which will be described in more detail in the following sections.

⁴ Oosterholt, R.W. (2019): Gas and Reunification in Cyprus Exploring the Linkages Between the Politics of Natural Gas and the Peace Talks in Cyprus. p. 8

7.1.2.1 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus



The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was established in 1983, about ten years after Turkish armed forces landed in North Cyprus to protect Turkish Cypriots and has since then only been recognized by Turkey (Adaoglu & Çelikpala, 2009, 135-136). It is a so-called de facto state meaning that it is not recognized by the international law.

The TRNC consists of the northeastern part of the island of Cyprus, extending from the tip of the Karpas Peninsula in the northeast to Morphou Bay, Cape Komrakitis and its westernmost point, the Kokkina exclave. The largest city and capital of the TRNC is Nicosia, which is also the capital of its southern counterpart, the Republic of Cyprus.

After the 1974 coup, organized by Greeks and Greek Cypriots to achieve the so-called “Enosis”, i.e., the unification of the island with Greece, Turkey invaded Cyprus. This led to the expulsion of most of the Greek Cypriot population in the north and the Turkish Cypriot population in the south. Another result of the coup and the subsequent invasion was the secession of the island

⁵ Canstockphoto: *Un Mapa Político De Chipre* (A political map of Cyprus) <https://www.canstockphoto.es/un-mapa-pol%C3%ADtico-de-chipre-25408813.html>.

and the declaration of independence in 1983, which was only recognized by Turkey (Bowman, 2020).

Concerning the demographics of the TRNC, it is not clear what the exact population is. In 2011, the last official census was carried out under the auspices of UN observers. The results showed that Northern Cyprus had a total population of 294 906. Nonetheless, these numbers were subsequently disputed by some political parties, labor unions and local newspapers. The reason for these disputes is that the government was accused of deliberately undercounting the population, as it had made an estimate of 700 000 people before the census. It was alleged that it wanted to receive financial aid from Turkey by doing so. In 2011, another source claimed that the population in the north was 500 000, consisting of 50% Turkish Cypriots and 50% Turks living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Therefore, it is difficult to say what the exact number of the population of Northern Cyprus is. (Cole, 2011, 97).

The official language of the TRNC is Turkish, although there is also a separate local dialect. Nonetheless, English is widely spoken as a second language. The majority of the population is composed of Sunni Muslims, although the religious leanings are mostly moderate. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that most Turkish Cypriot women do not cover their heads. However, some religious traditions still play a role within the community, such as the circumcision of Turkish Cypriots men based on their religious beliefs (Langfield, et al., 2010, 231).

This introduction to the TRNC serves as a brief geographical and demographical overview of the northern part of the island. Further details on the history, ethnic groups, and economic, military, and political situation of Northern Cyprus will be covered in the following sections.

7.1.2.2 Republic of Cyprus

Cyprus gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960 after the Cyprus Emergency, a series of nationalist acts of violence in the 1950s against the British occupation. As mentioned above, this was followed in 1974 by a coup by Greek Cypriot nationalists, the Turkish military invasion, the division of the island into North and South Cyprus, and the unilateral proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). All these are the causes and results of the disputes that continue to this day (Bowman, 2020).

Officially, the Republic of Cyprus has so-called *de jure* sovereignty over the entire island, which means that legally it has control over all of Cyprus, regardless of whether this is the case in reality. Furthermore, this *de jure* sovereignty includes the island's territorial waters and

exclusive economic zone, with the only exception of the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, which are under the UK's control. However, as mentioned above, the Republic of Cyprus is de facto separated into the TRNC, which covers about 37% of the island and the Republic of Cyprus which controls about 59% percent of the island. The remaining 3% is covered by the UN buffer zone and the British military bases (James, et al., 2011, 15).

As far as religion in the Republic of Cyprus is concerned, most Greek Cypriots profess the Greek Orthodox religion. It is also worth noting that in 2005 Cyprus was the second most religious state in the European Union, after Malta (European Commission, 2005, 9). In addition, the first president of Cyprus, Makarios III, was an archbishop, whose importance will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis.

Both Turkish and Greek are official languages. As Northern Cyprus is officially part of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkish is also a state language. Moreover, Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic are recognized as minority languages. In addition, English is also widely used and frequently appears on road signs, public notices, and in advertising. English was the lingua franca during British rule until 1960 and was even used in court until 1989 and in legislation until 1996. 80, 7% of the Cypriots are proficient in English as a second language (Mejer et al., 2010, 6).

As for the demographic data of the Republic of Cyprus, according to the website of the Republic of Cyprus, the population in the 2011 census was 856,857. These figures do not include the population of Northern Cyprus (Republic of Cyprus Statistical Service, 2021).

It is also interesting to note that the villages of Rizokarpaso (in Northern Cyprus), Potamia (in Nicosia District) and Pyla (in Larnaca District) are the only settlements remaining with a mixed Greek and Turkish population (Republic of Cyprus Statistical Service, 2006, 12).

This brief background of the Republic of Cyprus is intended as a short overview of the southern part of the island. Further details on the history, ethnic groups, and economic, military, and political situation of the Republic of Cyprus will be discussed in the following sections. Moreover, topics such as the exclusive economic zone, territorial waters and the British Military bases will also be discussed more precisely below.

7.1.2.3 Green Line

Regarding the Green Line, to offer an outside perspective, I thought it would be interesting to look at the opinion of a writer of foreign (not Cypriot, Turkish, Greek or British) origin. So, I

found an article written by the French author Marie-Pierre Richarte, who in “La Ligne Verte du partage de Chypre” (The Green Line of Cyprus) (1996), in which she explains in detail the causes and consequences of this Green Line.

The ceasefire line that has divided Cyprus for more than four decades, known as the Green Line or UN buffer zone, is the main dividing element between the north and the south. Moreover, it is the result of two elements: a local one, related to the antagonism of the Greek and Turkish communities of the island, and a regional one, which is the legacy of a Mediterranean geopolitics. For the Turkish Cypriots, this line is considered an international border; for the Greek community, it is a violation of the law. In addition, for some it is power, for others a loss of sovereignty. The Green Line represents a major obstacle for a state trying to establish territorial integrity in an area inhabited by people with very antagonistic identity relations. Indeed, the dividing line of Cyprus creates a division of the territory according to ethnic differences. And although the Green Line is not recognized by the international community, it does work as a border and represents the defining element of the hostile ideas of the island’s sovereignty (Richarte, 1996, 55).

Thus, the island is now divided by this artificial border which was first introduced in 1974 after the Greek coup and the Turkish invasion. The Green Line was initially drawn by the UN and was intended to create a buffer zone between the north and the south. However, the presence of the United Nations dates back to 1964, when the conflict between the two Cypriot communities first began to escalate (Richarte, 1996, 55-56).

It is important to note that the introduction of this separation line immediately had a negative impact on the tourism industry and cooperation between the Greek and Turkish communities (Bueno-Lacy & van Houtum, 2019, 586). Furthermore, it is remarkable that the Green Line is both an effect and a cause of the distribution of power on the island. Moreover, this line is present in the field, and highlights local and regional discrepancies, the interests of international actors, and external problems. This last point is confirmed by the presence of the UN, which guarantees the territorial status quo to allow negotiations. The Green Line represents a loss of global (i.e., insular) authority but creates others, different according to the communities. This authority refers to territory and military power for the Turkish Cypriots on the one hand, and economic power and representation in international organizations for the Greek Cypriots on the other (Richarte, 1996, 65-66).

Furthermore, power, which can be military for some or economic and diplomatic for others, is certainly fragmented, but it is more real and concrete than during the cooperation between 1960 and 1963 after the declaration of independence in 1960. This part of history will be discussed in more details in “Historical overview”. Political and strategic instability have created this dividing line, which has become an element of stability due to its duration and its relations that create identity. However, it is quite paradoxical that this stability is, in fact, very volatile and mostly depends on the efforts of the UN (Richarte, 1996, 65-66).

Concerning the Green Line after the accession to the EU, one notes that a new regulation was introduced just for this very particular case, which states that this line does not constitute the external border of the EU. It also stipulates that special rules must be established for the passage of goods, services and people, and at the same time seeks to fight illegal migration. However, it does not foresee cooperation or any kind of interaction between the North and the EU, or between the North and the South (Adaoglu & Çelikpala, 2009, 140 ff.).

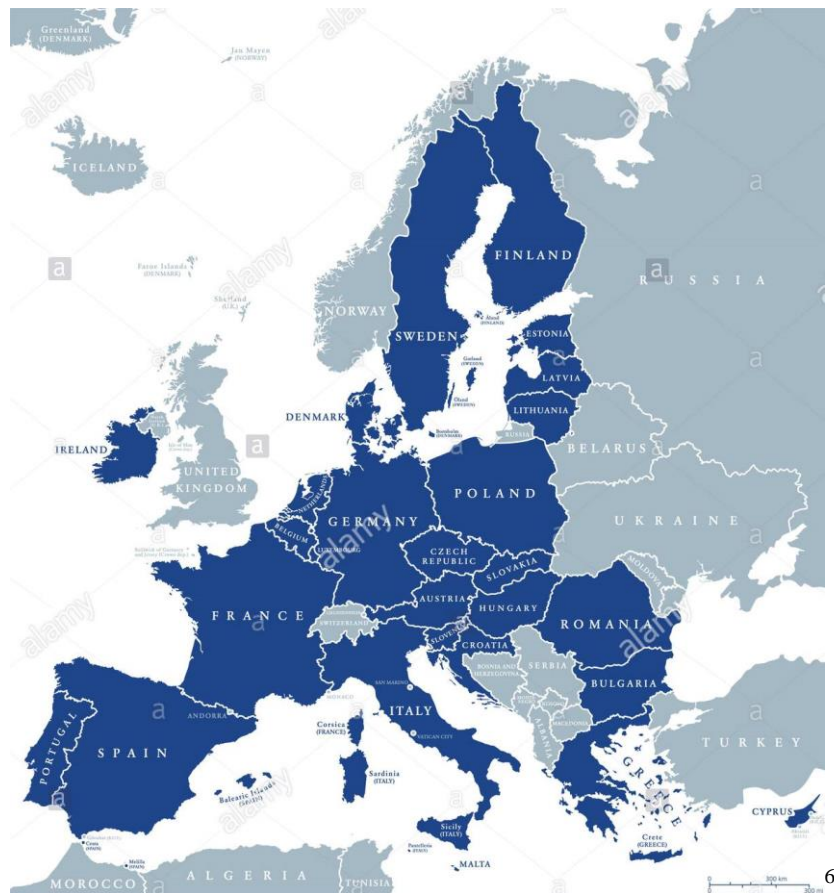
7.1.2.4 British Military Bases

The process of decolonization of Cyprus formally came to an end in 1960, when the Republic of Cyprus was created according to the Treaty of Establishment. In addition, the treaty stipulated the preservation of the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs), which remained under British control, recognized by the Cypriots as sovereign British territory. According to the treaty, the United Kingdom is granted a number of rights and facilities, including the use of roads, ports or overflights on the island, which are comparable to the US’ rights in the Guantánamo base in Cuba. The SBAs have a *sui generis* status, meaning that they are of their own kind and thus do not submit reports to the UN, but only to the UK Ministry of Defense (Stergiou, 2015, 285).

The existence of the Sovereign Base Areas has led to several unusual cases. For example, in January 2008, the British Sovereign Base Areas became the first part of the British territory to adopt the euro because the Republic of Cyprus introduced the currency. Another peculiarity is that the legal status of the Greek Cypriots living on the British military bases remains unresolved to this day (Stergiou, 2015, 285).

The two military bases, one located in the Larnaca district (Akrotiri) and the other in the Limassol district (Dhekelia), are seen by many Cypriots as remnants of the colonial era that limit the national sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. Nevertheless, protests against their presence have gradually subsided in recent years. In addition, the Cypriot community has never officially called for a revision of the treaty (Stergiou, 2015, 286).

7.1.3 Northern Cyprus as a special territory in the EU



Looking at the bigger picture, i.e., at Cyprus as a part of Europe or the EU, one notes that since The Republic of Cyprus became a member of the EU in May 2004, the whole island has been considered to be part of the EU. However, it is important to add that the application of EU law is suspended in the northern part of the island, as Northern Cyprus is considered a special territory within the European Union. Moreover, Northern Cyprus is the only territory within the EU whose administration is not recognized, as it is neither inside nor outside the EU. For this reason, the EU has established a special task force to deal with this unique and complicated issue (Adaoglu & Çelikpala, 2009, 127 ff.).

There appears to be a huge dilemma in Northern Cyprus, as, on the one hand, an internationally recognized government cannot exercise effective control and, on the other hand, the government which exercises effective control is not recognized internationally. This particular case forces the EU to take unique measures and set standards that affect only Northern Cyprus.

⁶ Alamy (2020): *Map of European Union member states after Brexit, English labeling. 27 EU member states, after United Kingdom left.* <https://www.alamy.com/map-of-european-union-member-states-after-brexit-english-labeling-27-eu-member-states-after-united-kingdom-left-image347623534.html>.

However, it is important to note that the EU is still able to maintain economic relations with Northern Cyprus despite not recognizing its government. Mutual trust and informal collaboration are thus possible despite unrecognized authorities. In addition, relations between the EU and Northern Cyprus also exist through NGOs and direct trade or financial assistance managed by the Commission. Moreover, under Article 2 of Protocol 10, the EU may adopt measures for the economic advancement of Northern Cyprus. Looking at other regions with specific characteristics in the EU, such as Ceuta and Melilla, Gibraltar, etc., one notes that the European Union is able to take measures tailored to the specific needs of each area. Therefore, it should, in theory, be able to do the same for Northern Cyprus (Adaoglu & Çelikpala, 2009, 145).

As the current status of Northern Cyprus in the EU is confusing, it creates significant obstacles for Turkish Cypriots as EU citizens, as they are hardly represented in EU institutions and working bodies. Moreover, the representatives of the Republic of Cyprus are not elected by Turkish Cypriots, which makes it hard for them to present their problems in the EU (Adaoglu & Çelikpala, 2009, 145-146).

According to Hacer Soykan Adaoglu, professor at the Faculty of Law at the Eastern Mediterranean University in Famagusta, Cyprus, and Mitat Çelikpala, professor at the Graduate School of Social Sciences at the Kadir Has University in Istanbul “Turkish Cypriots should at least be entitled to representation in the EU working groups and to have access to all documents to which Member States are entitled.”⁷ Moreover, according to the above-mentioned Green Line Regulation, Northern Cyprus is within the borders of the EU, which means that the EU should adopt politically and legally appropriate solutions to allow Turkish Cypriots to access the internal market and benefit from the same EU political, educational, social and cultural facilities as other EU citizens (Adaoglu & Çelikpala, 2009, 146).

It is important to note that these statements were formulated by two authors who have a Turkish or Turkish Cypriot ethnic background, and to add that people of Greek or Greek Cypriot origin may not feel the same way about sharing the identical EU citizenship rights with their northern neighbors. It will be interesting to analyze their point of view on the issue in the course of this thesis.

⁷ Adaoglu, Hacer Soykan ; Çelikpala, Mitat (2009): Special territories in European Union and North Cyprus: A “Sui Generis” Relationship Under Community Law. p. 145

7.2 Historical overview

7.2.1 Bronze age to Ottoman conquests

By looking back at history, one notes that the first inhabitants of the island were the Eteocypriots. However, the first people to leave their homes to settle in Cyprus were the Mycenaean Greeks, who arrived on the island between 1400 and 1100 BC. In the 9th century BC, the Phoenicians started to settle on the island. In the course of the following centuries, different civilizations conquered the island, including the Assyrians (end of the 8th century BC), the Egyptians (6th century BC) and the Persians (525-332 BC). However, it is remarkable to notice that even after these settlements and foreign attacks, the vast majority of the inhabitants of Cyprus still favored an annexation to Greece. This annexation took place when Alexander the Great conquered the island at the end of the 4th century BC. Greek control of the island did not last long, however, because after Alexander's death Cyprus became part of the Ptolemaic Empire. It remained a part of it until 58 BC, when the Romans took control of the island. The Roman Empire ruled the island until it split in 476 AD and Cyprus became part of the eastern province of Byzantium (Körner, 2016, 25 ff.) & (Ker-Lindsay, 2011, 2 ff.).

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the island was temporarily dominated by the Arabs around the 7th century but remained mostly under the Greek-speaking Byzantine rule until the 12th century (Ker-Lindsay, 2011, 2 ff.). In 1185, a Byzantine governor of Cyprus, Isaac Comnenus, self-proclaimed himself as an independent ruler of the island. This first declaration of independence in Cyprus did not last long, as in 1191, Isaac was defeated and captured by an English crusader fleet, leading to a takeover of the island by the English, who subsequently sold it to the Frenchman Guy of Lusignan, King of Jerusalem. For about three centuries the island was ruled by the French nobility and in 1489 the Venetians took control of Cyprus. The Venetians ruled the island until 1570, when the Ottomans conquered Cyprus (Bowman, 2020).

7.2.2 Ottoman rule 1570-1878

After the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1570, thousands of Ottomans began to settle the island for the first time in history. Furthermore, the Turkish Cypriot population started growing at an even higher rate, when Greek Cypriots began to convert to Islam to obtain financial benefits (Ker-Lindsay, 2011, 5 f.). The Ottoman rulers did not consider Cyprus an important province of the empire, which explains why their governors on the island were corrupt, repressive, and inefficient. Moreover, according to some historians, not only the Greek-speaking Cypriots were dissatisfied with Ottoman rule, but also the Cypriot Ottomans themselves, who even organized two revolts (in 1764 and 1833) (Bowman, 2020) & (Smilden, 2007, 64).

However, it is hard to obtain a clear, identical version of how citizens of Cyprus experienced life under Ottoman rule. In fact, this era is often described by Greek Cypriot historians as the “dark period,” while Turkish Cypriot historians often use words such as harmony, stability, and religious tolerance to refer to this time. Indeed, since the partition of the island in 1974, Turkish nationalism has developed into a grand narrative that could also be called a “myth story”, i.e., the myth that the Ottoman period in Cyprus was a period of justice (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 47 f.). There are differing accounts of this period. For example, the way Greek Cypriot historians describe the Turkish Ottoman masters as oppressive adversaries, while Turkish Cypriot historians see them merely as rulers of the island. Examples of this kind are numerous and thus make it difficult to make a clear statement about the exact living conditions of the time. What is known for sure, is that the Greek Cypriots, who were the ethnic and religious majority of the inhabitants of the island of Cyprus at that time, were occupied by a foreign ruling power for more than three hundred years. Consequently, the Greek Cypriots spent all these years hoping for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in order to regain their self-determination (Smilden, 2007, 79 ff.).

7.2.3 British control 1878-1960

In 1878, the Ottoman control of Cyprus ended after the Russo-Turkish War. The Ottoman Empire maintained sovereignty over the island, but the British Empire took control of it. In 1914, Britain annexed the island when it became one of the Ottoman Empire’s enemies during World War I. The British annexation of the island in 1914 was initially welcomed by the Greek population, as it presumably marked the beginning of “Enosis”, or annexation to Greece. This, however, never actually took place. So, in 1931, the demand for “Enosis” led to riots in Nicosia. Between 1955 and 1957, a growing number of nationalist groups such as the National Organization of Cypriot Struggle (EOKA) began to express their dissatisfaction with the British rule and their will to fight for “Enosis”, organizing several bombings and public attacks. A key player during this period was Archbishop Makarios III, who strongly supported “Enosis” and was eventually deported to the Seychelles after being accused of being in contact with clandestine liberation groups. However, he was released from exile in March 1957 and subsequently went to Athens to make his headquarters. In the following years, the EOKA began to reduce its activities, but the Turkish Cypriot minority, on the other hand, began to demand more independence and self-government. However, no solution was found despite mediation by the United Nations (Bowman, 2020).

7.2.4 1960 independence Constitution: Republic of Cyprus

In February 1959, Turkey and Greece made great strides toward peace when they reached an agreement in Zurich that was also accepted by the British government and representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. The agreement consisted of a declaration of independence for Cyprus, with Britain retaining sovereignty over some military bases in Cyprus. Under the terms of the treaty, Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain had to guarantee the independence, integrity, and security of the island and of the zones staying under British control. Moreover, the island would in no way be divided into two separate states (Bowman, 2020). Furthermore, inspired by the British policy of “divide and rule” and as a result of direct opposition between Greek and Turkish (Cypriot) nationalists, the independence constitution provided for a power-sharing agreement that indicated the future political partition of the island: Two separate electoral bodies; two community assemblies (and one joint assembly), one president elected by Greek Cypriot voters, one vice president elected by Turkish Cypriot voters (with veto power) (Bertrand, 2017, 112). So, in December 1959, a Greek Cypriot was elected president (Archbishop Makarios) and a Turkish Cypriot vice president (Küçük). In addition, a unified civil service, a unified army, a unified House of Representatives, and a common Greek and Turkish military headquarters were put in place (Bowman, 2020).

The establishment of a new independent state did not lead to a very long-lasting peace, as the conflict between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots started to escalate in the following years. It was particularly complicated to implement the governmental and financial matters associated with the constitution. These problems subsequently led to a new series of conflicts between the two groups from 1963 to 1967, in which both Greece and Turkey sent troops and officers to the island to support their respective allies. During these years of tension, a cease-fire line, the “Green Line”, divided Nicosia, which was policed by British troops. After that, there was an uneasy declaration of peace, but no solution was found between the two groups. Concerning Makarios, he was still president in 1973 and although he initially favored “Enosis”, he gradually started to be satisfied with Cyprus’s independence, which Greek nationalists in Cyprus did not appreciate (Bowman, 2020).

7.2.5 Greek coup and subsequent 1974 Turkish Military Invasion

Mainland Greece and Greece nationalists in Cyprus were longing for “Enosis” so desperately, that on July 15, 1974, they organized a coup to kill Makarios and achieve an annexation with Greece. A former EOKA member, Nikos Sampson, replaced Makarios, who lost his title but still managed to escape. Five days later, however, Turkey sent troops to overthrow the newly

installed government, in which they succeeded. Subsequently, a new democratic government was established, and the three guarantor powers (Turkey, Greece, and Britain) discussed the terms of the treaty. In the meantime, however, Turkey expanded its rule on the island and managed to gain control over about a third of the territory of Cyprus. In December of that year, Makarios returned to the island and regained his title as president. In February 1975, however, Turkish leaders declared a Turkish federated state of Cyprus with Rauf Denktash as president. Some 10 years later, in May 1983, Denktash proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), whose independence was recognized only by Turkey (Bowman, 2020).

7.3 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

It is important to note that the Turkish Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus are difficult to compare, as the Republic of Cyprus is an internationally recognized state and the Turkish Republic of Cyprus is only a *de facto* state recognized by Turkey. However, for structural reasons and in view of the fact that Cyprus is currently still divided into two large areas, the conflict will be analyzed in this paper on the basis of this partition. In this part, I will discuss the TRNC, focusing on the sense of identity and support for the past and current political regimes of the TRNC and Turkey among the Turkish Cypriot population. Discussing these issues will help to provide information on how the sense of identity among Turkish Cypriots influences the possibility of a reunification of the island.

7.3.1 Identity in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

To understand the stance Turkish Cypriots hold on a possible reunification of the island, it is crucial to understand with whom the citizens of the TRNC identify most. In this context, it will first be necessary to understand what exactly is meant by national identity.

7.3.1.1 National identity formation of the Turkish Cypriot community

In their article *The politics of identity in the Turkish Cypriot community and the language question*, Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek (2004) discuss the evolution of the national identity formation in the TRNC. Niyazi Kizilyurek, now member of the European Parliament, is a Turkish Cypriot who had to flee his home in Potamia due to intercommunal violence in 1964.

National identity is often regarded as something permanent, unchangeable and eternal. Also, it is often thought to be made up of some natural or spiritual elements that are set before a person is born. It has been shown by historical interpretations, however, that national identity is a never-ending process that is produced by modernity. So, it cannot be regarded as something separate from the process of nation-building by assuming that it is a natural entity. Indeed, we

belong to a nation not because we feel we are part of a particular collective identity, but because we participate in the life of that nation (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 37 ff.). This point is crucial in the case of identity in Northern Cyprus because, as will be discussed in more detail below, it helps to understand how the Turkish Cypriot ideology of being or not being Turkish has evolved over the years.

By looking to the past, one can better understand how the sense of identity of the Turkish Cypriots and their ancestors has been influenced and how these adaptations are expressed today.

If one examines the formation of Turkish Cypriot identity in the 20th century, two events seem to be of critical influence: first, the rise of Greek nationalism in Cyprus, which the Turkish Cypriot community perceived as a threat; second, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's secular reforms, which led to the emergence of modern Turkey and had a great impact on the Turkish Cypriots' ideology (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 37 ff.).

Concerning the first event, the Turkish Cypriots feared that after the Muslims in the Balkans had lived atrocities and deportation, the same might happen to them. Moreover, the case of Crete caused great unrest among the Turkish Cypriot community when in 1912 Crete finally realized its dream of reunification. This led to the expulsion of the island's Muslim community and their exile to Turkey. This explains why, in 1930, the Turkish Cypriots approached Turkey in 1930 as their motherland, which for the first time since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire restored the ideology of idealized romantic motherland that feels responsible for the protection of its "children". In addition, the Turkish Cypriot community was then viewed as the powerless remnant of the "once-strong nation". So, in these times of deep uncertainty, Turkish Cypriots looked on the one hand for an inspiring, powerful motherland, which they found in modern Turkey, and on the other hand for a great cult of personality. This leads us to our second important influential event in the process of identity formation of the Turkish Cypriots, i.e., the founder of the modern Turkish nation, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 37 ff.).

Mustafa Kemal sought to establish a secular nation-state in Turkey by banishing traditional elements such as Islam and the Ottoman legacy. So, in order to achieve a modernization of the country, he started to westernize it with moves such as, "abolishing caliphate, outlawing the tarikats 'Sufi Lodges', omitting Islam from the constitution as the state religion and replacing Islamic law with an adaptation of the Swiss civil code, secularizing and monopolizing education, abolishing religious and traditional dress, and replacing the Arabic alphabet with the Latin

alphabet’’⁸ In addition, another point that was revolutionary at that time was the fact that Atatürk strongly promoted science and even adopted a hostile attitude towards religion (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 41 ff.).

It is important to note that the worship of Atatürk mainly attracted the younger generation of Turkish Cypriots. This generation, who viewed Mustafa Kemal as a source of ethnic pride, formed the new leadership and adopted the ideology of secular Turkish nationalism, first as a fight against Greek Cypriot nationalism and later to achieve the division of Cyprus. This process of assimilation of secular Turkish nationalism began in the 1920s, when the educated younger generation took an interest in Atatürk’s reforms and to request that they be implemented in Cyprus as well. The rise of a secular nationalist Turkish Cypriot elite is thus a key episode in the process of Turkish Cypriot identity formation. It is important to point out, however, that the process of introducing Kemalist modernity was anything but smooth and even led to new conflicts of identity within the Turkish Cypriot community itself. Indeed, on one side were the Kemalist modernists, who sought a secular national education based on Turkish nationalism, and on the other were the traditionalists, who were loyal to traditional religious values and benefited from the trust of colonial authority. Nevertheless, in the face of the rise of Greek Cypriot nationalism, the colonial masters considered an alliance with the Kemalists to be stronger against the growing Hellenic threat. Thus, toward the end of the 1930s, the modernists acquired more power and the Turkish Cypriot community gradually began to exchange the Islamic components of its society for secular ethnic components. What characterized this period were not only the language reforms, but also the rejection of Islamic dress and customs. Also striking is the fact that for the first time Turkish Cypriots did not want to be called Muslims anymore but “Turks of Cyprus”. Overall, there was an increasing identification with Turkey resulting from the introduction of Atatürk’s reforms. This was manifested, among other things, by the fact that Turkish Cypriots, like Turks, refused to wear the traditional “fez”, which was very popular during the Ottoman era, and instead wore hats (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 41 ff.).

As a result of the two events mentioned above, i.e., the rise of Greek Cypriot nationalism and the emergence of the “formidable and powerful” figure of Atatürk, the Turkish Cypriot community constructed a counter-nationalism, created an image of Turkey as its motherland,

⁸ Niyazi, K., Gauthier-Kizilyurek, S. (2004). *The politics of identity in the Turkish Cypriot community and the language question*. P. 41. As cited in Erdogan, 1999. p. 111.

and adopted the Kemalist secular and linguistic reforms. Thus, it is important to note that the points of reference for identity regard not Northern Cyprus itself, but factors outside the island such as Turkey and Turkish nationalism (or, for the case of the Greek Cypriots, Greece and Greek nationalism) (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 37 ff.). Therefore, the ultimate purpose of both Cypriot communities became unification with their respective motherland, which resulted in “the denial of state-building in Cyprus and the emergence of two mutually exclusive ethno-cultural communities.”⁹ Indeed, in the past decades, Cyprus was never seen as a separate territory in which an independent state could be founded but only as a part of an area belonging to a superior entity, which is why the construction of nationalism in Cyprus is deeply related to processes of nation formation in Turkey (and Greece for the Greek Cypriot community) (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 37 ff.).

7.3.1.2 Identity split in Northern Cyprus

If, after analyzing the sense of identity in Northern Cyprus today, it can be concluded that a clear majority identifies with the Turks, as has been the case for many decades in the last century, and does not feel Cypriot at all, i.e., only desires recognition of independence, this could be a good start for answering the research questions. Nevertheless, the question of whether the overall majority of the citizens of the TRNC identify with the citizens of Turkey cannot be answered unequivocally. In fact, since opinions vary widely, it is impossible to make a statement for the entire population of the TRNC. Furthermore, this sense of identity has become very blurry since Turkey’s military invasion in 1974, as until then Turkish Cypriot identity formation was based on identification with Turkey. After this point, however, a new period of distinction began, in which both phases of identity formation, i.e., identification and demarcation started to appear (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 37 ff.). This topic is explained in detail by Prof. Yael Navaro of Turkish origin, who teaches at the University of Cambridge. For example, today, many identify themselves as Turks who “happen” to live in Cyprus, while others believe they are Turkish-speaking Cypriots but not Turks. Moreover, a third categorization is also possible and includes those citizens of the TRNC who are in the middle and do not feel that they are only Turkish, nor only Cypriot (Yael, 2006, 84 ff.).

Looking at mere statistics, one notices that when Turkish Cypriots were asked who they identify the most with, 7.6% answered that they felt only Turkish and not Cypriot, 7.3% Turkish and a

⁹ Niyazi, K., Gauthier-Kizilyurek, S. (2004). The politics of identity in the Turkish Cypriot community and the language question. P. 38.

bit Cypriot, 61.8% to the same extent Turkish and Cypriot, 12.4% Cypriot and a bit Turkish and 10,9 % only Cypriot and not Turkish (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 237).

So far in this thesis, the population of what is now Northern Cyprus has been defined as “Turkish Cypriots” without making any distinction about what community or ethnicity individuals identify with. This is because, as explained in the previous chapters, both sides of Cyprus have changed significantly demographically, which is why it is so difficult to find a definition for a particular group that includes the right people and does not include the others. For example, it would be wrong to describe “Turkish-speaking Cypriots” as “Northern Cypriots” for the period before the 1974 Turkish military invasion. For, as has been explained and is to be read on the map in “The island of Cyprus”, the Turkish Cypriot community was spread around the island and, more importantly, mixed with Greek Cypriot communities. As for the definition “Turkish Cypriot”, it is the one that describes the whole group of “Turkish-speaking Cypriots” the best both for the past and present times, although, as explained above, the whole population of the TRNC does not identify with being both Turkish and Cypriot. However, since both groups living in the TRNC speak Turkish and live in Cyprus, this is the phrase that best describes the two communities.

In the following part, a deeper analysis will be given on the two communities living in the TRNC. To avoid confusion, two different expressions will be used when referring to certain groups of citizens living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus: “Turks in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” and “Native Turkish Cypriots”. The first term is used when referring to the citizens of Northern Cyprus who identify more with the Turks. These are mainly Turkish settlers who came mainly after the Turkish military invasion of 1974. However, many Turkish Cypriots began to refer to themselves as “Turks living in Cyprus” as early as the 1920s and 1930s, during the process of national identity formation of the Turkish Cypriot community. So, the idea of being a Turk who happens to live in Cyprus was not new in 1974. As for the second phrase, “native Turkish Cypriots,” this will be used when referring to Cypriots of Turkish origin, most of whom lived in Cyprus before the 1974 invasion, although not all who were there before that date belong to this group.

7.3.1.3 “Turks living in the TRNC”

In the 1950s, Turkish Cypriot national sentiment grew even stronger, largely due to the fact that Greek Cypriots were desperate for unification with Greece at the time. This created a sense of identity among the Turkish Cypriots which so far had only been a linguistic and religious

concept. It was precisely at this time that the Turkish Cypriot leadership began to call for the division of the island as a counter-ideology to enosis. From that moment on, Turkish Cypriot nationalism ceased to be a mere romantic bond with “Mother Turkey” and devised its own political agenda centered on a partition of the island. For this reason, many Turkish Cypriots were compelled to break off their relations with Greek Cypriots and to associate only with Turkish Cypriots (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 45 ff.).

After the de facto division of the island, the politics of identity reached its climax, which can be noted by statements such as “There is nothing Cypriot by the Turkish Cypriots, they are just Turks in Cyprus” (Niyazi, Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 48). According to these Turkish nationalist discourses, all citizens of the TRNC and of Turkey constitute a single ethnicity, as both groups are often referred to as members of the same kinship with the same roots and ancestry. Furthermore, in these discourses, Turkish Cypriots are often seen as Turks who were left behind by accident after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Yael, 2006, 85 f.).

These nationalist discourses, which were also promoted by President Rauf Denktash, as will be discussed below, diminish Turkish Cypriots to Turks who happen to live in Cyprus but have no identity of their own, no cultural heritage, no folklore, no literature, no culture, and no education separate from Turkey. In addition to these elements, the majority of “Turks living in Cyprus” also consider the dialect of “native Turkish Cypriots” as “bad Turkish”. Many argue that their way of speaking Turkish shows how strong the influence of the Greek Cypriots was on them. Therefore, in the years following the partition of the island, special emphasis was placed on teaching Standard Turkish, often suppressing the local dialect. Besides this identity politics, Turkish TV, radio and newspapers are also available in Cyprus, which contributed to the assimilation of Turkish culture and standard Turkish even more. Thus, it is crucial to note that any form of an independent Turkish Cypriot community was not only rejected, but also seen as a betrayal of Turkey (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 48 ff.).

To illustrate the growing Turkish nationalism of the past century, Rauf Denktash, the former president of the TRNC, is a good example, as he strongly promoted Turkish nationalist discourses. In 1995, he said that it makes no sense to speak of a “Cypriot culture,” “Turkish Cypriots,” “Greek Cypriots,” etc., since for him the motherland was undoubtedly Turkey. He added that: “There isn’t a nationality called the “TRNC” [“KKTC”]. We are the Turks of the TRNC. We are proud of being Turks. The motherland [Turkey] is also our motherland, our nation. We are a part of that [Turkish] nation which has formed a state in Cyprus.” (Yael, 2006, 85 f.).

It was explained that the members of the group “Turks living in Cyprus” are mainly Turkish settlers who came at the end of the last century. However, it is important to emphasize that there are significant differences within this group as well. In fact, the community of Turkish settlers is not as homogeneous as one might think, as, after the Turkish military invasion in 1974, people of different backgrounds (Kurds, Arabs, Turks) moved to Cyprus hoping to ensure a better future through Turkey’s population policies. Most, however, had experienced similar social, economic, or political hardships in Turkey. Many of these settlers now identify as “Turks”, at least officially, as this was a requirement to obtain benefits in the TRNC (Yael, 2006, 91 f.).

7.3.1.4 “Native Turkish Cypriots”

As mentioned before, not all Turkish Cypriots identify only as Turks, as many see themselves as both Cypriots and Turks or even Cypriots first and foremost. This group is defined as “Native Turkish Cypriots” and did not readily accept Denktash’s statements. Moreover, after 1974, the arrival of new Turkish settlers on the island and their willingness or refusal to adapt to local customs created even more confusion about identity. In addition, “Native Turkish Cypriots” often call Turkish settlers who arrived after 1974 “People of Turkey” (Türkiyeliler), which already shows that for some “Native Turkish Cypriots”, a clear distinction between them and the new “settlers” can be made (Ker-Lindsay, 2011, 6 ff.) & (Yael, 2006, 85 ff.).

According to one elderly “Native Turkish Cypriot”, life with Greek Cypriots was never as bad as with the settlers from Turkey. The Greek Cypriots, for example, helped them if they were sick or had financial problems. The “Turks living in the TRNC”, on the other hand, rob them. By looking at the example of this “Native Turkish Cypriot” elderly, one notices that she neither identifies with Greek Cypriots nor with “Turks living in the TRNC”. Indeed, in both cases, she refers to the communities by using othering terms (Yael, 2006, 90 f.).

It is impossible to describe Turks living in the TRNC homogeneously. Nevertheless, in the “Native Turkish Cypriot” view, they are often regarded as a category of people who all belong to the same lower social class and have the same lifestyle. Moreover, their way of life has often been characterized by the “Native Turkish Cypriots” as being “backwards and uncivilized” (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 48 ff.). Furthermore, in a way to distinguish themselves from the Turks living in the TRNC, some Turkish Cypriots refer to the habit of veiling or wearing a headscarf which is categorized by Turkish Cypriots as “Turkish”. Others differentiate themselves by referring to the way Turks living in the TRNC keep their houses or gardens. Moreover, based on the idea that Turks living in the TRNC belong to a lower social

class and the fear of political domination under Turkey's supremacy, Turkish Cypriots frequently refer to them in a derogatory way and make it seem like they look down upon them (Yael, 2006, 91 ff.).

Another striking difference between both groups is the use of Turkish. On the one hand, the "Turks living in Cyprus" try to show their belonging to Turkey by using standard Turkish and, on the other hand, the "Native Turkish Cypriots" prefer speaking the Turkish Cypriot dialect. Therefore, speaking either one of the two variants has become a way of showing a political mindset towards the Turkish occupation. As mentioned in the previous sections, the use of the local dialect was often despised, leading to a linguistic inferiority complex among the "Native Turkish Cypriots." Nonetheless, as a reaction to being despised for not belonging to the community of "Turks living in Cyprus", the "Native Turkish Cypriots" have used the local dialect. This had led to "Native Turkish Cypriots" being criticized for trying to speak standard Turkish, which is often seen as pretentious. Thus, the "Native Turkish Cypriots" find themselves in a very delicate position. For they must decide whether to speak like a "a Turk living in Cyprus" on the one hand or like a "native Turkish Cypriot" on the other, and risk being humiliated by the "Native Turkish Cypriots" in the first case and by the "Turks living in Cyprus" in the second (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 48 ff.).

One notes that the "Native Turkish Cypriots" on the one hand disdain the "Turks living in Cyprus" for being backward, uncivilized, and too religious. But it is also striking that the "Turks living in Cyprus" on the other hand despise the "native Turkish Cypriots" as they consider their way of speaking as "barbaric" since they do not speak the legitimate standard Turkish. It is therefore noteworthy that both groups living in the TRNC express a certain contempt for each other, despite the fact that, in theory, they should be "satisfied" to finally be able to live together in an "independent state" with people of their "own kinship".

The assimilation of Turkish Cypriots to the so-called "Turkish culture", i.e., their "Turkeyfication", has also been relatively important since 1974 and was enforced by the Denktash administration. As a result, some Turkish Cypriots left the island for countries such as Australia, Great Britain, and Canada, while others decided to stay and face this new policy. The migration of Turkish Cypriots from Northern Cyprus did not seem to worry Denktash too much, as he used this outflow as a population policy against the Greek Cypriots by taking in Turks instead. Indeed, the ruling power in the TRNC much rather accepts settlers from Turkey than Turkish Cypriots because they tend to be more obedient to the Turkish regime (Yael, 2006, 94 ff.).

Looking at the history of nationalist identity formation of different ethnic or cultural groups, one might start wondering whether people only start to pay more attention to certain ethnic or linguistic differences when there is a conflict. Indeed, as mentioned above, at the beginning of the last century, due to the growing Greek nationalism among the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots began to look for a “kindred group” with which they could identify. This group turned out to be Turkey and undoubtedly remained so until 1974. However, after the division of the island, the situation has worsened again for many “Native Turkish Cypriots”. This is mainly due to Turkey’s open meddling in the affairs of Northern Cyprus; the migration movements from Turkey, which the “Native Turkish Cypriots” perceive as a threat to becoming a minority; the Turkish army, which exerts influence in all areas of life; and the economic and political exclusion. In this context, “Native Turkish Cypriots” identify increasingly with Cyprus as their motherland rather than with Turkey (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 51 ff.).

This change of attitude from Turkey to Cyprus is not only noticeable in politics, but also in art, for example in poetry. Indeed, since 1974, more and more poets have begun to write about Cyprus as their homeland and against the war. An important event related to this new sense of identity at the political level was, a few years after partition, the merger of 41 associations, including political parties, into a political platform with the slogan “This country belongs to us”. The Turkish nationalists’ response, “This land belongs to the Turkish nation,” provides a clear insight into the internal conflict that currently exists within the TRNC (Kizilyurek & Gauthier-Kizilyurek, 2004, 51 ff.).

7.3.2 Support for the TRNC

Having looked at the citizens of the TRNC in terms of identification, it is interesting to analyze to what extent they are (dis)satisfied with the current regime of the TRNC. As explained in the section “Identity split in Northern Cyprus”, the island is not only separated between the North and the South, but the TRNC itself is also internally divided between the Turkish Cypriots and the Turks living in the TRNC. Thus, it will be necessary to look again at both groups individually to try to get a general idea of the overall situation in the TRNC. One might expect that most Turkish Cypriots do not support the current situation but starting from the general idea that Turkey was the savior of the Northern Cypriots in 1974, it will now be important to try to understand whether this belief still exists today and what new problems have arisen.

7.3.2.1 “Turks living in the TRNC”

When Turks started to migrate to Cyprus massively from 1974, many did not know where Cyprus was located. What motivated them most to move to the island was undoubtedly the “land, houses, and livestock” offered to the ones who would migrate to Cyprus. The push-pull factors, influenced by socioeconomic considerations among the Turks, were exploited and manipulated by the TRNC political authorities. In fact, the TRNC regime had to consolidate its rule over the newly acquired territory by promising the new settlers that they would find work, a home, and a better life in Cyprus (Jensehaugen, 1989, 59 ff.).

Although Turkish settlers in the TRNC receive a lot of benefits from the government, many of them are not satisfied with the regime. For example, many Turks who were allocated to Varosha, Famagusta, had difficulty adjusting to life, especially compared to their previous life in Turkey. Many of them were not professionally trained for the tasks they were to perform on the island. Furthermore, most of the Turks allocated were Yörüks, i.e., semi-nomadic people used to living in tents and traveling around. Many of them were dissatisfied with their experience in the TRNC, partly because the authorities did not offer what they promised. Consequently, many Turkish settlers decided to return to Turkey. Settlers even claim that some of these Turkish migrants were so disappointed that they went back to Turkey and killed the governor of the provincial district for having deceived them. Despite the fact that some Turkish settlers were dissatisfied and returned to Turkey, most of the migrants stayed on the island and contributed to its economic growth (Jensehaugen, 1989, 77 ff.).

7.3.2.2 “Native Turkish Cypriots”

According to a 2006 survey, “Native Turkish Cypriots” were very concerned and worried about the fact that they had to live next to settlers from Turkey after the TRNC declared its independence. In addition, before the opening of the checkpoints at the borders, everyday conversations were often filled with critical stories about the Turks in the TRNC. Moreover, it is not only left-wing Turkish Cypriots who criticize the settlement of citizens of Turkey in Cyprus, but also Turkish Cypriots with other political ideologies. Therefore, there are many stories of Turks living in the TRNC who exploited and still exploit the political situation in their favor by disrespecting “Native Turkish Cypriots”. Indeed, according to some “Native Turkish Cypriots”, “Turks in the TRNC” believe they have more rights than “Native Turkish Cypriots” because Turkey now rules the territory and many “Native Turkish Cypriots” fear that they will soon be outnumbered (Yael, 2006, 87 f.) & (Jensehaugen, 1989, 59 ff.).

As for the Turkish soldiers occupying the area, it is not clear how many there are, but a number around 30 000 seems very plausible. Examples of how the TRNC's economy is tailored to their needs abound, including the marketplace in northern Nicosia, which has been transformed into a shopping destination for soldiers. However, this creates a lot of discontent among Turkish Cypriots who argue that because of the soldiers, many old trades such as pharmacy, shoemaking and carpentry are disappearing. In addition, some are even afraid of the Turkish soldiers and state that they do not dare to let their children open the door to them (Yael, 2006, 88 f.).

The contrast between the arrival of the Turkish soldiers and the current situation is quite astonishing. For while Turkish Cypriots joyfully welcomed the Turkish military upon its arrival in Cyprus, thinking that the Turkish soldiers would be their saviors, their relationship turned out to be much more complex than expected. Indeed, since 1974 the Turkish military has taken over a big part of both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot territory and resources. Moreover, it has spread nationalist ideas using slogans such as "Fatherland First", "Conquer, Shoot, and Take Pride", etc. (Yael, 2006, 89 ff.).

The Turkish occupation of the TRNC has resulted in "Native Turkish Cypriots" being forced to accept the harsh treatment of both "Turks living in the TRNC" and Turkish soldiers, and to resign themselves to being the subjects of a repressive political regime. Since they have nowhere else to go and they need to live in Northern Cyprus, many are obliged to submit to the new rule. A former Turkish Cypriot policeman seemed to agree with this idea of subordination to "Turks living in the TRNC". Although he openly claimed that it was good that the Turks came and saved them from the Greeks in 1974, in more private situations he expressed negative views about the government's policy, arguing that "Native Turkish Cypriots" feel they are less important than the "Turks living in the TRNC". This testimony confirms the general idea that many "Native Turkish Cypriots", if not the vast majority, sense that they have become subordinates in their own country, which, paradoxically, Turkey pretends to present and defend with all its might (Yael, 2006, 89 ff.) (Jensehaugen, 1989, 59 ff.).

However, the question of whether the majority of Turkish Cypriots are against the Turkish military occupation is difficult to answer. For, as found in a study, when asked about their opinion on the presence of the Turkish military in the Turkish Republic of Cyprus, the majority of a group of twenty young Turkish Cypriots answered that the army brings peace to Cyprus and that its presence increases the security of Turkish Cypriots and hinders aggressions by Greek Cypriots (Leonard, 2013, 334 ff.). Although it was not specified whether the young Turkish Cypriots were "Native Turkish Cypriots" or "Turks living in Cyprus", it could however

be interpreted that a great deal of them could be classified as “Native Turkish Cypriots”. Indeed, several stated that their parents moved to the north of the island in 1974, meaning that they did not settle on the island after the Turkish military invasion.

7.3.3 Political situation

Having analyzed the overall situation of the citizens of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in terms of identity with Turks in Turkey and individual support for the current regime, it is interesting to examine the extent to which these different ideologies are represented politically. First, it is important to look at how political parties of Northern Cyprus are politically aligned with the idea of a reunification of the island or a two-state-solution. Based on the idea explored in previous chapters that the TRNC is internally divided, the political representations of “Turks living in the TRNC” will once again be separated from those of the “Native Turkish Cypriots”. Then Turkey and Erdogan’s current stance on these three solutions will be analyzed and the current political situation in the TRNC will be reviewed.

7.3.3.1 *Turks living in the TRNC*

“Native Turkish Cypriots” often treat “Turks living in the TRNC” with disregard, who, to surmount this degradation, seek refuge in the nationalist ideas of Turkey, which accepts and even strongly encourages them to be part of its community (Yael, 2006, 90 ff.). Nonetheless, not all “Turks living in the TRNC” feel the same way, as many prove happy on the island and, moreover, integrated into Cypriot society. For, as analysis indicates, the notion that Turkish settlers in Cyprus are an expansion of Turkey’s politics is incorrect. Indeed, it is important to distinguish between temporary and permanent residents, as only the latter have the right to vote but make up only 20-25% of the total TRNC constituency. Thus, the influence of Turkish voters in the TRNC is smaller and less clear-cut than is often assumed (Meté Hatay, 2005, 57).

7.3.3.2 *Native Turkish Cypriots*

Although most “Native Turkish Cypriots” undeniably recognize Turkey’s role in defending and later supporting them during past conflicts, they do not unanimously feel culturally and ideologically identical to Turks in Turkey. Furthermore, after two main events in the history of Northern Cyprus, i.e., first the partition of the island between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots in 1974, and second, the establishment of the TRNC, an increasingly strong “Native Turkish Cypriot” identity began to emerge, despite Turkey’s efforts to promote a Turkish identity (Noel & Bahçeli 2010, 145 ff.).

7.3.3.3 Turkey and Erdogan

To point out the importance of Cyprus for several great powers and, most importantly, for Turkey, Sadi Samoncuoglu, a Turkish politician, gives an overview of the issue in his book “Kıbrıs’ta Sirtaki” (Sirtaki in Cyprus). Indeed, he explains that Cyprus has been the scene of conflicts between major powers fighting over the island for decades. Moreover, the fact that Cyprus is an important strategic and trade route explains why the island has been on the agenda for more than a century, why it cannot be shared by related and unrelated great powers, and why the problem is promoted in such a way that it cannot be solved. For this reason, it is considered an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” that will protect the interests of the great powers in the region. Above all, it represents Turkey’s back door. An example to illustrate this can be found in a statement made by Atatürk, in which he claimed that it is important to watch out for Cyprus, as it is necessary for Turkey. Moreover, England has based its policy on the fact that whoever controls the island of Cyprus also controls the port of Iskenderun and thus Turkey’s backyard (Samoncuoglu, 2002, 423). These statements highlight the importance that Turkey has attached and continues to attach to Cyprus and explain why it is so keen to maintain its influence on the island.

Concerning President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, he was not always against a reunification of the island. Indeed, when the AKP (Justice and Development Party) won the elections in 2002, its leader, Erdogan, announced that his main goal was to make Turkey join the EU and to solve the Cyprus issue (Ker-Lindsay, 2011, 60, 63). Now, however, Erdogan does not promote a reunification of the island anymore. On the contrary, he argues that the island is home to different peoples, democratic orders, and states, and therefore favors a two-state solution. These statements were made at commemorations for the 37th anniversary of the Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence. Concerning the Nicosia-based government, it considered his statements and trip very provocative (Deutsche Welle, 2020).

It is noticeable that President Erdogan is in favor of maintaining the current situation. This implies a continuation of Turkish military occupation in Northern Cyprus, in other words, a Turkish “occupation” of the region. Having looked at the current situation in Turkey regarding a reunification of the island, it warrants a look at how different political parties in Northern Cyprus approach the Cyprus issue.

7.3.3.4 Political parties in the TRNC

The ideology of “Turks living in the TRNC” is represented in the National Unity Party (UBP), founded by Rauf Denktash, who was president of the TRNC from 1983-2005, although he had already been president of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus from 1974-1983. The party promotes a Turkish nationalism and a “Turks in Cyprus” identity. Therefore, the party promotes a further division of the island between the Northern and Southern Cyprus and favors the migration of Turks to Cyprus (Noel & Bahcheli 2010, 146).

Since the founding of the two major political parties (CTP and UBP), members of the UBP have mostly been at the helm, as Dervis Eroglu, also a member of the UBP, was president of the Turkish Republic from 2010 to 2015. However, the fact that the president of the Turkish Republic was not a member of the UBP from 2005 to 2010 (Mehmet Ali Talt, CTP) and from 2015 to 2020 (Mustafa Akinci, independent) has led to some convergences, although significant differences remain (Chatignoux, 2020).

By looking at the current situation in Northern Cyprus, one notes that Ersin Tatar, a leader of the UBP, has just become president. As for the president’s position on the Cyprus issue, according to an article on the Greek *Euronews* website, Tatar stated that the TRNC’s goal is, as always, to have its independence recognized. He also claimed that the Cyprus issue has been going on for years, which means that there is no hurry to solve it (Euronews.Greek, 09/2021).

Thus, it becomes clear that the possibilities of reunification of the island will be less during his term, especially since he is also a clear ally of Erdogan. His victory in the Oct. 18, 2020, election for president of Northern Cyprus is seen as a clear triumph in Ankara but threatens to revive tensions with the European Union (Chatignoux, 2020).

Many “Native Turkish Cypriots” do not identify with Turks in Turkey and as explained, a strong “Native Turkish Cypriot” began to appear after the separation of the island. Therefore, in 1970, Ahmet Mithal Berberoglu decided to form a party that would support “Native Turkish Cypriot” nationalism: The Republican Turkish Party (CTP). This social-democratic political party promotes the idea of a one-state-solution in Cyprus and therefore views the settlement of Turks in Cyprus as negative, partly because it hinders the idea of reunification. Another important member of the CTP is Mehmet Ali Talat, who became president of the TRNC in 2005, after Rauf Denktas left office. The party is now led by Tufan Erhürman (Noel & Bahcheli 2010, 145 ff.).

7.3.4 Turkish and Turkish Cypriot narrative

7.3.4.1 Narrative on the history of the island

An argument that is used by Turks to explain why the island belongs equally (if not more) to the Turkish Cypriots than to the Greek Cypriots is related to the fact that the island supposedly never belonged to Greece or was never entirely Greek. This is explained in a video by Murat Bastem, a Turk from Ankara, who argues that the island was never a fully Hellenic, i.e., Greek, island in the history of Cyprus. However, starting from 1571, it was completely under Turkish rule (Bastem, 2020, 3.18-3.28 min.).

This statement seems to be inaccurate because, as explained in “Bronze age to Ottoman conquests”, the first people to settle the island were the Mycenaean Greeks. Furthermore, although this period did not last long, the island was under Greek domination when it was conquered by Alexander the Great at the end of 4th century BC. Thirdly, and most importantly, the island was under Greek-speaking Byzantine rule from the fall of Rome until the 12th century, with only a few temporary periods of Arab rule around the 7th century.

So, the claim that Cyprus was never fully under Greek rule does not appear to be correct, unless one only looks at modern Greece, which declared independence in 1821 and has never ruled Cyprus since. In that case, however, Cyprus was never fully under modern Turkish rule either, since the official state of modern Turkey was not proclaimed until 1923 and the island was under Ottoman rather than Turkish control for centuries.

7.3.4.2 Narrative on the Cyprus Issue

Andreas Theophanous, Greek Cypriot Professor of Political Economy, Head of the Department of European Studies and International Relations, and President of the Center for European and International Affairs of the University of Nicosia, Cyprus explains in *A proposal for a normal state. The Cyprus Issue after the Five Party Informal Conference*, what the Turkish Cypriot narrative sounds like and what the appropriate Greek Cypriot response is. This Policy Paper gives an insight and comparison of the two different narratives that are being told in the north and the south.

According to the Turks and the Turkish Cypriots, between 1963 and 1964, the Turkish Cypriots were driven out of the Republic of Cyprus, which meant the end of the legitimate state. Since then, the Republic of Cyprus has ceased to exist, being governed unilaterally by the Greek Cypriot administration. In 1974, following the coup by the Greek junta to oust President Makarios, Turkey stepped in under Article 4,2 of the Constitution to restore constitutional order,

provide protection to the Turkish Cypriot community, and prevent “Enosis”. Furthermore, Turkey intervened in a peaceful way and significantly contributed to the restoration of democracy in Greece. Since then, peace has reigned on the island (Theophanous, 2021, 13)

In addition, Turkey has repeatedly tried to bring about a solution to the Cyprus problem, but this has been impossible because of the obstinate Greek Cypriots. The year 2004 was a changing point when Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots approved a fair and balanced plan of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. However, the Greek Cypriots rejected it because they did not want and do not want to share power, wealth, and the benefits of participation in the EU with the Turkish Cypriots. Several attempts have been made recently to find a solution, but the unwillingness of the Greek Cypriots to give up their power has been the main reason for the failure of all these efforts. Despite being willing to make efforts to find a solution, the Turkish Cypriots are currently in isolation and Turkey is wrongly blamed and faces problems and hurdles related to its accession process (Theophanous, 2021, 14).

From these statements, it is clear that Turkey sees itself as a savior coming to the aid of its brothers who need a strong state to protect them from the “evil Greeks and Greek Cypriots”. Everything stated in this narrative seems to refer to a kind of angelic state that brings peace and prosperity wherever it goes. Moreover, a hint of victimhood can also be detected. This victim attitude is echoed in the claim that Turkish Cypriots are now isolated from the world because Greek Cypriots are unwilling to give up anything, and that Turkey is therefore being slowed down in its accession process

In the following chapters, the narrative of Greece and Greek Cypriots will be described and contrasted with that of Turks and Turkish Cypriots.

7.4 Republic of Cyprus

Having analyzed the notions of identity and support for the local government and Turkey in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), it is now essential to compare it with its southern counterpart, i.e., the Republic of Cyprus. Here, it will also be crucial to examine the Greek Cypriot community in terms of identity and support for the local regime and Greece.

7.4.1 Identity in Southern Cyprus

Looking at pure statistics, one finds that when asked with whom Greek Cypriots identify most, 0.8% answered that they identify only as Greeks and not as Cypriots, 5.2% as Greeks and a bit as Cypriots, 57.9% equally as Greeks and Cypriots, 16.2% as Cypriots and a bit as Greeks, and 19.9% only as Cypriots and not as Greeks (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 237).

Thus, just as in the Northern Cypriot community, an internal split occurred in the Southern Cypriot community from 1974 onwards. Indeed, in the Republic of Cyprus two, if not more, ideologies dominate the national identity (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 233).

7.4.1.1 The Hellenocentric attitude

The first type of national identity that is striking is the Hellenocentric attitude, which highlights the Greek identity of the Cypriots. This ideology is often associated with conservative, right-wing and nationalistic views, underlining the idea that Greek Cypriots belong to its motherland Greece. Moreover, people who support this ideology often argue that they are “characterized by the Greek cultural origin” and that “Cyprus is originally a Greek place”. They also believe that Christianity is an inseparable part of their identity. In summary, they represent the identity stance that follows the “Helleno-Christian ideals” and the persistence of Greek nationalism in Cyprus (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 233).

7.4.1.2 The Cypriot-centrist attitude

The second type of national identity promotes a Cypriot-centrist attitude and is considered a form of resistance to Hellenocentrism. Moreover, this ideology is often associated with leftist political leanings and goes so far as to advocate the creation of a new Cypriot identity, either by embracing both communities regardless of their ethnicity or by relying on the cultural affinities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 233).

7.4.1.3 A less clear-cut internal conflict

One notes, however, that the internal division is much less clear in the south of Cyprus than in the north, where, as explained in the previous chapter, the division between “Native Turkish Cypriots” and “Turks living in Cyprus” has been very conspicuous since 1974. As mentioned above, this issue can be considered an actual internal conflict within the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which cannot be said of Southern Cyprus (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 234). Indeed, it is important to note that there is more freedom and acceptance in the south of Cyprus when it comes to identity than in the north of the country, which means that the citizens of southern Cyprus can speak more openly about who they identify with. This is also related to the fact that there has not been a massive influx of settlers from the motherland in Southern Cyprus, unlike in the TRNC. In the north, on the other hand, as discussed in “Identity in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”, “Native Turkish Cypriots” are less inclined to express their feelings about their identity because of the presence of the Turkish military and pressure from the government.

It is also noticeable that Greek Cypriots tend to distance themselves more from their motherland. This could be related to the fact that members of the majority group tend to favor single-group representation. Another important aspect to explore is related to the fact that for some Greek Cypriots the terminology “Cypriot” is automatically associated with “Greek Cypriot”. This means that, even though the term “Greek” might not be used directly, it is still present implicitly. In fact, for many, the phrase “being proud to be Cypriot” is considered synonymous with “being proud to be Greek Cypriot.” (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 238).

7.4.2 Support for the Republic of Cyprus

Until 1974, i.e., until the partition of the island, there had been a very strong will to establish the national movement called Enosis. From that year on, however, Hellocentric nationalism began to lose popularity, as it did not meet the demands of Greek Cypriots. This is how Greek Cypriots started to develop a nationalism of their own. Important factors explaining this change are, first of all, the recognition that enosis was becoming a dangerous and unattainable goal (Masarogullari, Nicel, 2011, 124 ff.).

In the years following the island’s secession, two individual nationalist perspectives emerged within the Greek Cypriot community. One side abandoned the idea of reunification with Greece and aimed to counter the Turkish invasion. So, instead of fighting for reunification with Greece, their goal was to reunify both parts of the island. This new mission was also called “Epan Enosis”. The other side, however, promoted a federal state shared with the Turkish Cypriots, based on the principles of federalism, bi-community, bi-zonality and political equality (Masarogullari, Nicel, 2011, 125 ff.).

As for Greece, in the years leading up to Cyprus’ accession to the EU, it exerted a lot of pressure to put the Greek Cypriot community at the center of the EU agenda. Moreover, after the EU accepted the membership of Cyprus, Greece tried to convince the UN to make the island a member of the UN as well. Furthermore, after the separation of 1974, Greece started offering economic and cultural support. These actions were often seen as attempts by Greece to reestablish Hellocentric nationalism in Cyprus. However, the fact that the Greek Cypriots began to live a more comfortable life, mainly thanks to their rising standard of living, the new freedoms they could enjoy, the complete control over the Cypriot state apparatus and the fact that they still had not found a solution to the Cyprus problem, caused them to distance themselves from the Hellocentric nationalism anyway (Masarogullari, Nicel, 2011, 128).

7.4.3 Political situation

7.4.3.1 The Democratic Rally (DISY)

The current party in charge is liberal and conservative and is called the DISY, i.e., the Democratic Rally. It is currently presided by Nicos Anastasiades, who has been the president of Cyprus since 2013 (Triga et al., 2019, 104 ff.).

By looking at the party's stance towards a reunification, one notes that in 2004, it promoted a "yes" campaign, thereby supporting the Annan Plan. To date, the DISY, has pursued similar goals overall, namely a sustainable agreement between the two sides that would allow the reunification of the island. In 2014, a major step was taken when the leaders of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities signed a Joint Declaration to create a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with a single sovereignty. Regardless of whether these negotiations were successful, it is important to note that President Anastasiades played a crucial role in them, which shows his will to strive for reunification (Vural & Peristianis, 2008, 40) & (Triga et al., 2019, 107).

Later, during the talks in Switzerland, as will be explained in more detail in "Previous efforts of reunification", both sides ended up blaming each other. However, it is also important to highlight that internal conflicts within the respective communities themselves seemed to be clearly present, as President Anastasiades was later accused of having no real desire to support the negotiations, especially with the presidential elections approaching. Moreover, other Greek Cypriot parties accused the president of being too weak in the face of pressure from Turkey (Triga et al., 2019, 107).

7.4.3.2 The Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL)

A second influential party in Cyprus is AKEL (the Progressive Party of the Working People), which is generally associated with communist ideologies. This party's former president, Demetris Christofias, is also the previous president of Cyprus (Triga et al., 2019, 106 ff.).

Regarding the party's ideas on the reunification of the island, one perceives a wavering attitude towards a reunified Cyprus, especially during the times when the Annan plan was at the center of the Cypriot reunification debate. So, while the party took a "yes" stance at the beginning of the discussions, it gradually moved toward the other pole, arguing that the plan still needed to be refined to persuade more Greek Cypriots to support it. In fact, the party shared concerns about the limited right of return and the presence of Turkish troops and therefore recommended that the plan be postponed and ultimately rejected. This change of attitude created

embarrassment, internal division, and confusion, which eventually led to a considerable decline in its electorate (Vural & Peristianis, 2008, 40) & (Dunphy & Bale, 2007, 301).

Since the period of confusion around 2004, when the Annan Plan was being negotiated, AKEL has strongly reaffirmed its position towards reunification. Indeed, on its webpage, it is written that the “solution of the Cyprus means the liberation and reunification of our country and people; it means a permanent and lasting peace; the creation of conditions for the prosperity for all the people of Cyprus – Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians and Latins”. According to the party, failure to resolve the Cyprus issue would not mean “the Turkish Cypriots on one side and us (the Greek Cypriots) on the other side and everything would be fine.” It would that mean that Greek Cypriots would have to surrender half of their homeland to Turkey and live with thousands of Turkish troops and settlers. Moreover, in such a case, a formation inside the” Greek Cypriots’ country” would be controlled by Turkey itself (AKEL, 2014).

Another event where AKEL revealed its position on reunification was during the 2016 and 2017 negotiations in Switzerland, where the party accused President Anastasiades of not wanting to end the talks as soon as possible, implicitly expressing its support for the reunification of the island (Triga et al., 2019, 107).

7.4.3.3 The Democratic Party (DIKO)

A third influential party is DIKO (Democratic Party), which represents centrism and liberalism. Furthermore, it is worth noting that DIKO’s former president, Tassos Papadopoulos, was the president of the Republic of Cyprus from 2003 to 2008 (Triga et al., 2019, 109 ff.).

President Papadopoulos played an important role during the negotiations on the Annan plan and was eventually strongly supported by AKEL. During the negotiations on the agreement, DIKO unquestionably promoted a “no” campaign (Vural & Peristianis, 2008, 40). By looking at the party’s website, one can obtain more information about its current stance towards the Cyprus issue. For example, a written statement by the party’s leader and son of the former president of Cyprus, Nicolas Papadopoulos, said:

“As the Democratic Party, we support and welcome Greece’s stance, as expressed through Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias, against the insolent and provocative statements of Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu during a joint press conference. We see Cavusoglu’s attitude as an ominous harbinger of what we will have to deal with at the forthcoming P5 Conference on Cyprus, which is why we insist on the need for the Republic of Cyprus to be

invited. It is why we insist on the need for good preparation. We did not expect anything different from Turkey, unlike others who believed in goodwill and gave it or agreed to the granting of European “gifts”. Turkey is an aggressive and expansionist country and as such must be treated as such.” (Nicolas Papadopoulos, 2021)

These recent statements clearly show how DIKO currently feels about the Turkish occupation of the northern part of the island. They thus confirm that the party has maintained the same attitude all these years until today.

7.4.3.4 Greece and Katerina Sakellaropoulou

As for Greece’s attitude toward Cyprus, it exerted a lot of pressure to put the Greek Cypriot community at the center of the EU agenda and tried to convince the UN to make the island a member of the UN as well. Furthermore, after the separation of 1974, Greece started offering economic and cultural support. These actions were often seen as attempts by Greece to reestablish Hellenocentric nationalism in Cyprus (Masarogullari, Nicel, 2011, 128).

Regarding the current President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellaropoulou, one notes that she supports the Greek Cypriot community in its struggle against the Turkish occupation of the northern part of the island. On 7/25/2021, she claimed that “Greece will not accept any fait accompli or expansionist actions. There can be no concession to Turkey’s unacceptable announcements regarding the fenced-off city of Famagusta. Our support to Cyprus is absolute. So is our determination against Turkish illegal behavior and aggressiveness” (Gavriella, 2021). In this statement, the president refers to Famagusta, a city that was abandoned by ethnic Greek Cypriots during the Turkish military invasion of 1974. On July 20, 2021, Turkey announced that the area, now under military control, may be reopened for civilian resettlement. This subsequently aroused much disapproval among the Western powers, which condemned the act in the strongest terms (Nichols & Oladipo, 2021). Moreover, it is noticeable that President Katerina Sakellaropoulou’s statements characterize Greece as the motherland of Cyprus, which still watches over its nationals and protects them from the Turkish government, whose actions she even calls “illegal and aggressive.” Thus, the president asserts that she supports the Greek Cypriots in their struggle to expel the Turkish army and thus promotes the reunification of the island.

7.4.3.5 The Greek and Greek Cypriot narrative

Like the “Turkish and Turkish Cypriot narrative”, the Greek and Greek Cypriot narrative is discussed and contrasted by Prof. Theophanous.

According to the Greeks and Greek Cypriots, in the period from 1963 to 1964, the Turkish Cypriots, acting jointly with Turkey, sought to bring chaos to the newly established Republic of Cyprus using different means, among them violence. Nevertheless, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots did not reach their goals, as the state kept functioning lawfully under the doctrine of necessity and international law (Theophanous, 2021, 15).

During the Turkish invasion of 20 July 1974, the intruders took advantage of the chaotic situation created by the overthrow of President Makarios by the Greek junta to seize control of the northern area of Cyprus, claiming that their involvement was necessary to restore constitutional order and protect the Turkish Cypriot community. Three days after the invasion, the new President of the Republic of Cyprus, G. Clerides, proposed a return to the 1960 Constitution, which Turkey rejected. Subsequently, Turkey not only continued to violate the cease-fire, but two weeks later launched a new offensive, occupying about 37% of the territory by August 16 (Theophanous, 2021, 15 ff.).

Over the following years, the Greek Cypriots made many concessions in order to find a solution. When all these concessions finally emerged in the form of the Annan Plan, it was rejected by more than 75% of Greek Cypriots, who argued that the plan would not solve the Cyprus problem, but rather worsen it (Theophanous, 2021, 15 ff.).

According to the Greek Cypriots and the Greeks, the presence of Turkey in Cyprus is hegemonic, expansionist and colonialist, due to, among other things, the appropriation of Greek Cypriot property and the non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. Some Greeks and Greek Cypriots even go so far as to compare Turkey's actions to those of Nazi Germany in the Sudetenland just before World War II with the aim of invading Czechoslovakia. Therefore, the solution to the Cyprus problem cannot rely on the consequences of the illegal Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus but should instead take into account the historical record (Theophanous, 2021, 15 ff.).

In contrast to the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot narrative, Greek and Greek Cypriots believe that Turkey and Turkish Cypriots triggered the violence in 1963. The theory that Turkish Cypriots and Turkey triggered the 1963 riots is confirmed in a Greek YouTube video for sixth-graders. It was posted on the "Polka Dots" channel and produced with the help of the organization "Το Κίτρινο Βιβλίο" (The Yellow Book) during the COVID-19 pandemic to offer students online classes. The video explains that the problems continued because Turkish Cypriots, although a minority, kept demanding greater privileges, which subsequently led to the 1963 riots (Polka

Dots, 2020, 2.55 min.). In addition, the Greeks and Greek Cypriots also accuse Turkey of unjustifiably invading Cyprus and occupying the territory in the form of a colony since 1974 and of never being satisfied with the many concessions the Greek Cypriots are willing to make.

Like in the first narrative, a strong sense of victimhood in the Greek and Greek Cypriot narrative is evident as well. It appears that both sides claim to have acted and are acting in response to each other's expansionist and violent attitudes. Thus, the Cyprus problem seems to resemble the famous "chicken or the egg," as it is a major challenge to find out where the conflict originates. However, based on the research conducted so far in this master thesis, it can be asserted with sufficient evidence that neither the United Kingdom, nor Greece, nor Turkey, nor the Greek Cypriots, nor the Turkish Cypriots are entirely innocent. For, as has been pointed out in the previous chapters of this thesis, each of these countries and communities has its role to play in the Cyprus question.

7.5 Reunification

7.5.1 Previous efforts of reunification

Beginning in 1955, several negotiations were held to find a solution for the divided island, but mostly without success. Talks were held in different UN institutions, including New York and Vienna, but none of these negotiations led to clear answers. In late 2002, Cyprus's application for EU membership was accepted on the condition that reunification talks be completed by March 2003. Therefore, in early 2004, the then leaders of the two Cypriot communities agreed to resume negotiations. Subsequently, a United Nations-backed reunification plan, known as the Annan Plan, was proposed to establish a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal republic based essentially on the Swiss model. In 2004, most Turkish Cypriots (65%) voted in favor of the Annan Plan, but it was rejected by the vast majority of Greek Cypriots (75%). Since no agreement was reached, only Greek Cypriots were given EU membership (Bowman, 2020).

The Greek Cypriot leadership justified its rejection by saying that the plan was not the right solution and was not the result of negotiations between the two parties. Moreover, the plan did not guarantee the sovereign character of the island and it did not address the security issues of Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot government, on the other hand, supported the plan, arguing that it had the potential to solve the Cyprus problem and preserve peace (Vural & Peristianis, 2008, 40).

The following month, however, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) relaxed restrictions along the "Green Line", which allowed citizens to move relatively freely from one

part to the other. Although the TRNC was not recognized, the EU nevertheless agreed to reduce the country's isolation by offering assistance and promoting direct trade (Bowman, 2020) & (Ker-Lindsay, 2011, 64 ff.).

In 2014, another step was achieved when the leaders of both communities signed a Joint Declaration setting the objective of establishing a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with a single sovereignty. Nonetheless, contested issues remained, the most important of which were the exchange of territory and property, the question of security and the withdrawal of the armed forces of the three guarantor powers, Turkey, Greece, and Great Britain. Two years later, various rounds of negotiations took place in neutral Switzerland, subsequently joined by Greece and Turkey. However, these talks did not have a very positive outcome, as both sides ended up blaming each other (Triga et al., 2019, 107).

Overall, there have been 41 peace initiatives between 1955 and 2014 and in 2015 the 42nd one was initiated. Of these, 3 were unilateral initiatives, 8 were indirect negotiations, 10 were direct discussions, 12 were shuttle diplomacy, 5 were secret negotiations, and 5 were international conferences. In total, there have been more than 35 years of negotiations since 1964. Of the 53 years that passed between 1964 and 2017, there were only sixteen years in which the Cyprus issue was not negotiated, and the longest uninterrupted period without talks lasted only three years (1993-1996). It must be added, however, that not all of these peace initiatives were aimed at peace in the sense of restoring a stable and secure political and military situation. Some were directed more at achieving a short- or medium-term cessation of hostilities, although the vast majority of measures were actually aimed at bringing about peace. Also striking is the high number of UN Secretaries General (6, not counting the current one), their numerous representatives and special envoys who have also been involved in this issue. Nevertheless, neither the peace initiatives nor the UN officials succeeded in establishing a lasting peace in Cyprus (Bertrand, 2017, 113 ff.).

To understand why peace initiatives have consistently failed to date, it is first important to note that the conflict has evolved significantly since 1955. The situation initially worsened until 1974 and 1975, then was frozen until 1988 with two leaders unwilling to concede anything under any circumstances. Then, the future of the island became more promising with new political leaders, the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU and the opening to the circulation between the two zones (2003). Nonetheless, the main characteristics of the conflict have remained the same since 1974-1975: a buffer zone under UN supervision separating an island that was united for hundreds of years (Bertrand, 2017, 113 ff.).

7.5.2 Factors currently preventing the reunification

After these multiple failures, more than one author has wondered what the reason could be for this continuous lack of success. In his article “Chypre: trop de négociations ont-elles tué la négociation ?”, Gilles Bertrand, Professor at Science Po Bordeaux tries to explain why the negotiations on the Cyprus issue have all been unsuccessful so far. Some argue that the issue could be related to a conflict that is too complex or even unsolvable. Others wonder whether it is about the Cypriot, Turkish, and Greek actors being too passive and maximalist or even blocking or thwarting the negotiations. Others again believe that the UN Secretaries General could be the cause of the problem because they are too persistent or even stubborn in their efforts to reach an agreement (Bertrand, 2017, 111 ff.). In sum, it could be a combination of many or all of these issues, which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

7.5.2.1 A too complex or unsolvable conflict?

Concerning the idea that the conflict might be too complicated to ever be solved, one notes that according to opponents of the peace process, be they politicians, academics, journalists or ordinary Cypriot Greek and Turkish citizens, the current negotiations do not take into account the complexity of the issues at stake. Furthermore, they believe that another round of talks with new negotiators and mediators, especially from the UN, will undoubtedly be necessary (Bertrand, 2017, 114 ff.).

A clear example of a difficult problem to solve that resulted from the Turkish military invasion of 1974 is the houses that were left empty after Greek and Turkish Cypriots fled their homes. On the one hand, the Northern Cypriot authorities decided to compensate the Turkish Cypriots for their land abandoned in the south by, among other things, handing over the land abandoned by the Greek Cypriots in the north. The Republic of Cyprus, on the other hand, created an administration for the property abandoned by the Turkish Cypriots in the southern zone and, in addition, asked the Greek Cypriots to wait for a settlement of the conflict to recover their land, receive financial compensation or even to give them up. Subsequently, the European Court of Human Rights condemned Turkey, the only state internationally recognized as controlling the northern part of Cyprus. As a result, the Turkish government urged Turkish Cypriot authorities to offer compensation to Greek Cypriots who request it, although this issue leaves many questions unanswered, as more than forty years have passed since the Greek Cypriots left their homes in Northern Cyprus. For one thing, the value of land today is not the same as it was in 1974 and, and for another, many plots of land were not developed at that time. This makes it

very difficult to calculate the exact amount of compensation that should be offered to Greek Cypriots (Bertrand, 2017, 114 ff.).

Madeleine Leonard (2013), Professor of Sociology at Queen's University of Belfast, conducted a study on the attitudes of young Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots towards the Cyprus question. Based on her research, it appeared that many Greek Cypriot young people felt distressed by the loss of their families' former property after the events of 1974. Furthermore, it was found that the majority of young Turkish Cypriots do not attach much importance to the southern part of Cyprus and do not want to return. In contrast, Greek Cypriots expressed deep emotions related to their families who had lost their homeland and wanted to go back. This difference in mindset can be explained by the fact that the Turkish Cypriots left their homes in the south of the island to move to a safer place, while the Greek Cypriots had to leave places that were safe and prosperous due to the invasion of the Turkish army and had to adapt to less stable and safe conditions in the following years. Another important notion expressed by many young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots was that the Greek Cypriots referred to their families as being refugees to this day, while the Turkish Cypriots said they had been refugees in the past (Leonard, 2013, 334 f.).

Thus, Greek Cypriots are much more resentful in terms of compensation for their land and houses in the TRNC, and a settlement of the conflict would necessarily require a solution for the property of Greek Cypriots in Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, even young Greek Cypriots seemed to be impacted by this issue through their relatives. Several argued that a future solution to the Cyprus issue should also include the return of refugees. The Annan Plan in fact envisaged the restitution of areas that would accommodate about half of all former refugees. However, the return of the other half to the Greek Cypriots was more problematic, as it had been given to Turkish settlers. To solve this issue, some young Greek Cypriots argued that, while accepting that "Native Turkish Cypriots" would stay, Turkish settlers should be sent back to their mother country (Leonard, 2013, 334 f.). However, forcing Turkish settlers to move back to Turkey does not seem like a feasible plan, as it would lead to great unrest with Turkey. Thus, financial compensation based on the present value of the property appears to be the most reasonable plan for the Greek Cypriots whose homes and properties are now inhabited by Turkish Cypriots.

Another obstacle on the road to a sustainable solution is the configuration that would arise in the event of Cyprus's reunification. A first proposed scenario envisaged a president elected by the Greek Cypriots and a vice president elected by the Turkish Cypriots, who has the right of veto. However, the Annan plan set up a new system that would potentially avoid any direct face

to face conflict: the collegial presidency. This plan would have consisted of six members (including at least two Turkish Cypriots) who were to be elected on a joint list by the parliament. They were to assume the office of president - and vice president from the other community - on a monthly rotating basis, essentially representing the reunified Cypriot state rather than exercising power alone. Nonetheless, this plan was never launched, and the negotiations led to the previous executive power model, i.e., the president/vice-president model (Bertrand, 2017, 114 ff.). This example indicates that despite the many talks and efforts to reunify the island, it is still difficult to agree on basic concepts such as shared governmental power.

Territorial alignment between the two zones also poses an obstacle in the negotiation talks. According to the Annan plan, both areas were to become the two federal states of the reunified republic. The main idea of this plan was to return part of Northern Cyprus to the Greek Cypriots in order to allow some of the refugees to return to the homes they had left in 1974. During the Annan Plan negotiations and the Geneva negotiations, several ideas were put forward by maps proposing this type of adjustment. However, the two maps submitted by the Turkish and Greek Cypriots were never made public. On the contrary, they were kept in the safe of the United Nations Office in Geneva (Bertrand, 2017, 114 ff.). This shows that the Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders once again failed to reach an agreement, this time on the issue of where to adjust the northern area of the island.

One further issue that is frequently mentioned and repeated by both Turkish and Greek Cypriots is the presence of the Turkish army. It is important to mention that the presence of the Turkish army was a key point in the Annan Plan, as it assured the Turkish army would gradually leave the island over a period of eighteen years or until Turkey's accession to the EU was made official (Leonard, 2013, 334 f.).

In Leonard's (2013) study, the issue concerning the presence of the Turkish army is repeatedly mentioned. Indeed, when young Greek Cypriots were asked about their views on the possibility of reunifying Cyprus, they listed a number of preconditions, including the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the TRNC, which they viewed as expansionist behavior by Turkey. Furthermore, a large proportion of young Greek Cypriots interviewed added that they perceived the Turkish army in the TRNC as a source of concern and a potential threat for the future. Indeed, some young Greek Cypriots were even worried that the Turkish army would repeat its actions from the past and penetrate even deeper into their territories. Only a total withdrawal of Turkish troops would therefore allow them to feel completely safe (Leonard, 2013, 334 ff.).

Conversely, the Turkish Cypriots do not have a unified position on the Turkish military occupation, as, on the one hand, some Turkish Cypriots, mostly “Native Turkish Cypriots” argued that the TRNC has become a repressive political regime (Yael, 2006, 89 ff.), while, on the other hand, several young Turkish Cypriots stated that they felt safe thanks to the presence of the Turkish army and would fear an attack by the Greek Cypriots if it left (Leonard, 2013, 334 f.). However, the former group also takes an ambivalent position, being grateful to the Turkish army for having saved them, which makes it hard to find a way to describe the stance the Turkish Cypriots hold towards the Turkish military occupation.

Thus, it is interesting to note that, on the one hand, to reach an agreement on a reunification, the Greek Cypriots request a complete withdrawal of the Turkish troops, while, on the other hand, the Turkish Cypriots would begin to feel threatened the minute it left, meaning that efforts for reunification are stuck in a stalemate (Leonard, 2013, 334 f.).

It was noted that in both communities the influence of the respective motherland on the sense of identity among the citizens of Cyprus is quite important. However, it was also striking on both sides of the island, the Cypriot identity is dominant. It seems reasonable to expect, therefore, that citizens with a sense of identity that is to some extent similar would be more inclined to seek agreement. However, this is not the case, and the main reasons explaining this phenomenon are the geographical division of the island and the consequent low level of contact between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities. As a result, not only is the Cypriot identity divided and unable to unite the ideologies of the two communities of Cyprus, but there is also a mutual distrust between Greeks and Greek Cypriots on the one hand and Turks and Turkish Cypriots on the other. This leads to one of Cyprus’ biggest challenges, i.e., “the promotion of an inclusive form of civic identity or constitutional patriotism as Cypriots irrespective of the ethnic origin of the inhabitants of Cyprus.” (Psaltis & Cakal, 2006, 241).

7.5.2.2 Too passive, maximalist or uncompromising actors?

After discussing the historical, geographical, military and identity aspects preventing the reunification of Cyprus, it will now be crucial to examine the role of the Cypriot, Turkish, and Greek actors in the issue.

A hurdle that makes it harder for the negotiations to be successful is the fact that the talks between TRNC and the Republic of Cyprus are strongly influenced by their respective president in office (Bertrand, 2017, 116 ff.). Although both presidential terms last five years, they do not begin in the same year. So, while the last elections in the south were held in 2018, the last

elections in the north took place in 2020. This lack of coordination between the two parts of the island makes it difficult to find an agreement. For example, when leftist government leader Mehmet Ali Talat (Republic Turkish Party, CTP) took office in 2005, he had to wait until 2008, when Dimitri Christofias, the leader of the communist AKEL party (Progressive Party of the Working People), came to power, to begin serious negotiations. However, negotiations were slowed down again when the former lost to nationalist Dervis Eroglu (National Unity Party, UBP) in April 2010 (Bertrand, 2017, 116 ff.).

It is important to point out that the Turkish Cypriot leaders were always against anything but a legalization of the separation of the island, in the form of a “confederation” of two separate states with two sovereignties. Although Rauf Denktash had this main goal in mind, which was shared by the majority of Turkish Cypriot politicians and himself, he participated in the reunification negotiations during his long tenure (1976-2005). However, it is believed that the only reason was to show his goodwill towards Turkey at a time when the latter was strongly criticized by the international community for its military occupation of the northern part of the island (Bertrand, 2017, 116 ff.).

Concerning the Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, one notes that the nationalists are much less clear, often promising that they would start negotiating a reunification agreement after their election. The reason for this is that no politician can be elected without relying on a coalition with parties that are strongly in favor of a fair agreement with the Turkish Cypriots, such as the Communist Party (AKEL). However, like Rauf Denktash, two leaders of the center-right part DIKO (Democratic Party), S. Kyprianou (1977-1988) and Tassos Papadopoulos (2003-2008) could also be accused of never having wanted reunification. Nonetheless, the leaders of DIKO are not the only ones to blame, as some criticism could also be levelled at the AKEL party, which has not only shown its support for DIKO under Kyprianou and Papadopoulos but also called for the rejection of the Annan plan in 2004, which has already been discussed in more detail in “The Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL)”. Furthermore, smaller parties, like the Socialist Party, are slowing down the negotiations by accusing mediators of “treason” or demanding measures that disrupt or “spoil” any chance of an agreement (Bertrand, 2017, 116 ff.).

An example of this kind of disruptive move is the vote of the parliament on 10 February 2017, on the commemoration of the “Day of Enosis” in schools. This day was supposed to be introduced as a commemoration of the day on which Archbishop Makarios organized the referendum in 1950 as a means of pressure on the British governor. However, this referendum

was not well received by Turkish Cypriots back in 1950. On February 10, 2017, the commemoration was approved by 19 deputies, who were all members of DIKO and other small parties. This then led to many negative reactions among Turkish Cypriots (Bertrand, 2017, 117 ff.).

These examples show not only that there are, as mentioned in the previous section, long-term, deep-rooted problems between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots that seem almost intractable, but also that the leading parties and individuals on both sides are often unclear and, above all, inconsistent about their intentions regarding reunification. Having analyzed these two aspects that complicate the problem, it will now be interesting to consider the role that the UN Secretaries General (can) play in the Cyprus issue.

7.5.2.3 The UN's role in the issue

It was explained that it has become very difficult for the UN to have any influence on Cypriot affairs, mainly due to its seemingly unsolvable issues and the fact that it is a sovereign state, which means that the UN has no control or power over the island. Therefore, the UN Secretary General cannot exert much pressure on the protagonists.

On the one hand, the leaders of the TRNC can always count on the support of the Turkish government, which rarely disapproves them, especially if they are nationalist. The only Turkish political leader was Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who openly questioned Turkey's Cyprus policy in 2003. Nonetheless, after the failure of the Annan plan, he started pursuing a more conformist policy. On the other hand, the Greek Cypriot leaders enjoy the sovereignty that the Republic of Cyprus has maintained despite the major crises that started in 1963. Moreover, with resolution 186, the Security Council created an inequality between the political leadership of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots (one retaining control of the state and the other not). However, this resolution is in some ways counterproductive as it does not incite Greek Cypriot leaders to strive for compromises with their northern neighbors. In addition, few of them have dared to point out to the citizens that certain concessions are indispensable if any agreement is to be reached at all (Bertrand, 2017, 117 ff.).

This explains why it is so hard for the UN Secretaries General to intervene effectively. Therefore, some of them simply tried to facilitate the negotiations, while others tried to combine the demands of both sides and look for compromises. Nonetheless, neither has achieved concrete results. Furthermore, the UN has also promoted a multi-track democracy by

encouraging dialogue at the civil society level, which, however, only played a very small role during the referendum campaign on the Annan plan (Bertrand, 2017, 117 ff.).

The question therefore arises whether the UN should stop interfering in Cypriot affairs, especially since the numerous negotiations since 1964 have been pointless overall. What would then happen on the island, however, is unpredictable, but could result in a bloody conflict for which the UN could be held responsible. However, although none of the negotiations reached their goals, it is worth mentioning that some actions organized by ordinary citizens were to some extent fruitful. An example that illustrates this is the “yes” of TRNC voters to the Annan plan, which destroyed the illusion of nationalist uniformity in the north. Another measure, albeit a unilateral one, was the opening of traffic between the two zones, introduced by the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in April 2003 (Bertrand, 2017, 119). These examples show that progress and improvements have been made and can still be made in the Cyprus conflict, even if this is partly in the hands of civil society, be it Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots.

7.6 Gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean

A current essential topic is related to issues concerning the law of the sea around Cyprus. In order to dig deeper into the topic, it will first be crucial to get a clear overview of the recent events in the sea area around Cyprus. Then, it will be essential to take a look at the effects the discovery of gas fields had on the Cyprus issue and subsequently, on the negotiation talks in Cyprus. Finally, Turkey’s recent exploration and exploitation of gas fields around Cyprus will be highlighted.

7.6.1 The discovery of natural gas around Cyprus

The discovery of natural gas in Egypt’s Northeast Mediterranean concession block NEMED is discussed extensively by Roderik Oosterholt in his master thesis *Gas and Reunification in Cyprus: Exploring the Linkages Between the Politics of Natural Gas and the Peace Talks in Cyprus*. The thesis states that the discovery of natural gas in 2003 immediately attracted the interest of Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Lebanon, and Israel. Subsequently, Cyprus started taking its first steps towards gas exploration, believing that the discovery of a natural gas field could offer economic and political opportunities for Cyprus. And in order to realize their ambitions, Cyprus established a demarcation of a 51-square-kilometer strip of sea after various maritime delimitation treaties were signed with Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel in 2010. In this Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), located south of Cyprus, contracted gas companies could explore for

natural gas. However, in 2011 Noble Energy made a promising discovery. Consequently, Cypriots themselves began to get very enthusiastic about the gas discoveries around the island, as initial estimates spoke of billions of U.S. dollars in profits from Aphrodite alone. As a financial crisis was raging in Cyprus at the time, these revenues would have come in handy. However, this enthusiasm seemed to gradually fade as estimates for Aphrodite were revised downward in the following years. In addition, gas companies such as TOTAL and ENI began to experience poor gas exploration results, which eventually led to their withdrawal and an end to exploration activities in the EEZ by 2016 (Oosterholt, 2019, 48 ff.).

Despite this initial setback, hopes nevertheless remained high. In 2015, new discoveries were made in Egyptian waters, leading to renewed interest from the Republic of Cyprus in the EEZ and subsequently to a second promising discovery (Calypso) in 2018. However, to date no natural gas has been extracted or subsequently turned into cash. Moreover, many of these operations encountered serious constraints that made it difficult for Cyprus to make any profits at all from the gas reserves. Although the Republic of Cyprus has focused on drilling exploration, defining maritime boundaries, and harmonizing power interests with its neighbors in recent decades, it has yet to initiate an extraction process (Oosterholt, 2019, 49 ff.) & (Katona, 2020).

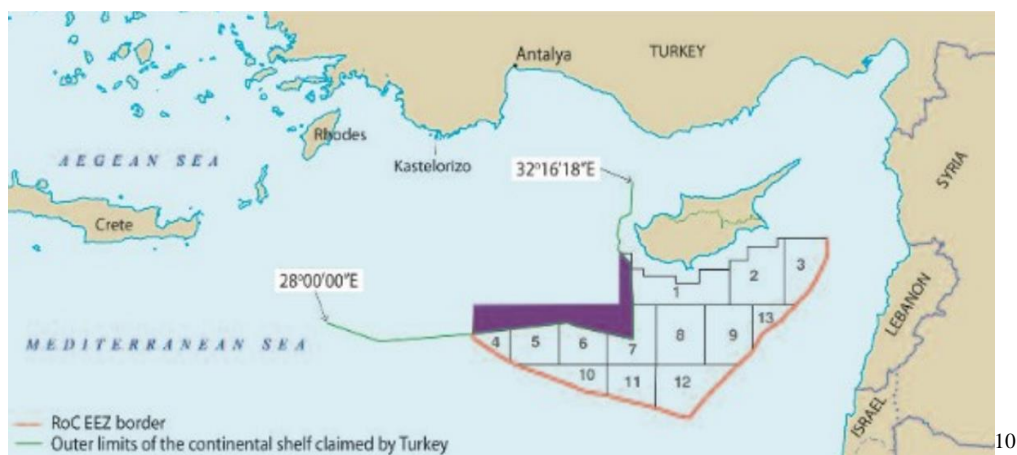
7.6.2 Influence on the Cyprus issue

As a consequence of the first discovery of gas fields in the Eastern Mediterranean, two new conflicts involving Cyprus have surfaced (Oosterholt, 2019, 50 ff.).

The first conflict involves the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and concerns the ownership of gas deposits around the island and the rights to exploit them. This issue is very closely related to the main topic of these theses, i. e. the Cyprus issue. What led to this new conflict was the exclusion of the TRNC in the gas explorations. In addition, the Greek Cypriots refused to share future revenues with their northern neighbors, which intensified the conflict. In response, with the support of Turkey, the Turkish Cypriot community objected, arguing that gas extraction should not begin until there is a legitimate government representing both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. The idea of a committee uniting both Cypriot communities was also put forward by the Northern Cypriots. However, the Greek Cypriots disagreed, arguing that the Republic of Cyprus is the only legitimate government of Cyprus, since the establishment of the TRNC in 1983 was illegal. Moreover, these claims have been confirmed and supported by

the international community, since it recognizes the Republic of Cyprus as the only government of Cyprus. For this reason, the Republic of Cyprus did not accept the proposal of Northern Cyprus to create a joint committee for both sides of the island, and this conflict remains tense (Oosterholt, 2019, 50 ff.).

The second conflict is between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey and concerns the boundaries of the sea areas. This dispute is partially related to the rights to gas extraction, as Turkey supports the TRNC in its efforts to obtain equal gains from gas extraction. Furthermore, in this conflict, Turkey also claims that Cyprus' EEZ is in its own continental shelf. According to the Turkish government, the concession blocks 1,4,5,6 and 7 (purple on the map below) overlap with its continental shelf. Characteristic of this dispute is the conflicting interpretation of the Law of the Sea Charters, which prescribe the delimitation of the seas. However, Turkey did not reject the laws and coordinates for demarcation immediately when they were submitted by the Republic of Cyprus in 1974 and 1993, but years later when the gas fields were discovered. The fact that it is only now rejecting them causes great irritation on the Greek Cypriot side and additional tensions to the Cyprus issue (Oosterholt, 2019, 50 ff.).



Another important issue concerning the rivalry between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus is the shared ambition to become the energy hubs of the Mediterranean Sea. As the EU now seeks to divert its gas sources away from Russian supply, Turkey seems the most logical candidate, as its ideal geographic location would allow it to transport gas from Egypt and Israel through Cyprus to Europe with relative ease. This plan, however, will very unlikely take

¹⁰Oosterholt, R.W. (2019): Gas and Reunification in Cyprus: Exploring the Linkages Between the Politics of Natural Gas and the Peace Talks in Cyprus. Utrecht University Repository. p. 53

place in the coming years, as the Republic of Cyprus has only considered regional energy cooperation that excludes Turkey (Oosterholt, 2019, 53 ff.).

7.6.3 Influence on the negotiation talks in Cyprus

In a scenario where the TRNC, Turkey, and the Republic of Cyprus would seek to cooperate on natural gas, a number of opportunities would arise that would favor the economic and political interests of all parties. Cooperation would allow all three parties to secure an advantageous position in the energy sector. In addition, it has been assumed that the discovery of gas fields, in the event of cooperation, could provide an impetus to resolve the Cyprus problem, as mutual trust between all three parties would increase and consequently lead to better diplomatic relations (Oosterholt, 2019, 62 ff.).

However, there have been no signs of cooperation between the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic and Turkey in recent years, and prospects for cooperation in the near future do not seem very likely either. Thus, although it has been claimed that the discovery of gas deposits could be an incentive for the resumption of talks on the Cyprus issue, it instead has mostly had a negative impact on the progress of the negotiations. Rather than bringing both sides closer together, the discovery of gas fields had the opposite consequence as both sides have grown further apart. Furthermore, these disputes have frequently undermined mutual trust between the parties, negatively affected the climate at the negotiating table, brought negotiations to a halt, and even returned a military element to their relations (Oosterholt, 2019, 62).

7.6.4 Turkey's recent exploration and exploitation of gas fields around Cyprus

Concerning the recent events in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey has used the Covid-crisis to further their goals in drilling. This topic is described in the article *The Tiny Island Nation That Can't Get Its Natural Gas Boom Going*, written by Viktor Katona, Expert at the Russian International Affairs Council, currently based in Budapest. The article says that at a time when gas companies and leading politicians have decided to delay all gas production because of fears of coronavirus, Turkey has used the crisis to step up its drilling. For example, in May 2020 the Turkish Yavuz ship drilled illegally in the northeastern part of Cyprus's Block 06, which is jointly held by ENI and TOTAL (Katona, 2020).

As a result of illegal drilling in the maritime territory of one of its members, the EU has tried to adopt a more imposing tone toward Turkey by threatening to sanction high-ranking officials linked to the illegal drilling. In addition, a group of Mediterranean countries and the

United Arab Emirates have signed a joint declaration on the inadmissibility of Turkish activities in the Cypriot EEZ. However, neither political punishment deterred Turkey: After the EU sanctioned two senior gas company officials, Turkey responded by threatening to intensify its drilling in the Cypriot maritime area if further sanctions were imposed. And in response to the UAE's denunciation, Ankara has called the statement "hypocritical" and "coming from countries seeking regional chaos and instability. Moreover, Turkey maintains that it will continue to oppose any exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Cypriot maritime area as long as no political solution is reached between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus (Katona, 2020). These recent actions and statements led to additional resentment on the Greek Cypriot side and an intensification of the conflict.

8. Participatory observation and guideline interviews

For this part of my research, as explained in “Methodology”, I planned a stay on site, during which I compared the information gained during the literature research period with the impressions and experiences of Cypriots.

During my stay in Cyprus, I interviewed a 62-year-old man, whose name is Petros and who used to live in the north but had to leave that area in 1974 due to the growing threat of the Turkish army. I decided to interview this Greek Cypriot because I thought his story could be useful and relevant to my research, especially because he used to live in the north of the country and his family still owns three houses in their hometown.

After interviewing a Greek Cypriot, I began to look for a Turkish Cypriot to interview. As mentioned in “Methodology”, it was not essential to interview a local expert for my research, but I thought it could also be enriching to have an academic insight to discuss the Cyprus topic in more depth. So I tried to contact Professor Doctor Niyazi Kizilyürek. Niyazi Kizilyurek is, as explained in “Identity in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”, a Turkish Cypriot who had to flee his home in Potamia in 1964 due to intercommunal violence. He later became a member of the Greek Cypriot party AKEL and a professor at the University of Cyprus in Southern Cyprus and is now a member of the European Parliament. Kizilyurek is known for having advocated the peaceful reunification of Cyprus for many years and condemned the presence of the Turkish army in the TRNC and the theft of property from Greek Cypriots in Northern Cyprus.

Kizilyürek did not respond personally but his representative for the Turkish Cypriot community, Derya Beyatli, sent me an email stating that she would be willing to help me with my questions. So, my second interview was with Derya Beyatli, a 45-year-old Turkish Cypriot peace activist, political advisor and writer born in Cyprus but with years of experience living abroad in France and the UK as well as elsewhere.

Furthermore, I used the participatory observation research method by interacting with Greek and Turkish Cypriots and discussing their impressions and opinions on the issue in an informal way. This led me to multiple conversations with Greek Cypriots, “Turks living in Cyprus”, and “Native Turkish Cypriots”.

During my research, I conducted the interviews and participatory observation related to the main issues preventing the reunification of Cyprus: the presence of the Turkish army, the

property and territorial issue, executive power, identity, the language issue and the discovery of gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the following sections, I will discuss the results I obtained during the interviews and participant observation, dividing the information into subsections, each of which refers to issues related to the Cyprus question. In the following chapter, I will provide comments comparing and interpreting the information I obtained from the people I was in contact with.

8.1 1974 Turkish invasion and its consequences

Talking to Petros, I noticed that he was still deeply affected by what happened in 1974. When I told him that I also wanted to go to Northern Cyprus, his immediate reaction was to ask me “Why are you going to the thieves?” (Interview Petros, 2022). He then explained to me that on July 20, 1974, he and his family had to leave their three houses in Kyrenia (now Girne, Northern Cyprus) and were forced to flee from the army, taking nothing with them except the house keys. For several nights they slept in the open under a tree with no roof over their heads. Then, they arrived in Nicosia, where they found an abandoned house, which they repaired in order to live in it. Petros explained that after four years the government started giving houses to the refugees, so they received one too. Regarding the family’s prior houses in what is now the TRNC, Turkish settlers moved into those houses. He added, however, that he and his family hold the property titles, which means that the houses still officially belong to them. Petros now owns a house on the outskirts of Nicosia, but still harbors strong resentment towards the Turkish army and the Turkish settlers and considers the houses in the north to be those of his family.

During an informal conversation I had with Andreas Theophanous, Greek Cypriot Professor of Political Economy, Head of the Department of European Studies and International Relations and President of the Center for European and International Affairs of the University of Nicosia, he stated he cannot understand how Turks can come to an area and start living in Greek Cypriots’ houses for free. He compared their actions to Mexicans going to the US and occupying Americans’ houses to show how ridiculous he believes this situation is and, more importantly, he resents the fact that it is being tolerated. Although Professor Theophanous understands that it is now complicated to send all these Turks back to Turkey after 50 years, he still cannot accept that Turks were given their houses to live in while the Greek Cypriots became refugees.

In terms of the property loss from the Turkish Cypriot perspective, Derya explained that she is a refugee as well because she has properties from her parents in Paphos, a city in the western part of the island. She clarified that, whereas the Turkish Cypriot authorities gave the titles to

the current users, the Greek Cypriot authorities kept the titles as they previously were, but do not allow the Turkish Cypriots to use this property. In addition, the situation has become extremely complicated, the Turkish Cypriot claimed, because Turkish Cypriot authorities gave the properties to some people who then have been selling them. Moreover, many people received properties “unjustly” from her perspective since they did not lose any property in the south. There was an unsuccessful attempt with the Annan Plan to solve this problem by donating money to compensate users like Derya.

Furthermore, during my conversation with Petros, I used the term “Turkish side” and he immediately interrupted me saying that I should use the phrase “occupied side”. Later, during my stay in Southern Cyprus, I noticed that it is very common for Greek Cypriots to point out to tourists and foreigners that the north is occupied and not Turkish.



Photo taken on 05/01/2022 in the southern part of Nicosia

While discussing my experiences in Northern Cyprus with young Greek Cypriots, I found that some have never been to the northern part but do not wish to go because they find it unfair that they must show their ID to enter a place that is part of their own country. They considered that Cypriots should be able to cross the border without having to show their ID and do not accept that their country is divided.

During my stay in Northern Cyprus, I met various “Turks living in Cyprus” who explained that, even though they have been living in Northern Cyprus for 5 to 30 years, they are not allowed to cross the border to the south due to their Turkish origin.

8.2 Language

Petros told me that, when he was still living in Kyrenia, many Turkish Cypriots mainly spoke Greek rather than Turkish. He explained to me that many Turkish Cypriots still prefer to speak

Greek rather than Turkish because it is their mother tongue. This is due to the fact that before the end of British rule, the Cypriot population was divided mainly on the basis of religion. Later, Muslims began to be classified as Turkish Cypriots and Orthodox as Greek Cypriots, which explains why Greek-speaking Muslims were assigned to the Turkish Cypriot community.

At a dinner with Petros' family, I asked him and his relatives whether they have ever learned Turkish. They told me they never have and even though they love learning languages, they would learn anything but Turkish. After this discussion, I began to think more about the language issue and started to ask Cypriots from both sides about their experiences with learning the other main language of the country.

Professor Theophanous pointed out that he was not interested in learning Turkish either. He argued that although Turkish might be an official language of the Republic of Cyprus, it does not mean everyone should know it. Moreover, he explained that he could not find any valid reason to explain why a country's majority should start learning the language of a minority. In fact, learning Turkish would at the same time mean accepting the occupation of Northern Cyprus, which would cause great frustration among the Greek Cypriots.

In my investigation, I found that many Cypriots had neither experience with nor interest in learning the language of the other community. It was only after five weeks that I met a single Greek Cypriot who told me that he had traveled to the northern part of the country several times and was interested in learning Turkish.

During my interview with Derya, she explained to me that she feels linguistically discriminated against whenever she is in Southern Cyprus. Although her parents spoke Greek because they lived with Greek Cypriots, she does not speak it because she grew up among "Turks living in Cyprus" and "Native Turkish Cypriots". However, while Turkish is an official language in the Republic of Cyprus, she is always forced to speak Greek and only with unusual good fortune is she addressed in English. Moreover, whenever she needs to fill out application forms or look for information on websites of the Republic of Cyprus, everything is in Greek.

Derya reported that she has tried to learn Greek but also pointed out that she frequently has no other option because when she fills out forms to apply for passports or identity cards, everything is in Greek. The fact that she is learning the other side's language could eventually bring her closer to the Greek Cypriot community but since she is forced to use the language and is not learning it out of interest, this could also lead to frustration.

8.3 Identity

Concerning identity, Petros shared with me the very interesting thought that, in his view, there is no Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot. “All people are Cypriot. Only the people who came from Turkey are Turks and the people who came from Greece are Greeks.” (Interview Petros, 2022). The designation of Greek and Turkish Cypriots was created by the British to “divide and rule” the country. When the Greek Cypriots burned down the government office of the British in 1931 to make them leave the country and started to rebel more against them, the British tried to divide the population by creating two different communities to fight them more easily. Petros pointed out that there had been no conflict between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots before then and that the Turkish Cypriots lived peacefully in the same towns as the Greek Cypriots. The only difference that existed before was in terms of religion because there were the Orthodox on one side and the Muslims on the other.

However, it is important to point out that Petros was born in 1960, which implies that he grew up with the hostilities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots around him, meaning that he cannot possibly remember the time when Greek and Turkish Cypriots lived in peace, i.e., supposedly the time before the end of the British rule, unless the tensions of the 1960s were not striking in the village where he grew up.

Interestingly, Derya agreed with the theory that tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots began with the uprising against the British rule in the 1930s. The Turkish Cypriot explained that the differences between the two communities were promulgated at that time to quell the unrest. Moreover, she added that the Greek Cypriot nationalist group EOKA was founded at that time. Derya also used the expression “divide and rule” to define the politics employed by the British.

Looking to the present, Petros repeatedly stressed that although the Cyprus question has not yet been resolved and the TRNC claims to be an independent state, Turkish Cypriots enjoy the same rights as Greek Cypriots and can benefit from the prosperity of the Republic of Cyprus without paying taxes in the south. They receive the same passports, the same identity cards, get access to Greek Cypriot hospitals for free and some of them even attend the best schools in southern Cyprus. Petros feels this situation is not fair and that the Turkish Cypriots are taking advantage inappropriately of the Republic of Cyprus.

Regarding the current sense of identity in Northern Cyprus, Derya felt that Turkish Cypriots feel squeezed between two larger powers that do not care about them. On the one hand she feels

discriminated against by the Greek Cypriots, for example in terms of language, as she has to speak Greek everywhere in the Republic of Cyprus. Thus, it is striking that Petros, a Greek Cypriot, believes that the Turkish Cypriots have too many privileges in the Republic of Cyprus and would like to grant them less as long as there is no solution, while Derya, a Turkish Cypriot, feels discriminated against and would like to have the same rights as Greek Cypriots. Both statements are arguable because if Turkish Cypriots claim to live in the TRNC and not in the Republic of Cyprus, why should they have the same rights as Greek Cypriots or European citizens? However, it is also true that, according to the EU, there is no division and the Republic of Cyprus, with Greek and Turkish as its official languages, comprises the entire island. Thus, this is one more factor that adds to the complexity of the whole issue.

The Turkish Cypriot feels not only discriminated against by the Greek Cypriots but also by the Turkish Cypriot authorities and the Turkish army because she holds different views from the current president and government and works in the field of human rights. As an example of the repressive measures of the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot regimes, she cited the recent presidential elections, in which the Turkish secret service threatened Turkish Cypriot presidential candidates because they did not support the Turkish government.

The presence of Turkish influence in the everyday life in Northern Cyprus can be illustrated through, among other things, the representation of two Turkish political figures. Indeed, in the center of Northern Nicosia, one can see a large poster of the current President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.



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¹¹ Poster of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Photo taken on 04 January 2022. Northern Nicosia.

Furthermore, when walking a little farther, one can see a statue of another Turkish political figure, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of the modern Turkish nation.



Thus, the influence of Turkish politicians and Turkey is striking and corroborates the claims made by Derya that Turkey is dominant in the TRNC.

Regarding a unified Cypriot identity, Derya pointed out that as time goes by, it becomes more and more difficult to find a solution because people forget about the prior peaceful coexistence. This refers to the time before the end of British rule when the Greek Cypriots (or Orthodox Christians) and the Turkish Cypriots (or Muslims) lived in harmony. It has been almost 50 years since the partition of the island and the more years that pass, the more difficult it becomes to solve the problem. This supports the assertions of Psaltis & Cakal (2006, 241), who argue that the greatest challenge in resolving the Cyprus question is to foster an inclusive sense of Cypriot identity regardless of ethnicity.

Following these statements, I asked the Turkish Cypriot peace activist why it is not developing the other way around, because one would think that the younger generations, who were not

¹² Statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Photo taken on 04 January 2022. Northern Nicosia.

directly affected by it, should be able to solve the problem in a more logical way. Derya replied that it is evolving this way because the hatred is being kept alive through the respective discourses on both sides by people who have a vested interest in the division. On the one hand, Greek Cypriots are told that: “Turkey invaded us in 1974 and has occupied the northern part of our country ever since. We want to live with our dear Turkish Cypriot brothers and sisters, but Turkey will not let us.” On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriots are told that “The Greek Cypriots killed us in the past, and now they are discriminating against us. They are cutting off all our ties with the rest of the world. Our only way out is Turkey, our motherland, which will protect us no matter what.” These two narratives are also reflected in the findings of Leonard’s (2013) research among young Turkish and Greek Cypriots, who made analogous statements.

8.4 Turkey and the presence of the Turkish army

Although he argued that the British were originally responsible for the division between the two communities, Petros repeated several times that the only country that is now preventing Cyprus from finding a proper solution is Turkey. The Greek Cypriot explained that the Turks took away their land and their houses, in short everything they owned, and brought people from Anatolia and gave them the Greek Cypriots’ belongings. He added that in 1920 they did the same with the Greeks living in Western Turkey. Petros sees the main problem as the expansionist ambitions of Turkey. He believes Erdogan wants to restore the Ottoman Empire all the way to Austria and Hungary. He also pointed out that neither Europe nor the UN is resisting Turkey. He feels it is always the Greek Cypriots who have to give in. In addition, according to Petros, Cyprus has friendly relations with all its neighboring countries except Turkey. He concluded that without Turkey, Cyprus would be a free country and perhaps even the best country in the world.

Petros was not very consistent in his statements, since although he repeatedly argued that Turkey was the only problem in the whole issue, he also claimed that the British had originally created the division between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, he argued that the UN was not following their own regulations and added that the EU was allowing Turkey to act as it does because it is a strong country which the EU needs and thus does not want to have conflicts with. Moreover, he mentioned the USA when talking about the gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, arguing that they are selling technology, guns, airplanes and tanks to Turkey. In addition, he argued that the Greek Cypriots also made a mistake in 1931, when they burned down the government office.

When I asked Derya about the role Turkey and Greece play in Cyprus's failure to reunite, she felt that since both motherlands promoted nationalistic ideas for many years, they are both to blame, but the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots also have a role in this problem. Moreover, since Turkey, just like Greece and the UK, was a guarantor power based on the constitution of 1960, the Turkish army had the right to intervene. The problem, however, is that it never left.

In addition, Derya explained, Turkey is now interfering in the politics of Northern Cyprus. For example, it threatened Mustafa Akinci, the former president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, who was opposed to the Turkish government. In addition, Turkey supported Ersin Tatar, the current president, who publicly thanked the Turkish president and vice president for assisting him in winning the election.

Regarding the Turkish army and the sense of security it gives Turkish Cypriots, Derya explained that if the army had to leave, her parents might feel in danger because they suffered significantly during the war. However, she finds the idea that a Greek Cypriot could enter her house while she is sleeping and try to kill her ridiculous. In addition, she claimed, the Turkish army is not in Cyprus to protect her or her Turkish Cypriot compatriots, but to protect Turkey's own interests. Thus, these statements contrast with those of young Turkish Cypriots interviewed by Leonard (2013, 344 f.), who claimed that they would fear a Greek Cypriot threat if the Turkish army withdrew.

As I crossed the border from the southern to the northern part, I got into a conversation with a Turkish Cypriot border guard who asked me if I was studying in Cyprus. After I told him that I was writing my master thesis on the Cyprus issue, he told me that the problem concerned only the states and governments and not the people themselves. I then wondered how much information he would be willing to give me and asked him directly if he thought Turkey is preventing the reunification of Cyprus. He then hesitated for a second but quickly said he will not say anything about that topic. I asked him if I could ask him any more questions and he said he cannot say anything as long as he is wearing his uniform. I then asked if I could question him another day and another place, and he answered "Inshallah" without much conviction, so I did not insist further.

Later, I had a conversation with a Turk who regularly comes to Cyprus for business. He explained to me that the intervention of the Turkish army in 1974 was necessary and that the Greek Cypriots would attack the Northern Cypriots the same day the Turkish army left. According to him, the Turkish Cypriots have been and still are treated badly by the Greek

Cypriots and he made it clear that, from his perspective, unless the Greek Cypriots stop their aggressive behavior, there will be no settlement.

8.5 Opinions on a reunification, two-state-solution, or annexation

Petros stated that he wanted Cyprus to find a solution as a free country: a fair, sustainable solution where every community is happy and there is not just one winner and one loser. The Greek Cypriot pointed out that a solution does not necessarily have to mean a reunification. If the solution is two independent states, he would be happy with that too, as long as both communities respect each other, and the agreement is equitable and long-lasting. Concerning his properties in the north, he commented that he would like to have them back, but in case of a fair two-state-solution, he would accept receiving a compensation for them.

Petros felt that whatever solution is found, all armies have to leave, be it the Turkish one, the Greek one or the Cypriot one. Since Cyprus is now in the EU, it does not need any army. He added that a solution with an army is not a solution, but a policy to govern the entire state would be the right approach. As for power sharing in case of a reunification, Petros stated that, in case of a reunification, the person who should lead the country should simply be the best candidate whether that person is a Turkish or a Greek Cypriot.

Concerning an annexation by Greece, Petros argued that “Enosis” is not a solution for Cyprus. He believes it is not realistic for Cyprus and that “It is better to stay here” (Interview Petros, 2022). Petros even added that he believes the Greek Cypriots made a mistake in 1931 when they burned the government office of the UK. According to him, the dispute between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots started then. Had they not done that, he feels the British would still have been in charge and the Turks would never have dared to invade Cyprus.

On the one hand, Petros seems to be very desirous of finding a long-lasting solution and even appears to be lenient towards the Turkish Cypriot in that he would be willing to make some concessions, such as his house for a compensation or even to withdraw claim to the northern part of the country. On the other hand, when I asked him why he did not support the Annan Plan, he told me that it was not equally beneficial for all. Moreover, when I discussed the language issue with him and his family, they reported that they would learn any language but Turkish. This issue is obviously related to feelings of many years of frustration and resentment. However, it does show that, when it comes to making efforts to attempt to reunite the island in a tolerant, multicultural, multiethnic and multilinguistic way, some crucial steps still have to be made.

Derya described herself as a member of the group of people who support the reunification of the island. The Turkish Cypriot peace activist pointed out that this group includes Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots, Europeans, Turks and Greeks. Moreover, the United Nations has been trying to bring all parties to the negotiating table, but unfortunately, they have not succeeded in getting everyone to sign the agreement. At one point the Turkish Cypriots are more open to a solution, and at other times the Greek Cypriots are, but never at the same time. She noted that for years people thought that the former president of the TRNC, Rauf Denktash, who was known as “Mr. No,” was the only problem. However, when his term ended and it was believed that reunification would be easier to achieve, there was President Tassos Papadopoulos on the other side, oppressing and pressuring the progressive Greek Cypriots to say “no”. The Turkish Cypriot pointed out that it is a very complicated issue that cannot be summarized by appointing one person or one state responsible for the entire situation. Derya said that over the years the leaders of both sides have failed to reach an agreement and that the current leaders have not been very successful either, meaning that the reunification of the island is unlikely for the time being. However, the Turkish Cypriot also stressed that the Greek Cypriots saw the situation with Turkey deteriorate after they rejected the Annan plan. Therefore, she stated, the Greek Cypriots might be willing to give up more of their power now.

Regarding the distribution of power in the event of a reunification of the island, Derya commented that in the 1960s the president was always a Greek Cypriot and the vice-president a Turkish Cypriot. She stressed that she did not think this would be fair in the future, as it would mean that as a Turkish Cypriot, she could never be president of her own country.

During my interview with Derya, my impression was confirmed that more exchange and interaction between both communities needed to be promoted after she noted that people are forgetting about the peaceful cohabitation which was present until the end of the British rule. Not recalling the prior existence of a peaceful cohabitation makes the conflict even harder to solve. Derya, however, is learning Greek, because everything is in Greek whenever she needs to go to the government office of the Republic of Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot is thus making efforts to learn the other side’s language, but also because she has no choice except to do so.

During my stay in Northern Cyprus, I talked to a Turkish Cypriot taxi driver of Turkish origin who has lived in Northern Cyprus for almost thirty years. During our informal conversation, he told me that he could not understand why the EU, Cyprus and the UN were so concerned about the reunification of the island. He then drew a parallel with the peaceful partition of Czechoslovakia in 1993, pointing out that no one complained about that event or made any

effort to reunify the country. The Turkish Cypriot of Turkish origin then asked: “Why can we not just leave Cyprus divided as it is now?”

The Turkish Cypriot taxi driver of Turkish origin argued that both communities are living peacefully so the island should remain divided. This argument makes sense, but the cab driver neglected in his remarks the fact that many “Native Turkish Cypriots” are not satisfied with the presence of the Turkish army in Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, the “Native Turkish Cypriots” currently enjoy some but not all the benefits of regular EU citizens. A declaration of independence recognized by the entire international community would mean the loss of these privileges. In addition, such a solution would not be accepted by the Greek Cypriot community, which considers the northern part of its territory as its own and still owns real estate in the area. Finally, a reunification of the island would lead to greater cooperation between the south and the north, which would bring economic benefits, especially for Northern Cyprus, as it would fully enter the EU and no longer depend on Turkey. For these reasons, maintaining the status quo or officially dividing the island do not seem to be viable solutions.

8.6 Gas and oil resources

The Greek Cypriot noted that Turkey is stating the sea around Cyprus is their “blue sea”, meaning that the gas and oil resources belong to Turkey. Moreover, other countries previously signed an agreement on Sea Charters, (see “Influence on the Cyprus issue”) which only Turkey did not sign. Petros stated that “Turkey has no idea about the sea area” (Interview Petros, 2022) which means that they interpret the Law of the Sea Charters their own way. He then referred to the Americans who provide Turkey with technology, weapons, aircraft, and tanks so that they can do as they please without anyone interfering.

As for the gas and oil deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean, Derya believes that much trouble is being made over something that is not economically feasible. While it is true that there are gas deposits, she believes that Cyprus should rather discuss global warming instead of seeking ways to exploit these deposits. She added that the revenue that gas could bring is not very high anyway. Derya stated that Cyprus should instead focus on solar panels and wind turbines, which would bring more environmental and economic benefits, given Cyprus’ geography.

9. Conclusion

The island of Cyprus, as discussed in “Historical overview”, is a huge conglomerate of years of invasion by different civilizations. However, despite all these conquests, the Greek identity remained strong and dominant on the island. Nonetheless, when the Ottoman Empire invaded Cyprus around 1571 and progressively more Ottomans began to settle on the island, the Greeks ceased to be the ruling community on the island. Since then, the number of Ottomans (later Turks) who started to inhabit Cyprus increased rapidly. Thus, it can be concluded that a solution implying a dominant community without any recognition of the other community is very unlikely since both communities have for many years represented a significant segment of the total population.

9.1 What attitude do Cypriots of each community adopt in terms of identity and politics?

9.1.1 Identity

During the literature review, it was first established that there are not only major cultural, social and political differences between the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus and the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), but also within the community of Northern Cyprus itself. Indeed, it became evident that there are significant gaps between Turkish Cypriots and Turks living in the TRNC in terms of identity, customs, social class, and support for the ruling power. In addition, it was found that generalized claims such as “Turks living in the TRNC are an extension of Turkish politics in Cyprus” are questionable, as a clear definition of this group also seems to be quite problematic, partly because some members of this community live in Cyprus only temporarily and others permanently. Because of this internal division in terms of identity, it is difficult to describe the conflict on the island as a conflict between two homogeneous communities facing each other. In other words, it is not just a dispute between the Turkish Cypriots on one side and the Greek Cypriots on the other, but a much more complex issue involving more actors, especially in the northern part due the presence of Turkish settlers and Turkish troops.

Regarding the sense of identity in Southern Cyprus, it was found that Greek Cypriots have a stronger sense of Cypriot identity and often define themselves as Cypriots, which implicitly means that they are Greek Cypriots. It was also noted that from 1974 onwards, Greek Cypriots began to distance themselves more from their motherland (Greece), in contrast to Turkish Cypriots. In fact, since that year Greek Cypriots have been seeking reunification of the island

instead of reunification with Greece (Enosis), which was also confirmed during the interview with Petros who argued that the struggle for Enosis was a bad idea. Moreover, he stated that there is no Greek or Turkish Cypriot identity, but only one Cypriot identity. Thus, the sense of cohesion seems to be stronger in Southern Cyprus than in the northern part of the island.

9.1.2 Politics

In terms of politics, it was noted that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, although previously in favor of a reunification of the island, is now encouraging a two-state solution. When looking at the political situation in the TRNC, it was observed that parties with different ideologies have been in power at different times. In the past some leaders advocated reunification, while others sought international recognition of independence. At present the ideology of Ersin Tatar, the leader of the TRNC, and his party align with Erdogan's (i.e., in favor of independence).

In terms of Greece's viewpoint on the Cyprus issue, the parties in charge, as in the Northern part, have had different opinions regarding reunification of the island. The current ruling party, the Democratic Rally (DISY) led by Nicos Anastasiades, has favored and continues to favor a reunification of Cyprus. The president of Greece, Katerina Sakellariopoulou also calls for reunification and condemns the actions of the Turkish army and its current occupation of the northern part.

9.2 What has been the influence of the discovery of gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean on the Cyprus issue?

As outlined in this literature review, although the discovery of gas and oil deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean in 2003 could have raised expectations of cooperation between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots, it has led to more tensions between the two sides and between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey since it created two new conflicts. The first dispute involves the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and concerns the ownership of gas deposits on the island and the rights to exploit them. This new conflict was triggered by the exclusion of the TRNC from gas production work. Moreover, the Greek Cypriots refused to share future revenues with their northern neighbors thus exacerbating the conflict. As a result, the Turkish Cypriot community with support from Turkey objected, arguing that gas extraction should not begin until there is a legitimate government representing both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. The second dispute is between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey and concerns maritime boundaries. Here Turkey claims that the Cypriot EEZ (exclusive economic zone) is located in its continental shelf. According to the

Turkish government five concession blocks overlap with its continental shelf; this is related to a contradictory interpretation of the maritime charters.

During the interviews Petros, the Greek Cypriot, considered the actions of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean to be expansionist and expressed much resentment towards the Turkish president. On the other hand, Derya, the Turkish Cypriot, felt that people were excessively concerned about this issue because according to some experts the value of the gas resources does not represent much income in any event.

So, it appears to this observer that Turkey is playing geopolitical games in the Eastern Mediterranean, leading to increasing tensions between the Republic of Cyprus and both the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey over something that may not be consequential. These new conflicts have worsened mutual trust, negatively influenced the atmosphere at the negotiating table, brought negotiations to a standstill, and even introduced a military aspect into the matter.

9.3 What prevents the reunification of Cyprus?

9.3.1 Common life

During the literature review, the participatory observation, and the interview with Derya, it was observed that for the past 48 years, due to the partition of the island, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have interacted only minimally with each other. In addition, older people who used to live in peace with Cypriots from the other community have begun to forget about this common life. As the younger generations are taught two opposing narratives and have no opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions, resentment and frustration are fostered and grow stronger over time.

9.3.2 Language

As my literature review and research in Cyprus revealed, the language issue appears to be a significant obstacle to efforts to find a solution. Although Turkish is an official language of the Republic of Cyprus very few Greek Cypriots speak it. Likewise, Turkish Cypriots do not speak Greek (although Greek is not an official language of the TRNC). Thus, the different languages constitute a significant hurdle to the desired reunification, as they divide both sides into two different communities with very little interaction.

9.3.3 Property

As explained, the property issue also constitutes a major obstacle for the negotiators of both sides. Indeed, the fact that the government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has given the abandoned houses that still belonged to Greek Cypriots to Turkish settlers and Turkish Cypriots has led to many problems and additional tensions between the two sides. On the other hand, as Derya explained in her interview, the properties of Turkish Cypriots in Southern Cyprus may not be occupied by anyone, but the Turkish Cypriots still do not have access to them. So, the problem is not one-sided, although it would be easier to solve it in the south because the houses could simply be returned to the original owners, while it would be harder to expel the settlers who now live in the houses in the north.

9.3.4 Territory

Regarding the territorial issue, both sides have not been able to reach an agreement on where the border between the two federal states should be drawn in the event of reunification. An important issue in this matter is the return of part of what is now Northern Cyprus to the Greek Cypriot administration so that Greek Cypriot refugees can move back to their villages. However, no common understanding has yet been found on how and where this border should be.

9.3.5 Division of executive power

As far as joint governance is concerned, various models have been proposed but none of them has convinced both communities. In particular, the plan to have a president elected by Greek Cypriots and a vice president elected by Turkish Cypriots was frequently mentioned, but this model has never been put into practice. Besides, as Derya stated, this plan would not be fair since Turkish Cypriots could never become the president of their own country. In addition, other ideas were proposed during the negotiations, such as the collegial presidency. However, none of these have garnered support so the negotiations kept returning to the above-mentioned idea of the president and vice president.

9.3.6 Turkish army

An important factor preventing the reunification of Cyprus is the presence of some 30,000 Turkish troops in the TRNC. On the one hand, the Turkish Cypriots in the north are told that the Greek Cypriots may attack them if the army withdraws. On the other hand, Greek Cypriots hear that the presence of the Turkish army is a threat to them and is the main factor preventing them from reuniting with Turkish Cypriots.

Nevertheless, as was revealed during the interview with Derya, not all Turkish Cypriots would feel less safe if the Turkish army withdrew. In addition, the Turkish Cypriot argued that the Turkish troops are not there to protect the interests of Turkish Cypriots but rather the interests of Turkey itself. So, the issue of the Turkish army is very delicate and would require some radical measures to be resolved.

9.3.7 Too passive or uncompromising actors

My work on this thesis established that the leaders of both communities rarely advocated reunification of the island at the same time. For many years, it was believed that Rauf Denktaş (National Unity Party, UBP) was the main person responsible for the failure to reunify the island. However, when his term ended and Mehmet Ali Talat, who favored reunification, took power and strongly supported the Annan plan, the then-incumbent Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos (Democratic Party, DIKO) waged a strong “no” campaign against the Annan Plan. When the latter left office and a more compromising president, Dimitri Christofias (Progressive Party of the Working People, AKEL), came to power, the Turkish Cypriot president, Dervis Eroglu (Party of National Unity, UBP), was less supportive of reunification. At present the recently elected president Ersin Tatar is a member of the UBP and an ally of Turkish President Erdogan, meaning he favors a two-state-solution and is against reunification. On the Greek Cypriot side, however, President Anastasiades (Democratic Rally, DISY) is currently president and he and his party promote negotiations towards a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation. Thus, the presidents of both communities have played and continue to play an essential role in the Cyprus issue, and in particular their lack of unity in promoting reunification has led to the failure to reach an agreement.

9.3.8 The role of the UN

Finally, although the United Nations has repeatedly tried to end the conflict and find a lasting solution, its Secretary General and negotiators have so far failed in this task. An important reason for the lack of success is the fact that since the Republic of Cyprus is a sovereign state, the UN has no control over the island and consequently cannot exercise much pressure on the main actors. Thus, it has only been able to promote negotiation talks between the leaders of both communities and dialogue at the civil society level and maintain peace on the island with its Peacekeepers.

10. Proposal of a sustainable solution

After acquiring knowledge to understand the main reasons preventing the reunification of Cyprus, it is important to look at how this issue can be solved. So, I will now present a plan for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and give an idea of what a reunification would entail by discussing a suggested solution for each problem. Hopefully, by using the information previously obtained it will be possible to stimulate action. Ideas on the issue that were presented in a Policy Paper by Andraes Theophanous (2021), Greek Cypriot Professor of Political Economy at the University of Nicosia, will also be referred to.

10.1 Exchange and cooperation

Theophanous (2021, 29) states in the last subchapter of his “Proposal for a Normal State” that cooperation and a framework of common goals should be promoted (Theophanous 2021, 29).

These statements are correct, but I believe that they are far from sufficient given the current situation. From the results of the literature review, the interviews, and the participatory observation, it appears that the majority of Cypriots are currently living without any contact with the habits, the language and especially the people from the other side. Until now, Cypriots from both sides have tried to solve the problem by assuming that they belong to two different communities that happen to live on the same island and thinking this is the only thing they have in common. Thus, solutions to the problem have so far been sought in a formal way between members of two different communities who are in contact with each other solely because they have a common problem to solve.

Although this is probably easier said than done, I suggest that both communities start interacting more with each other. And that, I am convinced, starts with education. Therefore, I strongly support the introduction of compulsory Greek language teaching in Northern Cypriot schools and Turkish language teaching in Southern Cypriot schools, starting from the first grade of elementary school. Turkish is an official language of the Republic of Cyprus, so learning both official languages should be mandatory in all schools. In parallel, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus should include Greek as one of its official languages and teach it in all schools starting at the same grade level. Furthermore, exchange between primary and secondary schools should be encouraged by organizing field trips or overnight stays in the other part of the country.

Further, I propose promoting not only exchanges between schools and children from an early age, but also cooperation between Cypriot adults. One example of collaboration that is already being encouraged is a project on biodiversity hotspots that form in buffer zones as a result of

limited human influence. In these areas, biodiversity flourishes and healthy populations of various species are found. The goal of this project is to foster cooperation between environmental scientists from both sides who are interested in environmental phenomena such as the thriving of endangered animal and plant species in the buffer zone. Although the project is not moving very quickly, it does give hope for peace in the long run (Euronews.Green, 02/2022).

I suggest that projects like the one on the Biodiversity Hotspot in the Buffer Zone be further promoted and expanded throughout the island. These cooperation efforts should be initiated immediately, as I believe that these efforts could eventually assist in reunification and lasting peace. Therefore, both communities should not wait for the reunification of the island to take these measures. In the event of reunification, the two official languages and intercultural and intercommunal exchange should of course be promoted even more strongly.

In addition to cooperation and exchanges at the local level, cooperation between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot authorities should also be promoted immediately, starting with the settlement of the issue of gas and oil resources in the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Cyprus. I propose that both sides cooperate as a single entity in this matter and agree to share the revenues equally among the two communities. If neither community agrees to this option, the gas and oil resources in the eastern Mediterranean should remain untouched until reunification is achieved. By then, tensions between the two communities will probably have quieted considerably and it will be easier to resolve the issue in a more peaceful environment.

10.2 Lost properties

In his “Proposal for a Normal State”, Theophanous (2021, 28) explains that the property issue can be solved on the basis of the various attempts at agreements worked out in the past, including the Annan Plan. In this case, compensation equal to the value of the property in 1974 plus inflation would be provided for the internally displaced persons who cannot return to their original homes because they are now occupied by other citizens (Theophanous, 2021, 28).

To avoid further complications in this matter, the first step should be to prohibit new Turks coming from Turkey from settling in houses owned by Greek Cypriots. Second, in order to make available the sum for compensation, Turks living in Greek Cypriot houses should be encouraged to leave or to start paying a remuneration to Greek Cypriots. In addition, donations from foreign sources should be collected in order to encourage the endeavors in this complex matter. However, there is no guarantee that the contributions of the Turks and donations will

be sufficient. Therefore, I suggest that when reunification is achieved the money invested in the Cypriot armies should be partly used to compensate for the lost properties. Since Cypriots from both sides currently are required to serve in the military for more than a year, a large amount of money could be obtained by cutting these costs. A strong army and military service are currently needed on both sides, mainly because the Cyprus issue has still not been settled. In the event of reunification Northern Cyprus would no longer be a special territory in the EU, but the entire island would be a normal EU state that could count on the full support of the other EU states and their armies in the event of a threat from abroad. Therefore, a reduction in the investment in the army would be both safe and beneficial for both communities, as it would bring new funds that could be used for more urgent and pressing matters, such as compensation for lost property.

10.3 The territorial issue

Theophanous (2021, 28 ff.) argues that instead of two constituent states, there should be six regions, one of which is the Turkish Cypriot region. This region would account for about 28.7 % of the territory and would be controlled by the Turkish Cypriots with the widest possible autonomy. As for the Greek Cypriot territory, it would be divided into five regions. Moreover, the legitimate residents and beneficiaries of the fenced city of Varosha should return under Greek Cypriot administration and the Buffer Zone should start being used without obstacles (Theophanous, 2021, 28 ff.).

Regarding the territorial issue, I agree with Theophanous (2021, 28 ff.) that a restitution of territories, especially abandoned areas, under Greek Cypriot administration should start happening gradually. Indeed, areas such as the enclosed town of Varosha or the abandoned village of Achna, which are now under Turkish Cypriot administration, should be returned to Greek Cypriot authorities as soon as possible. This would mean that the Turkish Cypriot region would shrink from 37% to 28.7% of the total territory and I do not object to this because a large part of this reduction would be the restitution of abandoned territories to the Greek Cypriot administration.

10.4 Executive power and presidency

Theophanous (2021, 26) states that each community should be provided with a common ticket for president and vice president. This system would be democratic and promote the achievement of common goals (Theophanous, 2021, 26).

As Petros said in our conversation about the election of the president, “the good guy” should be elected. However, the likelihood of a Greek Cypriot being elected president every time is high because, as the 2011 census showed, there are about three times as many Greek Cypriots (856,857) as Turkish Cypriots (294,906). While electing a president from one of the two communities would reduce nationalism, as presidential candidates would try to attract the votes of both communities, this system could result in Turkish Cypriots never being elected, as they are a minority compared to Greek Cypriots. Therefore, the system of the presidency suggested by Theophanous (2021, 26) with a president from one community and a vice president from the other would be more equitable and functional. However, having one be the president and the other the vice president could again create a power imbalance between the two communities, especially if the president is constantly being elected from the same community.

Thus, I suggest that both communities should be offered a presidential ticket. Moreover, both presidents should be elected by the entire population of Cyprus, which means that nationalist candidates who would only represent the interests of their own community would have much less chance of being president. This plan could be implemented (and, if needed, later adapted) in the first years of reunification since after more than fifty years of tensions and frustrations, both communities would most likely elect a president of their own community, which means that with only one presidential and one vice-presidential ticket, a Greek Cypriot would probably be elected each time. Therefore, the plan to offer two presidential tickets seems to be the fairest and most likely to bring peace, especially in the early years, and could be reconsidered over time as tensions have quieted. Unfortunately, whether both communities would accept sharing the executive power over the island equally is unclear.

10.5 Foreign powers and armies

Regarding the system of guarantor powers, Theophanous (2021, 26) argues that it should be abolished or reviewed because it is one of the causes of the problem. Instead of states assuming the role of guarantor powers, the United Nations Security Council should assume this role. In addition, there should be no foreign troops present in Cyprus, although UN Peacekeepers should provide support in the initial stages to monitor and ensure the peaceful development of reunification. Moreover, there should be a unified Cypriot army consisting of both Turkish and Greek Cypriots on the numerical bases of 3:1 (Theophanous, 2021, 26).

I agree with Theophanous (2021, 26) that the system of guarantor powers should be ended immediately or at least drastically revised. I also propose that the UN play the role of a neutral

supervisor with no interest in keeping the conflict going and whose only goal is to establish lasting peace by intervening only in emergencies and critical situations. Like Theophanous (2021, 26), I suggest a complete removal of all foreign troops, whether Greek, Turkish, or British, which would also mean an end to the British military bases at Akrotiri and Dhekelia. Thus, in addition to Cypriot troops, only UN peacekeepers should be stationed on the island, and only for a period of five to ten years from the day of reunification, which would support a peaceful evolution of the issue. As for the Cypriot army, I suggest that a reunified Cyprus not only form a united military force between Turkish and Greek Cypriots but also, as mentioned in “Lost properties”, significantly reduce its investments in the army, including the mandatory military service to obtain funds that will be used, among other things, for the compensation of lost properties.

10.6 Clarification

Although most of these ideas are easier to suggest than to implement and are based on the idea of an ideal settlement of the conflict, I do believe that by following these steps much improvement could be achieved. In addition, by implementing this plan, factors that currently prevent the reunification of the island but are difficult to control, such as the election of a president opposed to unification, could be fought in the next elections. I believe that by encouraging cooperation between the two sides, someone who favours reunification would be more likely to be elected later. It is important to add that this proposal, although it should be initiated as soon as possible, will not achieve reunification in a few months but might well be effective over a long-term period.

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12. Interview transcripts

The following two interviews were transcribed based on recordings. For a better understanding of the content, some wordings and phrases were adjusted to avoid misinterpretation. Grammatical and syntactic errors that were not detrimental to the correct understanding of the interviews were left untouched.

12.1 Interviews with Petros

12.1.1 Guiding questions

Please tell me more about the story of how you left Northern (or Southern) Cyprus during the 1974 Turkish military invasion.	Did the Turkish army come to your house? Were you told to leave? How did you leave?	
<p>Identity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What country do you identify with the most? 2. What feeling do you have towards the citizens of the other part of the island? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cyprus? Greece? Turkey? 2. Friends? Relatives? Brothers? Compatriots? Simple “neighbors”? Invaders? 	<p>Friends? Relatives? Brothers? Compatriots? Simple “neighbors”? Invaders?</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would be the best-case scenario for Cyprus in your opinion? 	A reunification, a two-state-solution or an annexation by the respective motherland (Greece or Turkey)?	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 What would a reunification of the island imply for you? 	Political system? Collegial presidency? Presence of the Turkish army? Restitution of lost territory during the 1974 Turkish military invasion?	

<p>1.1.1 In case of a reunification: Solution for the executive power</p>	<p>President, vice president</p>	<p>Collegial presidency. This plan would have consisted of six members (including at least two Turkish Cypriots) who were to be elected on a joint list by the parliament. They were to assume the office of president - and vice president from the other community - on a monthly rotating basis, essentially representing the reunified Cypriot state rather than</p>	
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		exercising power alone.	
1.1.2 In case of a reunification: Territory	Territorial	alignment	
1.1.3 In case of a reunification: Turkish Military	This is also a key factor which was included in the Annan Plan, as it assured the Turkish army would gradually leave the island over a period of eighteen years or until Turkey's accession to the EU was made official (Leonard, 2013, 334 f.) Although the Annan plan was ultimately rejected, the idea of a long-term withdrawal of Turkish troops seems to be a viable solution, as this plan could potentially avoid too sudden unrest between the two communities and gradually reduce the fears of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.		Possible solution?
1.1.4 Property: you still own a house	The Republic of Cyprus created an administration for the property abandoned by the Turkish Cypriots in the southern zone and, in addition, asked the Greek Cypriots to wait for a settlement of the conflict to recover their land, receive		

	<p>financial compensation or even to give them up. Subsequently, the European Court of Human Rights condemned Turkey, the only state internationally recognized as controlling the northern part of Cyprus. As a result, the Turkish government urged Turkish Cypriot authorities to offer compensation to Greek Cypriots who request it, although this issue leaves many questions unanswered, as more than forty years have passed since the Greek Cypriots left their homes in Northern Cyprus. For one thing, the value of land today is not the same as it was in 1974 and, and for another, many plots of land were not developed at that time. This makes it very difficult to calculate the exact amount of compensation that should be offered to Greek Cypriots.</p>	
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12.1.2 First Interview

On 4/01/2022, for the first time, I meet Cypriots who are immediately ready and willing to answer my questions. They are a married couple in their sixties. The wife explains to me that

she grew up living in the south, so she did not experience the war in the same way as Greek Cypriots living in the north. Her husband, however, tells me that he grew up in the northern part of the island, so I ask right away if he would be interested in telling me more about his stories and past. He tells me he has no problem with that, and I immediately start questioning him.

C: "Have you gone back to the Turkish part since 1974?"

H: "There is no Turkish part. There is only one Cyprus and an occupied part in the north."

C: "Oh, sorry for my incorrect wording. I am planning on going to the occupied part during my stay to continue my research and compare both situations in a more complete way."

H: "Why are you going to the thieves?"

C: "I think that it would be necessary to do so in order to write an unbiased thesis. Why would you call them the thieves?"

H: "In 1974, we abandoned our homes to flee to the south. The Turks then took our homes and started living in them. We have three houses over there."

C: "Did you ever go back since 2004 to see what it looks like now?"

H: "Yes, just once. I wanted to cry the whole time. It was so moving to see the place I grew up in after so many years."

C: "Did you get to speak to the people living there now?"

H: "Yes, they are Turks from Turkey. They renovated the house and changed them a lot."

C: "How long did you stay in the northern part?"

H: "Just for two hours, I couldn't stay longer. It was just too sad to see how it all changed. You know, the Turks began selling our houses, even to Europeans and Russians, but it is illegal, because we still own the titles."

C: "So officially, you are still the owners of the houses?"

H: "Yes, my family has three houses over there. When you go to the northern part, you can go see them. I will send you the location on Whatsapp."

C: "Thank you so much, that would be really interesting. Where are they located exactly?"

H: "In Kerinia (Κερύνεια)."

C: "Where is that exactly?"

H: "You don't know Kerinia? Let me show you on the map."

-H shows me the place on the map-

C: "Oh, yes. I do know it. I only knew it by its Turkish name Girne."

H: "Yes, when the Turks came, they changed all the names."

C: "So what did you do when you fled in 1974?"

H: "We first stayed in a refugee camp in Nicosia for a few years. I was still going to school then. I was only 14 years old."

C: "So how long were you in that camp for?"

H: "Yes, I was there with my family, then I started working abroad, in Libia, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi."

-Interviewee does not give a clear answer about how long he stayed and what kind of place he was staying in when he abandoned his home in Northern Cyprus. I keep in mind that I have this question unanswered. -

C: "You said you lost your houses in the north, but I see you still managed to buy a beautiful house. Was it your family's or did you buy it yourself?"

H: "I bought it with the money I earned working abroad. I started working young to have enough money to buy a house and provide for my family."

-H changes topics. -

H: "You know, when I was still living in the northern part, a lot of Turkish Cypriots did not speak good Turkish and spoke Greek just like us. Those people who are now in their sixties and up do not all speak Turkish. Many of them still feel more comfortable speaking Greek."

C: "So, after all these years, you think some still do not speak fluent Turkish."

H: "Yes, of course. Greek was their parents' and their own native language. So, of course they speak it better than Turkish."

12.1.3 Second Interview

12.1.3.1 Part 1

C: “ Hi, Petros. Just to confirm, you agree to being recorded and interviewed for this 1-2 hour interview.”

P: “ Yes.”

C: “ So, first of all, I would like to ask about how you left what is now Northern Cyprus, how that happened. Did you ever see the Turkish army? How close did it get to you?”

P: “ I am from a village. They started the war five miles from my village (Kerinia). They started the fight on the 20th of July. I think they came before on the 19th at night. Then they came on the 20th with airplanes and ship.”

C: “Did you see tanks or planes? “

P: “ Tanks from the first day no. Just the ship and the planes. They started bombing. They made fires. They had napalm bombs. Anywhere, it burned everything in the area. “

C: “ Did you leave immediately or how long after that did you leave?”

P: “ We left in the night and we went to the mount Pentadaktylos. You will see those mountains if you go outside. We went to Pentadaktylos for one or two nights. And after, we camped in Morphou. Morphou is about twenty miles from my village. We didn’t take anything from the house, only the key.”

C: “Morphou is... “

P: “ We stayed outside. My father had a friend there. We stayed outside under the tree. It was summer, we had no house there.”

C: “ In a tent?”

P: “ No, outside. We stayed a few days there.”

C: “ And then what happened?”

P: “ We then went to another village and then we came to Nicosia, we found an abandoned house that was falling apart. “

C: “ They were going to break it down?”

P: “Yes. We stayed there for one or two years. We fixed the windows and the doors. We stayed two years there.”

C: “You were fourteen to sixteen years old then? How old were you?”

P: “ 1974-1978, it was four years not two years. In 1978, I finished school and I then went to the army. The army was two years and two months. “

C: “The house you found? After that? “

P: “We received a house from the government which was for refugees. It was in Strovolos (Nicosia). I finished the army and started working in a company and I worked there about 10 years. In 1981 I left Cyprus. I went to Lybia, and after that Saoudi Arabia. I got married in 1990 and bought a house. I opened a shop for my job. We live here now. I have three children. My children finished schools and started working last years.”

C: “Thank you for giving me information about your life story. I have some more questions about Cyprus now. I mean about the Cyprus issue. First of all, I would like to ask what country you identify with the most. Is it Cyprus, Greece, bot Greece and Cyprus? Personally, do you feel more Greek, more Cypriot? “

P: “ No no. Look, I feel Cypriot, write this down. In Cyprus, we do not have a Greek Cypriot or a Turkish Cypriot. All people are Cypriot. Only the people who came from Turkey are Turks and Muslims. And the Greeks who came from Greece. The Greek and Turkish Cypriot problem is created by the British to divide and govern the country. In 1960, when they left from Cyprus, they made that problem. We did not have any problems with the Muslims before. They were living with us in our towns and they were together. In 1963, the British took the Turks from the village and put them outside of Nicosia. The name is Köneli. They put all the Muslims and made the problems with them since them. They left from Cyprus but they didn't leave, they have bases in Episkopi, Dhekelia and Akrotiri. They also have a big radar in Trodos, an airport in Akrotiri and a big port for big ship. They also have ... (inaudible) where they get information about everyone. They spy on all. It is like the CIA The British created all the problems between the Greek Cypriots the Muslims “

C: “How exactly did they create those problems?”

P: “The British bought this from the Turks. Before Cyprus was under the Ottoman empire. The Ottomans did not have money. So, the ottomans borrowed money from the British. The British took all of Cyprus because the Ottomans could not pay back. Then, the British took all of Cyprus

and said to the Muslims that they have to go to Turkey. About 3-4 thousand. They said that by 1925 they have to be gone. In 1931, the Greek burned the government office under British rule which is now the president office to make the British leave. We fought with the British to make them leave Cyprus. The British called the Muslims back and they made the Greek and Turkish Cypriot fight against each other to fight them more easily. You know the British politics.”

C: “Divide and rule”

P: “This is the history of Cyprus. And now Turkey starts to fight for gas and petrol and wants all of Cyprus. And Europe supports Turkey because it is a big market and they have businesses with Turkey. All the people, the Muslims in Cyprus, they have the ID of the Cyprus government. They have the EU passport. The people in Northern Cyprus. Our government gives it to them. If you go to the airport, you will see all the Turks who use our airports. Like you and me. Those people have an ID from the Cyprus government.”

C: “Those people are Turks who came later, after 1974, right?”

P: “Yes”

C: “I am going to stop the first recording now. “

12.1.3.2 Part 2

P: “Turkey took our land, our houses, our everything. They brought from Anatolia other people and they gave our houses and land. You know, in Turkey they burned a lot of villages of the Kurds. They also burned a village of the Greeks. In 1920, 1922, when they took back the West, they took the villages of the Greek. For example, Izmir, they burned it all, but then rebuilt it. The seaside was Greek. They also took (fought) the Armenians. How many? The Syrians...”

C: “So the main problem is Turkey, according to you? “

P: “Sure, Turkey is the main problem. They want more and more. They want to recreate the Ottoman Empire. They went all the way to Austria and Hungary. They want to take that all back. All the way to Austria and Hungary “

C: “Thanks a lot for your answers. I would like to ask you another question. What would be the best-case scenario for Cyprus in your opinion? Ideally what is the best case? For example, a reunification, a two-state-solution, or an annexation by the respective motherland (Greece or Turkey)?”

P: “I do not know, it is better to find a “Lisy” (solution). How do you say that? “

C: "Solution? "

P: "Yes, solution, to find a solution as a free country. We do not need the army, because we are in Europe. The problem with Europe. Cyprus is not a big country like France or Germany. We are not a big economy. The UN do not support their own "resolutions" they made. We have an army from the UN but they only watch, if there is a problem with Turkey they tell us to go back. They do not say anything to Turkey. The Greeks always have to go back."

C: "So, for you, the best solution is a reunification? One country living together"

P: "One solution to make one country."

C: "So , two different states is not a good solution?"

P: "Two states is also acceptable yes. But we need to have all the same in each space. Not a solution where Turkey has everything from us and our people who have houses in the north do not get anything. A sustainable solution is the best solution that lasts forever. A solution for everyone. A solution where everybody is happy, us, the Turks, the Turkish Cypriots, everyone but everybody respects their zone. The Turks own most of their land in Paphos, Larnaca and Limassol (all in the south). They do not have much land in Kerinia or Famagusta. All the land that the Turks had was 11% before 1974. Now, they have 35%. Sometimes 40%. If they take the land on this side. Because there is a rule. If they stay for 6 months, they can sell their land. They take back the land. They rent one house for six months and after that they go to the court and take the land and sell. Turks do that. But we cannot go there to take our land."

C: "So, just to make sure I understood you right. If the solution was two independent states, where everybody respects their space, it would be okay for you.

P: "Yes. But a solution equal for all the people. For example, I have a house."

C: "What would happen to your house in such a case? If there are two independent states"

P: "You see, what happens to my house? I showed you, we have three houses. You can go there and you will see that. By the way, make some photos and bring them to me. I think there is a bus to go there. There are many buses. Make a trip. If I find anything, I will give you the telephone number."

C: "Maybe on Friday I will go there. So, if the north is officially another state, but you still have a house there, what do we do? What would you like to have for this house? A compensation? Money? What do you want? "

P: "I want my house back. I was fifteen when I left. I went in 2005 and I was ill for a month. Because all that area, I worked there. I was born there. I cannot go see my houses. It has been 47 years and Turkey wants more. The Europeans do not say anything. They close their ears."

C: "So, let's say for example, Cyprus is officially divided into two states. But the government says you will get money for the house. Would that be okay for you?"

P: "Everything is okay if there is a good solution that lasts for Muslims and Greeks. not a solution like in 1960 that the British left us with the Turks. A solution forever and for everyone for the Greeks and Turks. If we get everything and they do not, it does not work. Or the other way around. A good solution for all. It is not a big problem. The only problem is Turkey."

C: "There was gas discovered around Cyprus. Turkey is saying the gas resources belong to Northern Cyprus and to itself. Turkey says Cyprus does not have the right to get the gas until the conflict is settled. "

P: "Turkey is saying it is their "blue sea". They do not know anything about the sea area. They did not sign the agreement on the Sea Charters. The other countries signed it, but Turkey did not. And now they say it is our sea. The problem is also with the Americans who give technology, guns, airplanes, tanks to Turkey like in Iraq. With Sadam Hussein. You remember the war in Iraq? They give them the technology. They want to make to Ottoman Empire. One minute."

C: "No problem, I will pause it."

12.1.3.3 Part 3

C: "Some Turkish Cypriots say that they feel safe thanks to the Turkish army. If there was only one Cyprus, what should happen to the Turkish army? Should it go? The army is now in Northern Cyprus. Would they have to go back? "

P: "The army would have to go back. If we have a solution. But if there are two states, the Turkish army has to go back too. The Turkish, the Greek and the Cypriot army have to "finish", to have a solution. We are in the EU, we do not need the army. Who will attack us? Turkey? In Cyprus we only have issues with Turkey. Turkey wants Cyprus. Without turkey, Cyprus would be a free country, the best country in the world. Because the people in Cyprus work. We came here without anything. We left everything. I was 15 years old. I came without any shoes, with a pair of short pants and a t-shirt. We worked hard and now we have more than them, in the northern part. We do not have problems because we work. The Muslims from Cyprus work too.

A solution with the army is not a solution. A Greek and Turkish army in Cyprus is not a solution. It is better to make a big policy to govern the state, not the army.”

C: “Is enosis (reunification with Greece) something you would like? “

P: “Enosis it is not a solution for Cyprus. In 1950, they made a ..., how do you say “dimopsifisma” (referendum)? The people voted for enosis (98%), Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This is not good. Now it is not realistic. It was better to stay here. A country with two states. Or one country. But no army. And freedom for the Greeks and the Muslims”

12.1.3.4 Part 4

C: “If there was only one country, who would be the president or the government of Cyprus? “

P: “ nyone good. The good one. Be it a Greek or Turkish Cypriot. They held elections and decided who is good for Cyprus. Cyprus is not Greece of Turkey. For the Cypriots. Even Christian or Muslim. So, we need a good solution to stay one Cyprus. If the solution is not good enough, both sides will start fighting. We need a real solution. Otherwise, we are one Greek and one Turkish Cyprus, like now. They use the Cyprus democracy to take passports and ID to go to Europe and stay in Turkey. They have our hospitals for free. Also, the schools. Our government pays for it. They come from the Turkish side and go to English schools, the American Academy. There is a school called Terra Santa. Our government pays for the expenses and they come. Also for university. Anywhere. We pay for that. A solution is a good solution. Not giving everything and getting nothing. “

C: “Thanks a lot. I think we can stop here.”

12.1.3.5 Part 5

P: “I think the Greeks made a mistake in 1931 when they burned the house of the government of the UK. This is a real problem. We made that problem with the British. If you want to find out more about that time, you can write: October 1931, Cyprus. You will find all, you find the photos. You will see the burned cars and houses. October 1931. Because the dispute between the Turks and the Greeks started then. If they had not done that to the British, Cyprus would still be British and there would be no issue with Turkey. Turkey would not dare to mess with Cyprus if it was British.”

12.2 Interview with Derya

12.2.1 Guiding questions

What role do Turkey and Greece play in Cyprus' failure to reunite?	<p>What side is more to blame?</p> <p>Is the issue comparable to the chicken and the egg issue? Which group came first? Which motherland is the source of the issue?</p> <p>What can be said about the Turkish troops? Is a reunification likely to happen if there still are Turkish troops in Northern Cyprus?</p>
How are both motherlands and their leaders perceived by each respective Cypriot community in terms of identity and politics?	<p>How is Turkey perceived by the Turkish and Greek Cypriots?</p> <p>How is Greece perceived by the Turkish and Greek Cypriots?</p> <p>What can be said about a sense of identity towards both motherlands?</p>
What influence did and does the discovery of gas and oil resources in the Eastern Mediterranean have on the Cyprus issue?	<p>Do you think it will have a positive or negative impact on the negotiations for a reunification?</p>
What is Cyprus heading towards?	<p>A reunification, a two-state-solution or an annexation by the respective motherland (Greece or Turkey)?</p>
How do the current leaders of both sides currently approach the Cyprus issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ersin Tatar, member of the UBP, national unity part, close ally of Erdogan. If we now look at the current situation in Northern Cyprus, we find that Ersin Tatar, a leader of the UBP, has just become president.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicos Anastasiades: DISY, Democratic Rally
Annan plan?	<p>What made the Annan fail? I.e., why did 75% of the Greek Cypriots vote against it and 65% of Turkish Cypriots for it?</p> <p>How likely is that to happen again if a new plan was to be made?</p>
Why have the negotiations been unsuccessful?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Too complex or unsolvable? 2. Too passive or maximalist 3. UN's role?
1: Compensation of lost properties. In 1974, a lot of Greek Cypriots abandoned their homes, which are now occupied by Turks and Turkish Cypriots. However, Greek Cypriots still own the titles. What could be done to solve the issue?	<p>A clear example of a difficult problem to solve that resulted from the Turkish military invasion of 1974 is the houses that were left empty after Greek and Turkish Cypriots fled their homes. On the one hand, the Northern Cypriot authorities decided to compensate the Turkish Cypriots for their land abandoned in the South by, among other things, handing over the land abandoned by the Greek Cypriots in the north. The Republic of Cyprus, on the other hand, created an administration for the property abandoned by the Turkish Cypriots in the southern zone and, in addition, asked the Greek Cypriots to wait for a settlement of the conflict to recover their land, receive financial compensation or even to give them up. Subsequently, the European Court of Human Rights condemned Turkey, the only state internationally</p>

	<p>recognized as controlling the northern part of Cyprus. As a result, the Turkish government urged Turkish Cypriot authorities to offer compensation to Greek Cypriots who request it, although this issue leaves many questions unanswered, as more than forty years have passed since the Greek Cypriots left their homes in Northern Cyprus. For one thing, the value of land today is not the same as it was in 1974 and, and for another, many plots of land were not developed at that time. This makes it very difficult to calculate the exact amount of compensation that should be offered to Greek Cypriots (Bertrand, 2017, 114 ff.)</p>
<p>2: Division of executive power.</p>	<p>A first scenario talked about a president elected by the Greek Cypriots and a vice president elected by the Turkish Cypriots, who has the right of veto. Then, the Annan plan set up a new system that would avoid a direct face to face conflict: The collegial presidency. This plan would have consisted of six members (including at least two Turkish Cypriots) who were to be elected on a joint list by the parliament.</p>
<p>3: Territorial alignment</p>	<p>As for the territorial alignment between the two zones, according to the Annan Plan, they were to become the two federated states of the reunified republic. The main idea of this plan was to return</p>

	<p>part of Northern Cyprus to the Greek Cypriots in order to allow some of the refugees to return to the homes they had left in 1974. During the Annan Plan negotiations and the Geneva negotiations, several ideas were put forward by maps proposing this type of adjustment. However, the two maps submitted by the Turkish and Greek Cypriots were never made public. On the contrary, they were kept in the safe of the United Nations Office in Geneva (Bertrand, 2017, 114 ff.) This shows that the Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders once again failed to reach an agreement, this time on the issue of where to adjust the northern area of the island.</p>
<p>Past leaders?</p>	<p>It is important to point out that the Turkish Cypriot leaders were always against anything but a legalization of the separation of the island, in the form of a “confederation” of two separate states with two sovereignties. Although Rauf Denktash had this main goal in mind, which was shared by the majority of Turkish Cypriot politicians and himself, he participated in the reunification negotiations during his long tenure (1976-2005). However, it is believed that the only reason was to show his goodwill towards Turkey at a time when the latter was strongly criticized by the international community for its</p>

	military occupation of the northern part of the island (Bertrand, 2017, 116 ff.)
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12.2.2 Interview

C: “Today, I have the pleasure to interview Derya Beyatli, personal assistant of Niyazi Kizilyürek, member of the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) and now member of the European Parliament “

D: “Sorry, what I was asking how you use your phone to transcribe. There is such a software that just types the words?”

C: “Let’s give an example. This is a test. I am talking about the Cyprus issue with Derya, who is helping me to answer my questions.”

D: “Is it an application?”

C: “The name is live transcriber.”

C: “One more question, do you want to remain anonymous or is it okay if I write your name?”

D: “You can write my name.”

C: “And the name of, I mean the person who you’re working for Niyazi Kizilyurek?”

D: “Yes sure.”

C: “Today, I have the pleasure to interview Derya Beyatli, personal assistant of Niyazi Kizilyurek, member of the Progressive Party of working people,”

D: “I am actually his representative for the Turkish Cypriot Community.”

C: “Okay, sorry, representative for the Turkish Cypriot Community. Niyazi Kizilyurek, who is also a member of the European Parliament, right? So, as you know, I’m writing my thesis about the Cyprus issue and I would like to get started with what we call the motherlands, Turkey and Greece. So far, Cyprus hasn’t been able to reunite. How much do you think it is related to Turkey or Greece? The, but let’s start with turkey. For example. Do you think Turkey played a big role in this impossibility to reunite?”

D: “I don’t think we can blame only one part in this whole issue. It’s a complex issue and the motherlands are to be blamed, but there are also the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots who

have not been able to agree on a on a plan either. I mean, it's a problem with two sides. And then there are the guarantor powers of 1960: Turkey and Greece. And the UK. .. were actually guarantor powers. And I think everybody has a role ... has played a role in and this status quo if you like,"

C: "That's very interesting. Just yesterday, I was talking to a Greek Cypriot. And he was, I'm just comparing your responses now. He was saying that that Turkey, he wasn't blaming Turkish Cypriots. He was saying the main problem was turkey just to summarize. It was interesting to hear from him, that Turkish Cypriots were not guilty according to him. It was mostly Turkey."

D: "The problem with this discourse is that it is the public discourse as the official discourse actually, that there was no issues between the Turkish Cypriots and Greek, Cypriots. And then Turkey invaded in 74 out of the blue and that's why we have a problem, which is not the case. I mean, it's only one side of the coin. I mean like we did have inter-communal clashes. There were problems between Turkish, Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. On the other hand, Turkey, based on the 1960s Constitution, had the right to intervene actually. The problem was that they stayed here. They had the right to intervene to restore the order of the Republic of Cyprus and then go away, but they haven't left since 74. From one point, obviously there were issues between the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots... before the 60s, there were issues between the Greek Cypriots and the British who were governing basically, so it hasn't started. The whole thing hasn't started in 74, as the Greek Cypriot colleague said, I don't know who the person was. But anyway, it started actually in 1950s with the uprising against the British rule and the British used the differences between the Cypriots, Turkish, Cypriots and Greek, Cypriots in order to suppress this Uprising. That's how EOKA came into existence, actually. It was against the British rule. But then the British were using these differences between Cypriots in order to divide and rule as... As it was their policy. So, it's not only one part of that is guilty of this. On the other hand, we have been trying to get together people. I will call us people who want to reunify the island. There are Turkish Cypriots, there are Greek Cypriots there are Europeans who are supporting this, there are Turkish people supporting this, there are Greek people supporting this. So actually, the problem is not with Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots Turkey and Greece, but it's because there is so much vested interest in keeping this country separated on both sides of the island and in the motherlands as well that we cannot make it work. Although we have the support of the United Nations...United Nations, have been trying to bring all the parties at the table at one point. It's the Turkish Cypriots who are more open to it. And then it's the Greek Cypriots, then Turkey supports, then Greece supports, but we haven't been able to

convince everybody... if you like.... to sign that agreement yet. Hopefully it will happen in the near future. But for the time being, it doesn't look hopeful."

C: "Right. So you talked about the UK, trying to divide the people, the communities in Cyprus in the 1960s, right? To fight them more easily. Divide and Rule like you said, and around that time, Turkish Cypriots felt closer to Turkey than to being Cypriot, I think. Was that the case then and is it still the case now? Do you think native Turkish Cypriots, not Turkish settlers, but native Turkish Cypriots feel closer to Turkey, then to being a Cypriot?"

D: I wasn't born back then. I cannot really comment on what it was like back then. Now, I think Turkish Cypriots feel stuck in between. I cannot say that they feel closer to the Greek Cypriots because they have been discriminated against by the Republic of Cyprus. At a lot of levels starting from the citizenship, getting the passports. I mean we have been, especially lately,...we have been hearing many cases of citizens who had their IDs and passports, that cannot get it renewed without any legitimate reason. The Turkish language, for example, is an official language of the Republic of Cyprus. But wherever we go, we have to speak Greek, basically, we are never addressed in our mother tongue, but if we are lucky, we are addressed in English. If we're lucky. Most of the time on the web pages, application forms, everything is in Greek. So, there is this from the Republic of Cyprus side. There is this discrimination. On the other hand, we do feel Cypriot, especially now with the oppressive regime in Turkey. We don't feel close to Turkey. Then again, we are... our democracy is better than the system in Turkey and we want to use that democracy. We want to make it better. It's not perfect. We want to make it better. But we want to continue having the rule of law basically in Cyprus, which is not happening in Turkey right now. So, it's a limbo situation that we find ourselves in and we cannot say that we feel closer to Greek Cypriots. We cannot say that we feel closer to Turkey, we feel in between two larger powers that don't really care about us. I think this is how we feel. We had elections for our leader last year in October. And basically, it was the candidate that was supported by turkey, who got elected. The Turkish actually, wrote a report on this. The Turkish Secret Service was in Cyprus, threatening people, including the candidate themselves and one of the candidates who was the president at the time, he was the leader and he was threatened by the Turkish Secret Service, not to run again because himself or his family could have been in danger. You see..."

C: "Just to make sure I understood you: this was a candidate who was running."

D: "He was the current president."

C: "Okay, the current president, okay"

D: "Actually, two candidates were threatened. I am one of the writers of this report. We interviewed these candidates and they told us that they were threatened personally, threatened by"

C: "Threatened by ?"

D: "By the Turkish secret service. I can send you the report."

C: "The current president is Ersin Tatar, right?"

D: "The one who was threatened was Mustafa Akinci. Ersin Tatar was the person who was supported by Turkey who actually in his speech, in his victory speech thanked the Turkish president and the Turkish vice president for making him get elected publicly."

C: "So, we have an interesting topic now. We have leaders of Cyprus of the Turkish Republic of Cyprus. Now, Ersin Tatar is clearly a close ally of Erdogan, of Turkey. So, does that mean a reunification is even less likely to happen in the coming years or?"

D: "Well, as I said, it's not one sided. I mean, we had Talat and Christofias in the past who were both pro solution and it did not happen. Then we had Akinci who was again pro reunification on the Turkish Cypriot side, Anastasiades was pro reunification in the previous plan, in the Annan Plan. He said yes. For the first two years, he pretended to be supporting reunification. Then, he left the table, basically. Actually... they had the deal. They were ready to sign it. Turkey and the UK were ready to sign it in Cran Montana in 2017. When? Was it 17 or 18? Sorry. I don't think it depends on Tatar or Turkey only. But it has to be everybody being on the same page. For years, we thought the only problem was Mr. Denktash, who was known as Mr. no. Then the Turkish Cypriot side got rid of Mr. Denktash. and then we realized that actually he was only one of the problems that we had Tassos Papadopoulos on the other side, who cried on the TV and who was actually suppressing progressive Greek Cypriots and pushing them to say "no". So it's a very complicated problem. It's not only Turkey or Tatar or Greece or the UK, it's more complicated than that."

C: "Very interesting. Thank you so much for your answers. So, we've kind of had the leaders now of Cyprus who at times are pro reunification or not. I would like to talk about another topic now, which is related to properties that are still owned by Greek Cypriots in Northern Cyprus."

Greek Cypriots still own the titles, officially those houses belong to them. There are now Turks living in them, Turkish Cypriots living in them. How... in case of a reunification, how would this problem be solved? How do you think this is a major problem? This is preventing a reunification of the island.”

D: “It is a major problem. Actually, there were solutions to this. I think there were different formulas that were created. Of course, I think it has to be a formula that satisfies basically both the original user and the current user. Because when you look at, for example, my parents. They are from Paphos. I’m also a refugee. I have property from my parents, in Paphos that are used by some other people right now. The difference is that the Turkish Cypriot authorities gave the titles to the current users. Whereas the Greek Cypriot Authorities kept the titles themselves, but they don’t let me go and use my own property. There is a guardian law that was passed after 74 saying that: “Okay, there’s Turkish Invasion, Turkish Cypriots, cannot use their property. I’m the guardian of their properties.” So, as a property owner myself, I cannot go and use that property either. And okay. I think the Turkish Cypriot sides made it even more complicated because then they gave the property to some other people who sold it to some other people, and it got extremely complicated now. And I think up till the point where: “I had property. I cannot use my property in the southern part of Cyprus right now. I was given some other property in the northern part of Cyprus because okay there was a problem.” I think this is fine. But of course, there were many people who got properties that belonged to Greek Cypriots, unlawfully, well not unlawfully but in an unjust way. They didn’t leave a property in this South. So, the exchanging has got very complicated. This whole thing happened in 1974. I wasn’t even born back then. But of course, there are people who were born after 74 like myself. For example, that if I’m born in property and I lived in the property for 45 years now. What will happen? Do I have a right to stay in the property? Do I have the right to buy the property? It’s... there are ways that can be found. And in the past some... there was a conference to donate money in order to reimburse users like myself, for example, and I think the economics of this were more calculated than this money could have been raised where all sides can be happy with that. It did not work out back then. This was in the Annan plan. It did not work out back then. There are a number of studies, surveys on both sides that found a couple of agreeable scenarios. One of the issues is this. Another issue is power-sharing. Yeah, and then the third issue is territories. So, there are a couple of scenarios that received over 50% of support from both sides at the same time. And it’s, well, give and take basically, you get some more percentage and maybe less Greek Cypriots come to the North (northern part) or less percentage and more Greek Cypriots

come to the North (northern part)... more percentage on the power sharing. It's the whole package, on the settlement, basically. That's (what) they can agree on. I think it's not impossible to sort it out. But as the years pass and the people who lived together... I mean, my parents spoke Greek because they were living with Greek Cypriots, but I never lived with Greek Cypriots. So, as time passes and people forget about the common life, it gets more difficult. It has been a conflict for over 50 years now. And as the time passes, it's going to be more and more difficult to solve this."

C: "It's a very interesting point. We might also argue that it gets easier to solve because people are less sentimental about it. They didn't live it. Their parents our grandparents lived it, so they might have less anger in them because of the whole conflict."

D: "No. Because what is happening is that the hatred is kept alive by those people that have a vested interests in division, which has been going on and what is happening is that this hatred actually takes a different shape in the two communities. In the Greek Cypriot community, the young people are being fed with "Turkey came and invaded us and we're under invasion and we want to live together with our dear Turkish Cypriot brothers and sisters, but they don't let us." The Turkish Cypriot youth are brought up with the idea that "Greek Cypriots killed us in the past and now they're discriminating against us. They're cutting all our other outlets to other worlds. And the only way out is through Turkey. Our motherland who is protecting us no matter what." This hatred is being kept alive and in different ways in the two communities. And the previous generation will have difficulties in remembering the good days. Now, after 50 years, remembering the good days? I mean, my parents and I had to ask them a lot of questions in order to make them remember that they had good neighbours. They were, they had happy memories with Greek Cypriots. They started forgetting them."

C: "That's very interesting. This Greek Cypriot I talked to told me that, well, the British created this conflict between Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. That before they used to live together, and they used to live in harmony according to him. But he does have memories about living with them but he's not even that old. He's not very old. He's 62. but yeah, he does have memories of good days living together with Turkish Cypriots. He also told me that a lot of his neighbours didn't speak any Turkish. They spoke mostly Greek, probably like your parents. So, that's very interesting. I have a question about a scenario that was talked about during the Annan plan. So, from what I read we've had two possibilities. On the one hand, we had a possibility

of having a president from one side and a vice president from the other side, but they have also been talking about a collegial presidency.”

D: “What is collegial? Rotational?”

C: “A plan that would consist of six members who were to be elected on a joint list. By the parliament. They were to assume the office of President and vice-president from the other community on a monthly rotating basis. So that was that was the idea for the Annan plan. I think.”

D: “The Annan plan had many versions. I think this was the final version. It was one ticket for the presidents and vice presidents. So, they would run together like they do in the in the states.”

C: “Yeah, but another proposal was made for the Annan plan where there were six members on a monthly basis. They would rotate, change. I read about that.”

D: “I don’t remember that. The Annan plan was this. The final version. There were I think five or six versions of the Annan plan, maybe somewhere in between. They suggested this. But in the last one it was one ticket.”

C: “One ticket would be President and Vice President.”

D: “Yes and then they would change. If I remember correctly for two terms it was the Greek Cypriot who would be president and the vice president would be the Turkish Cypriot. Then one term it would be the other way around. So, a Turkish Cypriot would be the president. The vice president would be the Greek Cypriot again two terms with the Greek Cypriot president. If I remember correctly. It was about twenty years ago.”

C: “Do you think such a system with a president from one community and a vice president from the other would be a possible solution or why hasn’t it been done?”

D: “So, well in the 1960s, it was always the Greek Cypriot president and the vice-president was Turkish Cypriot. This was the case. And I don’t find this just because it means that as a Turkish Cypriot, I can never be the president of my country. I mean, this is like telling Obama that “you cannot be the president. You cannot run for the presidency.” Okay? Being elected is one thing. But not being able to run is something else. For the time being, I cannot run either for the vice presidency of the presidential Republic of Cyprus. This is against my citizenship rights. I cannot be the president of my own country. So, in that sense, I think it is a good idea that at least I had the right to run for it. Well, whether I get elected or not, that’s something else. On the other

hand, once you have one ticket for Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots together, it means that you limit the nationalism in the propaganda time because what happens right now is that during elections, people try to get votes and of course, as the whole of Europe we are not going into a place where there is no nationalism. And nationalism is on the rise in Cyprus. It was always strong. That's... whenever they go to the elections of both sides. They get very nationalistic. They try to get the votes with nationalist propagandas. This will mean that if a candidate tries to get votes from both communities then, they're not going to play on the nationalism. That will be more democratic, more just. If such an election is a plan for the presidency and the vice presidency together."

C: "What if there was a person elected from both sides who were both at the same level. Not a vice president, but two presidents. Let's say, I don't know. That way, you would make sure that no community would take advantage of the other."

D: "I think it is a good idea. But we are far away from that. Even with the rotational presidency, the Greek Cypriots do not agree. Let alone being equal."

C: "Right. So in in 2004 the Annan Plan was rejected by the Greek Cypriot Community, right? Can you explain me why, can you give me more details about why? I think they didn't accept the rules in the plan."

D: "I think it's, well, as I said there was... There was a miss- judgment from our side that the problem was Mr. Denktash. Because he kept saying "no" to everything and the Greek Cypriot side didn't really need to reject anything because there was someone else who was rejecting everything. And once Mr. Denktash was removed from the equation then, we actually saw that Greek Cypriots were not prepared to share their power with Turkish Cypriots. Because they have been running this state on their own since 74 and even for the property that they would get back, even for the guarantee that they would get with the removal of the Turkish Army, because the Turkish army would leave Cyprus. They would have kept 650 soldiers. 650. There are 40,000 right now. And leave. Despite all that, they weren't ready to share their power. I think if we had more time, we could have prepared them. But we didn't have time and the person in power was from extreme right wing organization, from DIKO, Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, who, who went for an aggressive "No campaign". And the Republic of Cyprus had already signed the accession to the EU in 2003. This is happening in 2004, almost one year later in April and whether they said, yes, or no, they would become a member state. So, there wasn't enough leverage for the Greek Cypriots to leave the power they have been enjoying for

the, for the past... how many years since 74? 30 years basically? I would say they're more ready, now. I think now we can find the way because they saw what happened afterwards with Turkey and the person in Turkey that is following an aggressive policy against the Republic of Cyprus right now. Back then, it would have been much easier because in Copenhagen, Turkey was trying to get candidates to start the accession negotiations. So, there was a leverage for Turkey, but there wasn't a leverage for the Republic of Cyprus."

C: "Right. Very interesting. It's also interesting you mentioned the Turkish Army. I read that some Turkish Cypriots might feel in danger if the army had to leave. Do you think that is true? Would you feel in danger? Do you think other Turkish Cypriots would feel in danger?"

D: "My parents lived the war, their houses were attacked. They suffered. So, when my mother tells me that she feels in danger. I understand it. This was 50 years ago. Back then, the military power was more powerful. Now, if somebody tells me that a Greek Cypriot will come and kill me while I sleep at night, I just laugh at them. I mean, I don't think the Turkish Army is in Cyprus to protect me anyway. I think they're in Cyprus to protect their own interest. And I feel more in danger by somebody that might break into my house. Whether Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, I don't know, from Africa, from Europe whatever, than a Greek Cypriot coming to kill me because I'm a Cypriot."

C: "Okay. Very interesting, that answers my question. You also mentioned the EU. Now, Northern Cyprus has a difficult position right now in the EU because officially, there's only one Cyprus. I mean it is the Republic of Cyprus, but it's still divided. So how and to what degree do you feel blocked because you're from Northern Cyprus and not from Southern Cyprus when it comes to the EU. Like, how free are you to go to the EU, to live there, to have a normal EU citizen life lesson."

D: "Interesting debate. This one. I lived in different European countries. Lately, well not lately. I came back to Cyprus five years ago, actually, but before that, I was living in France. In France, I never felt discriminated against because I was a Cypriot or because I was a Turkish Cypriot. In Cyprus every day, I feel discriminated against whether I live in the North or whether I cross to the South. So, I mean, I don't know how it sounds, but I feel discriminated as a European citizen in my own country, but not in Europe. In Europe, I am a European citizen just like you."

C: "And how do you feel discriminated here in Cyprus?"

D: “Well in Cyprus, for example, as I said, now, I’m learning Greek. Because whenever I need to go to the government office of the Republic of Cyprus to exercise my European citizenship rights, everything is in Greek. The laws are in Greek. They sent me my contract, for example, for the European Parliament. It was in Greek. I had to insist on getting at least an English contract or a French one. I also speak French, but I had to insist to it to get it. And not in my mother tongue. In another language. Same thing with the reason I speak French is that I actually wanted to work for the European Commission. I took a test because that’s what happens when you want to work for the European commission. You need to take a test and you need to speak one European language and your mother tongue and supposedly my mother tongue is Greek. But it’s not. So, they made me sit in an exam in Greek, my mother tongue, which obviously, I failed. So, you see, when in Cyprus supposedly, I’m a Greek Cypriot, but I’m not. I don’t speak Greek. But wherever I go by, I am forced to understand that. Or I have to fight for it.”

C: “And what about in Northern Cyprus? I mean, I understand what you say in Southern Cyprus, of course but when you’re in the northern part?”

D: “In the northern part I speak Turkish, but then again, I have views that differ from the, from the current president and the government right now. And I cannot say that I’m living in a.... Okay. I said in the beginning, that it is more democratic than turkey, but it’s not a democratic society. So, I am discriminated against all the time because I’m not a mainstream person because I am a civil society activist who works in human rights areas. And that is not something that is liked by the new regime. And when it comes to the European rights, I cannot exercise them in the North. The TRNC identity card is not a European citizen card. The car that I drive needs to be bought in the North because I cannot buy a car in the Republic of Cyprus and cross into the North. They don’t let me do that. Neither side lets me do it. I have to pay twice as much tax to the TRNC than a Greek Cypriot colleague. All the government positions of the Republic of Cyprus are filled by Greek Cypriots for example. In the North, they are filled by people who support the government basically, so it depends on who you know, not what you know.”

C: “Mr. Kizilyurek is still member of the European Parliament, though. So, that is interesting. Are there many Turkish Cypriots who are in this position or who have been?”

D: “He is the only one. He is the first and only in this position. And he’s being attacked by nationalists from both sides equally.”

C: “Well, that’s very interesting. He seems like a very interesting person to me. I would have liked talking to him too. But very nice.”

D: "Yeah, how did you hear about him?"

C: "I read an article he wrote while I was writing my thesis."

D: "You read an article he wrote, you said."

C: "Yeah, I read an article he wrote. I think it was about identity in Northern Cyprus. Let me check the exact name. "National identity formation", I think it was

"The politics of identity in the Turkish Cypriot community and the language question." That's how I found about him. I have, I think, one last question, concerning the gas resources in the Mediterranean Sea. Turkey has been claiming that it belongs to Turkey. Turkey has said that Cyprus can't do anything about it as long as the conflict is not solved. What do you think Turkey's intentions are in this issue? What do you have to say about this topic?"

D: "I think they're making a lot of fuss over something that doesn't exist. Okay, there is gas. But at the time where we should be discussing global warming rather than getting this gas out and making money out of it. The experts say that the money that we might make from this gas is not much anyway, and I think we should start using sun and wind. I mean we live in Cyprus for god's sake. I don't think we should be fighting over gas that is in water to send more ships over each other threatening who gets the gas and start building solar panels and wind turbines together. This is what will make more sense both economically and ecologically."

C: "Interesting. I agree. This has nothing to do with the topic but I think from what I've seen in this part, in the southern part, people don't usually use bikes a lot. They love to drive and the buses are... public transport is pretty bad."

D: "It does not exist. It's the same over here."

C: "Yeah, so I bought a bike because, because I couldn't get anywhere."

D: "I have a bike. When I came from France, I bought a bike. Yeah, I haven't used it much because basically, I'm scared. There are very few biking trails. There are so few bikers. People don't really understand that there might be somebody on their bike and they have to watch them. Yeah, it's not safe at all. So, I have a bike that stays there and I only use it to exercise in the morning when there is no traffic basically."

C: "Yeah, I agree. Anyways, that's another topic, ecology. Okay, I think."

D: “So, I just wanted to say that on both sides, we just don’t give any thoughts on ecology, or the environment. I mean, we have a Green Party on the other side. In the North, it doesn’t even exist. That is very weak. Green Party. Yes. Today in the Republic of Cyprus, I think it has two MPs. In the North, I don’t even think it exists. I mean, the environmentalists are not very strong here. This is one more thing about the Cyprus problem. It’s stronger than anything and everything. So, whenever you want to do something, whether it’s for the environment, or for women’s rights, for example, I work in the area of women’s rights, human rights, animal rights.... Always they tell us: “Let’s first solve the Cyprus problem and then, we deal with that.” And hunting is a national sport. So that’s how environmentalist we are on this part of the world.”

C: “Yeah, I heard that argument before but it’s been 50 years. So, at one point, you need to do other stuff, but that’s my opinion. Anyway, I think that was it for me, from my side. Thank you so much for answering my questions. It was very interesting to talk to someone like you, who knows more about the topic. I wanted to get the opinion of an expert. Someone who knows more about politics, about the whole issue than just people who are ordinary Cypriots. So, thank you for that.”

D: “Okay. If you have any further questions, just feel free to send me an email and I will send you the paper that I signed by email. I will send it to you now. Thank you.”

C: “Bye.”