The Value in Everyday Conversations: The Unrecognized

A quest to understand the role of everyday diplomacy in migrants of de-facto states.

By

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Abstract

This research is positioned on the interplay between the social and the political nature of diplomacy. This interplay has undergone an increased amount of attention due to the shift of seeing diplomacy not as a profession but rather as an everyday event. I use this angle of everyday diplomacy to question and investigate the impact such ways of thinking can have in understanding the dynamics of how diplomacy is practised in the context of de-facto states. The understanding of diplomacy as a phenomenon means that this research takes a phenomenological perspective to get an understanding of how this nexus between everyday diplomacy and de-facto states takes place. It takes the logic of the de-facto state as a site of research because this site is theorized to be a fertile ground for developing social forms of diplomacy. Focussing specifically on migrants of Northern Cypriots currently in the Netherlands, I show how such groups might deal with their perceived diplomatic selfhood, and how their everyday diplomatic actions might take shape. The findings of this research touch predominantly on the importance of the exchange of pleasantries and the everyday diplomatic value embedded within them.

Tags

Everyday, Diplomacy, De facto states, Phenomenology, Legitimization, Citizenship, Cyprus

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"a narrow path alongside the busy world, but as separate from it as if it were in another dimension."
(Raynor Winn, The Salt Path: A Memoir)

Preface

Thanks for opening this thesis. You are on page two of many. This product has been a long process with many ups and downs and with a few moments of almost giving up. Yet, I am happy I did not, for after rain comes the sun. The idea for this thesis had been long coming yet took long to arrive. The topic has been something I had already been personally involved in for a long time through my time living abroad as well as my travels. I believe that the navigation of otherness is something to embrace rather than shy away from. This thesis for a great part has been inspired by a moment I still remember about 5 years ago. Abroad, I was sitting next to a fire and a family I didn't know who had invited me over to join them for some food. The family and I spoke no language we could both understand and as a result, all conversation was with gestures. We had little understanding of what we were saying, but it was fun, nonetheless. The kid in the family was wearing a football shirt, and we were playing a little bit of football in between the food. Explaining where I was from quickly turned into a rudimentary conversation about different football players. "Arjen Robben! Great!" he says. I responded of course agree, saying: "Yes, yes, great!". I ask: "You know *van Persie?*" he answers: "yes yes!", and he makes a diving motion reminding me of the goal that he made against Spain. This gave me a sense of warmth: wow he knows things about *me,* about my culture. And he cares. It was comforting to know that, so far away from home people knew. Yet, in the same understanding, I realized I knew so little about his. I didn't know any football players, nor did I know any famous sports players from there. I was also unable to ask; the language barrier was too high. Despite all this I tried my best to be kind; to show I did care about him, his family, and his culture. I hope they also enjoyed it.

Partly due to that encounter, I see Mongolia, where I was at that time, very positively. I hope partly because of that encounter that the family also sees The Netherlands positively. These conversations and encounters are what my thesis aims to zoom in on. I sincerely hope that reading this work makes you think about the many taken-for-granted things in our world. I hope it makes it visible that being kind to strangers is worthwhile and that otherness is something to embrace, not to shy away from. I hope that this work provides a good narrative for the plight of the many unrecognized. I hope that they find solace in this work, that despite the international status of their country, they do exist!

I would like to give an immense thank you to my participants, for without your time and contribution, this product would have never been possible. I hope that my words find you well. Also special thanks to my supervisor, Niels, who has been extremely kind to lend his time to answer my questions and listen to my ramblings about this thesis. And of course, to my girlfriend.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

On an everyday level, what role does an embassy really have? When I lived abroad for five years, I only used it once. To renew my passport. In the news, embassies are mostly mentioned in the context of international conflicts. Protests in front of embassies, embassies being attacked etc. Yet embassies also have practical, less symbolic roles. Among other duties embassies try to fulfil, providing information is one of them. Many embassies have Twitter accounts, where they try to fulfil this role through sharing information about events, (geo)political news, and promoting culture (see e.g.: @CyprusinNL, 2023). Yet now that everyone is using social media, I argue that it is worth reconsidering the effectiveness of such strategies. Take for instance the role Dua Lipa has taken on in the plight for recognition of Kosovo (Dua Lipa, 2019). She has a much greater audience that is willing to listen to her about her views on this matter. Certainly, much more so than an embassy or a diplomat ever could. It seems reasonable then to reconsider what diplomacy is, and that the role of individuals in enacting diplomacy should not be underestimated. Dua Lipa is of course an internationally famous individual, with millions of followers who are willing to listen. Yet, I argue that even individuals like you and me can be diplomats in our daily lives. Consider for example that when comparing social media, many individuals have a greater reach than most embassies have. Or think about how in many societies we have daily encounters with people from all sides of the world, both online, but also on the streets. In this sense, diplomacy practised by individuals is of everyday occurrence. It is something that we deal with every day. This understanding is what I, and many others called everyday diplomacy. Here, I see diplomacy as a process and phenomenon that appears "*whenever someone successfully claims to represent and negotiate for a territory or a group of people or a cause, or successfully claims to mediate between others engaging in such representations and negotiations*" (Bryant & Hatay, 2021; C. Constantinou, 2015; Faizullaev, 2022). In opposition to classical understandings of diplomacy, this type of diplomacy is not practised in offices, behind closed doors or through international organisations and embassies (Mac Ginty, 2014; Marsden et al., 2016). Everyday diplomacy aims to reconfigure what it is to be a diplomat by seeing diplomacy as a phenomenon rather than a profession (C. Constantinou, 2015). More specifically, it focuses on practices that are enacted and unnoticed in everyday life, that might, at first glance seem trivial and devoid of meaning (Felski, 2000). Yet, when taking a closer look at such practices they are found to be filled with (geo)politics. Everyday diplomacy also fundamentally addresses one of the pitfalls of diplomatic studies because it challenges the taken-for-granted nature of the Westphalian framework (idem, p. 14), by attempting to go beyond the methodological nationalism (idem, p. 14) which is very prone in classical understandings of diplomacy. It is upon this understanding that it is worth investigating how communities or individuals start developing a self-understanding as a diplomat and act on this self-understanding (C. Constantinou, 2015).

This type of diplomacy is theorized to most likely occur in areas that have been "*affected in especially intense ways by international conflicts*" (Marsden et al., 2016, p.5).

The case that Dua Lipa highlights, Kosovo, is specifically interesting to explore because it is so intensely affected by international conflicts. Kosovo is what many people call a de facto state because is a state in *practice*, but not de jure. It is a place that simultaneously exists but also does not. A place that lacks full recognition by the international system, and as a result faces a set of unique challenges and situations. It is a place where the territory is controlled by the local government and where it has achieved high levels of internal legitimacy, but where the international community refuses to grant it the external component of legitimacy (Caspersen, 2012). Citizens of such states in general struggle with travelling abroad; quite some countries officially don't recognize their passport (Krasniqi, 2019). For Kosovo in particular, its citizens face constant animosity with their neighbours due to the continued rhetoric of Serbia (Borger, 2023). As a result of such rhetoric, but also the international stance, the citizens essentially live in a constant state of uncertainty and anxiety (see e.g.: Bryant, 2014; Gogia, 2011). Kosovo is not the only place that is a de-facto state. Another area intensely affected by international conflict has been Northern Cyprus. This island has long been a site of tensions between the Turkish-speaking Cypriot minority and the Greek-speaking Cypriots. This tension resulted in the partitioning in 1973 when the Turkish military landed on the island. This however has done little to ease the hostilities (Hadjipavlou, 2007). Turkish-speaking Cypriots, as a result of the conflict, face a range of issues. Less than a handful of countries recognize Northern Cyprus, meaning their passport is of little use internationally. Although some Cypriots, who can prove their family has lived in Cyprus before 1973, can get a Republic of Cyprus passport many others who cannot prove that, cannot (Krasniqi, 2019).

The international community sees Northern Cyprus, and many other de-facto states as anomalies which are to be avoided (Ker-Lindsay, 2022). The lack of a de-facto state's external legitimacy severely hampers its ability to employ diplomatic activities beyond its border. As a result, it is forced to shift its resources to deploy alternative means of diplomacy. De facto states for example often mimic sovereignty (Loh & Heiskanen, 2020) by creating alternatives to international bodies like the UN (Harrington, 2019). These alternative practises are often called hybrid diplomatic practices because such states: "*stand out for their hybridity in transcending the state versus nonstate diplomacy dichotomy*" (Bouris & Fernández-Molina, 2018).

For residents of Northern Cyprus, many real everyday issues present themselves because of the non-recognition by the international community. Take for instance the sheer difficulty in travelling abroad during COVID, when vaccination certifications were not seen as valid (Interview 4). Or that some universities or jobs might take issue with the authenticity of school or university certificates and diplomas (Interview 5, 3). Starting a business or trying to innovate is difficult due to the often heavy range of economic sanctions this region faces. In general, the quality of citizenship, individual rights and protections are much lower than in other places (Krasniqi, 2019, p. 310).

It is at this intersection of the understanding of diplomacy as an everyday phenomenon combined with the logic of the hybrid practices of a de-facto state, I argue, brings a unique new perspective to the table for both the understanding of how diplomacy is enacted as well as how de-facto states fit within the wider international system, and the role of citizenship within that. This research is positioned on two layers of understanding. At the first layer, this research aims to position itself on the interplay between the social and the political nature of diplomacy. By instead focusing on everyday life, and thus letting go of the state-centric

approach, I put forward an understanding of how and why de-facto state citizens might employ everyday diplomacy.

In the background of all this is also the important question about the relationship between citizenship and statehood as understood in the context of the international system of citizens belonging to recognized states. Here specifically I see the international system as a so-called assemblage, lending the concept from Deleuze and Guattari. They describe how an assemblage can be anything that is made up of various components that constitute the whole (Deleuze et al., 1989). Specifically, within politics, an assemblage is about the many different power relations all entangled within each other, and, at a fundamental level these relations aim to keep their power. An assemblage is also generally constructed in such a way that it tries to grasp anything that threatens to flee (and therefore morph) from the assemblage.

Seeing the international power system as an assemblage is a useful way to think because it allows for a better understanding of why de-facto states are generally seen as anomalies to the system: because they present a threat that might fundamentally change the international system. This escape from an assemblage is what Deleuze and Guattari call a "line of flight".

Throughout this research, I work off the understanding that everyday diplomacy is this line of flight. As a result, this research is my account of chasing this line. During the process of this chase, It has allowed me to not only better understand what everyday diplomacy is and how it might be practised in everyday life, but also to try and place it in a broader context. Specifically everyday diplomacy aims to forego the persistent labelling of non-recognition by questioning the persistent methodological nationalism (Marsden et al., 2016), and thus enabling different conceptualizations of the assemblage to appear. To do so, I employ a post-intentional phenomenological angle to conduct this research. I argue that this method aligns perfectly with the broader vision of this research; that diplomacy is not a craft, nor a tool, but rather a phenomenon that can occur in all aspects of life. Vagle, the main academic to champion this method of research, describes this idea as a quest to chase "*the lines of flight phenomena can/might take*" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2016).

Research – Operationalisation

To conduct this research, I choose to focus on the de-facto state's diaspora communities. My primary reason for this is that it is through these groups that diplomatic activities are most likely to occur due to the pervasiveness of "exposure" to *others* from elsewhere. Furthermore, the choice of migrants is also partly due to practical reasoning. For student researchers it is difficult to visit and for various other reasons not necessarily wise to travel to unstable places like de-facto states (see e.g. the paper by Eck & Cohen, 2021). Because de-facto states generally feature relatively large diaspora communities, it was still possible to find enough participants.

To narrow the research further I decided to focus on the Turkish-speaking Cypriots from Northern Cyprus. Despite the difficulty in going abroad for citizens living in Northern Cypris, many have done so. Either via a European passport from the Republic of Cyprus, which Cypriots can attain if they can prove they (or their family) were on the island before 1973. Or through a Turkish passport sometimes attainable to certain families. For the Turkish-speaking Cypriots who have been able to move abroad, either temporarily or permanently, they have been able to communicate and relate with many international crowds.

As a researcher coming from The Netherlands, I have opted to conduct fieldwork inside of the Netherlands and to speak to Turkish-speaking migrants living here. Although as a student research part of this choice relates to budgetary reasons, another important reason is that I am aware of many of the "everyday realities" people living in the Netherlands might be presented with, and as a result might be better positioned to interpret the ideas and opinions of my participants. The Netherlands is furthermore also a good place to find Turkish-speaking Cypriots. The influence of Brexit means that Cypriot students are more likely to study in The Netherlands rather than the UK because many Turkish-speaking Cypriots who own a Republic of Cyprus passport, can no longer easily travel there. The Netherlands is then a good alternative due to the pervasiveness of English education. This is important because the interviews I have conducted were predominantly with students, studying in the Dutch educational system.

From an official standpoint, the governmental policy of the Netherlands is firmly opinionated to deny the official status of northern Cyprus, and it sees the island as being "property of" the Republic of Cyprus (Staatssecretaris Justitie en Veiligheid, 2023). It also does not accept a TRNC passport either (idem), and in this regard can therefore be seen as an example of being part of the international system where their state's existence is being denied.

To conclude, my research question is formulated with the aforementioned points alongside my choice of methodology which is found in the recent work of Vagle (2018) on post-intentional phenomenology (more on that in Chapter 3). This methodology importantly embraces that the role of the researcher is undeniable and that other descriptions of the experience are highly probable. This research's main question is as follows:

How might everyday diplomacy take shape for de-facto state migrants in a site where their de-facto state's existence is denied?

Then, in helping to answer this question, I have established three sub-questions with the aim to all directly contribute to answering the main question:

1. **What constitutes the everyday life of migrants living in sites where their de-facto state existence is denied?**

Understanding everyday diplomacy necessarily involves understanding the daily lives of these people. What do they do? How do they see and understand themselves? What is their relationship with their de-facto state? Here is not so much of interest the "truth" of what everyday life constitutes. More important is how these, in keeping with phenomenology, are experienced, and perceived. This specifically also lays focus on the (veiled) power dynamics at play for these migrants and their livelihoods.

2. **What is it like to enact the role of an everyday diplomat, and how is this entangled in their daily lives?**

This question zooms more in on the practice of ED, and the relations it holds with everyday life. It aims to focus more on the experience of every diplomacy, and how these are practiced and enacted. It aims to bring the understanding of sub-question one in a dialogue.

3. **What might the role of organisations be in relation to everyday diplomacy?**

Organisations like NGOs might in many ways enable or constrain how migrants act in their daily lives. The question here of interest is, is how this plays together with everyday diplomacy, and perceived by the individual.

Naming

In this introduction, I find it quite important to talk about naming, because I see words as useful tools, but also easy to abuse. Starting, I have opted to choose the term de-facto state, rather than any other for a few considerations. Firstly, the term de-facto focuses on the practical realities on the ground; for indeed, the people are as real as can be, they lead a real life. Not only the people but the state itself is also very real in practice; the state hands out passports, the state has politicians, it has parties and very real border checks. Yet despite these realities, according to official *de jure* realities, they are not. It therefore presents itself as a paradox; whenever it is named, it confirms its existence, but in that same breath is also denied. The term de-facto therefore very much highlights the idea that it does exist in all but name. This I argue is an important and highly relevant analytical angle vital for this research. Secondly, I argue that the term also brings into focus the most important contradiction, that results in the problems that the state has, non-recognition. The consequences of non-recognition are found in all sectors of life. From dealing with COVID to getting admitted into universities abroad, from international trade to international travel. I therefore agree with Bryant and Hatay, who summarize it well by saying that: " *'de facto' […] simultaneously acknowledges a 'fact on the ground' and denies it*." (Bryant & Hatay, 2020, p. 7). Other names that are linked to economic factors like trade-restricted state, and embargoed state, I have opted not to use because of the far-reaching consequences of a de-facto state. I argue that these consequences reach much further than just (international) trade and business-related issues. It also touches other areas like politics, daily life, and culture. Names that focus on non-recognition, like for example non-recognized state, disputed- or quasi-state, again also shy away from what I argue to be more than "just" a disagreement between parties, which is what the names non-recognition or disputed emphasized.

The analytical naming of the citizens living in the north of Cyprus is also under contention. Specifically, the distinction between Turkish Cypriots and Turkish-speaking Cypriots can be contentious. In this research, I will generally refer to Turkish-speaking Cypriot for the simple reason that it avoids touching on or insinuating a connection between Turkish culture and or identity. It also, from experience, seems to be the preferred "correct" option of the two.

Relevance

This research aims to find its relevance embedded in the research of everyday life and the research of de-facto states. The research field of everyday life is getting a growing level of attention, predominantly from ethnographers who put everyday life at the centre of their methodology. The research of everyday life has increasingly branched out to other genres of

research like security studies (Crawford & Hutchinson, 2016), peace(building) studies (Mac Ginty, 2014) and many others. However, within the field of conflict studies, Busse (2022) concludes that the relationship between everyday life and conflict is something that requires more attention from researchers. He argues, that conflict studies have often seen violence and violent conflict as a "*more or less severe suspension of normal life*" (Busse, 2022, p. 583). Yet he and Das (2007) both argue the opposite. Instead, violence and conflict "*attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary*" (Das, 2007, p. 1). The role of everyday diplomacy herein is relevant because it helps "*stripping away at dominant narratives of conflict*" (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 560).

Within the study of frozen conflicts and de-facto states, a considerable amount of attention is being paid to the role of international bodies and nation-states Take for instance the recent progress on the research projects such as "engagement without recognition" (see e.g.: Ker-Lindsay, 2018). The role of CSOs/NGOs in issues of legitimacy and cooperation is also being discussed but are already less common. Although this field investigates how alternative conceptualizations of various ideas might lead to more engagement, these studies, in my eyes, neglect the role of citizens and how their engagement with others hides a plethora of important information. De-facto states for example have large groups of diaspora who, for certain, have a role in shaping the structures of opportunities for a de-facto state (Dembinska & Campana, 2017; Ker-Lindsay, 2022). My study jumps into this academic gap and aims to contribute by creating an understanding of the role of citizens, and individuals.

Specifically, for members of de-facto state migrant communities, this research aims to show how they negotiate their daily lives. It can highlight the value certain practices can bring to better negotiate their often-troubled livelihoods. Many citizens of de-facto states will own two passports, but due to their background can often still be seen as outsiders. More broadly and more importantly, I argue, is the impact of narration and uncovering such groups. Due to their position in the world, such groups can often go "under the radar", and by putting these groups, and their issues in the spotlight, I hope to contribute in some small ways to the recognition of them as humans.

For de-facto state citizens, this research also aims to provide an understanding of how they navigate themselves through their lives. It aims to understand their value and their role in greater geopolitical processes. Thanks to the micro-scale of analyses, I show how diplomacy is not restricted to small rooms at international bodies or in the offices of presidents, and that therefore, these citizens have room for agency and movement. Ontologically, this aligns with the realisation that one is not simply a "cog in a wheel" nor a "puppet on a string" (Demmers, 2017), but instead in some ways can interact with the world around it simultaneously constrained by a myriad of (geopolitical) factors.

This interaction and agency come to fruition in already conducted studies of everyday diplomacy. This relatively new field of study got a kick-start through a special issue on Everyday Diplomacy published by Cambridge University in 2016. Yet there is a lot more to explore still. By taking everyday diplomacy as a starting point, I aim to contribute a case study to the growing understanding of what everyday diplomacy precisely is, and more importantly, what it is not. Specifically, I aim to enhance the understanding of researching how everyday diplomacy can act as a *substitute,* in places where the government is unable to do so. Despite some theorization by predominantly Marsden (2016) and Constantinou (2016), little actual research has been done in combining everyday diplomacy with the logic of de-facto states.

Finally, for practitioners and governmental officials, this study provides a story of how diplomacy is more fluid than how it conservatively has been described. And also crucially what this might mean for the role they play in such processes. Crucially I aim to shy away from seeing everyday diplomacy as a tool, to be instrumentalized by governments, like Marsden warns about (2016, p. 69). Instead, quite the opposite I aim to show that political elites would do well to take seriously the plight and everyday life of its citizens. In this line, I see the livelihoods of such groups as a source of information usable by practitioners to better understand the nuances of such types of conflict, with the nudge to meaningfully solve them.

The rest of this document is structured as follows. Firstly, in chapter 2 I aim to give a comprehensive overview of the literature and the debates on diplomacy. In that chapter, I also zoom into social forms of diplomacy and end up further specifying everyday diplomacy and linking it to the logic of de-facto states. In Chapter 3 I dive into the methodological backing this research holds closely. In that chapter, I also look at the ethical considerations of this research as well as sketch up in more detail how fieldwork is conducted. Finally, in Chapter 4 I present and discuss the findings of the research, after which in Chapter 5 I present and discuss the conclusion, answer the main question of this research, and briefly consider future avenues of research.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

Diplomacy

Finland has "sauna diplomacy", China practices "panda diplomacy", Russia uses "vodka diplomacy" and the US employs "wine diplomacy". It seems that everything can be diplomacy. It has perhaps become a verb of little value without one or more adjectives. These new conceptualizations of diplomacy were in part also due to the huge rise of social media and the internet and has meant that "*the tools of diplomacy have expanded*" (Ho & McConnell, 2019). The increasingly globalizing world, where foreign policy is assessed very broadly, has also meant that the range of actors that (want to) engage with these policies, on for example Twitter or elsewhere, has grown substantially (idem). The notion of diplomacy has grown by such quantities that Faizullaev (2022, p. 32-34), rather hilariously, dedicates two whole pages to listing different types of diplomacies he found on social media. I mentioned "just" four of them. What the rise in these adjectives also shows is how diplomacy as a concept gets more attention and gets problematized more often. It does start begging the question: what is diplomacy even? But also, what is it not? How is it generally conceptualized, and are there alternative conceptualizations? This chapter is precisely about this. It aims to give an overview of common threads in the understanding of the concept, and in the end, zooms in on one type of understanding I and this research particularly subscribe to.

What is diplomacy even?

In 1939 Harold Nicolson wrote an important work on diplomacy. He argues that diplomacy has come to mean many things and can be understood as 1) a synonym for foreign policy, 2) as a negotiation, 3) as the method of conducting these negotiations, 4) as a governmental institution, and 5) as a skill through which one can successfully conduct international negotiations. (Nicolson, 1988). Regardless of meaning, diplomacy is mostly understood as being 'of the state'. A thing, act or skill embedded within the logic of nation-states displayed and enacted on the international podium between other international nation-states. It is in this understanding also that in 1961 the creation of the so-called "*Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*", this state-centric approach was embedded and mainstreamed. The document states that the aim of diplomatic actions (and thus diplomats) is to; protect and represent the states' interests abroad, negotiate with the local government, gather information and lastly promote friendly relations between the two states (*Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961*, n.d.). The language in the document is firmly grounded in the understanding of diplomacy as being part of the relations between two sovereign and recognized nation-states and as a bi-directional form of communication. Yet, Nicolson in 1939 already wrote, "*diplomacy … is an*

*essential element in any reasonable relation between **man and man** [my emphasis] and between nation and nation*" (Nicolson, 1988, p. 14).

State-centric or not, the notion of diplomacy is still rather slippery because in general always talks parts of these five different conceptualizations mentioned by Nicolson into some combined term, just like he himself also did to some extent by using the Oxford dictionary definition (Nicolson, 1988). The following section is meant to briefly elaborate on other attempts by various authors to define diplomacy. After which I will, in the end, compose my own (and thus this research's) understanding of diplomacy.

Broad and Narrow Diplomacy

Despite Nicolson's early recognition of diplomacy as not exclusively being state-centric, a lot of literature, still to this day, heavily focuses on a state-centric approach. From those five earlier mentioned points. Now, in academic literature, it was (and often is) either seen as the communication between two governments or as a governing institute, managing relations internationally (Wille, 2023). This form of diplomacy is then mostly understood "*as a starting point for analysing relations between polities, and geopolitics at large*" (Marsden et al., 2016). The culture around diplomacy is understood as a "*minimalist, elitist and exclusivist [culture that is] not for everyone but for the chosen few*" (Constantinou, 2015, p. 7). One example of this has been the work of Hedley Bull, an IR scholar. He proposes three different approaches ('senses') to how diplomacy is to be understood (Bull, 1977). He highlights the "*conduct between states and other entities*" (idem), the role of "*professional diplomatists*" (idem), and the manner of the conduct as being: "*tactful or subtle*" (idem). Bull, through his three different senses, puts the lens on the role of political actors (*the few*) and their tactfulness (*exclusivist*). This conceptualisation firmly leaves out the social realm where non-state actors operate within.

An advancement in this understanding has come through the work of Sharp and Jönsson (2002), argues Faizullaev (2022). They both highlight a *broad* and a *narrow* definition of diplomacy. The broad definition of diplomacy can be summarized as the understanding of diplomacy as a tool or an instrument through which foreign policy is shaped and altered. Here diplomacy is seen as an institution inside of the system of states (Faizullaev, 2022). The narrow version on the other hand focuses more on a practical understanding like the approach Nicolson takes. Here, diplomacy is understood as a practice and how this takes shape as practised by professionals. The focus in this understanding as a result lies more on the communicative aspects, and how representation takes shape (Faizullaev, 2022; Jönsson, 2002).

Specifically the narrow version of diplomacy; about what it actually *is,* shows the first signs of going beyond what Marsden et al. (2016) calls methodological nationalism. Jönsson (2002), further talking about this narrow definition argues that indeed diplomacy needs not be limited to state agents, but rather is present whenever there is an *other.* Within this understanding that Jönsson brings forward, the first concrete signs of a big overarching theme that paints the debate on diplomacy can be discerned. Is the nature of diplomacy predominantly social? Or political? (Faizullaev, 2022, p. 22). Various authors have chosen one side or the other and argued for their cases (idem). Yet argues Faizullaev, a focus on the social does not mean ignoring the political. Quite the opposite, the "*political and social realities are interrelated and intertwined*" (Faizullaev, 2022, p. 22). This intertwined relationship between the political and the social can also be seen in the reasoning for taking on a diplomatic selfhood.

Faizullaev (2022), distinguishes four different driving motives behind diplomacy. From a rationalist and political standpoint, an actor might be looking for political or economic

benefits and sees negotiation as a form of game theory. Others might however also be driven by more moral reasons, based on the actor's principles and convictions. An actor might have legal reasons on which an actor is (forced) to take on diplomatic action and lastly, diplomacy might be conducted for social reasons. Think here of the importance of relationships, and the need for coexistence for example (Faizullaev, 2022).

Diplomacy as a social phenomenon

The social aspect of diplomacy, sometimes also called social diplomacy, can find its uniqueness in various aspects. Firstly, it views diplomacy not as a profession, but rather as a phenomenon. Here, the work by Constantinou et al. (2016) on transprofessional diplomacy, is of specific relevance. They argue that a pluralization of diplomatic actors has occurred, which they frame as a positive development by using the term trans-professionalization. This understanding goes further than the one Jönsson (2002) puts forward in the narrow understanding of diplomacy, because they argue that the professional diplomat was and is not so much a fully-fledged job, but rather is given authority and legitimacy through the sovereign state, rather than the job itself (C. M. Constantinou et al., 2016, p. 50). As a result of this trans-professionalization, a new focus lies on non-state actors like NGOs, celebrities or actors advocating certain issues. Constantinou, in this regard, has also coined the term everyday ambassador (2015), to highlight how the increasingly digital and global culture has resulted in the title of an "ambassador" becoming increasingly flexible. In this regard, he argues that not only celebrities but also "common" everyday people can take on this role (C. Constantinou, 2015).

Social diplomacy also means questioning the location where diplomacy occurs. This both in a geographical but also conceptual sense. In the classical view, diplomacy has mostly been practised in offices, behind closed doors or through international organisations in embassies (Mac Ginty, 2014; Marsden et al., 2016). By going beyond the nationalist understanding, there are suddenly a myriad of places where diplomacy can and does occur. Within the study of everyday diplomacy, specific emphasis is placed on this understanding. Marsden (and also others like Bryant & Hatay, 2021; Constantinou, 2015; Mac Ginty, 2014) show that this type of diplomacy can be observed everywhere: at the kitchen table, in the shopping mall, on the street etc. Marsden et al. (2016) however do highlight two sites that are especially prone to exhibit everyday diplomatic practices. The first site is through certain communities like stateless populations, or communities that are affected in "*especially intense ways by international conflicts*" (idem). The second one is where people are living in so-called frontier realms. These realms are often cultural areas which require frequent boundary crossing between a "*politically divided space*" (idem). Think here of cultural boundaries between the EU or living near a de-facto state border. Bryant (2016) also specifically emphasises the role such forms of diplomacy can take in neighbourhoods. She argues that in divided communities, pleasantries, greetings and gossip are important forms of social diplomacy (Bryant, 2016, p. 21). Yet, importantly with social diplomacy, also outside of the context of divided communities social forms of diplomacy can take a prominent role (Henig, 2016).

There is some contention however among scholars within the field of social diplomacy, as to *who* exactly employs everyday diplomacy. Faizullaev (2022) for example argues that "*everybody who promotes positive and constructive social relations, including goodwill and everyday ambassadors, acts as a social diplomat.*" (Faizullaev, 2022, p. 196). He argues that to embrace a diplomatic selfhood, one must have a "diplomatic spirit" whereby one acts out of goodwill

and constructiveness, and not merely to promote one's own ideas and agenda—others, like Constantinou (2015) and Marsden et al. (2016), however, do specifically include this wider understanding which does not necessitate the components of goodwill and constructiveness. It is this second, wider understanding, that I employ throughout this research.

In my understanding of everyday diplomacy, it is common however that everyday diplomacy is enacted out of goodwill, due to the important aspect of *coexistence*. I argue that diplomacy can be seen as a tool to mediate and navigate the eternal "*interdependence and need for coexistence*" (Faizullaev, 2022, p. 38). The search for coexistence is here seen as a bottom-up process whereby not only political actors but the whole society uses diplomacy as a way to manage their coexistence with each other. An example of the relationship between diplomacy and the search for coexistence can be found in the work of Bryant (2016) who researched how conflicts over space were navigated through diplomatic acts. In her reading on how communities managed to co-exist, she emphasizes the diplomatic act of the use of *constructive ambiguity.* Constructive ambiguity is a way of dealing with otherness, whereby difficult and contentious issues are left aside, and instead, the focus is shifted to issues where progress is possible.

Another key aspect of social diplomacy I would like to highlight is the aspect of representation. Social forms of diplomacy are not (and cannot be) representing a full departure from the relevance of the nation-state. As Marsden et al. points out: everyday diplomacy, and thus also social diplomacy, is still inadvertently involved in reconstructing "*representations of the nation-state*" (Marsden et al., 2016, p. 6). This is also in line with Faizullaev's statement that the political and the social always overlap. Yet, crucially, social diplomacy leaves the door open to pick and choose certain representations, which need not always be in line with governmental representations of identity, culture, language, and current issues.

A final aspect of social diplomacy I would like to highlight is perhaps the most associated one: the aspect of negotiation, and how these negotiations are conducted. Here negotiation can be seen as a process through which two or more actors reach an agreement. Different strategies of negotiation exist and have been well documented. In the context of social diplomacy, where the key to negotiations is the search for coexistence, such negotiations, are less seen as pure competition, and more so to find common ground. An important distinction however is that social diplomacy is not stooled on the "official" seat of diplomacy, and negotiations are more implicit and of the everyday (Faizullaev, 2022, p. 61). With this, I mean that negotiations should not be seen as official meetings, with an agenda and a clear expected result. But rather negotiations can be found in places where otherness is found. Think here of everyday conversation in the supermarket or at a university for example.

Social diplomacy and de facto states

I argue that a *site* that fits very well in the concepts mentioned is any de-facto state. Because indeed, de-facto states are intensely affected by international conflicts. The space is furthermore highly divided politically with at least two entities laying claim to it. Marsden et al. (2016) but also Constantinou et al. (2016) mention the relevance of social diplomacy specifically concerning de-facto states specifically as well. They state that these 'new' actors have systematically been left out of the diplomatic field of study. Yet, with that, they do not so much mean that the diplomats of such states have not received enough attention, but rather that the diplomacy related to de facto states is far wider than the restricted definition of state

diplomats. Importantly, both authors state that the non-professional side of de-facto state diplomacy might be way more meaningful and intense compared to recognized states (Marsden et al., 2016). Studying de-facto state diplomacy without explicitly focusing on social diplomacy seems therefore unwise.

This encapsulates quite well the position and research area this research has embedded itself in. This research is precisely positioned on the interplay between the social and the political nature of diplomacy and where it takes the logic of de-facto state as a site of research because this site is theorized to be a fertile ground for developing social forms of diplomacy.

Everyday Diplomacy

As a result, I further operationalise the concept of social diplomacy by focussing on everyday diplomacy. The simple reason for this is that this form is especially hypothesized to apply to citizens of such states. The notion of everyday diplomacy specifically focuses on everyday, mundane aspects and actions of "ordinary" people's lives. Here I don't mean to say that people's lives are ordinary, or banal, but I just want to emphasize this understanding of diplomacy is universal: everyone is involved. It can also be seen as a type of social diplomacy that specifies and amplifies the everyday nature of diplomacy. Everyday diplomacy as a form of social diplomacy applies diplomacy to larger contexts where it emphasises its "*humane and bottom-up profile*" (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 560). By taking a social angle this research also aims to steer clear of nation-state-centric approaches. Public diplomacy, also a form of social diplomacy, focuses more on the role of the nation-state in manipulating non-state actors. Everyday diplomacy, on the other hand, is seen as a truly ground-up concept (Marsden et al., 2016), where individuals build connections with other individuals or small groups, and less so with nation-states. It is also the same reason why everyday diplomacy differs from rebel diplomacy. Although rebel diplomacy explicitly focuses on going beyond the nation-state and zooms in on unrecognized groups, the focus of rebel diplomacy still lies with state officials and elites and adheres to many of the classical diplomatic practices seen as being reserved for states (Huang, 2016).

Sennet (2012) is one of the first scholars to properly mention and conceptualize the concept. He views everyday diplomacy more in terms of shaping, and maintaining positive relationships, and using it as a tool to handle conflict management. Constantinou (2015) however, departs somewhat from this notion by stating that diplomacy is also about self-promotion, sometimes at the expense of the other. It brings into focus the components of persuasion and coercion. He also supports the idea that an encounter of any actor with *others* holds the potential to be a diplomatic encounter.

The term everyday diplomacy, lending itself partly from the sociological study of the everyday, is firmly grounded in quotidian and mundane habits. Practices that are enacted in (unnoticed) everyday life, that might, at first glance seem trivial and devoid of meaning (Felski, 2000). Everyday diplomacy therefore aims to look at the *unnoticed* practices of diplomacy at an everyday level, and importantly how the experiences of geopolitical processes form the ground upon which communities or individuals start developing a self-understanding as a diplomat and act on this self-understanding. This angle firmly brings into question the diplomatic selfhood (C. Constantinou, 2015) and importantly asks how actors adopt a diplomatic identity to promote certain issues.

Everyday Diplomacy not only lends ideas from studies of diplomacy and everyday life. Everyday peace (grounded in peace studies) has also influenced how this form of diplomacy has taken shape. Where everyday peace sees any peace better as no peace, and advocates for a very "*limited form of peace*" (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 557) consistent with trying to "*ek[e] out space for 'normal' existence*" (idem, p. 560). Everyday diplomacy instead positions itself as a different, more active and activistic approach that goes beyond mere survival, and broadly accepting the status quo. Everyday peace is conceptualized by Mac Ginty (2014, p. 556) through things like avoiding contentious topics, speaking with high levels of ambiguity, deferring blame to outsiders, showing no care for the political situation and other such actions and practices. Everyday diplomacy instead advocates a more open, accepting, and utilization of the situation. Yet it is not blatantly pushing for changes at the cost of relationships. It is a nuanced, subtle, playful, and artistic act of embracing otherness and using it to one's advantage. It aims to subtly challenge norms and commonly held assumptions (Mac Ginty, 2014) which, as Marsden (2016) points out, can be a thin line between the political and the non-political. Within his paper, he, for example, highlights how traders often have to balance between political life and protecting the image of themselves more broadly. One way that these Afghan traders employed diplomacy was through the flexibility of presenting oneself through things like language and clothing (idem).

De-facto states in the global system

Just like the study of diplomacy, the study of de-facto states has gone through fundamental shifts over the last ten years. In these years, more scholars started to pay attention to so-called de-facto states. A state where the local government controls its territories and where it has achieved high levels of internal legitimacy, but where it misses a crucial aspect of any country: external legitimacy (Caspersen, 2012). These states used to be seen as an anomaly, even within academics. Yet, increasingly, with the rise of new fields of study like critical geopolitics and critical IR such states are being researched not as an anomaly, but as an inherent part of the international system (Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018; McConnell, 2017).

A state that lacks full legitimacy and sovereignty is in many ways a state, but also not. Such a state can be seen to be on the doorstep of the international system, but never quite able to step through the door and enter. Bryant (2014) rightly however points out that they are not locked *out,* but instead are locked *in.* The Human Geography term liminality is applicable here because it points to the in-betweenness of such states, paired often with turbulent periods (idem). De facto states can be seen to be in a liminal space between the political entity they are, and the one they wish to become (idem). Defining liminality further, Loh and Heiskanen (2020) argue that de facto states can specifically be classified as being *marginally liminal*. They describe this type of liminality as one where "*actors mimic existing sovereignty practices in an effort eventually join the system*" (see also: McConnell et al., 2012). Interestingly, Loh and Heiskanen (2020) argue that a de-facto state helps to "*sharpen the dividing line of the inside/outside dichotomy*". In other words, the fact that a de-facto state strives so hard to be sovereign, brings into sharp focus that it is not sovereign and that it is a true outsider from the international system. Yet, this does not stop them from adhering to certain practices that mimic that of the international system and happens in a few ways according to Loh and Heiskanen (2020).

Firstly, through the way the state internally structures government, which very much aligns with recognised states' governments. They have all the important institutions present as if part of the international order. With those institutions, these states attend international conferences and meetings that mimic the likes of the UN (Harrington, 2019) and such (see for example the *Community for Democracy and Rights of Nations*). During such conferences, they "*neatly copy the principles and practices of diplomacy*" (Berg & Vits, 2018) in an attempt to mimic diplomatic practices in the hopes of lending them legitimacy (C. M. Constantinou et al., 2016, p. 51). Loh and Heiskanen (2020) also highlight the example where the fact that Taiwan participates as Chinese Taipei, highlights very accurately how Taiwan is stuck on this liminal doorstep between being sovereign (and thus participating), and not being sovereign (China requiring a name change)

A second way this marginal liminality is exhibited is through the practice of diplomatic exchange. De facto states will often try to reach out to international actors to try and gain a presence. Taiwan is a notable example hereof due to its many informal and de-facto embassies throughout the world. The other way around is also the case: where international actors place trading posts or other similar types of buildings, but in practice act as de-facto embassies. Germany for example houses an "information office" in the North of Cyprus (*Foreign Missions in TRNC | Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*, 2014), as a way to engage with the north, without directly recognizing it.

The understanding of de facto states as being marginally liminal is important in order to understand its diplomatic actions and practices for two main reasons. Firstly, because it informs and reveals something on how other countries might engage with a de facto state, for indeed diplomacy is always multi-directional. Within the study of de-facto states, more attention is being drawn to the concept of *engagement without recognition.* An important field aiming to understand how the practical realities of global issues like climate change, COVID and globalization impact non-recognition (Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018). For the international community, engagement is a tricky practice. Interacting too extensively might lead to an impression of implicit acceptance. Interacting too little on the other hand often leads to isolation and extreme dependence on an external patron (e.g. what Russia is to Transnistria) and is also detrimental to any possible settlement (Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018).

Secondly, it is relevant because it reveals something about what diplomatic practices are employed by de facto state elites. As stated earlier, de facto states aim to mimic sovereign practices, so that once they may stop mimicking. Their diplomatic practices however have of course their own distinct character. Due to the restrictive system, and their liminal actorness their diplomacy performances have to be more creative (Berg & Vits, 2018; C. M. Constantinou et al., 2016, p. 51; Wille, 2023). So instead of embassies, they might opt for representative offices/trade offices or cultural centres (Berg & Vits, 2018). The locations of such offices are often also strategically picked in the context of peace negotiations, at international locations or locations where large groups of diasporas are located (idem). Diplomatic activity is less likely to occur with the parent-state, due to their conflicting history (Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018). Other than such offices, another creative way de-facto states practice diplomacy is through the role of honorary consuls. These individuals often are not even ethnical to the region, but due to their sympathy for the de-facto state receive this title (Berg & Vits, 2018). Not all de facto states have the same aims, ambitions and foreign policies (Berg & Vits, 2018; Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018). So, approaches differ. However, a general tendency seems to specifically focus on the role of diaspora. For example, the Armenian diaspora has been crucial

in the progress Nagorno Karabakh has been able to make in various policy areas (Berg & Vits, 2018).

Social everyday diplomacy and de-facto states

Most studies focusing specifically on diplomacy and de-facto states do so with a predominant political understanding of diplomacy (see e.g. Berg & Vits, 2018; Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018; Wille, 2023). Yet very little research has been done in researching the social aspect, despite the theorized relevance as Marsden et al. (2016) and Constantinou et al. (2016) put forward. The studies that do link diplomacy and de facto states together predominantly take the angle of a de facto state as a liminal actor as the main conceptualization. Despite some focus in such studies (see e.g. McConnell, 2017; or McConnell et al., 2012) on alternative conceptualizations of diplomacy, they tend to sway more toward the social and as a result, a good comprehensive study has yet to be made. In the absence of such studies, I would like to highlight and argue for some ways in which everyday (/social) diplomacy could take place.

The first, and main way that I argue such forms of diplomacy can take shape is through the vast diaspora & migrant communities that de-facto states usually boast (Crivenco & Von Löwis, 2022). This argument is in line with the argument that Marsden et al. hold which is that indeed "*transnational communities could play [a role] in official diplomatic processes involving nation-states*" (Marsden et al., 2016). Cull (2008) also argues that more attention should be paid to both migrants and refugees due to their diplomatic potential. Reeves (2016) in her article on how Kyrgyz migrants navigate the housing market in Moscow also clearly highlight the role everyday diplomacy takes for migrants. Their survival and the roof above their head depend on it. Although everyday diplomacy is not the first theory where mobile groups like diaspora are brought into dialogue with diplomacy, it is the first type of conceptualization that brings migrants and their social every day into dialogue with diplomacy. This difference is exemplified in the public vs everyday diplomacy debate. In public diplomacy, an example of diaspora and diplomacy can be seen in the recent information campaigns of Russia to try and promote their narrative of the war to the broader public. Here a nation-state "targets" a diaspora community elsewhere. The government understands that these groups have an impact and therefore targets them. Everyday diplomacy on the other hand however dismisses this direct role of the government and instead investigates how these groupings interact with other groupings.

Although at first glance this might seem similar to another type of diplomacy: diaspora diplomacy. Ho & McConnell's (2019) have defined a commonly referenced definition of diaspora diplomacy as enacted by diplomatic actors, who "*at times act[…] in the interest of the state and at other times realizing alternative political projects*" (Ho & McConnell, 2019, p. 245). Here in opposition to public diplomacy, less emphasis is placed on instrumentalization, and the acknowledgement is also there that not all diplomacy necessarily is there to better the state. Yet, with both understandings of diaspora and diplomacy, it still sees the role of the state as important. Both the sending state, as well as the receiving state try to "*enrol[…] diasporas as diplomatic actors*" (Ho & McConnell, 2019). This is done to promote and improve the state's image abroad (idem). In this sense therefore both in public and diaspora diplomacy, the main angle of research lies in the relationship between these diaspora groups and the nation-state. I highlight this to show the unique angle that everyday diplomacy offers when brought into dialogue with diaspora communities.

Then, finally, another fertile ground wherein de-facto states and everyday diplomacy can come into dialogue is in the so-called borderlands. This, quite simply means the geographical area near the physical border between a de-facto entity and either the parent state or a third state. From a political and state point of view, local governments might adopt local policies on issues specific to that region. These local governments, less bound by political animosity might implement small policies on cooperation in this border zone (Hocking, 1999; Turov et al., 2022). These practices have real consequences for the everyday livelihood of the people there. Turov et al. (2022) for example zooms in on the Transnistria border area. Here they highlight that the border is quite porous; people were able to move back and forth when living near the border. They were able to work in each other's neighbouring cities and were able to make use of shared infrastructure like telecommunication networks and bus routes. These borderlands are frontier zones. Zones where big political differences come together and that have also been intensely affected by international conflict.

Chapter 3 – Methodological Framework

Choice of Research Methodology

My research and personal view on life firmly position this research into the qualitative research space. It is for me and the research much more important to gain an understanding of individuals and groups rather than to aim to explain their actions. Yet, this statement has little value on its own given the many and wildly varying methods that exist. The topic – everyday diplomacy, and thereby also the research into diplomatic selfhood, considerably narrows the options. These ideas and research aims fit very well in line with the points Creswell & Poth (2018, p. 128) mention for conducting phenomenological research. At first, it might sound somewhat strange to conduct phenomenological research on diplomacy. Yet, I argue that this is precisely the best approach to take. It perfectly aligns with the broader vision of this research; that diplomacy is not a craft, nor a tool, but rather a phenomenon that can occur in all aspects of life. Furthermore, phenomenological research sits well with my personal life views. I subscribe to the understanding of the world lacking one singular 'truth', and instead I believe that a 'truth' is made up of the experiences of every individual. The focus of phenomenology is to zoom in on these experiences, how these experiences get situated in their lives and what these experiences (could) mean in influencing greater (geopolitical) processes. In turn, these experiences can reveal much about how it reflects upon the society they live in. The aim is to create a "*composite description of the essence*" of *what* and *how* they experience this essence (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Phenomenological research as the name says focuses on phenomena. Phenomena I here understand as "*the ways in which we find ourselves being in relation to the world through our day-to-day living*" (Vagle, 2018, p. 48). It is about the relationship between us, and *others*. In this sense, the interest is not so much in the *natural world,* as Husserl says, but rather in the *lived world* (Husserl through Vagle, 2018, p. 49). Phenomenology is in this regard also highly relevant to study everyday taken-for-granted experiences (Soule & Freeman, 2019). Applying this to the concept of legitimization is interesting because rather than focusing on the practicalities of finding a path towards legitimacy, phenomenology is rather focused on what the *experience* of their de-facto state lacking external legitimacy means, and how their diplomatic selfhood plays a role in this.

Within the field of phenomenology, many subfields exist. One that specifically is relevant to my research ideas is the post-intentional phenomenological research. This type of research differs from other types of research by combining elements of post-structuralism (Vagle, 2018). It acknowledges that essences are not as stable and are instead highly contextual social apparatuses (Soule & Freeman, 2019). This in turn slightly alters the aim away from purely describing the essence and instead lays focus on "*exploring how the phenomenon might take shape, how it is produced in time and space, and how it is entangled and provoked.*" (Vagle, 2018,

p. 219). As a result, this chapter is heavily inspired by the work of Mark Vagle, who has done a lot of work on this subfield.

Phenomenology

Zooming out slightly, multiple core phenomenological strands can be distinguished. Firstly, there is the work done by Edmund Husserl, describing a form of descriptive phenomenology tasking itself with how the essence of an experience reveals itself. Then, another main strand of this methodology is exhibited in the work by Martin Heidegger, who argues for the idea that things *are* not necessarily, and instead have different forms. Finally, the recent work by Mark Vagle, questions the hard division between the former two and instead aims to position it somewhere in between. He aims to understand how phenomena can appear, morph, and disappear and thus how they are constantly *becoming*.

Vital for phenomenology is the question of what intentionality is. When doing phenomenology-based research it is critical to be clear on how you conceptualize intentionality (Soule & Freeman, 2019; Vagle, 2018). Not only because it is a core concept with this methodology, but also because the different strands of the methodology (descriptive, interpretive, and post-intentional), have quite different understandings of the concept (Vagle, 2018). This different understanding is the source of these different approaches. At a basic level, intentionality is to mean the inherent connection between humans (subjects) and all the things of the world (ideas, clothes, cars, etc. etc.) (Vagle, 2018, p. 58). So, to study something phenomenologically is to study how people are connected to "*the things of the world*" (idem) and the meaning thereof. These *things* are rather vague but extremely broad. It could be other people, hobbies, certain geographical areas, etc. These things, or the subjects are being co-constructed together with the object through what is called their intentional relationship (Soule & Freeman, 2019). The result of this co-construction is the phenomena as they appear to us.

Within the field of descriptive phenomenology, another aspect of intentionality is the search for the *essence* of an experience. Yet, this means not so much to try to describe this finalized structure of the experience (and therefore uncover some universal truth), but instead, to describe the idea of what makes something *some*thing. The search instead is to find the "*essential characteristics of the phenomenon without which it would not be that phenomenon*" (Dahlberg, 2006). When you can grasp the essence, one is also being intentional. This happens often in everyday life as Dahlberg (2006) explains. She uses the example of an apple tree. That, in our everyday life, we (object) can clearly see that in fact, an apple tree (subject), is not a pear tree. Here already, we have been able to find the essence of the intentional relationship between the apple tree and us (idem).

My view on understanding intentionality has grown and changed over time. The more I read and think about the object, the more it seems fleeting: to change, move and morph. I could continue writing about what internationality is, and also what it is not, Just like Dr. Joseph Pate did in Vagle (2018). Yet, it is something that needs experiencing. One day I was walking to the university and was looking around me, thinking about this chapter. The sun was shining, and my mind wandered back to when I was a kid. Me and my brother loved building stuff. We either build big dams, just like beavers to obstruct the water or we build huts in the forest, where the trees serve as anchor points. At this moment I started better to understand what being intentional is about. My experience and consciousness of a tree

changed from when I was a kid, where I saw it as a building block, to myself now, where I see it as an air-making machine. A tree is not a tree. Rather, I and this object co-construct the experience and make meaning of it. Yet at the same time, this co-construction is temporary. When I arrived at university, I spent the whole day there. Going back, in the rain, I might as well have co-constructed this tree with its leaves, as an umbrella. A place of shelter in the bad weather. Others again might see the tree as a means of resources: a couch, a chair.

This all, Vagle argues, depends not only on the researcher (me) and the participant (the tree) but on much more. Vagle goes a step further by saying that any understanding is created through a combination of the relationships between the world, the text, the idea the researcher, the participant etc. So not only, in the example of the tree, is the essence found through the intentional relationship between me and the tree, but this essence is also found in other relationships you have with the world, the location of the tree, the societal status and other such factors. As a result, "*intentionality is always moving, is unstable, and is constantly being produced and provoked in and over time*" (Vagle, 2018, p. 63). In this vein, it is also a realization that my position as a researcher on this matter is not nought. I have thoughts ideas, biases etc. Expecting that these will change throughout the research is only logical I argue, which is what the post-intentional strand of phenomenology also warmly embraces (Vagle, 2018, p. 64).

Lines of Flight

When Mark Vagle talks about post-intentional phenomenology, he starts by stating that "*post-intentional phenomenology is more interested in chasing the lines of flight phenomena can/might take*" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2016). Here he lends the notion of *lines of flight* from an important piece of work authored by Deleuze and Guattari titled 'A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia'.

Before defining lines of flight further, it is important to understand what Deleuze and Guattari mean by assemblages. Thornton (2020), interpreting the rather difficult work, explains an assemblage as: "*a unified whole, but a combination that functions by bringing together elements of various levels, and which is defined by the external relations that it holds with other assemblages*" (Thornton, 2020, p. 435). Examples of such logic are plentiful. Take for instance the laptop I am typing this on. It is an assemblage of various elements and levels because, without a touchpad, a screen, and a processor, it would not be a laptop. A laptop is a laptop precisely because of these individual parts that constitute the assemblage, and when put together makes it "*a unified whole and its external relations are viewed as such.*" (idem). These assemblages argue Deleuze and Guattari, are constituted of "*a collection of 'lines'*" (Deleuze et al., 1989 as qouted by Thornton, 2020).

The first two types of lines ensure the internal structure of any assemblage, and also ensure they can adapt over time (Deleuze et al., 1989, p. 195). An example of these lines might be found in the predictable office worker. Where the *segments* of life seem almost predetermined, but once fired can find a new job to continue the predetermined *segments* of life. The third and final line they describe is one of great importance specifically for this methodology: the lines of flight. These lines are trying to go *beyond* the assemblage where they escape and are searching for ways to connect with assemblages outside of itself. This process of connection can result in a "*mutual process of becoming*" (Thornton, 2020, p. 438), which can result in an alteration of the assemblage itself. Given that the original work of Deleuze and Guattari was written in French, the notion of *flight* also has qualities of the verbs *to elude* and

to escape (Thornton, 2020; Vagle & Hofsess, 2016). An example of thinking with lines of flight might be if we start thinking about how different governmental institutions can be considered to constitute an assemblage, that is actively trying to undermine any effort to forego these institutions. If an individual then aims to escape these clutches, it can be considered a line of flight. The assemblage however automatically fights back to try and claw that person back into the fold. An example hereof could be how the sovereign citizen movement aims to forego the state, yet always gets pulled back into the fold.

Applying these lines of flight into research means that the role of the researcher is to *chase* after these lines. There is a need to "*actively look for ways that knowledge 'takes off'*" (Vagle, 2018, p. 228). The implications of chasing such lines and their knowledge are threefold. Firstly this methodology shifts the "*focus on how things connect rather than on what things are.*" (Lorraine, 2005, in Vagle, 2018, p. 191). There is no essence and only a fleeting and eluding intentional connection. The aim therefore is in chasing these eluding, and fleeting connections, which in other words can be described as chasing the lines of flight. This chase however is never ending, due to the resistance of such lines to be tied down, as well as the difficulty in identifying them (Vagle & Hofsess, 2016). Secondly, Rather than chasing an essence from the beginning, there is an acknowledgement that "*we always enter into the middle of things*" (Vagle, 2018, p. 193), and are unable to locate a beginning or an end, and thus should not aim to do so. Rather the chase aims to describe the middle and the now. And lastly, lines of flight are indicative of the way people and things are connected to many other things (idem).

Bridling, Bracketing and post-reflexing

Herein my value as a researcher (and co-creator) also comes from feeling myself. Taking note of emotions and thoughts that come up. However, distinguishing these lines of flight, from other lines, is often hard. Continuously reflecting upon your actions, thoughts and ideas is a very important part of this process. This is where Bracketing / Bridling comes in.

Bracketing aims to gain awareness of the phenomenon under investigation (Soule & Freeman, 2019). Bracketing seeks to combine our consciousness of the world; and question why certain decisions have been made in the context of our worldview and the understanding, thereof. Although, as Vagle also outlines (2018), bracketing is not very applicable in post-intentional phenomenology, I will still briefly elaborate on bracketing in order to better understand the alternative that the post-intentional methodology proposes. Edmund Husserl, being the one who advocated this approach, describes bracketing as a three-step process.

Firstly, he argues that it starts as simply perceiving what is there. Here the senses perceived the 'normal': the life-world as it appears to be (Husserl, 1970). An example might be that when you go to your friend's place, you simply see colours, smells and a group of people chatting. Then the next step, Husserl argues is where one seeks the most important, and most general aspect. This could be for example a recognition that this group of friends is sitting around a table playing cards, whereby the focus lies on these cards. The last step explains Soule & Freeman (2019) as, "*mov[ing] beyond perception and articulate a relationship between the whole (the group) and the part*" (p.866). In other words, to connect the group, and the cards, and to realize that a group of friends are playing poker. This step-guide is however by no means a rigid one-way process. This process and its steps continuously get re-executed and morphed as a different understanding of the lifeworld presents itself. It is in this sense recursive process (Soule & Freeman, 2019).

Bridling on the other hand disagrees and argues that such processes and steps are unnecessary and that instead, this happens in the natural world. Vagle (2018) describes, by referencing Dahlberg (2006) and her experiences in using phenomenology, that researchers must adopt a "*phenomenological attitude as opposed to a natural attitude*" (Dahlberg, 2006), where one is "*actively waiting for the phenomenon, and its meaning(s), to show itself* (idem). The type of attitude throughout the whole research is practically applied through Vagle's (2018) insistence on a post-reflexion plan, wherein the goal is precisely to bridle to "*not understand too quick, too careless, or slovenly*" (Dahlberg, 2006, p. 16). This goal Vagle holds then translated into what has become my post-reflexive journal wherein the phenomenological attitudes I employed were jotted down. Before, during and after my fieldwork, this journal served as a way to continuously (re-)engage with my thoughts, theories, and ideas. My journal in this regard also provided a way through which my feelings can find a voice, and where I can become aware of this voice. In the end, my journal contains more than fifty entries.

Methodology and Interviews

For participant selection, I used criterion sampling. To be considered a participant, I find a few aspects important. First and foremost, they should have some experience with diplomatic selfhood / everyday diplomacy. This is hard to fully establish beforehand, so it will be needed to properly establish during the interview. Another important criterion to consider is their heritage and how are they related to a de-facto state. Then, building on this criterion is the importance of what their self-identification is. It is important to understand how they identify themselves in relation to their de-facto state. Finally, participants must be living in The Netherlands, or have lived there in the past. Furthermore, as a rule of thumb, I only interviewed participants who have lived in The Netherlands for at least one year. In line with the theoretical understanding of everyday diplomacy, I am not looking for official representatives who are working in representative offices for example.

Due to the small population size, I expected difficulty in finding participants. Although this was true, almost all of the participants I did manage to find were very keen to talk with me, which was a great relief. In the end, I conducted six interviews with six participants, who all lived, or are living, in The Netherlands. The population was divided equally between males & females and were all in the age group of 18 – 25. Participant 1 was the only exception to this and was in the age group of 25 – 35. Interesting to note that it was easier to find female participants than male participants, which seems to be a broader trend in this research area (see: Selingo, 2019). The process of looking for participants has mostly gone through LinkedIn and the social circles of the participants. Firstly, I would explain to them why I was interested in connecting with them, and afterwards, explain more fully what the research was about, and ask if they would be interested in participating. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, and unfortunately due to various constraints, interviews were not held in person.

During the interviews with my participants, there were a few key guidelines I found important to employ when I conducted my interviews. Mark Vagle highlights a piece from Tina Fey through which Vagle convincingly argues some key points that serve as a guide to phenomenological interviewing (Vagle, 2018, p. 139). Firstly, he argues that one is to always agree with the interviewee. This is because "*our job is to agree not with the other's perspectives, but with what they are opening up - how they are helping us gain access to a complex phenomenon.*"

(Vagle, 2018, p. 142). Furthermore, during the interview, I found it important to take notice of myself: how I feel, my initial reactions, and my emotional responses. These, Vagle argues, will be important to highlight during your post-reflection notes. Secondly, it is important to not only say "yes", but also add your contribution. For the post-intentional approach, this is also specifically important since the phenomena will always be morphing and changing, in part due to the contribution of the researcher. Practically this advice talks of the importance of posing follow-up questions, contributing to the conversation through your own footmark. Thirdly, I found it important to "just" have a conversation that not only exists of questions. The importance of being confident and making statements, should not be underestimated. Finally, Vagle highlights the "there are no mistakes" rule from Tina Fey. He does so because making errors is part of the game and will lead to opportunities to bridle and reflect on those decisions as an interviewer and researcher.

I would also like to make special mention of the ethics involved in this study. I am acutely aware of the damage fieldwork can do as Eck & Cohen (2021b) and Baron & Young (2022) have very poignantly explained. These sorts of critical sounds about student fieldwork I take on wholeheartedly. A few measures have been taken in this study to limit this damage component. I have opted not to do fieldwork in places "*that put the student and the research team at risk*" (Eck & Cohen, 2021), and instead have opted to go for the diaspora, which is generally considered to be of less risk. The type of subject, everyday diplomacy, is also chosen as a way to touch on subjects, that avoid too contentious topics. Furthermore, before the interview, a so-called interview consent form was sent to the participant. This form highlights some basic facts about the interview but also explains the rights of the participant. One important part of this is that before, during or after the interview the participant can withdraw their interview and their data from the research. Also mentioned in this document is that sensitive, personal, data will be redacted. To honour this promise on my side I have taken the words of Saunders et al. (2015) to heart, and made sure that in the interview transcripts, some information is redacted and that all the real names are redacted, and instead pseudonyms are used throughout this document. For completeness's sake, I have attached an appendix where the basic interview metadata including the pseudonyms can be found. Furthermore, I have also attached the interview consent form in an appendix at the end of the research.

Methodology and Analysis

The analysis stage, just like other stages, is one of constant engagement. For this methodology, Vagle (but also other phenomenologists) argues how the gathering and fieldwork stage is extremely intertwined with the analysis stage (Vagle, 2018). This also makes sense due to the iterative nature of this research. In practice, this resulted in doing one or two interviews, and then reviewing, analysing, and assessing what this new information means. What can I learn from it? both from a point of view of the research question, but also to provide a solid moment of re-assessing how the interview itself went. I believe this way also allows for more self-reflection during the process. I found it important to be critical of my role as an interviewer. During the transcription phase, thoughts often arose about my role and the influence it has had in shaping the dialogue. Specifically in which way I posed questions, and also what questions I did not ask. My reflexive journal was then an important place where such thoughts during the transcribing found their place.

This process, in between interviews, does have structure, which I found important to adhere to in a methodology wherein there is much flexibility. Here I broadly follow the rather general phenomenological approach, which has a few core features. I like to point out how proponents of this kind of methodology stress the importance of a *whole-parts-whole* approach. This approach dictates a way to navigate through the gathered fieldwork data. Vagle describes this well in his book (Vagle, 2018, pp. 167–176). In brief, this approach first stresses the importance of assessing all the data, what is there? How is it structured? It then advocates for a researcher to zoom in on one text, writing down questions, thoughts, and ideas that make their way to you, and asking follow-up questions. This process is done through three different line-by-line readings. For me, these line-by-line readings materialised through printing out the interviews and writing initial thoughts straightaway on the paper. Lastly, zooming out, the aim is to *read across* the text to try and find common themes, or so-called patterns of meaning (Dahlberg, 2006). Throughout this first step, Vagle highlights some questions that are important to ask throughout this analysis which I have found to be of importance, so I'd like to highlight them here:

> *What doesn't seem to fit? What might I learn from following this misfit that is not yet thinkable? Where might I have retreated to either/or thinking? Where might I appear 'certain' of what something means? Where might I have extended to something creative and intriguing, but then backed off to something a bit safer? Where might I appear 'uncertain' of what something means?* (Vagle, 2018, pp. 229–230).

The second step of analysis, after the whole-parts-whole phase, is then to apply these new connections, and ideas and see how they relate to existing theories. Vagle calls this "thinking with your theory" because he argues that firstly the theory selected before the fieldwork is not sacred. If other theories fit better, that is OK. However, he also is wary of ditching a theory too quickly: "*The phrase thinking with your theory means that you have puzzled a lot over what the theoretical concept does and mean*" (Vagle, 2018, p. 231). The third and final stage is where the post-reflections come in. Although I do want to stress these personal reflections per definition also already creep in at the first step, this step uses these reflections more systematically in the sense that the starting point is the journal, rather than the data.

Chapter 4 – Findings

The everyday of Turkish-speaking Cypriots

This chapter presents the findings that came out of the analysis process as described above. I will elaborate on them in order of the sub-questions, answering the sub-questions as I go along. Specifically, during this initial section, I will try to paint a picture of some common everyday facts of life for my participants during their time in the Netherlands. Of course, the everyday is so multi-faceted that it encompasses so much of one's life and has therefore opted to highlight specific "features" of their livelihoods. I have aimed to zoom in on specific questions and perceptions of identity as well as everyday communication, and the interesting nuances and strategies involved in dealing with such these questions. Firstly, I would like to elaborate on how my participants identified themselves.

The participants I spoke to all initially explained that they were from *Cyprus* in the introduction. I believe this answer has a lot of information hidden behind it which I would like to unpack. For a long time, I wondered why they would introduce themselves as Cypriots, and not as Turkish-speaking Cypriots, or Northern Cypriots. This is because, as will become clear later, all participants, multiple times, argued about the importance of self-recognition. To answer this question, I think it is important to consider the context. The interviews were all conducted after multiple back-and-forth messages between me and the participant. In these messages, I always chose to widely elaborate on the topic and the reason for contacting (background in Northern Cypriots & currently living in the Netherlands). In these messages, participants would usually also confirm these two facts. Furthermore, before the interview started there would be some informal chatter, including elaborating on the research, and its specific focus on people from Northern Cyprus. As a result, the conversation was conducted on such a premise that it is clear they are from Northern Cyprus.

However, interestingly, in most interviews, the self-identification as *Cypriot*, and not northern Cypriot was consistent. Specifically, when talking about oneself and when talking about Greek-speaking Cypriots (see e.g. Interview 4, 5). It became clear to me during these interviews that most saw the island as a singular unit despite the officially divided status. Within the context of communication between Cypriots from the north and south abroad, the participants I spoke to would usually also refer to both groupings as Cypriots, only further describing the groups if required.

This identification is however not clear-cut either. Something that is also relevant to the context of any conversation is the role of language, and the politics embedded within. My interviews were in English, and as a result, identifications might be different than if I had conducted the same interview in Turkish for instance. In my interview with Aysel, she started by saying that she is a northern Cypriot. Aysel highlights this by stating that: "*if I was speaking my own language, I would just right up say I am Cypriot, but […] I need to specifically say I am a*

Turkish-speaking Cypriot." (Interview 2). Doing so, to avoid confusing whether one is Greek-speaking or not. Yet, despite this important caveat, most opted to describe themselves initially as Cypriots.

Another way identity can be attributed is not by yourself, but through external identification. This form of identification is based on how others see, judge and label somebody else. In my conversations, I could see three broad types of external (mis-)identification. The first type became apparent to my participants in conversations with mostly Dutch people. They often were quick to brand them as *Greek*. Certainly, in the Netherlands, Greece is well known as a holiday destination, and so when people hear Cyprus, they seemingly make a connection to Greece or think of Cyprus even as a Greek island (see interview 3). This understanding of *being* Greek, and thus European was seen as something positive. One participant, Aysel, for example, reported that: "*They were happy to know that we [author: participant + friend] were Greek*" (interview 2). This perceived happiness was also reported by other participants. Alongside this, one participant also expressed the relevance of Europeanness. Aynur (interview 5) reported that the understanding of Cyprus as part of Greece resulted in the assumption of "Europeanness", and as a result a more open and exciting response. This is in opposition to when the participant used the wording Turkish, or Turkish speaking, the response would be quite different (Interview 3). In other conversations, particularly with Turkish citizens, it was common to see Northern Cyprus as another region of Turkey, and as a result, quickly see them as Turks. The language spoken and the religion are some of the reasons Turkish citizens might make this jump (interview 5).

Another way people would brand identifications upon my participants is to *deny* their Cypriot-ness in general. One participant, Adnan, for example, reported that he was denied the right and the possibility that a Cypriot from the north could be a Cypriot (interview 5). Despite these various misidentifications, it is true that some participants also reported that they were surprised about the fact that, people they encountered in The Netherlands would know at least that the island is divided, and they would also ask, are you from the north or the south? (Interview 2,3,4) showing that the Cyprus issue is at least to some degree known.

Thinking about what this might mean I could not help but relate these findings to my own experiences of living abroad, having done so for almost five years. There, I was branded as the "Dutch guy". I however didn't mind so much. After all, it gave room for conversations, because people understood, at least to a level of the stereotype what being Dutch meant. Yet to me, it also confirmed my Dutch-ness, and in hindsight, made me act more Dutch in some ways. This, I argue also became apparent, during the conversations with my participants, but in a different way than I experienced. One participant, for example, explained to me that, not being seen as a Turkish-speaking Cypriot, intensified his identification as such. Adnan stated that: "*it is not like being [a] British person. Because we are not seen as much, it is quite more important to identify in that way [author: a Turkish-speaking Cypriot], because the other [author: outsiders] are not identifying in that way*" (interview 5). What Adnan highlighted to me was that in this case, the consistently wrong external identity attribution resulted in an inherent desire for recognition, and therefore made the internal defences within that person result in a stronger identification as such, rather than a weaker one.

Bi-communal encounters abroad

My interviews have been mostly conducted among student migrants. These students have often been in the country not for a very long time yet and as a result usually don't boast large social networks. I found that these people are more likely to seek out connections; engage with others and put effort into making friends. This is less common at home due to the often already pre-existing network of connections. Certainly, for internationals coming to The Netherlands, their social circle often consists of other internationals, and less so of locals. This is relevant because it means, as Adnan explained, that these social circles are fragile; they might disappear after finishing university for example (Interview 5). As a result, participants reported being very open to engaging with others. Aysel was for example explaining how her roommates were actively trying to help her increase her social circle. The fragility of one's social circle and the desire to build one is then, I argue, an opportunity to meet and interact with Greek-speaking as a Turkish-speaking Cypriots. The context for such meetings abroad is also different due to the system of exclusion being less present than on the island (Interview 6).

Participants highlighted however that a conversation with a Greek-speaking Cypriot was understood both as an opportunity and sometimes also as a threat. An opportunity because one can gain a friend, who might help them navigate their livelihood. In this regard, participants voiced their keen willingness to meet, talk and become friends with fellow students from the South. Aynur for example explained to me that: "*everyone gets happy when they see someone from their own country in another country*" (Interview 4). Aynur's statement was in one way, or another also present in many other participants. It highlights something about how they see themselves: as Cypriots and see it thus as natural that they are also excited to see a fellow Cypriot abroad. For them, there might be differences, but it is also a new opportunity. Yet, such encounters could also be a threat: a change of rejection of oneself. Some participants reported that they still felt a clear tangible tension between them and Cypriots from the south. One even got a lecture from a Greek-speaking Cypriot saying that he was not allowed to call himself a *Cypriot*, which was not taken in a good way (Interview 5). What such cases highlight is that abroad provides a different *site* where meetings are more likely to occur, and certainly my participants also voiced a willingness to do so. Yet, despite being abroad, and being in an international environment, the conflict is to some degree adopted abroad too.

The importance of recognition of existence

During conversations Turkish-speaking Cypriots had with Greek-speaking Cypriots and certainly also with locals and with other internationals, participants all felt it important to explain their background. One participant specifically felt that it was important because of lack of recognition, stating that "*Because we are not seen as much, it is quite more important to identify in that way [author: a Turkish-speaking Cypriot]*" (interview 5). In everyday conversation, participants explained that they would try and keep explanations to a minimum but would at least explain that the island is currently dived and that they are from the Turkish-speaking northern part of the island, and therefore do *not* speak Greek. One participant, Emine, revealed to me her view about the options available in this situation and perceived it as quite binary:

> *"I have two options, 1) don't say anything, and don't waste my time, because it doesn't solve anything anyway, or 2) I can teach one more person about my country"* (Interview 3)

Despite Emine's perception that explaining the other side of the story, with all its complexity and political nuances has no effect, she still usually opts for option two stating that it feels good knowing that, yet another person knows that you exist (interview 3). I found this quite revealing that, even to strangers, people whom they probably would not see again, it does feel worthwhile to explain and elaborate on their background. This participant was not the only participant to report this. Multiple participants in one way or another stated a similar feeling and mode of behaviour in such conversations. Aysel revealed to me a reason why these participants deemed it important to do so: "*It made me feel … I existed and that I am not living in this dilutional non-existing country*" (interview 2). This statement resonated with me and made me think about the importance of one's background, and how it is perceived as part of one's core identity. During the interview, I felt the importance of the statements these participants made. And that, as one participant put it: "*I can't quite escape the situation anyways*" (Interview 4), the reality of their background is an everyday reality. It is a reality that is entangled in the daily lives of these migrants. This inability to escape the situation yet being constantly reminded of the situation at the same time, is then an important aspect as to why the participants opt to choose to explain rather than wave it off. It is in line with how Karsniqi described their plight. They are "*neither citizens nor […] stateless*" (2019, p. 302).

This understanding of being unable to escape their everyday life and being faced with issues of recognition on a daily basis highlights to me some key liminal characteristics. In line with how I have earlier also described the state itself as being liminal, it is also relevant to understand the implications of individuals having liminal qualities. Certainly, the feeling of liminality is much stronger perceived when someone is abroad, as Bryant highlights:

> "*[I]t is one thing to stand behind a closed door and imagine that the world on one's own side of the door is sufficient. It is quite another thing to see the door swing open to reveal a wider, richer world that one is only allowed to observe from the threshold, without crossing.*" (Bryant, 2014, p. 131).

There are some important differences in what this liminality means, and how it is perceived for my participants. I think of the liminality of an individual as a conversation; on the outside of the door there is the person you are talking to, and you are standing on the inside. The conversation happens, with a threshold in between. It serves then as a constant reminder that there is this doorstep, one that is peekable, and seemingly accessible, yet also far away. However, the key difference with the state's liminality is that this door is accessible. One can step through in many cases. This is where connections and friendships are formed. Yet then, when a new person comes into the picture, the realisation that this door is once again present in between the self and the other is rather frustrating.

This understanding can also shed a light on the perceived uselessness of explaining the situation, yet still usually opting to do so. It perhaps does not matter so much what the perceived "objective" value is, but rather it is an action that is required to step through the door, to get closer to the person in conversation. It allows oneself to build a personal connection, rather than stay absent and keep this distance between oneself and others. Practically, however, moving abroad still more painfully exposes oneself to views of ignorance, and of denial of the otherness, than might be the case back at home. In this sense it

puts the liminal understanding to the front like Bryant also highlights (Bryant, 2014, p. 126). Yet, moving abroad also lends opportunities to break such views of ignorance. It allows for conversations with widely different cultures, and often, after explaining oneself results in sympathy, understanding and also legitimisation. Abroad it requires adopting certain modes of behaviour both to protect oneself and also to promote a different narrative.

The search for passing over the doorstep was interestingly not so involved in the attempt to chase official recognition and narratives of the TRNC as such. Instead, this search was more interested in the recognition of the people and the self. Participants felt it important that they were recognized as human beings, and not as some entity from a "*dilutional non-existing country*" (interview 2).

Conclusion

To conclude this section, I refer to the first sub-question I posed earlier on. The sub-question goes: *What constitutes the everyday life of migrants living in sites where their de-facto state existence is denied?* In general, the participants, living and studying in Dutch multi-cultural cities were found to be surprised by the amount of people aware of the division on the island (Interview 2, 3, 4). Though, despite that, a lot of encounters that participants had also showed a lack of awareness. In general, the individuals that I've spoken to live their everyday lives mostly like anybody else. However, some key features relating to their background can be identified. Everyday elements of their livelihood are importantly summarized by feelings of liminality. As a result, there is a longing for recognition on an everyday basis. These daily encounters are filled with external identity attribution, both due to lack of understanding, as well as due to incorrect understanding. Particularly among Turks and Greek-speaking Cypriots. Furthermore, Cypriot encounters are in this sense opportunities, but unlike other encounters, they are also a threat. Other encounters might deny their recognition but are usually innocent. The encounters with Greek-speaking Cypriots, can either be extremely delightful, and affirm recognition, which is seen as very positive, but there were also cases where Cypriot-ness is fully denied and as a result, perceived as very negative and frustrating. As a result, they are forced and encouraged to behave in ways that both aim to protect themselves and at the same time promote a different narrative.

There is as a result a clear feeling of not fitting into the box that the international system currently prescribes people to fit within. The understanding of the world that a person belongs to a recognized country seems to not apply. But what if you are from a non-recognized place? Then suddenly the system seems to no longer work, and therefore requires thinking about a different conceptualization. The understanding of not-fitting becomes clear to my participants through the everyday. Where sometimes seemingly simple questions or tasks, become rather awkward and ambiguous. One striking example that highlights this point is how Emine talks about the difficulty of everyday tasks like filling in your nationality in a form on the internet (Interview 3). Often, it's a choice between two untruths: the Republic of Cyprus or Turkey.

To combat such experiences of "not fitting in the box", Turkish-speaking Cypriots are therefore in general keen to talk about their background, and to lend recognition to themselves and their culture, which for them is a stark different from talking about the state apparatus. The situation then indeed helped push them into their role as an everyday diplomat.

The enactment of Everyday diplomacy

The various abovementioned findings are all relevant to better understand how everyday diplomacy takes shape. This is because these everyday realities are, as I will explain here, the driving forces behind answering the second sub-question: how everyday diplomacy takes shape. Hereunder I will argue about the relevance of pleasantries in the form of everyday greetings and conversations. Specifically, I will dive into the hidden layers of meaning in the question "Where are you from". I will also pay specific attention to interactions between Greek-speaking Cypriots and Turkish-speaking Cypriots, but also how interactions between Turkish-speaking Cypriots and *others* like Dutch and international people might take shape.

During conversations with the participants, whenever I asked about how they might navigate answering the questions "Where are you from?" or "What is your nationality?", there was a sense of exhilaration, noticeable, both for me as well as for my participants. Reflecting on this I wonder if this feeling was sparked due to the perhaps seeming rather banal question, certainly to non-migrants. Yet, as I also experienced when I lived abroad, I don't think this question is banal at all. Reflecting on my own experiences in living abroad I think back to the sheer number of conversations I have had in shops, cafes, bars, and at work about my background. Where was I from? How did I like it there? Etc. These conversations meant I was painting a certain picture; a certain representation of the Netherlands, which to be honest, was always quite positive. For indeed I grew up there, I have family there, and there are plenty of things I like about the country. Crucially then, I argue that the question "Where are you from" is a relevant vehicle to display everyday diplomacy. However, as my participants also highlight, the seemingly simple question is also loaded with meaning and nuance, and often also can reveal the questioner's hidden agenda.

Before diving more into how my participants navigated such pleasantries and what this meant for them, I would briefly like to take a step back and try to better understand these nuances and potential for hidden agenda, and how it could be interpreted when the question "where are you from" comes up. The first complexity that participants reported is that it is relevant to understand why the question asked is being asked in the first place. The question for example would probably not be asked to a well-versed person speaking the local language fluently and with the appearance of a local. In this sense, therefore, the person asking must perceive a sense of otherness.

Secondly, is the perceived understanding of what the question even *means?* What type of answer is the person looking for? From a personal experience of living abroad, I have witnessed that the intent of a conversation to not always innocent. An example could come up in the form of somebody refusing to allow you to define yourself, and instead trying to force their identification upon you. Such an example can be seen in my conversation with Adnan, where his Cypriot-ness in general was being denied. Another but different interpretation could be that the question is perceived as being posed out of genuine interest, and a search to learn more about this otherness and how Cyprus works. It is, perhaps, without surprise that this intent results in the most open conversations. Another aspect that is important to understand is the context, where and when the question is asked. A participant for example highlights that when she is in Turkey, she never specifies that she is from the Turkish-speaking north part of the island, simply because the conversation will already be in Turkish (Interview 3), and therefore it is already implied.

These implicit questions that my participants reported on can be seen as preparations for an imminent negotiation in the name of everyday diplomacy where the situation in which these negotiations took place dictated the answer (Interview 2, 3, 4, 5). If there was a situation that was rushed, clouded by other activities, or deemed unsafe, participants would however at times brush misidentifications off and leave the identification for others to assume. The everyday diplomatic intent also differs in the understanding of the situation. A participant for example highlighted how she was not always comfortable going into details about herself in cases where the situation was understood not as genuine interest. Aysel highlighted to me: "*There were times that I crossed my fingers and said I hope no one asks me where I am from*" (Interview 2). There is in this account a palpable tension visible between a more proactive stance on explaining where one is from and taking on a diplomatic selfhood and going into detail about the situation on the island. But on the other hand, trying to avoid an insecure situation that explaining oneself might bring forward. It is a clear sign of tension between avoidance, as a form of everyday peace, and on the other hand still the willingness, and the desire to go beyond everyday peace, and more heading towards everyday diplomacy, where the intent is not merely to survive but to coexist.

The state and the individual: Everyday diplomacy

Participants reported that it was important for them to explain themselves during such pleasantries, which, in general, they would almost always do. The type of answers given to the question varied, particularly depending on what kind of image the participant wanted the receiver to understand. The answers given are broadly dependent on the earlier reported self-identification. Though, regardless of what answer is given, the conversation that ensues between participants and the receiver is, I argue, a prime example of everyday diplomacy in action and can be seen as a negotiation. It is a negotiation of the right to be recognized with an identity, that is often explicitly denied.

Yet, I will argue that it is not only about the recognition of identity. I will argue that conversations like the ones often ensuing from "Where are you from" also implicitly can lend recognition to the North as a separate entity. This argument is important because it means that the everyday diplomatic value of implicit recognition is linked to the importance of the aim of consolidating self-identification to the external identity prescription. In other words, the driving force of everyday diplomacy towards the state seems to be found in the difference between self-identification and external identification. The link between identity and state is also what Marsden means by not being able to escape the representations of the state.

Evidence of the possibility of implicit recognition can be well seen in my conversations with Orhan. He believed it would be better that the island would be unified again. Yet, he highlighted that any conversations ensuing based on the *where are you from* question can be very double-edged. On the one hand, it might be seen as important for him to explain himself, and thus to explain some practical aspects of the island. Yet, crucially, on the other hand, there is a hesitancy on his part to do so. Telling stories of a divided island can create images in the receiver's head: images of racism, and hatred. Despite him not wanting to provoke such images on the belief that these images are not true, the assumption could be placed that it might be true. (Interview 6). Certainly, he also argues that due to the small population size of the north, his words matter even more because people are unlikely to encounter many other Turkish-speaking Cypriots (Interview 6). When thinking about everyday diplomacy this can be well understood. His hesitancy is due to his realisation of his role as a diplomat, and as a

result is highly aware of how his words matter: "*You need to pay attention to what you say and try to be peaceful and not get into any conflicts also in daily life.*" (Interview 6). This double-edged sword that Orhan explains is precisely what I mean; the quest to align one's self-identification with external identification might equate to painting certain images of the island that create images of division, but also crucial images of recognition of the status quo. What his example also does well is highlighting the core aspects of everyday diplomacy: Orhan has taken on a diplomatic selfhood and is aware of his role as an everyday diplomat and is acting towards this role as a peace-seeking representative. In this role, he is actively seeking coexistence by trying to avoid narratives of racism and hatred. The objective of coexistence as an everyday diplomat is also well noticeable when I talked with my participants about the relations between Cypriots from the north and from the south. As I highlighted earlier, such meetings could be conceived as a threat, because you put yourself in a potentially vulnerable position. Yet despite this, all participants moving to the Netherlands came there with the real intent to try and meet Cypriots and found it important to try and connect (see e.g. Interviews 2, 4, 6). This intent is important because it signals to me that my participants are not merely trying to maintain the status quo. Such acts of cross-communal engagement signal everyday diplomacy much more than everyday peace.

Diplomatic selfhood

This self-understanding as an everyday diplomat was outspokenly different between participants. Some participants felt they were not diplomats and also did little to explicitly act towards this role. Interestingly, these participants did feel that they were representing their nationality in formal settings such as presentations at a university, doing group work or applying for jobs. As a result, they did feel a diplomat to some degree (Interview 3). They did however not feel that this representation also continued in friend groups, informal conversations, or daily encounters (Interview 3, 1). Others never thought of themselves as diplomats, yet felt like the wording made sense, for lack of better terminology (Interview 5, 4). Finally, some participants reported feeling at times very diplomatic, careful of their wording and aware of their context, role, and impact (Interview 2, 6).

Yet, during my conversations with my participants, I understood something about diplomatic selfhood, and that such explicit questions need not be the best way to gauge how diplomatic selfhood works. In my conversation with Orhan, we started to talk about the very conversation we were having. He told me that he also adopted diplomatic selfhood, and as a result was carefully answering questions due to the awareness of representation, and the search for coexistence (Interview 6). After the interview with him, I realised that the interviews were set up, of course on the premise that I would interview participants and ask them questions regarding diplomacy, their daily life, their identity, and their relationship to Cyprus. As a result, it is not unreasonable for them to see me, the interviewer, as someone I have until now called the "receiver". What makes me different from a random encounter on the streets? I also ask similar questions. Perhaps not "Where are you from", but I ask participants for example what they would answer to the question "Where are you from". At first, I felt I was not this person, the receiver. That I was somebody else. Yet who? Not a Cypriot. Not a friend. After my conversations, I realised the performative nature of my interviews. I was asking about social diplomacy, their identity, and their life, whilst simultaneously seeing it play out right in front of my own eyes. Every interview is then an act of what I am trying to research. The sheer act of having an interview I argue is then, to some

degree, a confirmation of the idea that everyday diplomacy promotes. Certainly, the function of representation, and the ability to shape the representation I choose to present in my research, and thus in a way lending recognition to both my participants as well as to the state itself. By this logic, therefore, this product, this very writing, is a product of everyday diplomacy.

Thinking back means thinking about the diplomatic selfhood of my participants. Did anybody ever paint a negative picture of the north? No, everyone was quite positive, both during the interview, as well as during some informal chatter before. Were participants ever very negative towards Greek-speaking Cypriots? No, quite the opposite. I was surprised to see how my participants were keen to meet, talk and engage with them. Even, when at times negative topics about Greek-speaking Cypriots would rear its head, it was always in a constructive, understanding manner. I can therefore only conclude that in conversations with my participants, a diplomatic selfhood was well present.

It also made me think about the process of fieldwork. I anticipated having difficulty finding participants. Both due to the small group I am interested in, as well as the perhaps unwillingness to talk about such topics. Yet, I encountered the opposite. Everyone was extremely keen and excited to talk with me. The keenness and ease with which participants were willing to participate I can now only see as highly related to the research itself. It shows me that being seen, and having an opportunity to talk about Northern Cyprus, stepping through the door, and provoking a different image of Cyprus is an important and relevant endeavour.

Language crossing and everyday diplomacy of language

One further way in which pleasantries can hide everyday diplomatic value is through a crucial everyday feature of life and communication: language. Turkish-speaking Cypriots as well as Greek-speaking Cypriots, as the name clearly states, speak different languages. At schools, it is a highly controversial topic to teach the language of the other (Rampton & Charalambous, 2020). As a result, both know little of each other's language. This lack of mutual understanding was for a participant also an important factor for a lack of feeling *connected* to Cypriots from the other side of the island (Interview 3). The language barrier is seen as an important obstacle (Interview 3). Abroad, however, the dynamics are a little bit different. Being an international student in The Netherlands, the most spoken language is English. Speaking with a Cypriot who volunteers for a bi-communal Cypriot student organisation in The Netherlands, he highlights how English is the official language of the organisation (Interview 6). This environment seems therefore more suitable for bi-communal conversations to take place, where the issue of different languages is muted to some degree. A third, more neutral language might then be a bridge to communicate with one another. This language also opens space for Everyday Diplomacy to take shape. It allows for an actual conversation to happen, and to learn more about otherness. Yet, the native languages of both communities also provide opportunities. To show another level of interest, and care to lend recognition to either group.

In conversations with participants, some did however mention that they would always make a point to say the few Greek words they knew (Interviews 2, 3, 5). These few introduction words and some other words here and there will not make for any conversation. Yet, saying these words, contributing little to the conversation, instead can be seen as a form of everyday diplomacy. It can be seen as a way for them to show that they cared about the other community on the island. It is a simple everyday form of recognition of the commonly

described core differences between them. It is this recognition of difference, that is a great example of acting in a way that aims to promote co-existence, rather than to deny it.

Language also matters for feelings of recognition. One participant was visually excited and happy to recall her story of meeting a Greek-speaking Cypriot who was actively learning Turkish, to better communicate with Turkish-speaking Cypriots. She also admitted that it was rare to encounter such cases, yet it made her feel heard and seen as equal (interview 3).

Conclusion

What I have here tried to show through various accounts of participants, and various examples is that diplomacy as a phenomenon is practised everywhere. The focus of my research has been put on the relevance of greetings, quick, informal conversations, the everyday diplomacy involved in groups of friends, and what it means to understand oneself as a diplomat.

I have argued that the importance of the situation in which negotiations take place is vital for understanding the types of answers and approaches taken in everyday diplomatic practices. It is a balancing act on a thin line between enmity and coexistence. Yet, by taking on a diplomatic selfhood there seems to be a space created where this thin line is successfully balanced. I have furthermore argued that this balancing act is commonplace in informal and everyday conversations. I have taken as a point of departure the question "Where are you from" due to its common nature and the layers it hides and reveals. This question is a site fertile for everyday diplomats to enact their diplomacy, through representation and through language to promote coexistence. Throughout such conversations, the emphasis lies in the legitimation of the self, but invertedly also lends recognition of the state. This legitimation is of contention predominantly depending on how one views the space for a solution to the situation.

Furthermore, I argue for the importance of language crossing in aiming for coexistence. In my conversations with participants, it became clear that language mattered. For identity construction as well as the space for communication. Due to living in a different system away from the island, a different language was commonplace. Yet, despite that participants would explain they still felt it relevant to make a point to say the Greek words they knew. I argue this to also be a sign of everyday diplomacy, through which participants signalled their intent for coexistence.

The component of organisations in everyday diplomacy

During my research, I have come across two Cypriot organisations that are active in the Netherlands and both affect, in different ways, the space for everyday diplomacy among Cypriots. Here I would like to present three findings on the relationship between the everyday diplomacy of these individuals and the role of such organisations.

The first organisation I found is called ABKTÖF (Turkish abbreviation meaning as much as European Union Turkish Cypriot Student Federation). This organisation is, as the name already reveals, led by students living in the EU. The organisation actively aims to help northern Cypriots get accepted into universities with their certificates. They also help navigate students through various issues one might encounter whilst living in a de-facto state. Yet, as participants explained to me, the main goal of the organisation is to create a community of

Northern Cypriots abroad (Interview 3, 4). In this regard, it for example also features an alumni section after graduation (AB-KTÖF, 2023).

The other organisation I found is called EUCS (European Union of Cypriot Students) and is also a student-led organisation and is in many regards similar to ABKTÖF. In opposition to the first one, however, this organisation is a bi-communal effort that aims to bridge the gap between the two communities. As a result, the official language is English, and members of both communities are represented in the board (EUCS, 2023). The aim of this organisation is essentially the same as ABKTÖF, but with the main difference being that it aims to cater for the whole island (EUCS, 2023).

These organisations are both student-led and predominantly meant for other students. In terms of political nature, the latter is more politically outspoken than the former. EUCS in this regard is more actively promoting issues Cypriots are facing. The role such student organisations have can be quite important in the sense that it constrains or enables certain social circles to occur. Not only in terms of the people becoming friends with each other during social events but also in the bigger picture of enacting diplomacy. These organisations can help facilitate everyday diplomats connecting with official institutions. EUCS for example facilitated a trip to Brussels in 2022 and was able to highlight various issues Turkish Cypriots were facing in their daily life to EU politicians (eucypriotstudents, 2022).

A second important factor that these two organisations play a role in has to do with internal communication. A participant, Orhan, in this regard, made explicit mention of how he and the organisation found it important to show the youth the ability to create synergy between the two communities (Interview 6). This shows that such organisations can have an important position in managing not only external communication, but also focus on internal communication, and the modes of behaviour of Cypriots themselves. From an everyday diplomacy point of view, such organisations can contribute to creating an alternative narrative wherein emphasis is shifted towards coexistence and attending to the power of framing one's own representation.

This point then also related to what Marsden highlights: "Everyday *diplomacy must embrace not merely the ways in which individuals and groups manage intercultural relations, but also how they fashion and sustain durable ties of commitment to one another*" (Marsden, 2016, p. 68). The importance of managing such ties of commitment in terms of everyday recognition is something organisations like these can and do play a role in. Certainly, EUCS as an organisation is well positioned to fill this role, due to the nature of the organisation.

In opposition to EUCS, ABKTÖF is a different organisation in terms of its fundamental approach to the conflict and how the other community on the island is seen and approached. ABKTÖF has a way less active role in promoting modes of behaviour akin to everyday diplomacy. Their website and social media are clear examples hereof. The organisation, Instead, behaves more in line with how one would see an organisation endorsing everyday peace. This is in the sense that it aims to maintain the status quo and is not visibly active in promoting Turkish Cypriot issues abroad. Yet, despite this, the members I spoke to were, as I have already argued earlier certainly more active in enacting their everyday diplomatic role, as I have also elaborated on in section two.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The core idea of this research has been to give an account of the mechanics of everyday diplomacy for de-facto state migrants. Groups that have been affected in intense ways by international conflicts are hypnotized to be prone to employ themselves as everyday diplomats, yet little actual research has been conducted on this topic (Marsden et al., 2016). De-facto states are areas that are indeed affected especially by conflict, precisely because the de-facto status of a state is the result of a still ongoing, frozen, conflict. This ongoing conflict severely affects the everyday life of citizens of such states. My research focuses on a specific group of citizens who are in many ways still affected by the conflict, but in opposition to other citizens, they do have the ability to meet and navigate otherness, a requirement for diplomacy. Consequently, this research took the angle of social diplomacy to see how these migrants might employ themselves as diplomats in their daily lives. This understanding of diplomacy specifically foregoes the classical views of diplomacy as being restricted for the professionals in offices and behind closed doors, and instead focuses on everyday encounters in the form of greetings and conversations.

At the backdrop of this combination is a critical stance towards the role of the international system, which of course severely affects the position and power of the de-facto state and its citizens. The international system, I argue, should be seen as an assemblage that sees de-facto states as an anomaly and a threat that is to be avoided. This research takes the starting point that everyday diplomacy is a phenomenon that represents a departure from the ways in which the international system is seen. It represents a departure because it no longer sees the international system as a set of pre-defined actors but instead reconfigures the assemblage to include a much wider variety of actors. Everyday diplomacy therefore questions how this assemblage is constructed and poses the question of how it might be reconfigured.

Everyday diplomacy is here seen as a line of flight, as Deleuze and Guattari call it, which “flees” from the assemblage. As a result, this research can be understood as a chase to attempt to highlight this act of fleeing and see how it takes shape. Specifically, I argue that everyday diplomacy is a useful tool precisely because this type of diplomacy not only foregoes the perceived singular dimension of diplomacy but also aims to forego the persistent labelling of non-recognition by questioning the persistent methodological nationalism. The design of this research has been set up as phenomenological research precisely because this understanding of diplomacy sees diplomacy not as a profession, but rather as a phenomenon that morphs and changes shape (C. Constantinou, 2015). Researching such a phenomenon therefore necessarily requires taking into account the self of the researcher.

Findings

From this backdrop, my research reveals a few key findings. Firstly, I found that participants commonly had issues with the gap between self-identification and external identification. Especially abroad, misidentifications were common and as a result, participants took on a diplomatic selfhood through liminal characteristics that are important to understand. Participants in some ways felt stuck in the situation, constantly on the threshold of an open door. Yet, a key difference between individuals and the state is that every encounter also lends opportunities to step through the door. The driving force of everyday diplomacy towards the state furthermore seems to be found in this difference between self-identification and external identification. With that, I mean to say that people were not necessarily very occupied with trying to lend legitimization to their de-facto state. Instead, they were more occupied with ensuring they felt recognized and legitimized, showing that they also existed. Though because this is an important aim for them, it inadvertently also created images in the minds of the *others*, about the divided status quo of the island.

Secondly, a common *site* where everyday diplomacy takes shape is through simple, everyday pleasantries. For migrants, this site is commonly "visited" through the question "Where are you from". I show that this question is loaded with layers of meaning that Turkish-speaking Cypriots must negotiate themselves through. This site of everyday diplomacy is also relevant to better understand the phenomenon itself. It showed me that the situation in which these negotiations took place did dictate the answer. It also revealed to me that there is still this visible tension between everyday diplomacy and everyday peace and that as an everyday diplomat, it is very much a balancing act on a thin line. This thin line is especially brought to the fore in cases where the other is seen as hostile with a malicious agenda or unwilling to act diplomatically in return.

Thirdly, the pervasiveness of English as an acceptable first language in the Dutch education sphere normalizes conversations between communities. Yet, my participants always found it important to speak the words they would know of each other's language. In this sense then, their native languages can also be seen as a tool for shaping space for everyday diplomacy, and to signal room for coexistence.

Then, lastly, I investigated the role of two Cypriot migrant organisations in shaping space for everyday diplomats. I found that these organisations don't necessarily employ many diplomatic activities, though with one more outspoken than the other. The role such organisations might play is in how these organisations provide space for alternative narratives to take place, yet further research in this regard is needed.

To summarize and to answer the main question: How might everyday diplomacy take shape for de-facto state migrants in sites where their de-facto state's existence is denied? I can therefore say that I have found everyday diplomacy to take shape:

- In the site of everyday conversations
- On the site of fieldwork
- As a result of the difference in self-identification and external identification
- As a result of understanding oneself as liminal
- Through common questions like "Where are you from"
- Through language crossing

Implications

My research provides an account that confirms the theoretical understanding that everyday diplomacy is prone to occur among communities that have been "*affected in especially intense ways by international conflict*" (Marsden et al., 2016, p. 5). Yet, it also seems to suggest that it is within this context important to consider the relevant component of *liminality*. Specifically in the context of the de-facto state, the concept of liminality is an increasingly common tool through which an understanding of the actions of the state can be understood. In this research, I argue that liminality is also relevant for the understanding of how it shapes everyday diplomatic actions. Further research then is needed to better understand the difference between groups that are intensely affected by international conflict, and groups that inhibit liminal characteristics. Certainly, also, future studies linking everyday diplomacy and de-facto states should be mindful of how liminal characteristics play a role in shaping everyday diplomacy.

At a fundamental level, the result of this research leads me to suggest thinking about the international system not only as a system of communication between governmental bodies but instead to be seen as a system of everyday actions, conversations, and negotiations. The enactment of the international system plays out right in front of our eyes, and as a result, is continually reinforced. A society like The Netherlands, multicultural, is a sort of microcosm wherein international negotiations, images of representation and mediations are shaped, navigated, and enacted. I see the international system as an assemblage wherein the many different power relations between states are represented, but wherein, crucially, the lack of power of de-facto states is also enshrined. The experiences of my participants are indicative of the understanding that, embedded within the power relations of the assemblage, the lack of power of de facto states is taken as a given. The way that everyday conversations are perceived makes it painfully clear what the position of power of a de-facto state in the international system is. The self-understanding but also the daily practices of citizens from de-facto states are enacted as not fitting in the existing mould of the current conceptualisation of citizenship. This also becomes clear through the sheer difficulty of filling in simple internet forms; not being able to choose your own country, is an everyday challenge. Everyday diplomacy as a form of selfhood provides an ability to project power and to attempt to alter the power relations at a micro level. Everyday diplomacy in this sense then represents an escape from the international system and can be seen to try and meaningfully alter the international system itself. My research, therefore, suggests seeing diplomacy related to de-facto states not *outside* the international system, but as operating *inside* of the system.

In this light, from a policy point of view, steps can be taken to put into practice this understanding. A first step towards this could be to internationally reconfirm the belief in the difference between self-understanding and group-level identification. Specifically for de facto states, this would mean that it is worthwhile to for example recognize the passports. Practically this is also relevant because stories about being stuck in a small piece of territory that lacks recognition is a common issue (Euronews, 2023). Even in Northern Cyprus, there are cases where citizens are unable to get a Turkish or a Republic of Cyprus passport. As a result, such citizens are now almost permanently stuck on the island, with only a handful of places to visit. For governmental officials of recognized states, this also seems like a good endeavour to follow, because regardless of what any governmental officials want

(reunification or separation), a full exclusion of the international system is a bad idea. It is a bad idea because it fundamentally drives de-facto states to create a symbiotic relationship between the de-facto state and the patron state (Ker-Lindsay, 2022). This essentially ensures that de-facto states are unlikely to ever become independent states as well as ever being reunified with the state they separated from due to this connectedness. Governmental officials therefore in general should find a balance between these two approaches (Ker-Lindsay & Berg, 2018).

This research falls in line with this understanding but approaches it from the angle of the individual. My research seems to suggest that adjusting policy to firmly separate citizens and state to be a good idea. Interestingly, this policy has started to be considered and has even been implemented by some countries regarding Kosovo. Brazil for example does not recognize Kosovo as a country but has stated they accept Kosovar passports as valid and legal (Ministry of External Relations, 2022). The same goes for Greece, which, as part of the European Union, will even give Kosovar passport holders visa-free entrance, despite not recognizing the country (European Commission, 2023). This shows that the recognition of a passport but not the nation is a strategy a country can employ.

Another important implication regarding everyday diplomacy is the *site* that I explored. In various other research, the emphasis was specifically on physical sites: A market in China (Cheuk, 2016) or a lodge in Bosnia (Henig, 2016). Yet, I argue, a diplomatic site needs not to be physical. I explored throughout my research two different everyday *sites*. Firstly, the site of everyday pleasantries, where everyday conversations take place, and secondly the site of fieldwork, both online and offline. The first site reveals the relevance of everyday, commonplace conversations, and the different ways such a conversation is interpreted and acted upon. It suggests that the idea of *sites of diplomacy* indeed need not be taken in a geographical sense or virtual, and instead can be interpreted in a broader sense. This site, although never directly alluded to, has seen some investigation before. Cheuk (2016) in his paper, for example, talks about pleasantries, and the role it has had in his research. My research therefore seems to confirm the ideas put forward by Cheuk, and that sites like these are also examples of sites where the so-called mediated exchange (see: Marsden et al., 2016) occurs.

Then, secondly the site of the fieldwork, and in my research's case particularly the site of the interview. This site has already been brought to the fore by the work of Morris, who attentively describes his experiences in doing fieldwork in Russia at a time of conflict. My understanding of how everyday diplomacy is practised is in many ways like the experiences of Morris. Yet, my research emphasises a different aspect than Morris does. Morris predominantly focuses on the different ways the identity and nationality of the researcher reflect on the participants, and how this shapes conversations. My focus also lies in how the interview itself is relevant as a research product since it inherently exhibits forms of everyday diplomacy, and thus the metadata of the interview should also be paid attention to. However, we, as researchers, need to also pay specific attention to how we view the agency of individuals as political (Morris, 2016, p. 123). Because it is of vital importance, as this research shows, to detach the person from the state.

My study also talks about the importance of language, both for identity formation and for everyday diplomats to signal signs of intent. Talking about the relevance and importance of language is not new. Marsden (2016) already talks about the importance of learning different languages for Afghan traders in navigating their livelihood. Reeves also mentions the importance of language in the search for a "common language" to navigate otherness

(Reeves, 2016). Yet, what my research adds to this discussion is how a basic level of understanding of another language can serve as a tool for signalling intent and conveying signs of hospitality and coexistence. In this sense then the relevance of language for future research comes in not only at full proficiency but can already be relevant at a basic level.

Lastly and specifically within the context of de-facto states, there has been much interest in researching how de-facto states (try to) act internationally. Different alternative forms of diplomacy have been under much investigation, yet the underlying assumption of such studies has always related to how state officials of de-facto states try to fit in within the classical arena of diplomacy. In other words, the field has mostly focused on state-to-state diplomacy. Even the role of NGOs has seen little investigation. My research in everyday diplomacy in migrants provides a different account of diplomacy that I hope is a first step in starting to think differently about the relationship between de-facto states and diplomacy.

Certainly, within the context of de-facto states, many topics for further research have come up during my research. At the first level, due to the lack of focus of this research on the potential reach and possible impact of everyday diplomacy, it will be relevant to explore that avenue further. Specifically, how everyday diplomacy might be able to genuinely impact decision-making. But also, how this affects policy makers, and the types of policies they decide to invest their time into. A second point is that although my research provides a starting point to assess the role and relationship between NGOs and everyday diplomats, more research is needed to better understand this interaction. How do everyday diplomats of NGOs for example relate to each other, what kind of problems do they face, and what role do these organisations provide in bridging the classical and social diplomacy. A third avenue for further research can shift its attention towards the virtual space. How is everyday diplomacy practised on the internet, and what is the role of social media therein? Due to the pervasiveness of social media, and the ease with which one can communicate with others, it is also interesting to start learning about the role of everyday diplomacy on the web. Some interesting examples in the form of people like Alik Puhati (Puhati, 2023) or Soslan Koshty (Koshty, 2023) exist but need more investigation. As a final suggestion, I would like to consider my role as a researcher. If anything, this product has been produced by my participants *and* me. So, in this vein, a repeat of this research might net different results, that would be equally valuable, to compare next to this one, to see where the differences are, but crucially also, where agreement is.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Overview of conducted interviews.

Interview	Date	Name
Interview 1	06/07/2023	Mehmet
Interview 2	12/07/2023	Aysel
Interview 3	18/08/2023	Emine
Interview 4	18/09/2023	Aynur
Interview 5	21/09/2023	Adnan
Interview 6	21/10/2023	Orhan

Interview Consent Form

Radboud University

Research Title: Migrant Everyday Diplomacy of de facto states abroad

Research Investigator: **Jeroen de Jong**

Research Participants Name: ____

The interview will take 30-45 minutes. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures require that interviewees explicitly agree to be interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. Would you please read the accompanying information points and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be produced.
- The transcript of the interview will be analysed by myself.
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to myself and my supervisor.
- Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available within my research will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed.
- The actual recording will be deleted after the completion of the research project.

Printed Name :

____

Participants Signature Date :

____

Researchers Signature Date :

____