Impacts of Abandoned Properties in Conflict Zones (Geopolitical Brownfields) on Real Estate Development & Regeneration Possibilities: Case of Cyprus Conflict

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Abstract
Abandoned areas are one of the most fundamental consequences within conflict zones, where they may appear as buffer zone, militarized areas, and closed or restricted zones. In this regard there are two complimentary discussions: one advocates the impacts of conflicts among regional policies and related actions arisen according to the facts that can produce geopolitically conflict zones, and the other one advocates the nature and origins of geopolitical conflict zones that can negatively impact the regional policies. Taking both discussions together as two dimensions among land management issues in conflict areas, and also considering conflicts in regional policies and existence of geopolitically conflict zones, would express a negative impact on any planning proposals for real estate developments and regeneration possibilities. Therefore this study attempt an investigation on these two dimensions to demonstrate the complicated realities associated with geopolitically conflict zones. Case of Cyprus conflict taken as an evidence to this study, where the rare situation of four decade of on-going conflict became part of norm of decision making processes regarding all possible real estate development and regenerations scenarios. The study takes documentary and empirical research methods as the main methodological approach for data collection and analysis, where it particularly uses qualitative analysis in order to gain insights into the unspoken issues of real estate development difficulties within an internationally ignored conflict zones such as North Cyprus.

Keywords Interest, Power, Space, Abandoned Properties, Policies, Geopolitical Brownfields, Conflict Zone, Developmental Strategies, Varosha, Cyprus, TRNC

1. Introduction
The territorial behaviour of humans in relation to lands and properties has widely acknowledged and reflected an interest in land ownership. In other words, this natural consequence of territorial behaviour is always associated with an interest in real estate property ownership and has been regulated via deferent regimes during history as policies related to land law and property ownership practices. This interest is generally known in real estate as possessory interests, which describes the intent and
right of a party to occupy or exercise control over a plot of land. On the other hand, the conflict of interest within territorial behaviours over controlling land (in many different scales) historically caused conflicts and wars associated with occupation and destruction. However, after one party occupies a territory or the conflict is resolved, and usually after destruction is complete, developmental strategies take place to turn the degraded areas to beneficial places responsive to needs of the owners. This scenario took place throughout history. However, in conflict zones, where resolutions did not take place, destruction became a significant barrier to any developmental strategies. Keywords, such as ‘interest,’ ‘policies,’ ‘degraded areas and abandoned properties,’ and ‘developmental strategies’ are explored in the following text to provide a framework for the discussion of impacts of abandoned properties in conflict zones on real estate developmental strategies.

The general focus of this study is to investigate the negative impacts of inaccessible areas on socio-economical condition of the affected regions and their current and future developmental strategies, where they used to be part of vibrant urban or rural locations. Particularly, this paper demonstrates the hidden negative impacts of abandoned properties and their periphery on current and future real estate developmental possibilities and proposals regarding the urban and rural regeneration (real estate developments) of affected areas, where historically most proposals failed due to unrealistic visions and understandings of the nature of such real estate problems. Such proposals usually consider regenerations and real estate development strategies such as planning, architectural, and economic development proposals with one-dimensional perspectives without taking the origins of the problem into account. The Cyprus conflict serves as evidence to this discussion, where more than 40 years of ongoing bi-communal conflict on territorial control, in addition to a conflict of interest of geopolitical actors who participated in the complexity of the case, demonstrates a unique case of abandoned real estate properties as a consequence of a conflict zone. Accordingly this study provided a comparative analysis with exploration of market prices of real estate properties and their links to geopolitical problems and questions in both side of the island to demonstrate the reality of prices which is defined by access, supply, and demands that all links to violence and state interests in a conflict zone. This study suggests the real estate market price in Cyprus depends very intimately on the political climate, both locally and internationally, and any suggested proposal for future development can be effective if become associated or aligned with conflict resolution progress.

This study is part of an investigation project called “Dealing with Geopolitical Brownfield Sites: Towards an Adaptive Guideline to Foster Their Regeneration,” in which derelict, inaccessible, declined, and/or abandoned real estate properties within geopolitical conflict zones that were previously developed land, are addressed as geopolitical brownfields. This term postulates that all space is power, and all power produces space; geopolitical brownfields would be the space of contested powers (Shojae Far & Marmolejo Duarte, 2014).
2. Four Associated Key Factors With Conflict Zones and Their Related Real Estate Issues

Interest is the most fundamental common understanding in the nature of real properties, and upon the conflict of interests, a real property (estate) can turn into a conflict zone. Defining conflict zone is not easy, as each conflict zone has its own origins and nature of conflict that can rely on many different aspects, such as bi-communal conflicts, religious conflicts, ethnic conflicts, international conflicts, geopolitical conflicts, and many more types of internal and external conflicts. Regardless of the origins, all types of conflict of interests over a particular real property can impressively impact the value of land, where the positive or negative aspects of the impact depends on the nature, duration, consequences, and complexity of the conflict.

Policies are the consequences of decisions on regulating topics, and decisions are made based on interests, so to question the nature of the problem within conflict zones, it may be necessary to understand the role of regional or national policies that push geopolitical locations into a conflict zones. The term geopolitical location is also key in this discussion, where the integration of geography (real property in a bigger scale) and politics (powers) produced a geopolitical location. Such geographical locations are naturally sophisticated with concentrated interests from both internal and external actors. The question always remains: is it the nature of geopolitical areas that evoke conflict within regional policies or is it the conflict within the regional policies that cause a geopolitical location experience conflicts, or both? The answer to this question can always turn and lead to never-ending discussions, similar to asking about the chicken or the egg causality dilemma. To face the reality in terms of real estate properties within conflict zones, and to leave the circularity of causality dilemmas, consider both conditions together as a whole to have a holistic approach in dealing with real estate properties in geopolitically conflict zones.

Abandoned real properties are generally defined in real estate policies of governments (regionals or national) differently but with a common understanding of volunteer abandonment for a long period of time, which represents a low level of interest over holding and maintaining real estate. However, even if a piece of land and its attached belongings are physically abandoned it is very rare to find it without legal ownership status. Nevertheless, there is an inconsistency with this argument in relation to the case of abandoned real properties in conflict zones, where the abandonment takes place as a consequence of conflicts associated with violence and armed force activities. An abandoned real property in conflict zones is usually a frozen asset for negotiations regarding conflict resolutions, in which there is a high level of interest over such real estate properties. The most common reasons behind these kinds of abandonments are the high level of risk, fear, uncertainty, and external pressures, where for many people in conflict zones life is associated with a constant sense of instability and fear associated with a great feeling of pressure and injustice.

Real estate development and regeneration possibilities are important vehicles in the improvement of socio-economical situations of most of the declined areas, where policies, actions, and funds are the main factors within such possibilities of improvement. However, the circumstances in conflict zones may affect the effectiveness and validity of any possible development and regeneration plans. Then
the metrics for development and regeneration of real estate properties are quite different from normal circumstances, where in geopolitical conflict zones, existence of militarised, restricted, abandoned, and buffer zones are usually normal in shaping the local geography of the affected areas.

3. Brief overview on the Cyprus conflict and its impacts on real estate market

The island of Cyprus is a strategic geopolitical location in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, historically representing an important strategic real estate asset for many Mediterranean regional actors, in addition to international powers. The contemporary geopolitical challenges of the eastern Mediterranean Sea brought a new era of conflict into Cyprus. After gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1960, the island experienced an unbalanced or unjustified coexistence and cooperation of rulers within a bi-communal island (Shojaee Far & Marmolejo Duarte, 2014). This unbalanced coexistence of two Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities brought a strong ethnical and bi-communal conflict on the surface, where it get to its peaked in 1974 with a coup d'état sponsored by Greece. The Turkish military responded as guarantor of the safety of Turkish Cypriots. The armed forced conflict resulted in the official division of the island into two parts, associated with massive population transfer, where the Turkish Cypriots were forced to move to the north of the island and Greek Cypriots to the South. Armed forced activities and the continuation of bi-communal conflict resulted in many militarised and restricted zones in the north, in addition to the UN buffer zone as the dividing line between two sides and the fencing of the Varosha district of Famagusta by Turkish military (Figure 1). All the military bases, buffer zones, closed areas, and restricted zones appeared and were declared as a guarantee of peace for both parties.

Figure 1 – Restricted areas (fenced by Turkish Military) at Famagusta – Varosha District (Source: Photographed by Author)
Since then a series of negotiations took place with the hope of reunification of the island. However, there has been no significant result, as both communities propose solutions with significant ignorance of the other party's interests. In fact, the Cyprus conflict is a very complex issue, where the conflict of interest of international actors on their influence in future prospects of Cyprus, act also as a hidden barrier of achieving any comprehensive resolution. After the official division of the island in 1974, North Cyprus remained an occupied and administrated area by Turkish military until 1983, when the leaders of Turkish Cypriots proclaimed a new republic called the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC). The Turkish military bases and all their troops remain in northern part. Due to international sanctions against the northern part’s administration and occupying forces, the new-born republic never achieved international recognition (except by Turkey). This event resulted in the isolation of North Cyprus, or in other words, international ignorance of the Turkish Cypriot community.

As the general consequences of isolation and international ignorance, the market values of real estate properties in North Cyprus significantly became associated with conflict resolution processes and talks. For instance, the positive forecast of investment value on real estate properties before the April 2004 referendum of the United Nations’ Annan Plan (UN Annan Plan, 2003) brought a construction boom and increased international demands for purchasing real estate properties in North Cyprus by a yearly market price increase of 100% from 2000 to 2004 (Chart 1). However, after rejection of the referendum and failure of the plan, the growth rate of property values increased only with an average yearly ratio of 20% (TRNC SPO, 2015).

A simple comparison of the recent (2015) prices for properties with similar characteristics in both sides shows that the prices in northern Cyprus are significantly cheaper than the southern part (Table 1 and 2). However this is not just the case of current situation, where as an evidence Property-Wire in 2008 reported the prices of real estate properties in the northern part are generally 50% lower than the south.

![Average Market Price of Dwelling Units in TRNC 1996-2012](chart1.jpg)

Chart 1 - According to governmental statistics of the real estate market prices of new constructions in TRNC, the market prices from 2000 to 2004 increased around 400%. However, the same statistics show that the average growth of the market price from 2004 to 2012 were around 165% (Reference: TRNC SPO, 2015, Chart developed by the author)
The report presented evidence of direct sales from interviewing with international buyers. One of the cases was presented as an interview with an Irish couple that invested in an apartment in the northern part:

“It was the price, the quality and the stunning scenery which made us change our mind,” said Jolene. They had been set to spend £130,000 on an apartment in Agia Napa, a popular tourist resort in the south. A friend suggested they contact a property agency in the north side and they decided to go and look at some projects in Famagusta. ..."I was immediately struck by the difference in quality and price. We also fell in love with the area, it is simply beautiful," added Jolene. With their £80,000 two bed apartment due for completion next year the couple and their two young children are looking forward to spending up to six weeks a year there and enjoying a rental income (Property-Wire, 2008).
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Table 1 – Comparison of market prices of dwelling units between northern and southern Nicosia
Table 2: Comparison of market prices of dwelling units between Famagusta and Larnaca

Although the prices in TRNC are significantly more attractive compared to the southern part, there are many criticisms and cautions related to the risks of investing in real estate of the northern part. After the population transfer in 1974 many Cypriots were forced to leave their land and property, and in the past years many of
them are looking for compensation and/or return of their property. Accordingly, court cases were opened in EU and UK courts against the new owners of the real estate properties (TODAY’S ZAMAN, 2009). In 2013, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of UK government published a guideline to warn their citizens about general real estate investment in Cyprus and particularly about northern Cyprus.

Purchasing property in Cyprus has a number of potential pitfalls...Purchase of these properties could have serious financial and legal implications. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled in a number of cases that owners of property in northern Cyprus before 1974 continue to be regarded as the legal owners of that property. Purchasers could face legal proceedings in the courts of the Republic of Cyprus, as well as attempts to enforce judgements from these courts elsewhere in the EU, including the UK. There has been at least one successful case to enforce rulings in the UK, putting at risk property owned in the UK (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2013).

Another legal problem associated with real estate investment in North Cyprus, is the title deeds status of the lands caused by the conflict. The title deeds are categorised into two types: pre-1974 title deeds and TRNC freehold title deeds. The Pre 1974 deeds refer to the lands owned by a Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, or foreign person before 1974. TRNC freehold deeds refer to lands that were owned by a Greek Cypriot national prior to 1974 and after conflict became abandoned or were exchanged with land in south side. The TRNC freehold title deeds are just recognised by Turkey and TRNC. Their international validity depends on the future political settlement in Cyprus. Although pre-1974 title deeds are generally known as safe investments, the UK government warned their citizens, “even when purchasing pre-1974 Turkish title land, you may still be refused permission to purchase the land/property and no reason for the refusal may be given” (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2013).

To summarise, it can be said that general real estate market in Cyprus and particularly in TRNC is negatively impacted by political and bi-communal conflict within the island, where not just market price in TRNC is much lower compared to the other side, but also the ownership status is a legal question. However, to understand the dimensions of these negative impacts, it is important to make an overview on physically disturbed areas within the geographical map of such a small island.

4. Places in conflict zone that negatively impacted the real estate market

This study categorised the local geographical conflict map of the island into 6 categories: (1) division line that is defined by UN buffer zone, (2) Militarised and restricted areas such as Turkish military bases at coastal areas, suburbs, and within cities of northern part, (3) Closed and fenced areas such as the Varosha district in Famagusta and Cyprus international airport in Nicosia, (4) British sovereign base areas, (5) Greek Cypriot administration area, known internationally as Republic of Cyprus, and (6) Turkish Cypriot administration area, known as TRNC (Figure 2). A significant appearance of these places within a geographical map of Cyprus defined a new local geography for the island, where planning decisions and developmental strategies considered these gaps in the map, and after 4 decades of conflict dealing
with the situation, became a norm of decision making in planning proposals. Also, abandonment of properties by Greek Cypriots, and occupations of the abandoned properties by TRNC administration as part of their internally recognised ownership status (TRNC freehold title deed) added another complication to the local geography of the island, where the lands with TRNC freehold title deeds became a risk element in the real estate market of the unrecognised state of the northern part. In other words, the bi-communal conflict of Cyprus, in addition to geopolitical issues provided a new local geographical map that impacted the urban and rural pattern of the small island.

Consequently, after independence from British colonial rule in 1960, and particularly in 1974, the island lost its territorial cohesion and integrity. Each of these restricted areas that tore apart the land cohesion of the island have different origin and characteristics, where the most significant ones that in many dimensions affected the whole island are the UN buffer zone and closed district of Varosha. United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) is responsible for the buffer zone and Turkish military controls the Varosha. The buffer zone crosses 180 kilometres from the east coast to the west coast of the island. In some parts where it divides cities such as Nicosia, it is just few meters wide, but in other places it is a few kilometres wide. The eastern part of the buffer zone is interrupted by the British Sovereign Base Area, and closed Varosha district (Figure 3), where the UN does not operate nor control the areas (UNFICYP, n.d.).
The inhabitants of the Varosha district abandoned their properties during the armed forced conflict of 1974, and after occupation of the district by Turkish military, the area was fenced and restricted. No one except Turkish militants and UNFICYP staff could enter the area. The majority of the displaced population from Varosha were Greek Cypriots, and they became refugees in their own country (Figure 4). However, the cases of refugees are not limited just to Greek Cypriots. Many Turkish Cypriots as well had to abandon their properties in the southern side and became refugees in the northern part of the island (Figure 5). Since 1974 the Varosha district that was one of the major touristic resorts of Famagusta became abandoned, restricted, and frozen areas within the northern territory of the island. New arrivals to Famagusta, have taken the remaining houses of Greek Cypriots, and the city will start to grow in the next 40 years without a clear master plan or strategy. The establishment of Eastern Mediterranean University in the northern suburb of the city in 1986, and development of university campus, provided a developmental magnet to push the city expansion towards the north. Due to housing demands of new arrivals caused by the university, many uncontrolled development took place in Famagusta, where most of them constructed on abandoned lands that suffer from ownership status and title deeds recognition.
In addition to the UN buffer zone and closed Varosha district, military bases became another restricted area that disturbed the urban and rural pattern of the island. The military areas act as an independent guarantor of safety for each community, as another layer of protection for peace, in addition to UNFICYP forces. Hellenic (Greek) Force as part of Greek military remained to support and supervise
the southern Cyprus National Guard and Cyprus Turkish Peace Force Command (Turkish Military) remained at the northern part as the guarantor of the safety of Turkish Cypriots. However, the Turkish military remained with a big number of troops estimated as 22000 according to UN reports and 40000 according to the administration of southern Cyprus (Global Security Organization, n.d.). Although the main purpose of all the militant forces include UNFICYP, Turkish Military, and Greek military was to ensure the safety of their allies and civilians of the island, their existence after more than 4 decades resulted in shaping the geography of the island as a militant competition zone. Since the military bases at the northern side took control on the most strategically urban locations, the scenario in the northern part became significantly disturbing, in which it negatively affected the urban patterns of the cities and their developmental strategies at North Cyprus. In Famagusta, there are 3 military bases that surround the city: one next to closed Varosha, the second at the centre of the city, and the third controlling the main costal area of the city. There is a temporary (more than 40 years) UNFICYP base at the city centre, which affected the image of the city. The view and vista of military bases from new developments (apartments) became a norm for citizens of Famagusta, however it is a surprise for new arrivals and tourists.

One year after the armed force activities of 1974, the southern part of the island was re-established as the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). Since then RoC has been recognised by the United Nations as the legal administration of the island, and after the 1983 proclamation of TRNC by the Turkish community, the UN Security Council passed a resolution (550) on 11, May 1984 that called TRNC an illegal state:

Recalling its resolutions 365 (1974). 367 (1975), 541 (1983) and 544 (1983), deeply regretting the non-implementation of its resolutions, in particular resolution 541 (1983), gravely concerned about the further secessionist acts in the occupied part of the Republic of Cyprus which are in violation of resolution 541 (1983), namely, the purported exchange of ambassadors between Turkey and the legally invalid "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" and the contemplated holding of a "constitutional referendum" and "elections," as well as by other actions or threats of actions aimed at further consolidating the purported independent State and the division of Cyprus, deeply concerned about recent threats for settlement of Varosha by people other than its inhabitants... (UN Security Council, 1984)

The official international ignorance of TRNC (except by Turkey), and establishment of a new State, provided a market of extreme low cost lands. Between 1974 and 1983, the real estate property market prices were close to zero, as the northern part became an unrecognised and occupied state. Many properties were given to refugees for free and there were incentives to Turkish families from Turkey to settle in northern Cyprus as Ankara’s strategy for changing the demographics of the island. Correspondingly, local and Turkish developers found the situation as an opportunity to take advantage of low-cost lands to construct villas and apartments for foreign tourists with significant competitive prices. In Chart 2, the comparison of average market prices of new construction between the years 1998 to 2012 shows the difference between the market values and prices of TRNC versus RoC. The low and attractive prices of TRNC are associated with legal risks on ownership status, which have been
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discussed before. However the rapid and uncontrolled development of properties disturb the natural historic housing development of Cypriot urban settlements.

![Chart 2: Comparison of the average market prices of dwelling units between TRNC and RoC (1998-2012)](chart.png)

Chart 2: Comparison of the average market prices of dwelling units between TRNC and RoC (1998-2012), the chart shows the significant differences of the market prices of properties within a small island, where the real values and characteristics of the lands are quite similar. The factor of ownership status of the real estate properties of the northern part, in addition to TRNC’s unrecognised status and existence of a big number of armed forces within the urban environment (urban and its suburbs) are the main elements of this negative value in market prices of TRNC (Reference: The chart developed by author based on governmental statistics available at planning offices of RoC and TRNC).

4. Hidden Impacts of abandoned properties (both real and non-real) on developmental strategies

This study categorises the abandoned properties of North Cyprus into 3 categories: (1) abandoned properties within closed or restricted areas, (2) abandoned properties at the periphery of the UN buffer zone and closed Varosha district, and (3) abandoned properties as the result of population transfer (displacement) between northern and southern parts of the island. All these abandoned properties share the same origin of the bi-communal and geopolitical conflict, however, each of them has unique characteristics. This study determined that the owners abandoned the first real estate category as a consequence of fear of armed force activities, with the hope of returning in a short time. The owners could never return since the areas closed and their return possibilities became associated with long-term negotiations on political settlement. The second category is a consequence of the fenced and restricted areas. For instance, local authorities ignored the peripheries of restricted areas in the northern part as the result of political uncertainties. This ignorance caused the abandonment of houses, where the most vibrant neighbourhood of the cities used to be (Shojaeec Far & Atun, 2012). The third category of abandoned properties has quite different characteristics from the other two. They were abandoned as a result of massive population transfer. Although new arrivals occupied and developed them, the illegal ownership status of the lands and properties negatively affected the whole real estate market values, in which developments on these lands could be associated with internationals courts’ jurisdiction against the new owners.

This study suggests (not particularly this paper) a new land typology for such abandoned real estate properties (all three categories) by considering a holistic
perspective on the origins of the problem (bi-communal and geopolitical conflicts) in association with out-dated regional and national policies, geopolitical interests, physical degradations, and ownership status issues (Shojaee Far & Marmolejo Duarte, 2014). The suggested land typology so far has been named “Geopolitical Brownfields,” where the new terminology heritages its name and characteristics from the physical urban characteristics of a classical brownfield site in addition to characteristics and issues associate with political geography.

The issues caused by geopolitical brownfields (GPB) in Cyprus, and particularly in the northern side, are a significant element that affects any regeneration or developmental strategies. Famagusta is one of the best examples of the negative impacts of abandoned properties, in which developmental strategies focused on rapid sprawl development for inexpensive second home tourism purposes. Except for the private investments on second home tourism, major developments for Famagusta oriented towards the demands of new arrivals to the university (EMU), where the low-quality housing, with no characteristics of an urban neighbourhood developed rapidly around university campus. Consequently, there have been many proposals for revitalising and regeneration the city by university academics and professional activists from both sides, such as “The Urban Problems of Gazimagusa (Famagusta) and Proposals for the Future,” “Proposal for the Revitalisation of the Walled City Famagusta,” “Famagusta Eco-City Project,” “Hands on Famagusta Project,” “Famagusta–Rebuilding No Man’s Land Project,” and many others. However, almost none of these proposals consider the geopolitical situations and challenges. In addition to these urbanism proposals, the political and economic solutions were also not integrated. For example there are many critiques of the UN Annan plan as the cost and economical estimation of realisation of the plan will not be feasible in the long run (Bryant, 2004; Tirman, 2004; Neophytou, 2006; PLATIS, ORPHANIDES, & MULLEN, 2006). On the other hand, politicians from both sides are quite passive and ignorant to any other proposals except the ones proposed by their own administration. As evidenced by the government spokesman of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) in 2007: “none of the proposals on revitalisation of Famagusta are valid for us, except our political proposal presented by the President of RoC” (Palmas, 2010). The same behaviour is exhibited by the local administration of the northern part.

The only proposal with a substantial and practical content as regards the return of Famagusta was the proposal submitted by the President of the Republic Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, and anything else said on lost opportunities regarding the return of the occupied town is not valid, the Government Spokesman Mr. Vassilis Palmas has noted. Specifically, Mr. Palmas said, replying to a press question, that “the only substantial and practical proposal regarding the return of the fenced-off town of Famagusta had been submitted by the President of the Republic during the Luxembourg Presidency [of the EU] and the proposal provided for the return of the fenced-off town of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants and the joint management of the Famagusta port by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, under the supervision of the European Union” (Palmas, 2010).

The evidence from majority of the suggested proposals proves that the suggested proposals are one-dimensional. The proposals either focus on political settlements
without considering the land and real estate developmental solutions, or shape an imaginary urban planning solution for post-conflict conditions without considering the current complications. Therefore, almost none of the proposed solutions could take place in a realistic action plan (2015). In addition to this passive situation as the consequences and impacts of conflict zone, the geopolitical actors oppose any proposal that is not aligned with their geopolitical interest. For instance, Turkey has opposed the re-activation of the Famagusta port at its full functional capacity under the supervision of the EU, and the Ankara administration complained that the port is fully functional at the moment (Uras, 2006).

The discussions in this section explore the generally hidden impacts of conflict and abandoned properties on developmental strategies, however there are some other hidden impacts that deeply affected any future proposals. The duration and complexity of the Cyprus conflict that has lasted for more than 4 decades enforced a negative sociological impact on the elite and scholarly citizens and activists of both sides, where the conflict and abandoned properties became part of the norm in the decision-making process.

Consequently, many scholars lost hope of any resolution, and they generally only focus on one dimension of the problem, without a real consideration of the other factors, such as economic, urban planning, tourism proposals, etc. Generally speaking, these types of proposals concentrate on the individual short-term issues, such as social, political, economic, urban, or environmental. Unfortunately, the main long-term considerations are associated with a high level of uncertainty, which is the result of a long-term on-going conflict. Also, there are other scholars who ignore the reality and dedicate their time to propose futuristic plans for post-conflict situations. These types of proposals usually are quite visionary, which is a good optimistic approach about the future, but unfortunately, since they do not consider the current situation, it is very difficult to see their insight and participate in conflict resolution.

5. Conclusion

This study takes different evidence of the impact of abandoned properties (geopolitical brownfields) on the real estate market and developmental strategies to demonstrate the negative impacts of long-term and unresolved bi-communal and geopolitical conflicts, not only on the general situations of the affected area, but also on future developmental proposals and strategies that could participate in the conflict resolution processes. Accordingly, this study demonstrated the direct link between prices of real estate properties and geopolitical problems and questions in both side of the island to demonstrate the reality of prices which is defined by access, supply, and demands that all links to violence and state interests in a conflict zone.

The proposals and investigations in a conflict zone would become beneficial if they become part of conflict resolution. In this paper, the impacts of geopolitical brownfields on the production of proposals are discussed and it is determined that one-dimensional proposals that do not consider being part of future political settlements, neither by the scholars nor politicians, do not provide insight on developmental possibilities. This highlights the necessities of integrated approaches, which can be achieved by a democratic collaboration of professionals, academics, and politicians for the production
of possible scenarios. Since most of the decision making process and action plans are in the hands of politicians, this study strongly suggests that politicians invite and welcome the cooperation of professionals and academics. In this regard, there would be hope of creating integrated strategies for development and regeneration of abandoned properties (geopolitical brownfields) in conflict zones.

Another finding of this study is that both conflict issues in policies and the nature of geopolitical locations together are the pushing factor to turn a territory to conflict zone. The conflicts within regional policies, which occurred in policies of the new-born republic of Cyprus in 1960, turned the island of Cyprus from a geopolitically interesting location into a conflict zone. However, the nature of the political geography of Cyprus, which is based on the interest on controlling and/or influencing this specific territory, pushed the regional, national, and international policies into a challenge and conflict situation to satisfy the interest of geopolitical actors.

To explore and argue about conflict zones, neutrality is very difficult to achieve, which is a crucial factor in the validity of any study and suggestions. The majority of studies proved that critiques and evidence usually depend on which side of the conflict you belong to. However, this study tries to keep the highest level of neutrality in relation to critiques and evidence from different events, where the principal investigator of the study is an independent researcher and peace activist, who advocates for an integrated approach to deal with disturbed areas in conflict zones.

Bibliography
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