Institution: University of York
Unit of Assessment: 19 - Politics and International Studies
Title of case study: Conflict resolution in protracted territorial conflicts through the promotion of inclusive peace processes
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012-2020
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	**Role(s) (e.g. job title):**	**Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:**
Nina Caspersen	Professor	2012-present

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Territorial conflicts are notoriously complex and difficult to resolve. Academic research by Nina Caspersen on inclusive peace processes has led to the development of practical conflict resolution strategies for some of the world's most protracted conflicts. Caspersen's work had three key impacts. Firstly, her framework shaped a UN initiative on mediation in self-determination conflicts and was directly incorporated in a UN handbook for mediators, affected peoples and states. Secondly, her policy suggestions changed the strategies adopted in the Cyprus peace talks and led to the adoption of an implementation agreement, and a framework for monitoring it that was accepted by all conflict parties and the high-level UN representatives. Thirdly, her recommendations informed conflict resolution strategies in the Caucasus-Abkhazia (Georgia) and Nagorno Karabakh (Azerbaijan) - and shaped the thinking of a leading peace INGO, subsequently influencing Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) strategy in the South Caucasus.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Professor Caspersen's research on territorial conflicts has examined some of the world's most protracted conflicts, in particular several involving *de facto* (or unrecognised) states. By stressing the importance of embedding individual and group rights within the design of peace agreements, her work has challenged conventional approaches that examine conflict in narrow military terms **[B]**. Caspersen has pioneered a unique and ground-breaking framework for '**fudging sovereignty**' having **inclusivity** as a core strategy for promoting dialogue and peace processes **[B][D]**. This formulation argues that sidestepping status-related concerns and engaging a range of international and domestic actors can both prepare the ground for inclusive peace and promote permanent solutions to highly protracted territorial conflicts.

De facto states are beyond the control of the central government (the *de jure* patron state), often following a period of intense warfare. They have declared independence but have failed to gain (widespread) international recognition. Caspersen's research demonstrates how the issue of status acts as a barrier to successful conflict resolution. On the one hand, the *de jure* patron states are wary of engaging with *de facto* states because they fear such interactions could consolidate already-existing territorial loss **[D][E]**. Likewise, they are worried about territorial solutions that could be used as a stepping stone to the formal independence of *de facto* states, or could be misused by neighbouring countries **[B][C]**. On the other hand, the leaders of *de facto* states are concerned that contacts with their *de jure* patron state could undermine their claim to independence **[A][D][E]**. They worry that solutions within the structure of the existing state come with insufficient guarantees and protections **[B][C]**.

In proposing that these challenges should be addressed through 'fudging sovereignty' - i.e. downplaying claims to status and independence, and engaging international actors and NGOs in order to promote peace processes that address fears and uncertainties on both sides - Caspersen's framework sets out a case for: (1) strategies for promoting inclusivity, dialogue and engagement; and (2) sustainable solutions through inclusive peace processes.

(1) Fudging Sovereignty: Promoting inclusivity, dialogue and engagement
Despite the fears of the conflicting parties, Caspersen's research has shown that there are few 'red lines' in international law, beyond which the status of a disputed territory will be altered. Quite extensive forms of interaction and engagement are therefore possible and can help prepare the ground for peace. Caspersen's 'fudging sovereignty' framework emphasises the need to address the fears of both sides by using international actors and NGOs as mediators, creating multiple forums for dialogue, and focusing on technical problems, rather than prioritising questions of self-determination and territorial integrity **[D][E]**.

(2) Fudging Sovereignty: Sustainable solutions through inclusive peace processes
In addition to bringing parties to the negotiating table, 'fudging sovereignty' is a strategy for arriving at more permanent and stable solutions. In particular, this framework proposes addressing conflicting territorial demands by involving neighbouring *patron* states and/or through forms of extensive territorial self-governance **[B].** For such solutions to be acceptable to the conflicting parties, the mediators need to address the fears of both sides of being cheated: not just the fear that the other side will re-arm, but also concerns that promised rights and protections will fail to be implemented. Caspersen's research underlines the risk of relying on 'constructive ambiguity' and identifies ways of providing guarantees that a peace agreement will be honoured, for example through a phased implementation process, independent international monitoring, and adequate resourcing **[B][C]**. Caspersen's research also emphasises the need for broad societal support **[B]**. A peace process should not be limited to the 'men with guns', but instead include a wide range of societal actors. She has also identified strategies for ensuring inclusivity, e.g. by creating different forums that focus on different aspects of the peace process **[B]**. Caspersen's research has, finally, pointed to specific challenges that must be addressed in agreements that 'fudge' sovereignty through territorial self-governance. In particular, she has shown that there is a risk of insufficient capacity in self-governing regions **[B],** resulting in a lack of good governance, and a frequent trade-off between territorial self-governance and the effective protection of human rights, including gender rights and the rights of minorities within the region **[F]**.

These arguments formed the basis for impact on the strategies of states in and after conflict, as well as international organisations and leading peace NGOs as they seek to devise strategies for solving protracted territorial conflicts.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)
[A] (2015) Caspersen, N. 'Degrees of legitimacy: Ensuring internal and external support in the absence of recognition' *Geoforum* 66 pp.184-192
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.10.003
[B] (2017) Caspersen, N. *Peace Agreements: Finding Solutions to Intra-State Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity Press). ISBN: 978-0-745-68026-2
[C] (2017) Caspersen, N 'Moving Beyond Deadlock in the Peace Talks', In Svante Cornell (ed) The International Politics of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017). https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60006-6_9
[D] (2018) Caspersen, N. 'Recognition, Status Quo or Reintegration: Engagement with de facto States' *Ethnopolitics* 2018 17(4) pp.373-389 https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2018.1495360
[E] (2018) Caspersen, N. Nagorno Karabakh Conflict: The Limit of Confidence-Building?' in A. Iskandaryan, *Prospects for Peace in Nagorno-Karabakh* (Yerevan: UK Government & Caucasus Institute)
[F] (2019) Caspersen, N. 'Human Rights in Territorial Peace Agreements,' *Review of International Studies,* 45(4): 527-549 https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210519000056

Evidence of Quality: **[A]**, **[D]** and **[F]** are in leading peer-reviewed journals. **[B]** is published with a leading academic press. **[B]** and **[F]** are submitted to REF2021. **[B]** and **[F]** were funded by a Midcareer Fellowship from the British Academy (2014-2016, GBP99,991), with **[B]** reviewed in Cambridge Review of International Affairs, European Politics and Society (review article),

Human Rights Review, International Studies Review, Journal of Asian Security, and International Affairs. **[E]** is underpinned by work done with the UK Foreign Office and an Armenian NGO, the Caucasus Institute.

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4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

(1) Developing UN Mediation Strategies
The main impact of Caspersen's research in UN mediation strategies has been the direct inclusion of her framework of 'fudging sovereignty' related to inclusivity, good governance and human rights in a UN handbook for UN mediators, affected peoples and states **[1a]**. Caspersen advised the Liechtenstein Mission to the United Nations on their sponsored initiative on self-determination and their development of a UN handbook on how to prevent and resolve self-determination conflicts across the world **[1a][1d]**. The Liechtenstein's Permanent Representative to the UN confirms that Caspersen's work "*provided key arguments that we have used to articulate the substance of our initiative*" **[1a]**. On this basis, he invited Caspersen to a conference held in Princeton (December 2018) "*to provide feedback on draft recommendations for [the] handbook*" **[1b]**. This led to the publication of a report, which was presented at the UN General Assembly **[1c]**; alongside recommendations for the new UN handbook on self-determination conflicts **[1d]** presented to UN delegations, mediators and the UN Security Council.

The UN handbook - to be released in early 2021 **[1d]** - includes Caspersen's recommendations on territorial self-governance **[B][F]**. The Liechtenstein's Permanent Representative corroborates that the Mission was directly influenced by Caspersen's work, noting that "*the handbook recommendations emphasize the need for an inclusive peace process with the aim of building a greater peace constituency*", which the Mission also referenced in their speeches to the Security Council on Mediation and Reconciliation **[1a]**. The UN handbook recommendations are also shaped by Caspersen's findings on '*the centrality of good governance, human rights, and democratization in agreements, the reflection of these priorities in an implementation plan, as well as a presumption against ambiguity in arrangements*" **[1a]**. The recommendations directly link to Caspersen's research on the benefits of inclusivity and different ways of achieving it. For example, "*Arrangements should consider different modes for public participation […] in particular those that allow for constructive and inclusive public discussion such as citizens' assemblies and public meetings*" **[1d]**. The handbook implements Caspersen's suggestions regarding the requirement for monitoring the implementation of self-governance arrangements, the need for proper resourcing, and the challenge of ensuring good governance and human rights protections within self-governing regions **[B][F] [1d].**

(2) Designing a new security architecture for the Cyprus peace talks
Caspersen's policy recommendations directly led to an implementation agreement adopted by all conflict parties and the high-level UN representatives. Caspersen was invited to work with leading international peace NGOs, including Interpeace and the Berghof Foundation, and the Cyprus bicommunal NGO Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD), between 2016 and 2017 in order to develop the 'Security Dialogue Initiative' (SDI) for Cyprus. The SDI proposal was designed to "*facilitate the Cyprus peace negotiations*" **[2d]** by developing innovative ways of approaching security, one of the key stumbling blocks in the talks. It was directly shaped by Caspersen's 'fudging sovereignty' framework, and in particular the role of a staged implementation framework with independent third-party monitoring. The proposal had an impact at the highest level **[2f]** and "*(inspired by Dr Caspersen's work)* [it] *was adopted by the Cypriot leaders and the high-level UN representatives*" **[2d]**.

Caspersen was commissioned to write a report on different options for transitional security arrangements on the island **[2a]**, which drew on her framework for 'fudging sovereignty' **[B][F]**, and was presented in a keynote speech at the project's public launch in December 2016. The launch was attended by key stakeholders, including the UN envoy to the Cyprus Peace talks, and it "*paved the way for SeeD's presence and voice at the high-level peace talks in Switzerland*

between January-July 2017" **[2d]**. Caspersen participated in policy consultations with the UN mission in Nicosia and was subsequently asked to write two policy briefs **[2b]**, which further developed the arguments on 'fudging sovereignty' and credible guarantees, and ways of addressing fears on both sides **[B][C]**. In April 2017, Caspersen provided a written evaluation of the first draft of the proposed security architecture **[2c]**.

Caspersen's recommendation on a staged implementation featured as the main recommendation of the SDI proposal **[2f]** and was accepted by all parties involved. Caspersen's suggestions were *"invaluable throughout"* **[2d]** and *"instrumental in shaping the SDI proposals around transitional arrangements and stages*" **[2d]**. This core part of the proposal recommended a phased implementation framework, with international oversight that provides guarantees for the implementation of both military and political provisions **[2e]**. It involves the guarantor states and therefore enables a form of patron state guarantee - a form of 'fudged' sovereignty - without requiring permanent Turkish troops in Cyprus. It also recommended that the implementation of the settlement should be monitored and supported by a hybrid international mission **[2e]**. More generally, the proposal stressed the need for institutional capacity-building and good governance as a means for fostering popular "*confidence in the implementation, functionality and sustainability of an agreed settlement*" **[2e]**. The significance of the proposal is confirmed by the UN Secretary General who emphasised this breakthrough in June 2017 when he announced that there had been major advancement in "*developing a security concept*" and stressed the importance of the proposed "*credible framework for monitoring the implementation of the agreement in which the current guarantors would play a role*" **[2g]**. Independent impact assessment, commissioned by the partners and donors, also confirms that - through the SDI proposal - Caspersen's framework of an *"inclusive and sustainable vision of security"* and a *"gradual and comprehensive security response, focused on developing long-term endogenous resilience"* influenced and informed the positions of stakeholders on all sides in the negotiations **[2d]**.

(3) Developing Conflict Resolution Strategies for the South Caucasus
Caspersen's research helped to shape strategies for peace in the Caucasus. This impact has focused on engagement with the *de facto* states, Abkhazia (Georgia) and Nagorno Karabakh (Azerbaijan). Such interactions are highly sensitive as they could prejudge the final status of the disputed territory. Caspersen's framework suggests different ways of promoting a more inclusive process **[B]** and identifies strategies for delinking engagement from the issue of status **[C][D][E]**. Her research has:

a) *Shaped the thinking of a leading Peace INGO*. Caspersen worked closely with Conciliation Resources (CR) and shaped CR's approach to conflicts involving *de facto* states. Their Caucasus Programme Director states, "*We have read and been influenced by Professor Caspersen's landmark study … and her advocacy of multi-track diplomacy as an approach that circumvent[s] politically controversial issues concerning the status of such entities*" **[3a][E]**. Caspersen was invited to discuss strategies for moving towards peace in a meeting of the Karabakh Contact Group (KCG) organised by CR, which brought together leading civil society actors and former policy makers from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh. Caspersen's interventions, in particular on the "*utility of multi-track processes as a mechanism for the inclusion of populations*" and on "*how to navigate the politics of status…contributed directly to the messaging*" **[3a]** in a widely distributed CR discussion paper **[3b]**. This paper advocated for multiple, inclusive and technical-oriented dialogue processes, suggested by Caspersen, which may "*allow for status to be less salient in framing dialogue"* **[3b]**.

b) *Informed the strategies of international organisations*. Caspersen has presented her conflict resolution framework at several high-ranking seminars with the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) **[4]**. Shaped by Caspersen's research, selected recommendations in the CR discussion paper **[3b]** have been adopted. For example, the OSCE promoted engagement and inclusivity by inviting a journalist from the unrecognised republic in Nagorno-Karabakh during a journalists' exchange between Armenia and Azerbaijan **[3a]**.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] **Evidence of impact on UN Mediation Strategies**: **(a)** **Testimonial** from Liechtenstein's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, 27 November 2019; **(b)** invitation from Liechtenstein's Permanent Representative to the United Nations to the conference on 'Self-determination in Conflict Prevention and Resolution' held at Princeton University; **(c)** Permanent Mission of the Principality of Lichtenstein to the United Nations, 'Self-Determination in Conflict Prevention and Resolution', May 2019 (key points, p. 2-3); **(d)** 'Guidelines on Prevention and Resolution of Self-Determination Conflicts,' Final adopted version (and version with Caspersen's expert comments, see pp.2 & 3, 7, 9)

[2] **Evidence of impact on Cyprus peace talks**: **(a)** Commissioned report, N. Caspersen, 'Transitional Security Arrangements: A Comparative Perspective' Berghof Foundation and SeeD, June 2017; **(b)** Two Commissioned Policy briefs: 'What could provide a mutually acceptable guarantee for Cyprus?' & 'Pros and Cons of a Turkish Base Remaining on the Island', January 2017; **(c)** Caspersen's written expert evaluation of Security Packages and Elements, April 2017; **(d)** **Testimonial** from SeeD's Head of Programmes and Field Operations, 17 January 2020; **(e)** SeeD, 'Security Dialogue Initiative: A New Security Architecture for Cyprus', June 2017 (pp.4,10); **(f)** Interpeace & SeeD, 'Breaking the Pattern of Deadlock in the Cyprus Peace Process: Lessons learned from the Security Dialogue Initiative in Cyprus', September 2019 (p.5); **(g)** Report of the UN Secretary General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus, 28 September 2017 (p.6)

[3] **Evidence of impact on Resolution Strategies for the South Caucasus**: **(a)** **Testimonial** from Caucasus Programme Director, Conciliation Resources, 3 December 2019; **(b)** Conciliation Resources, 'Preparing populations for peace: Implications for Armenian-Azerbaijani peacebuilding', Discussion Paper, July 2019 (p.9)

[4] **Evidence of high-level engagement**: invitations/programmes from: **(a)** the Council on Foreign Relations (event co-organised with OSCE chairman-in-office); **(b)** Caucasus Institute/FCO co-organised with the Foreign Office (including the UK ambassador); **(c)** Carnegie Europe / the EU's Special Representative to the South Caucasus