Adding fuel to the conflict: How gas reserves complicate the Cyprus question

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A discursive framework of conflict analysis

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Which factors account for the conflict-inducing role of natural resources? The theories derived from the agency-structure dilemma could potentially offer tentative answers to this question and be tested in the Cypriot context: scarcity of resources and security from a structuralist perspective; fear, hatred and political expediencies from an agency perspective. These factors are readily discernible in any conflict. While I acknowledge their validity, I do not deem their explanatory power as intrinsic, self-evident and universally given (Birgel 2018, 56). Instead, I consider them as precarious and processual theoretical preconceptions, contingent on the discourses under investigation. My departing point is that what renders gas reserves as contentious is the particular intense relationship that both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots feel toward them. In its fullest form, this intensification yields an absolute divide between friend and enemy in relation to any given issue (Schmitt 1932; Willams 2003, 516). This line of thinking resonates with Schmitt's (1932) 'specificity of politics'. What Schmitt underscores as 'the political' cannot be inferred from the specific substantive content of any issue at stake, like the natural resources, but in a particular wat of relating to them (Williams 2003, 516; Schmitt 1932).

To this effect, I prioritize how the 'conflictual strategies' of the contending parties are constructed and reproduced in their actions. My objective through this single case study is to understand and interpret the recent Cypriot imbroglio as an end in itself and not the development of broader theoretical generalizations that may be tested for other resource-related conflicts. This is why I employ a 'discursive way' in conflict research as my conceptual framework (Alkopher 2005; Campbell 1993; Jabri 1996; Jackson 2002, 2007, 2009; Weldes 1999). In these studies, the analytical attention shifts from the object of research – natural resources, for instance – to the discursive construction or (even) exaggeration of a pervading sense of threat as well as the manipulation of grievance and a sense of victimhood. Conflict discourses are 'large-scale power-knowledge regimes akin to Foucault's discourses of medicine, education, or humanism, and achieve hegemony at particular historical junctures' (Jackson 2002, 63), such as the recent energy tensions in Cyprus. Via discourses, I scrutinize how ideational factors underpin the recent tensions: how do the agents decipher their 'anarchic' environment, how do historical experiences factor into the recent developments and how does the perception of the 'other' influence each side's strategies? By doing so, I can explain why the escalation of the conflict was inevitable, rendering it 'conceivable, legitimate and reasonable' (Jackson 2009, 180).

Through the discursive framework, I let my findings-discourses 'speak for themselves', so that the interpretation emerges in a 'bottom-up' fashion (Levy 2009, 73). Agent-based and structural premises, manifested through neorealist and political economy perspectives, can be used as implicit theoretical preconceptions for my single case study. Nonetheless, these are expectedly implicit and not explicit, as Jack Levy (2009) recommends for single-case conflict studies.

In this chapter, I first present these theoretical preconceptions. Motivated by the agency-structure dilemma, I use the dichotomy of Le Billon (2009) and present two broad types of theoretical perspectives, each of them corresponding to the primacy of structure or agency as the key explanatory factor in resource-related conflicts. The first type, the geopolitical or neo-realist perspectives, adopts a structural approach and explains how the anarchic system urges states to launch conflicts over the possession of or access to natural resources. Scarcity of security and resources compels the contending parties to launch a conflict to safeguard their sovereignty. The second one, the 'political economy perspectives', grants primacy to the role of agents and builds on the dichotomy of 'greed-grievance' in the eruption/escalation of conflicts. I examine the extent to which and how these perspectives can be implicitly applied in the case of Cyprus or other resource-related conflicts. After I do this, I set forth the discursive framework and speculate about the extent to which these theoretical conceptions can be found in these discourses.

2.2 STRUCTURE-BASED PERSPECTIVES: NEOREALISM & GEOPOLITICS

2.2.1 General background

In the 1960s and 1970s, neorealists developed advanced theories to enrich our understanding of the conflictual behavior of states. According to their founding father, Kenneth Waltz (1979), the structure of the international system largely accounts for their behaviour. Neorealists treat the international system in which states play the leading role as a brutal arena, where states seek for 'windows of opportunity' to exploit each other and are not eager to show trust to each other (Mearsheimer 1994, 2001). The system is labelled 'anarchic', in the sense that it consists of independent political units (the states), which have no effective authority above them to adjust their competing interests (Mearsheimer 2001). In such an anarchic system, the most basic motive driving their behaviour is survival, meaning the protection of their sovereignty. Survival is the ultimate motive that drives their behaviour. In order to survive, they have to maximize their power. Power includes material capabilities, such as military equipment and natural resources.

There are two key features underpinning the international system: anarchy and the distribution of capabilities. Anarchy does not refer to chaos or disorder. 'It simply means that there is no centralized authority, no night watchman or ultimate arbiter, which stands above states and protects them (Mearsheimer 2001, 81). Through the distribution of capabilities, neorealists estimate a finite amount of power and power-producing potential in the system, spread over any given number of state-actors (Mearsheimer 2001). In order to further illustrate how neorealism accounts for the conflictual behaviour of the contending parties, I focus on three different concepts which animate this school: hegemonic stability and decline, maximization of

power and relative gains. After I elaborate on these concepts, I explain how the key premises of neorealism are utilized in geopolitics.

Hegemonic stability or power transition theory

Robert Gilpin (1981) sheds light on the 'anarchic structure' of the international system and the distribution of power among its member-states. He stresses that under particular conditions, such a system can be stable or unstable. By a stable system, he means one in which economic, (geo)political or technological changes do not jeopardize the vital interests of the dominant states (Gilpin 1988). In this context, the stability of such a system is marked by an unequivocal hierarchy of power and an unchallenged dominant or 'hegemonic' power. This 'hegemonic power' has the ability to 'single-handedly dominate the rules and arrangements of international political and economic relations' (Goldstein 2005, 83). For instance, during the Cold War period, the United States and the Soviet Union could deploy their preponderance of power through military coercion or diplomacy in order to safeguard their interests. Hegemonic periods, although less dynamic, provide stability to the international system (Gilpin 1988). A strict hegemonic order governs the political relations between states and does not leave any room for them to manoeuvre outside the boundaries defined by the hegemon.

Correspondingly, an unstable system emerges when economic, (geo)political and technological changes erode the international hierarchy and undermine the position of the hegemonic state. The alteration in relative capability between the dominant state and its principal challenger in tandem with the dissatisfaction on the part of the challenging power may lead to a questioning of the 'hegemonic stability' and eventually lead to power transition (Snidal 1985; Organski 1958). Under these circumstances, adverse events and changes precipitate a power vacuum. The outcome of such a situation unleashes a new international 'anarchic' structure and provides formerly 'peripheral' or 'marginal' countries with an increased freedom of movement, allowing them to maximize their power.

Numerous scholars, such as Sitilides (2014), Tziampiris (2019), Stivachtis (2019) and Tziarras (2016, 2018), have mentioned that a form of hegemonic stability was governing the Eastern Mediterranean as long the US, the dominant superpower in the aftermath of the Cold War, held vested interests in the region. After the US attempted to disentangle itself from the Middle East by withdrawing its troops from Iraq, a power vacuum emerged and the competing actors in the region, Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, sought to do everything necessary to fill this vacuum. Through strategic partnerships or unilateral actions, these actors had to maximize their power to safeguard their 'survival' in the 'anarchic system'. The maximization of power, besides military capabilities, included the utilization of and/or the access to the recently discovered gas reserves.

How much power is needed: the great divide

The central question that divides neorealists is how much power a state should pursue for the sake of its survival in this 'anarchic system'. The various answers to this question led to Jack Snyder (1991, 11-12) drawing a distinction line between defensive and offensive (neo) realism. Defensive realists, represented by Kenneth Waltz (1979) and van Evera (1999), assert that it is unwise for states to strive for the maximization of their share of world power because the system will punish them if they struggle to gain too much power. Defensive realists believe that the offence-defence balance tends to work in favour of a defensive capability over an offensive one (van Evera 1999, Waltz 1979). The rise of balancing coalitions will deters a state from pursuing an aggressive expansion of its power. Motivated by Herz (1951) and Jervis (1978), Stephen Van Evera (1999, 42-43) posited that 'a chief source of insecurity in Europe since medieval times has been [the] false belief that security was scarce'. He assumes that 'states are seldom as insecure as they think they are ... [the] exaggeration of insecurity, and the bellicose conduct it fosters, are prime causes of national insecurity and war' (ibid).

The second school of thought, known as offensive neorealism and advanced by Mearsheimer, adopts a contrasting viewpoint. Offensive realists argue that the scarcity of security in the anarchic international system is not an exaggeration, as van Evera (1999) stipulates. States live in uncertainty as they can never be certain about their neighbours' intentions; they should assume that these intentions are malign or can become aggressive. As a result, states are driven by the system to maximize their power as much as possible. For some of them which have the proper capabilities, achieving regional hegemony is the best way to guarantee survival (Mearsheimer 2001). Mearsheimer (2001, 35) states: 'Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to be the hegemon in the system because it thought it already had sufficient power to survive'. In light of this approach, states should not be considered reckless expansionists but 'opportunistic aggressors', seeking to 'increase their power at acceptable cost and risk' (Walt 2002, 207). Offensive realists would expect Turkey to expand its interests in the Eastern Mediterranean by seeking regional hegemony, while the influence of the formerly dominant power in the region, the US, would decrease. In contrast, other countries, such as Egypt, Greece, Israel and the Republic of Cyprus, due to the power asymmetry, would fail to dominate the region. That is why they have to, at least, maximize their power and improve their 'relative position' in the system (Schweller 1994; Tziarras 2016) in order to check Turkey's increasing influence. This happens because this group of states could never be certain of the intentions of others (such as Turkey).

Relative gains

To pursue 'regional hegemony' and to 'maximize power', states have to possess or control the largest proportion of available material sources in their immediate environment, including military, economic and natural resources. Successful conquest of or access to these natural resources increases the state's relative position in the 'anarchic system' and enhances its efforts

for 'regional hegemony'. Candidate 'regional hegemons' hammer out strategies to control lines of communication and transportation routes in their neighbourhood in order to reduce the risk of being cut off from the vital commodities or export markets. This, in turn, leads to the reaction of the neighbouring states.

A state's drive to maximize its own security by pursuing regional hegemony will inevitably create anxiety among its neighbours. If the relative power of countries such as the Republic of Cyprus or Israel is lower than the powerful neighbour's (for example, Turkey), these countries may team up to contain the latter's influence. These countries are aware that they cannot pursue regional hegemony solely by maximizing their own power. The states' major motive in any interaction with 'competing states' is not to only achieve the highest possible individual payoff through conquest and access to resources (absolute gains) but to prevent others from surging ahead in their relative capabilities (relative gains).

As Grieco et al. (1993) explain, although states are interested in increasing their power and influence through cooperation with others (absolute gains), they can also be concerned about how much power and influence they might achieve in any cooperative endeavour (relative gains). From the neo-realist point of view, when countries encounter the possibility of cooperation for mutual gain, the feeling of insecurity might urge them to question how the gains will be divided. As the prominent neorealist scholar, Kenneth Waltz, (1979, 105) asserts, 'even the prospect of large absolute gains for both parties does not elicit their cooperation so long as each fears how the other will use its increased capabilities". The economic gains arising from energy cooperation can be ultimately transformed into security gains. States gaining disproportionately while dealing with other states may achieve a superiority that will jeopardize the very security of their cooperative partners (Powell 1991).

From neorealism to geopolitical perspectives

Theoretically motivated by this neorealist reasoning, geopolitical perspectives have frequently associated the term 'resource wars' with interstate disputes over the control of 'strategic resources' (Le Billon 2004, 2009, 2014) whose possession would maximize their relative position in the 'anarchic system'. Equating trade with trade and power has diachronically inspired Western geopolitical reasoning about the use of natural resources. Strategic thinking about natural resources in the course of the Cold War concentrated on issues of vulnerability coming from resource-supply dependence and the potential for international conflicts generated by antagonism over access to and control of key resources (Russett 1981; Le Billon 2014). The calculations of decision-makers at that time were fixated on questions of 'energy security', looking at reserves through a security approach and forging alliances with producing countries (Le Billon 2001, 2009). In the 1970s, energy security concerns reached their peak for the majority of Western countries, when they strived to manage the economically disastrous repercussions of the 1973 oil crisis and the 1979 Iranian revolution (Yergin 2012). In

the aftermath of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet empire, which left the pipelines between Russia and Western Europe without a concrete system of governance, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, aggravated these concerns.

The term 'geopolitics', coined in 1899 by Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922), Swedish parliamentarian and political scientist, underlines the role of territory and resources in shaping the condition and the destiny of states (Tundander 2001). The founding father of geopolitics, Sir Halford John Mackinder, in his famous article, *Geographical Pivot of History* (1904), underscored its role in global politics. He stressed their importance on the grounds that for the first time analysts and practitioners can perceive something "of the real proportions of features and events on the stage of the whole world" and search for a formula which can articulate certain aspects "at any rate of geographical causation in universe history".

As a field, geopolitics investigates the impact of geography on international politics, including conflicts. It constitutes a method of analysis which explains countries' conflicting behaviour primarily in terms of geographical variables, such as physical location, size, climate and natural resources (Ortmann and Whittaker 2013).

Geopolitics therefore highlight the break-up of the international system into competing blocks, which engage in rivalry over the control of energy resources (Correlje and van der Linde 2006; Winrow 2016). Geopolitical thinkers share in common a view of an anarchical international system defined in terms of states and states' responses to international distributions of power. To safeguard their security, and ultimately survival, states are 'destined' either 'to control what they depend on or to lessen the extent of their dependency' on others (Waltz 1986, 103). Natural resources, framed in this respect as a key strategic good, are seen both as a source of internal strength, essential for the dictates of an anarchic international system, and as a concomitant source of external dependency –thus, vulnerability- for those that do not have access to it (Casier 2011, 494).

2.2.2 Applicability of geopolitical perspectives

Geopolitics has been used as a theoretical and methodological tool to explain the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, among other conflicts of course. Control of the oil and gas pipelines running from the Caspian Basin is one of the primary factors accounting for the eruption and prolongation of the conflict (Companjen 2010). The government in Baku, due to the possession of oil reserves, considered its region geopolitically more important to the Soviet Union than Armenia. This feature, along with its loyalty to Moscow, led the Azerbaijani government to expect Soviet leaders to prevent any revisions of the status quo, meaning the loss of sovereign control of Nagorno-Karabakh (Melander 2001).

Nonetheless, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the US, taking advantage of Russia's weak financial position and subsequently the power vacuum that emerged, helped

American and other Western oil companies gain concessions in the Caspian Basin. Azerbaijan, militarily and economically weak at that time, projected US interests in the Caucasus by offering its main valuable asset, the oilfields, in exchange for mainly political support in its controversy with Armenia. On the other hand, Russia viewing the region in terms of its former position as imperial and Soviet-era overlord, supported Armenia militarily, although it was selling weapons to Azerbaijan as well. During the USSR era, many generals of Armenian origin did their military service in the Soviet army. Yet, it is noteworthy that the military infrastructure of Azerbaijan, in terms of logistics, depended on Moscow's equipment and other kinds of assistance.

Geopolitical approaches have inspired a number of scholars to study the conflictual strategies of Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus as the inevitable outcome of an anarchic environment. For instance, Grigoriadis (2014) tested how the above-mentioned relative gains theory can explain the negative development in the Cyprus and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. By putting forward this concept, he justified why and how building trust in a region affected by prolonged conflicts among neighbouring states is notoriously difficult. Other scholars have elaborated on the rise of the Eastern Mediterranean as a (sub)regional security complex. The region is allegedly 'stigmatized' by a prexisting imbalance of power full of uncertainty and security threats for the Republic of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey (Adamides and Christou 2013; Aydin and Dizdaroğlu 2018; Bilgin 2015; Ifestos and Platias 1992; Ifestos 2013; Kahveci-Özgür 2017; Karbuz 2018; Kentas 2013; Koktsidis 2014; Kontos and Bitsis 2018; Kouskouvelis 2015; Mazis 2008; Paraschos 2013; Proedrou 2014; Sitilides 2014; Stergiou 2016, 2017; Stivachtis 2019, Tsakiris 2014, 2017; Tuncalp, 2015; Turan 2015; Tziampiris 2019, Tziarras 2016, 2018; Winrow 2016).

Kouskouvelis (2013, 2015) explains how natural resources may also be used by a small state, such as Cyprus, as a bargaining tool or relative capability to gain advantage in its confrontation with bigger powers such as Turkey. Inspired by Fox (1959), he underlines how the demands of great powers over small states frequently centre on concessions for the exploitation of natural resources or control over strategic passageways. From this viewpoint, since such demands never cease, small states such as Cyprus, according to Kouskouvelis (2015) can utilise their goods and services in order to buy consent, gain advantages or build alliances. In this respect, Cyprus, as a small country with limited resources, can respond to the dictates of the anarchic environment by joining in partnerships with Egypt and Israel, with which it shares common maritime borders, in order to contain the unfavourable arms race with Turkey.

Such a school of thought offers useful insights but copes with some shortcomings as well. It uses states as a key unit of analysis. In this respect Turkish-Cypriots, who are not recognized as a state entity, fall out of the scope of such studies. Moreover, the problem with geopolitical perspectives is that, due to their dogmatic and structural nature, they underplay the historical and perceptual factors forming part of the intractable nature of conflicts. Sticking to their

deductive and structuralist logic while simultaneously neglecting the historical patterns of amity and enmity among disputants results in researchers ignoring a great deal of the role which historical experiences play in the formulation of leaders' strategic rationality in conflicts. Moreover, such structural approaches, with some few exceptions (Christou and Adamides 2013; Tziarras, 2016, 2018; Tziarras and Moudouros 2016) pinpoint an almost 'automatic' impact of the anarchic environment on the responses of the contending parties. They dismiss their 'domestic' calculations and their efforts to 'decipher' this anarchic environment. These calculations can function as transmission belts which filter systemic pressures and convert them into actual policy responses (Juneau 2015, 4). As I explain later, through the use of the discursive framework, my research contributes to this direction.

2.3 AN AGENCY-BASED APPROACH: BETWEEN GREED AND GRIEVANCE

An agency-based model can also provide a framework to explain strategic decision-making in conflicts over natural resources. One theory highlighting the role of agency is the rational-choice model. Rooted in economics, it conceives the decisions of the key stakeholders as means-ends calculations. Schelling's *Strategy of Conflict* (1960) puts forward the principles of contemporary strategic theory. According to Schelling, strategy theory analyses and explains the maze of national actions and reactions as more or less advantageous moves in a game of interdependent conflict (Allison & Zelikow 1999). Decision-makers select from a variety of options, expecting that their choice will deliver their goals better than the alternatives. This reasoning is portrayed as a cost-benefit analysis: decision-makers are anticipated to select the choice which has the greater net benefits (benefits-costs) above those of other alternatives (Allison 1971, Allison and Zelikow 1999, Frynas et al. 2017). The buzzword for this concept is 'rationality', defined by Allison (1971, 71) as a 'consistent, value-maximizing choice within specified constraints'.

In this rationality I include the role of emotions. Emotions should be also considered as part of the agents' 'rational choice approach' in conflicts. Some rational-choice theorists may consider rational thinking as a 'cold,' and deliberative process; in contrast they deem emotions as 'hot process', full of biases that trigger irrational choice behaviour (Shafir et al. 1993; Fisher 1994, 150; Jervis 1976). Nonetheless, more recently, scholars began to argue that considering emotions as the source of irrational behaviour is inaccurate (Erişen 2013, 117). The scholarship revised the 'utilitarian reasoning' as being by default superior to emotions (Erişen 2013, 118) through a series of experiments and replicated findings (Elster 1999). Now, the current literature pinpoints the interaction of cognition and emotion as equal forces shaping agents' behaviour (Erişen 2013, 117). While examining the behaviour of contending parties in a conflict, the contribution of emotion, as a by-product of grievances (which I will explain

later) cannot be left out of the scope of my research when it comes to the study of the agents' 'rational behaviour' in a conflict.

According to the rational choice paradigm, the eruption or prolongation of a conflict is a result of choice. Individuals act on the basis of rational future expectations (Muth 1961, Fischer 1980). Therefore, scholars hypothesize that the decision-makers of the contending parties conduct a cost-benefit analysis before dragging ethnic groups into conflicts for the possession and exploitation of natural resources. The same arguments apply in regions holding the promise of the future extraction of natural resources. Frynas et al. (2017) support such hypotheses even for countries which have not necessarily experienced genuine resource windfalls, such as Cyprus. The exact amount of gas reserves in the seabed of the Republic of Cyprus is not known. Despite the lack of accurate information, disputants have been dragged into the dispute.

Amidst an alarming trend in the increase of intra-state rivalries, especially after the termination of the Cold War period, researchers from different disciplines, such as economics and development studies, inspired by the rational-choice model, have shifted their focus from the abovementioned 'structural' geopolitics to agency-based theories and models (Khan 2016). As I will explain later in detail, among various agency-based models, the 'greed-grievance' theories gained prominence in the literature. This literature is divided into two camps. One camp comprises proponents of the economic logic advocating that opportunities of economic profit (greed) motivate the onset, escalation and prolongation of conflicts. The other camp, involving scholars from the disciplines of political science, political psychology and sociology, stresses the role of political and social discontent (grievance) as the prime motivator of civil war.

2.3.1 Greed

2.3.1.1 General background

Greed theory, prominently advanced by the pioneering quantitative research of Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2001, 2004), postulates that 'economic motivations and opportunities are more highly correlated with the onset of conflict than ethnic, socio-economic, or political grievances' (Ballentine and Sherman 2003, 4). Using data from 45 civil wars, including the Nagorno-Karabakh, the Aceh and the Sudan conflicts[1], Collier and Hoeffler found a positive correlation between the exports of primary commodities, low education levels, the number of young men in society along with other greed-proxies and the frequency of civil war outbreak. Some of these greed-proxies included a low per capita income, a large diaspora, , a low growth rate, a dispersed population and a higher population in total (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2001, 2004). To operationalise grievance, they used social factionalisation, ethnic dominance, geographic

[1] Which I discuss later as additional examples of resource-related conflicts.

dispersion, income and land inequality (ibid). They concluded that an economic calculus of the costs and opportunities for the control of primary commodity exports constitutes the main systematic initial impetus to rebellion, with an additional effect arising from fear to be dominated by an ethnic majority (Collier & Hoeffler 1998, 2001, 2004). Ross (2006) developed additional measures and new tests to enhance these linkages. Fearon and Laitin (2003) also conducted econometric studies to show how greed outweighs grievances in the eruption of conflicts.

In stark differentiation with the quantitative literature, Humphreys (2005) conducted a qualitative analysis to assess the impact of 'greed' on the escalation of conflicts. In this work, he defined greed as political opportunism in conflict settings. This definition drew my attention as the most relevant one in the case of Cyprus, rather than the economic opportunities presented by the quantitative scholars. In Cyprus, no rebels exist in order to measure the economic gains deriving from the prolongation of conflicts. Nonetheless, I can hypothesise, based on this definition, that 'spoilers of the peace process' on both sides gain political benefits, such as popularity, through the continuation of the conflict.

Among the various causal mechanisms which Humphreys (2005) adopts in order to forge linkages between 'political opportunism' and escalation of conflicts, he emphasises two, the 'domestic conflict premium mechanism' and the 'pork mechanism'. According to the first one, groups within the contending parties, which provide either economic or political benefits during a conflict, may prefer the continuation of the conflict and therefore act as spoilers of the peace process. The real puzzle here is: what prevents disputants from concluding a peaceful settlement which leaves everyone better off? An answer to this question is the ability of key agents – whether leaders or chief negotiators – to make credible commitments in honouring the agreements as the conflict continues. There may be constituents who do well out of the continuation of a conflict because they may be engaged in activities which they would not be able to carry out if a settlement were reached.

The 'pork mechanism' focuses on the relation between resources and peace negotiations. The theoretical argument goes as follows: if the resource exploitation is contingent on reaching a settlement, then the presence of natural resource endowments should make negotiations more likely to succeed. However, if resource exploitation does not depend on peace, the contending parties can keep on the pre-existing 'conflictual tracks'. In the absence of a settlement, one party can continue with the exploration activities without granting any management rights to the other. Exclusion from the co-management of natural resources would give the other contending party the pretext to harden their stance in the peace negotiations.

Pork barrel policy incentives can also work the other way round, even if an agreement is reached. In the context of distributive politics, if any coalition achieves an agreement, new coalitions may rise with a common agenda to overturn the agreement (Humphreys 2005).

Such a perspective marks the futile character of negotiations, in the sense that negotiators and the chief leaders of the contending parties cannot proceed with credible commitments for a settlement; the presence of natural resources which offer transferable rents renders negotiations more difficult by granting the opposition incentives to renegotiate subsequently (Humpreys 2005). The logic of the 'pork mechanism' resonates with Putnam's (1988) two-level game. At the domestic level of a community, domestic groups pursue their interests by putting pressure on leaders to employ favourable policies and politicians seek power by establishing coalitions among those groups. At the international level or at the peace-negotiation table in my case, the same leaders attempt to maximise their own ability to satisfy the domestic pressures while diminishing the adverse consequences of the commitments they have to undertake at the negotiation table (Putnam 1988, 433). The complexity of this two-level game lies in the fact that that moves potentially considered 'rational' for a player at the negotiation table (reaching a settlement) might be impolitic or unpopular for that same player at the other (domestic) board. Therefore, the players, for the sake of their own political survival, may prefer to toughen their stance on the negotiation table and consequently jeopardise the possibilities of a settlement.

2.3.1.2 Applicability of greed theory

While testing the explanatory power of greed theory in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, Morelli and Rohner (2015) posit that as long as oil within a country is unevenly distributed among groups, it can determine ethnic war. Azerbaijan is considered a petro-state, holding a vast amount of oil and gas reserves in its soil. Taking this element into consideration, scholars dealing with 'resource curse theory', such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004), Fearon and Laitin (2003), and Morelli and Rohner (2015), have identified a link between the discovery of natural resources and the eruption or escalation of conflicts.

Fearon and Laitin (2003) have classified the (second) Sudanese war (1983-2005) as a resource-induced conflict. During the peace negotiations between the North and the South, the distribution of wealth from oil was the main bone of contention between the contending parties. During the second civil war, oil resources had reportedly become a critical battleground between the rebellious freedom movement, the SPLA, and the Sudanese government. 'Oil has raised the stakes of the war and given both sides an increased commitment to the battlefield' (ICG 2002, 100). According to the SPLA manifesto in 1983, the efforts to redraw the borders and the decision to construct an oil refinery at Bentiu motivated the SPLA's struggle against Khartoum (Johnson 2003, 80; Tang et. al 2017). Oil exploitation, falling under the responsibility of the federal and not the regional government, provided significant revenues to the government in the North. These revenues proved instrumental for the North purchasing extensive military equipment with a view to counterattacking the SPLM insurgents (Cascão 2017). A booming oil economy was serving the interests of the elites in north Sudan, regardless of the fact that more than tw0-thirds of the oil fields were located in the South (Cascão 2017). On the other hand, the rebels designated the oil fields as targets of military attacks, seriously disrupting

oil production as well as the revenues of the companies and the government in Khartoum (Goldsmith et al. 2002).

Based on the literature, greed could apply in the Aceh conflict. Aceh is located in the northern tip of Sumatra and has witnessed a continuous conflict between the central Indonesian government and the rebel group, GAM, from 1983 to 2005. The narrative that the central government of Indonesia had sucked Aceh's natural wealth away puts the conflict in the 'greed-based' category. This is partially confirmed by the words of one of the young leaders in a massive 1999 campaign favouring the independence referendum: 'You can imagine: of the trillions of rupiah produced by Aceh's wealth each year, Aceh only received less than one percent' (*Kompas*, December 2, 1999, cited in Aspinall 2007, 955). Had Aceh gained its wished-for independence, the constituents would have been in a better economic position. Thus, greed as a material motivation triggered the rebellion.

In the case of Cyprus, there are no rebels to consider in order to assess the impact of their greedy behaviour on the escalation of the conflict. I rather foresee the 'implicit' application of Humphreys' (2005) assumptions, although his work has not been cited in the Cypriot literature. This probably happened because no literature, to my knowledge at least, has examined the impact of political opportunism on the recent tensions. I find, however, a literature focusing on the role of problematic political leadership in the perpetuation of the conflict. According to Heraclides (2011), Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot leaders do not have the political will to adopt bold and far-reaching decisions to extricate themselves from a costly conflict and reach a political settlement. In his view, most political parties, regardless of their political colour and ethnicity have embraced intransigent positions in order to avoid sacrificing their political survival for the sake of a settlement. Adamides and Constantinou (2012), Adamides (2015), Charalambous (2015) and Christophorou (2009), Kaymak (2009) and Richmond (1999) pinpoint this routine-like, risk-averse attitude of political parties and leaders. Charalamous (2015) attributes such behaviour to the unwillingness of the political parties across the island to uproot themselves from the domestic surroundings and the historical experiences of their constituents. Given the existing grievances on the island and bearing the political cost in mind, political parties in Cyprus do not demonstrate a bold pro-solution stance that would downplay the objections of their constituents. Such a move would come at a high political price (no re-election). What the literature misses is the potential causal links between the calculations of the political elites and the recent escalation of the Cyprus conflict. This is one of the gaps that I seek to fill through the use of a discursive framework.

The limitations to the explanatory power of greed theory cannot go unnoticed. The greed thesis has reportedly attracted scholars because of its statistical analysis and social science methodology in which it was steeped. This enterprise has oversimplified the complexity of conflicts faced by the policymakers in conflict environments (Berdal 2005; Ballentine &

Sherman 2003; Luengo-Cabrera 2012). This aphorism captures, to a great extent, the grievance theorists' criticisms of the greed-hypotheses. Advocates of grievance theory question whether all factors conducive to conflict are measurable. They also question whether an actor's behaviour and ultimate decision concerning strategic behaviour in a conflict can be the product of economically rational calculations (Bensted 2011, Sambanis 2004), disregarding other socio-political and historical factors which might be in play. In their view, the latter have oversimplified the complexity of the factors which contribute to the onset of conflict. Berdal (2005, 690) states that the economic literature displays 'a static, culturally blind and profoundly ahistorical picture of civil wars', which takes the analysis of the precipitating factors of civil wars out of the historical and social context they should be embedded in. That explains why I distinguish Humphreys' (2005) approach from the other greed-theorists.

2.3.2 Grievance

2.3.2.1 General background

Grievance theorists pinpoint the centrality of relative deprivation and 'justice-seeking' to understanding the outbreak of conflicts over natural resources. Gurr (1970) defines relative deprivation as the discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what they get in reality. Grievance is, hence, interpreted as 'justice-seeking', whereby every endeavour to redress the perceived injustices stimulates collective political violence. This sense of 'deprivation' functions as the 'wheel' which makes the competing parties objectify the conflict in terms of interests, stakes and goals. This is especially pertinent to ethnic conflicts, wherein competing territorial claims give birth to antagonizing interests over natural resources that 'objectively separate the parties' (Agnew 1988, 50).

Resource-related conflicts should be understood in line with the complicated systems of interaction between identity groups which have evolved over time and the degree to which the conflicts themselves have 'become part of the adversaries' identities' (Mayer 2000, 13). This sort of historical interaction affects their 'values, communication style, emotional reactions, and the structure in which they operate' (Mayer 2000, 13). As the conflict becomes the main concern of each disputant's 'thoughts, feelings, and actions', even aspects irrelevant to the genesis of the conflict, such as natural resources, become portrayed in such a way that intensifies or prolongs the conflicts (Vallacher et al. 2010). Thus, the conflict functions as a 'gravity-well' into which the surrounding mental, behavioural, and socio-structural landscape begins to slide' (ibid., 262).

In the series of studies which the late Edward Azar, the pioneer of conflict scholarship, published from the early 1970s until 1991,[2] the motivating factor in protracted conflicts is the struggle by

[2] He died in 1991.

communal groups for 'security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation' (Azar 1990, 93; Ramsbotham et al. 2011, 112). These needs are ontological and 'non-negotiable', and correspond to Shue's (1980) three basic rights of 'security, subsistence and freedom'. Azar concentrated on identity groups, however defined. He noted: 'the most useful unit of analysis in protracted social conflict situations is the identity -racial, religious, ethnic, cultural and others' (Azar 1986, 31). Theorists supporting grievance-based explanations underscore the centrality of identity and group formation for understanding the outbreak of conflicts (Murshed and Tadjoeddin 2009). Additionally, Azar noted that it is the relationship between identity groups and official states which lies at the core of the conflict or, as he put it, 'the disarticulation between state and society as whole' (Lewin 1948, Kelly 1955, Deutsch 1973, Taijfel 1978). How can we explain this 'disarticulation between state and society as a whole'? Azar forged linkages between this disarticulation and a colonial legacy which artificially imposed European and Soviet ideas of territorial statehood onto 'a multitude of communal groups' based on the principle of 'divide and rule' (Azar 1986, 33; Ramsbotham et al. 2011, 101). As the outcome of that principle, in many postcolonial or post-Soviet multi-communal societies, the state machinery becomes 'dominated by a single communal group unresponsive to the needs of other groups in the society', which 'strains the social fabric and eventually breeds fragmentation and protracted social conflicts' according to Azar (1986, 33).

This is why the grievance literature prioritises 'relative deprivation' (Murshed and Tadjoeddin 2009, 16) as the main motivating factor behind the eruption or escalation of conflicts as regards natural resources. Basedau and Pierskalla (2014, 4) argue that 'political exclusion of local, proximate ethnic groups is likely to amplify the conflict-increasing effects of oil and gas, due to the added ability to overcome collective action and coordination problems'. Therefore, relative deprivation may trigger social activity if people acknowledge that a higher standard of living exists and that they will have the opportunity or ability to achieve it. For instance, Turkish-Cypriots, as a non-recognized state-entity, believe that through international recognition, they may achieve a better standard of living. This international recognition may be achieved if their participation in an official committee on hydrocarbons management is guaranteed. The lack of recognition captures, to a certain extent, this sense of 'relative deprivation'.

2.3.2.2 Applicability of grievance theory

Tang et al. (2017) advocate the superiority of grievance-based explanations for the onset of conflicts over natural resources and, therefore, strongly criticise Morreli and Rohner's (2015) metric analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Instead, they argue that oil was not associated with the onset of the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh. They concluded that Armenians in the region began the fight not because of oil but for their independence and their (re-)unification with Armenia. To this end, nationalism construction during the dying days of the Soviet Union was the main factor motivating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and not greed over the exploitation of Karabakh's rich oil reserves (Tang et. al 2017).

In a similar vein, the same authors asserted that the deep pre-existing ethnic grievance in Sudan was more critical for the flaring up of the conflict than oil, although oil looting provided revenues for the rebels in the South. They set forth Garang's[3] thesis in 1985 (Tang, et al. 2017, 377 citing Johnson 2003, 71) to underplay the greed hypothesis explanations regarding the war in Sudan:

> The central problems in the Sudanese war are the dominance of One Nationality; the Sectarian and Religious Bigotry that dominated the Sudanese political science since independence; and the unequal development in the country.... Unless the Nationality Question is solved correctly, the Religious Bigotry is destroyed and a balanced development for all the regions of the Sudan is struck, war is the only invited option in the South.

With respect to the Aceh conflict, Aspinall (2007, 952) argued that it was not greed that motivated the GAM to attack foreign oil companies. Instead, 'the legacy of earlier conflicts came to be embodied in a set of institutions and discourses that ultimately provide to be conducive to conflict' (ibid.). In his view, 'grievance and hatred, instilled over long periods and in earlier episodes of conflict, played a more crucial role in escalating the conflict than the greedy behaviour of the rebels. (Aspinall 2007, 957).

The grievance theory concentrates on the 'identities' of the contending parties in the Cypriot conflict setting. Cigdem Sirin (2012) investigates the 'negative' role of ethnic identities on negotiation decision-making in the case of Cyprus. Based on her thorough quantitative research, Hadjipavlou (2007, 363) stipulates that 'psychological fears, pain, and mistrust still remain great in the experiences of each other'. This, among other causes, accounts for the intractability of the conflict. According to Heraclides (2011), the denial of the 'other' lies at the heart of the conflict. Bryant (2012, 347) posited that the two sides suffer from 'a wound that is a witness, and one that speaks from the depths of the unknowable'. She also mentions how this wound is reproduced by the two sides: 'both the temporality of the wound and the sense of a threatening other are most perceptible in representations of suffering bodies, or of the land as a body in pain' (ibid). In other research, she drew on women's writings to demonstrate how nostalgia creates the 'emotional ground that makes politics possible, that makes return realizable, and that makes the future homeland into something for which one would fight' (Bryant 2008, 418). John Burke (2019, 174) explained how the disputants use museums and schoolbooks as powerful symbols to 'frame crimes perpetrated against individuals, families and their wider communities' and reproduce the trauma associated 'with its violation, to underpin their stories'. However, how grievances and traumas are reproduced within the energy issue in Cyprus has been underexplored. This is an additional contribution that the discursive framework intends to make in the literature of the Cyprus conflict.

[3] The leader of SPLA/M.

2.4 THE ROLE OF DISCOURSES AS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As I mentioned above, I do not question whether geopolitics, greed and grievance may exist. Conflicts may be motivated by opportunism, questions of identity and power. As Zartman (2011, 298) aptly puts it, to 'deny any of these is simply blind and hence uninteresting'. My point is that they cannot be fully investigated in some objective realm; it is in the mind or, rather, the interacting minds of the disputant opinion-leaders in particular times and places where they have to be examined. My concluding point is that what makes gas reserves a bone of contention is not solely their material utility but the particular intense relationship that both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots feel toward it. Such intensification yields an absolute divide between friend and enemy in relation to this issue (Schmitt 1932; Willams 2003, 516). This line of thinking resonates with Schmitt's (1932) 'specificity of politics'. Therefore, a conflict-inducing role of the natural resources cannot be inferred from the specific substantive content of the natural resources *per se*, but in a particular way of relating to them (Williams 2003, 516; Schmitt 1932).

Therefore, in my research I look for the meanings that the constituents ascribe to notions such as relative deprivation, survival and political opportunism. I place my research effort in the discursive shift that other scholars such as Alkopher (2005), Campbell, (1993) Jabri (1996), Jackson (2002, 2007, 2009), Suurmond (2005), Weldes (1999) have made in the study of their own conflict case studies. The discursive activity is multidisciplinary and can include perspectives from international relations, social psychology and political economy of natural resources. Discourses can involve judgements and arguments which account for the escalation of a conflict but do not have to necessarily fit into any of the three categories. These perspectives, judgments and arguments are used as theoretical preconceptions that can render the assigned meanings intelligible and 'rationalized' for readers not familiar with the setting of the Cyprus conflict.

Motivated by this discursive approach, Jackson (2002) focused on the Yugoslavian wars and highlighted the importance of discourses in demonstrating the role of human agency in the eruption of conflicts. He showed how 'conflict entrepreneurs' 'construct' war as well as anti-war discourses. Jabri (1996) adopted a discursive framework to show how the cultural-political notions of just war and militarist values reproduce war as a social continuity (see also Jackson 2009, 181-182). She posited that the dominant presence of such notions offers a potent discursive resource for the elites to mobilize the masses and wage wars against others (Jabri 1996). Alkhoper (2005) alleged that the discourses of 'just war' render the social practices of the Crusades more 'logical' and 'intelligible'.

The objective of the current exploratory study is to examine the extent to which the stakeholders in a conflict use some of the theoretical preconceptions (geopolitics, greed and grievance)

presented above in order make their own 'conflictual' strategies more intelligible. I use discourses to lay out the collectively shared understandings of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot opinion-leaders vis-à-vis the conflict, their contending strategies and the importance they attribute to the gas reserves. My logic is that the conflict-inducing role of the gas reserves cannot be treated as independent of the beliefs that Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots articulate regarding energy's future role in and around the island. They cannot be treated independently of the particular intense relationship of enmity that both sides have experienced.

The articulation of the disputants' logic through their own words is on the spotlight of my discursive framework. According to Aristotle, 'spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words' (Klinck 1992, 51). Habermas (1981) identified *telos* (Greek for purpose or goal) in the use of language. Extrapolating on this idea, philosophers of the 20th and 21st centuries have placed rationality in everybody's communicative competence (Suurmond 2005). Discourses provide a form of practical argument (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 2), which, in this case, put forward collectively shared ideas for and against a particular course of action. They reflect a broader matrix of social practices which give meaning to the way people understand themselves and their behaviour (George, 1994, 4). They single out communication practices which systematically edify and structure our knowledge of reality. They put forward the terms of intelligibility, 'whereby a particular reality can be known and acted upon' (Doty 1996, 6).

I use them here as a conceptual framework which incorporates a shared set of capabilities, enabling the 'assemblage of words, phrases and sentences into meaningful texts intelligible to the readers' (Dryzek 1988, 710). They spell out how the most intense historical experiences as perceived and articulated by Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots have influenced the formulation of their strategy today. They may explain how they 'decipher' their anarchic environment and whether the natural resources are their means for their 'survival' in this anarchic environment. They may also consider that the natural resources are useless at the time being and that the people who attribute 'survival' or 'security' aspects to them have a vested interest in the continuation of the conflict. In this study, I expect that discourses will be motivated by arguments which are similar to the main approaches outlined before. These are the geopolitics, greed and grievance logics, which are part of the main theoretical approaches developed in the literature. The interesting question is whether in these discourses, participants use one of these perspectives or combine several so as to motivate their views and judgments on the linkages between natural resources and the conflict.

A first step is to assume that the logics of these theoretical approaches provide some understanding of the world and could be part of a discourse. If these approaches – geopolitics, greed and grievance – are as dominant as their proponents proclaim, one would expect at least traces of these perspectives in the discourses on the Cyprus conflict. Such traces would make the discourses more intelligible. This is the basis of the first set of hypotheses in this study.

Of course, it is possible that some perspective may not be included. In that case, at least from the perspective of participants, the basic logic of this perspective is not helpful in understanding the Cypriot context.

I have already illustrated my intention to create a framework that goes beyond the agency-structure dilemma. Such an effort would include discourses that encompass traces from at least two perspectives (geopolitics-greed or geopolitics-grievance). Geopolitics grants primacy to the role of structure while greed-grievance explanations focus on the role of agency. That is why, I consider the interaction between different perspectives a necessary task via discourses. While a theoretical perspective should consist of some coherent theoretical logic, a discourse may be a coherent set of judgments and outlooks (Dryzek 1988, 710). In other words, it is possible to mix several elements of the perspectives distinguished above into one discourse. In my work, I explore this possibility of allowing different combinations of perspectives to work together into the same discourse. In other words, within the Cyprus conflict, there may exist 'mixed' discourses which describe the conflict in terms of combinations of different theoretical perspectives. These can be the interplay between (a) geopolitics and grievance, (b) greed and geopolitics or (c) greed and grievance. In the following pages, I further elaborate on these expectations and explain how discourses based on these different perspectives may appear.

2.5 THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS BASED ON SINGLE PERSPECTIVES

I focus first on discourses based on a single perspective. These discourses follow the logic of the theoretical frameworks discussed in this chapter. According to geopolitical perspectives, the disputants treat the system within which they operate as an 'anarchic' brutal arena, where they search for a window to exploit each other. The basic driver of their behaviour is not greed but survival in a system where both resources and security are scarce. Possession of or access to natural resources maximises their relative power, which eventually safeguards their survival. Based on this logic, I raise the following expectation for both sides:

1A: *The survival in the 'anarchic system' motivates the conflictual behaviour of the contending parties on the use of natural resources.*

Table 2.1. Two sets of theoretical expectations

Discourses based on a 'single perspective'	Discourses based on 'mixed' perspectives
1. Geopolitics	4. Geopolitics-Grievance
2. Greed	5. Geopolitics-Greed
3. Grievance	6. Greed-Grievance

Inspired by Humphreys' (2005) approach, which defines greed as 'political opportunism', I claim that there are groups within the contending parties which reap political benefits during the conflict. From a cost-benefit analysis, if these groups can form strong coalitions among their constituents, they prefer the continuation of the conflict and act as spoilers of the peace process rather than letting their domestic opponents reaching a settlement. If resource exploitation does not depend on a successful conclusion of the peace process, then the contending parties have no incentive to strike a deal; rather, they prefer to prolong the conflict. Bearing this in mind, I raise the following expectation:

1B: *'Political opportunism' motivates the conflictual behaviour of the contending parties on the use of the natural resources.*

Finally, according to grievance theory, 'relative deprivation' is the main factor motivating the eruption or escalation of resource-related conflict. The possession of or access to the natural resources is propelled by the disputants' desire to redress the injustices of the past. According to 'grievance', I formulate two expectations:

1C: *The traumas of the past motivate the conflictual behaviour of the contending parties on the use of the natural resources.*

2.6 THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS BASED ON MIXED PERSPECTIVES

While dealing with such a convoluted topic, I also expect that my discourses may involve more premises coming from at least two out of the three perspectives. As I mentioned above, discourses comprise a coherent set of capabilities, judgments and outlooks (Dryzek 1988, 710) about a particular topic. In this case, the Cypriot discourses could potentially forge linkages between relative deprivation (grievance) and the 'decoding' of anarchic environment (geopolitics). They may include some perceptions of how political opportunists (greed) exploit the sense of resentment among constituents (grievance) in order to maintain their popularity, which they gained through their 'aggressive' stance towards the conflict and through its prolongation. Discourses could expectedly describe the strategies of political opportunists, who, during periods of domestic turmoil, invoke external security threats (geopolitics) to increase short-run popular support and deflect the public's attention from the domestic turmoil.

2.6.1 The interplay between geopolitics and grievance

Mainstream geopolitical and neo-realist perspectives, as shown above, are centred on the geography of politics, where long lists of material capabilities, including natural resources, usually lay out the structural background against which key agents have to make their 'optimal' decisions (Guzzini 2012). Questions of history start becoming salient in explaining states'

behaviour. Along the lines traced by a discursive and post-structuralist turn, a new branch of geopolitics, known as 'critical geopolitics', has reversed the interest in the *geography of politics* to the *politics of geography*. 'Critical geopolitics' has established itself as a new strand, prominently represented in major political geographic journals such as *Political Geography* and *Geopolitics* (Agnew 2003; Dodds 2005; Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992).

Through critical geopolitics, I examine the interplay between geopolitics and grievance. According to critical geopolitics, the value of natural resources is not naturally given. Instead, the role of natural resources is driven by the understandings which stakeholders, including opinion leaders, have about them. Whatever their actual importance, it is their place in their discursive representations which most strongly conditions their actual value (Herod, Ó Tuathail and Roberts 1997; Toal and Agnew 2005; Campbell 1993). This understanding can be provided by the main lessons these stakeholders have drawn from the crises and conflicts of the past. Most importantly, these understandings can be rooted in the grievances that opinion leaders and their constituents have inherited from the past. The primary mover behind resource-related conflicts is no longer the 'natural data of geography' but the claims made by nations in light of their 'historical rights' or simply their desire to preserve their historically charged security-sovereignty or 'environment' (Lacoste 1976). These interpretations are informed by the legacies of a turbulent past and constitute socially shared discourses. The mainstream geopolitical perspectives, trapped in structural thinking, undermine the role of grievances in formulating these strategic objectives. In contrast, through critical geopolitics, discourses showcase the interplay between geopolitics and grievance.

Based on an interaction between geopolitics and grievance, I expect the following discourse:

2A. *The traumas of the past in tandem with the survival in the 'anarchic system' motivate the conflictual behaviour of the contending parties on the use of the natural resources.*

2.6.2 The interplay between greed and geopolitics

Leaders of unit states, encountering economic crises or other challenges, may discursively invoke 'geopolitics' or 'security' as a form of conflict involvement in order to alarm the public and divert its attention from internal problems (Mitchell and Prins 2004; Foster and Keller 2014; Mintz and DeRouen 2010; Levy 1989; Miller 1995). Such a discourse involves an interplay between political opportunism (greed) and geopolitics. Political opportunism is defined here as the politics of accountability, with the inclusion of blame games during a domestic turmoil. Key stakeholders, whose institutional position during the domestic turmoil is at stake, invoke a threat against 'state's survival' in order to divert the public's attention and deflect blame from the domestic turmoil as much as possible. The objective of this external discursive construction of threat is to weaken the linkages between the domestic turmoil and their potential responsibilities. Such an initiative may also generate a 'rally around the flag effect' at home,

regardless of whether the effect of this discursive construction is short lived (DeRouen 1995; Mitchell and Prins 2004; James and Oneal 1991).

The discursive construction of threats raises the concept of 'securitization', a term coined and developed by the Copenhagen School of International Relations. Securitization offers a constructivist perspective on how 'security problems emerge and dissolve' (Balzaq 2005). It is a discursive process, which requires 'negotiation' between the key stakeholders (or securitising actors) and a significant audience (their constituents), thus making it a social and intersubjective process (Buzan, 2009; Buzan et al. 1998; Vuori 2008; Williams 2003). Threat discourses do not float freely in a vaguely defined 'anarchic'[4] environment. They unfold in what the Copenhagen School calls a regional security complex (Buzan et al. 1998; Buzan, 2009). Regional security complex constitutes 'a set of units whose major processes of securitization are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another' (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 26). From this standpoint, geographic proximity or adjacency 'is potent for security because many threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones' (ibid.). In such an antagonistic environment, natural resources gain prominence because they alter the balance of capabilities among the interdependent parts of the security complex and, consequently, impact the distribution of power within it (Ciuta 2010, 130). This is clearly articulated in the approaches of Kouskouvelis (2015), Stivachtis (2019), Tziampiris (2019), Tziarras (2016, 2018) and Tziarras and Moudouros (2016) as regards the 'anarchic environment' of the Eastern Mediterranean.

In their insightful work, Christou and Adamides (2013, 517) laid out how the exploitation of the recently detected gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean rendered natural resources an 'intervening variable of securitization in political and military sectors'. They pinpointed the threat to sovereignty and the threat of not being able to exploit natural resources byy be subsumed into the military sector (ibid). Theoretically motivated by their approach, I speculate that the securitization of natural resources may take place during a period of domestic turmoil and carries with it the risk of an escalation of conflicts (Mitchell and Prins 2004, Morgan and Bickers 1992). The politics of accountability during a domestic turmoil and the effort to deflect blame from their responsibilities result in key stakeholders 'securitizing' natural resources. By securitising I mean that the stakeholders assign 'sovereign attributes' to these natural resources. The logic flowing from this analysis leads to an additional expectation:

2B. *The low popularity of the leaders during domestic turmoil in tandem with the need for survival in an anarchic system motivates the conflictual behaviour of the contending parties on the use of the natural resources.*

[4] As dictated by the mainstream geopolitical and neo-realist perspectives.

2.6.3 The interplay between greed and grievance

The advocates of 'greed' hypotheses have underscored how leaders invoke 'grievances' in order to mobilise constituents against their opponents. While the prospects of economic benefits compel them to invoke grievances, I focus on 'political opportunism', as stipulated by Humphreys (2005). In my discursive framework, I supplement these theoretical linkages between 'political opportunism' and 'grievances' by investigating the literature of diversionary theory or the scapegoat hypothesis. Leaders facing declining levels of support prefer to carry out policies which boost their popularity, even if these policies can be considered risky and erroneous. This captures the idea of 'diversionary theory'. McLaughlin and Prins (2004) maintain that such behaviour finds a breeding ground in environments surrounded by historical grievances.

Within an environment stigmatised by grievances, constituents in a wide range of circumstances tend to support assertive national policies which appear to enhance the power and prestige of their constituent state. The traumas of the past and the 'fight for justice' legitimise this type of initiative. In an opportunity-rich environment of rivalry, decision-makers find a pretext for embarking upon risky policies as a means of increasing or retaining their domestic support, especially during periods of economic turmoil or crisis: some opinion leaders allege that political elites intentionally initiate a dispute over natural resources in order to divert popular attention from internal social, economic and political problems (Levy 1988, 666), and such a discourse is expected in this case. This reasoning, in my interpretation, captures the essence of diversionary theory or the scapegoat hypothesis.

The logic underpinning the diversionary theory emanates from the sociological literature of 'in-groups and out-groups' (Coser 1956) and Schmitt's (1932) distinction line between 'friends' and 'enemies' to any issue of contention. Facing a threat from an external source ('enemy'), members of a group ('friends') are inclined to become more cohesive and supportive of their leader. These tendencies find fertile ground in rivalry contexts, where grievances lead to distrust, the most important cognitive precursor of a hard-line orientation of political leaders (Mitchell and Prins 2004). Distrust magnifies threat discourses and encourages reliance upon aggressive policy instruments to deal with these threats (Stuart and Starr 1982; Tucker 1965; Mitchell and Prins 2004). It constitutes the general belief that the other's actions, especially their underlying motives, are insincere and should be regarded with suspicion. Therefore, the role of historical grievances cannot be neglected when assessing such decision-making of state leaders. The perceptions and decisions of political elites mirror, to an important extent, the pre-existing enmity, mutual suspicion and competitiveness of relations between the contending parties (Mitchell and Prins 2004; Stuart and Starr 1982). Because of the deep mistrust and animosity among rival states produced by the grievances, political elites could take advantage of the 'external affairs' to satisfy their own political opportunism, broadly defined as 'greed' here. Based on an interaction between greed and grievance, I expect the following discourses:

2C. *The low popularity of the leaders during domestic turmoil in tandem with the traumas of the past motivate the conflictual behaviour of the contending parties on the use of the natural resources.*

2.7 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study is to explore the impact that gas reserves have had on the escalation of the Cyprus conflict. While the theories outlined above could provide tentative answers, I believe that, without being evidenced by the constituents' discourses, they are too simple to capture the complexity of a conflict. In all conflicts, researchers have to investigate a number of issues: the incompatible positions of disputants over territory, the scarce resources, physical security, but also how the various parties perceive history and each other, the injustices inflicted on each other, the suffering, the mutual distrust and the fears. My starting point is that what renders natural resources contentious is the historically charged relationship that both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots feel towards it. Discourses are instrumental to articulating these complicated aspects.

Due to the dynamic nature of energy in a conflict environment, where everything is constantly in flux, I shed light on the collectively shared and incompatible preferences, and the fears and calculations which Cypriot opinion leaders enmesh in these very gas reserves, attempting to make them intelligible (Jervis 2017, 2). When these preferences, fears and calculations manifest themselves, I expect to trace elements of the three theoretical categories back to my analysis. This has motivated me to develop several expectations about how discourses can reflect some of the theoretical perspectives as well as some combinations of them. The theoretical preconceptions from the agency-structure dilemma were helpful in this respect.

Based on these expectations, I now further explore the historical and energy context around Cyprus. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, context is 'the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning'. These contexts add specificity to the competing discourses on the gas reserves and direct the readers' attention to their very formation. By presenting these contexts, I seek to avoid, to a certain extent, unwanted interpretation because they provide the details which surround the recent developments: the economic, social and (geo)political conditions which existed before the recent tensions. Moreover, I uncover the representations which former policymakers, historians, sociologists, energy analysts and investigative journalists use in order to describe the situation at hand. As I explain in the methodological chapter (five) these features are necessary for the development of the discursive framework of my study.