INSIGHTS FROM CYPRUS FOR’ NEW GEOPOLITICS’

Emel Akçali

Political Science and International Studies Department

University of Birmingham,

Email: e.akcali@bham.ac.uk, emelakcali@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper aims to stimulate a new theoretical debate on geopolitics between post-structuralist discourse analysis and world-systems theory. Although a useful contribution to foreign policy analysis, post-structuralist discourse analysis falls short of incorporating the non-discursive factors, like, for instance, the consequences of the global capitalist economy (the management of global financial flows, informationalisation, etc.) on the emergence and dominance of particular geopolitical and foreign policy discourses such as de-territorialisation. World Systems theory, instead, argues that the world capitalist economy facilitates the discourse of ethnic mixing and tolerance in certain places of the world where rigid identities and borders are no longer desired. In order to explore the ways in which a geopolitical approach which combines both perspectives can be developed between these two approaches, the paper will examine the Cyprus conflict resolution efforts in the aftermath of the Cold War and in the post-UN brokered Annan peace plan period. In so doing, it will identify under what conditions deterritorialisation discourses and identity transformations have emerged and become dominant in the Turkish part of the island, whereas no such changes have characterized the rest of the island and other actors involved in the conflict.

Key Words: poststructuralism, discourse analysis, world-systems theory, deterritorialisation, reterritorialisation, Cyprus
I. INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-1990s, political geographers have introduced the notion ‘New Geopolitics’ in order to signify that the geopolitical condition of the world has changed, from modern to postmodern, with an emphasis on de-territorialisation. According to Ó Thuathail, one of the leading political geographers of post-Cold War era, these new geographical processes have provoked the development of new forms of geopolitical discourse and practice and asked for new tools of critical investigation. The post-structuralist approach combined with discourse analysis has matched this demand. A prolific post-structuralist literature in International Relations (IR) and Geopolitics has thus emerged, challenging the old realist and rationalist paradigm which assumes that political leaders pursue the nation’s interests and such interests correspond to geographical realities. The analysis of space per se has ceased to be the departing point, as the new focus is on the discourse analysis of space. Geopolitical or foreign policy discourses are analysed as inter-subjective and contextual, often representing the political elite’s ideology and ambitions and power/knowledge relationship, rather than the needs and interests of the nation. This new literature deconstructs the articulations of the Self and the Other and scrutinizes how they enable/disable geopolitical discourses and practices. The discursive construction of territoriality by human agency is emphasized as well, rather than how territoriality influences human agency.

Rationalists have criticized the poststructuralist perspectives for being self-referential and disengaged from the world, and for denying the ‘use of evidence to adjudicate between truth claims.’ The Marxist perspective has found the poststructuralist discourse analysis as a ‘politically detached textualism’ which reads the class out, as “antagonism to class is as unnecessary as it is common in poststructuralist writing.” Neil Smith further argues that the
methodological result of discourse analysis is a linguistic abstraction which in reality is thoroughly homologous with the construction of ‘facts’ in realist and scientific discourse, because discursive ‘objects’ and ‘sites’ transform into new poststructuralist ‘facts,’ “supposedly cocooned from the abyss of reality-speak”.

The poststructuralists have answered this criticism by reaffirming that their mission is to expose power politics and open a public debate in the name of democratic politics. Moreover, they have not argued against the relevance of material facts. In line with Laclau and Mouffe’s assertion, they have posited that material facts can actually constitute themselves as such only within a discursive context, they are produced by human and discursive agencies (individuals, media, and institutions who collect, document and distribute them) and inserted into foreign policy. By alleging the importance of discourse and context to showing partisan motivations in the ‘scripts’ of decision-making elites, poststructuralists have aspired the replacement of economic and political authority of the hegemonic powers with a more balanced benefits to marginal populations. Nevertheless, serious epistemological concerns between the rationalist and poststructuralist approaches have emerged in regard with how to analyse foreign policy as well as decoding global, national, and regional spaces. These two approaches have often been found irreconcilable. The constructivist approach has then been proclaimed as the Middle Ground in IR between rationalist and post-structuralist approaches since constructivists do not deny the existence of material reality, but believe that this reality cannot be known outside human language. For them, the so-called postmodernists view reality as nothing other than a text, a symbolic construction that is itself related to other texts, or to history and social structures. “A Constructivist ‘Meditative’ epistemology is interested neither in emancipation per se, nor exclusively in uncovering the power structures that affect the marginalized in history,
but in providing better explanations of social reality.”  

My approach to foreign policy and geopolitical analysis shares to a certain extent the post-structuralist perspective, which I acknowledge that has opened a useful debate and stimulated an important epistemological question: “Is it possible scientifically or empirically to explain the world by observing it, gathering facts about it and then intuitively or rationally formulating facts into theories? Or is reality so subjective and personal that generalising is simply not productive, and consequently one must focus on de-constructing and contextualising mind sets and motivations of decision-makers so that later historicising a radicalised society can bring something better?” My answer to this epistemological question is twofold. On the one hand, I agree with the constructivists and the post-structuralists that meaning is produced socially and discursively, identities are changeable, and foreign policies are legitimised with reference to particular representations of identity. With the change of identities or representations of identity, foreign policies can also change. In line with Laclau and Mouffes’s discourse theory, I also recognize that a foreign policy or geopolitical discourse is an articulatory practice which establishes a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. On the other hand, I depart from the poststructuralist position when this deliberately refuses to incorporate the impact of non-discursive factors (such as the global capitalist economy, the management of global financial flows, informationisation) on the emergence and dominance of particular geopolitical and foreign policy discourses like de-territorialisation. Ó Thuathail has mentioned that “the study of geopolitics [I also add foreign policy to this] is the study of the spatialisation of international politics by the core powers and hegemonic states.” However, the consequences of the world capitalist economy and the core-periphery economic inequalities have not been scrutinized so far by poststructuralists, as
enabling processes for ‘deterritorialisation’ policy articulations, for example. According to the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, the importance of any non-discursive factor [if there is any] depends on how it is made sense of in the language. However, as Larsen argues, certain non-discursive features constitute a framework for policies in an almost absolute sense, because they impose concrete restrictions which have to be taken into account despite the fact that they are mediated differently in foreign policy articulations.20

In line with Larsen’s approach, I argue that the world-systems analysis offers insightful explanations about restrictions imposed or prescriptions dictated by the global capitalist economy which enable certain geopolitical and foreign policy articulations such as deterritorialisation. The world system analysis posits that a global environment of quick transactions and rapid flows of information, goods and people are a reality of the core21, where globalization has created an environment of interaction between different cultures and practices. This is a situation which the global elite must comply with and to which they have to adjust their different business and cultural practices. Rigid cultural or national identities are thus incompatible with the dynamic flows of world capitalist economy which then enable contemporary discourses of de-territorialisation. Poststructuralist discourse analysis in foreign policy determinedly avoids taking into considerations such an analysis.

There is also a second reason for my departure from poststructuralist discourse analysis and this is its argument that states are somewhat fading away or losing relevance in the new geopolitical processes or, if not, they just should. I reckon that only economically weaker peripheral states are fading away against the big waves of globalization, but the core ones are still well and alive. ‘States are fading’ discourse eases ‘deterritorialisation’ and identity transformation in weaker states and once again post-structuralist discourse analysis stays away
Phil Kelly has suggested that both rationalist and poststructuralist approaches, although different in most respects, are equally legitimate to analyze foreign policy and interpret geographical spaces and perhaps they may be brought closer together, at least in ways that may complement each other. Building on this suggestion, this paper’s main objective is to explore the ways in which poststructuralist discourse analysis and world-systems theory can be effectively integrated to understand contemporary geopolitical processes like de-territorialisation/re-territorialisation. The paper is divided into five sections. After this introduction, I elaborate in section II on my epistemological concerns about poststructuralist discourse analysis and introduce world-systems theory and its contribution to geopolitical analysis. In the third section, I present a historical overview of the resolution efforts of the Cyprus conflict in the aftermath of the Cold War and in the post-UN brokered Annan peace plan period in order to identify under what conditions deterritorialisation discourses and identity transformations have emerged in the Turkish part of the island. The fourth section assesses why these discourses have emerged and become dominant in the Turkish part of Cyprus conflict after the Cold War and why the Turkish Cypriot part has been more prone to identity transformation than other actors involved in the conflict. In so doing, this section will also explore the ways in which a complementary avenue can be developed between poststructuralism and world-systems theory for further geopolitical research. The concluding section summarizes the findings and attempts to trace the theoretical implications of the Cyprus case in geopolitics.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In an era of financialisation of global capitalist economy and decisive spatio-political changes that swept over Europe at the end of the Cold War, rationalist approaches and state
centric foreign policy and geopolitical analysis have come under the challenge of what Ulrich Beck calls ‘reflexive modernity’, i.e. the awareness (felt mainly by the Europeans, though) of the limits and the ambiguities of modern technical and social progresses. Constructivism in IR was born in such a political and intellectual environment as a novel analytical framework which understands foreign policy and national interests as socially constructed processes. Constructivism was challenged by poststructuralism which agreed with the former on its problematisation of the logic of anarchy, with its focus on state anarchy, enabling to hold states responsible for conflict or cooperation behaviour. However, it criticized the former for not interrogating the practices that produce states themselves. The poststructuralist approach has later on taken a discursive turn, and begun to emphasize the power of enabling discourses in foreign policy (policy is part of discourse), and scrutinize the representations of identity and policy as being linked through discourse, but argued that the two (identity and policy) do not stand in a causal relationship with each other. “Discourses engage and contest each other by challenging policy and identity, and in doing so they often provide different readings of facts and events.” Foreign policy discussions are thus not simply descriptions of an existing reality, but are part of the process of constructing that reality.

In geography, poststructuralist discourse analysis has found echo in the so-called “critical geopolitics” literature, which problematises geopolitics by conceptualizing it as an ensemble of discourses and representations enabling practices rather than an objective science or a set of ‘truths’. Similar to the poststructuralist perspective in IR, critical geopolitics argues that traditionally geopolitics has divided the world into a hierarchy of places, blocs, and states associated with political attributes and created a series of conceptual transformations of time into space: modernity is here, primitiveness there. The dichotomy of ‘We’ and ‘They’ has translated
thus into new geographies of danger, of rogue states, failed states, environmental threats, and related phenomena inscribing the world in terms of time zones and wild zones, stable centres and threatening peripheries. By deconstructing geopolitical discourses, critical geopolitics attempts to reveal the knowledge/power relationship behind foreign policy practices.

To be sure, behind the emergence of post-structuralism in geography and IR, there has been good-will and an activist spirit. Poststructuralists aimed to tackle some of the issues associated with the new world condition of time-space compression, envisioning new or reinforced global institutions to face coming environmental and other crises. It has helped to understand “how language functions in maintaining and changing power relations in modern and post-modern societies; the ways in which we can analyse language and which can reveal these processes and on how people can become more conscious of themselves and more able to resist and change power relations.

Despite their good-will and achievement, the poststructuralist approach has consciously avoided scrutinizing the consequences of globalised capitalist economy and the inequalities between the core and periphery as forms of power/knowledge relationship. By concentrating mainly on the Self and the Other dichotomy in foreign policy articulations, it has neglected to question the impact of the global capitalist economy on emerging foreign policy articulations and geopolitical discourses like deterritorialisation and identity transformations. Again, although being genuine in their desire to transform the current world and providing support to marginal peoples, the poststructuralists have also avoided to discuss that power structures exist in any political formation, even in ‘post-modern’ and ‘irrational’ ones. In the context of hegemonic transition, once dominant meta-narratives are deconstructed, new political identities and movements appear. The ‘new’ poststructuralist/postmodernist elites may get rid of the ‘rational
or modernist’ ones, in the name of ‘eliminating power’, but this is often realized by the support of an emerging power structure. It is thus probable that deconstructing foreign policy scripts and meta-narrative may directly or indirectly help establish a new elitist supremacy and new ideologies, making power unavoidable in any political system. Poststructuralism prefers to ignore this point and the post-structuralist discourse analysis neglects to deconstruct the ‘new scripts’.

Finally, poststructuralist geopolitics has also argued that “modern geopolitics is condensation of Western epistemological and ontological hubris – an imagining of the world from an imperial point of view.” 35 Foreign policy making upon geography has existed throughout history in the non-Western world as well, and today, it is also at the service of small states, influencing their position in the international arena. Moreover, it is more poststructuralism today which is viewed as the condensation of Western epistemological and ontological hubris, at least in the non-Western world, where national territories, meta-narratives and sovereignties are challenged by its de-territorialisation discourse. “It is somewhat ironic to see how Europe and North America are now exporting new narratives of globalisation and deterritorialisation to areas which have not yet fully adapted to notions of territorial fixation which, as we continue to see in contemporary Africa, and Asia, still clash with the territorial behaviour of many indigenous and nomadic or tribal societies”.36

World-systems theory, on the other hand, has used the contributions of poststructuralists who have discussed deterritorialisation or post-modern conditions of geopolitics like identity transformations and interpreted them within a historical materialist framework37. According to its premise, the world capitalist economy facilitates the discourse of ethnic mixing and tolerance in certain places of the world where rigid identities are no longer desired. Rigid cultural identities
are incompatible with the dynamic flows of the contemporary globalized economy. The result is thus the promotion of identity politics that embraces deterritorialisation, internationalization, and multiculturalism. Borders in these processes become unnecessary. As a consequence, many components of the classical models of the firm nation-states have been undergoing deconstruction and decomposition. This situation has further signalled the death of modern meta-narratives whose function was to ground and legitimate the illusion of a ‘universal human history’.  

However, these processes are not developing in all parts of the world or more realistically, some states are better equipped to resist than others. In the core, on the one hand, discourses of hybridization are developing as a functional necessity, but, on the other hand, fear is spread against the exterior threats as security discourses, maintaining the discourse of otherness and difference between the core and the periphery. In the periphery (also in the periphery within the core states), multiple reactions develop. People either redefine identities, in order to adapt to global changes and seek sometimes the help of transnational organizations, or they resist by developing even more rigid identities and strengthening or defending their territorial claims. As a consequence of the former, new identities are rising and states have to readjust to these changes in the forms of deterritorialisation or decentralization, as an attempt to retain or renegotiate power. As a result of the latter, new ideologies and policy articulations are rising that offer new promises like nationalism, re-territorialisation or spiritual fulfilment.

World-system analysis helps to advance questions for the poststructuralist approach in IR and Geopolitics to explore the ways in which it may not be enough to deconstruct political discourses only, but a political discourse is one amongst several structural causes which should be taken into account in foreign policy analysis. To substantiate my arguments, in the next
section, I will present a historical overview of the post-Cold War Cyprus conflict resolution efforts of the Cyprus conflict and also in the post-UN brokered Annan peace plan period, in order to understand under what conditions deterritorialisation discourses and identity transformations have taken place in the Turkish part of the island. In so doing, I would like to identify how discursive and non-discursive factors can be combined to analyse foreign policy articulations such as deterritorialisation and identity transformations.

III. DETERRITORIALISATION DISCOURSE AND IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION IN THE TURKISH PART OF CYPRUS IN THE POST COLD WAR PERIOD

As a result of an ethno-territorial conflict which erupted in the decolonization period from the British rule in the 1950s, exacerbated throughout the 1960s in the forms of inter-communal fighting and developed into a major war in 1974 by the inclusion of Turkey and Greece, the island of Cyprus today is partitioned territorially between a de facto Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), not recognized internationally, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), internationally recognized and an EU member since 2004, two sovereign British bases and a buffer zone, known as the Green Line that covers 3% of the island’s space.

While the legitimacy of the British sovereign bases and the buffer zone are recognized by both Turkish and Greek Cypriot governments, none of the sides recognizes the legitimacy of the other. Turkey is the only state in the world who recognizes TRNC and who does not recognize RoC. Turkey thus keeps its air space and ports closed to Greek Cypriots planes or vessels and argues that the Greek Cypriot community had no de jure right to be the only representative of the 1960 RoC which ceased to exist in 1963 with the first intercommunal clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The Republic of Cyprus government considers the territories controlled by TRNC under occupation and claims a full sovereignty all over the island. However, it does not
exercise any authority in the northern part of the island since 1974. This is also because Turkey still holds a substantial military presence in TRNC.

**Map I: Partition of Cyprus**

The official stance of the Turkish Cypriot administration in TRNC is a solution based on a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation. The actual Greek Cypriot administration, on the other hand, generally favours a liberal democratic unitary state, although it has formerly agreed on a bi-zonal and bi-communal federal solution. The conflict in Cyprus led to the internal displacement of thousands of people, Turkish Cypriots in 1958 and in 1960-1963, and Greek Cypriots in 1974. The Greek Cypriot displacement in 1974 was *en masse* (around 250000
people) and they expected to return back to their homes. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots welcomed the separation and the establishment of their territorial administration in 1974. Consequently, they have never had an insistence on a ‘right of return’ to their places of origin. Turkish Cypriot administration has also presented the separation in 1974 as a permanent situation while the Greek Cypriot administration has stressed on the temporary nature of the process, keeping alive the right of return discourse. Since 1974, Turkey also encouraged numerous Anatolian families to settle in the northern part of the island by promising them housing and agricultural land. Most of the people who migrated to TRNC from Turkey since that time obtained TRNC citizenship.

Despite decades of negotiations since 1963, between two administrations about federalism acceptable for all and a normalisation of intercommunity relations, disagreements between the two administrations continue as proved their contradictory positions concerning the last proposition on the United Nations solution, the Annan Plan. This plan, proposed in November 2002, by Kofi Annan, General Secretary of the United Nations proposed the creation of a United Cyprus Republic, covering the entire island (except for the British bases) under a loose federation of two constituent states, one GC and the other TC in which the TRNC was going to cede a considerable quantity of territory to GC constituent state. In the referendum taken on the plan on 24 April 2004, this plans was rejected by a 75, 83 % No vote from the Greek Cypriot side, and accepted by a % 64.9 Yes vote.

Today, the island is still largely militarised. There are around 30 000 Turkish troops and a contingent of Turkish Cypriot forces guarantee the border security of TRNC. The Republic of Cyprus also has a strong army, called the Cyprus National Guard of 10 000 soldiers, led by a chief of staff from Greece. In the south and east of the island, some 4000 soldiers and officers
accompany 6000 British civilians since the foundation of the Cyprus Republic, on the sovereign British bases of (Akrotiri and Dhekelia). Finally, a peace-keeping United Nations Force (UNFICYP) which is one of the longest peace-keeping operation forces in the world, composed of around 1000 elements supervise the Green Line (the buffer zone) since 1964. There are still about 29 mine fields in Cyprus that date back to the war in 1974. According to the Mine Action Center (MAC), there is still a need for five to six millions of euros to clean off the rest of the buffer zone and 11 to12 other million of euros to clean the rest of Cyprus.

There are also two sovereign British bases on the island, that Britain kept in the era of decolonization, initially to defend the Arab state allies, Turkey and Israel against the ‘Soviet expansionism’, to protect the British commercial interests and to collaborate with the member countries of the Baghdad Pact. In a global war, they could also stop the Soviet force thanks to their nuclear arms installation potential. According to O’Malley and Craig, when the British decided to end their colonisation rule on the island, the British generals insisted on the fact that Cyprus could be an excellent base for nuclear arms, electronic listening and radar supervision. Today, British listening stations are usual scenes on the island. However, the question of the presence of nuclear arms in Cyprus is a taboo although a document entitled ‘Nuclear weapons in Cyprus’ existed in the National Archives in Kew, London, in June 2004, but it was inaccessible to the public use. According to the Freedom Information Act which came into being in January 2005, in Great Britain, a request in October 2005 to the National Archives to be able to consult this document was made by me to the British Ministry of Defence. However, the Ministry replied by an e-mail that this document is momentarily inaccessible because of a computer virus.

The Establishment Treaty, one of the founding texts of the Cyprus Republic of 1960 allowed Great Britain the right to use ‘without restriction and interference 10 sites for an
unlimited time period and 11 small sites in accordance with the Republic of Cyprus authorities. (Annexe B of the Treaty, Part II, Section I).

MAP II

Sites used by Great Britain according to the Establishment Treaty of RoC

All of these sites are outside of the area covered by the British sovereign bases. Great Britain has the right to defend militarily these sites or stop any non-authorised persons to penetrate or to come close to these facilities. The Dhekelia sovereign base has two other listening stations, one radar station for the Royal Air Force in Pergamos and at Agios Nikalaos. The United States also has listening stations in their embassy in Nicosia in order to listen to the diplomatic messages transmitted by cable in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Apart from its tragedies, the oil and gas transportation and the commercial or human maritime traffic situate Cyprus today in the middle of a zone of exchange between countries of
the Eastern Mediterranean and the European Union, Russia and even China, India and Iran. Republic of Cyprus, the only entity internationally recognized is a privileged centre of maritime transit. The value of re-exported goods from its territory reached 450 millions of euros in 2004 and a volume of more than 19 millions of tons. It possesses the tenth biggest commercial fleet of the world. The developments in the electronic and communicational domain throughout the 1990s opened new occasions to develop its financial services. It became an offshore bank centre, a fiscal paradise and of money-laundering which attracted already billions of euros as national income to the economy of RoC although since the adhesion of the RoC to the UE, the offshore societies do not benefit from fiscal advantage, like before. While the RoC is a flourishing economy, receives many tourist, has been an offshore banking centre and had the world’s ninth commercial fleet by granting favourable tax rates to foreign ships in exchange of the Cypriot flag, the TRNC is embargoed. Its ports and airplanes are closed to foreign flights except those coming from Turkey. There is no direct trade with this entity. There is a considerable difference between the GDP per capita of both sides. While it’s about 8,000 US dollars in TRNC, it’s 18,000-20,000 US dollars in RoC.

The European Union (EU) got involved in the conflict in the 1990s, as the RoC applied for membership in the name of the whole island. During this period which corresponded to the end of the Cold War, a new European discourse started to develop, representing the Green Line in Cyprus as the last ‘Berlin Wall in Europe’. The EU assumed that RoC’s accession process and conflict resolution under the auspices of the UN would go hand in hand, and the Commission’s opinion on Cyprus in 1993 endorsed this view. This was the main discourse of the GC political leadership and the strategy of mobilizing the international factor especially the EU to realize the reunification in Cyprus was expressed by the then RoC President Clerides, in his inaugural
address at the House of Representatives of RoC.\textsuperscript{51} However, the parties involved had different views on the process. The Turkish Cypriots did not object to EU integration, but called for a settlement to the conflict before membership and demanded separate negotiations with the EU from those of the Greek Cypriot. The Greek Cypriots wanted to proceed with accession negotiations hoping this would strengthen their bargaining hand in inter-communal negotiations. The Turkish Cypriot leadership in TRNC, however, questioned the legitimacy of the application this time, on the grounds that the GC government did not represent the whole island. Greece, already an EU member threatened using its veto power against the enlargement of the EU to the Central and Eastern European Countries if Cyprus’s application was rejected and if official negotiations with Turkish Cypriots were opened. \textsuperscript{52}

The European Council summits at Corfu in June and at Essen in December 1994 not only confirmed that the next round of EU enlargement would involve Cyprus and Malta but adopted a more partial approach by not making any reference to the need for settlement to the Cyprus problem before accession. In July 1994, European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued a ruling against the importation of Turkish Cypriot potatoes and citrus fruits without RoC health and transport certificates. This ruling has become the severest economic embargo launched to the TRNC and the Turkish Cypriot community since 1974. In June 1995, the EC-Cyprus Association Council adopted a common resolution on the establishment of a structured dialogue between the EU and the RoC and on laying down a roadmap on how to start negotiations. In response, the TRNC leadership introduced preconditions to direct negotiations and they would only be resumed if concluded on a state-to-state basis. However, the EU embargo on export of citrus fruits was damaging TRNC and the \textit{de-facto} entity suffered a huge financial crisis, the following year. Moreover, during the Luxembourg Summit in 1997, the European Council rejected Turkey as a
The Helsinki European Council in December 1999 changed the equation by granting candidacy to Turkey. Yet it also emphasized that the RoC’s accession would not be linked to a settlement to the conflict. Since then, EU-Turkey relations entered a new phase and the EU engaged civil society development in Turkey the TRNC. Intensive diplomatic efforts and NGO activity were involved during this process, especially to change the intransigence of the Turkish Cypriot leaders. Pro-European intellectuals, journalists, academics were contacted, networks established and many organizations were funded to challenge the status quo in Cyprus. As a result, the territorial and full sovereignty claims of TRNC, TRNC’s geopolitical importance discourse for Turkey started to be deconstructed. At the same time, the economic and political isolation of the north started to weigh heavily in TRNC, especially in view of Turkey’s economic crises in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The traditional Turkish Cypriot leaders did not change their stance but the grassroots diplomacy worked well to change the public opinion in TRCN, tilting it towards a reunification or federal option, instead of insisting on the recognition of their de facto state, and strengthening the opposition. The Turkish Cypriot opposition which was marginal in the 1970s and the 1980s favoured reunification with the Greek Cypriots under a federal state and the retreat of the Turkish army. During this period, new identities like ‘Cypriotness’ started to emerge in TRNC, as opposed to a separate Turkish Cypriot one. Turkish Cypriots started to pronounce that they are closer to Greek Cypriot or European cultures than that of the mainland Turk, emphasizing lifestyle and mentality divergences. Some Turkish Cypriots even claimed that they could also be the descendants of Venetians or Lusignans, who ruled the island in the Middle Ages. While ‘Cyprus under occupation’ had been Greek Cypriot and Greek foreign policy discourses, it has
also become a Turkish Cypriot discourse in the 1990s.

In such a ripe environment for conflict resolution in TRNC, Alvaro De Soto, who helped broker the peace agreements in El Salvador got appointed as Special Adviser on Cyprus to the UN Secretary General in November 1999 and his meetings with the GC and TC leaderships subsequently led to a new round of negotiations. As no common ground was found, and Turkey backed the Turkish Cypriot leadership at the time, threats passed between Turkey and the European Union. On November 2001, Turkey threatened to annex the TRNC and in a speech made in Athens, Gunter Verheugen, the then European Commissioner on enlargement, threatened Turkey’s application for EU membership as a response. Nevertheless, the pro-EU forces in Turkey were delivered an unexpected breakthrough with the Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) election victory in November 2002 under the leadership of Recep Tayyib Erdoğan. Just at this period, the UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan, released a comprehensive peace plan for the resolution of the Cyprus issue. Commonly known as the Annan Plan, it proposed the creation of a United Cyprus Republic, covering the entire island (except for the British bases) under a loose federation of two constituent states, one GC and the other TC.

Exhaustive efforts were made to get the both sides sign the document prior to the RoC’s membership that was going to be confirmed at the EU’s December 2002 Copenhagen Summit. As neither side agreed to sign, the EU invited only the RoC to join. Despite these developments, the UN continued dialogue with the two sides with the goal of reaching a settlement prior to the Cyprus’ signature of the EU Accession Treaty on 14 April 2003. A third version of the Annan plan was presented to the parties in February 2003.

The same month, the candidate of the Progressive Worker’s People Party (DIKO), a hard-liner, Tassos Papadopulos, was elected as the RoC president with 51.51% of the votes. His
election ended the term of previous RoC president Glafcos Clerides who has been engaging on the negotiations for months and was favourable to the Annan Plan. This was somehow an indicator that the EU neglected its NGO diplomacy among GCs while concentrating too much on Turkey and the TRNC. Meanwhile the talks on the last phase of the Annan Plan collapsed as the TC hard-liner, TRNC president Rauf Denktaş walked out of the negotiations. On April 16, 2003, RoC signed the Accession Treaty with other nine countries. A week later, the TRNC leadership opened two crossing points on the Green Line first time since 1974. This opening favoured the pacific contacts between Greek and Turkish Cypriots and increased the reunification demands of TCs. Mass demonstrations were held against Denktaş’ intransigence. Meanwhile, TCs started to apply for RoC citizenship, since despite the division, they would still have the right to be individual citizens of RoC, thus of the EU after accession. They also started to use RoC state institution facilities such as the public health service. “Many of these rights, it should be noted, are rights, the denial of which would contravene EU law and for which the RoC could be liable to the European Court of Human Rights.”

In December 2003, a coalition government was formed in the TRNC under the pro-change and pro-solution Republican Turkish Party leader Mehmet Ali Talat as prime minister. The Annan Plan was brought back to the negotiating table in February 2004 and Papadopoulos and Denktaş accepted Annan’s invitation to resume negotiations. As they met almost daily, numerous technical committees and subcommittees met in parallel in an effort to resolve legal, political and economic issues underpinning reunification. The talks failed to reach an agreed settlement and Denktaş refused to attend the next stage of the talks, scheduled to take place in Switzerland in March 2004. The Turkish Cypriot coalition partners continued the talks, which nevertheless collapsed, and no agreement was reached. Annan then stepped in as arbitrator and
presented a final version of his plan. Rauf Denktaş rejected it immediately and started his ‘No’ campaign for the referendum that was going to be held in April 2004. A week later, in a televised speech, Papadopolous called upon the Greek Cypriots to reject the Plan as well. Together with the Orthodox Church and the left-wing Progressive Workers Party (AKEL), Papadopolous started his own version of the ‘No’ campaign. Talat in the north instead supported the Plan and enjoyed majority support amongst the Turkish Cypriot public, launching with other pro-solution parties and NGOs, his ‘Yes’ campaign in the TRNC. Finally, the Annan Plan was put to referendums in the two communities on 24 April 2004 and was rejected by 75% of Greek Cypriots while being accepted by 65% of the Turkish Cypriots. Since the implementation of the Plan was dependent on the approval of the two sides, the plan remained dead letter.

After the failure of the Annan Plan, the RoC became the only member of the EU and \textit{l’acquis communataire} has been suspended in RTCN. Turkish Cypriots could still enjoy citizenship rights of the RoC, due their rights that date back to the 1960 Agreements and since May 2004, of the EU. However, Turkish language, which is still one of the official languages of the RoC did not become an official EU language. The EU also passed a kind of Green Line regulation so that Turkish Cypriot products can be sold in the Greek Cypriot market and to third countries by Greek Cypriot ports. This regulation planned a trade of 1 to 2 million dollars for RTCN which has been under sanctions since 1983. However, because the businessmen in RoC, refused to have business affairs with their Turkish Cypriot counterparts for political reasons and TRCN products have not been sold easily in the Greek Cypriot market, this regulation did not help much the TRNC. The exportation of Turkish Cypriot products to third countries through Greek Cypriot ports has also not been significant by the intermediary of this Regulation since Turkish Cypriots refused to send their products to third countries under Greek Cypriot
The Green Line Regulation contained advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are more for the EU members and citizens. An Italian citizen, for example can enter RoC from the Ercan airport in RTCN, cross the Green Line, to go to the Greek Cypriot side. However, this is not permitted for the Italian goods. Thus, the danger is that in the long run, it could create a dependence of the Turkish Cypriot economy on the Greek Cypriot side. As a way to appreciate the Yes vote of Turkish Cypriots and their willingness for a solution, the EU Commission promised direct trade to the TRCN which means the free circulation of Turkish Cypriot products in the Customs Union. However, the adoption of the direct trade to TRCN needed a qualified majority in the European Council and was rejected by the Greek Cypriot side who has become a new member. The new EU members, Greece and Spain also rejected it, on the basis that this direct trade does not conform to the Article 133 of the Maastricht Treaty. Since TRNC is recognized as a state, the Council indicated that the commerce with the TRCN have to be done according to the Protocol 10 of the Treaty of Adhesion of Republic of Cyprus. In reality, the new members wanted to show solidarity with the other new member, Greece sided with its traditional partner and Spain worried that the same regulation could be applied to Gibraltar. Because of these disagreements, RoC blocked the negotiations to be opened between the EU and Turkey. France and Germany, who are against Turkey’s entry into the EU, at the moment, gave their support to this blockade.

Since the failure of the Annan plan, there have been various tensions between the actors involved, especially between RoC and Turkey, concerning the continental shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) issues. For Turkey, the continental shelf is not only a prestige issue but has classical geopolitical implications like for other states in the Mediterranean, including those
EU members like Spain and Great Britain over Gibraltar, Morocco and Spain, over Ceuta, Melilla and Chafarinas between Libya and Tunisia. If Greece applies the right of 12 miles territorial water in the Aegean Sea and RoC under the Greek Cypriot jurisdiction delineated its continental shelf, the High Sea is almost going to disappear for Turkey in the Mediterranean. As Turkey has not yet solved its difference with Greece and RoC on numerous issues, its parliament still maintains the declaration that an extension of territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles and the ZEE to 200 miles in the Aegean Sea would be a *casus belli* for Turkey.

**Map III: Sea borders in the Eastern Mediterranean**

![Map III](image)
As for Cyprus, because of its insularity, Cyprus has a geopolitical particularity in the classical sense of the term, due to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), granted to the islands by the International Convention of Montego Bay in 1982 on the Right of the Sea. This convention demarcated a zone of 200 sea (nautical) miles for the EEZ and this zone juridically surrounds the management of the halieutic, deep sea sources and the exploitation of the polymetallic nodules. Provisional data has suggested there are oil and gas deposits in a sea area separating the island from Egypt to its south and Lebanon to its east and according to the *Europa World Year Book* data of 2005, 25 oil companies expressed interest to have the right of exploration of oil and gas in the EZZ of Cyprus.

Since the Eastern Mediterranean is already a conflictual region and the High Seas is almost inexistent, none of the countries has declared their ZEE so far. However, on February 17, 2003, Cyprus and Egypt signed the Agreement on the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). A similar Agreement was signed on January 17, 2007 between Cyprus and Lebanon. On February 15, 2007, Cyprus opened a bidding process to license offshore gas and oil exploration. Turkey has sharply protested the move and argued that TRNC and Turkey have legitimate and legal rights and authority over the maritime areas around the Island of Cyprus, as well. Through identical letters addressed to the United Nations (UN) Secretary General and to the President of the Security Council dated January 31, 2007, RoC responded by invoking its sovereign rights. Greece and the EU supported the standpoint of RoC. The United States took a cautious approach, and avoided taking sides. Turkey maintains its foreign policy discourse that it does not want the RoC to enjoy the island’s resources alone either since as a *de facto* state, the TRNC will be further isolated. It thus tried show its presence in the area by a series of military exercises in summer 2007.
IV: FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENT

As I have demonstrated in the previous section, TRNC was economically and politically the weakest ring of the Cyprus conflict chain, especially in the post-Cold War era. It has also been the country where deterritorialisation discourses and identity transformations from rigid to hybrid have become the strongest. Since the advent of the conflict in the 1950s, Turkish Cypriots have always been under the protection of Turkey. Although they were content with the outcome of the 1974 conflict which granted them a territorial entity, they soon realised that the new situation has cornered them to international economic and political isolation which started to weigh heavily, especially in the 1990s. The Turkish government granted passports to Turkish Cypriots since 1974, in order to travel abroad, but starting from the 1990s, it became harder to travel with Turkish passports in the world, because of visa regulations. During this period, the EU issued an embargo on the citrus fruits of Cyprus which had a fatal impact for the economy of the entity. Financial crises in Turkey were also directly transferred to TRNC which uses the Turkish Lira as its currency. TRNC has also become a satellite entity of Turkish illegal activities, like money laundering through off-shore businesses, casinos, night clubs, etc. During the 1990s, Turkish citizens started also entering the TRNC only with their identity cards (without passports), originally to work, but later also in connection with criminal activities. As a community suffering from international isolation, embargoes, economical crises, non-recognition and being a satellite entity for Turkey, Turkish Cypriots welcomed the EU discovery of the Cyprus conflict.

Although there have been various UN and US mediation efforts to bring a viable solution to the island since 1963, the island’s reunification and the elimination of the Green Line
discourses flourished in the EU only in the 1990s. Since RoC’s membership application to the EU, various EU and American NGOs attempted to bring the members of the two sides together, either in the buffer zone in Cyprus or abroad, to discuss their differences and reach a consensus. These encounters prompted the first identity transformation and deterritorialisation of TRNC discourses, in the name of ‘peace’ and ‘solution’ among the Turkish Cypriot community. Meanwhile many Turkish Cypriots who have gone to study abroad in EU countries and the United States have also brought home the same discourses. The magnetic attraction of the EU at this point has become another significant incentive in the identity transformation in TRNC. One also has to take into account that during this period, Turkey was also going through a transformation period as an awkward candidate of EU. While liberals, neo-conservatives, critical theorists and post-structuralists challenged, deconstructed and decomposed the firmness of the Turkish nation-state, the IMF inscriptions and massive privatization have wiped away the major principles of the Turkish Republic state ideology - populism, revolutionism and statism. The remaining three principles (nationalism, secularism and republicanism) on the other hand, have still been leading an existential struggle against the rise of Islamism, traditionalism, Kurdish separatism and the pluralist democracy that Turkey’s EU candidacy process entails. The same type of identity transformations and deterritorialisation discourses has thus also emerged in Turkey during this period. However, unlike in TRNC, these developments have encountered a bigger resistance from the civil society, the Turkish army and the republican institutions.

The same kind of identity transformation has not taken place, however, in RoC a prosperous internationally recognized country, which has paved its way to European Union without any obstacles. Much to the surprise of the international community, and the hurt feelings of the EU Enlargement Commissioner who felt ‘cheated’ by the Greek Cypriot leadership, RoC
maintained its firm position and rigid identity and entered the EU as such. Following its adhesion to the European Union, one of the first things that RoC articulated as its foreign policy was the territorialisation of its continental shelf. The Greek Cypriot leadership have also continued to stigmatise the Turkish army, Turkish Cypriot and Turkish leadership, as the biggest obstacles before a viable a solution. The negotiations during the Annan Plan and the events that followed in the post-Annan period showed also that rigid identities were maintained in the other actors involved in the Cyprus conflict or resolution efforts as well. The United Kingdom, jealously guarded its sovereignty rights for the British bases, managing even to exclude them from the European Union jurisdiction. After the failure of the Annan Plan, when the EU Commission decided to grant a direct trade regulation to the TRNC as a way of gratitude and ‘carrot’ policy, the EU states like Spain objected it, on the basis of sovereignty and territorial ‘interests’. Finally, while all the actors, including the EU, have developed discourses about the anachronistic existence of the Green Line in Cyprus, representing it as the ‘last Berlin Wall in Europe’, the EU set a very concrete frontier in the middle of the Mediterranean by incorporating the RoC. After RoC’s membership to the EU, non EU citizens, like Russians, Serbians and citizens of Middle Eastern countries could not anymore enter freely the RoC, while they were enjoying this right before. During the bombardment of Lebanon by the Israeli army in July 2006, only the Lebanese citizens with US, EU or Canadian passports could enter the RoC, for example, although the island was one of their single exits from their ravaged country. Their evacuation via TRNC was also prevented by the RoC government, on sovereignty claims.

These findings from Cyprus suggest that poststructuralist discourse analysis in foreign policy and geopolitics is necessary to deconstruct the geopolitical and foreign policy articulations of state elites, for having the assumption that they will pursue the nation’s interests and that such
interests will correspond to geographical realities. Such an analysis can help to uncover inter-
subjective and contextual decision-making aspects of foreign policy, as in the case of issues
related to the continental shelf and the ZEE between RoC, Turkey and Greece and the British
bases on the island. It can also help partially to understand the identity transformation and
foreign policy discourse change in TRNC. However, to be able to genuinely grasp why
deterritorialisation discourses and identity transformations have become more significant and
stronger in TRNC, and to a certain degree in Turkey, world-systems analysis can offer healthier
insights. The global capitalist economy imposes concrete restrictions or dictates inscriptions for
the peripheral countries, leading to identity transformations and enabling sometimes
deterritorialisation and sometimes reterritorialisation foreign policy articulations. Peripheral
states and people are more compelled to redefine identities, in order to adapt to the global
changes, and seeking sometimes the help of transnational organizations or they resist by
developing even more rigid identities and consolidating or defending their territorial claims,
depending on their strength. However, as the Cyprus case study has demonstrated, the weaker
peripheral entities within the global capitalist economy are generally more vulnerable to identity
transformations and prone to the development of deterritorialisation discourses. Core states,
instead, maintain their rigid identities and firm geopolitical and foreign policy articulations. They
reproduce the identities which enabled their foreign policy discourses in the first place and
marginalise alternative articulations.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to stimulate a debate on a complementary research avenue
in geopolitics by taking the post Cold War Cyprus conflict resolution efforts and developments
in the post Annan peace plan period as a case study. I explored the ways in which post-structuralist discourse analysis and world-systems theory can be complementary for explaining contemporary geopolitical processes like de-territorialisation /re-territorialisation. For the poststructuralist approach, the ways in which language can be analysed to reveal changing power relations in modern and postmodern processes and how people can become more conscious of themselves and more able to resist and change power relations are crucial. Furthermore, they acknowledge that in the post-Cold War world, the nature of unequal power relationships has been particularly challenging. Nevertheless, they determinedly neglect studying the impact of the world capitalist economy on these unequal power relationships which promotes deterritorialisation/ reterritorialisation foreign policy discourses and identity transformations in the periphery, while securing the territory of the core states. By demonstrating the development of deterritorialisation discourses and identity transformations in the Turkish part of Cyprus, I have suggested that a historical materialist perspective articulated in terms of core and periphery can be complementary to the poststructuralist discourse analysis, in order to offer healthy insights to analyse the current geopolitical discourses and identity transformations in different parts of the world. Such a perspective does not deny the agency of contemporary actors. It does, however illustrate both the transformational possibilities and limitation of their activity.
ENDNOTES


8 Ibid. p. 369.


11 L. Hansen (note 5) p. 32.


Poststructuralists are often referred as postmodernists although none of the philosophers associated with post-structuralism identified themselves with this term.


Ibid. p. 333.


Core and periphery refer to processes of the capitalist world-economy with core processes referring to economic activities adding a large amount of value to a product, paying high wages and thus, allowing for high levels of consumption. Peripheral processes refer to the opposite situation-low wages, low consumption and low value added to the product. (P.Taylor and C. Flint, *Political Geography: World-economy, nation-state, and locality* (London and New York: Prentice Hall, 2000), p. 20.

(note 15).


29 Ibid., p. 32.


33 M Pace (2006), 178.


39 Core and periphery refer to processes of the capitalist world-economy with core processes referring to economic activities adding a large amount of value to a product, paying high wages and thus, allowing for high levels of consumption. Peripheral processes refer to the opposite situation-low wages, low consumption and low value added to the product. (P.Taylor and C.Flint, Political Geography: World-economy, nation-state, and locality (London and New York: Prentice Hall, 2000), p. 20.


41 H. Larsen (notes 5, 20 and 26).

42 Anatolia is the name given to the Asian part of Turkey, but usually ‘Anatolian’ is a connotation for being rural.

44 DEFE 7- Records of Ministry of Defense- 7/2052 Nuclear weapons in Cyprus.


47 Department of Merchant Shipping of the RdC, information accessible on www.shipping.gov.cy.

48 According to a civil servant, who I interviewed in May 2005 at the Statistics Department of Ministry of Finance of RoC, the off shores contributed annually up to 100-150 millions of Cypriot pounds (around 200-250 millions d’euros).


50 Commission opinion on the Accession of Republic of Cyprus, 30.06.1993.


55 Interview with the General Secretary of de Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce in Nicosia, TRNC June 2006.

56 Ibid.

57 This map is produced by me in ArcView, using the original map from J.R.V Prescott, J.R.V. *The Maritime Political Boundaries of the World*, (London,Methuen, 1985).

58 The EU Enlargement Commissioner, Gunter Verheugen at that time publicly stated that he had been cheated by the RoC government, and was particularly vexed by the refusal of two Greek Cypriot television channels to allow him to explain the Annan Plan to the public, Le Monde, 22.04.2004.