Energy (In)security beyond the oil paradigm: The EU's dependence on "the other" in the case of natural gas

(In)Segurança energética além do paradigma do petróleo: a dependência da UE do "outro" no caso do gás natural

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Abstract This paper aims to analyze energy security beyond the oil paradigm, a proposal that is fully in line with the current energy transition in progress, widely recognized by the IEA and IRENA. To this end, we initially present a theoretical debate about key concepts of the case study to be analyzed next. Based on the concept of "the other", we stress the relevance of international flows in achieving energy security in different contexts. From the domain-dependency binomial, we problematize the concept of "energy security" and present how it can take place at different levels of governance, showing that the context of Agenda 2030 and the current energy transition underway make room for natural gas to replace the relevance of oil in global energy geopolitics. Hence, based on self-other(s) and domain-dependency relations, we assessed the case study of the EU's vulnerability to Russian natural gas, considering the role played by Turkey in this context. Historically enemies, Russia and Turkey are in a moment of unprecedented approximation since 2019, playing strong roles in relation to the EU's energy security. **Keywords** energy security; natural gas; European Union; Russia; Turkey.

Resumo Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a segurança energética além do paradigma do petróleo, uma proposta totalmente alinhada à atual transição energética em andamento, amplamente reconhecida pela IEA e pela IRENA. Para tanto, apresentamos inicialmente um debate teórico sobre os principais conceitos do estudo de caso a ser analisado em seguida. Com base no conceito de "outro", enfatizamos a relevância dos fluxos internacionais para alcançar a segurança energética em diferentes contextos. A partir do binômio domínio-dependência, problematizamos o conceito de "segurança energética" e apresentamos como ele pode ocorrer em diferentes níveis de governança, mostrando que o contexto da Agenda 2030 e a atual transição energética em andamento abrem espaço para o gás natural substituir a relevância do petróleo na geopolítica energética global. Portanto, com base nas relações entre nós-outro(s) e domínio-dependência, avaliamos o estudo de caso da vulnerabilidade da UE ao gás natural russo, considerando o papel desempenhado pela Turquia nesse contexto. Historicamente inimigos, Rússia e Turquia estão em um momento de aproximação inédito desde 2019, desempenhando fortes papéis com relação à segurança energética da UE. **Palavras-Chave** segurança energética; gás natural; União Europeia; Rússia; Turquia.

1. Introduction

Given the relevance of oil in relation to the current energy geopolitics since the end of the 19th century, particularly after the second industrial revolution, it is noteworthy that much of the debate and international policy focused on this energy resource – paying little attention to other relations of ownership, dependence and power. However, the oil crisis of the 1970s (1973 and 1979) led to the need to question this paradigm, since the oil importing countries of the period linked excessive dependence to a source of fragility of their foreign policies, affecting their economic and industrial dynamics.

During this period, countries began to promote studies, research and policies to encourage "alternative sources" to oil as well as energy efficiency, which, at that time, had no relation to "renewable energy" – link that is currently made. Therefore, given the urgency of these policies, which soon become a sovereign state policy in some countries, the energy agenda becomes securitized, placing "energy security" as a national priority.

Despite being a questionable concept, the search for energy security often took place through international flows. Whether through international trade or international arrangements (energy cooperation and/or integration), dependence on other countries caused a fear of exposure to this external dependence – which ended up reinforcing concerns about vulnerability to "the other" – particularly in the case of importing countries.

Almost five decades after the oil crises, oil is still relevant in global energy geopolitics. Nonetheless, the current energy transition requires a greater effort of analysis about this energy resource, especially due to the impact of this trend on energy flows. Ergo, the main purpose of this paper is precisely to analyze energy security beyond the oil paradigm – a proposal that is fully in line with the current energy transition in progress, widely recognized by the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the European Union's dependence on Russia and Turkey from the perspective of "the other". It is necessary to emphasize that both these countries do not necessarily represent a single block of "the other" to Europe. We just want to analyze the situation which the EU depends on countries that it does not consider as part of itself considering that they have had historical issues with Russia, like the Cold War for example, and they did not fully accept Turkey as part of its union.

To this end, and after this brief introduction, section 2 initially presents a theoretical debate about key concepts of the case study to be analyzed next. Based on the concept of "the other", we stress the relevance of international flows in achieving energy security in different contexts. Campbell (1992) and Neumann (1999)'s reflections creates the theoretical lens responsible for analyzing the tense (historical) relationship between "the self" (European Union, previously referring more broadly to Europe) and "the other" (Russia and Turkey). It is worth mentioning, as will be explained below, that there are differences, that is, this other is not homogeneous.

Next, from the domain-dependency binomial, we problematize the concept of "energy security", highlighting its diversity of perspectives, methods and ways of measurement. In the context of Agenda 2030 and the current energy transition underway, we briefly analyze how the search for energy security can take place at different levels of governance (domestic, regional and international) and how, in some cases, it is possible to identify side effects on the energy security itself.

Section 3 evaluates the case study in question, based on self-other(s) and domain-dependency relations between the EU and Russia. Focusing on the EU's vulnerability to Russian natural gas, we start from presenting some fundamental factors of historical nature, followed by more contemporary analyzes of the former Crimean case, Russia, Ukraine and the EU, as well as the troubled relations between Turkey and Cyprus.

2. "The other" in the domain-dependency binomial

This section proposes and presents the theoretical-conceptual basis to be carried out in this paper, which embraces at a first glance two initially independent frameworks; however, they in fact dialogue and influence each other. Thus, it starts from the construction of "the other" in International Relations (IR), as paramount to the cohesion of "the self" and, therefore, the notion of States. Based mainly on the contributions of Iver B. Neumann and David Campbell, the construction of geopolitical relations between Russia and Turkey is particularly discussed, given its relevance to the EU's current dependence on Russian natural gas from gas pipelines.

Then, and from the notion of "the other", concepts such as "sovereignty" are shaped and, consequently, some agendas are securitized. This is the case of energy security, whose construction (and validity) as a robust concept will be analyzed. From the domain-dependency binomial, different countries outline strategies to promote energy security, although this in some cases leads to conflicts and crises that compromise the achievement of this objective itself.

2.1. The construction of "the other"

First, this subsection will address the construction of "the other" in international politics and how it applies to the issue of energy security in the European case, especially regarding to relations between Russia and Turkey – to be analyzed in the following section. Such approach will utilize the complementarity we believe exists between material and ideational means.

From that very beginning, it is noteworthy recognize the importance of classic works such as Friedrich Ratzel (1987), which presents the interference of geography in political relations through "geographic determinism". Another classic geopolitical conception of great importance for such studies is Halford Mackinder (1904), which points in his studies Eurasia as the main center of power. Despite recognizing the importance of such approaches, they will not be used in this paper, because we do not assume deterministic conceptions and do not consider the preponderance of material factors; in fact, we understand that such factors are discursively shaped, building knowledge and realities. Therefore, although we consider the importance of these authors and their approaches, this work will not use a geopolitical approach.

Such realities and knowledge constructed about Turkey and Russia – by "the West", namely "Western Europe" – have similarities (NEUMANN, 1999). Thus, "the Turk" is the dominant "the other" when it comes to the European history. Another relevant point of view on this

issue is that it regards Turkey as "the sick man of Europe". Consequently, Ankara and Moscow are built socially and politically outside Europe, for example, "Turkey and Russia have both been othered as 'the East'" (p. 162).

However, there is a divergence in this process. Still according to Neumann (1999), "the Turk" was constituted as a process of space externalization, whereas in relation to Russia, there was a space-time marginalization. Therefore, we understand that Turkey was built as a territory outside Europe, while Russia was constituted as backward. Thus, "the East" is not only understood as something unique nor homogeneous.

It is then possible to argue that what occurs as "the other" is practiced in the construction of European identity itself; in other words, "the question is not whether the East will be used in the forging of new European identities but how is this being done" (*Ibid.*, p. 207). Hence, the formation of the European identity was in opposition to "the other" of "the east", constituting an ambiguous relationship between this East and the European system. As an example, Cavalcanti (2015) presents how the other is instrumentalized, seeking at times to get away, sometimes to approach another region.

On the other side, "at present, representations of Russia concern its future more than its present. Russia is often seen as a learner of European economic and political practices" (*Ibid.*, p. 107). So, it actually becomes more "us" and less "different".

It is noteworthy that the construction of "the self" in relation to "the other" was also carried out by Russia in relation to "the West", besides being a common place in International Relations (IR) – what will be discussed later. It is also important to emphasize that our goal is not to reify the binary "self/other", but to investigate boundaries of this dichotomy. In this paper, we do understand Russian construction of "the other" in relation to Europe as a way of (re)producing and maintaining its political identity. However, regarding the relationship between Turkey and Russia, we can notice moments of approximation and others of withdrawal, therefore becoming a real ambiguity.

Moreover, by categorizing "the other", "the self" is (re)constructed and (re)affirmed, constituting the idea of existence of pre-given and ideal narrative of "the self" – that is created in discourse. Because of the construction and affirmation of "the self", it is necessary to counteract "the other" in a way that identities are performatively constituted (CAMPBELL, 1992).

This creates (new) subjectivities and constructing boundaries that demarcate various binarism that support traditional IR studies, such as "inside/outside", "self/other" and "domestic/foreign" (WALKER, 1993), the latter being constituted as inferior to the first one, somewhat deviant. We thus deduce that there is no inclusion without exclusion. As a consequence, representations of threats are constructed in an anarchic and external environment, threatening the security of domestic society, often with resources of violence (CAMPBELL, 1992). This question of a homogeneous domestic environment, in contrast to the heterogeneous international, is also addressed by Blaney and Inayatullah (2004). It is worth mentioning that we do not intend to reify the dichotomies that exist in the traditional IR literature, since the authors used try to deconstruct and criticize them.

From this understanding – identity not being constituted in relation to differences, but naturalized and homogenized –, Campbell (1992) formulates his argument about the constitution of Foreign Policy as a central practice for constitution, production and maintenance of political

identity. Then, in this paper we understand foreign policy as practices of differentiation and modes of exclusion, confronting "the self" and "the other". Thus, we agree with Campbell's (1992) argument about adopting a mode of representation for "real causes", then "the boundaries of a state's identity are secured by the representation of danger integral to foreign policy" (p. 3).

Through the understanding of complementarity between material and ideational aspects, as well as between domestic and international, Freire (2013) argues that the construction of understandings and perceptions of Russian foreign policy reflects this combining ideational and material factors.

The Russian discourse then define itself as a great power, emphasizing its historical and civilizational past combining European and Asian elements in its culture, which is endowed with unique characteristics that constitute an ideational dimension of power. On the other hand, such power assumes a more objective component, underlining alignment and competition, especially in its – sometimes ambiguous – relationship with Turkey.

From this discussion we can have an idea of how Europe sees Russia and Turkey as "the other" – although this "other" is neither cohesive nor unique; in fact, it is the negation of the "self". Then, we can understand how the Europeans deal with their energy security plans. Besides being in part Europeans, these two countries have their particularities such as belonging at the same time to the Asian and the European continents representing a kind of bond that link the East and West of the planet. As a consequence, one can see them either as Europeans or Asians.

Considering this divergence, the EU is likely to try not to rely so much on Russian gas for example. However, according to the European Union Statistics Office (EUROSTAT), most of the EU's energy supply comes from Russia. In 2017, for example, about 30.3% of all the imported energy came from Russia, followed by 11% from Norway, 8% from Iraq and 7% from Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia. In natural gas, 40% of imports came from Russia, followed by 26% from Norway and 11% from Algeria. When it comes to fossil fuels, mostly coal, 39% comes from Russia, followed by 17% from the United States and Colombia[1].

According to the same database, European energy dependency on Russia has risen from 47% (2000) up to 55% (2019), and it is a matter of concern to the EU, which has been trying to reduce its imports from Russia especially after the annexation of Crimea. This fact can be interpreted as a continuation of the Russian strong influence over these countries that once were part of the Soviet sphere of power. Therefore, the EU policy understands that it may be losing its sovereignty to Russia if this situation continues deepening.

According to these facts, it is necessary to analyze the energy security concept, since the energy agenda is so relevant to the full understanding of the geopolitical relations and the foreign policy of the countries in question. Next section will do so, by critically analyzing the concept of "energy security", showing how to seek it can lead to conflicts of different natures that, as a side effect, can negatively impact energy security itself.

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[1]   Available in: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy/bloc-2c.html. Accessed on: 17 dez. 2019.

2.2. Energy (in)security

By its very nature, the energy sector is often associated with national sovereignty. Because of this, proper planning of the sector is often justified, as well as national self-sufficiency, which is evident in the classic reference texts on Energy Planning, such as Jean-Marie Chevalier, Jean-Marie Martin and Jacques Percebois (SANTOS; SABBATELLA, 2020). In addition, and as a historical consequence of the second industrial revolution and the energy crises of the 1970s, oil is the mainstay of the debate and is often the only energy resource that is really relevant to much geopolitical analysis.

Therefore, having access to energy would not only ensure the improvement of household well-being but would also promote the economic growth of countries. Either through the provision of their own resources, or through international trade, cooperation or regional integration, countries would seek to dominate such a resource, depending on it, while avoiding incurring external dependence.

> "It became important to have energy *domain*, mainly having access to different resources 'in the backyard', that is, domestically; however, when this was not possible, different contractual/commercial arrangements, wars and/or interventions took place in order to dominate it. By dominating energy and basing an entire model of production and patterns of consumption on certain energy sources, *dependence* started increasing and seemed to have no return. In this sense, the binomial domain-dependency of energy began to control and even determine technological, economic, political, social and undoubtedly environmental relations within and between *countries*" (SANTOS, 2018, p. 1).

In this context, and particularly in view of the need to guarantee access to energy, it is noteworthy that the agenda is now securitized (BUZAN *et al.*, 1998; WÆVER, 1995, 2004; TAURECK, 2006). Energy security then gains momentum in the aforementioned 1970s oil crises, when importing countries at the time, particularly of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), seek to reduce imports and dependence on oil (YERGIN, 1991).

Although energy security will almost always be associated with oil alone, it is a limited, biased and often a wrong view. This is because the concept of energy security has evolved since then, incorporating new dynamics, new actors and new concerns.

Associated to (i) price and guarantee of demand from primary sources such as oil and gas (IEA, 2013); (ii) risk management (CHESTER, 2010); (iii) mitigation of uncertainties (VAN DER HOEVEN, 2011); (iv) 4As approach – availability, accessibility, affordability and acceptability (CHERP; JEWELL, 2014); (v) environmental sustainability (KRUYT *et al.*, 2009); (vi) sociocultural factors (VON HIPPEL *et al.*, 2011); (vii) need for promotion of regional arrangements – such as cooperation and/or integration (SANTOS, 2018); (viii) long-term prospects for promoting sustainable development (UNDP, 2000); (ix) technologic innovation (IRENA, 2017); (x) indicators and measurement indices (SOVACOOL, 2011; ANG *et al.*, 2015); (xi) non-state actors (CHERP, 2012); and/or (xii) institutional factors; it is argued that the concept of energy

security is slippery, since it is hard to define universally, because it is polysemic, multi-dimensional and context-dependent on the nature of each country/region (CHESTER, 2010; VIVODA, 2010; SANTOS, 2018).

However, despite its scope of actors and issues involved in the concept, the geopolitics of energy still focuses on the case of oil – for the reasons already mentioned. Thus, the present paper proposes to focus on natural gas, mainly because it plays an essential role in the current energy transition underway ("clean energy transition").

The ongoing concept of "energy transition" is used to mention the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources (IRENA, 2019). For example, in "evolving transition [scenario], government policies, technology and social preferences evolve in a manner and speed seen in the recent past" (BP, 2018, p. 3), the share of natural gas (26%) in the projection of the 2040 energy mix is close to oil (27%), compared to only 24% compared to 33% in 2016.

Natural gas is one of the mainstays of global energy, since worldwide consumption is rising rapidly and, particularly in 2018, natural gas accounted for almost half of the growth in total global energy demand (IEA, 2019). In this transition scenario, global gas market is evolving rapidly due to two revolutions: the US shale revolution and the LNG revolution (SABBATELLA; SANTOS, 2020). Notwithstanding, caution should be taken with the statement that natural gas will necessarily play a decisive role as

> "the one-size-fits-all type of solution paradigm needs to be broadened, to accelerate action in the short to medium term. [However, it is indeed possible to argue that] natural gas can be an important complementary transition fuel to support renewable energy in the short- and medium-term transition phases" (SAFARI, 2019, p. 1075).

The discussion of the current energy transition dialogues directly with the presented concept of energy security and is fully considered under the 2030 Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 stands out, seeking to "ensure affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all". It is worth mentioning that, unlike the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were not specifically dedicated to the energy issue, the SDGs are concerned with this agenda and are looking for results to be achieved by 2030.

However, the pursuit of national or regional energy security, regardless of perspective, whether limited or broad, can lead to geopolitical conflicts and tensions. An extreme case is when a country tries to hinder or even refuses to sell energy to importing countries, what is often referred to as "energy weapon" (LÖSCHEL *et al.*, 2010). In such cases, the fragility associated with the vulnerability of the importing country is evidenced, which naturally does not have sufficient reserves to supply its domestic demand. The lower the potential to replace this resource, the greater the (external) dependency – reinforcing the already presented domain-dependency binomial.

Consequently, it is possible to glimpse the incessant pursuit of energy security through: (i) domestic investments in research, incentive policies and/or exploratory technologies; (ii) regional or international arrangements and agreements to achieve it; and/or (iii) trade relations and/or geopolitical conflicts, sometimes "masked" by other motivations of different natures, but which may ultimately have contradictory effects. In some cases, it is possible that conflicts/

wars motivated by the guarantee of energy security lead to the energy insecurity itself, negatively impacting prices and quantities offered. For these reasons, next section will show how complex and dynamic is the relation between Russia and European Union (EU), which also wraps Turkey, Ukraine, Crimea and Cyprus.

3. Russia, Turkey and the energy supply to EU

Russia and Turkey have unique geopolitical features, such as their simultaneous belonging to the European and Asian continents, besides representing the major energy sources for Europe. As shown earlier, Russia is the biggest energy supplier to the EU and Turkey is an important route linking the Middle East to Europe. In this section, we will address the importance of these two countries in the field of energy geopolitics in relation to the EU. Given the big amount of issues associated with the topic, this section will be divided as follows: 3.1. which presents graphically and briefly discusses each of the analyzed pipelines; 3.2. which have a historical nature in order to better introduce the issues concerning the energy disputes in Europe; and 3.3. which deal with the specific cases of the involved countries such as Turkey and Cyprus.

3.1. The Russian case

Although energy cooperation between East and West dates back from the Cold War, the increase in the construction of oil and gas supply pipelines intensified in the 1990s when the EU was consolidated gathering the new countries created after the end of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). However, differently from the Cold War, when it was easier to discern which countries were allies or opponents, there is a fine line when we try to understand what is cooperation and what is confrontation when it comes to energy flows, because it sometimes blurs depending on the specific situations on the market economy which is affected by the game of power among the great countries (HENDLER, 2015).

This issue has intensified, especially after Vladmir Putin's rise to power (2000) with a strong emphasis on the return of Russian sovereignty after the exhausting dismantling of the USSR. From 1990 onwards, Europe's energy dependence on Russia has only been increasing. This has been causing discomfort in the main sectors of the EU, fearing the increasing of Russia's influence on its former satellite states. It could also function as a way to bargain power in order to try to put these countries in a position of submission to Russian power. **Figure 1** shows the pipelines taking gas from Russia to the EU.

Figure 1. Pipelines taking gas from Russia to the EU

Source: Global Affairs Strategic Studies.

We will untangle the routes of these pipelines so that we can better understand the power implications surrounding this issue. All next information in this subsection were taken from the website of the largest energy company in the world, the Russian state-owned Gazprom. We will start with Nord Stream 1, which supplies Germany directly and from there the supply goes to the United Kingdom (UK), the Netherlands, France, Denmark and other European countries. The construction of Nord Stream 2 is currently in process, whose geopolitical implications will be discussed later.

Ahead, there is the Northern Lights pipeline, carrying gas from Russia and Belarus, to Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland. At this point, it is possible to realize that many Russian gas pipelines that supply Europe have Ukraine as their route. We can observe that it has a fundamental geopolitical implication since Russia and Ukraine are in tense relations. This will be also discussed in the next section.

Also passing through Ukraine, there is the Brotherhood, also called "the Trans-Siberian Gas Pipeline", representing the largest of all, heading to Slovakia, dividing also to the Czech Republic. Still in Ukraine, this pipeline meets the Northern Lights, carrying the gas to Slovakia, and from there to Austria and then Italy. There is still a system that also passes through Ukraine, bringing gas to Romania, heading to the Baltic countries and also passing athwart Turkey, which is becoming an increasingly important partner for the Russian energy issue.

The Yamal-Europe pipeline has its entry points in Germany, which has its pipeline line also connected to it, leading to Belarus and Poland, while its second branch goes to Austria, which has an important value since 1967 as it is from it that the Russian gas reaches Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. The Blue Stream pipeline between Russia and Turkey is still in operation and is the largest Black Sea pipeline. According to Gazprom, this pipeline was constructed to prevent

passage through third countries, which has been a major trend in Russian energy policy recently. As seen earlier, Russia has been planning and building other pipelines to boycott Ukraine, especially after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, as we will discuss later (GAZPROM, online)[2].

3.2. The former Crimean case, Russia, Ukraine and the EU

Relations between Ukraine and Russia come from ancient times and the current situation is a historical matter of Russian domination over this territory. As we are going to show in the end of this section, in 2014 there was a referendum in the Crimean society which decided to be part of Russia. We have discussed that Russia is no longer considering Ukraine in its energy projects towards Europe, bypassing this country. This has much to do with this referendum and even more with the history involving both of them. That is why we are going to subdivide this section, since it would be hardly possible to understand this strong rivalry without knowing its past. So, in this section we are going to show the main events that occurred between Russia and Ukraine to better comprehend this energy scenario trying not to stretch too much over these facts.

By 1654, Ukraine was already under Russian command, which shared its domain with Poland. By 1783, Russia already had dominion over the Crimean Khanate, a region previously dominated by the Tartars, which included the famous Crimean Peninsula, something that has returned to the newspapers as a current topic by 2014. It is noteworthy that Crimea is extremely important to Russia, because it gives real access to the warm and therefore navigable waters.

In 1795, when Poland was divided by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, practically all of the Ukrainian territory came under Russian control, which once dominated only the Ukrainian East, and also came to control the West, a region called "New Russia". Shortly thereafter, there was the Crimean War in 1853, since this region was considered extremely important to Russian interests and was then disputed between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, with English intervention. This war was considered the only destabilizing systemic conflict of the nineteenth century order (SOUZA, 2019), what Polanyi (2012) called the Hundred Years of Peace.

Already in the twentieth century, with the Treaty of Brest-Litovski in 1918, which sealed the end of the World War 1 (WW1), all the existing empires until then ended and so it was with the Russian Empire. Considering this fact, the Russians could not exert so much power as it did before over the Ukrainian territory. Furthermore, the end of the WW1 stimulated a resurgence of Ukrainian nationalism (1918). However, soon after the Polish-Soviet War (1919-1921), Ukraine was again divided between Poles and Russians and then the eastern part was incorporated in 1922 to the USSR under the name of *Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic*. During the World War 2 (WW2), Ukraine was occupied by the Germans and at the end of the conflict, Soviet borders in the Ukrainian portion were expanded to the west and Ukraine became part of the United Nations (UN).

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2   See more in: http://www.gazpromexport.ru/en/projects/transportation/. Access on December 17th, 2019.

In 1953, in a friendly manner, the political leader Nikita Khrushschov made the decision to return Crimea back to Ukraine. With the beginning of Perestroika in 1985, the Ukrainians took advantage of the plot to claim greater political and economic autonomy, and in 1990 managed to proclaim the sovereignty of their Republic. In 1991, together with the Russian Federation and Belarus, it became part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The following year, Crimea declared its independence, when Russia took the opportunity to request its re-annexation without any avail seeing that Crimea turned back after economic concessions from Ukraine.

In 1993, Ukraine ceded to Russia part of its Black Sea Fleet as payment of debts on the supply of Russian oil and gas. At the same time, cooperation was agreed for the intercontinental missile disassembly between both since Ukraine feared a future Russian territorial advance over its territory.

Considering this history about the relationship between Russia and Ukraine, we can see that there has been a Russian ambition over the Ukrainian territory for centuries, and mainly because of the Crimean Peninsula which was a reason for conflict and war. The long situation remained relatively stable from the 1990s until 2013, when a series of demonstrations took place in Ukraine that ousted President Viktor Yanukovych who was recognized for his rapprochement with Russia; in the protests and demonstrations, the population called for greater approximation with Europe. Tensions between the Ukrainians and the Russian majority population in south-eastern Ukraine broke out, culminating in a plebiscite request promptly answered by Putin. The vote culminated in most votes in favor of the annexation of the Peninsula to Russia.

Thus, since March 18th, 2014, the Crimean Peninsula is part of Russia and Sevastopol has come to be considered a Russian Federal City. However, Ukraine did not recognize this independence, accusing Russia of taking an illegal action, influencing the votes of the referendum, despite the fact that the majority of the population is Russian in the region. It was the moment of greatest tension between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War.

Recently, with Russia's annexation of the peninsula, the situation has worsened relations not only between Russia and Ukraine, but also between Russia and "the West". It becomes clear therefore that Vladmir Putin is trying to retake a large role already played by his country by adopting measures to reassert his sovereignty and power (MAZAT; SERRANO, 2012). One of the main tools used by the Russian leader is his ability to supply much of the energy demanded by Europe.

As a way of extending his power, Putin has been trying to project new pipelines that ignore Ukraine as a transit route, taking away the power of influence of this territory on this issue – what can be actually understood as a retaliation against the Ukrainian government in a clear struggle for power. Among the pipelines that bypass Ukraine, there is the new direct supply project for Germany, called Nord Stream 2, and also Turkstream, which links Russia to Turkey and is already extending to Serbia, with a project to extend to Bulgaria in the year 2020, ignoring Ukraine (OXFORD, 2020)[3]. Trying to be part of the EU, Serbia shall have greater difficulties following its rapprochement with Russia.

As Serbia will be part of this project, Hungary, Bulgaria and even Slovakia are in the Turkstream extension projects, also ignoring Ukraine in the project. Therefore, a real fight is being fought with "the West", especially the US and the EU which see their surroundings increasingly dependent on Russian energy, mainly Germany, as we will see later when we take a look at Nord Stream 2.

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3   See more in: https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/OXAN-DB249939/full/html. Access on January 23rd, 2020.

On the other hand, Nord Stream 2 would allow Germany to double its Russian gas import capacity (FISCHER, 2016). The geopolitical implications are that with direct supplies to the country, it would be easier for the Russians to control eastern European countries in the event of any disagreement as a form of retaliation. As the US Secretary of Energy, Rick Perry has stated, with Nord Stream 2 and Turkstream, Russia will be able to consolidate its presence and gain high power over the security and stability of Central Europe. And that is the most important issue between the United States and Russia recently. Russia is one of the most important countries when it comes to defense investments and spending and it haunts the US ambitions over this region as we can see on the list of countries which are part of NATO. However, we do not mean to explore this issue as long as it is not the main purpose of this article.

As a consequence, both Europe and the US are increasingly aware of this progressively dependence on energy supply from Russia. According to EUROSTAT (2019), more than half of Europe's energy supply comes from imports about 55%. Some countries such as Malta, Luxembourg and Cyprus depend on up to 95% of their import supplies. Thence, the discovery of gas sources in Cyprus is an important issue not only for the country itself but also for the EU – as we see later on the next subsection.

This situation is serving as a trigger for the NATO's leading actor (US) to enter this issue as it did in December 2019 by imposing sanctions against Nord Stream 2. With this sanction, the Ukrainians thank the US intervention and Germany interprets that the US is only country doing this because it is interested in selling liquefied natural gas to Europe[4].

3.3. The troubled relations between Turkey and Cyprus

While Russia supplies almost all of Europe's energy, Turkey is an important transit route for pipelines from the Middle East as we can see in this section. Turkey was a major candidate to supply energy to Europe as an alternative to Russian gas, however major projects such as the Nabucco Gas Pipeline was canceled (SKALAMERA, 2016). The Nabucco gas pipeline was a project to bring gas from Turkey to Austria, through Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. The Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) is a project to bring gas from Azerbaijan to Turkey and then to Europe. It was ready by July, 2019, as an alternative to the Russian gas to Europe and, consequently, it was supported by the US, however Russia proposed the South Stream, which replaced the Nabucco Pipeline idea.

In 2019, Russia's Turkstream gas pipeline was inaugurated with forecasts for operation in 2020. This new pipeline has virtually the same path as South Stream, replacing it. For now, it has only prospects of supplying Turkey, but it will be expanded to an extent that will pass through Serbia and Bulgaria, bringing gas to Europe – as shown before.

Nevertheless, Russia and Turkey fight on opposite sides in the Syrian and Libyan Wars. Both countries seek each other as bridges to strengthen their capacities for regional influence,

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4   See   more   in: https://www.dw.com/pt-br/senado-dos-eua-aprova-san%C3%A7%C3%B5es-contra-gasoduto-entre-r%C3%BAssia-e-alemanha/a-51713482. Access on December 19th, 2019.

but still pursue their own interests. Therefore, there is an unprecedented approach of those who are historical enemies, but there is no prospect of a lasting alliance, which can be shaken at any sign of crisis.

Concerning to Europe, the current President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is being an assiduous actor at the gas exploration in Cyprus. In 2019, Exxon Mobil made the discovery of the world's third largest natural gas reserve in the recent two years in the Glaucus-1 offshore field, in the coast of Cyprus. Given Europe's heavy reliance on Russian energy, this discovery could change the European geopolitical landscape and the EU heavily trying to protect Cyprus against the Turkish ambitions over its recent gas discoveries. Although EU is allowing many other oil companies to share exploitations in Cyprus's fields as we can see in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (ZEE), existing drilling blocs and its exploiting countries
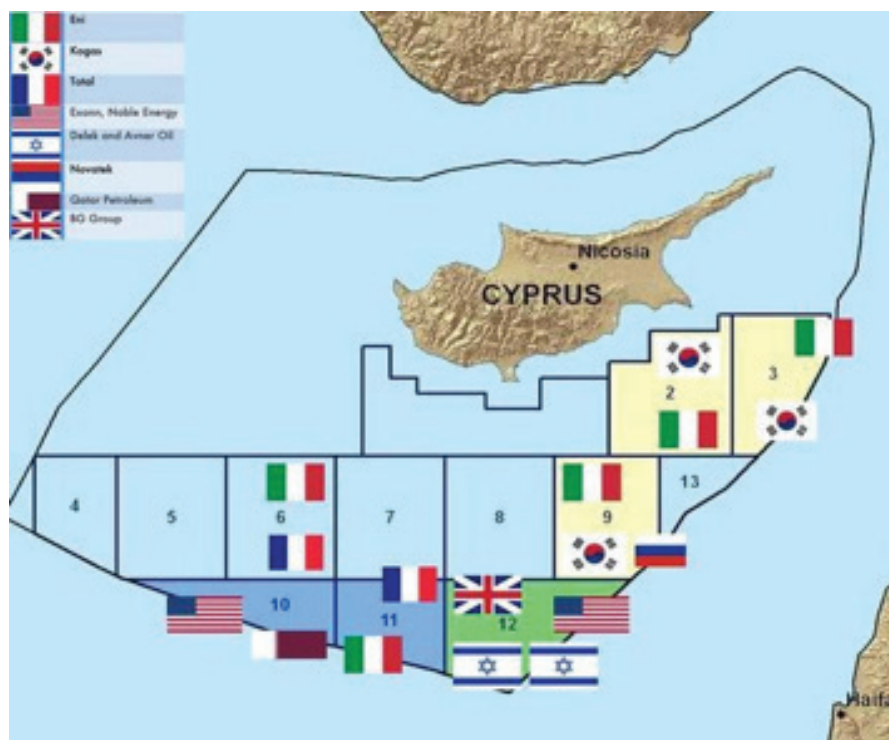
Source: Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa[5]

Keeping the same methodological procedure as the Russian case, it is interesting if we analyze the past involving Turkey and Cyprus. We are going to do it briefly so then we can understand why Turkey is claiming for its right to explore gas in Cyprus.

The island, which was once part of the Ottoman Empire, was claimed by Greece shortly before its War of Independence from the Ottomans in 1830, where it gained support from the British. In 1877-1878, there was the Russian-Turkish War and with the Berlin Congress after the end of this war, Cyprus was in fact administered by the British in accordance with the Cyprus Convention of 1878 under the justification that England would use the island as a base to protect

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5   Available in: https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Cyprus/Gas-in-Cyprus-blessing-or-curse-191948. Accessed on: 30 mar. 2020.

the Ottoman Empire in case of any Russian attack. After World War I, the island was formally annexed by the British Empire.

The situation would begin to change somewhat in 1960 when the UK, Greece and Cyprus signed an independence agreement for the island, where England would have the bases of Acrotiri, Deceleia and Makarios, taking over the presidency, but leaving the vice-presidency for Turkish Cypriots, who had veto power. This made the administration of the island more complicated than expected at the time of the agreement. Shortly thereafter, ethnic tensions within the island began to increase until the situation became unviable for the Turks when a pro-Hellenic government was elected in Greece and then Turkey invaded the island in 1974, causing the Turks to migrate to the north and the Greeks to the south of the island.

The Turkish occupation in Cyprus occurs until today where it received the name of Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Turkey. The concentration of Turkish population on the island is much lower than the Greek portion, representing only 18%. However, it is with this support that Turkey claims its share of gas exploration in the region. So, first we need to understand what is the concept of 'territorial sea' and how it influences this case involving both countries.

Territorial sea is the portion of sea that extends for 12 nautical miles, about 22 kilometers, which is still considered part of the territory of a territorial state. **Figure 3** shows that the territorial waters of Turkey and Cyprus mingle. In this case, according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (CNUDM), neither State has the right to the area unless there is an agreement between them on drawing an equidistant midline for both to exercise their sovereignty[6].

Figure 3. Turkey and Cyprus EEZ

Source: Stratfor.

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6   Available in: https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part2.htm. Accessed on: 19 jan. 2020.

Figure 3 shows the regions claimed by Turkey as it recognizes the northern part of Cyprus as Turkish territory. Since its territorial waters merge and according to the CNUDM, in this case an agreement between both states is required. However, Turkey has not signed this convention and is the only UN member country that does not recognize Cyprus as a sovereign state. All of this makes it difficult to resolve the issue of exploration of discovered gas in Cypriot waters that Turkey claims that it is its right.

Since Erdogan came to power, Turkey has become prominent on the international stage by presenting itself as a state that fights for its interests regardless of alliances of which it is a part of, as it did in buying Russian anti-ballistic missiles S-400 even making part of NATO. Likewise, Erdogan has been affronting the EU, which he was trying to join until recently, by insisting that it is his right to exploit the gas discovered in Cyprus.

Even with US sanctions and serious consequences for its economy, Turkey continues to act in the interests of its national interests, like when the US positioned itself in favor of reunifying Cyprus if Turkey did not stop its activities after preventing the passage of an Italian vessel from the Italian company ENI for its territorial waters towards Cyprus in early 2019 (SOUZA, 2019)[7].

We must still consider the fact that Turkey controls the access of the refugees to Europe and then it becomes an important actor of the geopolitical situation of the region, especially in recent times. Consequently, while the US and the EU impose sanctions on Turkey, the country has been playing a key role for the stability in the Mediterranean.

4. Conclusion

Pointing out that such energy issues (and security) are beyond the oil paradigm, this paper showed the relevance of international flows in this arena. More than just considering the current energy transition underway, our contribution selected a case study that already highlights the relevance of thinking about such issues beyond the "black diamond" perspective.

The EU's dependence on Russian natural gas may be understood as a source of vulnerability and insecurity. In this way, the theoretical basis related to the construction of "the other" was paramount not only to realize why the energy agenda came to be securitized, but also how the concepts shape the conflicting relations between the EU, Russia and Turkey.

As shown, the EU heavily depends on Russia's energy supply, that is the reason why the region is trying to change that condition in order to secure its energy self-sufficiency. Considering the Russians as "the other" throughout its history, we showed why the EU is afraid of Russia's expansion capacity – mainly if we consider that most of the EU countries belong to NATO, this situation becomes even deeper.

Given the fact that Russia is the biggest energy supplier to the EU, the gas pipelines can be understood as an important geopolitical tools/weapon. At the very same time, they also represent the strength that a country can exert over others by its power of coercion and bargain – being the case of both Turkey and Russia.

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7   See more in: https://www.marinha.mil.br/egn/sites/www.marinha.mil.br.egn/files/flipping_book/index_89/mobile/index.html. Access on January 12th, 2020.

Besides, Turkey is the only country that can contain Russia's access to navigable waters in the Mediterranean Sea and is playing a "shield" for refugee's migration towards Europe. This is paradoxical since the EU depends on the country for protection against Russia, but did not accept Turkey as its member state. It becomes even more complicated when we consider this dependence on Turkey and, at the same time, its disapproval or prohibition over Turkey when it comes to its exploration of natural gas on Cypriot/Turkish waters.

Ergo, the EU is like heavily depending on a specific country, in other words, Turkey for geopolitical strategies against Russia and, at the same time, not giving it any concession. This situation is perhaps being an important issue that is current linking both Russia and Turkey, what is definitely making relations more complicated to the EU and the US, which is supporting the EU on its actions over Turkey's ambitions, as seen before.

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