

**Russian
Greatpowerness:
Foreign policy, the Two Chechen
Wars and International
Organisations**

by

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In Memory of
Olavi Oscar Björklund (1927-2009)
and to Leea Björklund

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Abstract

This dissertation addresses the difficulties encountered in international relations between Russia and the West, specifically Europe, in spite of their cultural and geographical proximity and the expectation that Russia and Europe would share values and interests following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The problem is addressed through focussing on a particular aspect of Russia's national and state identity – 'greatpowerness'. Greatpowerness - the self-perception that Russia always has been and still is a great power - is a significant part of Russia's self identity.

The effects of Russian greatpowerness are examined through investigation of Russia's relations with three European international organisations – the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – from the early 1990s through to 2004. The particular issue through which these relationships are explored are the two Chechen wars of 1994-1996 and 2000-2004. Russian actions in Chechnya provoked frequent criticisms from the West, but were seen in Russia in the 1990s as an internal matter, and as part of the international war on terrorism in the 2000s. In both cases, they reflected in part Russia's great power aspirations. There were particular sets of expectations from the Russian side based on its self-perception in each case. It is argued in the dissertation that this plays a part in understanding the difficulties and apparent inconsistencies encountered in Russia's relationship with the West.

The dissertation contributes to explaining inconsistencies in Russian foreign policy behaviour towards the West which are not adequately accounted for by existing empirical and theoretical approaches. It begins with a discussion of definitions of being a Great Power and understandings of greatpowerness as an issue of self-perception in state identity. It then looks at Russian understandings of international relations, different Russian foreign policy schools and a series of factors which are persistent in Russian greatpowerness: sovereignty, *ressentiment*, isolationism, expansionism, imperialism, multilateralism and multipolarity. Next it sets the course of the two Chechen wars in the context of Russian political and international development.

The main empirical section of the dissertation is taken up by the three case studies of the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, noting similarities and distinctions in each case as to how Russia experienced interaction with the three different organisations. The Council of Europe has adopted a rather pragmatic approach in its cooperation with Russia and hence, in spite of some difficulties, the relationship has been the best of the three. This cooperation has challenged Russian greatpowerness the least and expectations came closest to outcomes. Cooperation with the EU has been of a different nature since Russia is not a member state. Here the relationship has had good and bad periods, which have very much depended on how Russia has felt about its level of expectations met by outcomes. The Russian relationship to the OSCE was also full of ups and downs always with strongly power political reasons. Russian expectations were highest in regards to the OSCE. However it challenged Russian greatpowerness most and caused biggest disappointment.

In conclusion, it is shown that Russian self-perception of greatpowerness and the aspiration to have its status as a Great Power recognised internationally provide one part of the explanation of the apparent inconsistencies while showing a form of consistency in Russia's relationship with the West.

Venäjän suurvaltius: Ulkopoliittika, kaksi Tshetshenian sotaa ja kansainväliset organisaatiot

Abstrakti

Tutkimus käsittelee kansainvälisen politiikan ongelmia Venäjän ja lännen suhteissa, erityisesti läntisen Euroopan ja Venäjän. Ongelmia näissä suhteissa on paljon, vaikka kulttuurisesti ja maantieteellisesti Venäjä ja läntinen Eurooppa ovat toisiaan lähellä. Neuvostoliiton hajoamisen jälkeen oletusarvona oli, että Venäjä tulisi jakamaan länsimaiset arvot ja intressit, näin ei kuitenkaan ole käynyt.

Tässä tutkielmassa aihetta lähestytään Venäjän kansallisen ja valtiollisen identiteetin – suurvaltauuden – kautta. Suurvaltius on Venäjän oma näkemys itsestään ja keskeinen osa sen identiteettiä. Venäjä pitää itseään suurvaltana.

Tarkastelun kohteena on Venäjän suhde kolmeen keskeiseen eurooppalaiseen kansainväliseen organisaatioon: Euroopan neuvostoon, Euroopan unioniin ja Euroopan turvallisuus - ja yhteistyöjärjestöön. Tutkielmassa valotetaan Venäjän suurvaltiuden näyttäytymistä käytännössä 1994-2004 välisenä aikana. Lähemmän tarkastelun kohteeksi on valittu Tshetshenian sotien ajankohdat 1994-1996 ja 2000-2004. Venäjän toimia Tshetshenian sodissa kritisoitiin paljon länessä. Ensimmäinen sota koettiin suurimmaksi osaksi Venäjän sisäiseksi asiaksi, ja toinen sota osaksi kansainvälistä terrorismin vastaista sotaa. Kummankin sodan kohdalla Venäjän suurvaltaidentiteetti korostui vahvasti. Suhteessa länteen Venäjällä oli omat arviot ja odotukset, jotka perustuivat sen omakuvaan Venäjämästä suurvaltana. Tämä osaltaan selittää vaikeuksia ja ailahtelua Venäjän ja lännen suhteissa.

Tutkimus avaa ja selittää Venäjän ulkopoliittisen käyttäytymisen epäjohtomukaisuuksia suhteessa länsimaihin. Näihin epäjohtomukaisuuksiin ei ole perehdytty tarpeeksi tähänastisessa empiirisessä ja teoreettisessa tutkimuksessa.

Aluksi tutkimuksessa käydään läpi eri suurvallan määritelmiä ja miten suurvaltius on osa valtiollista omakuvaa. Sen jälkeen siirrytään tarkastelemaan Venäjän tapaa lähestyä kansainvälisiä suhteita, eri venäläisiä ulkopoliittisia koulukuntia ja käsitteitä, joilla on jatkuvuutta Venäjän ulkopoliitikassa ja jotka erityisesti ovat osa Venäjän suurvaltiutta: suvereenisuus, *ressentiment*, eristäytyminen, laajentuminen, imperialismi, multilateraalisuus ja multipolaarisuus. Tämän jälkeen käsitellään Tshetshenian sotia osana Venäjän sisäistä ja kansainvälistä kehitystä.

Tutkimuksen pääpaino on empiirisessä osassa. Luvuissa käsitellään miten Venäjä on mieltänyt Euroopan neuvoston, Euroopan unionin ja Euroopan turvallisuus- ja yhteistyöjärjestön. Jokaisen organisaation kohdalla löytyy yhtäläisyyksiä ja erilaisuuksia. Euroopan neuvostolla on ollut hyvin pragmaattinen lähestymistapa ja vaikeuksista huolimatta se on organisaatio, johon Venäjällä on ollut paras suhde. Euroopan neuvoston kohdalla Venäjän suurvaltius, Venäjän näkökulmasta katsottuna, on ollut vähiten uhattuna ja tulokset ovat olleet lähimpänä odotuksia. Sen sijaan Venäjän suhde Euroopan unioniin on ollut ongelmallinen. Luonnollinen syy tähän on, ettei Venäjä ole Euroopan unionin jäsen. Suhteessa on ollut hyviä ja huonoja aikoja. Paljon on ollut kiinni siitä, miten yhteistyö on vastannut Venäjän omia odotuksia. Vaikka Venäjä on Euroopan turvallisuus- ja yhteistyöjärjestön jäsen, mahtuu tähänkin suhteeseen paljon vastakkainasettelua länsimaisten jäsenten kanssa. Voimapolitiikka on heijastunut tähän yhteistyöhön enemmän kuin Euroopan neuvoston tai Euroopan unionin suhteessa tehtyyn yhteistyöhön. Venäjä panosti Euroopan turvallisuus- ja yhteistyöjärjestöön eniten 1990-luvun alussa ja pettyi pahiten. Järjestö haastoi eniten Venäjän suurvaltaisuuden.

Yhteenvedona tutkimus osoitti, että Venäjän omakuvan, suurvaltaisuuden, ja länsimaiden Venäjäkuvan välillä on iso kuilu. Sitä ei ole osattu kuroa umpeen. Venäjän suurvaltaisuus luo Venäjän osalta raamit kansainväliselle yhteistyölle. Suurvaltaisuuden toteuttamisesta kumpuavat epäjohdonmukaisuudet Venäjän ja lännen suhteissa. Näin epäjohdonmukaisuudet näyttävätkin johdonmukaisena politiikkana.

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My research has taken 13 years of PhD studies, but the road to studying Russia goes back further. It was on 19th August 1991 that I signed myself into Stockholm University to study Russian language. That same morning alarming news came from Moscow. The State Committee for Emergencies announced that Mikhail Gorbachev had resigned due to illness and a state of emergency was declared. I was wondering that day if I had made the right decision in relation to university studies. Gorbachev's Soviet Union seemed an interesting country to study. There was hope of change, people started to talk about things that had not been talked about before. When hidden stories surface or taboos are broken, there is plenty to fascinate the enquiring mind. But since the coup attempt threatened to put a lid on Russia's new openness, the day of entering Stockholm University was a day of doubts. What followed proved that Russia would remain fascinating and that things can rapidly take unexpected turns, but also that certain things that one would expect to change fast do not, and vice versa. Russia became, on that historical date, my profession.

I have many, many people to thank and be grateful for in my journey to explore myself, Russia and world politics. To my regret I cannot even recall some people's names since encounters with them were very short and accidental, but they had a big influence, showing that a big picture is made up of small details.

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literature side of Russia in Swedish with a Danish accent. Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Pasternak, Chekhov, Bakhtin, Akhmatova, Tsevetayeva and others captured not only me, but also my fellow students and a group of us needed to go to Moscow to see and experience this mysterious country with our own eyes.

In August 1992 a new chapter started. We arrived in Moscow - I, Charlotte, Per, Martin, Rikhard and Andreas. There in the dormitory by Park Kultury we met Susanna, Monika, Sofia and Johan. A year later Kamilla and Karin had joined our ranks, even Sergei turned up. During 1992-1994 some of us left Russia earlier than others, some worked, some studied, some found themselves and occasionally some lost themselves and some found their life partners. Ever changing Moscow was modern and old, political and intellectual, backward and spiritual – it was a world that was every morning something different and there was not a day when things went the way one expected.

In Autumn 1994 I returned to Sweden to real and orderly life. Now with personal experience under my belt, I started a comprehensive package in East European Studies at Uppsala University to complement what I had learned in Stockholm and Moscow. There Stefan Hedlund, Kristian Gerner and Susanne Oxentierna patiently and in their own decisive way taught and argued with ‘I have been in Moscow and I know it all’ students, demonstrating that to make a good argument one needs to have a bit more knowledge than queuing for bread, going to theatres, walking in Gorky Park or partying until the first metro. Annah I have to thank for knowledge on how market economies work and for good company.

From Sweden after my Bachelor of Arts, I moved to London and started a Master of Arts degree at the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies. The academic knowledge and requirements were lifted to a new level. Russian political transition and the young politics of the new state came under critical scrutiny with Martin McAuley. Geoffrey Hosking’s lectures were an inspiration. Peter Duncan’s Soviet and Russian foreign policy course opened several new doors and put IR studies from Stockholm to good use. These classes created an academic atmosphere that is hard to beat, and were the reason why, in spite of some hardships involved in pursuing an academic career, that path started to attract me.

In 2001 I started my road towards a PhD at the University of Helsinki. When I started, it felt that the whole project would be over in a couple of years – what could be so difficult about a PhD? I got my first funding for the Phd research in Jukka Korpela’s project “Integration and Disintegration in Russian History” which gave me my initial touches in

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Contents

Contents	xii
List of Tables	xv
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Approaches	2
1.2 Russia and <i>Greatpowerness</i>	3
1.3 The Shadow of Chechnya	6
1.4 The Council of Europe, The European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe	7
1.5 Research Setting	9
1.6 Sources	12
1.7 In Summary	14
2. International Relations Theory – Russia, the West and <i>Greatpowerness</i>	16
2.1 The International Context: Russia in a Unipolar World	17
2.2 Three Schools of International Relations Theory	22
2.2.1 Viewpoint I: Realism	23
2.2.2 Viewpoint II: Liberalism	27
2.2.3 Viewpoint III: Constructivism	31
2.3 Great Power Definitions	35
2.4 Greatpowerness of the Great Powers	42
2.5 Russia and International Relations Theory	46
2.6 Great Power Definitions Applied to Russia	52
2.7 Conclusion	55
3. Determinants of Russian Foreign Policy	58
3.1 Introduction	58
3.2 Russian foreign policy schools	61

3.3 <i>Derzhavnost</i> – Great Power thinking uniting Russian foreign policy groups	65
3.4 History and national interest	70
3.5 Imperialism and Expansionism	74
3.6 Sovereignty made in Russia	79
3.7 The Concept of <i>ressentiment</i> and isolationism	83
3.8 Multilateralism and multipolarity in the Russian context	87
3.9 Conclusion	97
4. Challenge to Russian Greatpowerness – the two Chechen wars	101
4.1 Introduction	101
4.2 Chechnya and the War on Terrorism	103
4.3 Russian attitudes towards conflict in Chechnya – uniting Russians but losing the West	110
4.3.1 Public Opinion	112
4.3.2 The State Duma	114
4.3.3 The Military Establishment	116
4.3.4 The Foreign Policy Establishment and the Government	117
4.4 Chechnya and domestic reasons for the war – state identity at stake	119
4.4.1 The historical and structural legacy of the imperial and soviet systems	120
4.4.2 Strategic arguments	122
4.5 Domino theory or spill over effect	123
4.6 Leadership politics and personalities	126
4.7 Conclusion	126
5. Russia and the Council of Europe – the success of institutionalism	128
5.1 Introduction	128
5.2 Russian entry to the Council of Europe and the first Chechen war	130
5.3 The Second Chechen war	137
5.4 The Council of Europe’s place in Russian foreign policy	146
5.5 Conclusion	149

6. The Russia Federation and the European Union; The lost opportunity that Chechnya revealed	152
6.1 Introduction	152
6.2 Chechnya as a test case of common values and integration ideas	154
6.3 The first Chechen war	156
6.4 The Second Chechen war	161
6.5 The European Union's place in Russian foreign policy	166
6.6 Conclusion	170
7. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Russia and the West working together in constant conflict	173
7.1 Introduction	173
7.2 The first Chechen war	174
7.3 The Second Chechen war	181
7.4 The OSCE's Place in Russian Foreign Policy	190
7.5 Conclusion	195
8. Conclusion	197
Bibliography	203

List of Tables

2.1 Realist school of thought in international relations	24
2.2 The Liberal School of Thought in International relations	30
2.3 The Constructivist School of Thought in International relations	35
3.1 Russian foreign policy orientations towards Europe	64
3.2 Views of different Russian Foreign Policy schools towards key concepts	99

Chapter 1: Introduction

Russia's state identity is based on the self-image of Russia as a Great Power. This has become widely accepted as an important factor in Russian international politics, but very few studies of Russian foreign policy have explored this aspect of identity in any depth. The aim of this study is to open up and investigate the Russian foreign policy discourse of greatpowerness and explore what kind of impacts it has on Russia-West relations. The hypothesis is that Russian assumptions about cooperation owe something to the Russian self-perception as a Great Power and the identity of greatpowerness.

Russian Great Power identity has developed over centuries of interaction with other great European powers, and more recently with the United States, and has played an important role in Russia's international relations. Russian greatpowerness has evolved through different state formats and times. The assumption after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 was that the Russian Federation would now, finally when the ideological barrier was lifted, move closer to the Western countries. Russia's democratic choice in 1992 was seen as a good basis for the functioning of a new era of cooperation. Such expectations were particularly strong with regard to Europe, with which Russia shared a cultural heritage and where common values had already been emphasised in Mikhail Gorbachev's concept of the 'Common European Home'. However, this assumption that an age of harmony and of Russia's integration with Europe would emerge naturally proved to be too hasty. Why is it that Russia and the West, especially Europe, despite their cultural proximity and numerous shared interests, continue to have a very complicated relationship, and why is cooperation still difficult?

This study will explore how Russian great power identity has expressed itself in Russian interactions in several European based international organisations. The framework of international organisations provides a valuable testing ground since there have been clear signs of Russian willingness to cooperate and interact in multilateral settings. Both sides had high expectations as cooperation favoured the idea of success. Through the case-studies, analysing how the two Chechen wars effected multilateral cooperation, the dissertation hopes to find some of the answers to the roots of the problems existing in Russia-West relations. From this examination we will see what factors guide Russian greatpowerness and what kind

of impact this self-perception had on foreign policy concepts, playing an influential role when a domestic political matter is dealt with within an international organizations framework.

1.1 Approaches

The dissertation ties Russian foreign policy making since 1991 into mainstream international relations theory. The traditional ‘area studies’ approach to Russia has, in the past, tended to stay apart from the international relations theory approaches. However three of the international relations schools of thought – liberalism, realism, and constructivism (or social constructivism) – which are discussed in more detail in chapter two, can be identified within the area studies domain. Notably, Christer Pursiainen’s groundbreaking work, which sought to bridge the gap between Soviet/Russian studies and international relations theory, identified these as the schools which had most to offer to the study of contemporary Russian foreign policy.¹

Liberalism has played less of a role in understandings of Russian foreign policy, due to the Russian Federation’s international economic ties falling short of high levels of integration in the past. This trend started to change with Russian economic recovery in early 2000. One popular subject from which to approach Russian foreign policy has been energy geo-economics. However it does not fit comfortably within a liberal framework. The liberal framework provides a relatively straightforward explanation in cases where economic interests, interdependence and institutions play a decisive role. The assumption that these three economic factors guide Russian foreign policy still waits to be fulfilled and does not yet help to explain Russian foreign policy making.²

Approaches which are related to the two other schools of thought focussed on here – realism and constructivism - on the other hand, can be found even in the study of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War there were two competing approaches in western studies of Soviet foreign policy - one supposed that Marxist-Leninist ideology was what guided policy and therefore Soviet foreign policy was something different and peculiar, while the other approached the Soviet Union as a ‘normal state’ promoting national interests and security.³

¹ Christer Pursiainen, *Russian foreign policy and international relations theory*, London: Ashgate, 2000

² See for example Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, Why Moscow Says No - A Question of Russian Interests, *Not Psychology, Foreign Affairs*, vol.90 pp.122-138, 2011

³ For comprehensive accounts on international relations theory on Russian studies, in addition to Pursiainen see Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International relations*, London: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988.

The 'normal state' approach clearly has a close correspondence to today's realist school in international relations. Realism has been and perhaps still is dominant in broader public understandings of Russia, but still falls short of providing complete explanations. It is often attractive to depict the power clashes between Russia and the West purely as zero-sum games. The world becomes simple, but such a characterisation does not seem to provide explanations of why sometimes Russia is very willing to cooperate with the West, and why sometimes material gains come second to gains in prestige.

The approach focusing on the state of mind and subjective aims of the makers of Soviet foreign policy has more in common with constructivism. Constructivism places human awareness or consciousness above the materialist interests which constitute the main analytic driver in the competing realist school of thought. And yet social constructivists in general, and in today's studies of Russian foreign policy in particular, assign little role to ideology. Historical, cultural, and personal factors are instead emphasized. For Russia ideology has always been an important concept whether it has been discussed in the framework of Russian ideas, identity or communism. So in this sense we are building on Constructivism, which comes closest to the core of this study. Explanations anchored in persistent factors and identity can help to explain fluctuations in Russian foreign policy directions and in fact turn inconsistencies into consistencies. Greatpowerness as an identity, an important element of Russian self-perception, however, has not been emphasised in constructivism, not at least from the Russian point of view.

1.2 Russia and *Greatpowerness*

In this work, by arguing that Russia's state identity, informed by the self-perception of greatpowerness, is in effect an ideology, the conceptual framework of constructivism is extended. The key to this argument lies in examining the role Russian greatpowerness plays in the way Russians imagine themselves. The self-image of Russia as a Great Power then exerts a decisive influence on how Russians interpret a particular situation they find themselves in and how interests are defined. This follows Alexander Wendt's constructivist line of how the ideas of intersubjectively constructed identities form the basis of interests.⁴

⁴Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999

So, while it is argued in chapter two that elements of realism and liberalism are essential to a full understanding of Russian foreign policy in general, the focus on greatpowerness and its role in self-perceptions locates this study more closely to the constructivist school of international relations. In Western foreign policy studies devoted to Russia, the social constructivist (constructivism) school has been gaining ground on realism as the main theoretical approach among academics. In contrast, the realist approach is still applied more often in international relations generally, while in Russia itself realism remains the dominant school of thought.⁵

There is plenty to suggest that Russian political elites themselves embrace the notion of Russian greatpowerness, but more significantly it is an attitude widely shared among the population. As a result, the domestic political need of Russia's leaders to stay in tune with popular opinion infringes into foreign policy decision making.⁶ While Alexander Wendt stressed the importance of external factors, many Russian foreign policy scholars from the constructivist school have explored the effect of the domestic arena. Iver Neumann has analysed Russian national identity through 'otherness' and why the Russian quest for greatpowerness is so hard to accept in the West.⁷ Andrei Tsygankov has examined domestic identity coalitions and the concept of honour effecting Russian foreign relations.⁸ In Ted Hopf's study state identity was stressed. Hopf was looking for an answer to the question of how domestic identity formation contributes to defining national interests.⁹ Anne Clunan's study on Russian foreign and security policy drew inspiration from aspirational constructivism that incorporates social psychology and historical legacies' role in shaping

⁵ Tatiana Romanova, 'Neoclassical Realism and Today's Russia', *Russia in Global Affairs*, October 2012 and Tatiana Romanova and Elena Pavlova, 'Towards neoclassical realist thinking in Russia?' in Asle Toje and Barbara Kunz (eds), *Neo-Classical realism in Europe: Bringing Power Back In*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012.

⁶ William Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy – Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives, 1993-2000*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002.

⁷ Iver Neumann, *Russia and the idea of Europe: A study in identity and international relations*, London: Routledge, 1996 and 'Russia as a Great Power 1815-2007', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Nr.11, 2008.

⁸ Andrei Tsygankov, *Russian Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, second edition, London: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2010; Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin: Honor in international relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012; Andrei Tsygankov, 'If not by tanks, then by banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin's Foreign Policy', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58, 7, November 2006.

⁹ Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics; Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow 1955 and 1999*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002

national identities and interests.¹⁰ And Valentina Feklyunina has studied extensively the Russian battle for perceptions and constructing an international image and how both perceptions and image effect Russian foreign relations.¹¹

The English School of international relations is not explored in greater depth here, but the notion of greatpowerness uncovered in this dissertation has something to offer to its proponents. The notion that Russia adheres to a ‘pluralist’ variant of international society at a time when western countries incline to a more ‘solidarist’ variant has been explained in part by Russia’s insistence on the distinction between Great and non-Great Powers.¹² The finding that greatpowerness has played a role in Russia’s dealings with international organisations would seem to support this contention, but such further consequences of greatpowerness are beyond the scope of the thesis. Other schools of international relations which focus on institutional and social divisions within society have much to offer for the analysis of Russian foreign policy but are not discussed here, firstly because they have not yet been widely applied in the Russian context, and secondly because an important aspect of this dissertation is its finding of the universalism of greatpowerness in Russia.

This study deploys the constructivist approach to examine one particular feature of Russian self-identity – Greatpowerness – which is now widely held to be an important part of identity which has implications for foreign policy. As David McDonald has put it: ‘.....whatever the ambiguities or contradictions in the rhetoric of Russian absolutism and statehood, Russians from virtually all sections of society and on either side of the state-society divide agree that Russia is “fated to be a Great Power”’.¹³

In greatpowerness the external, in the spirit of Wendt’s ideas, is very much activated by internal factors, as the case studies show. Great Power identity can differ from or be the same from one Great Power to another, usually sharing many features but also varying according to national specificities. In this thesis, greatpowerness is analysed as a state ideology, and a part of the self-perception of all Russian political elites and most Russian citizens, that can cause contradiction and conflict with interest-based partners, such as the West is for Russia.

¹⁰ Anne Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia’s Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity and Security Interests*, New York: John Hopkins University Press, 2009

¹¹ Valentina Feklyunina, ‘Battle for Perceptions: Projecting Russia in the West’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol.60, issue 4, 2008, 605-629; Valentina Feklyunina, ‘Russian foreign Policy towards Poland: Seeking reconciliation? A Social constructivist analysis’, *International Politics*, Vol.49, issue 4, 2012, 434-448

¹² Christopher Browning, ‘Reassessing Putin’s Project: Reflections on IR Theory and the West’, *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol.55, no.5, September/October 2008, 3-13, p.7.

¹³ David McDonald, ‘Domestic Conjunctures, The Russian State, and the World Outside, 1700-2006’, in Robert Legvold (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century and the Shadow of the Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 145-203, p.163

Greatpowerness in itself is a complex term and has not been opened up properly. What is meant by Great Power identity and how it seems to combine elements of the three selected IR schools of thought are questions dealt with in chapter two.

In Russian contexts the term greatpowerness comes from the words ‘*velikoderzhavnost*’ or just ‘*derzhavnost*’. Mark Urnov has defined it in Russia’s case as ‘The vision of Russia not as one among a community of equals but more as an independent player on the global stage that incites fear and therefore respect and is in a position to impose its will on others.’¹⁴ The concept is old and plays a significant role in Russia’s past and present as well as future foreign policy. Bobo Lo has observed: ‘If we interpret ideology more generously – as a “predispositional influence” on policy thinking and decision-making – then there is no reason to exclude the re-emergence of Russia’s sense of “greatpowerness” (*derzhavnost*) as one of the key strands of the post-Soviet foreign policy debate.’¹⁵ In Lo’s view Russian greatpowerness is based on a belief in Russia’s global status and gives Russia *ipso facto* a ‘right of involvement’ in any matter Russia sees as important for its own interests.¹⁶ Lo’s suggestion that greatpowerness is an ideological belief of sorts is rarely uttered by constructivists, but is pursued further in this dissertation. Chapter three continues by exploring Russian understandings of greatpowerness.

1.3 The Shadow of Chechnya

While Greatpowerness can be seen in operation in many spheres of Russian foreign and domestic policy, its role has been accentuated in the context of perhaps the most important challenges that the young Russian state has faced and which provide the focus for this study – the two Chechen wars. “Chechnya was the most dangerous manifestation of this domestic Other, the empowerment of periphery in general was the central threat to the maintenance of both the Russian Self and Russia itself.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Mark Urnov, ‘Defeating the authoritarian majority: an uneasy agenda’, in Vladislav Inozemtsev and Piotr Dutkiewicz, *Democracy versus Modernization: A Dilemma for Russia and for the World*, London: Routledge, 2013, 65-76, p.70

¹⁵ Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign policy Making in the Post-Soviet Era – Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave 2002, p.53

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics; Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow 1955 and 1999*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002, p.277

A war situation can reveal both the weaknesses and strengths of a state in domestic and international politics. Russia faced a challenge from an internal entity; in the first war it was more of a challenge to the survival of the state in concrete terms and in the second war it was more a matter of prestige, image and power relations. In the right circumstances, a domestic challenge to a Great Power's statehood is the most sensitive of all and will reveal a true state identity to the international community.

The wars in Chechnya challenged Russian self-perceptions of greatpowerness in the international framework as well as domestically. The West, by criticising and wanting to exercise its own influence inside Russia, challenged the Russian state identity as one of a Great Power. Chechnya revealed the borders that Russia was not ready to cross in Russia-West cooperation. As Thomas de Waal wrote in 2004: 'The Chechen conflict is a classic case of the law of unintended consequences.'¹⁸

Chechnya became Russia's Achilles' heel not only in president Yeltsin's Russia but also in Russia under presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. The 'law of unintended consequences' still haunts the Russian state's leadership in its efforts to lift Russia's status on the international scene and also in its aim to create domestic order. The *Guardian* correspondent Andrew Osborn illustrated the role of Chechnya in the Russian leadership's thought well: 'If there is one thing guaranteed to make Russian President Vladimir Putin's elf-like face drop it is any mention of Chechnya.'¹⁹

1.4 The Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Great Power identity can be examined concretely in Russia's interactions with the international organisations - the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – over a domestic matter like Chechnya. The focus of this study does not allow for an exploration of every aspect of greatpowerness in International Relations – most significantly, by excluding the USA, which in some respects provides the most obvious point of reference. During the Cold War, the greatpowerness of the Soviet Union was defined by its rivalry with the USA. Even since the Cold War, negative

¹⁸ Thomas De Waal, 'A War of Unintended Consequences', *Index on Censorship*, October, Vol.33., No.4, 2004, 54-63, p.56

¹⁹ Andrew Osborn, 'The EU's Chechnya Challenge', *The Guardian*, 7 November 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/nov/07/worlddispatch.russia/print>, accessed 06.11.2012

Russian discourses about the West tend to forefront the USA, which according to some authors has taken the place of the 'Other' in Russian national identity.²⁰ However, this is precisely what makes Russia's relationship with Europe more intriguing and, it is argued here, more significant in terms of its Great Power status. The USA has stood either as something which Russia can aspire to or imitate, for example in its level of economic development, as was largely the case at the beginning of the 1990s; or it is something hostile which is, in the tradition of the Cold War, seeking to undermine Russia's place in the world through opposing it in forums like the UN, through NATO action in Serbia, or through supporting anti-Russian forces in Russia's near abroad. Europe, by contrast, is a place where Russia can not only aspire to be on equal terms with the leading members, but where it can also offer cooperation in a number of spheres which can be of mutual benefit to both.

Historically, West Europeans have subscribed to an unflattering image of Russia as a non-European barbarian country. It has been described as more exotic and remote than Africa.²¹ The image owed a great deal to the writings of European travellers in Russia. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries many aristocrats in Europe saw Russia as 'the promised land' for the nobility after the French Revolution (rather as, in the aftermath of the Socialist revolution in Russia, many socialists from the West looked to the Soviet Union as the promised land of equality). Both of these examples highlights also what happens when expectations are high and reality does not match expectations. Many who went to Russia returned disappointed and holding the view that the differences between European history, the European way of life and European aspirations on the one hand and the barbarian Russian country on the other, were so huge that no positive developments could be expected from the latter.²² This feature of western views 200 years ago, no doubt very much coloured by the persons writing and their personal experiences, has been influential in shaping the image of Russia in Europe even in later times.

The volume of writing on the Russia-Europe relationship tells its own story of how close Russia and Europe are to each other, at the same time as revealing the complications of this relationship. After the fall of the Soviet Union, when one ideological barrier disappeared,

²⁰ Peterson, Bo, 'Mirror, mirror... Myth-making, self-images and views of the US 'Other' in contemporary Russia' in Taras, Ray (ed.) *Russia's Identity in International Relations: Images, perceptions, misperceptions* London: Routledge, 2013, 11-23.

²¹ Helene Carrere d'Encausse: 'Russia and Europe in a historical Context', in Tom Casier and Katlijn Malfliet (eds), *Is Russia a European Power? The position of Russia in a new Europe*, Leuven: Leuven University Press 1998, p.11.

²² Ibid. p.12.

Russia's first reaction was that naturally it would 'return' to its rightful place in European Great Power politics (referring to the status lost in 1917). Expectations were high.

Russia immediately began to pursue its place in European politics through engagement with the major international organisations. Russia applied for membership in the Council of Europe in May 1992, only 5 months after the fall of the Soviet Union. President Yeltsin even went so far as several times hinting to the USA that Russia could someday join NATO.²³ Towards the European Union there was little interest in membership from Yeltsin's side initially. In 1994 the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Russia and the EU was signed in Corfu, stressing cooperation but not integration. However in early 1997 Yeltsin went so far as to say that Russians were prepared to join the European Union.²⁴ The one European organisation Russia did not need to seek membership in was the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, where it inherited the Soviet Union's place. Russia hoped to turn the OSCE into a pan-European security organisation.

The early optimism with regard to all three organisations soon gave way to bleaker assessments, as Russia found that none of them were quite as accommodating to Russian aspirations as anticipated. The difficulties were interpreted by Russians as disrespect for Russian greatpowerness by the states in the organisations. The case studies will show that when Russian greatpowerness was not threatened by cooperation, it was easier to find a common approach.

1.5 Research Setting

The Chechen wars are used as a case study through which Russia's Great Power identity is examined in relation to - to use the common constructivist notion - 'the other' - in this case, the West, especially Europe. The West is the most common other in Russian foreign and security policy studies. Its relevance has not gone away. Western-centrism has retained its dominant position in Moscow's world-view, either as a friend or a foe.

Before the Second World War, the West consisted mostly of Europe and since the end of the Second World War the United States has occupied the dominant principal point of reference. What should be kept in mind is that Western-centrism does not mean at all a pro-

²³ Timothy J Colton, *Yeltsin: A Political Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2008, p.269

²⁴ Associated Press, 1997, Yeltsin says Russia interested in the EU, 23 March, The spokesman-review, <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/1997/mar/23/yeltsin-says-russia-interested-in-eu/>, accessed 07.11.2012

Western policy.²⁵ It is still the single most important ‘other’ through which to mirror Russian Great Power identity. During the Cold War Russians defined the West largely in terms of the capitalist opponent of the communist East. Since the end of the Cold War the West has been seen more in institutional terms, as embodied in a variety of international organisations. The West is identified especially as those organisations which are either exclusive to the West in terms of membership (NATO, the EU) or are dominated by either the USA or EU members. Either way, there appears an element of competition between Russia and organisations focussed on the West.

The fact that Russia should devote so much effort to its relationship with the more Europe-centred organisations reflects the European aspirations of Russianness, but is also an expression of Russian greatpowerness. While Russian international relations operate at a number of levels, the argument of this work is that it is in the multilateral context that Greatpowerness has the clearest influence. Multilateralism is not the framework within which Russia is often seen as a keen player or as the one that would best serve the interests of Russia in its claim to greatpowerness. But as Robert Legvold has said ‘Multilateralism, as the Russians fancy it, complements their notion of how the international setting, if rightly organised, can aid Russia’s return as a great power, and in the meantime minimize the risk and pain of standing in the shadows of others’.²⁶

Within the theoretical framework of constructivism and the context of the two Chechen wars, a case study approach is adopted. In case study methods there are several ways to proceed: idiographic case studies, hypothesis generating case studies, hypothesis testing cases and plausibility probes.²⁷ Here the idiographic case study method and plausibility probes are applied. The idiographic case studies aim to describe, explain, interpret and/or understand a single case as an end itself – here how the Russians argued and cooperated on the matter of the wars in Chechnya with the international organisation mentioned above. The plausibility probe approach allows the researcher to sharpen a hypothesis or theory, to refine the operationalization or measurement of key variables, or to explore the suitability of a particular case as a vehicle for testing a theory.²⁸ In this study the plausibility probe is Russian greatpowerness.

²⁵ Lo, 2002, p.8

²⁶ Robert Legvold, *The role of multilateralism on Russian foreign Policy*, in Elana Wilson-Rowe and Stina Torjesen (eds), *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian foreign policy*, London: Routledge, 2009, 21-45, p.21

²⁷ Jack S Levy, , ‘Case Studies: Types, Design and Logics of Inference’, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol.25, No.1, 2008, 1-18, p.3

²⁸ Levy, 2008, p.6

What constitutes a Great Power is constructed through three articles - Jack S Levy, 'Alliance Formation and War behaviour – An analysis of the Great Powers 1495-1975', Joseph S Nye Jr., 'Changing Nature of World Power' and Iver Neumann, 'Russia as a Great Power 1815-2007'. The articles are chosen to represent the different theoretical approaches based on great power definitions. The task to find a definition of what is a great power proved to be impossible to fulfil without reference to all three schools of thought. The IR frameworks of realism, liberalism and constructivism are chosen to highlight how one theory on its own has difficulties in explaining complex issues like foreign policy preferences, guiding lines and behaviour.

Greatpowerness is the identity of a Great Power. It is about self-perception. While Great Powers can be very similar, each and every one has its own particularities. Russian greatpowerness is unique since no other Great Power has experienced such a flux around its self-perception. The rise and fall of the Russian empire, revolutions and radical changes of state systems makes Russia a special case, incomparable to others. This has effects on the Russia-West relationship and makes it also a fruitful domain for the study of how self-perceptions effect external relations.

The different Russian foreign policy determinants and variables forming greatpowerness defined in the early chapters are tested in the case studies. One of the best methods for testing the impact of a country's state identity on foreign policy and international relations is to reflect on an internal matter debated in both domestic and international arenas. It is one thing to express views on international events but when it comes to the point of defending, explaining and arguing in the international arena what can also be seen as an internal affair, sometimes hidden foreign policy orientations, preferences and interpretations are uncovered.

In internal Russian foreign policy debates a triangular divide is visible. There are several ways of labelling the three different schools, which very much follow the line of international relations schools of thought. In this study the approach of Andrei Tsygankov in characterising the main streams has been adopted; he divides Russian foreign policy actors into westernisers (liberal), statist (realist) and civilizationists (constructivist). Naturally the division is not fully comparable but there exist enough elements, to make it parallel the western schools of thought. Without knowledge of Russian internal foreign policy debates, it is also impossible to create a coherent picture of Russian greatpowerness and foreign policy behaviour.

Thus the function of the argument that Russian state ideology as a Great Power identity is a guiding line in Russia foreign and security policy is tested through the effect the two wars in Chechnya had on Russian interaction with three Europe-dominated international organisations – the Council of Europe (CoE), the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Russia has a meaningful identity connection with each of these organisations as well as practical advantages from cooperating with or joining each of them. The Council of Europe has adopted a rather pragmatic approach in its cooperation with Russia and hence, while there have been disagreements and heavy criticisms, the relationship has been the best of the three. This cooperation has provided the least challenge to Russian greatpowerness. Cooperation with the EU has been of a different nature since Russia is not a member state. Here the relationship has been through good and bad periods. The key variable in the relationship has been Russian perceptions of the extent to which the EU has been ready to treat Russia as an equal partner. Russia's relations with the OSCE have also gone through periods of cooperation and periods of conflict, but in this case there have been real political conflicts involved. The OSCE put up a direct challenge to Russian greatpowerness. This was particularly hard to swallow, since the organisation had a special place in Russian foreign policy, which in turn led to more severe Russian reactions.

1.6 Sources

A wide range of different materials has been used as the sources for this study. The breadth of sources provides both a weakness and a strength to the study. Weakness in the sense that it is difficult to detect a single model or line of argumentation, like when some newspapers are selected with the emphasis on economics, some emphasising party politics or others representing the state's official line. It is a strength in the sense that Russian foreign policy debates inside of Russia have many aspects, different newspapers can carry articles representing the views of all three different foreign policy schools in Russia, while inside of the political elite trends also change and a clear line is not always found if the view is restricted to just one or two foreign policy representatives (president, foreign minister etc.) Moreover, the lines between journalism and politics are often blurred, not only because of political influence on the media. One good example is Aleksey Pushkov who started as a journalist expressing his foreign policy views in various newspapers as well as on his own TV show, while today he is the head of the foreign affairs committee in the Russian state дума.

In order to ensure a broad range of opinions were covered, newspaper material has been used based on subject matter, rather than being selected according to the type of publication. Russian newspapers from 1994-1996 have been researched through the Integrum and Eastview databases. The valuable collections of the *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* proved extremely useful for finding articles on Chechnya and international organisations, especially from 1994-1996 and 1999-2002. The *Current Digest* had already selected articles for publication. However the selection was carried out in such way that views representative of all three different Russian internal foreign policy schools can be found there. Some articles were found through information given in interviews or encountered in field trips.

The western and other newspaper (English language newspapers in Russia) articles have simply been selected based on subject matter: Chechnya, The CoE, the EU, the OSCE, international organisations and Great Power have been the most used search words. Based on this approach, this research does not represent a single line or view but has tried to explore the subject of study as broadly as possible. The same method has been applied to speeches and documents. Documents included Council of Europe, OSCE and European Union official documents and press releases, and Russian foreign ministry documents.

Interviews conducted in Russia and in Strasbourg on field trips provide expert communities' views and some inside information for the study. The interviews conducted in Strasbourg 20-23.06.2006 are here used anonymously since some of the officials asked not to be named, and so the principle was applied to all interview subjects. Most of the interviewing trips to Moscow were made during 2002-2005 on several separate trips. The interviews were conducted with officials, journalists and the expert community. In addition to the interviews carried out in Moscow and Strasbourg, some interviews have been conducted with OSCE officials, Finnish foreign office officials and a German foreign office official. Not all of the interviews have been quoted in the study but all of them have contributed tremendously.

Secondary sources have been academic journals and books published both in Russia and in the West. Russian foreign policy research is perhaps thin overall but widely spread across different types of IR studies, therefore this study has not limited itself to one category of journal but has kept the door open to all that have taken up Russian foreign policy. This has also proven the best way to take the perspectives of all three schools of international relations into account.

One category of sources that should be mentioned separately is memoirs. Memoirs as a source material are counted among the primary sources. Naturally memoirs are not an objective observation of events but are always coloured by the personality of their authors. Memoirs are usually used by historians but could be used more in IR. They might not give an objective account but they do reflect the author's feelings and interpretations of a particular event that can provide the 'missing link' in a political discourse which allows for interpretation of underlying beliefs and identities.

Thus the dissertation combines a range of sources with three case studies, three schools of thought in international relations, and a number of key characteristic features of Russian foreign policy in general, and applies them to the specific context of the two Chechen wars. What emerges is a picture of inconsistent policies and behaviour but underpinned by a consistent belief in Russia's status as a Great Power, greatpowerness as a state ideology. While this is only a contributory part of the complex story of Russian foreign policy behaviour, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a clearer picture of Russian behaviour in international forums and show that indeed there is an ideology in Russian foreign and security policy.

1.7 In Summary

This dissertation takes a specific aspect of Russian attitudes towards international relations – Greatpowerness – in developing a constructivist approach to the study of Russian foreign policy. It goes beyond previous constructivist studies in three ways: firstly, through its focus on one specific facet of Russian identity rather than a holistic approach; secondly, by conducting a rigorous case study approach to the role of Greatpowerness in specific settings; and thirdly, by developing the notion that Greatpowerness represents something more than a personal or societal disposition – a state ideology. These tasks are achieved through the linked case studies of Russian participation in three Europe-centred international organisations, where Russia came under intense scrutiny as a result of its engagement in the two Chechen wars.

The study proceeds with an overview, in chapter two, of the place of Russia in international relations theory. The context of the post-Cold War unipolar world as set out as the background to Russian foreign policy behaviour which has yet to be satisfactorily explained by the realist school. After exploring in more depth the historical and contemporary

relationship between Russia and the West, definitions of a Great Power and what an identity of greatpowerness constitutes are both looked at through the lenses of the three international relations schools of thought: realism, liberalism and constructivism. From the constructivist school, the recently developing but still young study of greatpowerness as a factor in foreign policy is summarised and discussed. In chapter three Russian greatpowerness as a self-perception is analysed more closely through different concepts that belong to Russian foreign policy: the importance of history, imperialism and expansionism, *ressentiment* and isolationism, and finally the multilateral aspect. These are the key elements of Great Power identity, whether Russian or other.

Next, chapter four links these elements into the experiences and impact of the two Chechen wars. After summarising the key political discourses of the war, closer attention is paid to the attitudes of different Russian actors and the wars' place in Russia's historic and contemporary development. Having set up the theoretical, conceptual and empirical background, chapters five, six and seven then explore the case studies of Russia's engagement with the Council of Europe, European Union, and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe respectively.

The conclusion revisits the constituent elements of Russian Greatpowerness within the framework of constructivism. Overall, it provides a detailed, theoretically framed, and empirically tested investigation of a significant ingredient of today's international order. More research needs to be done to pin down the general role of Great Power identity in world politics. This study provides only a small slice of a much bigger cake - Russian greatpowerness.

Chapter 2: International Relations Theory – Russia, the West and Greatpowerness

Russia after the Cold War is a unique case of a superpower which has lost its status from the former bipolar world. Its foreign policy behaviour has been analysed from different perspectives which often fall into three of the schools of international relations theory: realism, liberalism and constructivism. The argument of this thesis is that, given the complex nature of Russian politics and society, none of these theories on its own provides a full understanding of Russian foreign policy behaviour. Each of the three approaches offers some insights into that behaviour.

These three schools of international relations theory, and what they bring to the understanding of Russian foreign policy, was discussed at the end of the Yeltsin era by Christer Pursiainen. He describes in detail the constructivist, liberal and realist approaches (the ‘three broad approaches’ as he terms them²⁹) to Russian foreign policy, and also investigates the varying attitudes to the ‘incommensurability’ of these three theories, alongside the theoretical attempts to allow for more than one theory to contribute to a unified understanding. While critical of many of these efforts, Pursiainen’s own conclusion is that ‘attention must be paid not only to the connection between facts and theory, but also to that between different theories’.³⁰ It should further be noted that a majority of Russian area studies experts who do not pay much explicit attention to theory do implicitly accept a mixture of motivations in political actors, which could be related to different schools. While this dissertation does not address directly the issue of commensurability and accepts the constructivist paradigm as of greatest relevance to the topic of greatpowerness, it follows Pursiainen in accepting that there are links between theories, and indeed that greatpowerness is one of those links.

One area in which all three schools has something to offer is in understandings of what constitutes a great power. While such definitions, and the differences between them, are important in understanding different Western approaches to Russia as a great power, they do not in themselves explain the effects of Russia’s great power identity on Russia’s behaviour. The much less developed field of understandings of greatpowerness focusses on more remote

²⁹ Pursiainen, *Russian Foreign Policy*, p.160.

³⁰ Idem, p.216.

historical examples (Germany before WWI and the Soviet Union in the Cold War) but nevertheless contains important pointers as to the ways in which a great power identity can influence the behaviour of a country whose status as a great power might be considered as ambiguous – in this case, post-Soviet Russia.

This chapter proceeds with a brief summary of the three chosen schools of international relations theory and some of their sub-branches, as well as examples of the definitions each of them has provided of a great power. This is followed by an outline of approaches to greatpowerness that have already been developed.

2.1 The International Context: Russia in a Unipolar World

As is demonstrated in chapter 3, Russia since 1991, and especially under Putin's leadership, has argued that the world is or should be multipolar. By contrast, with the collapse of the USSR in 1991, academics almost universally agreed that a unipolar system of international relations came into being. Although there has been substantial disagreement as to whether such a unipolar system was lasting or represented a temporary 'moment', and equal disagreement as to whether unipolarity promoted stability or was inherently unstable, it is against the reality of a unipolar world that Russian foreign policy behaviour since 1991 needs to be examined, even if Russian leaders would wish it were otherwise. According to a realist account states ought to behave in the way which brings them biggest advantage in the world as it is, not in the world they would like to see. Realist descriptions of a unipolar world predict certain patterns of behaviour by lesser powers, and hence the failure of Russia to conform to such patterns in practise would suggest that either the theory of unipolarity itself is flawed, or else that Russia is in some way exceptional.

The most comprehensive realist statement of a stable, benevolent and enduring unipolar world was presented by William C. Wohlforth in a 1999 article 'The Stability of a Unipolar World'.³¹ Twelve years later, this article was described as 'as one of the most influential perspectives in debates about current international politics'.³² Although the War on Terror and the growth of Chinese economic power mean the international order has changed substantially since then, the quantitative data Wohlforth deployed to demonstrate the USA's

³¹ William C. Wohlforth, 1999, 'The Stability of a Unipolar World', *International Security*, vol.24, no.1, pp.5-41.

³² Nuno P. Monteiro, 'Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity is not Peaceful?' *International Security*, vol. 36, no.3, 2011, 9-40, p.10.

unique place as the unipolar power continues to hold good. While the article is devoted in the main to comparisons of the current status of the USA with earlier multipolar or bipolar orders, it also addresses the likely behaviour, from a realist viewpoint, of lesser powers in a unipolar world: 'The only options available to second-tier states are to bandwagon with the polar power (either explicitly or implicitly) or, at least, to take no action that could incur its focussed enmity'. Deferring to the unipolar power extends, according to Wohlforth, to areas of prestige as well as real power competition: 'unipolarity generates comparatively few incentives for security or prestige competition among the great powers.'³³

According to Wohlforth, in a unipolar system there is no serious possibility of a second-tier power challenging the unipolar superpower: 'Both hegemonic rivalry and security competition among great powers are unlikely under unipolarity. Because the current leading state is by far the world's most formidable military power, the chances of leadership conflict are more remote than at any time over the last two centuries.'³⁴ Even at the regional level, any attempts by lesser powers to establish themselves as a hegemonic pole are doomed to fail.³⁵ In the specific case of Russia, Wohlforth contends that the shortlived attempt to re-establish multipolarity in the 1990s ended in failure.³⁶

In a later (2011) critique of Wohlforth's article, Nuno Monteiro has tackled Wohlforth's key argument that unipolar systems tend to be peaceful, showing that in some cases conflicts between the unipole and minor powers can and do occur, and that in the event of the strategic disengagement of the unipole, conflict between major powers might occur. Adopting a realist starting point, however, Monteiro shares many of Wohlforth's assumptions about the behaviour of 'major powers', and agrees that it is not generally in their interest to oppose themselves to the unipole. Major powers will tend, rather, to accommodate to the unipole, in this case the USA: 'Accommodation is less risky for major powers because they can guarantee their own survival, and they stand to benefit greatly from being part of the unipolar system. Major powers are therefore unlikely to attempt to revise the status quo'.³⁷ While Monteiro goes on to argue that there may with some regularity be circumstances where minor powers do enter into conflict with the unipole, giving Iraq (1990) and Serbia as examples, he does not entertain this possibility for major powers. Indeed, in his analysis it was Russia's

³³ Wohlforth, 1999, 25.

³⁴ Wohlforth, 1999, pp.28-29.

³⁵ Wohlforth, 1999, pp.30-31,

³⁶ Wohlforth, 1999, p.36.

³⁷ Monteiro, 2011, p.24

propensity to keep in line with the USA which disappointed Serbian expectations and led to the conflict over Kosovo.³⁸ His argument that strategic disengagement by the unipole might lead to major power conflict applies only to regional settings and remains hypothetical, given Monteiro's admission that the USA has not pursued such a strategy since the end of the Cold War.³⁹

The model of major powers as docile accommodators to the unipolar power has been challenged from some quarters, most notably by Samuel Huntington. His argument not only allows for major powers acting as great powers on a regional level, but also makes room for resentment against America's sole superpower status as an important influence on foreign policy behaviour, citing Russia's Primakov doctrine of the 1990s as a prime example.⁴⁰ In contrast to the realist treatments of Wahlforth and Monteiro, Huntington sees resistance to the acceptance of the USA's exclusive position: 'political and intellectual leaders in most countries strongly resist the prospect of a unipolar world and favor the emergence of true multipolarity.'⁴¹ Notions of prestige or status are implicit in this argument, but are not elaborated.

The literature on unipolarity naturally focuses on the place of the USA, with other countries grouped together as 'major' or 'minor' powers. What such approaches miss is the unique position of the Russian Federation in this order. The unipolar world emerged at the end of nearly five decades of bipolarity, in which the other superpower was Russia's precursor, the Soviet Union. Depending on how a Great Power is defined, Russia is today viewed at best as only one of a group of great powers from Europe and East Asia, which is rapidly being eclipsed by China and even India and Brazil. Only Russia's control of substantial nuclear arms and energy resources prevents it slipping further down the global pecking order. Among this group of second tier great powers, apart from Russia only Great Britain has any recent record of being a superpower, and in Britain's case this was in a more distant past and finds echoes only in its ambivalent positioning between Europe and a Transatlantic world, with the British Commonwealth as the only institutional vestige of its former status.

³⁸ Monteiro, 2011, p.29

³⁹ Monteiro, 2011, p.35.

⁴⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, 1999, 'The Lonely Superpower', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.78, no.2, 35-49.

⁴¹ Huntington, 1999, p.42.

Analysts and academics have yet to get out of the habit of labelling Russia and other east European states as ‘post-communist’, even though the institutions of communism have long past into history. Attitudes from the past do linger, however, and when it comes to Russian foreign policy rhetoric and behaviour, it is another aspect of Russia’s past which comes the fore. In international relations, Russia is not so much ‘post-communist’ as ‘post-superpower’, and it is this aspect which lies at the centre of this dissertation. Among the many complex factors influencing Russian foreign policy, it is argued that this aspect of Russia’s past has been neglected by realists and liberals alike, and only partially explored by adherents of constructivism. The soreness Russia feels at its lost superpower status is only sharpened by the fact that its former competing pole is now the unipole. This factor contributes in particular to fraught and inconsistent episodes in Russia-US relations. As BBC analyst Jonathan Marcus put it ‘These [Russia and the USA] are no longer equivalent powers and they have so far not found a way to co-operate on terms that benefit both’.⁴²

When it comes to the more specific question of Russia’s interaction with international organisations, Maria Raquel Freire has noted the unpredictability of Russia: ‘The Russian position within and towards the OSCE has been ambiguous. Russia has at times been cooperative and sought the strengthening of the OSCE, to the extent of expecting to raise the organisation’s status to that of primacy among other international organisations (particularly to the detriment of NATO). At other times, Moscow has revealed distrust for a powerful OSCE and has limited the organisation’s reach and decision-making power.’ For Freire, this ambiguity can be explained by competing interests on Russia’s part: ‘Politico-military, strategic and economic considerations sustain the Russian position.’⁴³ On this reading, Russia’s stance in relation to the OSCE is dictated by its own interests and nothing else: ‘[Russia] has been playing the OSCE card at its will, making the bets according to its own interests’.⁴⁴ But these interests are conflicting for Russia, on the one hand wanting enhance the OSCE’s role and provide credibility to Russia’s aspiration to be part of a community of European states, on the other hand opposing outside interference which hampers Russia’s ability to deal with its own problems of succession and terrorism: ‘Russian acquiescence to the deployment of the OSCE group in Chechnya was a demonstration of the Russian desire to appease the international community while enhancing the OSCE’s role in the European

⁴² Jonathan Marcus, ‘Analysis: Obama cancels Putin meeting over Snowden asylum’, BBC News website, 7th August 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/23605507> accessed 19.8.2013

⁴³ Maria Raquel Freire, ‘Matching words with actions: Russia, Chechnya and the OSCE – a relationship embedded in ambiguity’ *UNISCI Discussion Papers* no.9, 2005,159-71, p.160.

⁴⁴ Freire, 2005, p.164

security framework'. However 'for the Russian government, the Chechen issue is an internal matter: international mediation between a state and one of its "subjects" does not make sense'.⁴⁵ As Freire correctly points out, these alternating stances mean Russia ends up undermining its own interests, since by blocking OSCE involvement in its own affairs it undermines the organisations credibility as a European security organisation, which Russia is keen to promote.⁴⁶ The OSCE – Russia relationship is examined more closely in chapter seven.

This self-contradiction poses a fundamental problem to the realist approach. States do have competing interests, but if this leads to ambivalent attitudes which end up undermining those interests, then something is missing from the realist account. One avenue of explanation is to explore the different institutions and individuals that are involved in foreign policy making and which may have different priorities, leading to changing positions according to which faction has the upper hand at any given moment. In exploring the different Russian policy actors in chapter three of this thesis we see that the several groups in Russian foreign policy making do indeed have some differing priorities, and more importantly different means to reach their goals. But what emerges as even more striking is the similarity in rhetoric between these different groups the key strategic aims of Russian policy. In spite of different interests, there exists in certain respects a unity of purpose, and the argument of this thesis is that it is the shared self-understanding of greatpowerness that underpins this shared purpose.

Moreover, Sinikkuka Saari has shown that Russian participation in multilateral contexts has not had the socialising effects that are predicted by liberal theories of multilateralism: 'The CoE hoped that membership would encourage norm socialization by Russia to the European norms by strengthening the moral authority of the organisation and evoking processes of persuasion and institutionalization'.⁴⁷ These hopes were not fulfilled. On the one hand Russia behaved in the CoE context as any member, and on the other hand it chose its own way of acting in the organisation, hand-picking which norms were ratified and which were not. 'The non-compliance to the European norm of abolition [of the death penalty] was not due to a lack of political or material resources. After all, Russia already practised

⁴⁵ Freire, 2005, p.163.

⁴⁶ Freire, 2005, p.169.

⁴⁷ Sinikkuka Saari, *Promoting Democracy and Human Rights in Russia*, London: Routledge, 2009, p.68

abolitionism and only refused to comply with the European legislative requirements on the issue. The discourse in the Russian press implies that non-compliance with the European norm became a symbolic, principled issue to Russia'.⁴⁸ The case of the CoE is looked at more closely in chapter 5.

As argued below, both realist and liberal approaches have a great deal to offer in explaining Russian foreign policy behaviour. But taken on their own, each approach would suggest a certain level of predictability and consistency in that behaviour. This is clearly lacking in Russian behaviour in general, and especially in relation to the international relations which form the case studies of this dissertation. Not only does Russia behave differently in each of the three organisations, but as Freire has pointed out in the case of the OSCE, it behaves inconsistently within the context of each separate organisation. While the state interests highlighted by realists and economic interests highlighted by liberals do play a major part in Russian foreign policy, it is where Russia fails to consistently pursue either, or even undermines both, that constructivism comes in. Russia's identity and the domestic political messages of its leaders cause it to behave in certain ways, and while there is a lack of consistency over the pursuit of interests, the argument of this thesis is that there is a clear consistency in rhetoric which, moreover, provides a partial explanation of Russian behaviour as seen in the case of international organisations concerning the Chechen conflicts. This consistent theme is the self-perception of Greatpowerness.

2.2 Three Schools of International Relations Theory

I assume that most potential readers of this study are familiar with the central ideas of three of the most widely known strands of today's IR, realism, liberalism, and constructivism. However the next part will go through in a rather text book style the most important features of these three international theory schools. The aim is to recap the different strands of each school and how, in their simplicity, the three schools form a rather complex world of international relations. Although my emphasis here is on the importance of identity located in the constructivist school, the selection of these schools is based on the assumption that self-understanding itself in a study of Great Powers, in the case of this study Russian Greatpowerness, is based on various aspects which are drawn from realism and liberalism and embedded in an identity formation.

⁴⁸ Saari, 2009, p.73

2.2.1 Viewpoint I : Realism

Realism is the oldest and arguably most lasting current in international relations thinking. Its basic ideas have remained unchanged and have not been affected by time, international systems or development. Therefore it can be said that realism itself is more a school of thought than a theory. From the realist school of thought several theories branch out that base their ideas upon it. The basic core assumption in the realist school of thought is that human nature is egoistic and power-seeking but that individuals also seek 'groups' that have similar interests and similar views as to how to enhance them. This assumption strongly influences the first definition of a Great Power that will be examined, that outlined by Jack S Levy in 'Alliance Formation and War behaviour – An analysis of the Great Powers 1495-1975'.

Even if we live today in a globalised world, the international system retains some 'old features' – states are independent entities with diverse interests and have no guarantees that other states will act benignly toward them or even stick to their commitments. As Kenneth Waltz has stated, world politics is a 'self-help system', in which states seek to maintain and insofar as it is possible expand their power and in which they are concerned about their power relative to others as well as about their own welfare.⁴⁹

The classic realist solution to this problem of anarchy is to concentrate power in the hands of a single authority and to hope that this despot will prove a partial exception to the rule that men are bad and should be regarded with distrust.⁵⁰ Such a solution remains largely hypothetical at the national scale, and impossible to realise on a global scale. Hence the realist school of thought is very pessimistic about the prospects of eliminating war and conflicts in the world.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Waltz, p.64

⁵⁰ Wight, p.66

⁵¹ Stephen M. Walt, 'International relations: One world, many theories', *Foreign Policy*, No.10, Special edition: frontiers of knowledge, spring 1998, p.31

Table 2.1 Realist school of thought in international relations

	Classical realism	Sub-schools - Neorealism	Specific theories – Balance of power, security dilemma, offensive realism and defence realism
View point	Human affairs are seen to be based on groupism, egoism and power-centrism. ‘politics is likely to be conflictual unless there is some central authority to enforce order’. ⁵² Based on assumptions about human nature. Multipolarity seen as ‘safest’ option.	States as main actors (human nature as such not important) in international politics, internal politics did not matter; also geography and technology were subordinated. ‘international politics is not foreign policy’ (Waltz 1996). Bipolarity seen as stable and safest option.	Analysing the role and nature of hegemony, expansionism, military build-ups and alliances, rivalry between great powers, geopolitical considerations
Authors	Machiavelli, Morgenthau	Waltz, Grieco	Waltz, Mearsheimer, Jervis,

There are a number of more specific theories springing from the realist school of thought which give a more nuanced picture of realist thinking. There are some small but significant differences within this school of thought. The main differences between Classical realism, neorealism and certain more specific theories are summarised in table 2.1.

⁵² William C. Wohlforth, ‘Realism and foreign policy’, pp.32-48 in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (eds.), *Foreign policy- theories, actors, cases*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.34

One important difference is the conceptual split between defensive and offensive realist stands. These two lines of thought inside the realist school fundamentally disagree over whether the anarchic nature of the international system causes states to want to preserve the status quo, as defensive realists argue, or to want to maximise relative power, as offensive realists believe.⁵³

The defensive realists like Kenneth Waltz and Jack Snyder ‘assumed that states have little intrinsic interest in military conquest and argued that the cost of expansion generally outweighed the benefits. Accordingly, they maintained that great power wars occurred largely because domestic groups fostered exaggerated perceptions of threat and an excessive faith in the efficacy of military power.’⁵⁴ Waltz has argued that system-level theories, such as the one he developed in his Theory of International Politics, cannot explain specific unit-level behaviour, but only general system-level outcomes and aggregate state behaviour. Structural realism can explain why balances of power repeatedly occur, or why no state has ever achieved world-wide hegemony, but it cannot explain why one state balances or fails to balance a specific threat.⁵⁵

This is a claim that the offensive realists argue against. ‘If a structural realist theory of foreign policy can explain anything, it should be able to explain the behaviour of states during war. Therefore, if offensive realism can explain why states expand their political objectives during war better than defensive realism, it has passed an important test for the utility of the theory.’⁵⁶ The offensive realist theorists like Mearsheimer, Labs and Zakaria argue that anarchy encourages all states to try to maximise their relative strength simply because no state can ever be sure when a truly revisionist power might emerge.⁵⁷

This split is indeed a significant one from the point of view of the nature and aims of Great Powers. On the one hand defensive realism argues for preferring the status quo and on the other hand offensive realism argues in favour of the war-proneness of great powers. The split itself is perhaps not so new or fresh as it looks at first glance. Some trace the first realist writings back to Thucydides’ analysis of the origins of the Peloponnesian War where the rise of Athens threatened Sparta. This analysis backs the idea that states should be aggressive to safeguard and maintain their interests and positions already gained. However, another author

⁵³ Eric J. Labs, ‘Beyond victory: Offensive realism and the expansion of war aims’ *Security studies*, 1997 vol. 6, iss. 4, p.4

⁵⁴ Walt, p.37

⁵⁵ Labs, p.5, footnote 14

⁵⁶ Labs, p.5

⁵⁷ Walt, p.37.

also often named as one of the fathers of the realist school, Niccolo Machiavelli in sixteenth century Italy, argued for the importance of military power (equivalent to the modern day balance of power) to maintain the status quo. By looking at history, it is clear that at some times some great power states act in an aggressive manner in order to expand their power, while at others great powers cooperate in order to avoid conflict and unrest.

This debate also shows clearly some of the weaknesses of the basic realist thinking, with its emphasis on the power aspirations and war proneness of states in unfettered competition with each other. The absence of alternatives to defensive and offensive positions does not allow space for the analysis of progress and change. The world has changed considerably since the early analysis of realism. States have changed fundamentally from total authoritarianism to functioning democracy, from full sovereignty to interdependence and integration and naturally there are also states somewhere in between. That is not to say that realist thinking would have disappeared or would be irrelevant in the study of today's foreign relations, but the methods of realism, war and state centrism, are not as evident today as they have been in the past. Even if self interest still plays a big role in international relations, it is not any more only the self interest of states. Many other actors are involved like individuals, NGOs, transnational companies etc.

The arrival of neorealism on the scene of international relations at the end of the 1970s can be seen and understood very much in the framework of US-Soviet relations.⁵⁸ The dominance of neorealism can therefore be put down to the dominance of the Cold War bipolar world where the adversaries were the Soviet Union and the United States. This central feature of international relations during the Cold War has also left very deep marks on today's analysis of Russian foreign policy and understanding of the world. As Ted Hopf has observed: 'Instead of figuring out how to deter nuclear war or how to encourage a more amicable relation with Moscow or thinking of an alternative way of understanding how the world works, the central issue became managing an unavoidable enemy.'⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ted Hopf, 'Introduction: Russian Identity and Foreign Policy After the Cold War', in Ted Hopf (ed.) *Understanding of Russian Foreign Policy*, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, pp. 1-13,

p.3
⁵⁹ Hopf, p.4

2.2.2 Viewpoint II: Liberalism

Liberalism has existed as a school of thought at least since the late eighteenth century. Liberalism as a guide to foreign policy came about through established liberal regimes and therefore it could be said that liberalism, in the first place, is a domestic theory which has had spill over effects into foreign relations. Perhaps the most notable thinker in this respect was Immanuel Kant with his notion of ‘Perpetual Peace.’ His idea that liberal regimes do not go to war with each other still has a strong resonance in the modern world and especially in the foreign policies of the Western world. The fall of the Soviet Union represented one of the triumphs of liberalism against the realist school of thought. This was so even if some defenders of realism keep claiming that Soviet diplomacy in the period of 1985-1991 was consistent with realist theory.⁶⁰

Liberalism incorporates a belief in the possibility of progressive change facilitated by multilateral arrangements and it has an ethical dimension.⁶¹ All liberal theories imply that cooperation is more pervasive than even the defensive version of realism allows but each view offers a different recipe for promoting it.⁶²

Liberalism shares with realism the stress on explaining the behaviour of separate and typically self-interested units of action. But from the standpoint of international relations there are three key differences. 1) Liberalism focuses not only on states but on privately organized social groups and firms. 2) Liberalism does not emphasize the significance of military force. 3) Liberalism believes in the possibility of cumulative progress (while realism assumes that history is not always progressive).⁶³

From the liberal tradition emerged Robert Keohane, whose writings on the liberal tradition in international relations can be compared to Kenneth Waltz’ in the realist school of thought. The specific school that Keohane is most often connected to is neoliberalism or neoliberal institutionalism. The argument put forward by Keohane is that liberalism provides thoughtful arguments designed to show how open exchanges of goods and services on the

⁶⁰ William C. Wohlforth, , ‘Realism and the End of the Cold War’, *International Security*, Vol.19, No.3, 1995

⁶¹ Robert Keohane, ‘International liberalism reconsidered’, in Robert O. Keohane, (ed.), *Power and Governance in a partially globalized world*, London: Routledge, , 2002, p.59

⁶²Walt, p.32

⁶³ Robert Keohane, ‘International liberalism reconsidered’, in Robert O. Keohane, (ed.), *Power and Governance in a partially globalized world*, London: Routledge, 2002, p.45

one hand, and international institutions and rules on the other can promote international cooperation as well as economic prosperity.⁶⁴

According to Keohane, there are at least two different sets of conditions where the progressive impacts of liberalism may fail and even go into reverse: 1) If only few governments seek to promote social equity and welfare in an open economy, they may find their policies constrained by the more benighted policies of others. 2) Liberalism may have perverse effects if the global extension of interests that it fosters cannot be defended. Decaying liberal systems may be the most dangerous of all.⁶⁵

Another key liberal text for the purpose of this thesis, Joseph Nye's *Changing Nature of World Power* includes a definition of a Great Power which is used in the following section. Nye's article takes a clear stand for neoliberal institutionalism's growing importance in global affairs and downplays traditional realism: 'the real problem of a post-cold-war world will not be new challenges for hegemony, but the new challenges of transnational interdependence'.⁶⁶ A similar line is developed in *Power and Interdependence* where Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye outline the 'neoliberal institutionalist' approach, which 'emphasised the impact of interdependence, interaction, learning and regimes instead of the structural realist concepts of structure and the distribution of power'.⁶⁷ Neoliberal Institutionalism does not claim that international cooperation is easy to reach or easy to continue. International institutions merely provide opportunities for negotiations, reduce uncertainties in others' policies and affect leaders' expectations about the future. The liberal institutionalist sees the role of international organisations as that of a mediator and the means to find cooperation at the international level. It is recognised that sovereign states often have their national interest in mind while dealing inside of the international organisation, but they do believe that international institutions can alter the behaviour of state actors and in turn improve environmental quality.

Liberalism has a number of faces in international relations theory. The three main lines are the importance of the freedom of the individual (Lockean tradition), the Kantian tradition of republican internationalism and the superiority of economic arrangements (commercial liberalism).

⁶⁴ Keohane, 2002, p.40

⁶⁵ Keohane, 2002, p.58

⁶⁶ Nye Jr., 1990, p. 192

⁶⁷ Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, 'Introduction: The End of the Cold War in Europe,' in Robert Keohane, Joseph S. Nye and Stanley Hoffmann, (eds), *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993, p.130

The Lockean tradition in the liberal school of thought is seen in modern liberal individualism, that claims states themselves have rights for political independence and territorial integrity. This thinking has provided the liberal foundations of international law. Furthermore in terms of domestic policies ‘Locke had the task of justifying both a duty to obey and the right to resist, a right that is inseparable from equality and freedom. To accomplish this task requires the ability to clearly distinguish the legitimate from the illegitimate exercise of power.’⁶⁸ In international relations this translated to arguments of equality of states but also to responsibilities of a state in the international system.

Kantian thinking theorized an internationalism that institutes peace among fellow liberal republics. The Kantian tradition has exerted greatest influence on contemporary liberal international relations theory, the idea of ‘democratic peace’ which incorporates to some degree both liberal individualism and commercial liberalism. It argues that liberal democracy leaves a coherent international legacy on foreign affairs: a democratic peace also called separate peace. Liberal states are peaceful with each other, but they are also prone to make war on nonliberal states. In Michael Doyle’s interpretation, Kant’s hypothetical peace treaty, from Kant’s book ‘Perpetual Peace’, shows how liberal republics lead to a dichotomous international politics: peaceful relations — a ‘pacific union’ — among similarly liberal states, and a ‘state of war’ between liberals and nonliberals.⁶⁹

Commercial liberal theories seek to explain the international behaviour of states based on the domestic and global market positions of domestic firms, workers and owners of assets. This line of liberal theories posits that changes in the structure of the domestic and global economy alter the costs and benefits of transnational economic exchange, thus creating pressure on domestic governments to facilitate or block such exchanges through appropriate foreign economic and security policies. The commercial liberal theories have provided the basis for neo-liberal institutionalism and one of its analytic concepts of interdependence. Interdependence in world politics refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries.⁷⁰ Interdependence can refer to economic relations but also other types of interaction between states and other actors in world politics. For example power can be exercised, in the view of neo-liberal institutionalists,

⁶⁸ Grant Ruth Weissbourd, 1991, *John Locke’s Liberalism*, University of Chicago Press, p.5

⁶⁹ Michael Doyle and Stefano Recchia, 2011, ‘Liberalism and International Relations’, in Bertrand Badie, Dirk Berg-Schlosser, and Leonardo Morlino, eds., *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, London: Sage

⁷⁰ Robert O. Keohane, *Power and Interdependence – World Politics in Transition*, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1977, p.8

through the question of interdependence; the more a state prefers a particular outcome, the more power others potentially have over it and vice versa. Often this is applied to commercial relations and so the line that Keohane and Nye represent can be considered to belong to the commercial liberal group of the liberal school of thought.

As we will see in the next section, the emphasis on interdependence, progress and cooperation under all of these liberal approaches leads to a very different understanding of what constitutes a great power from that provided by a realist approach.

	Lockean thinking (human nature and individualism)	Commercial (societal and economic relations)	Kantian (republican internationalist)
View Point	In the Lockean world of mutually recognized sovereignty... states should have more confidence that their existence is not threatened, creating room for processes of positive identification to take hold. The ability of states to create new worlds in the future depends on the old ones they created in the past. ⁷¹	An open international political economy, with rules and institutions based on sovereignty, provides incentives for international cooperation and may even effect the internal constitutions of states in ways that promote peace. ⁷²	The best guidance 'Perpetual Peace,' written in 1795, predicts the ever-widening pacification of the liberal pacific union, explains that pacification, and at the same time suggests why liberal states are not pacific in their relations with nonliberal states. ⁷³
Authors		Robert Keohane	Michael Doyle

⁷¹ Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State' *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2, Jun., 1994, 384-396, p.389

⁷² Robert O Keohane, 'International liberalism reconsidered', in Robert O Keohane (ed.), *Power and Governance in partially Globalised World*, London: Routledge, 2002, p.39

⁷³ Michael W. Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer, 1983, 205-235, p.225

2.2.3 Viewpoint III : Constructivism

In the late 1980s and early 1990s constructivism was established as an alternative to the two then predominant international relations rational theories, realism and liberalism. As Stefano Guzzini has noted, ‘New intellectual developments within an academic community, such as constructivism in IR, can always be seen as the product of a double conjuncture; on the one hand, they are embedded in historical developments outside the academic community and on the other hand, they reflect the structure and content of the debates that define the identity of an academic community itself.’⁷⁴ This was the case with constructivism. The developments in world politics during the 20th century brought questions of identity both into social science studies as well as practical policy making questions. Empires broke, international rules made by great powers applied also to themselves not only to others, multicultural societies were formed. Structural changes in international relations were significant. Globalisation with withering borders became a challenge for sovereignty as understood in realism and liberalism. A big boost to identity studies was provided by the break up of the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War.

‘Anarchy is what states make out of it’ is a famous line from Alexander Wendt’s book *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999). The idea and phrase was first introduced by him in the journal *International Organisations* in 1992.⁷⁵ It has been claimed that from a genuinely radical alternative interpretation of international relations, constructivism has become the acceptable middle ground for those that wish to find alternatives to the two mainstream American international relations theories.⁷⁶ Steve Smith defined the situation: ‘A constructivist would be the acceptable face of reflectivism for rationalists and the acceptable face of rationalism for reflectivists.’⁷⁷ In the late 1990s Stephen M. Walt went even further and suggested that constructivism has replaced Marxism as the main paradigmatic rival to realism and liberalism.⁷⁸ Wendt himself saw the situation as follows: ‘A rationalist approach makes sense when state interests really are exogenous to interaction, which is sometimes the case. When they are not, however, it may ignore important possibilities and/or strategies for

⁷⁴ Guzzini, Stefano, ‘A reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations’, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.6 (2), 2000, pp.147-182, p.150

⁷⁵ Alexander Wendt, ‘Anarchy is what states make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics’, *International Organization* (46) 391-426 and *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

⁷⁶ Chris Brown, *Understanding International Relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, Second Edition, p.52

⁷⁷ Steve Smith, ‘Reflectivist and constructivist approaches to international theory’, in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.), *The Globalisation of World Politics – An introduction to international relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, second edition, 2001, 224-249, p.243

⁷⁸ Walt, ‘International Relations’, pp.29-46

cooperation, as well as misrepresent the latter's dynamics. It would be useful to discuss potential anomalies for the rationalist hypothesis, but ultimately it can only be assessed against its rival, which has not been adequately articulated in the literature. With a view toward theoretical pluralism, my goal herein is to formulate such a rival by reframing the collective action problem among states in terms that make interests endogenous to (or part of the problem in) interaction. In so doing, I hope to put in sharper relief the underappreciated implications of a rationalist assumption (exogeneity).⁷⁹ How did constructivism then argue its case and attempt to challenge rational choice theories?

The two radical differences to realism and liberalism that constructivism argues is that the role of identities and beliefs matters in international relations and that an anarchical framework is a situation where norms can emerge. Realism in particular does not leave much space for the possibility of change. For the constructivists the world around is socially constructed. Constructivists would argue that it is not so much the brute fact of their existence that matters; rather it is the social context that gives meaning to that capability.⁸⁰

The criticism towards constructivism comes from both scholars that subscribe to constructivism and those belonging to other schools. Ted Hopf summarized the criticism towards constructivism in three main lines: constructivism as necessarily postmodern and anti positivist, constructivism's own ambivalence about whether it can buy into mainstream social science methods without sacrificing its theoretical distinctiveness and constructivism's failure to advance an alternative research program.⁸¹ Jeffrey Checkel points out that theories of social constructivism tend to neglect agency and, even more importantly, they neglect the processes that tie the agents to the structures of meaning.⁸² Maja Zehfuss' critique of constructivism in her book *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* points out how the basic assumption of constructivism, that reality is socially constructed, has sometimes been misunderstood in IR.⁸³ For her 'All constructivisms critiqued in this book posit "reality" as a significant point of reference : the "reality" of international politics for

⁷⁹ Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State' *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2, Jun., 1994, 384-396, p.384

⁸⁰ Jeffrey C. Checkel, 'Constructivism and foreign policy', in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Tim Dunne (eds.), *Foreign Policy – Theories, Actors, Cases*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 71-82, p.72

⁸¹ Ted Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory', *International Security*, Vol.23, No.1, 1998, 171-200, p.171.

⁸² Jeffrey C. Checkel, 'Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe' *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 1, March 1999, 83-114

⁸³ Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: the politics of reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Wendt, everyday “reality” for Kratochwil and “reality” as raw material for Onuf.⁸⁴ From Zehfuss’ perspective, this repeated essentialization of reality is a political move that stops short of constructivism’s critical potential. Next is opened up two ways to look at different divisions inside of constructivism.

‘Thus, constructivism is clearly significant to IR (Theory) and its future developments. However we still lack clarity on what constructivism is. Critique usually starts with clear definition of its target. Although constructivism has been defined, explained, assessed and positioned, there is little agreement what it is’⁸⁵ argues Zehfuss. Her book is a critical view of constructivism. At the same time she does a good job in identifying different lines inside the constructivist school. It is often the case that through a critical view of the subject in question, clarity of the subject can best be found. The three key constructivists that have contributed to the development of this school are Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt and Friedrich Kratochwil. According to Zehfuss, Nicholas Onuf’s book *World of Our Making*⁸⁶ presented the first international relations constructivist theory. Alexander Wendt’s article ‘Anarchy is What States Make of it’ is credited with popularising the approach. Friedrich Kratochwil in an article co-authored with John Ruggie, made intersubjectivity one of the key concepts of constructivism and developed that further in his book *Rules, Norms and Decisions*.⁸⁷ Since constructivism is very focused on how identities and interests are constructed, the best way of seeing the divisions inside the constructivist school of thought is also via that question, argues Zehfuss. Wendt’s central argument is that actors’ identities are not given but are developed and sustained or transformed in interaction.⁸⁸ He argues that conceptions of self and other arise from interactions between states. Friedrich Kratochwil makes a complex argument about the role of rules and reasoning in international relations. He represents the ‘normative club’ inside of the constructivist school that sees all political systems as remade or changed through actors’ practises. Kratochwil together with Rey Koslowski argues that the domestic level is as important as the international in constituting changes: ‘Rather, what is important is the way in which changed practises arising from new conceptions of identity and political community are adopted by individuals and the way which interactions among states

⁸⁴ Zehfuss, *Constructivism*, p.197

⁸⁵ Zehfuss, *Constructivism*, p.6

⁸⁶ Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.

⁸⁷ Friedrich Kratochwil, and John Ruggie, ‘A State of the Art on the Art of the State’, *International Organizations*, vol.40, 1986, pp.753-775 and Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

⁸⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

are thereby altered or vice versa'⁸⁹ Finally, Nicholas Onuf's constructivism relates to concepts of speech, deed and rules. His starting point is Anthony Giddens' structuration theory. Central to Onuf's ideas is that people and society construct each other: 'Human beings with whatever equipment nature and/or society provides, construct society and society is indispensable to the actualization of whatever human beings may naturally be.'⁹⁰

Another way of seeing the divisions inside constructivism is to divide constructivism into structural, situational and aspirational constructivist. Alexander Wendt's works on constructivism could be classified as structural constructivism. In structural constructivism the focus is on international structural factors. Their approach sees the international system as a source of national interests. In the structural constructivist view identity is a product of how the other views the self. National identity is based in this view on how a state is identified by another state. The situational constructivist sees identities as a social cognitive structure drawing from cognitive psychology. In the national identity and in the identity question situational constructivists see that the Other can also be something else than another state. Ted Hopf in his *Social construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policy, Moscow 1955&1999* argues that Other for any given Self is an empirical question of the first order. Hopf's purpose in his book is to examine how states understand themselves through domestic order, how state identities are constructed at home as well as through interstate actions.⁹¹ In the Durkheimian tradition Hopf argues that habits and practice are powerful mechanisms in the reproduction of identities. Iver Neumann in his definitions of what makes a country a great power subscribes to Durkheimian views too. Situational constructivism adds to Wendt's structural constructivism domestic aspects regarding the question of other and identity formation. The aspirational constructivists draw from social psychology in an attempt to offer a synthesis that underscores the role of historical aspirations and human reason in constructivist explanations of identity and interests.⁹² Aspirational constructivism suggests that there is a logic of aspiration, that underlying aspiration is the human need for self-esteem, playing a central role in the creation of national identities and national interests.⁹³

⁸⁹ Zehfuss, 2002, p.95

⁹⁰ Onuf, 'World of Our Making', p.46

⁹¹ Hopf, 2002, p.10

⁹² Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence; Aspirations, Identity and Security Interests*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009, p.8

⁹³ Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*, p.9

Table 2.3 The Constructivist School of Thought in International relations			
	Structural	Situational	Aspirational
View Point	International system as a source of national interests. Identity is the product of how an Other views the self.	Identities are social cognitive structures. Explanations are solely based on ‘objective’ and ‘primordial’ historical ties such as geography, culture, language and ethnicity that lead to fixed identities.	National identities are subject to change by political elites. History is taken in the form of historical memory. Identity formation is a process and is not fixed at all. Underlying aspiration is the human need for self-esteem.
Authors	Alexander Wendt	Ted Hopf	Anne L. Clunan

2.3 Great Power Definitions

The understanding of what constitutes a Great Power, has been an important factor in Russia-West relations. Russia’s self-perception as a great power – Greatpowerness – does not always coincide with either academic or popular understandings of what constitutes a Great Power in the West. Differing perceptions of who is and who is not a Great Power is a broader issue in international relations, and contributes to disputes in several parts of the world. Since the fall of the Soviet Union much has been written about the ‘rising Great Powers’ – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the BRICS. On the Western side the size of the economy has often influenced whether the country has been seen as a Great Power in world politics. The major advanced industrial economies which have clearly fallen into this category in the past have been the United States, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy. The international organizations that are perceived as world powers, both the European Union and the United Nations, are in their own league. However, if the BRICS countries are perceived as rising powers, the Western countries and international organisations have been seen as declining in power.⁹⁴ This rising and declining power aspect has affected the power

⁹⁴ See “World Powers in the Twenty-First Century: The Results of a Representative Survey in Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, The United Kingdom and in the United States”, Berlin Bertelsmann Foundation, June 2, 2006, http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/bst/en/media/xcms_bst_dms_19189_19190_2.pdf, accessed 12.05.2013

balance among the countries seen as Great Powers in world politics. New forms of competition, cooperation and conflict have emerged as a result. How great powers differentiate their behaviour in relation to each other as opposed to lesser powers is an important part of this changing picture. Understandings of what constitutes a great power are not unanimously agreed, however.

In the context of rising or declining powers Russia emerges as a unique case. It was a traditional Great Power of the nineteenth century and one of the two superpowers between 1945-1990. In that framework, how could Russia now be included in the category of rising powers? From the realist point of view Russia as a rising power does not work. In that framework Russia is a declining power which has lost territory and the ability to project power outside its borders. In the liberal framework Russia can now be viewed as a rising power, especially if the reference line is to the early 1990s. So from both the realist and liberal points of view Russia clearly did lose its Great Power status with the end of the Cold War. A wide range of Russia related literature supports this viewpoint, since the starting point has been that one of the most important Russian foreign policy priorities has been to seek Great Power status and return Russia into world politics as one of the major powers. In the constructivist framework, however, where identity is at the core of the analysis, a view that Russia has been, is, and will be a Great Power regardless of its economic and military strength or weakness, is possible. The key here is not some objective assessment of Russia's status, but that Russians, from political elites down to the general population, consider that Russia has continued to be a Great Power without interruption. This is a question of belief or, in terms of this dissertation, a kind of ideology, which feeds into identity, but is a belief which hold independently of identity. The constructivist framework takes identities as given and so places less emphasis on belief, but is able to shed light on the biggest and perhaps deepest misunderstandings between Russia and the West. Self perceptions of a country and others' perceptions of another country are harder to measure and analyse than military capabilities or economic performance. Differences in fundamental beliefs are harder to account for.

Most important from the point of view of this thesis is the Russian view of greatpowerness. But it is also necessary to look at how Great Powers are defined generally and in what ways Russia has been studied as a Great Power in Anglo-American international relations theory. Academic understandings of a topic such as greatpowerness do not necessarily translate directly into the attitudes of politicians and other key actors. But

differences in theoretical definitions do reflect different approaches in the actual world of international relations and go some way towards explaining competing Western and Russian perceptions of Russia as a Great Power.

It is not a simple task to define the concept of power and therefore it is not a simple task to define what makes a country a great power. As Joseph Nye has put it ‘power, like love, is easier to experience than to define or measure.’⁹⁵ This same applies to the concept of Great Power. Here three slightly different definitions and interpretations of a Great Power from a period of nearly 30 years are examined in detail as representative of the full range of definitions. They all give a slightly different picture and put a stress on different factors of what constitutes a Great Power. These differences are in line with the different approaches of the three schools of international relations theory already discussed. They have been selected as good examples of the full range of definitions, as their authors are well-known figures in international relations adhering to each of the schools respectively: Jack S Levy, *Alliance Formation and War behaviour – An analysis of the Great Powers 1495-1975* (realist), Joseph S Nye Jr., *Changing Nature of World Power* (liberal) and Iver Neumann, *Russia as a Great Power 1815-2007* (constructivist).

Only Neumann’s work specifically takes Russia as a Great Power into its framework, but all three advance general definitions of a Great Power. These articles have been chosen as, firstly, they represent different times: the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. In the 1980s realism was still the dominant IR theory, in the 1990s liberalism/neo-liberalism and institutionalism had convincingly challenged realism. By the 2000s constructivism had established itself as a legitimate alternative to both realism and liberalism. Therefore the articles follow the evolution of IR during 30 years that have also changed the world significantly. This evolution is also central in understanding contemporary world politics and the interaction between states.

Secondly defining a great power has proved problematic. Often the list of Great Powers from various historical epochs seems to be intuitive rather than based on agreed definitions. Kenneth Waltz defends such an intuitive understanding of Great Powers: ‘Historically, despite the difficulties, one finds general agreement about who the great powers of a period are, with occasional doubt about the marginal cases. Counting the Great Powers of an era is about as difficult, or as easy, as saying how many major firms populate an oligopolistic sector

⁹⁵ Joseph S Nye Jr., ‘Changing nature of world power’, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No.2, summer 1990, pp.177-192, p.177

of an economy. The question is an empirical one, and common sense can answer it.⁹⁶ Waltz thinks that the following factors all need to be present if a state is to be counted as a member of the club of Great Powers: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence.⁹⁷ Martin Wight's Great Power elements are slightly different to Waltz's list: 'The power that makes a power is composed of many elements. Its basic components are size of population, strategic position and geographical extent, and economic resources and industrial production. To these must be added less tangible elements like administrative and financial efficiency, education and technological skill, and above all moral cohesion.'⁹⁸ Paul Kennedy in his book 'The rise and fall of Great Powers' defines a Great Power as a state capable of holding its own against any other nation.⁹⁹ In Kennedy's argument a Great Power can be properly measured only relative to other powers. Most analysts argue first and foremost that military might is an undoubted factor in being a Great Power, economic resources come perhaps in second place, but then arguments start to differ. The factors mentioned in these rather broad considerations as to what constitutes a great power are all covered by the alternative definitions advanced by Levy, Nye and Neumann. The more detailed discussion of the definitions advanced by these three authors, each corresponding to one of the major schools of international relations theory, therefore covers all other definitions in general terms.

Levy's article focuses on alliance formation and asks questions as to whether alliance formation contributes to peace or to war. However the article gives a brief definition based on Levy's own wider analysis that was developed in a book some years later.¹⁰⁰ Levy defines a great power as follows: 'A Great Power is defined as a state which plays a major role in international politics with respect to security related issues. Operational indicators of Great Power status include the following: possession of high level power capabilities; participation in international congresses and conferences; de facto identification as a Great Power by an international conference or organization; admission to a formal or informal organization of powers (such as Concert of Europe); participation in Great Power guarantees, territorial compensations, or participations; and generally treatment as a relative equal by other Great

⁹⁶ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1979, p.131

⁹⁷ Waltz, 1979, p.131.

⁹⁸ Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, Leicester: Leicester University Press and The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1978, p.26.

⁹⁹ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, London: Vintage, 1987, p.539

¹⁰⁰ See also Jack S Levy, 'Historical trends in great power war 1945-1975', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 1982, pp.278-300 and Jack S Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983.

Powers, in terms of protocol, alliances, and so on.’¹⁰¹ The focus, then, is on military power but also on being part of the ‘club’ of great powers and being recognised as such. The realist assumption that states’ primary aim is to maximise their own power can be seen in the emphasis on security in this definition, but Levy also recognises that great power status is part of an interactive process between different powers.

Iver Neumann does not dismiss these elements, but the emphasis is different in his description of a great power. Neumann begins from two definitions for a recognised great power; one based on Max Weber and the other based on Emile Durkheim. Then he goes on to suggest one more inspired by Foucault’s notion of art of government. This way Neumann gives three different elements for recognition as a Great Power; prestige, moral grounds and regime type. Prestige can be tied to material factors such as the military or the economic but it can also include other elements. Prestige can also be connected to pride. ‘As long as there are states, so there will be national pride and nothing can be more warranted. But societies can have their pride, not being the greatest or the wealthiest, but being most just, the best organised and in possessing the best moral constitution.’¹⁰² Thus there is a subjective element to being a great power: what counts in this part of the definition is how the establishment or population of a country views its place in the world. But under the third, Foucaultian part of his definition, in order for a country to be part of the great power club it is not sufficient to have a great enough military or economic weight in the world (as in Levy’s definition). Such a power must also conform to certain types and standards of governance, to be recognised as an ‘advanced’ power in social as well as material terms.

Neumann’s approach is, then, constructivist from two perspectives: in the first place, the self-perception of the country in question, which may be constructed from elements such as national pride, historic achievement, and political rhetoric among other factors, can lead a state and its citizens to view themselves as a Great Power. Secondly, however, as with the other definitions there is an element of recognition coming from other countries and from international organisations. In Neumann’s case, it is regime type and moral grounds as much as traditional power that leads to such recognition. Although Neumann does not develop this point, the possibility of a country seeing itself as a great power but not being recognised as such by others is a very real one. The potential for mismatched perceptions leading to troubled relations is also clear. We shall see in later chapters examples of precisely such mismatches, where Russia is viewed as ‘behind’ because of the slow pace of democratic

¹⁰¹ Levy, 1981, p. 585

¹⁰² Durkheim quoted in Neumann, 2008, p.131

development and failure to fully embrace western norms, whereas Russians have not appreciated that these have any relevance to great power recognition.

Joseph Nye's article 'Changing Nature of World Power' gives us one more way to approach the concept of power and being a Great Power. If Jack Levy's definition was based on influence, position and visible participation in World politics and Iver Neumann's definition partly on resources, partly on moral accounts but mostly on governance, Joseph Nye stresses the interplay between soft and hard power. Hard power is resource based and the traditional way of seeing a country as one of the Great Powers. As Nye puts it, 'Because the ability to control others is often associated with the possession of certain resources, political leaders commonly define power as the possession of resources. These resources include population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability, among others. The virtue of this definition is that it makes power appear more concrete, measurable, and predictable than does the behavioural definition. Power in this sense means holding the high cards in the international poker game'.¹⁰³ This part of Nye's view is very closely linked to Levy's arguments although Levy's argument stresses visible participation of a state in world politics. Nye sees also technology, education and economic growth as very significant in modern times as a source for being a Great Power. All of these can be measured and compared in order to provide, at least in theory, an objective assessment of the relative standing of the world's powers which is independent of self-definitions or of recognition by other powers.

However, as Nye goes on to recognise, it has been a growing trend in world politics that the forms of power and ability to be a Great Power cannot be measured only in terms of tangible resources. The power to get others to do what you want them to do, can also be achieved by indirect ways, such as co-optive power behaviour. In this framework it is important to be the agenda or structure setter. 'Co-optive power can rest on the attraction of one's ideas or on the ability to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences that others express. Parents of teenagers know that if they have structured their children's beliefs and preferences, their power will be greater and will last longer than if they had relied only on active control. Similarly, political leaders and philosophers have long understood the power that comes from setting the agenda and determining the framework of a debate. The ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions. This dimension can be thought of as soft power, in contrast

¹⁰³ Joseph S. Nye Jr, 'The Changing Nature of World Power', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 2, Summer, 1990, pp. 177-192, p. 178

to the hard command power usually associated with tangible resources like military and economic strength.’¹⁰⁴ Thus, an equally important part of being a great power is a state’s ability to set agendas and exert cultural and other forms of influence beyond its borders, all of which can be achieved in a variety of ways.

Nye’s article’s conclusion on being a Great Power relies on two concepts: command power and co-optive power. ‘The distinction between hard and soft power resources is one of degree, both in the nature of the behaviour and in the tangibility of the resources. Both types are aspects of the ability to achieve one’s purposes by controlling the behaviour of others. Command power - the ability to change what others do - can rest on coercion or inducement. Co-optive power - the ability to shape what others want - can rest on the attractiveness of one’s culture and ideology or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes actors fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic.’¹⁰⁵ This distinction between hard and soft power has now become widely accepted by academics. One possible source of soft power is the kind of governance issue highlighted in Neumann’s definition. Thus Nye’s article represents a position somewhere in between Levy’s, where there is more of a hard power emphasis, and Neumann’s.

As with the other definitions, there are a number of parts to Nye’s definition which are not always compatible: the more tangible elements of hard power are common to all definitions. When it comes to soft power, Nye’s liberal perspective leads to a focus on agenda-setting within a particular milieu and where technology, education and economic growth are key factors. The focus here is clearly on the West and on organisations dominated by western powers. While in the unipolar world it is the US and its allies which are the key agenda-setters, it could also be considered that soft power often has a regional aspect or is exerted through particular cultural forms, and therefore is not necessarily easily universalised.

The three articles open up the picture of what makes a country a Great Power but they also highlight the continuing difficulty of defining it. Neumann’s article raises good governance and domestic political realities, where the political elite’s possibilities and capabilities to do changes are the crucial determinant, as the central and defining issues. Nye on the other hand stresses the cooperation capabilities in the international arena, possibilities to set the agenda in international politics and the realities of world affairs. Levy adopts an

¹⁰⁴ Nye Jr., 1990, p.181

¹⁰⁵ Nye Jr., 1990, pp.181-82

alternative position with his argument about potential and possibilities to inject power. All the articles list things that make a country a Great Power but naturally these lists are also subject to criticism since they do not show how all these factors are measured or defined, and therefore each of these definitions of a Great Power leave room for interpretation when it comes to their application to specific cases, especially marginal ones.

Each of the definitions also contains at least two types of element, which do not always coincide. One of these is traditional, security-oriented power, particularly military power but perhaps also size and economic reach. This side of being a great power still dominates some academic discussions, including the debate concerning unipolarity already referred to at the start of this chapter, where much is made of the quantitative nature of being a great power, as measured by military capability. The attractiveness of this approach for comparative studies is, in part, that it is easily measurable. When it comes to other elements such as acceptance by formal or informal groups of great powers, regime type, and forms of soft power, it is harder to reach consensus and the possibility of different assessments by different international actors is evident.

The disadvantage of definitions designed for comparative purposes is that they lose some value when it comes to the analysis of specific cases. This is especially the case when, as is argued here, a case like Russia's is unique in that it has very recently been recognised as one of the superpowers in a bipolar world.

2.4 Greatpowerness of the Great Powers

Being a Great Power requires resources, as the previous part has shown. However while numerous authors have addressed definitions of a Great Power, from the resource and other points of view, and the consequences for the international system of the existence of a given number of Great Powers, few have paid attention to the effect on a state's behaviour in international relations of its self-identification as a Great Power – referred to here as greatpowerness. One scholar who does address Great Power behaviour is John J. Mearsheimer. He adopts an explicitly realist approach – his aim is to show that, for Great Powers, realist thinking did not disappear along with the Cold War, so that “states still fear each other and seek to gain power at each other's expense”¹⁰⁶. Hence, the possibility of war between Great Powers at some point in the future cannot be ruled out, according to

¹⁰⁶ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2003, p.361

Mearsheimer. As part of the picture he argues that international institutions have negligible if any effect on Great Power behaviour. In this picture, Great Powers seek to dominate international institutions and shape them to increase their own share in global power.¹⁰⁷

This approach is limited by realist assumptions about the aims of states in general and self-defined Great Powers in particular, but at least makes a distinction between the behaviour of Great Powers and other states, thus giving some initial substance to the notion of 'greatpowerness'. Mearsheimer draws attention to possible challenges to the realist arguments through two examples where Great Powers appeared to be abandoning realist thinking – The Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev, and the United States under President Bill Clinton.¹⁰⁸ He claims that, in the former case, the weakness and costs of the Soviet empire forced the abandonment of confrontation with the West in favour of a more collaborative approach, which could be explained by realist interests. Without directly challenging the proclaimed priorities of the Clinton administration, Mearsheimer goes on to claim that realist politics continued to dominate the world in the 1990s by pointing to cases such as Germany and Japan and a rising China.

While this thesis does not engage with the broader point about the aims of Great Powers, Mearsheimer's analysis itself reveals some challenges to the classic realist assumptions about a Great Power's behaviour. The fact that the United States returned to a more obviously Great Power dominant role under George W. Bush, when compared to the Clinton years, shows that Great Powers have more than one way of expressing their greatpowerness. China provides another contrast, with the focus since the early 1990s on economic growth and some forms of market domination, and this has not yet, in spite of heavy arms spending, transformed into Mearsheimer's predicted move to regional hegemony.¹⁰⁹ Germany and Japan meanwhile, in his analysis, are viewed as 'potential' Great Powers with capacity to become regional hegemons should the United States withdraw its military forces from Europe and North East Asia respectively, with uncertain consequences for regional multipolarity.

The realist approach focuses on such hard power aims as regional hegemony, and therefore does not have much to say about different behavioural traits of various Great Powers. In the constructivist approach there are explanations of foreign policy behaviour which go beyond questions of power, including identity. For theorists of both personal and state identity, identity is socially constructed, meaning it is defined and understood through

¹⁰⁷ Mearsheimer, 2003, pp.360-65

¹⁰⁸ Mearsheimer, 2003, pp. 360-61, 369

¹⁰⁹ Mearsheimer, 2003, pp.396-400

interaction with others – in the case of international relations, through interaction with other states. Much of the literature on state identity rests on notions of the ‘Other’ through which state identities are defined – in the case of China, the Other is Japan, for Western Europe, it is Eastern Europe, while for Russia, it is the West - primarily the USA.¹¹⁰ This social nature of state identity has, in turn, led to a focus on *recognition* as an important factor in many cases of state behaviour in international relations.¹¹¹

Michelle Murray has gone further in linking identity and recognition to greatpowerness. Taking the case of the development of the German Navy before World War One, she argues that, since this investment took resources away from land defence, it was sub-optimal in strategic terms and therefore contradicted realist assumptions of power maximisation. Instead, she proposes ‘a social theory of great power politics that argues that in addition to physical security states also want recognition’.¹¹² Such recognition, a social act, is essential to a state’s identity since ‘when a state is recognized, its identity is brought into existence, its meaning stabilized, and its status in the social order secured’.¹¹³ On the other hand ‘if the international community does not recognize a state’s self-understanding, then it will struggle to obtain the recognition it needs to secure that identity, sometimes at the expense of other goals, like security.’¹¹⁴

While Murray provides a convincing case for understanding the case of Germany at the start of the twentieth century, the general applicability of this theory is limited by her insistence that ‘states ground their aspirant identities in concrete material practises’¹¹⁵ – specifically, the acquisition of military hardware: ‘great powers have historically grounded their identity in particular capabilities – battleships, aircraft carriers, nuclear weapons – that were understood at the time to be emblematic of great power status. It is these specific practises that are constitutively linked to the establishment and maintenance of great power identity and are at the center of great power identity construction’.¹¹⁶ Reference to

¹¹⁰ Peterson, 2013, p.14.

¹¹¹ Wendt, Alexander ‘Why a World State is Inevitable: Teleology and the Logic of Anarchy’, *European Journal of International Relations* 9(4), 2003, 539–90., For a critique of the emphasis on recognition, see Greenhill, Brian, ‘Recognition and Collective Identity Formation in International Politics’, *European Journal of International Relations* 14 (2), 2008, 343-68.

¹¹² Murray, Michelle, ‘Identity, Insecurity, and Great Power Politics: The Tragedy of German Naval Ambition Before the First World War’, *Security Studies*, 19, 2010, 656-88, p.658.

¹¹³ Idem

¹¹⁴ Murray, 2008, p.661

¹¹⁵ Murray, 2008, p. 665

¹¹⁶ Murray, 2008, p.665.

contemporary examples of India's nuclear weapons programme and China's plans for aircraft carriers confirms that Murray considers this still to be the case.¹¹⁷

While Murray does not offer any definition of a Great Power, this comes close to the classical realist definition. But all of the definitions of a Great Power discussed above suggest that material factors alone do not constitute a Great Power. Of particular significance when considering gaining recognition as a soft power in the contemporary world are claims to moral, cultural and other forms of non-military influence. The liberal tradition of international relations has contributed and highlighted notions of 'soft power' which complement the more realist hard power aspirations of states, and these are especially relevant when it comes to efforts at recognition: 'If citizens of other countries wish to attend university in your country, speak your national tongue, watch your movies, emigrate to your country, or identify their political institutions or cultural values as being like yours, then your country has soft power...Soft power inheres in a country's reputation'.¹¹⁸ This last point underlines a further important aspect of greatpowerness, in line with the literature on recognition and constructivist notions of state identity – namely, that it is not enough for a state to believe it is a Great Power, it needs that status to also be recognised by others.

By using a broader concept of greatpowerness, international institutions can also be viewed in an alternative way – without denying that both great and small powers seek to use institutions to their own advantage, being not only a member but also a leading influence in such organisations can be an end in itself for the confirmation of greatpowerness and general prestige that such a status confers. Greatpowerness then, for the purpose of this thesis, is understood as *a state's self-image as one of the dominant powers in the world which can have a variety of impacts on that state's behaviour. Such behaviour can be observed across a wide range of activities and includes measures not only to confirm Great Power status to the citizens of the state itself, but also to obtain and continually reaffirm the recognition of that status by the international community, and especially by other Great Powers.* The focus of this thesis is on Russia which, as clearly demonstrated in chapter three, has never abandoned its self-image as a Great Power, a fact which influences its behaviour in relation to the international institutions discussed in the case study chapters five to seven.

¹¹⁷ Murray, 2008, pp.687-88.

¹¹⁸ Leslie Elliott Armijo, 'The BRICs Countries as Analytical Category: Mirage or Insight?' *Asian Perspective*, Vol.31, no.4, 2007, 7-42, pp.29-30.

2.5 Russia and International relations theory

During the Cold War, the study of the Soviet Union and its political institutions was largely confined to the methods of 'Kremlinology'. In terms of international relations, some authors such as Snyder, Hopf and Zimmerman did pay attention to the Soviet Union as part of the international system when it came to the development of their own theoretical models. But studies devoted solely to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union tended more often to stand apart from broader IR studies. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, general IR studies have included Russia more and more in their considerations as an important international actor, and the number of studies of Russian foreign policy which take IR theory as their starting point has been increasing. Of the three examples of definitions of Great Powers taken above, Iver Neumann has Russia as the main focus of his studies, while both Nye and Levy include Russia as a case in their discussions. More broadly, it is now possible to summarise an approach to Russia from each of the three international relations schools already discussed.

In analysing Russia since the collapse of communism from a realist perspective, several different groupings and terms occur: Great Power pragmatism, statist view, Great Power balancing and new realism. The realist school of international relations has, at least until recently, been more dominant when it comes to Russia and the Soviet Union than the other traditional international relations schools of liberalism and constructivism. This extends from the academic world to the world of politics. One of the statements from a Western leader that significantly represented the picture of the Soviet Union as being explicable through the realist school of international relations is provided in Winston Churchill's words 'There is nothing they (Russians) admire so much as strength and there is nothing for which they have less respect than military weakness.'¹¹⁹ Statements by Western foreign policy leaders are one factor that has contributed to the fact that the Soviet Union and Russia are often seen through the realist paradigm.

Another factor that also speaks for a realist approach in Russia's case is that realism embraces the 'top-down' approach in politics. Russia throughout its history has been a country ruled from the top down, and Russia's leaders whether in the Imperial Russian or Soviet or post-Soviet time are assumed to be all powerful leaders. This picture certainly tells us something about some guiding ideas in Russian thinking but if it is seen as a proof of realist thinking dominating Soviet and Russian foreign and security policy the picture will

¹¹⁹ Cited in Richard Sakwa, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union, 1917-1991*, London: Routledge, , 1999, p.295

become inaccurate and the danger of misinterpretation of situations increases. Realism from Machiavelli to von Clausewitz and from Morgenthau to Waltz and Mearsheimer allows for very little possibility of significant change. All the same, neorealism is still the most popular framework of analysis of Russian foreign policy among the policy community and in Russia. As Pami Aalto has observed, amid the lack of theoretical debate about Russian foreign policy plenty of fine empirical works have been published and some level of consensus has been formed about the picture of Russian foreign policy today.¹²⁰ However it has to be noted that most of the empirical works take the realist assumptions as the most influential school of thought into their studies of today's Russian foreign policy.¹²¹ Consensus views on events in Russian foreign policy actions have also been found before¹²² but often the main stress is in the realist interpretation.

When looking at Russia from the liberal point of view, at first glance, there seems to be very little compatible with liberalism, since liberalism applies and develops in a modern and more or less democratic environment. However, deeper examination will reveal that Russian foreign policy also has elements that can be understood through the liberal school of thought.

The interesting point from the Russian perspective is that classical liberalism 'begins with the recognition that men do what they will, are free; that a man's acts are his own, spring from his own personality and cannot be coerced.'¹²³ If the word man would be replaced by state, this is fully in line with how Russia is trying to argue its state position in the international order. Russia fiercely tries to defend the sovereignty of a state and its right to make decisions independently. A central belief in Russian Foreign Policy is that 'Attempts to belittle the role of the sovereign state as a fundamental element of international relations creates the threat of arbitrary interference in internal affairs'.¹²⁴ Russia seeks the freedom that comes through liberalism in international affairs even when it is not ready to apply it to her own internal politics. Russia as a nation state is a phenomenon of the 1990s but it has faced similar problems to those of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. It has had to fight for its existence, not so much for external reasons but because of its internal environment. The

¹²⁰ Pami Aalto, 'Mitä länsimainen kansainvälisen politiikan tutkimus kertoo Vladimir Putinin ulkopoliitikasta?', *Idäntutkimus* 2/2006

¹²¹ Some to be mentioned: Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing System, Enduring Interests*. Armonk, NY: M.E.Sharpe, 2005; Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.) *Russia between East and West: Russian Foreign Policy on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*. London: Frank Cass, 2003; J. Hedenskog, V. Konnander, B. Nygren, I. Oldberg & C. Pursiainen (eds), *Russia as a Great Power: Dimensions of Security under Putin* London: Routledge, 2005.

¹²² Henrikki Heikka, 'Beyond Neorealism and Constructivism – Desire, Identity and Russian Foreign Policy', in Hopf (ed.) *Understanding Russian Foreign Policy*, 57-107, p. 60

¹²³ Doyle, 'Kant's Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs', p.206

¹²⁴ 'Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation', 2000, 28th June, Part II.

challenges for Russian statehood have nearly always come from within.¹²⁵ This has created an interesting relationship regarding the ideas of liberalism in external politics. The desired situation for Russia would be a world order where states should have more confidence that their existence is not threatened, creating room for processes of positive identification to take hold. The reason can be found in Russian domestic political challenges. Therefore, from the Russian perspective, it would suit best for Russia to be part of the ‘liberal world’ and enjoy the benefits of ‘perpetual peace’.

In times of internal weaknesses, beneficial external relations are to Russia’s advantage. Alexander II’s Foreign Minister after the Crimean war, Alexander Gorchakov, saw two preconditions for Russia being able to rebuild its Great Power status in Europe after defeat in the Crimea: ‘To avoid any external controversies that are likely to divert some domestic resources, so halting internal developments of Russia, as well as to forestall any territorial changes or shifts in the balance of power in Europe’.¹²⁶ So even if at first glance the realist framework seems to fit best in Russia’s case, liberalism has some strong advantages for Russia in international relations. In the domestic political arena liberalism is still waiting for Russians to see the advantages of it. This is a strong contradiction since the liberal school of thought, starts from the assumption that all states have similar state systems or that they have their own will to be part of the liberal world. Russia does want to be part of the liberal world in terms of international institutions, but at the same time wants to operate according to its own conditions and without liberalism touching its internal development in an uncontrolled way.

The external environment operating according to neo-liberal institutionalism, and therefore also within the liberal framework, is also important for Russia to be able to promote its national interest, its economy and greatpowerness. For this it is important for Russian foreign policy makers to accept the maxims described by Robert Keohane concerning the importance of international institutions even if they are not always successful in world politics: ‘Superpowers need general rules because they seek to influence events around the world. Even an unchallenged superpower such as the United States would be unable to achieve its goals through the bilateral exercise of influence: the costs of such massive “arm-twisting” would be too great’.¹²⁷ Since one of the main arguments of Russian foreign policy is that Russia is a Great Power, it also needs to prove the correctness of its claim. For that

¹²⁵ This holds true even in modern times. See chapter 3 ‘Challenge from Russian great powerness’.

¹²⁶ Igor S Ivanov, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii i mir*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000.

¹²⁷ Keohane, 2002, p.27.

Vladimir Putin has emphasised the modernization process of Russia. This mostly means economic developments but also Russia catching up in the areas of technology and science. 'In the contemporary world Hobbesian states¹²⁸ will not be able to reap the vastly expanded benefits of international scientific, technological and economic exchange, without which no state can longer remain a great power.'¹²⁹

For Russia this also means working within the framework of international institutions and, increasingly, in exploiting those institutions to further Russian interests. Russia can be seen not only as one of the 'difficult cases',¹³⁰ but as a case which has proved remarkably successful at manipulation of international events in order to enhance the government's prestige both at home and abroad. This has been most evident over the Kosovo conflict, but also in debates over NATO expansion and the EU. At the same time, international institutions provide a check on Russia's activity, since they serve as a bridge between Russia and the other members of the international institution. In Russia's case this is especially important as it would be politically unthinkable for one leading world power like the USA to dictate independently conditions for Russia's behaviour in different internal or external matters without going through the apparently neutral medium of international institutions. In this light it is quite clear that Russia and the USA, as well as other leading western countries, do calculate benefits and costs. At present, Russia apparently sees the uncooperative line as bringing more benefits than costs (although quite what the benefits are is discussed later in this thesis). Institutionalism emphasizes, however, that especially international institutions and the mechanisms created within their frameworks are essential in creating lasting co-operation and in helping to overcome the thresholds in different cases of co-operation.'¹³¹

The complex interdependence model, which is very relevant for institutionalism and indeed in any study of international organisations, is characterised by allowing multiple

¹²⁸ The Hobbesian dilemma is based upon Thomas Hobbes's assumptions about human nature and human interactions from the 17th century. His ideas, which mainly concentrate on domestic politics and civil strife but also refer to international relations, developed an argument for unified sovereignty and authoritarian rule. Hobbes' dilemma in short is: Since people are rational calculators, self-interested, seeking gain and glory and fearful of one another, there is no security in anarchy. But precisely because people are self-interested and power-loving, unlimited power for the ruler implies a predatory, oppressive state.

¹²⁹ Putin, p.68.

¹³⁰ Christer Pursiainen, 'The Impact of the International Community on Russia's Policy Towards Chechnya: Three Interpretations', *Ulkopolitiikka* 1/2000, p.95

¹³¹ Pursiainen, 2000

channels, connecting societies and removing military force as a dominating agenda in world affairs.¹³² Keohane's and Nye's model also includes three basic assumptions about the world:

1. Societies are connected not only by interstate relations, but by transgovernmental and transnational relations as well.
2. There is no hierarchy among issues in world politics, which means that military security does not dominate other issues.
3. For the region or the issues wherein complex interdependence prevails, military force is irrelevant and inefficient to resolve disagreements

These points have some connection to today's world politics. Point two is of less concern especially in the world since September 11th and the age of war on terrorism. But points one and three have a strong relevance specifically in Russia's case towards the rest of the world and especially in regard to international organisations and Russia.

Keohane and Nye's complex interdependence model, with its emphasis on transgovernmental and transnational relations,¹³³ also has implications for the Russian case. 'In complex interdependence power resources specific to issue areas – such as manipulation of interdependence, or international organisations, or transnational actors will be most relevant.'¹³⁴ If Russia is really to gain the status of a great power recognized by all actors, it needs to become a trusted partner in the network of international organisations. Russia already participates in NATO, EU, IMF, G7 (G8), UN and OSCE and later the WTO.

In the framework of international institutions there is also an argument that 'where international institutions exist, the post-Soviet leadership attempts to use them to gain access to resources and help stabilize their tumultuous political and economic relations'.¹³⁵ This may be the case to some extent, but also this should be seen as a long-term opportunity to integrate Russia into world politics and create some basis for better cooperation and common understanding.

¹³² Clive Archer, *International organizations*, London: Routledge, 2003, third ed., p. 149

¹³³ Pursiainen, 2000, p.132

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Celeste A. Wallander and Jane E.Prokop 'Soviet Security Strategies towards Europe: After the Wall, With Their Backs up against it', in Keohane, Nye and Hoffmann, (eds.), *After the Cold War*: p.

Many constructivist writers have drawn empirical evidence from Russia or tested assumptions in the Russian context: Ted Hopf, Iver Neumann, Jeffrey Checkel, Anne C. Clunan, Robert Herman¹³⁶ etc. Specifically, the fall of the Soviet Union provided the big push for constructivists to show how identities, rules and norms matter and that reality is more complex than 'rational theories' tend to argue.

In the Russian context constructivism fits rather well since the Russian discourse is strongly connected with the ideas of identity. 'In the constructivist perspective, identity research is about development, evolution, construction; identity is treated as a process, an ever-evolving phenomenon that is based on a certain foundation of stable cultural attributes but open to adjustments and transformation'.¹³⁷ In the case of Russia, the constructivist way of approaching identity is through self-identification. It is often done either following the method of breaking Russian political society into groups based on their ideological orientations or through the prism of otherness. On the one hand when looking at the question of otherness the West is the single most significant other. On the 'other' hand europeanness is often counted as part of Russian identity and the 'other' is outside that framework. The Europe in Russia is reflected well in Gorbachev's central foreign policy of the 'Common European Home'. Europe has not only been for Russia the other but Russia has been the other for Europe.¹³⁸ The academic community is quite united behind the thought that 'Russia is in Europe but not of Europe'. Ted Hopf in his book *Social Construction of International Politics* comes to the conclusion that there are not only many identities influencing at the same time but also many different others.¹³⁹ In Neumann's definition of what constitutes a Great Power, the others' acceptance is very central. That is also the weakest link in Russia's own identification as a Great Power. Hopf looks at Russian identity through four different discourses and identities that constitute them and concludes that all four discourses appreciated the Soviet past for the Great Power status attributed to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Hopf continues: 'Presumably, states that accorded Russia that kind of status in 1999 would be considered more favourably than those who denied such an identity'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Robert G. Herman, 'Identity, Norms and National Security: The Soviet Foreign Policy Revolution and the End of the Cold War', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, pp.271-316.

¹³⁷ Kassinova, 2001, p.824

¹³⁸ Argument presented by Iver B. Neumann in 'Self and Other in international relations', *European Journal of International Relations* June 1996 vol. 2 no. 2 139-174 and in his book *Russia and the Idea of Europe; A study of identity and international relations* and 'Russia as Europe's other' in *Journal of Area Studies*, Volume 6, Issue 12, 1998

¹³⁹ Hopf, 2002, p.263

¹⁴⁰ Hopf, 2002, p.210

The constructivist school of thought has definitely added to the Western understanding of Russian foreign policy thinking and behaviour. Andrei P Tsygankov has observed: ‘Constructivists do not view foreign policy as a product of a unitary state’s advancing power, as in realism, or as a particular group’s pursuing modernization interests, as in liberalism. Rather, the role of a coalition is to put forward a particular image of national identity that will speak to the existing local conditions and be recognized by the significant other. Identity coalitions are broader and more fundamental than interest coalitions, and they seek to achieve social recognition, rather than to maximize wealth or power.’¹⁴¹ Precisely this aspect has contributed a lot to Western understandings of Russia and vice versa.

2.6 Great Power Definitions applied to Russia

While the definitions of a Great Power do not have any official status in international discourses (indeed there is no official status of a ‘Great Power’), the different approaches in IR literature are reflected in the assessments of different international actors. It is therefore instructive to examine how the academic definitions of a Great Power have been applied to the case of Russia.

From the realist point of view, the assessment is fairly straightforward. Returning to Levy’s realist definition, he sees that in 1975 there were six great powers in the world: France, Great Britain, Russia/the Soviet Union, Germany, the United States and China. Russia/the Soviet Union had remained, in Levy’s view, a great power continuously since 1721. By this realist definition even today’s Russia is accorded great power status, at least by virtue of its nuclear arsenal and military capability, and its clear place as the leading power in regional organisations embracing the former Soviet space.

However, according to Neumann and others, in the case of Russia it can be argued that it does have national pride – greatpowerness – as well as the material attributes of a great power that are recognised by realists. Russia also seeks to reaffirm its great power status through its search for international prestige – recognition by the world community and particularly the Western powers the EU and the USA. But Neumann states that this quest has not been successful. ‘The persistence of the theme and the intensity of its presence in Russian identity

¹⁴¹ Tsygankov, 2006, pp.15-16.

politics suggests that Russia's quest for recognition as a great power has not been a successful one. This is because, if an identity claim is successful, it forms part of the horizon of the political debate rather than its substance. Recognition of Russia as a great power can only be given by great powers that are established as such.¹⁴² His constructivist definition provides one suggestion as to what is missing from Russia's status as a great power. In Neumann's picture Russia would qualify as a great power on two out of three criteria. In Weber's realist account relating to prestige through material sources and ability to project power, Russia as a great power holds at least since the end of the 18th century. Under Durkheim's moral criteria, Russia is on weaker ground already but does still seem to fulfil them nevertheless. Russia's Christian credentials and European civilisation tilts the Great Power status in Russia's favour. However already in this category questions and doubts started to appear from the European side at the same time as Russia's status as a Great European Power seemed to be consolidated at the end of the 18th century. The two faces of Russia became perhaps even a source of confusion in Europe as to what kind of a country Russia was and how it should be dealt with. One of the most famous of these early accounts, that did cast a shadow on Russia as a Great Power, is the Marquis de Custine's *Journey of Our Time* that describes very critically the Russian society and state. He observed: 'Do you know what it is to travel in Russia? For a superficial mind, it is to be fed on illusions; but for one who has his eyes open and added to a little power of observation, an independent turn of mind, it is continuous and obstinate work, which consists in laboriously distinguishing, at every turn, between two nations in conflict. These nations are Russia as it is and Russia as it would like to show itself to Europe.'¹⁴³

Neumann's argument sees the situation with Russia as follows: 'On Weber's criteria - material resources and the ability to project power - there is no doubt that Russia was a Great Power by the end of the 18th century. Similarly, on Durkheim's moral criteria - setting an example for how a state should be in the world - the socialization into the states system would appear to be strong enough for Russia to qualify',¹⁴⁴ but even by fulfilling these two criteria, according to Neumann, Russia has not been able to fully qualify as a great power in European terms. Therefore the third element and the most important in Neumann's argument (inspired by Foucault's ideas) is that regime type and governance style do in the end determine great power status. In European terms 'Russia's problem with being recognised as

¹⁴² Neumann, 2008, p.129

¹⁴³ Marquis Astolphe de Custine, *Journey of our time*, London: Arthur Baker Limited, 1953

¹⁴⁴ Neumann, 2008, p.136

a great power is a social one. At its root is the question of relations between state and society. As seen from Europe, a great power cannot have state/society relations that are too different from those that at any one given time dominate European politics. In the final analysis, in order to achieve and maintain the status of great power, social compatibility is needed.¹⁴⁵ Neumann's argument is a big claim and he leaves open who is the one that defines this social compatibility. This naturally points already to the direction that on its own this is a factor which can create tension in the Russia-West relationship.

In the case of liberal approaches, it becomes even clearer that there is a gap between Russian perceptions and those of Western states when it comes to acceptance of Russia as a Great Power. Russian foreign policy has, throughout its history, been working towards it being an agenda setter and one of the founding members in international relations structures.¹⁴⁶ Despite Russia's hard work, according to the analysis of Nye, neither Imperial Russia nor the Soviet Union has been rewarded with either world leadership or military hegemony from the 16th century until the fall of the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ In the post-Soviet world, the partial loss of military and other forms of power status were not made up for by advances in democratic development and embracing western values. The value gap not only leads directly to misunderstandings in Russia-Europe relations in particular, but also does so indirectly. Since Russia is not seen as fully compatible with European values and does not have the soft power instruments (beyond its immediate neighbourhood) associated with liberal conceptions of a Great Power, it continues to struggle to achieve any recognition of its great power status.

To sum up, it can be argued that in Russia's case undisputed factors, mentioned in all of the three articles, that make it a Great Power and are in fact sources of its own understanding of greatpowerness are its size (geography), military power, natural resources, cultural influence, history, ability to inject power and the potentials and possibilities that are related to Russia as a nation state. Areas where Russia then does not fully qualify, according to the definitions, are economics, soft power that relates to questions of authority and respect and the question of good governance with domestic realities. When it comes to the factor of being recognised by others the case is not quite clear either. Each of the three definitions leads to a different result: under the realist definition, Russia has been a Great Power for the past three

¹⁴⁵ Neumann, 2008, p.147

¹⁴⁶ Congress of Vienna 1815, Congress of Berlin, UN, Second World War, OSCE, war on terrorism, Medvedev's European security architecture initiative, attempts at energy security and so on.

¹⁴⁷ Nye Jr. , 'The Changing Nature of World Power', tables 2 (p.187) and 4 (p.190).

centuries and continues to be so; for liberals, Russia is far from being a Great Power in a sense which can be accepted by western powers; for constructivists, Great Power status is more ambiguous: Russia achieves the status on certain criteria, including those which are most commonly counted by Russians, but not on others. In the Western discourses of declining and rising powers in world politics, being recognised by others has grown in importance, sometimes even overtaking the material factors.

The differences revealed in academic definitions of what constitutes a great power when it comes to Russia do not in themselves translate directly into international relations. But they do highlight the potential for a mismatch between the self-perception of greatpowerness by a one country and the failure to accept or recognise that status by other powers. When looking at cooperation between Russia and the West and especially in the framework of international organisations, the matter of being a Great Power can easily be politicised and the result can be that of hurting Russian greatpowerness, which is different from being a Great Power.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed three schools of international relations theory, and definitions of a Great Power arising from each of those schools. Each of these schools has something to offer to the understanding of greatpowerness which informs the remainder of this thesis. In contrast to sociological studies and some other disciplines, International Relations theories have tended to be viewed as incompatible with each other and, indeed, schools and sub-schools have developed largely as a result of a series of polemical debates with each other. A more recent trend, however, has been to view different schools as contributing jointly towards understandings of the same foreign policy behaviour. As Neumann and Pouliot, for example, have put it ‘At the level of practice, both views [realism and constructivism] are obviously right, as politics seamlessly combine stability with change.’¹⁴⁸ In his early assessment of the role of International Relations theory in the study of Soviet and post-Soviet foreign policy, Christer Pursiainen concluded that both neoliberal institutionalism and constructivism could contribute to the study of Russia’s foreign policy, while also developing ‘a synthesis-like conceptual framework to be used both in defining the nature of Russian foreign policy decision-making and analysing particular cases of situational decision-

¹⁴⁸ Iver B. Neumann and Vincent Pouliot, ‘Untimely Russia: Hysteresis in Russian-Western Relations over the Past Millennium’, *Security Studies*, 20:105, 2011, 105-37, p.136;

making'.¹⁴⁹ In her study cited above, Michelle Murray, while adopting for the most part a constructivist approach to the case of German greatpowerness, agrees that some motives are best explained by a realist approach. But it may be that such a combination of theoretical approaches is more common in the study of Russian foreign policy than in other cases. Without fully claiming uniqueness for Russia, it does become apparent that Russian decision making and actions are relatively inconsistent, unpredictable and difficult to pin down, in part because of the peculiar combination of bureaucratic and individual levels of decision-making.¹⁵⁰

All three international relations schools have something to contribute to understandings of greatpowerness. Greatpowerness for Russia is a question of identity which involves matters of power and whose end is recognition by and membership of an elite group of Western democratic states. Hence the definitions of a Great Power provided by constructivists, realists and neoliberals contain more common elements than might otherwise be expected, yet each approach has its own emphasis. These differences help explain the conflicting understandings of what constitutes a Great Power between Russia and the West, which are discussed in the next chapter.

In the three different definitions of a Great Power, each added something that was missing from the others. For the realist based definition presented by Levy, power, in its traditional meaning of physical strength, is essential. In Nye's definition, representing the liberal institutional view, power has obtained some other forms than just physical strength through military and economic might. Nye's soft power concept makes a Great Power more modern and emphasises common values. Neumann's view of what constitutes a Great Power adds into the picture the concept of good governance and, related to that, acceptance by others.

These definitions of a great power have been used by political scientists to categorise states according to their place in the world order. The categorisation of each power can then be used as one variable in explaining foreign policy behaviour. Russia is an unusual case in that it qualifies as a Great Power under certain criteria of each definition, but not every criterion of every definition. This serves to underline Russia's ambiguous place in the post-Cold War world.

¹⁴⁹ Pursiainen, 2000, pp.214-15.

¹⁵⁰ Pursiainen, 2000, p.206.

Competing definitions of a great power help to illuminate the concept of greatpowerness, since the criteria are all understood to a greater or lesser degree by states. However, as with social scientists, states are not unanimous as to which criteria are the most important, which can lead to conflicts when it comes to recognition as a great power. Since greatpowerness is primarily a matter of state identity and self-perception, it is mostly the constructivist school that helps explain this aspect of Russia's foreign policy behaviour. However, since both the hard power stressed by realists and the soft power taken up by neoliberals are taken up in Russian efforts to gain recognition and treatment as a Great Power, both schools contribute to the understanding of greatpowerness arrived at in this chapter. The most comprehensive discussion to date of greatpowerness has been applied to Germany prior to World War One seen as a case of a rising power seeking recognition as such. Russia, by contrast, has been a power that has clearly declined from its peak but which nonetheless, as the following chapter illustrates, has no doubts as to its continuing Great Power status.

Chapter 3: Determinants of Russian Foreign Policy

*‘Foreign Policy is both an indicator and a determining factor for the condition of internal affairs. Here we should have no illusions. The competence, skill and effectiveness with which we use our diplomatic resources determines not only the prestige of our country in the eyes of the world but also the political and economic situation inside Russia itself’*¹⁵¹

3.1 Introduction

Historically, one reason the identity question became so important in Russia was that many Russian intellectuals had a need to explain, especially to Europeans, what kind of a country Russia was. This meant that Russia had to be understood in comparison to other European countries, and it has widely been argued among scholars of Russian studies from all disciplines that Russia is ‘different’. However, in the discourse of Russian otherness the answer to the question ‘How is Russia different?’ has been difficult to find.

Greatpowerness is a concept that Russians have used to describe their country, which is one way of linking Russia into a more universal system while maintaining that differentness which is at the core of Russian cultural and political self-understanding. Greatpowerness is an easier concept to define in the Russian context than democracy, totalitarianism or any other term in political science which characterises a state identity. Russians call it *Derzhavnost*. Robert Legvold explains the word: ‘Derzhavnost, however, has a meaning all its own, one missing from the English language, simply because the phenomenon is missing. Only the Russians in moments of distress revert to an affection of great-power standing – that is, to asserting their natural right to the role and influence of great power whether they have the wherewithal or not’.¹⁵² Where Legvold is right about greatpowerness in the Russian context, he perhaps misses the fact that greatpowerness does exist in all the Great Powers or in countries that see themselves as Great Powers.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Putin, 2011

¹⁵² Robert Legvold, ‘Russian Foreign Policy During State Transformation’, in Robert Legvold (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century & The Shadow of the Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, 77-143, p.114.

¹⁵³ See Hedley Bull, ‘Great Irresponsibles? The United States, The Soviet Union and the World Order’, *International Journal*, 35, 1979, pp.437-447 for discussion of different and similar approaches by Great Powers and countries that see themselves as belonging to the group of Great Powers.

What actually constitutes a normal country has not been defined. What unites some states is the similarity between them in terms of state identity. Sometimes state identity effectively replaces national identity. This is the case especially when looking at multinational states. But Russia does not fit into this pattern, and instead state identity, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, has been a mishmash of everything. Through the concept of being a Great Power Russia has worked best with countries that share Great Power interests and also politics. The road has not been easy to be part of today's Great Powers and this particular feature relating to the difficulties of state identity has been a source of cooperation and conflict in Russia's relations with the Western countries, as Iver Neumann's argument summarised in the previous chapter has shown.

In this chapter the attempt is made to bring under the magnifying glass concepts that seem to be very persistent in Russian historical foreign policy discourse, while recognising that not all historical references necessarily translate to today's world; 'Discontinuity is as permanent a feature of history as continuity'.¹⁵⁴

Leading western historians of Russian national and imperial identity – Geoffrey Hosking, Hugh Seton-Watson, Vera Tolz and Ronald Suny - have identified a number of factors which have been a persistent part of the Russian great power thinking since the time of Ivan the Terrible, or the Napoleonic wars, or Peter the Great respectively: imperialism, expansionism, isolationism, multilateralism, and sovereignty.¹⁵⁵ Liah Greenfeld further identified *ressentiment* as a part of Russia's great power thinking from the late eighteenth century on.¹⁵⁶ As well as the late imperial period, historians identify each of these factors as present in Soviet foreign policy making at certain periods.¹⁵⁷ Contemporary observers in the Soviet period also noted the presence of each of these factors,¹⁵⁸ while political scientists and international relations specialists who refer back to trends already present in the Soviet

¹⁵⁴ Ruhl, 2004, p. 24

¹⁵⁵ Ronald Grigor Suny, 'The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, "National" Identity, and Theories of Empire' in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (eds), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 23-66; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: a History*, London: Allen Lane, 2001; Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp.280-331.

¹⁵⁶ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, pp.189-274.

¹⁵⁷ Robert Craig Nation, *Black Earth, Red Star: a History of Soviet Security Policy, 1917-1991*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

¹⁵⁸ Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: the History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1967*, New York, Praeger, 1968; Alexander Dallin (ed.) *Soviet Conduct in World Affairs*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1960; Seweryn Bialer, *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1981.

period, have also identified imperialism, expansionism, isolationism, sovereignty, multilateralism and *ressentiment* as continuing factors.¹⁵⁹

The notion that there are persistent factors providing continuity across the ages in Russian foreign policy is not a new one. In addition to the historians mentioned above, Alfred J. Rieber has written: ‘This chapter accepts the premise of continuity in Russian foreign policy but rejects single-factor, determinist theories’.¹⁶⁰ His four persistent factors are economic backwardness, porous frontiers, multinational society and cultural alienation. All of these can be found in relation to greatpowerness and, while the persistent factors used in this chapter are differently formulated, Rieber’s factors can all be included. Rieber sums up the importance of such factors as follows: ‘Persistent factors have a long term horizon; they make up the geographical and cultural dimensions of Russian foreign policy’.¹⁶¹

These are the factors in Russian great power thinking that are focussed on in this study, as each is related to Greatpowerness and is evident, to different degrees, in each of the case study chapters. They are not all present all of the time, and sometimes are in competition with each other. They do, however, run through the remainder of this dissertation: imperialism, sovereignty and expansionism appear in chapter 4; sovereignty, and multilateralism and isolationism posed as alternatives in chapter 5; isolationism, *ressentiment* and sovereignty play a part in chapter 6, along with the liberal notion of norms and values and the realist notion of interests; multilateralism again plays a role in chapter 7, while sovereignty comes into conflict with international obligations, until both are trumped by the politics of *ressentiment*.

Russian foreign policy searches for its sources from past experiences that are not dependent on time, state system or ideology. Since the concepts can be tracked far back in history, it can be stated that they are the cornerstones of Russian state identity in international relations. All the concepts have their own specificities. They are used simultaneously but their position in the foreign policy priority list keeps changing depending

¹⁵⁹ Nicolai N. Petro and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy: from Empire to Nation-State* New York: Longman, 1996; Robert Legvold, ‘The role of multilateralism in Russian foreign policy’ in Elana Wilson Rowe and Stina Torjesen (eds), *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 2009; Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium: a Eurasian Story*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011; Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, , *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing System, Enduring Interests*. Armonk, NY: M.E.Sharpe, 2005; all chapters in Robert Legvold (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century & The Shadow of the Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

¹⁶⁰ Alfred J. Rieber, ‘How persistent are persistent factors?’, in Legvold (ed.), *Russian foreign policy in the 21st Century & the Shadow of the past*, p.205.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.211.

on time. This makes reading of Russian foreign policy challenging. An increasing literature of the analysis of continuity and change has been appearing from 2000 onwards.¹⁶²

For the attempt to uncover Russian foreign policy behaviour in its encounters with international organisations it is essential to understand the underlying concepts that have been influencing Russian foreign policy making for centuries. So it is central to our understanding of current Russian foreign policy to be aware of how Russia uses concepts of international relations and, indeed, what translates from the past into current policies.

3.2 Russian foreign policy schools

The direction and the nature of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation since the break up of the Soviet Union has been debated both in domestic discussions in Russia, and by analysts and academics in the West and elsewhere. The debates reflect visions of what kind of a state Russia should be. The nature of the state is essential when it comes to the selection of foreign policy orientation as well.

Traditionally Russian foreign policy thinking has been put into three different categories that have then competed in the foreign policy establishment for the leading place. Alla Kassianova has observed: 'Most authors who have written on the evolution of the foreign policy discourse in Russia follow the method of breaking Russian political society into groups based on their ideological orientations, and comparing their respective narratives on key topics of Russian domestic and foreign policies.'¹⁶³ Both domestic and outside factors have influenced how the different groups have been in the leading place and then changed places. The common way of breaking the political society into groups is to define three categories.¹⁶⁴ The categories according to Andrei Tsygankov are westernisers, statist and

¹⁶² Tsygankov, 2006; Donaldson and Noguee 2009; Jyotsina Bakshi, , 'Russia's national security concepts and military doctrines: Continuity and change', *Strategic Analysis*, 2000, Vol.24, issue 7, pp.1267-1284, Alla Kassianova, 'Russia: Still Open to the West? Evolution of the State Identity in the Foreign Policy and Security Discourse', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2001, Vol.53, issue 6, pp.821-839

¹⁶³ Kassianova, 'Russia: Still Open to the West?', p.824

¹⁶⁴ Some examples: Margot Light, 'Foreign policy thinking', in Neil Malcolm, Alex Pravda, Roy Allison and Margot Light (eds), *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, Oxford: Royal Institute of International Affairs and Clarendon Press, 1996, 33-100, p.34; Vladimir Lukin, 'Our Security Predicament', *Foreign Policy*, no.88, Fall 1992, 57-75, pp.65-66; Alexei Pushkov, 'Russia and America: Honeymoon's Over', *Foreign Policy*, no.93, Winter 1993-94, 76-90, pp.78-81 (Pushkov identifies four groups); Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS – Theories, debates and action*, London: Routledge, 2003, pp.36-37.

civilizationists.¹⁶⁵ Igor A Zevelev's equivalent groups are liberals, Great Power balancers and nationalists.¹⁶⁶

Bobo Lo has argued that this categorization has its drawbacks. In his view the most important drawback is inflexibility, once a label has been given to a person it tends to stick. This categorization gives insufficient account to changing allegiances of participants seduced one way or another by self-interests and short term political imperatives. Furthermore Lo argues: 'Labels are also highly normative, and often reflect the commentator's biases as much, if not more so, than those of the subject.'¹⁶⁷ Lo's point is very relevant but it does not undermine the bigger picture where different lines for Russian foreign policy orientation are visible. Individuals can change camps and analysis can enhance their own preferences but the overall picture remains the same. Furthermore, it can be argued that the three different groups have something in common in the Great Power identity. The concepts looked at here can be found in all of the groups but arguments are framed differently. Nevertheless, it is useful to consider the viewpoints of the different camps while at the same time bearing in mind Lo's cautions.

Russian statistes come closest to the Western realist thinking, and are also known as eurasianist or liberal nationalist. This group could be broken down further along a variety of different lines. Statists believe that foreign policy should be guided by national interests defined realistically with regard to the Russian geopolitical security situation, domestic economic objectives and available resources. During Vladimir Putin's presidency this line was also called pragmatist. It can be argued that the statistes are the most influential group in Russian foreign policy. They see the state as a central actor governing and preserving the social and political order. For statistes one important defining concept in foreign policy making is the notion of external threat. The concept of external threat is also seen in domestic politics. *Ressentiment* is one of the ways this characteristic translates into policies.

The Russian school of Westernisers (*zapadniki*) have been called atlanticist, liberals, democrats and even 'international institutionalist'. For this group the West was the referent for Russian evolving state identity. Russian discourses of modernization have roots in this thinking, Russia needs to become a modern state in the Western style. Westernisers emphasise the Russian similarity with the West and view the West as the most viable and

¹⁶⁵ Tsygankov, 2006, p.4

¹⁶⁶ Igor A. Zevelev, ISA paper 2012

¹⁶⁷ Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era – Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002, p.41

progressive civilisation in the world. For Westernisers the ideas of multilateralism and international cooperation are essential elements of international politics.

The last group – civilizationists - are also known as slavophiles (*slavyanofily*) or nationalists.¹⁶⁸ This group seek their arguments from what they call Russian inheritance and values. They see the international environment as hostile. For them the West is a threat to Russian values and the vast land mass as essential for Russian greatness. Those subscribing to this group often circulate isolationist ideas. Their foreign policy discourse exploits mythologised narratives of Russian civilisational uniqueness and ‘mission’. For civilisationists the idea of the ‘Russian Empire’ has been in the core of thinking. The civilizationists object to both Western and Asian influence in Russia, seeking Slavic unity.

In Russia’s policies towards the West and especially Europe three main groups of foreign policy thinking can be identified. They can be named as Europhiles, Eurasianists and Europhobics (see table 1.). This follows the lines of the three main Russian schools in relation to foreign relations.

¹⁶⁸ See e.g. Iver.B.Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe*, London: Routledge 1996

Table 3.1 Russian foreign policy orientations towards Europe

Russia	<u>Europhiles</u> (also known as westernisers, liberal internationalist, atlanticist)	<u>Eurasians</u> (also known as pragmatic nationalist, statist)	<u>Europhobes</u> (also known as civilizationist, slavophiles, patriots)
Russia's relations to Europe	Integral and undivided part of Europe	Semi-integral part of Europe	Separate cultural entity
European values (rule of law, human rights, democracy)	Russia should adapt without questions to those values	Russia should pick up those parts that fit Russia	Different values (Collective thinking and spiritual unity)
Russia's position in Europe	Great Power through soft power elements	Global Great Power	Global Great Power
Identity	European	Multinational	Russian
The form of state	Democratic state with strong president and rule of law	Semi-democracy, centralized power, weak institutions	Autocracy with people's forum. Leader listens to people
Central national interests	Economic policy	Security policy	Social and regional policy
Foreign policy	Eurocentric – Russia is a European Great Power	Great power politics, USA, China equals with Russia	Slavic unity, Russia as the protector of the slavic cultural inheritance a unique Great Power

These three dominant lines of thinking on foreign policy can be seen as a fact of continuity in Russian foreign policy. Arguably it could be stated that these factors have been present as a type of a philosophy in Russian foreign policy thinking since the Russian adoption of Orthodox Christianity in 988, although it took centuries before the idea of ‘third Rome’ was introduced in the 15th century and became an active concept during the reign of Ivan IV (the terrible) who was first crowned as the Tsar of all Russians in 1547.

The Russian leading political elite, individual leaderships and the outside world have had influence on which group has had the leading position in Russian foreign policy. This change of power balance in the Russian foreign policy philosophies has often been viewed in the West as a change in foreign policy orientation. The groups have different emphases, rhetoric and methods to go by, but the underlining fact is that all of them have at least one unifying notion and that is the notion of Russia as a Great Power whether it is in a European, global or regional context. The different lines can also exist simultaneously even relating to the same topic but in different forums. This confuses the picture even further.

3.3 *Derzhavnost* - Great Power thinking uniting Russian foreign policy groups

For Russians, *derzhavnost*’ is more like an emotion, it is a craving for a status which most Russians strongly believe is theirs by right, by virtue of the enormous size of the country, its resources, its history. In the past this feeling has been expressed ideologically in terms of Russia as the defender of Christendom or as the guardian of international communism. However, its roots are deeper than these obsolete ideologies. Russia’s leading role in the Concert of Europe in the nineteenth century and its place as one of the two great superpowers for much of the twentieth century have left the impression that Russia is, and should be treated as, at least on a level with the world’s other great powers.

Russia’s greatpowerness is based on its large size, military might and cultural impacts, and yet it still does not translate into the economic power that has been the aim of Russian foreign and domestic policy for centuries without success. Furthermore Russia has been too weak to survive on its own and too large to have natural allies. The importance of *derzhavnost*’ as a key element in Russian state identity with important impacts on foreign policy making has been recognized by scholars for some time. In a statement of this relationship, Margot Light has argued that ‘Russia was clearly not a superpower; indeed, it was questionable whether it was a great power. Yet to ordinary people, as well as to

politicians, it was unthinkable that Russia could be anything less than this. The insistence that Russia should be regarded as a great power became an important theme in foreign policy statements and discussions and it remains an important driver of foreign policy'. Light goes on to argue that '...Russia's identity could be established by defining its foreign policy principles'.¹⁶⁹

George Friedman stated after president Putin's speech at Munich's security forum in February 2007 'The Cold War has not returned, but Russia is now officially asserting itself as a great power, and behaving accordingly'.¹⁷⁰ While the war with Georgia in August 2008 was the most extreme manifestation of a new, more assertive direction in Russian foreign policy, most observers had noticed this new direction long before, with the Munich speech clearly marking a watershed regarding how Russia argued about itself in the world arena. As Dmitri Trenin put it at the beginning of 2008, the Munich speech was a signal of 'Russia's return to the traditional status of an independent player on the international stage, unencumbered by any relationship of "complex subordination" to the West'.¹⁷¹ This was not mere rhetoric. As another observer noted in a review of Russian foreign policy for the year 2007, it was 'the year Vladimir Putin implicitly compared the United States to the Third Reich. It was the year Moscow threatened to target its missiles at Europe and was accused of carrying out a cyber-attack on a NATO member. It was the year Russia pulled out of a key arms-control treaty and resumed strategic-bomber patrols. And it was the year that...the last remnants of the vaunted strategic partnership between Russia and the West appeared headed for the dustbin of history'.¹⁷²

The shift led some commentators to talk of a new Cold War,¹⁷³ and while this never fully materialised the differences were clear. Beforehand, Russia's leading politicians concentrated on the need and aspiration to become a great power again, but with his Munich speech president Putin defined Russia as a great power. For example, in his 2000 State of the Nation speech Putin argued:

¹⁶⁹ Light, 2010, p. 229

¹⁷⁰ Friedman, 2007

¹⁷¹ cited in Lyne, 2008

¹⁷² Whitmore, 2007

¹⁷³ For a balanced discussion of the significance of the Munich speech, see Monaghan, 2008, pp.719-22.

The only real choice for Russia is the choice of a strong country. A country that is strong and confident of itself. Strong not in defiance of the international community, not against other strong nations, but together with them.¹⁷⁴

and again in 2003:

Now we must take the next step and focus all our decisions and all our action on ensuring that in a not too far off future, Russia will take its recognized place among the ranks of the truly strong, economically advanced and influential nations.¹⁷⁵

The underlying message here is that Russia has been a great power, it has had its weak moments but it is a great country by potential and the future will show to those that cast a doubt over this claim that Russia will again be recognized as a great power. On other occasions Putin did not admit any doubts about Russia's great power status. In an interview with the newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* in June 2000 it was put to Putin that 'there is some concern in the West about renewed Russian claims to the status of a great power', to which he replied: 'Russia is not claiming a great power status. It is a great power by virtue of its huge potential, its history and culture'.¹⁷⁶ President Medvedev has since the start of his presidency used the term 'Russia as a Great Power' on every possible occasion, from speeches in the domestic political arena to talks with the presidents of China, France and other nations. Russian greatpowerness can also be viewed as primarily resting on nuclear weapons, as Sergei Kortunov from the committee on international affairs of the Duma's upper house described it:

Russia is a great power in terms of its political importance, intellectual might and influence on global affairs, including as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and corresponding responsibilities. Apart from this, as well as the geopolitical situation and the existence of nuclear weapons (Russia is a military superpower without a doubt), other proof of Russia's great power status are its current and future opportunities of a resource provider, its hard-working and intellectual population, and the high scientific and technological potential. These factors (territory, technological and human potential, and the existence of nearly all types of raw materials and resources) objectively make Russia a major

¹⁷⁴ Putin, 2000a

¹⁷⁵ Putin, 2003

¹⁷⁶ Putin, 2000b

world power.¹⁷⁷

This description underlines a major feature of Russian claims to greatpowerness, which was also present in many of Putin's earlier statements – potential.

The undoubted source of Russian greatpowerness has been the Russian military and nuclear arsenal as well as characteristics of imperialism. The characteristics of imperialism, weak or not, functioning or not, bring with them a notion of greatness too. As Richard Pipes has put it:

Russia is torn by contradictory pulls, one oriented inward, hence isolationist, the other imperialist. The population at large, preoccupied with physical survival, displays little interest in foreign policy, taking in stride the loss of empire and the world influence that went with it. People pine for normality, which they associate with life in the West as depicted in foreign films and television programs. Depoliticized, they are unresponsive to ideological appeals, although not averse to blaming all their troubles on foreigners. But for the ruling elite and much of the intelligentsia, accustomed to being regarded as citizens of a great power, the country's decline to Third World status has been traumatic. They are less concerned with low living standards than the loss of power and influence, perhaps because inwardly they doubt whether Russia can ever equal the West in anything else. Power and influence for them take the form of imperial splendor and military might second to none.¹⁷⁸

In this conception the empire has more to do with the size and influence of the country than with being a classic imperium with colonies. Russian imperial character still lies in its image of a military power and a status that it has automatically through the size of the country. According to Pipes' argument, for the ordinary people the status of a great power is not as important as it is for the elite and intelligentsia. However, recently opinion polls have shown a slightly different picture.

In an August 2008 poll conducted by FOM, 60 percent of those that answered saw Russia as a great power, in comparison to 21 percent in 1996. The most popular view of respondents regarding the sources for Russia greatpowerness concerned the size of the country (large territory), its strength (strong state), natural resources, 'Russia has always been

¹⁷⁷ Kortunov, 2006

¹⁷⁸ Pipes, 1997, p. 68.

a great power', Russia is feared, its voice is heard and it has a say in important international matters, Russia has authority in international matters and its army is powerful.¹⁷⁹ Also noteworthy is the fact that 72% of all respondents place Russia among the 10 most important countries in the world. Out of those 44% see Russia belonging to the five leading countries and 7% place Russia as a leader of the world.¹⁸⁰ This opinion poll is only one example of how Russian people view their own country's position in the world order. One of the main themes of Putin's official speeches throughout his presidencies was Russia's belonging to the group of great (Russian *velikaya*) nations. Towards the end of his second term in office, Putin dropped the conditionality and claimed Russia to be a great power. The opinion poll shows that this message has been delivered well.

The fact that Russian greatpowerness has been a part of its identity, and has often been a uniting factor for the nation in hard times, also has a downside. The thirst for greatpowerness has had its costs. For the political elite it has been important to maintain the picture of Russia as a great power but the drive to play a part in global politics and also be influential in the world has made some domestic developments suffer as well:

One legacy passed on to us from our Soviet foreign policy was a 'superpower mentality' and a subsequent striving to participate in any and all more or less significant international developments, which often bore a greater domestic cost than the country could afford.¹⁸¹

The problems that Russia has had during its history regarding reforms and modernisation efforts have often had their roots in the drive for great power status, either to maintain or to gain it. Russia has often embarked on the road to reforms when it has detected some weaknesses in its own system and the understanding has been that without reforms Russia's great power status might be questioned. However, the limits of the reforms have also been defined by the framework of a great power status. Wars, the inflexibility of political structures and the fear of losing Great Power status have then worked in the opposite direction. One of the best examples is Gorbachev's Russia. The reforms started precisely from the view that if the Soviet Union will not reform/modernise, it will lose its superpower status. The reforms then turned out to be half hearted due to the fact that they led to the

¹⁷⁹ FOM, 2008. The opinion poll was conducted on 23-24 August 2008. The war in Georgia was in early August. This poll shows also that in the eyes of the Russian people the war only reinforced Russia's Great Power status, not the other way around.

¹⁸⁰ *Idem*

¹⁸¹ Ivanov, 2006

Soviet Union's great power status being questioned. This is well illustrated, especially regarding the thinking in the ranks of military leaders and security service elite, by Mar L. Haas in his book 'The Ideological Thinking of Great Power Politics 1789-1989'.¹⁸² Soviet reactions to the events in Riga and in Vilnius in early 1991 provide good examples, as do the wars in Chechnya and the five day war between Russia and Georgia in 2008, of the consequences of a state reacting on the basis of the view of itself as a Great Power.

The fundamental problem of Russia's great power status has always been Russia's economic structure as compared to the Western economies and its style of governance. Celeste A. Wallander and Eugene B Rumer have argued:

What defines a great power if not a colossal geographic expanse, rapid economic growth, a vast nuclear arsenal, a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, and the unique ability to obliterate the United States at the flick of a switch? With all of these traits, plus vast quantities of energy resources and vital raw materials, wide-reaching political influence, and a dynamic leader, Russia appears to have what it takes to be a great power. The reality, however, is that these very elements that scholars and observers readily identify as key attributes are actually sources of weakness for Russia and thus significantly limit the country's ability to act as a desirable partner for managing the global challenges of terrorism, proliferation, underdevelopment, and instability.¹⁸³

As Wallander and Rumer show, Russian great power status is contradictory, on the one hand, it has it, and on the other hand, a shadow has been cast over it. The great power status is often an asset in Russian domestic politics and at the same time a stumbling block in domestic reforms.

3.4 History and national interest

National interest plays a great part in discourses of Russian politics, as it does in other countries. But what defines the national interest? Contemporary understandings of the national interest, at least in Russia, are strongly linked to the past through continuity and/or current perceptions of the past. Russia's past has largely been that of a great power, and so those interests are the interests of a great power. History is a subject that is highly regarded

¹⁸² Haas, 2005, pp. 176-210

¹⁸³ Wallander and Rumer, 2003

in Russia and people are proud of its history. ‘We (Russians) are attracted to history. As respected Soviet academician Pokrovsky has said, history is politics which is created through the past. Historical analogues are used a lot in Russia.’¹⁸⁴ Russian Great Power identity finds many of its building materials in the past and in the light of what history has always meant to Russians, history has also become an essential element of Russian self-perceptions as a Great Power. This is also very visible in Russia-West relations today.

The Russian imperial past has cast a shadow over its nation-state building, in fact it can be argued that history and the imperial past as a building block for Russian greatpowerness very much stand in the way of Russian modernisation projects. Since the rulers of Russia were most of the time interested in the first place in maintaining the power of their dynasty, state building or development occurred only when a leader felt there was a need for it. The need could be internal or external, but most of the time the external was used for internal purposes.

There was a separation of different classes in imperial Russia. ‘In what might be called the “imperial imaginary” rulers did not so much want the ruled to identify with them but rather emphasized the distance and difference between monarchs, nobles and ordinary subjects’.¹⁸⁵ This created a situation where people identified themselves primarily with locality, religion and family. This distance of power from the people in the early 19th century marked empire and differentiated Russia from the nation-state building of future centuries.¹⁸⁶ But to hold an empire together a bigger framework was needed and became important in times of invasions or offensives. By using the concept of Great Power, Russia has been able to form a functionable national and state identity. And to push the argument a bit further, Russians have especially in times of trouble sought unity in the concept of greatpowerness as national strength. This is regardless of which school of foreign policy you belong to.

The three different foreign policy schools have slightly different interpretations of the past and especially disagree over when have been the greatest moments of Russian history. For the westernisers what has moved Russia forward is its interactions with the West, in particular with Europe, and the leaders to remember are those that have brought reforms to Russia: Peter the Great, Alexander II and Gorbachev. For statist the times of Russian

¹⁸⁴ Alexei Makarkin, interview in Moscow, May 2011

¹⁸⁵ Ronald G Suny, ‘Thinking about feelings – Affective Dispositions and emotional ties in Imperial Russia and Ottoman Empire’, in Mark D. Steinberg and Valeria Sobol (eds) *Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe*, DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011, 102-127, p.111

¹⁸⁶ Suny, 2011, p.111

expansionism and great alliances are the times to remember and leaders like Catherine the Great, Alexander I and III as well as Stalin are those that should be looked up to. For the slavophiles the times before Peter the Great, when the Orthodox Church was still strong and the Byzantine world had a strong position are the times when the real Russia existed. In alliances the slavophiles see Slavic brotherhood as the workable concept. Their historical figures are Tolstoy, Solzhenitsyn and Ivan III.

The influence of historical continuity on current foreign policy making is still very understudied in general, although often stated, and in Russia's case too often foreign policy analysts rush to conclude that 'it is a Soviet type of thinking' or 'the Russian empire is back', without further explanations. Former Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov has written about the past and foreign policy as follows: 'No state can recreate its foreign policy from scratch simply because of particular domestic political changes, even if such change is profound. Foreign policy objectively reflects the characteristics of how a country – its culture, economy, geopolitical situation - have historically developed, and therefore is a complex alloy, comprising elements of both continuity and renewal, which defies expression in an exact formula. It is common that what appears to be a fundamentally new direction for foreign policy actually turns out to be yet another variation of a traditional policy repackaged in a form more in line with the spirit of the times'.¹⁸⁷ Ivanov's statement clearly shows how state identity takes building blocks from the past. This naturally translates to all the states from their own perspectives.

Part of the Western understanding of Russia has been influenced by two very famous and over used statements. The often quoted words of Winston Churchill 'Russia is a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma, but there is a key and that key is Russian national interest' counter balances Tjuchev's vision of Russia, that it cannot be understood with reason. The interesting factor here is that they were both constructed in times when Russia has been regarded as a Great Power in European politics and they both in the end help very little to understand the strategic thinking of Russian foreign policy.

In the 2000s under president Putin the policy of pragmatism was introduced into Russian foreign policy. With the 'policy of pragmatism' Russians have wanted to show that precisely national interests are the guiding lines for Russian foreign policy, the Winstonian way of explaining Russia. The problem with that naturally has been that national interests are not an easily defined concept.

¹⁸⁷ Ivanov, 2002, p.18

The core ideas of national interests are based on basic needs of a state; to guarantee its external and internal security and territorial integrity. The assumption is that all other policies are subordinated to these two main lines. It seemed that even in the mid 2000s president Putin still viewed that the main Russian challenges were external and internal security and territorial integrity; ‘We need armed forces able to simultaneously fight in global, regional and - if necessary - also in several local conflicts. We need armed forces that guarantee Russia’s security and territorial integrity no matter what the scenario’.¹⁸⁸ Many might agree with the president’s analysis. Why this is significant is that for the purposes of maintaining Russian greatpowerness there has been a strong need to argue, whatever the historical period, that Russia is faced with several external and internal security threats.

The historical perspective shows that to uncover Russia is not to only identify Russian national interests but to understand how they are formed and shaped. National interest formation can be seen as a result of interactions with the world and in Russia’s case especially as a result of its interactions with the West, through both multilateral and bilateral relations. National traditions, current concerns and state capacity as the general causal mechanism of national interest formation can also be identified.¹⁸⁹ Thereby they do also play strongly into Russia’s behavior in international organizations.

The influence of the past is also strongly present in national interest formation. Alfred J. Rieber has argued that the Russian national interest has been shaped by four factors that have been present in Russia for centuries: economic backwardness compared to the Western world, porous or vulnerable frontiers, Russian multiculturalism and cultural alienation that refers to geographical, and political and historical factors that have contributed to the fact that Russia is engaged with but distinctive from Europe.¹⁹⁰ Also in Rieber’s argument outside factors play a very significant role in national interest and foreign policy making. He sees seven external factors that have strongly influenced Russian national interest formation and foreign policy choices during the 20th and 21st century.

The first is in the first half of the 20th century the rise and expansion of Germany and Japan, secondly the emergence of the United States as a world power, arguably replacing the United Kingdom, after the second world war, thirdly the reunification of China in 1949, the fourth significant factor was the decolonization and birth of new sovereign states, the creation

¹⁸⁸ Vladimir Putin, speech, Annual Address to Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, May 10 2006

¹⁸⁹ Anderi P. Tsygankov, *Russia’s foreign policy – change and continuity in national identity*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006, p.174

¹⁹⁰ Rieber, ‘How persistent are persistent factors?’, pp.205-278

of nuclear weapons had a significant impact in international and national policies, and since the collapse of the Soviet Union the most significant challenges Russian foreign policy making has had to face are the sixth and seventh factors: NATO expansion and the presence of the United States in the area of the former Soviet Union.¹⁹¹ Finally a factor that has to be mentioned as influential for Russian foreign policy and national interest formation is the factor of leadership.¹⁹² All of these factors are one way or other present in current Russian policies. The factors that exert most influence in the case studies of this thesis are the factor of leadership, NATO expansion and the role of the USA in Europe and in the former Soviet Union.

Robert Cooper has put it ‘to understand the present, we must first understand the past, for the past is still with us’.¹⁹³ Russian greatpowerness has been built on the Russian historical past, sometimes with selective understanding of history for the purposes of the state power. This factor is one of the most important factors when trying to understand Russian Great Power identity.

3.5 Imperialism and Expansionism

There has been a great deal of discussion of imperialism and expansionism in the context of Russian politics. The goal in both is an empire. As Ronald G. Suny has defined empire: “Empire was a polity based on conquest, difference between the ruling institution and its subjects, and the subordination of periphery to the imperial center.”¹⁹⁴ Historical Empires can be compared with today’s Great Powers. Expansionism, according to Jack Snyder, is a central myth of empire and is justified by the idea that it is the only way of safeguarding the state’s security.¹⁹⁵ A central belief of those statesmen and strategists that have aimed to strengthen the state has been summed up in the words of a minister of Catherine the Great: “That which ceases to grow begins to rot”.¹⁹⁶

In a classic formulation by Johan Galtung, Imperialism is defined as ‘a special type of dominance of one collectivity, usually a nation, over another’. Galtung concluded that there

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 212

¹⁹² Ibid. p.213

¹⁹³ Robert Cooper, ‘The post Modern State’, The Foreign Policy Centre, 2000.

¹⁹⁴ Suny, 2011, p.111

¹⁹⁵ Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire – Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991, p.1

¹⁹⁶ Robert Jervis, ‘Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma’, *World Politics*, Vol.30, No.2, January, 1978, pp.167-214, p.186

were five types of imperialism: economic, political, military, communication and cultural imperialism.¹⁹⁷ Especially in the postcolonial era, then, imperialism can be conducted through non-military means and without direct political subordination. The connected concept of expansionism refers to the tendency to increase a state's territory either directly or through influence. While it is perhaps anachronistic to talk about imperialism and expansionism in the classical sense today, related tendencies can be seen especially in Russia's attitude to its 'near abroad' – the other post-Soviet states which in aggregate formed the historic Imperial territory of both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Those countries which joined the Commonwealth of Independent States, i.e. excluding the three Baltic states, constitute an important and distinctive focus of Russian foreign policy.

These two concepts are closely associated with Russia. Russia has been the third largest empire in human history, and the largest for most of the last four hundred years. It was also an autocratic state for centuries and expansionism has been one of its state building forms. Russia's search for raw materials and seaports and the continuing need for secure borders have created in Russia something that Emil Pain calls 'an imperial syndrome'. The Imperial syndrome has several basic elements. The first element is 'the imperial body', the territories that have been included in the Russian empire and then the Soviet empire. The imperial principle calls for the retention of these territories. The second element is 'imperial consciousness' that includes a continuing hope for a 'wise tsar' to lead the country and also the division of peoples between 'big brothers and younger brothers'. The third element is 'imperial power' that is estranged from society.¹⁹⁸

All of Pain's imperial syndrome elements have an influence on foreign policy making. The imperial syndrome is also a very significant part of the Great Power thinking that exists in Russia. Russia's need to maintain some kind of hold on the 'imperial body' which it has held for the past three centuries has caused many foreign policy headaches for Western countries, but especially Russia's neighbours, in their dealings with Russia and vice versa. It has confused Putin's otherwise very pragmatic looking foreign policy agenda to the extent that many western analysts have started to talk about empire building in Russian foreign policy. Perceptions are still in evidence that echo Britain's foreign secretary Lord Palmerstone in 1860: 'The Russian government perpetually declares that Russia wants no increases of territory, that the Russian dominions are already too large. But while making

¹⁹⁷ Johan Galtung, 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.8, no.2, 1971, pp.16-17.

¹⁹⁸ Pain, 2005

these declarations in the most solemn manner, every year it adds large tracts of territory to the Russian dominions not for the purpose of adding territory but carefully directed to occupation of certain strategical points, as starting points for further encroachments or as posts from whence some neighbouring states may be kept under control or may be threatened with invasion'.¹⁹⁹

The imperial body element is the one that gets most attention, since its implications are the most concrete ones, but the elements of imperial consciousness and imperial power are far more important when trying to understand Russian foreign policy decision making and behaviour. It is very important to keep in mind that while talking about imperialism, it is not a determinist theory and does not make Russia an enemy. Both imperialist thinking and expansionist actions have been dismissed at all official levels as not playing a part in Russian foreign policy. Putin himself has said, 'a fundamental aim of our policy is not to demonstrate imperial ambitions but to ensure an external environment favourable to Russia's development'.²⁰⁰

After the break up of the Soviet Union the first two years passed in trying to come up with a new form of Foreign Policy for the Russian Federation. 'There is no reason to doubt the good intentions of the policy's authors: they sincerely wanted to advance Russian foreign policy to a new level of relations with the civilized nations of the world and transcend the traditional framework of geopolitics and strategic balances and they sought to found these relations on common values and international law'.²⁰¹ The road proved to have many difficulties. The domestic situation turned against liberal policies. People started to grow more and more dissatisfied towards reforms and the effect on foreign policy was that Russia started to promote a more nationalistic line. This had an especially profound effect on Russia's relations with the former Soviet republics.

The CIS itself as well as Russian policies towards the CIS region stand out as a grey area of Post-Soviet politics. The idea of forming the CIS was good and stressed, with or without intention, the new situation and Russian willingness to work in a multilateral framework. At the same time it echoed voices from the past. The issue that has become a problem in the cooperation among the CIS states in the CIS framework is that Russia does want a dominant position in the former Soviet space, which does undermine genuine multilateral cooperation. Since 1992 Russia's 'near abroad' has been held up as one of the

¹⁹⁹ Donaldson and Noguee, 2005: 33

²⁰⁰ www.president.kremlin.ru/

²⁰¹ Arbatov, 2004, p.139

top priorities of Russian foreign policy, at least as far as the rhetoric goes. Already in February 1993 President Yeltsin appealed to the UN to delegate to Russia the mission of ensuring stability and carrying out peacekeeping operations within the geopolitical space of the former Soviet Union.²⁰²

David Lake has argued in regard to Russia's relationship to CIS countries: 'The theory [that autocracies will tend to possess an imperial bias in their foreign policy] provides a sketchy road map for the future. Most pointedly, it suggests that at least some of the successor states are likely to be reintegrated into an informal, if not formal, Russian empire either voluntarily, in order to realize scale economies while minimizing the expected costs of opportunism, or by force, especially if the antireform forces prove politically triumphant in Russia'.²⁰³

The different Russian foreign policy schools all saw the area of the former Soviet Union as one of the priority areas of Russian foreign policy. However some differences can be found. The statist took the agenda to protect Russia as their strongest line and gained popularity with that. It meant that the instabilities and conflicts in the area of the former Soviet Union were identified and it was argued that Russia needs to get involved and increase their influence in the area to protect Russian security.

The CIS region has always been a very touchy subject for Russians. Yeltsin, in his State of the Nation speech in 1996 stated that 'We are disturbed by attempts to oppose Russia's interest in the Commonwealth of Independent States, during efforts for a Yugoslav settlement, and on the questions of achieving a balance of conventional arms in Europe and preserving the effectiveness of the Treaty on the Limitation of Antibalistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty). Hotbeds of local conflict persist along Russia's borders'.²⁰⁴ He continued to stress that the integration process within the CIS was deepening. From these statements it is easy to get the picture that CIS policy was coherent and solid from Moscow, but this was not the case. Many inside of Russia argued at the time that Russia should pull out of the CIS' institutional development and first take care of its internal problems and concentrate on the Russian economy.²⁰⁵ The difficulties associated with the reunification of West and East Germany had not gone unnoticed in Russia, a lesson which further discouraged any moves towards fuller integration between economically unbalanced countries. Even today many

²⁰² Webber, 1996, pp.89-90

²⁰³ Lake, 1997, p.57

²⁰⁴ Yeltsin, 1996

²⁰⁵ Kondrashov, 1996, p.3

seem to think that Russia should not integrate with CIS states but first look after itself.²⁰⁶ At the same time concerns were raised about the disorganised manner of Russian foreign policy-making, claiming with some reason that there was virtually no well-considered long-term policy in regard to bilateral relations with the CIS states, let alone the CIS as an organisation.²⁰⁷ These views were, though, whether based on a softer or tougher approach, scaled-down versions of the traditional Soviet and Imperial Russian policies of expanding the imperial perimeter at the expense of weaker neighbouring nations.²⁰⁸

In world history, when an empire breaks up, the ‘parent country’ itself must, one way or another, come to terms with the new situation. The British Empire, through its strong economic relationships, language, education system and its regal symbols, has managed to maintain a position of respect in countries that were part of the empire. In Turkey, the remains of the Ottoman Empire still have their own areas of interest and the keenness to teach Turkish-based languages extensively beyond the present borders. Even in Italy, the heart of the Roman Empire, an imperialist attitude can occasionally be seen. Imperialism takes many forms. Broadly speaking, imperialism can be divided into four main categories. Traditional strong imperialism is based on the occupation of another country and ruling it. There is the concept of so-called liberal imperialism, which is based on Robert Cooper’s ideas, and relies on economic strength. Soft imperialism is achieved through culture and language. *De facto* imperialism is where the other country is not occupied, but other means are used for the decision-making to be dictated by the ‘parent country’.

Since the Yeltsin era seems to be remembered as a time when their country lost some of its geopolitical role in the world, in Putin’s Russia the attention towards the CIS only intensified, but arguably this time through Geo-economics along the lines of Cooper’s idea of liberal empire. One of the most notable elements of this geo-economics is two energy companies that have been expanding and buying themselves intensively into the markets of the CIS area. Russia has made use of the Gazprom gas company and the Unified Energy Systems (UES) in its economical and political disputes with Kiev, Minsk and Tbilisi. ‘Formally, these disputes – particularly with Belarus and Ukraine - have been about integration, its format and scale, but in reality they have been about Russia’s participation in the privatisation projects within the CIS, its role and influence on the economics, and to a

²⁰⁶ Interview with Sergey Artobolevskiy, Moscow, February 18th 2004.

²⁰⁷ Karaganov, 1996, p. 2

²⁰⁸ Arbatov, 2004, p.143

lesser degree on the politics of the CIS countries'.²⁰⁹ As noted earlier in this article there has also been a growing aim, on Russia's initiative, to establish new multilateral integration structures and reshape old ones in the CIS area, particularly in the economic and also the security fields. This is one way to try to ensure continuing Russian dominance in the area. The colour revolutions that have occurred in the CIS area - the Rose revolution in Georgia in 2003 and the Orange revolution in Ukraine in 2004 - have made it clear that in case Russia still wants to maintain its dominant status the only way is to create an attractive Russian economy that ties in the neighbouring countries as well as a cooperative approach to Western organisations, especially to the EU, and embracing the idea of promoting democracy in the CIS states. It seems that some of the peculiarities and almost irrational behaviour by Russians in regard to the foreign policies towards the CIS countries can be best understood from the position of its imperial past and present. The growing stress in studies of Russia's international relations on its position with regard to the near abroad underline the Russian assumption that it has exclusive prerogatives in the region which come close to the post-War concept of 'spheres of influence'. This is one other way in which Russians have assumptions about their country's Great Power status, which are not necessarily shared by other countries.

3.6 Sovereignty made in Russia

Sovereignty is a concept that is very much in the first place associated with the realist school of international relations. John Ruggie's traditional definition of sovereignty as 'institutionalization of public authority within mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains'²¹⁰ represents the most widely accepted understanding among IR scholars. However the changing nature of international relations has also changed the ideas behind sovereignty. In globalised thinking the importance of the concept of human rights in international relations has tended to reduce the nature of sovereignty from being legally fixed towards being a subject of changing interpretations, as Barkin and Cronin have argued.²¹¹ Robert Keohane has argued though that sovereignty is a useful concept especially in today's international relations and should be viewed as an institution.²¹² Sovereign statehood as an institution has a set of

²⁰⁹ Kobrinskaya: 2004, p.90.

²¹⁰ John Ruggie, 'Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Towards a Neorealist Synthesis', in Keohane, Robert (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986pp.131-157, p.143

²¹¹ Samuel J. Barkin and Bruce Cronin, 'The state and the nation: changing norms and the rules of sovereignty in international relations', *International Organization*, vol.48, No.1, Winter, 1994, pp.107-30

²¹² Keohane, p.64.

persistent and connected rules prescribing behavioural roles, constraining activity and shaping expectations. Traditional sovereign statehood was an international institution prescribing fairly clear rules of behaviour.

Sovereignty was the central institution of international society between the late 17th and the mid 20th centuries and continues to be so in much of the world. An especially important time for the legal definition of sovereignty was the creation of the holy alliance in 1815. This was the time the concept of 'legitimate state' became an important principle in maintaining the balance of power in Europe, the nation became subordinated to the state.²¹³ However traditional sovereignty did not take into consideration the large-scale economic exchange under conditions of high interdependence which came to be a major force in the 20th century world. This drive to maximise economic profits (as well as the experience of World War II) has been one of the driving forces for institutionalism.

The concept of *sovereignty* is also a core notion in Russian foreign policy. The collapse of the Soviet Union was, among other things, a crisis of Russian statehood. To defend the principles of sovereignty has been one of Russia's national interests, in fact it is in any country's national interests. But with the state identity crises caused by the fall of Soviet Union, the sovereignty principal became all the more important. Its significance has been increasing at the beginning of the 21st century, at exactly the time when the new Russian Federation has been looking for its place in world politics and slowly but surely getting back to its feet after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Alexander Sergunin has observed: 'As these concepts (realism and geopolitics) refer to national interest, national security, national sovereignty and territory they seem a reliable theoretical basis for searching for a national identity. Russian and other countries' experience shows that these concepts may provide both society and the political elites with some intellectual support for building a foreign policy consensus'.²¹⁴

The concept of sovereignty is itself a complicated one. With globalization the idea of sovereignty has been questioned, some argue that the meaning of sovereignty has been decreasing, others that it has been sustained.²¹⁵ The concept has been used by different disciplines but in slightly different ways. In political science in the cases of neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism sovereignty has been treated as a set of analytical assumptions and

²¹³ Barkin and Cronin, 1994, pp.115-119

²¹⁴ Alexander Sergunin, *International Relations in Post-Soviet Russia: Trends and Problems*, Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University Press, 2007, p. 106

²¹⁵ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p.3

states are assumed to be rational, unitary and independent actors. For constructivism, sovereignty is a set of normative principles into which statesmen are socialized.

When looking at sovereignty from the Russian point of view in its interactions with international organisations, it comes closest to the understanding of sovereignty by international lawyers. They see states as basic building blocks of the international system. The states are sovereign in the sense that they are juridically independent and can enter into treaties that will promote their interests as they themselves define them.²¹⁶ The Russian emphasis on sovereignty can often be seen, as a realist perspective would suggest, as a justification for Russian actions or an excuse to avoid international interference. But the constructivist approach is also relevant, as ideas of sovereignty are clearly internalised but also contradictory to the extent that the restrictions on sovereignty imposed by globalisation are at odds with notions of greatpowerness. The strong emphasis on international law in Russian foreign policy rhetoric is connected to defending the principals of sovereignty. It also clearly has connections to the ideas of sovereignty defined by the Holy Alliance in 1815. In the system of Nicholas I, however, explicit primacy was given to the great powers, who pledged to assist each other in the event of internal disturbances and external threats. The same level of sovereignty was not to be guaranteed for lesser powers, an important distinction whose legacy can still be seen in Russian conceptions today.

Krasner identifies four different types of sovereignty: domestic sovereignty, interdependence sovereignty, international legal sovereignty and Westphalian sovereignty. Domestic sovereignty is the oldest way of using the concept of sovereignty; it involves organisation of both authority and control within a given state.²¹⁷ This reflects the slavophile ideas inside of the Russian foreign policy schools. Interdependence sovereignty is more about control over and power of regulation over different movements across borders: goods, capital, ideas, individuals and diseases.²¹⁸ This category fits then the school of westernisers in the Russian context. International legal sovereignty has its basic rule in recognising political entities' status in the international system, meaning also that for states with that recognition comes also territorial and juridical autonomy.²¹⁹ Westphalian sovereignty denotes that external authority structures should be excluded from the territory of a state.

²¹⁶ Stephen D. Krasner, 'Problematic Sovereignty', in Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *Problematic Sovereignty – Contested Rules and Political Possibilities*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, 1 -23, p.5

²¹⁷ Ibid. p.7

²¹⁸ Ibid. p.8

²¹⁹ Ibid. p.9

Sovereign states are not only *de jure* independent; they are also *de facto* autonomous.²²⁰ Maintaining the Westphalian type of sovereignty has been a growing concern of the Russian authorities since the beginning of the 1990s and therefore has also played an important role in Russia-West relations. This type of sovereignty translates into the statist way of thinking about sovereignty.

In the case of Russia, in the overall picture, sovereignty is an obscure factor. For the Russian Federation to be born, the Soviet Union needed to be abolished. For Ukrainians, Georgians and Estonians the Russians had been the imperialist masters, but for Russians the situation was quite strange; they had been liberated from Russians.

Ultimately the collapse of the Soviet Union came down to the power struggle of Yeltsin and Gorbachev, but few Western analysts have used the discourse of sovereignty or national independence or decolonization to describe the political battle between Russia and the Soviet Union.²²¹ As Michael McFaul has argued the discourse of sovereignty was the method of Boris Yeltsin to frame the power struggle as a fight about sovereignty. Boris Yeltsin himself stated ‘The problem of the (Russian) republic cannot be solved without full-blooded political sovereignty. This alone can enable relations between Russia and the Union and between the autonomous territories within Russia to be harmonized. The political sovereignty of Russia is also necessary in international affairs.’²²²

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the gaining of international recognition as a sovereign state the notion of sovereignty has played an important role in Russia’s self-identification both domestically and internationally. McFaul’s argument is that while seizing domestic and international legal sovereignty Russia paradoxically lost some of its Westphalian sovereignty. It has, however, had difficulties coming to terms with this loss. This is a very important point especially when examining Russia’s behaviour and interactions in and with international organisations and why the concept of sovereignty has become so important for Russians in international relations in general. For Russians, sovereignty is part of the great power status and equality principle.

²²⁰ Ibid. p.10-11

²²¹ Michael McFaul, ‘The Sovereignty Script- Red book for Russian Revolutionaries’, in Krasner (ed.), *Problematic Sovereignty*, 194-223, p.197

²²² Ibid

President Vladimir Putin has nearly throughout his presidencies stressed the sovereignty principle: ‘You well know that we constantly advocate the supremacy of international law, and also its basic principles such as respect of territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs of other countries. We are absolutely convinced that truly equal partner relations can only be founded on these principles.’²²³ The fact that should be kept in mind with the Russian use of the sovereignty concept is that their view differs from the commonly understood meaning of sovereignty. At a formal level, for Russians state sovereignty is the same as foreign policy independence, possibility to compete in economic terms in the global markets, control over natural resources in Russia, domestic consensus and independent military strength.²²⁴ But at times two contradictions can be found in the Russian approach. In the first place, while it is recognised that membership of international organisations involves a certain surrender of sovereignty, and this is accepted in relation, for example, to the European Court of Human Rights, sovereignty has also been raised in opposition to outside interference of organisations to which Russia has formally delegated such a right of interference, such as the OSCE. Secondly, there is evidence presented in the case study chapters that sovereignty is not viewed as something universal, but as something to which great powers have a special claim.

3.7 The concept of *ressentiment* and Isolationism

After empires break up there is a problem of finding a new reason for unity and this is much more problematic if we are looking at places with an imperial inheritance, without developed institutions and with a state system in flux. In the late nineteenth century the elites of the Russian Empire resorted to state sponsored xenophobia and exclusivity as the foundation of political order. Sometimes the politics of *ressentiment* go down better with the population than openly isolationist or imperialistic rhetoric.²²⁵

The politics of *ressentiment* accuses outside forces for every problem that occurs on the domestic front. It is not at all a new phenomenon in Russian history. It was frequently used during the Soviet era. One good example can be seen in Nina Andreeva’s famous letter ‘I cannot Give up My Principles’ in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on March 13, 1987. The article

²²³ Speech by Russian President Vladimir Putin at a Ceremony of Presentation Letters of Credentials, Moscow, Kremlin, on 22 December 2004, MID Information and Press department document

²²⁴ Sergei Lavrov, ‘The present and the Future of Global Politics’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, No.2 April-June 2007

²²⁵ Prizel, 1998, p.412

claimed that the attacks on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the former political leaders in the heat of *glasnost* must owe their origin to professional anti-communists in the West, who have long advocated ‘the so called democratic slogan of anti-stalinism’.²²⁶ Another more recent example of the same type of argument can be found in Putin’s speech on 4th September 2004 ‘We winked at our own weakness, and it is the weak who are always beaten up. Some want to tear away a large part of our wealth, while others help these aspirants in so doing. They still believe that Russia poses a threat to them as a nuclear power. Terrorism is just another instrument implementing their designs.’ In statements of this kind today it is unspecified who is the ‘foe’ of Russia. During the Soviet era it was clear that it was the West and the capitalist system. Illarianov also warns about the influence from outside: ‘It is critical for Russia to breed immunity against destructive ideas, which are occasionally imported from countries generally viewed as advanced and developed’. Illarianov calls for a selective approach to ideas that come from the West - some are good and some are bad for Russia. He points out that not only freedom of the individual, the market economy and democracy have entered Russia from the West, but also Marxism and Socialism.²²⁷

Building a strong identity is seen as important and national unity as a crucial element. The Russian Sergei Markov has stated that ‘the Russian mentality is by nature defensive, and has been thus for hundreds of years. The myth that Russia is surrounded by enemies is widespread, and politicians use this to their advantage.’²²⁸ *Ressentiment* is a typical characteristic of a state governed by an elite, in which the institutions have not developed. *Ressentiment*-type behaviour in Russia are the government’s accusations of Russian oligarchs living abroad trying to weaken the current Russian government and create a detrimental image of it in the West, and claims that citizens’ organizations, particularly those getting funding from abroad, are hotbeds of anti-government political activity. Georgians have been made the scapegoats for the growing hatred towards foreigners, and international terrorism is regarded as a threat to Russia’s unity. Some major western firms have also been accused of trying to hijack Russia’s important raw material resources for themselves.

The concept of *ressentiment* is of use to the understanding of Russian foreign policy since it highlights Russian suspicions towards anything that comes from outside its own society. This feeling has deep roots in the Russian historical past where in order to survive, it needed to defend itself against many aggressions. This is something that has often been

²²⁶ Davies, 1989, pp.141-2

²²⁷ Illarionov, 2005.

²²⁸ Sebastian Smith, ‘Enemies at the gate: Russia’s siege mentality in polls run-up.’ AFP, 17.10.2006, Moscow

forgotten when talking about Russian foreign policy. In the Western discourse Russia is the aggressive one with traditional imperialist ambitions and Great Power mentality. The concept of resentment is in its extreme form very dangerous but also very helpful to explain Russian foreign policy where great power ambitions exist at the same time as the mentality of an occupied country. Muzykantsky further explains this suspicion, using sociologist Igor Yakovenko's definitions about the Russian mentality, that part of the Russian mentality according to Yakovenko is that of Manicheanism. Manicheanism sees the world as an arena of the external struggle between two forces – light and darkness, good and evil. In this struggle there are 'us' and 'them'. A Manichean mentality needs an enemy, real or imaginary. In interstate relations, stereotypical enemies of the Manichean type are: a hostile environment, imperialist circles, backstage intrigues or simply 'forces of darkness' that are out to destroy, dismember or take control of everything'.²²⁹ This type of a world view feels like something straight from 19th century Russian literature, but the evidence of even the official statements speaks for itself that Russian ruling elites divert into the politics of *ressentiment* when it is too difficult to say 'we don't know what to do'. Because it has such deep and historically long popular roots, this tactic is often successful.

From the concept of *ressentiment* can follow a trend of isolationism. **Isolationism** is a diplomatic policy whereby a nation seeks to avoid engagement with other nations. Most nations are not in a political position to maintain strict isolationist policies for extended periods of time, even though most nations have historical periods where isolationism is popular. The concept of isolationism can be understood in many ways and so it is very important to understand the idea of isolationism in the Russian context correctly. The starting point is what president Putin said in 2000 'Russia cannot be isolated from Europe and the rest of the civilized world since Russia is a part of European culture'.²³⁰ However the claim that Russian foreign policy has had growing isolationist tendencies during Putin's second term in office as a president of Russia gives a reason to examine closely what isolationism is and where does it come from in the Russian context. The two terms that have been used often in the Russian context are Pacifist isolationism and constructive isolationism. Pacifist isolationism has been seen as characterizing Russian thinking far more than either imperialist militarism or great-power nationalism.²³¹ A policy of constructive isolationism has been argued for as the best choice for Russia in the short-term historical

²²⁹ Muzykantsky, 2005.

²³⁰ Putin, 2000

²³¹ Kandel, 1999

perspective. According to Nikolai Shmelev ‘This does not mean that we [Russians] should become more self-centred. On the contrary – we should develop active cultural and economic relations with the external world. At the same time, we should pursue a policy of predominant non-interference in those developments beyond the national borders that are not directly connected with us or the spheres of our traditional influence (the CIS)’.²³²

The word isolationism has also been used in debates about Russia’s international place since 1992. It has been argued that one of the most dangerous things that could happen is that Russia would go down the road of isolationism (for example, in discussions about Russia’s accession to the Council of Europe). Also in the context of the Russia-EU dialogue the idea that Russia will be pushed aside or will pull away in case cooperation with the EU fails have been raised.²³³ The official Russian line is indicated in deputy foreign minister Chizov’s answer to the question about Russia’s isolation: ‘Isolation is not a threat for Russia. Russia was and is an important player in world politics’.²³⁴ Here also the fear of isolationism can be seen. It can be argued that both the Russian worldview of multipolarity and the more current version of it, the multivector foreign policy, are aimed at ensuring that Russia would not be isolated from world politics, even if fundamental problems would occur in Russia-West relations. But the continuing presence of *ressentiment* rhetoric does not sit easily with the denial that isolationism is a possibility for Russia.

Even if Russian Isolationism is not seen as an option in Russia especially in the official statements and it is viewed also in the West as something dangerous, there are those that speak seriously in favour of it. Mikhail Yuryev, president of the Evrofinance group and former deputy speaker of the Russian State Duma, sees a policy of isolationism as a quite feasible option for Russia. He defines isolationism as follows: ‘Isolationism means a national mode of existence where the state builds a relatively small number of external contacts, as well as a relatively limited interaction with it in all spheres of life – economy, politics, culture, ideology and religion. Thus the influence of external forces is incomparably smaller than that of the internal forces’.²³⁵ While clearly linked to *ressentiment*, this attitude reflects also the specific fear that was planted among the Russian ruling elite by the colour revolutions that outside influences might make Russian society also rise up against the ruling elite. Yuryev’s argument is based on his view that in the past 50 years Russian foreign policy

²³² Verlin, 2003

²³³ *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* 20.05.2005

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Yuryev, 2005

has either been a bitter confrontation with the West or full capitulation and servility to the West. The policy of isolationism in his view would give a healthy start to developing an independent Russia. In his view only after a period of isolationism is it possible for a nation to grow into a world power.²³⁶ As amazing as it sounds, this view, which is not adopted in official statements, also has one thing in common with the official line: Russia has to become a world power. On the other hand Andrei Illarionov, Economic Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation, contradicts Yuryev's view by arguing that international engagement is essential for the attainment of great power status: 'There is no country in the world that can exist in international isolation, especially a country that seeks to advance its economy, attain high growth rates and become a respected member of the global community'.²³⁷

The politics of resentment and expressions of possibility towards isolationism are both deeply rooted in the past. Some of the emotional and even angry Russian foreign policy reactions and statements can be more effectively examined within a framework where the concept of resentment and isolationist ideas are better understood. The influence of *ressentiment* and isolationism are contradictory when it comes to Russian efforts to integrate and promote its own status as a Great Power in the world community. Hence the question of whether to engage internationally or not, or to what extent and with what level of commitment, has always made integration problematic and has led to fluctuations in policy.

3.8 Multilateralism and multipolarity in the Russian context

Multilateralism as we understand it today is a 20th century phenomenon, but with some precedents at least in the nineteenth century. Multilateralism refers to a system of coordinating relations between three or more states in accordance with certain principles of conduct. As a policy, multilateralism is a deliberate action by a state, in concert with others, to realize objectives in particular issue areas.²³⁸ Today's multilateralism differs substantially from the 19th century examples of multilateralism that involved a concert of big powers cooperating to redraw the map of Europe and attempting to reduce great power conflict and promote internal stability. Multilateralism is often connected to the westernisers but is supported also by statistes and to some extent the slavophiles.

²³⁶ Idem

²³⁷ Illarionov, 2005

²³⁸ Evans and Newnham, 1998, p.340

After the Second World War the character of international relations changed significantly in two ways: the Cold War brought the balance of power and bipolarity into the world order and the horrors of the Second World War highlighted the need to promote instead bloc-based structures to create more multilateral mechanisms in world politics. Because of the Cold War the bloc structure based model was the dominant one and the multilateralism concept as we know it today was mostly developed in the West.

In the Eastern bloc multilateral structures also existed, but they worked in a hierarchical way; by contrast, the present day model of multilateral action works through a complex scheme of interaction where everything is interconnected by a system of agreements and protocols and where there are no friends or foes but rather partners formulating and upholding their own interests. However it can also be argued that a strong state in a multilateral context can influence more the decisions and actions taken than a weaker and smaller state. In the multilateral context, Russia wants to belong among those states that ‘matter’, the Great Powers, in international decision making.

For the statist quite often the multilateral cooperation model still means a hierarchical way of conducting cooperation. For the slavophiles the alliances and groups that participate in multilateral cooperation are important. Slavic brotherhood ideas are incorporated in the slavophile approach to multilateralism.

When trying to make sense of understanding multilateralist thinking in Russia the concept of multipolarity often pops up, and sometimes in a very confusing way. In the Russian context you often hear that ‘Multilateralism is used in the same way as multipolarity’.²³⁹ Even in former foreign minister Igor Ivanov’s book that reflects Russian foreign policy doctrine from 2000 he uses multipolarity and multilateralism in overlapping ways. He talks about the constructive solutions between the permanent UN security council members and see this as evidence that Russia does not want to create a multipolar world to be in opposition to the West but to try to find a way to create a mechanism which can respond collectively to the challenges posed by the modern world.²⁴⁰ Multipolarity is a type of system structure with at least three ‘poles’ or actors being identified as predominant. This domination is dependent upon the idea of capability or power potential as the essential defining possession of the ‘poles’. The actors that dominate a multipolar system need not be

²³⁹ Interview with Kolesnikov, and Interview with Bazhanov

²⁴⁰ Ivanov, 2002, p.47

states: blocs or coalitions may qualify.²⁴¹ The proverb a ‘beloved child has many names’ could be adapted to make a saying ‘multipolarity has many meanings in Russia’.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia arguably did not have any experience of functioning effectively in a genuine multilateral system as the western understanding of it is. A genuine multilateral system does not give veto rights to one or some countries.²⁴² According to Bobo Lo, Russia views multipolarity as a plutocratic multilateralism and so does not have any commitment to multilateralism, if we are talking about the democratisation of international relations where big and small are making decisions on an equal basis.²⁴³ This is also the reason Russia does not push the idea of its membership in the EU, it does not want to be one member out of 27, and many problems between Russia and the EU are down to the fact that Russia does not like the fact that countries it views as insignificant in international decision making would have any say in how Russia should conduct its affairs.

This attitude can also explain to some extent Russia’s views about its difficulties with smaller EU countries. Looking at the statements on Chechnya, for example, Russia takes a calmer approach if it is France or Germany or Great Britain that criticises Russian actions than if it is the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia or Finland. The equality principle is one of the guiding principles of Russian foreign policy. While it works well for Russians inside the idea of multipolarity, Russians do face some difficulties inside the international institutions’ framework. Russia still seeks to belong and be one of the ‘big’s’ inside the international organisations.

The Council of Europe example illustrates this well. Russia has been playing by the Council’s rules during the first decade of its membership, however all the time seeking to find ways to change agendas and unwritten rules.²⁴⁴ Russia has wanted to take its place among the ‘big’ countries in the Council, thus seeking a status of superiority of the Great Powers. The Great Power mentality, as mentioned earlier, is a strong one and it is deeply rooted in foreign policy behaviour in the multilateral context as well. Despite this attitude it can also be argued that Russia does very much understand and is acquainted with today’s multilateral structures and mechanisms and how multilateralism works in theory.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Evans and Newnham, 1998, p.340

²⁴² Interview with Bobo Lo, Moscow, 22nd June 2004.

²⁴³ Interview with Lo.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Council of Europe official, June 2006, Strasbourg

²⁴⁵ Interview with Kobrinskaya.

The multilateral system provides a chance and forum for Russia to create a leading role, especially in regard to the organisations where Russia has a dominant position like in the CIS and UN or organisations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The case of the OSCE is an interesting one since there Russia has both demonstrated the willingness to work with and use in conflict situations the multilateral framework and also at the same time has opposed the involvement of the organisation (e.g. the case of Chechnya). The troubles that the OSCE has had with Russia or vice versa are also to do with the two dominant trends, the principle of equality and superiority of the great powers. The tension between these two are creating a deadlock in Russia's behaviour in the OSCE. This translates also to the general framework of Russian foreign policy creating a clear tension between Great Power thinking based on the realist view and the equality principle that has a base in institutionalism and also elements of democratic peace theory.

In the Russian view of multipolarity the principle of equality is strongly present but only succeeds in playing a role in Great Power relations. When Russians are talking about multipolarity in the West, it has raised a lot of questions. What is quite widely known in the West is the Primakov doctrine of multipolarity from 1997. The less known fact is that multipolarity was already present during the years when Kozyrev was the foreign minister of the Russian Federation. Kozyrev's vision of multipolarity was more along the lines of the 1815 Concert of Europe concept, the early stages of multilateralism. He saw multipolarity as great powers dealing with big issues together, in a manner a bit like today's G8. One of Russia's high foreign policy priorities in the 1990s was to gain equal status in the G7. Kozyrev wrote in 1994 about his world views and about the nature of Russian foreign policy. The following long quote reflects on the whole the complexity of the concept of multipolarity, multilateralism and the possibilities for misunderstanding:

'By now it has already become quite clear that in the 21st century world there will not be a 'Pax Americana' nor any kind of bipolar order. It will be multipolar. First of all, the USA through the use of all its resources can still not deal alone with all the issues in the world, and indeed if it did play that role it would overstretch its forces. Secondly Russia, even if it is going through a period of difficult transition, remains as a world power, not only because it has nuclear weapons and a complete military capability, but because it even has the latest technology, not to mention its natural resources and geostrategic location. Thirdly, there are other centres of influence, which are striving to obtain a more independent voice in global

affairs. Fourth and finally, the actual character of today's international problems makes it preferable to search for solutions on a multilateral basis.

I wish to be understood correctly: I was not in any way talking about the USA, Russia or any other country refusing to include national objectives in their foreign policy or of handing anything over to a foreign or supranational 'subcontractor'. Bill Clinton also spoke against this in his speech to the UN.

The dilemma in front of the world community consists of something else. If it takes a highly ultra nationalistic and egoistic road, then the world will present itself as a storm of competing national interests. Then it would be thrown back to a new kind of 'self-destructive horror' like it was in the international system in 1914'.²⁴⁶

This clearly argues that Russia is a Great Power and reflects Gorbachev's new thinking foreign policy formulations. As Larson and Shevchenko have argued Gorbachev and his advisors recognized that military power alone did not bring the Soviet Union political influence or acceptance. He was pursuing a new status for the Soviet Union as the moral and political leader of a new world order. The Soviet Union would have had a Great Power status based on 'soft power' rather than hard power.²⁴⁷

When applying the social identity theory (SIT) that Larson and Shevchenko have used in analysing Gorbachev's New Thinking to the readiness to gain great Power Status, it can be stated that people will try to achieve a superior position for their group even when it costs them potential material benefits.²⁴⁸ Gorbachev's New Thinking did not include multipolarity or multilateral thinking as such, it was still based more on ideas of bipolarity, but many ideas from the new thinking did appear in Kozyrev's foreign policy formulations. The Russians started to use the multipolarity concept at the beginning of the 1990s with the recognition that with the collapse of the Soviet Union the cold war balance of power and bipolar world had disappeared.

The new Russian Federation needed to find its place in the world community again, a bit like in 1917, and to formulate its foreign policy interests in the post-communist world. To gain Great power status became one of those interests. As argued earlier, that was the goal of

²⁴⁶ Kozyrev, 1994, p.186

²⁴⁷ Larson and Shevchenko, 2003, p.78

²⁴⁸ Larson and Shevchenko, 2003, p.77

all different foreign policy groups in Russia. In this framework multipolarity became a very useful concept. In it the different 'poles' are Great Powers and also regional hegemon in world politics. This is a theme that appears in all of the forms of multipolarity in Russian foreign policy arguments from Kozyrev, Primakov and Ivanov to Lavrov. In multipolarity the ideas of all different Russian foreign policy groups merge.

Primakov's multipolarity, however, has a different face from Kozyrev's and his is the most commonly understood Russian use of the multipolarity concept. Primakov's doctrine of multipolarity was like a ghost from the past, like a continuity with the old Soviet Doctrine of counterbalancing the United States whenever possible. The anti-american element of Primakov's multipolarity has led to the need for a great deal of explanation by Igor Ivanov and Vladimir Putin as well as Sergei Lavrov and Sergei Ivanov, who all stress in different arenas that Russia is not driven by imperialism in its foreign policy and that it is not targeted towards the USA. This has in fact resulted in the new concept of a 'multivector foreign policy'.

According to Yuri Fedorov, Russian foreign policy under Putin contains three major changes compared to the policies of his predecessor. Geostrategy has been replaced by manifestations of geoeconomics; threat perceptions are more towards international terrorism and the consequences of local conflicts than the 'rise of the unipolar world' (Primakov doctrine); and Putin seldom if ever uses the concept of multipolarity. Multipolarity has been replaced by Putin's idea of a multivector foreign policy.²⁴⁹ In March 2004 Putin himself outlined the multivector policy: 'We shall build a multivector foreign policy, we shall work with the United States, and with the European Union, and with individual European countries. We shall work with our Asian partners, with China, with India, with countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Due to its geographical position Russia is both a European country and an Asian country simultaneously.'²⁵⁰ This cannot be seen as anything else than yet another variation of a traditional policy repackaged in a form more in line with the spirit of the times as Igor Ivanov has formulated it.

Putin combined the two previous visions of multipolarity in an attempt to unite the different groups in the foreign policy elite. From Kozyrev's definition he did take the idea of a 'Concert', of big powers dealing with big issues and this applies very much to the economic policies of Russia. It was a big victory for Russia when the G8 announced in June

²⁴⁹ Fedorov, 2004

²⁵⁰ www.president.kremlin.ru

2002 that Russia will host the presidency of the G8 in 2006 and so will also be a member of the organisation.²⁵¹ G8 was the only ‘club’ where Russia was included until joining the WTO in 2011. It still stands outside of the EU and OECD. Russia’s situation as an outsider looking in has clear economic disadvantages. Russia spent a long time seeking membership in the WTO and OECD and has sought closer cooperation in the economic sphere with the EU. It also badly needs foreign investment and economic cooperation to strengthen and develop its economy. Furthermore the WTO membership negotiations have been a learning ground for Russians as to how small countries matter in the international arena and how to deal with them through the equality principle.²⁵²

Keohane and Nye have characterized international regimes for trade and money as a ‘club model’, which meant that a small number of rich countries’ trade ministers controlled the agenda and made deals.²⁵³ This argument seems to apply well to the way the Russian foreign policy administration wants to see its role in the ‘clubs’. Irina Kobrinskaya concludes from her analysis that Russia sees the G8 as a substitute for world government and so also for multipolarity.²⁵⁴

Putin’s multipolarity also includes the second concept, however. If strengthening the Russian economy and membership of the ‘clubs’ as serving Russia’s foreign policy interests are inspired by Kozyrev’s views of multipolarity, the aspect of creating a tool for advancing bilateral relations with other world ‘poles’ and also diverting foreign policy to really becoming ‘multivector’ has been influenced by Primakov’s doctrine. Especially during 2004 the word multipolarity turned up more often than in 2000-2003 in Putin’s speeches, and it has been especially often used during Putin’s visits to China, India and Brazil, and also in discussions with France - if not always by Putin, then by analysts.

The success and the reason why Russians use the word multipolarity more is because the countries in question themselves use the concept of multipolarity and feel comfortable with it. In the contexts where multipolarity is used, there is present a feeling of resentment against unilateralism in world politics and so it can be interpreted as unhappiness about US world politics. However the anti-Americanism that can be found in the concept of multipolarity is to limit US unilateralism but is not, as Primakov’s doctrine could be interpreted, a racist type

²⁵¹ G8 summit site, ‘Russia’s role in the G8’, www.g8.gc.ca/2002Kananaskis/russiarole-en.asp

²⁵² Julian Cooper, seminar presentation, Nupi, Oslo, October 2006

²⁵³ Keohane and Nye, 2002

²⁵⁴ Interview with Irina Kobrinskaya, Moscow, 21st June 2004.

of anti-Americanism. The drive towards great power status and an important role in world affairs seems to be the main task of multipolarity more than the essence of 'anti-Americanism'.

Russia has been interested in Western international organizations. There is one international organisation in the Russian eyes that stands above all others – the United Nations. The role of the UN in Russian foreign policy argumentation has steadily grown. Russia has always stressed the importance of the UN but in Putin's multivector and multidirectional foreign policy programme the UN has gained an even bigger role. 'In the course of Russia's realization of its foreign policy programme, the United Nations has begun to play an extremely important role. In the Russian view, the UN represents the central collective mechanism for shaping the multipolar world order and regulating world politics. It is the backbone of the emergent international system based on international law, the UN Charter and multilateral approaches to global and regional problems'.²⁵⁵

The UN is an organisation Russia does not need to seek membership of as it is already a member. What is more important is that from the beginning Russia has been in an influential position to shape the organisation. It also suits its views as to how Great Powers should be able to manoeuvre inside of an international organisation. With the veto right given to all the permanent members of the UN security council, Russia among them, UN decisions can rarely be unsatisfactory for Russia. Russia, or rather the Soviet Union, has been a member of the UN longer than any other significant global organisation, and this experience can only contribute to the preferred Russian view of multilateralism: great powers have a special status and their interests can not be overridden by the interests of smaller powers or treated on the same level as them.

Multipolarity seems to be a different way of defining multilateralism. Multipolarity as it is used in Russian foreign policy is multilateralism with a Great Power mentality and veto. This view clearly also fits with Putin's pragmatic statist approach: when it is in Russia's interest, all means are useable. This type of diplomacy is not at all new in Russian foreign policy. First of all Russia does seek to go via multilateral frameworks but when Russians do not get what they wanted they turn to a different strategy. One good example from the past is the treaty of Rapallo in 1922 when Russia and Germany signed a bilateral treaty, having both been frozen out of the post-War Versailles process. It was important for Russia then to get

²⁵⁵ Kassianova, 2002

rid of any type of compensation claim that World War I might have created.²⁵⁶ The treaty was signed during the Genoa Economic Conference. The meaning of the Genoa Conference was to present a united front to the Soviets on the issue of debts and to the Germans on the issue of reparations. Chicherin, the foreign minister of the Russian Federal Soviet Republic, managed to persuade the Germans into a bilateral treaty since the British and French had not been prepared for the bilateral option.

The mixture of promoting multilateralism and diverting to bilateralism in Russian foreign policy makes it difficult to interpret. Russian foreign policy makers seem to accept the maxims described by Robert Keohane concerning the importance of international institutions even if they are not always successful in world politics: ‘Superpowers need general rules because they seek to influence events around the world. Even an unchallenged superpower such as the United States would be unable to achieve its goals through the bilateral exercise of influence: the costs of such massive ‘arm-twisting’ would be too great.’²⁵⁷ But at the same time Russians find it very difficult to cooperate with the multilateral agreements and protocols where Russia would be one among others, small and big countries alike, and furthermore the multilateral format of international organizations and forums makes it possible for Russian diplomacy to actively create a wide circle of supporters for its conceptual approaches to the issues.²⁵⁸

The Russian understanding of Great Power status does not include equality among all states or any possibility for interfering in the state affairs of a Great Power. As much as it looks that Russia understands the use and meaning of international organisations and international relations in the multilateral context, the influence of the past centuries of Russia’s international status still lurks in its actions and views about how international relations should be conducted and foreign policy statements follow accordingly.

The idea of multipolarity reveals the unifying factor among the different foreign policy schools in Russian foreign policy thinking on multilateralism – the status of a great power has to be maintained by all means. This is in the interest of the Russian state and of the power elite. It also appears that popular opinion agrees with this approach. Even those in opposition to the Russian government and presidential administration are also worried about Russia’s status and image in the international arena.

²⁵⁶ Donaldson and Noguee, 2005, p. 55

²⁵⁷ Keohane, 2002, p.27

²⁵⁸ Ivanov, 2002, p.47

Multipolarity also shows us that Russian foreign policy conduct towards each of those it regards as a great power, or one of the power poles in the world, is very similar. On the other hand it adopts an even-handed stance towards each of the smaller countries. So the US is treated on the same level as China, while Azerbaijan is treated equally to Armenia.²⁵⁹ Many Russian academics and analysts have repeatedly stated that the ‘Russian mentality is a great power mentality’.²⁶⁰ This ‘Russian mentality’ that strives for the Great Power status, according to Alexander Muzykantsky, Head of the World Politics department at Moscow State University, is a product of three centuries of Russian politics. He argues

‘despite different historical circumstances and conditions, similar foreign policy paradigms and mechanisms are being reproduced. In some way or other, they reflect the fundamental characteristics of core cultural values that influence the formulation of doctrinal foreign policy concepts. For Russia, the philosophy of syncretism²⁶¹ plays a decisive role and manifests itself by a tendency to reduce the entire range of international relations to a confrontation between a small number of alliances or blocs, identifying the ‘poles’ of influence and staking out the zones of special interests’.²⁶²

Under this view the world is seen in great power terms, big states among themselves creating the rules of the game and the smaller countries bandwagoning.²⁶³ Muzykantsky’s understanding also supports Igor Ivanov’s view that ‘Foreign policy objectively reflects the characteristics of how a country – its culture, economy, geopolitical situation- have historically developed, and therefore it is common that what appears to be a fundamentally new direction for foreign policy actually turns out to be yet another variation of a traditional policy repackaged in a form more in line with the spirit of the times’.²⁶⁴

Multipolarity and multilateralism are concepts that give backbone to Russian foreign policy thinking in the era of globalisation and integration. They are tools to ease off the Russian ‘hangover’ from its imperial past during its transformation, and to face up to the challenges of world politics without losing the country’s identity and dignity. It is also clear that despite some differences the different foreign policy schools see the cooperation model in either multilateralism or multipolarity as a workable framework. But greatpowerness also

²⁵⁹ Interview with Yevgenii Bazhanov, Moscow, 15th December 2004.

²⁶⁰ Interview with Andrei Kolesnikov, Moscow, 16th December; Interview with Bazhanov.

²⁶¹ Syncretism is a state of society and culture that is characterized by the fusion and blending of their elements (Alexander Muzykantsky’s definition)

²⁶² Muzykantsky, 2005.

²⁶³ Refers to the act of weaker states joining a stronger power or coalition within balance of power politics.

²⁶⁴ Ivanov, 2002, p.18

colours understandings of multilateralism, with the UN providing a model, in Russian eyes, of how multilateral organisations should be constructed and function. How Russia should use these frames is still sometimes under disputes.

3.9 Conclusion

The question of persistent factors in foreign policy making is not an easy one to tackle in the context of any country. Far too often different concepts that can be traced back in history can also be misused and give an idea of a deterministic path of foreign policy making. In the Russian context this is also the case. Different concepts that are still in use have a different meaning than 200 years ago, but they can still play a very central role in foreign policy behaviour and making. The features listed above are known from the past but are today central to Russian foreign policy thinking. Many of them are different from Western thinking and therefore put the West and Russia on opposite sides. However, some positive outcomes of Russia's fondness for looking back to her own past can be observed: embracing multilateralism, even if based on notions of Great Power status, is one.

If in Western foreign policy analysis and assessments, the influence of persistent factors, especially in the form of Great Power state identity, would be taken more often under examination, we would find more tools to explain and understand Russian foreign policy behaviour. If the Western understanding of these concepts would include the Russian point of view, the tensions between the West and Russia would be easier to reduce. The fact that Russia is looking for forms of cooperation at the multilateral level also ensures that Russia will be more and more integrated into the mechanisms and diplomacy of the multilateral setting, which could make Russia less unpredictable. The negative experience of isolationism has left its imprints on the Russian collective memory, and so with the Russian drive to be an important part and player in world affairs the idea that Russia would be left on the periphery is seen as very unattractive. This in its turn will encourage cooperation in the multilateral setting.

The imperial syndrome presented by Emil Pain and the analysis of Russian mentality by Alexander Muzykantsky offers us an insight into possible influences from the past on both the practice and rhetoric in today's foreign policy making in Russia. Tendencies from Russia's past, such as imperialism, expansionism and *ressentiment*, are subject to differing levels of influence as Russian foreign policy develops in the context of both shifting

domestic priorities and the demands of a globalised world. These three concepts have caused a lot of damage and left an atmosphere of mistrust in the Russia-West relationship. It seems, however, that imperialism, expansionism and *ressentiment*, are more connected to the internal politics of the Russian Federation, than to foreign policy directly. However the frequency of their usage and their effect on Russia's foreign relations first of all show clearly the link between domestic politics and foreign policy, and secondly serve as good illustrations of how rhetoric can become reality. Table 3.2 at the end of this chapter shows how the concepts introduced here are viewed by the different foreign policy schools in Russian internal debates, which then impact on foreign policy. The schools have been named more according to the European conception, but they do follow the Tsygankov line.

To recognise some of the repeating notions that have connections with Russia's history, some analysis of the Russian mentality and foreign policy making traditions is important, so that the reading of foreign policy statements and speeches can be put into context. It is clear that the domestic political context is seen to be a crucial determinant of foreign policy because this is where politicians' political ideas are formed and decisions are made.²⁶⁵ Robert Putnam's argument that political leaders can be seen as trying to achieve their goals in the domestic and international arenas simultaneously, applies well to the Russian contexts. This is seen in the case studies of Russia's interaction in international organisations in the context of the Chechen wars, where domestic and international messages and priorities are frequently entangled. The determinants which define these priorities and are exercised in Russian foreign policy have strong domestic roots in part because of their prevalence historically.

This chapter has emphasised the influence of the persistent factors playing an important part in foreign policy formation. In the Russian context greatpowerness and concepts relating to it play a particularly important role in foreign policy. In relations towards the West the multilateral context is one of the central frameworks where Russia would be keen to operate. The Great Power identity is the 'ideology' Russia seems to operate from. At the beginning of the 1990s, when the Russian Federation started to form its foreign policy lines, the first challenge to its greatpowerness came from within – the wars in Chechnya. This challenge shaped Russia's relations with the West significantly and set the tone for its foreign policy.

²⁶⁵ Jackson, 2003, p. 19.

Table 3.2 Views of different Russian Foreign Policy schools towards key concepts

Russia	Europhiles (also known as westernisers, liberal internationalist, atlantacist)	Eurasians (also known as pragmatic nationalist, statist)	Europhobes (also known as civilizationist, slavophiles, patriots)
Historical aspects	Russian historical path is towards integration with the West	Russian history as a Great Power gives Russia a Great Power status and so Russia should act in world politics	Russia's attempts to get closer to the West have failed and so the West should be seen as something bad for Russia. Russia should find solutions to all her problems from russianness, not to seek answers abroad
National interests	Strengthening Russia via economic means and market economy in democracy	Protecting Russia's position in the world through sovereign democracy with some state control in the economy, especially in natural resources	Distribution of wealth coming from natural resources to Russians. Democracy creates chaos. Traditionally Russia is led from above. The 'good tsar' is the best option.
Multilateralism	Russia as an equal partner with Western powers. Modern way to conduct international relations.	Russia will be involved in everything but will not accept majority vote	Hierarchical structure and with Slavic allies

Multipolarity	Russia as a regional hegemon and one of the poles in the world	Russia as a regional hegemon and one of the poles in the world	Russia as a regional hegemon and one of the poles in the world
Sovereignty	Interdependence sovereignty	International legal sovereignty and Westphalian sovereignty	Domestic sovereignty
Imperialism	Interdependence and liberal imperialism can only be good for Russia	Buffer zone around Russian borders. Greater integration in CIS area under Russian leadership	Russian heartlands extended with Ukraine, Belarus and Northern Kazakhstan (Solzhenitsyn line)
Isolationism	It is not good for Russia and nobody wants it	External influence needs to be controlled by Russian state but no doors should be closed (foreign investment).	Resistance as much as possible to outside influence. Strong internal market.
<i>Ressentiment</i>	Complains often that Western critics are actually undermining the democratic developments in Russia	Seeks to present the “other” as a threat. Tries to find unity through a common enemy	West presents a threat to Russian civilization. Socialism was also a Western ideology that did not fit Russian conditions, so is democracy

Chapter 4: Challenge to Russian Greatpowerness – the Two Chechen Wars

‘Through its treatment of Chechnya, the Russian Federation actually defines itself’²⁶⁶

4.1 Introduction

The greatest challenges to Russian greatness and greatpowerness have come from Russia itself. Smaller scale wars and bigger scale revolutions and state system changes have shaken the state and affected its image abroad. By contrast, big wars like the Napoleonic war in the early 19th century and the Second World War have played to the advantage of Russian greatpowerness. The fall of the Soviet Union was the ultimate challenge and many argued that the Russian Federation hardly qualifies as a successor of similar status and influence as the Soviet Union even at its weakest.

A smaller scale war that brought a serious challenge to Russian greatpowerness in the 1990s was the conflict with Chechnya. The effects of the wars in Chechnya are more far reaching than the newspaper and news headlines that they frequently gave rise to, usually after bloody terrorist attacks connected to the Chechen conflict or in the form of election coverage.²⁶⁷ The effects of Chechnya on Russian society are still to materialize in full, but some signs are already identifiable. One example is the Russian media laws and the tightening control over the mass media by the state. Furthermore, the trend of the growing power of security interests can also be linked to the same issue. The issue of Chechnya has dominated in at least two presidential elections and also through those has had a long-term effect on Russian political culture development. But the effect this study is interested in, is the challenge to Russian greatpowerness and state identity as well as what kind of impact the wars have had on Russia-West relations, especially with Europe.

The challenge Chechnya has presented to Russian greatpowerness can be framed in terms of each of the three international relations schools presented in the first chapter, in terms of the actual policies pursued by Russia with regard to Chechnya and, more

²⁶⁶ Dmitri V. Trenin: ‘End of Eurasia’, Carnegie Endowment Moscow, 2001, p.180

²⁶⁷ Since the start of the first Chechen war in 1994 up to 2004 Russia had 3 Duma elections, 3 presidential elections in Russia, two presidential elections in Chechnya, one parliamentary election in Chechnya and one referendum on Chechnya’s status in Chechnya – all during active war time.

importantly, in terms of Russia's international standing. For the realist the challenge to greatpowerness can come through a struggle for power and zero-sum game. The wars in Chechnya, from the Russian point of view, are theoretically won but in practice the victory is bleak. The image of a weak and backward army cast a shadow over claims to Great Power status. To enhance the strong image relating to Great power identity Russians wanted to frame the second Chechen war in terms of a war on terrorism.

In terms of the liberal school and ideas of soft power on the other hand, Russia has failed, although it is trying to argue the opposite and also engage in international cooperation in some cases. Russian policies of 'Chechenisation' in Chechnya were aiming to use soft power, to win the game of hearts and minds. However the steady numbers of terrorist attacks in Russian territory, especially inside the North Caucasus republics, tell the grim story of failed policies. The aid money pumped into Chechnya has not reached the local population and the image of Russians is not good in Chechnya. From the liberal point of view Russian policies which should have promoted economic growth, material aid and the restoration of order, have not reached the population and instead of Moscow being seen as a desirable centre to belong to, militant Islamic trends in different forms have gained strong support in the whole North Caucasus. Thereby it can be stated that this failure of improving the living standards of the area between the wars and after the war, undermines Russia's modern Great Power image. The Russian attitudes towards the two wars reflect very much the liberal ideas relating to greatpowerness.

In the case of the constructivist framework, there are two discourses to focus on: one that sees Chechnya as a separate entity that should have the right to self determination as an ethnically separate state from Russians, and the other discourse that falls into the category of Great Power identity: Chechnya is and will be an inseparable part of Russia, no matter what. The fact that Chechnya wanted to become an independent state but that Russia prevented it at great cost, shows how important the great power status is for Russia. The domestic argumentation for the reasons to start the war highlight this identity discourse.

In the previous chapter the persistent aspects and determinants arising from domestic situations influencing foreign policy thinking were examined. In this chapter the aim is to track how the two Chechen wars impacted on Russia's state identity as a Great Power. Chechnya, an internal conflict, came to define Russia's state and nationhood and therefore also had a major impact on Russia's image especially in the West. In the case of the Chechen wars, the persistent factors come to the surface. Great Power sovereignty, *ressentiment*,

expansionism, imperialism, even multilateralism are present in the domestic and international dimension of the wars in Chechnya.

The challenge for Russian greatpowerness was tackled by Russians in international cooperation, through argumentation and actions in different international organisations. This analysis will be illustrated more closely in the case-study chapters. This chapter does not present a comprehensive history of the causes and process of the two wars.²⁶⁸ Rather, the two Chechen wars are gone through in the context of the domestic political determinants, the international war on terrorism, and different attitudes towards the wars. In all of them the theme of Russian greatpowerness is present.

4.2 Chechnya and the War on Terrorism

*'11 September was the wand that transformed Russia from its ugly ducking condition into, if not a swan, then at least a fully fledged member of the community of civilized nations.'*²⁶⁹

The first Chechen war was portrayed as a war against a national separatist movement trying to break away from Russia. In the light of the democratisation process that was ongoing at the time in Russia, and arguably still is, the start of the first Chechen war needs to be seen as Yeltsin's attempt to use armed conflict to show that he is able to make decisions, reverse his own notion 'as much power to the regions as they can handle' in favour of a more centralised state, and also as an attempt to consolidate public and elite opinion behind a united nationalist line. This argument is also advanced by Mansfield and Snyder.²⁷⁰ Their contention that countries undergoing democratisation are more prone to warfare belongs to the realist school. In essence the argument is about power and methods used to maintain the elite's position of authority.

²⁶⁸ For detailed accounts of the first Chechen War see, for example, Matthew Evangelista: 'The Chechen Wars-Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union', Brookings Institution Press, 2002; Gall, Carlotta and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: A Small Victorious War*, Basingstoke: Picador, 1997.

²⁶⁹ Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p.116

²⁷⁰ Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, 'Democratization and War', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1995, Volume 74, no.3, pp.79-97, p.90 and the argument was developed into a book, *Electing to Fight – Why Emerging Democracies Go to War*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005.

The first war in Chechnya was planned to be a *blitzkrieg*, that would show that the central authority in Russia had the country under control. This thinking is very much along the lines of power politics, with the aim to show who was in charge. Somehow it seems that the lessons from history were forgotten by Yeltsin and perhaps also by Putin. War is seldom quick and results often unexpected and unwanted (the example of Iraq also highlights this). Russian tsar Nicholas II was persuaded by his interior minister Viacheslav Pleve in 1904 that ‘a quick and victorious war’²⁷¹ would boost the popularity of the tsar. The result was quite the opposite and so it was also in the case of the Chechen war, apart from some short moments when Yeltsin’s popularity managed to recover (during the presidential elections of 1996). The first Chechen war was not only designed to boost Yeltsin’s power and show his ability to coerce Russian society, it was also promoted by the Russian military that had suffered badly from the break-up of the Soviet Union. The defence minister Pavel Gratchev who had helped Yeltsin to maintain his power in the conflict between the parliament and president in autumn 1993, was one of those that lobbied for the war. It is interesting to note that during 1993-2000 despite the humiliating failures of the Russian military, Russia’s army was the public institution that enjoyed more trust than any other public institution in Russia.²⁷² This was very much down to the fact that the Russian public saw the military as a crown jewel of Russian greatpowerness.

Arguably the first Chechen war started the vicious circle that Russia has difficulties to escape from – democracy and war seldom go well hand in hand. The first Chechen war started in the environment created by regime breakdown and at the beginning of a process of democratisation, but itself became a major factor in preventing further democratisation.

The first Chechen war enjoyed little public support after the shortcomings exposed by the first days of the invasion. The military defeats and the inability of the Russian side to see a route to eventual victory combined with the lack of support domestically led Russia to reach a peace agreement with the Chechen republic of Ichkeria in August 1996. However the regime consolidation in Russia as well as in Chechnya was far from completed. The first Chechen war had left the Russian military bitter and the peace agreement divided factions among the Chechen elite as well as in Russia. Furthermore since the ‘old’ elite in Russia started to gain a footing in the Yeltsin administration, the seed for the war on terrorism was planted. The first Chechen war was not portrayed by the Russians as a war against terrorism

²⁷¹ Richard Pipes, *The Russian revolution 1999-1919*, London: Collins Harvill, 1990,p.2

²⁷² Public Opinion survey conducted by VTsIOM in Valerie Sperling, ‘Opposition to the War in Chechnya: Antimilitarist organizing in Russia’, PONARS Policy Memo, no.224, December 2001.

but some of the methods of the Chechen fighters like the hostage taking in Budyanovsk in 1996 made the Russian authorities use the word ‘bandit’ and also the word ‘terrorism’ began to appear. Already in 1994 Russian criminal law was amended regarding terrorism.²⁷³ The first federal law on the fight against terrorism came into force in July 1998. And the *ressentiment*-thinking in the form of an outside threat for Russia started to take shape.

There had been a chance to restore stability and development to the area of Chechnya on the basis of the Khasaviurt Agreement, signed in August 1996, and the Treaty on Peace and Principles of Mutual Relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, signed in May 1997. The Chechen Presidential election in January 1997 and the election of Aslan Maskhadov were seen as positive signs especially in the West. The government in the war-torn area was, however, unable to get the territory under its full control without financial help for the reconstruction of its infrastructure and was unable to provide employment opportunities. Moscow was very unwilling to provide this help, above all because it was struggling with similar problems itself. The other reason looking at the events retrospectively seemed to be the knowledge that Russia was preparing for the second war.

Less explicable were Moscow’s measures to prevent any international organizations from assisting. The OSCE Assistance Group was pushed aside. In the Russian view, since the war was over, the need for any international assistance was also over. Chechnya became a place of lawlessness and anarchy. The fact that some Chechen groups reverted to kidnapping and that everybody including Western citizens were targets did not help the Chechens win much international support and opened up for Russia the opportunity to link terrorism and Chechnya.

The role of land military power is significant in discussions of Great Power status²⁷⁴ and it fits into this picture. If Russians claim that the NATO invasion of Kosovo was fulfilled because NATO needed a mission after its lost identity with the end of the Cold War, and that the EU’s interest in being involved in Moldova is also down to the fact that the EU needs a mission to promote its security identity, then the similar claim can be made that the Russian military needed a mission, especially in the early 1990s, but also at the end of the 1990s.

²⁷³ Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia. The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2004, p.123

²⁷⁴ See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2001, pp. 83-137

Chechnya was presented to them as such an opportunity. An interesting feature is that the initiative for the renewal of hostilities did not come from the Defence Ministry but from the Interior Ministry. The kidnapping of an interior ministry official in March 1999 made the Minister of the Interior Sergei Stepashin call for a new mission in Chechnya.²⁷⁵ It was also clear that the military had its own agenda relating to Chechnya: ‘Chief of the General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin gathered a group of combat generals (Konstantin Pulikovskiy, Gennady Troshev, Viktor Kazantsev, Vladimir Shamanov) driven hard by the desire to take revenge for the humiliating defeat in 1996’.²⁷⁶ In Daniel Treisman’s view the incidents that began the second war had been planned for months on both sides.²⁷⁷

That picture, the picture of ‘war strategy’, is also supported by the claim by Putin in his first meeting with president Clinton in the summer of 1999 that al-Qaeda had troops in Chechnya and that they were planning action against Russia.²⁷⁸ Furthermore the fight against terrorism was also raised in the CIS summit in Minsk June 1999. The CIS-countries signed a document for cooperation in the fight against terrorism.²⁷⁹

In August 1999, Chechen forces led by Basaev and Khattab launched an invasion of Dagestan, and bombs exploded in Moscow apartment blocks. This made the start of the second Chechen war inevitable, while it also suited the purposes of the newly appointed Prime Minister of Russia and heir-designate to the Russian presidency to demonstrate a show of strength. The broader aims of the war started to be clear: ‘In fighting in the south, Russia not only hopes to restore constitutional order and, of course, reassert its territorial integrity in the region, but also to send a warning shot across the bows of anyone who might have thought that Russia would quietly slip away from the region, like a thief in the night. As Russia has been a key player in the area, for better or worse, for over 300 years, it is not going to quietly slip away.’²⁸⁰ The Russian public very much shared this view. Opinion polls showed that the Russian population supported overwhelmingly (73% in favour) the war still

²⁷⁵ Matthew Evangelista: *The Chechen Wars-Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002, p.73

²⁷⁶ Pavel Baev, ‘Putin’s War in Chechnya: Who steers the course?’, PONARS Policy Memo 345, November 2004., http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/pm_0345.pdf, accessed 20.03.2012

²⁷⁷ Treisman, *The Return*, p.298

²⁷⁸ Council of Foreign Relations, ‘Terrorism, Q&A – Russia’, 2004 <http://cfrterrorism.org/coalition/russia.html>, accessed 23.08.2005

²⁷⁹ ‘Treaty on Cooperation among States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Combating Terrorism’, Minsk, 4th June 1999

²⁸⁰ S.J. Main, ‘Counter-Terrorist Operation in Chechnya: On the Legality of the Current Conflict’, in A.C. Aldis (ed.), *The Second Chechen War*, Camberley: Conflict Studies Research Centre, 2000.p.35

in March 2000.²⁸¹ The second Chechen war started in September 1999. In Putin's words of October 1999 for Russians the matter of Chechnya was everywhere 'Wherever one looks, one sees Chechnya'.²⁸²

The Russian presidential administration started to argue more clearly and consistently about the threat of international terrorism in the international arena. The picture of the enemy had to be reinforced. Russia was not only fighting with a small backward mountain people but well organised and equipped international terrorists. For a Great Power this image was more acceptable. The foreign minister Igor Ivanov spoke for international cooperation against terrorism in the 54th general assembly of the UN in September. In October 1999 the UN security council passed two resolutions, one regarding the action against the Taliban government in Afghanistan and one about international cooperation against terrorism²⁸³.

Once elected president of Russia, Putin continued to talk about the threat of international terrorism. When he met with leaders of the EU and US, he continuously brought up the issue of the growth of terrorism in Afghanistan and he warned about links between the terrorist camps in Afghanistan and groups of Islamic fundamentalism in Europe.²⁸⁴ The fight against terrorism had become one of the major priorities of the Russian state. All the major foreign and security policy documents stressed the danger of terrorism; the Russian national security concept saw international terrorism attempting to weaken Russia and split Russia, in the military doctrine terrorism was named as the most dangerous factor threatening Russia's internal unity and the Russian foreign policy doctrine stressed the importance of international cooperation in the fight against international terrorism. All three major foreign and security policy documents were published in 2000.

The second Chechen war and the war against terrorism united for the first time since the break-up of the Soviet Union the Russian political lines - liberals, communist, nationalist – while the army and security institutions as well as public opinion moved to support the Russian president and his government. Only a very few newspaper writings questioned the operation in Chechnya. Jevgeni Krutikov wrote in *Izvestia* newspaper 'Why do we Russians

²⁸¹ Valerie Sperling, 'Opposition to the War in Chechnya : Antimilitarist organizing in Russia', PONARS Policy Memo, no.224, December 2001

²⁸² Treisman, *The Return*, p.263

²⁸³ Security Council Resolution nr.1267, 15th October 1999 on measures against the Taliban; and Security Council Resolution nr. 1269, 19th October 1999 on international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

²⁸⁴ Fiona Hill, 'Extremist and Bandits- How Russia Views the War against terrorism', Brookings Institution, PONARS Policy Memo No.246, April 2002

do all this and what exactly do our leaders want to gain by using all this force?’²⁸⁵ Specialist on security issues and still a member of the Duma in 1999 Alexei Arbatov warned ‘Never step into the same war twice’ in an article in *Obshchaya Gazeta*.²⁸⁶ It looked already then that the war might become a long one. Defence minister Igor Sergeev stated at the end of October that Russian troops would never leave Chechnya.²⁸⁷

Putin needed a tool to mend the things that had been problematic during the Yeltsin era and had stood in the way of the economic reforms - the resistance of the army and security forces, the hurt image of a Great Power and the lack of unity in Russian society. The wars in Chechnya did not fulfil this task alone but the war on terrorism arguably has benefited Putin in his task.

The roots to the claim that Russia is fighting terrorism in Chechnya are in the first Chechen war, but the claim was seriously and systematically used during the second Chechen war. The Chechen government headed by Aslan Maskhadov was not able to prevent the fact that power in Chechnya slipped into the hands of so-called field-commanders, such as the slave traders Arbi Barayev and Ruslan Khaikhoroyev and terrorists Salman Raduyev and Shamil Basaev, and the Jordanian Islamic fanatic Khattab, who many asserted was an ally of Osama bin Laden.²⁸⁸ This information was emphasised in the West by respected commentators such as Sergei Kovalev, a biologist and former political prisoner and well known human rights activist from Russia. As well as being used to influence opinion abroad, this was all the information the Russian public needed to fully and truly support Putin in his actions in Chechnya.

As the second Chechen invasion was launched the Russian government was keen to prove to the international community, almost more than to its own people, that the operation was legal and justified. The then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin announced on 30th September 1999 ‘Chechnya is Russian territory, and our troops can be deployed wherever we want’.²⁸⁹ Russian officials gave a new meaning to the word terrorist, as Kovalev puts it: ‘Thus, the word “terrorist” quickly ceased to mean someone belonging to a criminal underground group whose goal was political murder. Now the word came to mean “an armed

²⁸⁵ Jevgeni Krutikov, ‘Chechen Rakes’, *Izvestia*, 28th September 1999

²⁸⁶ Alexei Arbatov, ‘Never step into the same war twice’, *Obshchaya Gazeta*, No.39, 30th September – 6th October 1999

²⁸⁷ Eva Busza, ‘Chechnya: the Military’s Golden opportunity to Emerge as an Important Political Player in Russia’, PONARS Policy Memo 98, December 1999

²⁸⁸ Sergei Kovalev, ‘Putin’s War’, *The New York Review of Books*, Vol.47, nr.2, February 10, 2000, p.2

²⁸⁹ *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol.51, No.39, October 27, 1999, p.5.

Chechen – anywhere””.²⁹⁰ Military reports started to use the word ‘terrorist’ commonly in any context. The war itself was to be called an ‘Anti-terrorist special operation of the Russian troops’. Russians stressed also the international terrorist dimension, and as part of the official justification comparisons were made to other similar events in the world, including the USA’s missile attacks against Osama bin Laden’s guerilla camps in Afghanistan after bombs exploded in US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, and NATO’s bombing of Serbia with civilian casualties in June 1999. Furthermore, some Russian newspapers enhanced the international dimension too. *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* reported in September 1999 that Osama bin Laden, who two years later was to become a household name throughout the world, had personally visited camps of Chechen militants and that he was sending arms and equipment to the Chechen rebel leaders Basaev and Khattab through the Afghan Taliban. The same article stressed that the high-ranking Chechen rebel leader Amir-al-Khattab came from Jordan, and that under his command was a Pakistani national Abu Abdulla Dzhafar. Clearly the point being made here was that Russia was involved in an international conflict, and even the Russian Internal Affairs Minister Vladimir Rushailo emphasized that mercenaries from certain countries in the Middle East were fighting in Dagestan.²⁹¹ Thus with these kind of arguments Russia itself pushed for the Chechen war to become an international issue as well. Here, however, lies a strong contradiction with the other official line that Chechnya is a domestic matter of Russia and Russian territorial integrity needs to be respected. Thomas de Waal has summarised this dual nature of Russian thinking regarding Chechnya: ‘Chechnya is a front in the international war on terror and our policies there deserve unreserved western support; however, it is a domestic political issue and no international organisation can be involved.’²⁹²

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on September 11th 2001 changed in ‘one big blow’ the security challenges, coalitions and priorities in world politics. Russia, and especially president Putin, was quick to seize the opportunity and announce that Russia was an ally with the USA and the West in their efforts to fight terrorism in the world. During the previous decade Russia appeared to have been struggling to improve its worldwide image and to rediscover a suitable place for itself as an actor on the global scene. Now it found an opportunity to be seen and heard with the United States as the other great power suffering from the threat of terrorism. Russia saw

²⁹⁰ Kovalev, ‘Putin’s War’, p.5

²⁹¹ *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* 7 September 1999 p.7

²⁹² Thomas de Waal, ‘Europe’s Darkest corner’, *The Guardian*, August 30th 2004

itself as a possible go-between, a constructive mediator, between West and East (Islamic world) and it was facing security challenges together with the West that Russia had claimed to have faced already for close to a decade from the Russian ‘South’, meaning especially Chechnya. ‘The events of September, retrospectively, appear to have justified Russia’s longstanding claim that the West was not only underestimating international terrorism but also ignoring the existence of an arc of Islamic fundamentalism from Kosovo to the Philippines’²⁹³ writes John Russell. Indeed it could be said that after 9/11, from the Russian point of view at least, it was not so much Russia that joined the US-led War on Terror as the rest of the world that joined a war Russia was already waging. The eerie resonance of the destruction of New York’s Twin Towers with the bombing of Moscow apartment blocks two years earlier, while not directly exploited on the Russian side, inevitably lent a retrospective sense of justification to everything Russia had done in Chechnya. In the realist framework great power alliances are created based on mutual interests. The war on terrorism was a common issue. It did not take long for the impact of September 11th to leave its mark on a new direction in international alignments, and it certainly had an effect on how Russia was viewed.

The way in which Russians already connected Chechnya and international terrorism before 9/11, was a success for Russian diplomacy. Nobody can deny that an element of international terrorism was involved. But it is good to keep in mind that the reason for the second war had as much to do with the way Russians handled the conflict in the first place as with the threat of international terrorism. Every single terrorist attack that was linked, however vaguely, to international terrorism through dodgy internet pages or some money flows did back Putin’s words and strengthened the excuse to use force in Chechnya. Since 9/11, this approach was largely successful in stifling international criticism. With the subsequent shift in focus of international human rights organisations to US behaviour at Guantanamo Bay and in prisons in Iraq, even the human rights aspect of the Russian military’s behaviour was no longer under the same kind of scrutiny as previously. In the end Russians did also manage to get Chechens onto the international list of terrorists with US backing. The war on terrorism contributed to the strengthening of Russia’s international image as a Great Power.

²⁹³ John Russell, ‘Exploitation of the “Islamic factor” in the Russo-Chechen Conflict before and After 11 September 2001’, in Rick Fawn (ed.), *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p. 96

4.3 Russian attitudes towards conflict in Chechnya – uniting Russians but losing the West

The international context of outbreaks of the Chechen Wars was interesting both times. The timing of the first Chechen war is very intriguing from the point of view of Russia's international standing and cooperation with the West. The year 1994 looked very positive in terms of foreign policy opportunities for Russia. In March the IMF approved a loan worth US\$ 1.5 billion to Russia and so indicated the West's keen interest in trying to keep Russia on course to a market economy. Russia became a member of NATO's partnership for Peace Programme in 1994. In the summer of 1994 Russia had signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU in Corfu, when Yeltsin himself stated 'Our country has made a strategic choice in favour of integration into the world community and in the first instance, with the European Union'.²⁹⁴ In July the same year Andrei Kozyrev attended the G7 meeting in Naples and there were hopes in the Russian camp of the G7 becoming the G8. Russia was also in negotiations over membership of the Council of Europe. The current towards Russian Western integration was strong. All of these positive developments for Russia in international terms, did not give a reason to jeopardize her international standing by launching a controversial war.

Furthermore, the decision to use force in Chechnya itself was very peculiar in terms of international cooperation and would have been so even if the outcome had been a successful *blitzkrieg*. During 1994 Russia signed two OSCE documents which committed her to giving advance notice of troop movements and taking measures to minimise civilian casualties: the Vienna document on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) and the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of security, which was signed at the Budapest summit on 5th and 6th of December.²⁹⁵ The launch of the Chechen war violated these agreements, and the nature of the whole case broke general OSCE norms and rules. The peculiarity of launching the first Chechen war from the point of view of Russia's international standing can be explained by the fact that the underlying arguments for the first Chechen war advanced the domestic factors not the external ones. Therefore the huge impact the first Chechen war had on Russia's external relations was not considered beforehand. It

²⁹⁴ Quote taken from page one of the agreement on Partnership and Co-operation by the European Union and the Russian Federation (Brussels, 1994). The speech was delivered on 24th June in Corfu.

²⁹⁵ Christer Pursiainen, 'International Security regimes, OSCE and Chechnya' in Ted Hopf (ed.) *Understandings of Russian Foreign Policy*, Philadelphia: Penn State Press 1999, pp.135-136

can be argued that the Great Power identity in Russian politics did not see Russia as weak and could not see that war inside the federation's borders could cause an international outcry the way it did. Only a few commentators anticipated the negative international impacts of the war, specifically in relation to the International Monetary Fund (page 122).

The situation was quite different in the build up to the second Chechen war. The timing of the second Chechen war made far more sense than the first given the international climate. The arguments were parallel to those of NATO and the United States' on Kosovo. The bombings of Kosovo and Serbia in the summer of 1999 marked a significant change in attitudes in the international arena. The Russian military used the bombing as an argument for their own actions: 'If NATO can shell civilian objects in a sovereign country for the sake of political aims we can do the same in our own country.'²⁹⁶ It seems that while the main reasons for launching the war were internal to the Russian Federation, the precise timing was provided by NATO. This rhetorical frame, of two Great Powers doing what they see best for world order, suited the Russian home audience.

4.3.1 Public Opinion

William Zimmerman's book *The Russian People and Foreign Policy: Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives, 1993-2000*, is a comprehensive piece of research about public opinion. Zimmerman comes to the significant conclusion that the general public in Russia has a modest but real role in Russian foreign policy, and tends to be either nationalistic or isolationist in their foreign policy thinking.²⁹⁷ Public opinions on foreign policy, however, do not touch so much on specific questions, but need rather to be understood in a broader context. They reflect public understandings of their own country. Professor Konstantin Khudoley, from the School of International Relations, University of St.Petersburg, has argued that Russian people are uninterested in foreign affairs, and that they already have enough to think about in the everyday reality of the domestic field.²⁹⁸ It seems, however, that there are two broader contexts that are important to the Russian people and that are reflected into Russian foreign policy rhetoric, and to some extent into actual actions. The first of the two

²⁹⁶ Emil Pain, 'The second Chechen war: possible scenarios', in Lena Jonson and Murad Esenov (eds.), *Chechnya: The International Community and Strategies for Peace and Stability*, Stockholm: The Swedish Institute for International Affairs, 2000, p.22

²⁹⁷ William Zimmerman, *The Russian people and Foreign Policy: Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives, 1993-2000*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002

²⁹⁸ Talk at Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Winter 2003

tendencies is, according to Andrei Melville: 'If one thing is to be mentioned as the most important dimension of public political orientation in Russia today it is definitely the longing for order.'²⁹⁹ The other is related to another feature of Russian foreign policy. 'Russian foreign policy is geared to the fundamental goal of redoing Russia as a Great Power in modern conditions.'³⁰⁰ In the case of the two Chechen wars the two central factors in public opinion, order and Russia's Great power status defined by Melville, come together. At the same time the two seem to be factors that have made a rift between Russia and the West.

Public opinion regarding the Chechen wars seems to reflect the quest for order and a high status for Russia. If in the first war the emphasis was on order, in the second one the international dimension was important also for the general public. In the first Chechen war the public quite clearly thought that the war activities lowered the respect of Russia in world politics. After two years of the war, 51% of the respondents thought so, while only 11% believed that the war would gain some respect for Russia.³⁰¹ In the same poll 74% of the respondents saw the war as a tragedy for the whole Russia.³⁰² Furthermore 63% were against the war in Chechnya, while only 23% were supportive.³⁰³ The general attitude seemed to be that the Chechen war would have to be paid for, at least in the international context. *Izvestia* of January 10th 1995 ran an article titled 'What the Chechen war will Cost Us' in which the speculation was that the mission from the IMF which arrived in Moscow on the 16th of January would decide against more support for Russian reforms. 'But the most serious economic losses may now be in store for Russia not in the theatre of military operations but in peaceful Moscow offices'.³⁰⁴ Two days later *Izvestia* published an article titled 'The Chechen factor could mean abandoning the concept set in the Current Budget'.³⁰⁵ *Sevodnya* ran an article titled 'State investment falls under the impact of the operation in Chechnya'.³⁰⁶ On the 10th of January and on the 9th of February the same newspaper claimed 'The military operation in Chechnya has probably caused the IMF mission to doubt that the budget's basic economic indices can be achieved'.³⁰⁷ The element of lost respect and a suffering Russian

²⁹⁹ Andrei Melville, 'The Achievement of Domestic Consensus on Russian Foreign Policy', Paper at the International Studies Association, 43rd Annual Convention, New Orleans, 24th -27th March, 2002

³⁰⁰ Dmitri Trenin, interview in Moscow, 23rd June 2004

³⁰¹ FOM, http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/reg_ros/chech_/chech_war/of19950105, accessed 11.05.08, The poll was conducted in December 1995 with 1366 respondents

³⁰² http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/reg_ros/chech_/chech_war/of19943916, accessed 11.05.08

³⁰³ http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/reg_ros/chech_/chech_war/of19943913, accessed 11.05.08

³⁰⁴ *The Current Digest*, Vol.XL VII, No.2 1995, p.14 (original *Izvestia* January 10, 1995)

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p.15

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p.15

³⁰⁷ *The Current Digest*, Vol. XL VII, No.6, 1995, p.30 (original *Sevodnya*, February 9th 1995)

image was present in the first war but then the reaction was more to seek restored order by stopping the violence.

In the Second Chechen war the public opinion was overwhelmingly behind the intervention unlike its opposition stand in the first Chechen War. The first war did leave an image that in the end through negotiations Russia had looked weak and order was still not accomplished. So the memory of the first war and the feeling of insecurity that was created during the NATO bombings in spring 1999 could easily be exploited for internal use and the explosions at housing blocks in Moscow only increased that feeling. Even in mid-March 2000, 73% supported the renewed war in Chechnya and the number was higher during the first months of the invasion.³⁰⁸ Partly the strength of support can be put down to the state's strong control of much of the media. And partly it was down to the new leader Prime Minister Putin, who showed strength in leadership which had long been missing in Russia. Interestingly also, according to a VTsIOM survey, the army was still the most trusted of Russia's institutions. Between 1993 and 2000 Russians expressed slightly more confidence overall in the army than in other institutions, including the Church.³⁰⁹ The voices of non-governmental organizations such as the Committee of Soldier's Mothers and Alternatives to a Militarized Patriotism had almost no influence. However there were some dissenting voices: in addition to the articles by Krutikov and Arbatov already mentioned, former Prime Minister Primakov believed that any ground operations in Chechnya could escalate into a protracted and costly war.³¹⁰ However, in Arbatov's own words 'When it comes to the Chechen question all our political parties, all branches and echelons of government, military men and civilians, the general public and the intelligentsia, are in agreement these days'.³¹¹

4.3.2 The State Duma

The State Duma of the Russian Federation represents the third element (along with the President and the government) in the creation of Russian Foreign Policy. It is not an actor as such, but provides a platform for discussion where alternative Foreign Policy orientations have been put on display for the population, and cannot be wholly ignored by the two executive parts of the administration. On the question of whether the Duma even matters in

³⁰⁸ Valerie Sperling, 'Opposition to the War in Chechnya: Antimilitarist Organizing in Russia', PONARS Policy Memo no.224, December 2001

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ *Obshchaia Gazeta*, No.39, Sept.30-Oct.6, 1999

Russian politics Duma deputy Sigtkin has argued: ‘I do not agree with the notion that the Duma would not have independence in Russia. In principal we do support the president and most of the reform programmes are introduced by the president. But there are also disagreements and not all laws go through just like that. The President has though the public’s support for his policies and that is also our job, to drive policy that the public supports. The notion comes when people do not know what is going on before for example a law or decree comes to the Duma floor. Often there are serious and strong disagreements. It is not pleasant but the fight happens during the pre-work, not in the Duma floor. But it has to be pointed out that the country does not go forward if we are not effective. Disagreements do take time and in my opinion it is a waste of time.’³¹²

During Yeltsin’s presidencies the Russian State Duma was often in disagreement with the presidential administration. As Sigutkin pointed out when the Duma and presidential administration did not work together, things moved forward in Russia very ineffectively.

The decision to go to war in Chechnya in 1994 appeared to go against the 1993 Russian constitution, which recognized that obligations under international law must be followed—*pacta sunt servanda* (article 15.4). As the result of a Duma initiative during 1995 a court case in Russia raised the question of whether the Chechen war was unconstitutional and President Boris Yeltsin was cleared. Vladimir Lukin, Chairman of the State Duma’s Committee on International Affairs, claimed in 1995 that Russian foreign policy was at its lowest levels since 1982. He saw the Chechen crisis as resulting from Russia’s total loss of fear or respect in the eyes of the world.³¹³

If a majority of the Duma was in the first Chechen war in open opposition to the presidential stand, in the second one the president had the Duma’s full support for the actions in Chechnya. In September 1999 the Duma voted for a resolution that was targeted at combating terrorism. It included increased expenditure for defence and security in the 2000 budget, amendments to the Criminal Code instituting liability for aiding terrorists and ‘self-proclaimed bodies of government’ and a law establishing a special status for Stavropol Territory (which borders on Chechnya). The resolution was fully in line with Prime Minister Putin’s proposals, which he presented to the Duma a day before the vote.³¹⁴

³¹² Interview with Aleksey Sigutkin, Deputy head of defence committee of the Russian State Duma, 30.09.2004, Moscow

³¹³ *The Current Digest*, Vol. XL VII, No.2, 1995, p.20

³¹⁴ *Kommersant*, 16th September, 1999

In a rather paradoxical way the Duma has played a very significant role in Russia's image in the world. During the first Chechen war it showed the weaknesses of the Russian president in internal politics and thereby made Russia look like a very unstable country. During the second Chechen war the support the Duma gave to Vladimir Putin, made Russia look very authoritarian. Slowly but surely the arguments from the Western side relating to a values gap started to emerge.

4.3.3 The Military Establishment

In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, the military establishment saw its own power weakened. Ultimately their calculations regarding the 'short and victorious war' failed. With the first Chechen war the Russian military establishment fell into an even more difficult position than before the wars; 'Most amazing are the Russian attitudes towards the army, a sacred institution for Russians throughout centuries. It is now an accepted norm to avoid compulsory military service, as well as to defect from military units in Chechnya'.³¹⁵ It seemed that sometimes even the army itself questioned the reasons why they were fighting in Chechnya, which then resulted also in poor military success and morale in the army.

The year 1999 could be labelled the 'golden year of the Russian military'. With their fierce statements about Kosovo they had already gained some influence, the military doctrine was going to be rewritten and more funds were made available for it. Perhaps the 'compromises' the Russian military establishment made regarding the Kosovo war in some ways speeded up the second military intervention by Russians into Chechen territory. The military was categorically against any cease-fire negotiations. In late October 1999, Defense Minister Igor Sergejev said that troops would never leave Chechnya.³¹⁶ The military officers were fostering a myth that if the civilian leaders had not intervened during the first war, there would have been a totally different outcome.³¹⁷ It seemed that the public and political establishment as well as economical elite was behind the strengthening of the Russian military. Anatoly Chubais, widely known for being pro-western, commented on the Chechen

³¹⁵ Vladimir Shlapentokh, 'Early Feudalism. The Best Parallel for Contemporary Russia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3, May, 1996, 393-411, p.398

³¹⁶ Eva Busza, 'Chechnya: the Military's Golden opportunity to Emerge as an Important Political Player in Russia', PONARS Policy Memo 98, December 1999

³¹⁷ Mark Kramer, 'Civil-Military Relations in Russia and the Chechnya Conflict', PONARS Policy Memo 99, December 1999

intervention: ‘I really do believe that the issue being decided in Chechnya today is not the Chechen problem but something incomparably more important than that - in Chechnya, the Russian army is being reborn....Now, for the first time in all these years, the army is regaining its proper status. And this fact, in my view, should be welcomed by democrats and nondemocrats alike – by all segments of the political spectrum.’³¹⁸

The second Chechen war, military intervention onto Chechen territory, seemed in some ways to be Russia’s answer to NATO military intervention in Yugoslavia. But at the same time it was a battle of Russia as a Great Power in the eyes of its own people and outside world. To consider a political solution to the conflict was unthinkable. One reason for this is that the military establishment was strongly opposing it and support from the general public only strengthened the argument to press on. Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev stated: ‘the Armed Forces are completely satisfied with the support they are getting not only from the country’s political leadership but also from the general public.’³¹⁹ The other reason is that in the post-imperial situation, while trying to define the state identity, political negotiations with a small, historically complex nation, was not anymore after the first war possible even in the public’s eyes. Chechnya and in fact the whole North Caucasus had become a place where terrorists planned their attacks on Russians. A Great Power does not negotiate with terrorists. The military establishment’s desire to redefine the Chechen independence war into a war of terrorism had worked.

4.3.4 The Foreign Policy Establishment and the Government

In the first Chechen war the foreign policy establishment found itself time after time cornered about the issue. Even the Foreign minister Kozyrev, who has been labelled a liberal westernist, had to excuse Russia from having to account for her actions before the world in an interview in October 1995: ‘Generally speaking, it is not only our right but our duty not to allow uncontrolled armed formations on our territory. The Foreign Ministry stands on guard over the country’s territorial unity. International law says that a country not only can but must use force in such instances ... I say it was the right thing to do ... The way in which it was done is not my business.’³²⁰ Already in January 1995 in *Rossiiskiy vestnik* an article by the Russian Foreign minister called the international reactions to the Chechen war hasty and

³¹⁸ *Kommersant* 24th November, 1999

³¹⁹ *Vremia MN*, 27th September, 1999

³²⁰ *Sevodnya*, 1995, p.9

declared their readiness to constructively cooperate with international human rights and humanitarian organisations. Furthermore he accused the West of being unfair: ‘...to our regret, such rhetoric [western reactions] evokes memories of the recent and very sad past of our relations with the West. In a number of instances we are observing a syndrome in which chronic reflexes are being triggered and long standing stereotypical ways of reacting to events associated with Russia are returning’.³²¹

It could be argued that even if there were some doubts in the air between Russia and the West as to the direction the matter had been taking since the fall of the Soviet Union, up until the first Chechen war, all doors were still open. The way Russians handled the first Chechen war both militarily and rhetorically gave the West reason to doubt Russians’ sincerity to pursue democratic reforms.

While still Prime Minister and the head of the Russian government, Vladimir Putin stated in September 1999: ‘we can’t sit around whimpering and whining, we all have to act decisively, resolutely and energetically, and this applies to every level - the President, the government and the Federation members alike. We must choke this abomination off at the roots.’³²² With the first Chechen war the government had been making decisions behind closed doors and the military involvement came as a surprise to the Russian people as well as to the outside world. With the second Chechen war the job, at least from the propaganda point of view, was done properly. The government’s task was to unite everybody under the same flag. For his part Foreign Minister Ivanov was out to gather the international community to fight a common fight – against terrorism. In the UN General Assembly’s 54th session, also in September 1999, he included in his speech a draft proposal and adopted a declaration of principles of mutual assistance among states with a view to stepping up the war on terrorism.³²³

The foreign policy establishment that had managed to create an image in line with westernisers as described in the previous chapter, lost it during the first Chechen war. This complicated Russia’s relations with the West. It contributed to the fact that Russian foreign policy was often described as inconsistent and in flux. Thereby the public, military and foreign policy establishment and the state Duma with their opinions about the two Chechen wars revealed wider Russian understandings of Russia’s position and state identity in world

³²¹ *The Current Digest*, Vol.XL VII, No.3, 1995, p.28 (original *Rossiiskiy vestnik*, January 17, 1995)

³²² *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 17th September, 1999

³²³ *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 22nd September, 1999

politics. In this way the idea of a modern Great Power using soft power in conflict solution failed.

4.4 Chechnya and domestic reasons for the war - state identity at stake

The link between domestic factors and foreign policy is often seen as one of overlap, the one being a continuation of the other. But the alternative view is that foreign policy can be seen as quite separate from the domestic context, at least when it comes to decision-making. There seems little doubt that at least in Russia's case the former holds good; as Bobo Lo has written: 'One of the most noteworthy aspects of Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet era has been the extent to which it has been shaped by domestic factors'³²⁴

During the Cold War era the domestic factors were always there but not as strongly taken into account. One of the reasons was the dominance of realist thinking in international relations. The literature on the relationship between domestic factors and foreign policy started to increase towards the end of the 1980s when constructivist approaches on how ideas and beliefs affected policy making started to be formed and discussed in the IR-framework.

The domestic political context is seen to be a crucial determinant of foreign policy since politicians' political ideas are formed and decisions are made there.³²⁵ Robert Putnam has taken the question 'How does domestic politics matter?' as a starting point for his analysis. He argues that political leaders can be seen as trying to achieve their goals in the domestic and international arenas simultaneously. He discusses the two faces of a policy arising from the same social base and argues: 'A more adequate account of the domestic determinants of foreign policy and international relations must stress politics: parties, social classes, interest groups (both economic and non-economic), legislator and even public opinion and elections, not simply executive officials and institutional arrangements'.³²⁶ The two-level games literature that was started by Putnam's article in 1988 has been extensive during the 1990s.³²⁷

³²⁴ Lo, 2002, p.26

³²⁵ Jackson, 2003, p.19

³²⁶ Putnam, 1988, p.432

³²⁷ See for example. Jongryn Mo 'The Logic of Two-Level Games with Endogenous Domestic Coalitions', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 38, No. 3, Sep., 1994, pp. 402-422; Jongryn Mo 'Domestic Institutions and International Bargaining: The Role of Agent Veto in Two-Level Games', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, No. 4, Dec., 1995, pp. 914-924; T Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on US Foreign policy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995; Thomas Risse-Kappen, 'Ideas do not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War', *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2, Spring, 1994, pp. 185-214; Emanuel Adler

A significant amount, according to James D Fearon, of research in the field of international relations during the 1990s advanced the proposition that domestic politics is typically a crucial part of the explanation for a state's foreign policy. He coded 193 article abstracts in *International Organisations* journal for the years 1987-1996 and found that more than a third of them were advancing arguments about the influence of domestic political or domestic factors in foreign policy making.³²⁸

Since the two Chechen wars have had so profound an effect on both Russian internal societal and political development as well as being one of the defining factors in Russian foreign policy making since the start of the first Chechen war 1994, the ideas and beliefs effecting the formation of Russian state identity can be seen in the arguments over the causes of the two Chechen wars. Among the reasons advanced, the notion comes up strongly that Russian state identity is very much connected with the ideas of greatpowerness presented in the previous chapter.

One can find different ways to categorise the different reasonings behind the first war in Chechnya, but here the classification adopted by Matthew Evangelista has been chosen as a starting point: the historical and structural legacy of the Soviet system; strategic arguments; domino theory and spill over effect; leadership politics, personalities and elite battles.³²⁹ These categories of reason also apply somewhat to the second war, either directly or indirectly.

4.4.1 The historical and structural legacy of the Imperial and Soviet systems

The first domestic political reasoning for the first Chechen war has long historical roots. This is a good illustration of how arguments, beliefs and perceptions from centuries back can have a strong influence even in the modern world. As a result of the cultural and social formation of the highland Chechens, as well as the relative inaccessibility of their communities, Chechens have always demonstrated resistance to the imposition of Russian rule.

'The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control', *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination, Winter, 1992, pp. 101-145; Peter M. Haas 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination, Winter, 1992, pp. 1-35.

³²⁸ James D. Fearon, 'Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy and Theories of International Relations', *Annual Review of Political Science*. 1998. 1, pp.289-313

³²⁹ See Evangelista, 2002.

They formed an important part of the Caucasian highland resistance to the Russian conquest in the mid-nineteenth century, and frequently rebelled against Soviet power in the 1920s and resisted collectivisation in the 1930s. The Soviet federal system, under which a Chechen Autonomous Republic was created in 1924, encouraged the promotion of local non-Russians and certain elements of national culture and identity, while simultaneously restricting the real power of the republics and, from 1930 onwards, promoting the superiority of the Russian nation.³³⁰

In 1944, on the pretext of punishing instances of collaboration with the Nazis, but more likely in order to settle once and for all the troublesome Chechen issue, Stalin and Beria ordered the deportation of all Chechens from the Caucasus by train, to be resettled elsewhere, mostly in Kazakhstan. This act of retaliation against a small but persistently troublesome people is an example of how strong the great power identity in Russian state identity has been and still is.

Although the measures against Chechen national identity were launched with the idea to destroy once and for all the Chechen resistance, in the end it had the opposite effect: the trauma of deportation and the experience of collective exile reinforced bonds of solidarity and identity which the deportees and their descendants took back to Chechnya once return became possible from the end of the 1950s.³³¹ Shortly before and after the break-up of the Soviet Union, the suppressed national identities resurfaced, not only in Chechnya but also other parts of the former empire. Ethnic separatism is one of those causes most strongly associated with the Chechen conflict, and it is the only republic that has mounted a claim to independence. With the claim of an ethnic war the Chechens have also been able to win considerable sympathy and support from the outside world, at least in the first war.

There is, however, a big question mark over this factor as the cause for the second Chechen war. With the first Chechen war the case was much stronger, with true unity in the fight for independence. In the later situation the fight for independence seems to have become more declamatory and to have come mostly from those now linked to terrorist attacks, than as a real aim with a realistic background and objectives.

³³⁰ Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2, Summer, 1994, pp. 414-452

³³¹ Michaela Pohl, "'It cannot be that our graves will be here': the survival of Chechen and Ingush deportees in Kazakhstan, 1944-1957", *Journal of Genocide Research*, 4 (3), 2002

With this Russians versus Chechens framework the Russian side had to revert to Great Power identity as a state identity in order to be able to argue their actions in Chechnya now and historically. If two separate ethnic groups become enemies, do not get along and one of them is significantly stronger than the other, we can start talking about a state relationship in an imperial framework suggesting Great Power thinking as a policy guide.

4.4.2 Strategic arguments

Chechnya was seen as a transport junction between Russia and the rest of the Caucasus with its important oil refining industry and oil transit pipelines. The arguments concerning the oil trade seemed to have taken on greater force when President Putin, on the eve of the second Chechen presidential elections in August 2003, promised to give all revenues from the oil transit trade to the full use of those trying to govern Chechnya. This was a total opposite line to that of Yeltsin's Russia.

The federal government ended subsidies and cut oil shipments to Grozny's refinery. Moscow then imposed a trade embargo. Together with the federal government's actions and the incompetence of the Chechens' own administration there was a 75 percent drop in per capita income between 1991-1993 in Chechnya.³³² Before the first war in Chechnya Dzhokar Dudaev was trying to make a deal with Yeltsin's central government. If Moscow would surrender all rights to oil exports, the Chechens would pay Moscow for using their pipeline. This deal was not acceptable to Yeltsin. In the interwar period 1997-1999, in internal Chechen politics there were conflicts over the nature of the Chechen state and competition, both internal and external, over the control of oil.³³³ In some analyses oil is advanced as the main reason for the start of the second Chechen war.

Boris Kagarlitsky has written about the role oil played in the Caucasus – Dagestan and Chechnya: '...the reluctance of Moscow to recognize Chechen independence, aided the formation of a criminal economy. This suited the Moscow oligarchs, who used Chechnya as a site to conduct their "unofficial" business.'³³⁴ When the war shut down the oil pipelines it made the price of oil go up. It has been claimed that the battle between the companies Sibneft and Transneft over Caspian oil was a triggering factor in the Chechen military incursions into

³³² Treisman, *The Return*, p.270

³³³ This view can be found in Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars*

³³⁴ Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*, London: Pluto Press, 2002,p.228

Dagestan, which then gave the Russian authorities an excuse to launch the second invasion of Chechnya.

It seems that whatever the truth about the oil and strategic importance of Chechnya is, the belief that oil had much to do with the warfare lives deep in Chechnya. One official who wanted to remain anonymous explained in an interview with Finnish journalist Susanna Niinivaara as follows: ‘Oil is a curse, for that the Chechens have to pay a high price. Oil has effected greatly to all wars in Chechnya. In Chechnya the battle for control of oil has been as strong as in Iraq.’³³⁵

If the Chechen interpretation of the reasons for the wars has put the emphasis on oil, Russians have not emphasised the strategic aspect, but from Moscow’s point of view it has been the strategy of not letting Chechnya control an economic resource that might make Chechnya survive without Moscow’s help.

4.5 Domino theory or spill over effect

One of the theories of the underlying causes behind both Chechen wars (but especially the first one) was the so called ‘domino theory’. The argument in this domino theory was - and to some extent still is - that if Chechnya were to be given the right to leave the Russian Federation and pursue formal independence recognized by the international community, then the other ethnic republics within the Federation would soon follow suit.

In particular it was argued that Chechnya’s neighbours in the North Caucasus - Ingushetia and Dagestan - would be the first to follow Chechnya’s example, and in the end the whole North Caucasus region would break away from the Russian Federation to unite and form its own Islamic North Caucasian Federation along similar lines to its short lived predecessor in the 1920s. If this domino effect were to occur it would – among other things – deny Russia access to and influence in the South Caucasus. This domino theory had more relevance and explanatory power in the period right after the collapse of the Soviet Union and especially during the first Chechen war and the inter-war period when, according to Malashenko and Trenin, the central authority was at its weakest vis-à-vis the regions.³³⁶

³³⁵ Susanna Niinivaara, ‘Rikkauden toinen puoli’ in Susanna Niinivaara and Hanna Smith, *Medvedevin Venäjä*, Helsinki: Silta, 2011, 208-226, p.221

³³⁶ Dmitri Trenin and Aleksei Malashenko with Anatol Lieven, *Russia’s Restless Frontier – The Chechen Factor in Post-Soviet Russia*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004, p. 1.

Even then, however, poor republics like Ingushetia and Dagestan were so dependent on Moscow that serious moves to independence were unlikely, and in the event no serious secessionist movement ever emerged. Rather than separate themselves from Russia, these republics distanced themselves from their Chechen neighbours' aggressive bid for independence. Ingushetia voted in a referendum in 1992 to stay in the Russian Federation and in Dagestan local Dagestanis opposed the invading Chechen fighters and the Islamic militants together with the Russian army in August-September 1999. The largest republic, Tatarstan, did look a serious candidate for secession up to 1994, but Yeltsin was able to negotiate a bilateral treaty with Tatarstan. Thus it seems that Chechnya was an exceptional case, and it was unlikely that separatism would develop elsewhere as strongly as it had in Chechnya. Nevertheless, the horrors of the two Chechen wars have taught a lesson to all those regions and republics in Russia who might harbour separatist tendencies about the high price they have to pay if they wish to leave the Federation against Russia's will. As Dmitri Trenin and Aleksei Malashenko have argued 'The Chechen independence movement has become a vaccine against Separatism'.³³⁷

There was, however, a price to be paid for Tatarstan's acquiescence, in the form of allowing the republic virtual self-rule. The invasion of Chechnya can therefore be interpreted as a warning that Tatarstan and other republics should not try to push this advantage too far. Since Putin rose to power the trend of re-centralization has gathered back much of the power lost to the regions and republics into the tightening grip of the Kremlin. By the second Chechen war, the 'domino theory' referred not so much to the spread of separatism (which there were no signs of at the time), but to any sort of resistance to greater centralisation.

The spill-over effect of the Chechen conflict is a different, but related phenomenon, which has much more relevance to the current situation in Chechnya than does the domino effect. This spill-over effect has been of particular concern to Georgia, where it was feared that fighting between Russian forces and Chechen fighters would escalate across the border into Georgian territory and especially the Pankisi Gorge. In many respects this Chechnya-card was Russia's tool for putting more pressure on Georgia up until 2008.

But the spill-over of the conflict also takes place inside the boundaries of the Russian Federation, where Chechnya's immediate neighbours Dagestan and Ingushetia have been the hardest hit. Examples of these are numerous - from Budyonnovsk to Kizlyar and the raid by militants in June 2004 into Ingushetia. The hostage situation at the Beslan school in October

³³⁷ Idem, p.47

2004 spread the conflict into North Ossetia. The problem of refugees has also troubled Chechnya's neighbours. Kabardino-Balkaria has not been unaffected either.

In order to contain and counter the spill-over effects, the Russian authorities were forced to use extraordinary methods in other North Caucasus republics, for example installing an unpopular former FSB official Murat Zyazikov as president of Ingushetia in a Chechen-type election, and tightening internal security in Karachaevo-Cherkessia in order to react to the challenge of the local Islamic militants.³³⁸ Perhaps most serious was the central government's plans in 2006 to reorganise the system of 'consociational' ethnic politics in Dagestan, which had proved successful in maintaining peace and order in the multi-ethnic republic for many years. These measures may not, in fact, have been a result of the Chechen conflict, but more the product of general centralising tendencies on the part of Putin's administration. But because of the proximity of Chechnya, such moves could prove dangerous. These tougher Russian actions caused dissatisfaction and suffering that in turn formed a breeding ground for more radicalism and sympathy for the separatist ideas on the Chechen model. In this way, renewed impetus or re-birth could be achieved for the domino effect, originating not from the independence of Chechnya, but rather from the large-scale repressive policies implemented by Russia throughout the Caucasus.

The situation creates a paradox that the Russian leadership has found it difficult to escape from. While Russian policies for the North Caucasus give a picture of central government trying to exercise its power over its subjects, its inability to do so undermines the international image of Russia as a modern Great Power. But the over-riding factor here was that, after the break-up of the Soviet Union the Russian Federation could not tolerate any further loss of territory. To do so would have dealt a massive blow to the feeling of Great Power status that was linked to Russia's imperial past. The legacy of the imperialist and expansionist features of Russian foreign policy meant that allowing Chechen separatism to go unchallenged was unthinkable.

³³⁸ The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor, 'Authorities in Karachaevo-Cherkessia Fear Union of Basaev and Local Islamic Separatists', 9.8.2004, http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=3042&article_id=2368383

4.6 Leadership politics and personalities

In regard to the first Chechen war Galina Starovoitova, shortly before she was murdered, wrote: ‘Chechnya was a unique case, containing an over determined number of strategic and historical-institutional factors pointing towards secession, but also one that did not need to result in war’.³³⁹ She made the point that a face-to face meeting between Dudaev and Yeltsin might have prevented the outbreak of the war. Furthermore, internal power battles in Chechnya also gave a boost to the line Russia adopted. In regard to the second Chechen war a significant role was played by Yeltsin and his ‘family’ that had gathered around him. It should also be kept in mind that Putin’s victory and popularity in the presidential elections of 2000 owed much to the tough image he had achieved by dealing with Chechnya. Being tough on Chechnya was seen as a symbol of Putin’s policy on the whole. He was to restore order and security in Russia.

The Wars in Chechnya were meant to reinforce the picture of strong leadership of Russia but instead Chechnya became a symbol of the fact that Putin was not as strong as he seemed and a constant reminder that a large country like Russia cannot be kept peaceful with forceful policies. The role of the military fits into the same picture, with the wars in Chechnya fulfilling an analogous role for the Russian army as the mission to Kosovo did for NATO, or mediation in Moldova did for EU security policy. Chechnya presented the Russian military with just such an opportunity to justify its own role.

4.7 Conclusion

The two Chechen wars illustrate well how domestic political unity can alienate Russia from the West. Furthermore, they show how the different Russian foreign policy schools figure in domestic politics as well. What does unite Russians is the desire to see their country as strong and influential.

In the case of the first Chechen war the internal threat and domestic factors were the defining factors initially, and the international dimension crept into it, rather to the surprise of the Russian decision makers. However unintentionally, the result of the wars was a

³³⁹ Evangelista: *The Chechen Wars*, p. 5

weakening of the position of Russia in the world arena. Chechnya became a question of Russian state identity internationally as well as domestically.

The second Chechen war showed that the Russian leadership had learned a lesson, so that the war was better planned and the international dimension was already in place. The war on terrorism was a success for the Putin administration on the one hand, but at the same time it failed to reinforce Russia as a Great Power of the 21st century.

This chapter has shown how Russians argued about the two Chechen wars. The argument here has been that the two wars had a significant effect on Russia's relations with the West and also in its internal developments. The Great Power state identity framed the second Chechen war more strongly than was the case with the first one. The war on terrorism pushed Russia into cooperation with the West in an interests-based matter, but at the same time locked the poles of Russia and the West into opposite sides. Modern and traditional greatpowerness were mixed in the Russian argumentation and views on Chechnya.

The way how the Russian foreign policy, political and military establishment viewed and argued about the wars in Chechnya confused and complicated Russia's relations with the West. The reasons and reasoning relating to the two wars led to the fact that Russia was defining its state identity in terms of being more of a traditional Great Power than a modern one. This had strong implications for years to come in the Russia-West relationship.

The underlying feelings of the Russian general public in support of arguments by the political leadership relating to restoring order and Russia as a strong state brought the question of a value gap into discourses between Russia and the West, and put at least temporarily a stop to any kind of ideas of integration. On the other hand the issue of Chechnya also became a matter discussed in several international organisations. By Russia's own requests but also on the West's initiative Chechnya became both a point for cooperation and a bone of bitter disputes between Russia and the West, depending on the organisation. Russians felt that in the matter of Chechnya the West was challenging Russian greatpowerness.

In the following chapters this tension will be tested through the case studies, where the three different foreign policy groups prevailing in the previous chapter are presented in three different arenas of international cooperation.

Chapter 5: Russia and the Council of Europe – the success of institutionalism

‘Today, the way of Europeanization is institutional. Democracy, rule of law, a functioning market economy, or good governance can be achieved only by accepting and adopting international rules and values as established in the World Trade Organisation, the European Union or the Council of Europe’³⁴⁰

5.1 Introduction

The Council of Europe (CoE) is generally neglected as a significant international organisation when compared to other European bodies. It was created in 1949 to take up the issues that were seen as causes of the division in Europe before the Second World War and so provide Western Europe the upper hand in the battle of ideologies - democracy versus communism and fascism. It was regarded as a very important element of Western European unity to have some common norms and rules as well as defined values in democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the holy trinity as some CoE officials call the ground that the CoE was built on. The initiative for forming an organisation like the CoE came from France and Great Britain. Winston Churchill stated in 1948 in Zurich that for a prosperous Europe the way forward would be to create a United States of Europe: ‘What is this sovereign remedy? It is to recreate the European fabric, or as much of it as we can, and to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety, and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe.’³⁴¹ One essential fact that affects the organisation’s mechanisms and abilities was already decided then. France and Great Britain wanted a slightly different kind of organisation. France even suggested the name ‘European Union’, but this was rejected by the British on the grounds that the term was too loaded. The British view was that the new body would work better if it was more of an organisation that provided general

³⁴⁰ Stephan Kux, ‘European Union-Russia Relations – Transformation through integration’, in Motyl, Ruble, Shevtsova (eds), *Russia’s Engagement with the West – transformation and integration in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: M.E.Sharpe, 2005, 170-184, p.182 .

³⁴¹ Winston Churchill, 19 September 1946, Zürich (Switzerland), http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/About_Coe/DiscoursChurchill.asp

guidelines and acted as a forum for the exchange of opinions than if it was able to force its decisions on its members. The general feeling was that human rights, the rule of law and the understanding of democracy were too difficult subjects to be agreed on and forced upon countries in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in Europe and the rest of the world.

The organisation had an important role in criticising countries of the Eastern bloc and their state management. During the Cold War period the role of the CoE in relation to the communist states was mostly limited to condemning the human rights situation and authoritarian rule. At that time Europe's inability to agree on a mechanism for imposing its decisions did not matter so much. But since the Berlin wall came down and the organisation expanded, taking in new members that had previously been under authoritarian rule, it suffered from the lack of a mechanism that would have reinforced its own authority and ability to promote more efficiently the democratisation process going on in Eastern Europe.

With the founding of the European Union and its expansion in the 1990s, less attention has been focussed on the CoE and its role in European cooperation. The EU has included to its agenda many of the issues that are at the core of the CoE's functions. This created an interesting situation. The EU has 28 members dealing with many of the same issues as the CoE. The CoE has 47 members, 19 of which do not belong to the EU, most of them countries from the former Eastern bloc and former Soviet Union. This has opened up the possibility of dialogue between countries of the EU on the one hand and those that have an interest in close cooperation with the EU, and who aspire to join it on the other hand. On some occasions the EU has been accused of seeking to impose its norms and rules on other countries, and as long as there has been the possibility of membership on offer, the EU has succeeded in this and it has proved a fast track way of promoting the democratisation process.

In the post-Cold War world, the CoE is one of the organisations that seeks to challenge the unipolar nature of world politics. Although it lacks any military or security role, as a body that is broader than the European Union and is committed to promoting and upholding common European values it has a certain moral authority as it embraces many of the second tier powers. Membership of the CoE is seen as a marker of being part of the advanced group of countries, while not being subject to US influence.

5.2 Russian entry to the Council of Europe and The first Chechen war

Special guest status within the Parliamentary Assembly was granted to the Russian Parliament on 14 January 1992. In May 1992 Russia submitted an application to become a member of the Council of Europe. The Russian application was held up first by the internal events of autumn 1993, 'The White House drama', and then the first Chechen war, which started in December 1994. In January 1995 in *Rossiiskiy vestnik* an article from the Russian Foreign ministry called the international reactions to the Chechen war hasty and declared Russia's readiness to constructively cooperate with international human rights and humanitarian organisations. Furthermore it accused the West of being unfair: '...to our regret, such rhetoric [western reactions] evokes memories of the recent and very sad past of our relations with the West. In a number of instances we are observing a syndrome in which chronic reflexes are being triggered and long standing stereotypical ways of reacting to events associated with Russia are returning'.³⁴²

These were direct appeals for Russia to be treated in a different way from the Soviet Union. Russia was no longer the Cold War adversary, but suspicion was cast that many in the West still viewed her in these terms. In the initial exchanges with the CoE, Russia's representatives were seeking to establish its place as a significant power in the new world order, one which should be treated with respect and on equal terms.

Assurances of continued progress were given to the Council of Europe by the President of the Federation, the Prime Minister, the President of the Duma and the President of the Council of the Federation in a letter dated 18 January 1995.³⁴³ The letter at the time was not enough and procedure on Russia's request for membership was interrupted on 2 February. Even if the application process was temporarily stopped in the first half of 1995, the President of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Miguel-Angel Martinez said that the council's leadership had no fundamental objection to admitting Russia.³⁴⁴ The COE's way of using the word 'freeze' in the context of the Russian application triggered very emotional Russian reactions and cold war rhetoric was brought up again. Ernst Muelemann, a Swiss parliamentarian, speaking at the CoE's session of February 2nd did not see Russia's entry to the CoE as possible under the circumstances and thought it unlikely that the matter would be

³⁴² *The Current Digest*, Vol. XL VII, No.3, 1995, p.28 (original *Rossiiskiy vestnik*, January 17, 1995)

³⁴³ Council of Europe, OPINION No. 193 (1996) on Russia's request for membership of the Council of Europe, Assembly debate on 25 January 1996 (6th and 7th Sittings)

<http://assembly.coe.int/documents/adoptedtext/ta96/eopi193.htm> (accessed 25.06.2012)

³⁴⁴ *The Current Digest*, Vol. XL VII, No.4, 1995, p.27 (original *Pravda* January 26, 1995)

solved in the near future.³⁴⁵ The Baltic States were particularly keen in opposing Russia's entry. In the summer of 1995 the matter was taken up again in Strasbourg, but even if the Russians were willing to allow a PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) delegation to visit Chechnya the answer to the Russian application was negative. However the Assembly did admit Albania and Moldova as fully fledged members.³⁴⁶ In September the debate started again and this time the tone from CoE started to soften. By 27 September, with the adoption of Resolution 1065, the Russian application procedure was resumed on the grounds that Russia was henceforth committed to finding a political solution in Chechnya and promised that alleged and documented human rights violations were to be investigated. But now the Russian tone had become very bitter. Vladimir Lukin, the chairman of the Duma's international affairs committee, went to a CoE Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Strasbourg where the Russian application for admission was 'unfrozen'. In the briefing he gave afterwards he questioned the need for Russia to join the CoE, since he felt that there was a strong dislike for Russia. In particular given that the Political Commission recommended the admittance of Ukraine and Macedonia to the CoE, he asked, 'Why is a kind of criterion of absolute perfection set exclusively for Russia?'³⁴⁷

In this period of January to September 1995, Russia was playing a game of brinkmanship, in which it was unready to make more than minor concessions over Chechnya, while insisting that there were no reasons that this should hold up CoE membership. In the end, the application was unfrozen and Russia had scored a victory, but Lukin's comments indicate that the country did not accept this graciously. Russia wanted to be more than just a member of the CoE, it wanted acknowledgement that it was now a leading player and was ready to give up membership rather than entertain outside interference with its own affairs.

The fact that Russia had displayed a strong will to find a political solution in Chechnya, it had accepted an OSCE mission in Chechnya, had come to an agreement with the EU over the interim trade agreement, and that democratic political development was moving forward were seen as positive developments.³⁴⁸ In October 1995, Jean Seitlinger, chairman of the CoE Parliamentary Assembly's committee on relations with non-members, made an announcement that since Russia had shown a strong willingness to join the CoE, which is the first condition for admission, and even if Russia still had a long way to go to catch up with

³⁴⁵ *The Current Digest*, Vol. XL VII, No.5, 1995, p.25 (original *Kommersant-daily*, February 3, 1995)

³⁴⁶ *The Current Digest*, Vol. XL VII, No.27, 1995, p.25-26 (Original *Sevodnya*, July 4, 1995)

³⁴⁷ *Sevodnya*, September 7, 1995, p.3

³⁴⁸ Webber, p.130

the Western countries, when it comes to the second criterion of having a legal structure and a normal democratic society, it was on the right path and so most likely would be admitted to the Council in mid-January 1996.³⁴⁹

Russia played the card of multilateralism strongly while seeking CoE membership. The method was to warn the other side of the more negative elements of Russian foreign policy. It seemed that the Russian side's warnings about isolationism, the threat of ultranationalism, a new iron curtain and weak western support for Russian reform efforts had started to have an effect. In January 1996 the view that a positive signal, which the granting of membership would provide, might boost reform started to gain strong support in the CoE. Membership was seen as a support mechanism for Russia on its road to democracy and that accepting Russia would pre-empt any division of Europe and help Russia to strengthen its European identity. Furthermore Russian membership would allow CoE to apply more monitoring procedures and so have an influence on Russian policymaking. This in spite of the fact that in early January, the commission on legal issues and human rights of the CoE's Parliamentary Assembly came to a conclusion that Russia cannot be considered a law-governed state. At their press conference the commission's chairwoman Lidia Ehr rejected the Russian accusations of double standards and stated that Russia was treated with a maximum of objectivity and impartiality. In this kind of approach we see something close to the classical liberal view of international relations – for the CoE it was the rule of law and acceptance of international norms that determined Russia's status in the CoE, but from a liberal perspective, membership of such a body ought to accelerate Russia's development in this direction.

However the final result was hardly surprising since the Russian side was united on all sides in applying to the CoE. Before the vote on 25th January 1996 Russia made a final assault in its bid for membership. President Yeltsin made a speech where he said that if Russia was not accepted it would be indirect support for Chechen terrorism and a sign of a withdrawal of Western support from the Russian democrats. The communist leader Gennady Zyuganov repeated the president's remarks almost word for word in Strasbourg. In the domestic political arena Zyuganov was a bitter opponent of Yeltsin. Zyuganov also stressed in his speech that rejection would be tantamount to support for extremist forces and the war party in Russia and would encourage the rise of fundamentalism in the Caucasus. Also the human rights activist Sergei Kovalev joined the Russian effort by sending a letter to the Parliamentary Assembly in favour of entry, saying that an isolated Russia is more dangerous

³⁴⁹ *The Current Digest*, Vol.XL VII, No.43, 1995, p.23 (Original *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, October 25, 1995)

to itself and to the world than an integrated Russia.³⁵⁰ The very split Russian political elite was very unanimous in their bid for Russia's membership of the CoW.

Furthermore Vladimir Lukin, who had been questioning if Russia really needed the CoE, four months later suggested that Russia could 'mature' to the high standards of the Council as a member. This would both accelerate the maturation process and rid Europe of its psychological complex about a Russian threat.³⁵¹ Even the Liberal Democratic Party's leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy played his part in favour of Russia's entry, but in his typically controversial way. He stated that Russia's admission to the CoE would be a wonderful gift for Europe, while a denial of admission would be a gift for him as a presidential candidate. He also continued by warning 'We will have no reason to protect those who push us away with disgust – we will part ways, and Basaevites along with other terrorists from the East will instantly turn up in Riga, Tallinn, Warsaw, Berlin, Paris and London'.³⁵²

The Russians were shooting on all fronts and their approach and policy was successful. The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly voted 164 to 35 with 15 abstentions for granting the Russian Federation admission to the CoE. So initial objections on the part of the CoE to Russian membership, based largely on Russia's record in Chechnya but also a poor state of the rule of law and respect for human rights, were eventually overcome, in no small part thanks to an apparently orchestrated Russian campaign which highlighted the likelihood of improvements in Russia's behaviour should membership be granted, in almost equal measure to barely disguised threats as to the serious consequences of rejection. Thus Russia became a member of the CoE in February 1996 under the idea that Russia is better in than out. In spite of that some still consider that Russia was admitted too early and was not ready for membership.³⁵³ 'In other words, Russia was admitted in the name of an "up-and-coming" democracy and the risks entailed in its possible isolation, even if the decision was made without any real enthusiasm'.³⁵⁴ Also the Russian side seemed to admit that Russia had not fulfilled the requirements. Director of the legal Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs A. Khodakov wrote in early 1996: 'At the present moment Russian legislation, with the exception of the Constitution of the Russian federation, and law

³⁵⁰ *Sevodnya*, January 26, 1996, p.1

³⁵¹ *Sevodnya*, January 30, 1996, p.3 (The reference is to Shamil Basaev, a Chechen rebel leader and organizer of terrorist acts).

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ CoE official interview, Strasbourg, 20.06.2006

³⁵⁴ Jean-Pierre Massias, 'Russia and the Council of Europe: Ten Years Wasted?', *Russia.Nei.Visions*, No.15, Ifri Russia/NIS Research Programme, January, (2007), p.6

enforcement practice do not fully meet the Council of Europe's standards'.³⁵⁵ Similar views were still dominant ten years later: 'We were naïve and had illusions about membership. Russia was not prepared and had this romantic idea of a common European House'³⁵⁶.

On top of the idea of institutionalism, better in than out, there were additional factors too pushing Russian membership through from the CoE side, in circumstances where any other country might not have even been considered. Similar ideas to those in the case of the OSCE were expressed in the CoE case as well. According to Mr. de Lipkowski, 'Russia's joining will give our organization a new impetus and authority. We shall be the only pan-European organization (...) We shall be the only forum for dialogue embracing all countries of a Europe whose divisions we shall have at last healed.'³⁵⁷ Russia acted also in the post Cold War world as a sufficiently prestigious case, to show the importance of an organization that was created especially to fit in a very bipolar world with ideological divisions.

Furthermore there was no greater fear in the West than the return of communism in Russia. Russia was a big enough country to shake the newly found democratic trend in Central and Eastern Europe. Russian internal politics had taken a turn to the worse, from the Western point of view, in the Duma elections of December 1995. Both nationalists and communists had gained popular support and President Yeltsin looked very weak. An additional factor that played positively for the admittance of Russia to the CoE was the 1996 presidential elections. For the West and particularly the European countries it was important that Yeltsin would win the elections and if CoE membership would help, it would be granted.³⁵⁸

The manner of Russia's entrance to the CoE is significant. Russia's hopes were high and quite unrealistic in terms of what membership meant in real terms. For the Russian government it was very important to be one way or other anchored in some European structures, to institutionalise its foreign policy and get a feeling of belonging to the 'European Common House', the positive legacy of Gorbachev's foreign policy. As a modern democratic European Great Power, a membership in one of the well respected clubs in Europe would bring the conformity of institutional type of greatpowerness.

³⁵⁵ Georgii Vinokurov, Andrei Rikter and Vladimir Chenisov (eds), *Evropeiskii Sud' po Provam Cheloveka i Zashchita Svobody Slova v Rossii: Pretsedenty, Analiz, rekomendatsii*, Moscow: Institut Problem Informatsionnogo Prava, , vol.2, 2004, p.583-4,

³⁵⁶ Interview with Russian CoE official, 22.06.2006, Strasbourg, France

³⁵⁷ Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly. Official Report, op. cit.

³⁵⁸ Interview with CoE official in secretariat of the Council of Ministers, 20.06.2006, Strasbourg, France

No EU member country has entered the organization without being a member of the CoE first and later the membership became one of the criteria for the EU membership. Some circles in Russia saw Russia's membership to the CoE as a key for closer cooperation if not even membership in the EU. There was also, among the Russian political elite, a view of the CoE as a 'mini UN'³⁵⁹ and 'a visiting card that looks good'.³⁶⁰ As a result of these expectations, when Russia continued to face criticism from the CoE and particularly from the direction of the PACE and it realised that CoE membership was not the way to get closer to the EU, Russian attitudes towards the organisation became more reserved and involved tougher rhetoric. 'Very soon the reality hit. There was frustration and a feeling of being manipulated. Obligations were many but very few advantages'.³⁶¹

The first Chechen war acted as a trigger for worries in the EU member countries and other European states that Russia's path towards democracy would not be that easy. The ideas of liberal institutionalism played a very significant role in acceptance of the Russian application for CoE membership. Russia's own arguments were supporting the ideas embedded in liberal institutionalism arguing that the road to democracy for Russian would be even slower if not going into reverse if Russia was not a member of the CoE. The quarrelling factions of Russian political thinking were also united behind the idea, though with very different arguments. The question to be asked here is whether the Russian political elite from all groups have the motive of liberal institutionalism, wanting to learn, share information and harmonize societal practices in their mind while arguing for Russia's membership, or was it the idea of prestige, belonging to a group that represents Western values, more important than developments in Russian domestic politics?

One of the definitions of being a great power includes belonging to different multilateral frameworks, and this seemed to be one of the underlining motives of the Russian foreign policy elite to seek membership in a Western based organization where it had no place before the fall of Soviet Union. The CoE was known as a 'club of democratic countries' a definition that was suited for Russia while seeking a new international identity after the fall of the Soviet Union. Furthermore the original ideas of the CoE, dating back to the late 1940s when the general feeling was that human rights, the rule of law and the understanding of democracy were too difficult subjects to be agreed on and forced upon countries in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in Europe and the rest of the world, suited Russians. So

³⁵⁹ Interview with CoE official in committee of legal affairs and human rights, 20.06.2006, Strasbourg, France

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Interview with CoE official in secretariat of the Council of Ministers, 20.06.2006, Strasbourg, France

even if Russian signed for the CoE values, there was no mechanism apart from undermining one's reputation, to force anything on member states. This is also in accordance with great power thinking.

The mechanisms that exist today in the CoE for taking action against a member state that does not comply with the obligations of the CoE are two-fold. PACE can strip the member state of voting rights. PACE is the institution that monitors member states' progress or current situation in the sphere of human rights. PACE is an institution of parliamentarians. Its status has not always been considered high and its reputation has been that 'second class parliamentarians' have been sent there. This reputation however does not do justice to PACE and its members. Its reports have been highly valued and well put together. In the process of monitoring the democratic progress of former socialist countries including Russia it has been essential for the European integration process. The Russian representatives have always been rather high ranking professional diplomats with leading positions in Russian political parties represented in the state Duma.³⁶² But it is the Committee of Ministers (CM) where the real power lies. It is the committee that can suspend cooperation, assistance programmes or freeze or cancel the whole membership.³⁶³ CM decisions are arrived at in three different ways depending on the issue: unanimous vote, simple majority or two-thirds majority.³⁶⁴ Furthermore, the meetings of the CM are private in nature and the CM decides what will become public out of their meetings.³⁶⁵ The CM is an institution where countries are represented by foreign ministers. This is the fundamental issue when it comes to countries like Russia with a strong Great Power identity. The CM is a decision-making body that fits into the picture of Russian foreign policy views. The working mechanisms are in line with Russian understandings of multilateralism. Russia pays 11 per cent of the CoE budget and belongs to the big five that contribute together about 56 per cent of the budget. The big five are Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and France plus Russia. Currently Russia pays 2,4 per cent less than the other four.³⁶⁶ This budgetary detail gives Russia a certain status.

It is clear that after the fall of the Soviet Union Russia was seeking membership in different 'clubs' in the form of international organizations. The CoE has ever since the end of

³⁶² Interview with Russian diplomat in Strasbourg, France, 22.06.2006 and interview with CoE official in Political Affairs, 20.06.2006

³⁶³ Article 8 of the CoE Statute, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/001.htm>, accessed 27.06.2012

³⁶⁴ Article 20 of the CoE Statute, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/001.htm>, accessed 27.06.2012

³⁶⁵ Article 21 of the CoE Statute, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/001.htm>, accessed 27.06.2012

³⁶⁶ 2012 CoE budget was 240.016.900 euros. Russia's share was 26.436.230.

the Second World War symbolized reconciliation in Europe. The second time in European history that this kind of symbolism was needed was after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism. It was very important for the Russian Federation to become a full member of the CoE. The first Chechen war had a negative effect on Russian internal development and that also reflected on Russia's path to becoming a member of the CoE. It is important to remember how and under what circumstances Russia did become a member. The shadow of Chechnya followed with Russia's membership in Strasbourg.

All three definitions of a Great Power outlined in chapter 2 highlight the acceptance by other powers and membership of international organisations as among the indicators of Great Power status. Membership of the CoE is not dependant on size and power, and so on its own does not confer any such status, but nevertheless we have seen that for Russia it was treated as such. But the CoE comes closer to the liberal understanding of Great Powers than the realist definition, which can be seen reflected in Russia's approach to membership and its insistence on being one of the major financial donors. Conflicting understandings of what constitutes a Great Power contributed as much to the difficulties over Russia's admission to the CoE as the actual clash over values triggered by the first Chechen war.

5.3 The Second Chechen war

When the second Chechen war started Russia had been a full member of the CoE for nearly three and half years. This time around possible membership could not be used as a bargaining chip, as it had been during the first Chechen war. Russia was already in the Council. It entered the organization without a good record of human rights or sound democratic development. CoE monitored the presidential elections in Chechnya in January 1997 and the observers Ernst Muehleman and Tadeusz Iwinski stated that the elections were carried out in a calm and positive atmosphere.³⁶⁷ During the interwar period the Council of Europe did raise its voice especially concerning the assassination of British and New Zealand hostages. They appealed to Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov to end the violent practices. 'These executions are against the Council of Europe's principles and incompatible with the moratorium on the death penalty in force in the Russian Federation, composed of 89 entities and a member of the Council of Europe' stated Lord Russell-Johnston.³⁶⁸ Once the conflict situation in Chechnya started to escalate the Council of Europe strongly reminded Russia of

³⁶⁷ [www.press.coe.int/cp/97/56a\(97\)](http://www.press.coe.int/cp/97/56a(97))

³⁶⁸ [www.press.coe.int/cp/99/152a\(99\)](http://www.press.coe.int/cp/99/152a(99))

its obligations for respect of the rule of law, human rights and fundamentals of freedom. However it also expressed its support for the Russian government's fight against terrorism; 'The Russian government can count on our support in the fight against terrorism'.³⁶⁹ In December 1999 after the ultimatum of 6th December given by Russian Federal authorities to citizens of Grozny the expressions of concern increased. CoE's Secretary General Walter Schimmer wrote to Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on the 15th and asked Moscow to give an explanation about the human rights situation in Chechnya. In his reply, which met the given deadline, Foreign Minister Ivanov presented a cooperative attitude underlined by his statement that 'the situation in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation is a matter of concern for the Council of Europe by virtue of its competence'.³⁷⁰ This was a positive signal, which allowed the CoE the possibility of getting involved in the conflict. In January 2000 the Parliamentary Assembly noted with satisfaction that the acting president Vladimir Putin had accepted the CoE's presence in the region and it welcomed Russia's willingness to cooperate with the CoE in the solution of the Chechen conflict and to take into consideration the proposals of the organization in the matter.³⁷¹ It looked like the place that was occupied by OSCE during the first Chechen war, Russia looking for assistance and support from international organizations, somebody to tackle the problem of Chechnya with Russia, was now replaced with the CoE. Russia was clearly seeking an 'alliance' formation with CoE in its war against Chechnya. International terrorism provided here a necessary framework. Even if Russia was challenged from within, with international cooperation the conflict became equivalent to an outside attack on Russian statehood.

The situation in Chechnya was getting worse during January 2000. There were enough worrying developments in Chechnya for the PACE to take a vote to suspend Russian voting rights on 27th January. The result of the vote was against suspending Russian voting rights. Not all of the parties and blocks inside of the CoE were happy about this. In the same session Igor Ivanov gave a speech. He saw the role of CoE as a provider of training for local self-government officials, judges and prosecutor's office employees, an organization that could help to improve the Chechen educational system, to promote civic development in a spirit of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, monitoring elections and providing other services.³⁷²

³⁶⁹ [www.press.coe.int/cp/99/520a\(99\)](http://www.press.coe.int/cp/99/520a(99))

³⁷⁰ [www.press.coe.int/cp/2000/16a\(2000\)](http://www.press.coe.int/cp/2000/16a(2000))

³⁷¹ 'The Conflict in Chechnya', Doc. 8630, 25/01/2000, 1.12 and 1.13

³⁷² *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, January 28, 2000

The result of the session was that if the situation in Chechnya would not improve the matter of suspending Russia's voting rights was going to be brought up again in April. Russia was given three months to improve the situation in Chechnya. As the main task of the CoE is to defend human rights that was also the main issue it concentrated on in the case of the conflict in Chechnya. The Council of Europe did not question the intervention by Russian Federal forces in Chechnya but they tried to stress '...the modalities of the intervention and measures taken to uphold Convention rights in the context of that intervention'.³⁷³

These exchanges again illustrate the different perceptions that were at work here. From the Russian point of view, the CoE's role was to take practical measures itself to promote developments within its member states, whereas the majority view was that the organisation should seek to ensure its members themselves observe basic human rights, enacting disciplinary measures where needed. The Russian stance at this stage also marked a shift from its earlier position in being ready to embrace some of the organisation's values, to one where it would not be dictated to but instead the CoE would need to take actions to meet its own agenda.

In the first half of 2000 there was correspondence between the Council of Europe and the Russian Foreign ministry, a questions and answers game with recommendations from the CoE side. It demanded a complete cease-fire, the start of negotiations without preconditions and the immediate cessation of all human rights violations on both sides. It strongly made clear that it did not accept the Chechen behaviour either, but put the main blame onto the Russian side. It reminded Russia that, upon its accession to the CoE, it had signed documents that she was breaking with the Chechen conflict. Attention was turned especially to Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe.³⁷⁴ Mr. Rudolf Binding, the reporter of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, wrote in his recommendations in April 2000 '...The Committee of Ministers should be asked to consider whether to initiate, in accordance with Article 8 of the Statute, the procedure for suspension of Russia from its rights of representation in the Council of Europe'.³⁷⁵ Also the Political Affairs Committee's rapporteur Lord Frank Judd spoke strongly about the situation in Chechnya and in his conclusion he stated 'The membership of the Council of Europe is about human rights or it is about

³⁷³ Council of Europe, Doc.8685, 30 March 2000

³⁷⁴ Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe states as follows: 'Every member of the Council of Europe must accept the principles of the rule of law and of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and collaborate sincerely and effectively in the realization of the aim of the Council as specified in Chapter I'

³⁷⁵ Council of Europe, Doc. 8700, 5 April 2000

nothing'.³⁷⁶ The PACE voted on the issue on the 6th of April and the result of that voting was that the Russian delegation was indefinitely stripped of its voting rights.

The response from Moscow was strong. Russian newspapers reacted with headlines like 'Is Russia on the Verge of Expulsion from Europe?' (*Izvestia*), 'Garden Gnomes defend Human Rights' (*Noviye Izvestia*), and 'Russian Foreign Ministry is Perplexed' (*Rossiskaya Gazeta*). The PACE not only suspended the Russian voting rights but also recommended an investigation for suspending Russia's membership in the CoE. This had an even bigger psychological impact than the voting rights since only one country's membership in the history of the CoE has been suspended (in 1961 when the military seized power in Greece). Since the issue of the humiliation of Russians after the breakup of the Soviet Union has been very central in Russia, this added more fuel to the feeling. The matter was not made better by the interview of Aslan Maskhadov where he approved the PACE's decision and called for OSCE to come and participate in the conflict.³⁷⁷

In May the Committee of Ministers met to debate about the possible suspension of Russia from the organization. Igor Ivanov, the Russian foreign minister, travelled to Strasbourg to lobby against such a measure. He went as far as saying that Europe should be grateful to Russia for combating terrorism on its own territory, thereby preventing it from spreading further.³⁷⁸ This, for those with a deeper knowledge of Russian history and how it has been used to promote the feeling of 'uniqueness' inside of Russia, immediately brings to mind the reference to the fact that Russians see themselves as saviours of Europe from the Mongol invasion. One can only wonder if the speech was meant for the home audience rather than for the CoE members and delegates. This is one fact that should be kept in mind when trying to understand some quite strong and unusual statements by Russian leaders. Are they addressing Russians or those outside? One CoE official saw that 'Putin's foreign policy is very much internal policy'.³⁷⁹ This fits also the ideas of greatpowerness in foreign policy. Actions in the international arena are guided by their use in internal politics.

One of the pleas the CoE made to Russia was to have a CoE presence in the conflict area and when the Russian announcement came that the necessary security measures were in place so that the organization's staff could start to work in the Znamenskoye office in Chechnya, the tone from CoE's side changed a little. Walter Schwimmer stressed in his declaration that

³⁷⁶ Council of Europe, Doc.8697, April 4, 2000

³⁷⁷ *Kommersant*, 21st April 2000

³⁷⁸ RFL/RL, 11 May 2000, Prague, by Jeremy Bransten

³⁷⁹ Interview with CoE official Directorate General of Political Affairs, Strasbourg, France, 20.06.2006

the Council of Europe was the first international political organization to establish its presence in Chechnya since the beginning of the crisis in September 1999.³⁸⁰ This inevitably recalls the triumphant way the OSCE announced its agreement with Russia about its presence in Chechnya during the first Chechen war. At the end of June the answer from the Committee of Ministers arrived and it did not see enough reason to suspend Russia from the CoE. 'The Committee remains of the view that the Council of Europe has a major contribution to make to the restoration of human rights in the Chechen Republic. At the same time, it recognizes that the contribution can only be made on the basis of Russia being a member of the Organization and fulfilling its commitments to the Organization.'³⁸¹ This again strengthens the argument that for the CoE as well as for OSCE, both organizations without power to enforce their resolutions, their presence in Russia can be seen as an achievement for the organization and so Russia's membership which opens up this possibility is viewed as highly desirable. Furthermore it has to be kept in mind that a higher political level also has higher stakes to play with, and so suspending Russian membership would possibly have had a devastating effect on Russia-Europe relationship. The relationship was already deteriorating in 2000 due to the Kosovo conflict the year before.

It seemed that there was a rift inside of the Council of Europe over the Chechen issue. After the Committee of Minister's reply the PACE adopted a draft resolution which stated: 'The Assembly believes it to be totally unacceptable that the Committee of Ministers has neither denounced Russia's conduct of its military campaign in the Chechen Republic and the resulting grave human rights violations as contrary to the Council of Europe's principles, nor seriously considered the implications for Russian membership of the Council of Europe.'³⁸² This reflected well the approaches of different levels in the CoE.

In July the EU unblocked an aid package it had frozen 6 months earlier in protest against the war launched in Chechnya. In September 2000 Lord Judd reported to the PACE about the developments in the Russia-Chechnya conflict after his visit to the region. The report condemned Russian military conduct and took a swipe at the Committee of Ministers which failed to strongly criticise the conflict. However he stated 'Nevertheless, the report accepts that there have now been some encouraging developments such as the beginning of work by

³⁸⁰ Press Release, 07.06.2003, Strasbourg, [www.press.coe.int/cp/2000/414a\(2000\).htm](http://www.press.coe.int/cp/2000/414a(2000).htm)

³⁸¹ Conflict in the Chechen Republic – Implementation by the Russian Federation of Recommendation 1444 (2000) and recommendation 1456 (2000), Doc.8783, 27 June 2000, Reply from the Committee of Ministers

³⁸² Doc. 8785, 28 June 2000, Report, Political Affairs Committee.

the human rights bodies put in place by Russia.’³⁸³ This kind of line continued almost throughout 2001 as well.

The Joint Working Group on Chechnya by PACE and the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation increased considerably the Council of Europe’s hopes for a better future. The working group was set up after the PACE re-instated the credentials of the Russian delegations at the Assembly in the spring of 2001. Also the reopening of the OSCE mandate in Znamenskoe in June reinforced the European belief in the positive process.

Prior to 9/11, then, the CoE took an ambivalent attitude to Russia’s actions in Chechnya. In part this was due to recognition that Russia was in clear violation of CoE standards on human rights on the one hand, and to the idea that Russia’s behaviour could only be influenced as long as she remained in the CoE fold on the other. Which consideration had the upper hand depended on whether it was the Committee of Ministers or the PACE which was speaking, and the issue caused a clear rift between the two. Already before 9/11, however, it appeared that even the PACE was softening its stance and that the CoE recognised the Chechen conflict as to some extent an anti-terrorist operation. In January 2001 it voted to give back Russia’s right to vote and a PACE-Russian state Duma working group on Chechnya was set up.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the CoE initially moved towards an even more accommodating stance with Russia. In March 2002 the Assembly’s monitoring committee reported on the Russian Federation and welcomed the progress made by Russian authorities since it became a member of the Council of Europe in 1996. The areas of progress mentioned were in regard to the signature and ratification of the CoE conventions, the reform of the judicial system, the transfer of responsibility for the penitentiary system from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice and the adoption of the Law on the Office of the Commissioner of Human Rights. However the biggest rift between Russia and the Council of Europe remained over Chechnya.³⁸⁴ The matters were not made better by the recommendation of the CoE that Aslan Maskhadov was to be included to the peace negotiations. Russia had categorically opposed that.

After about two years of relatively ‘peaceful coexistence’ the arm wrestling between Russia and the Council of Europe began again. Russia had announced already in June 2002 a plan for a referendum on the approval of a new Chechen constitution. By the end of the year

³⁸³ PACE documents, Working document 8840, 26 September 2000

³⁸⁴ Press Release, 130a(2002), 12.03.2003

the necessary signatures were collected and the process went ahead. The date for the referendum was given as 23rd March 2003. In January 2003 Russia closed the OSCE mandate and started a strong attack against those arguing that the referendum was to be held too early and the political process in Chechnya needed more time before it would be ready for a referendum. On January 27 Mikhail Margelov was elected as a deputy chairman of the PACE. He stated that the referendum is a must 'otherwise we shall be forever more entangled in corridor battles over recommendations offered by international organizations, the situation in Chechnya and with various groups of influence in the Chechen political elite.'³⁸⁵ Russians twisted the dispute to be all about Lord Judd personally. Dmitri Rogozin, a Russian outspoken hardliner and then the head of the Russian Federal Assembly delegation to the PACE, stated to Interfax: 'This form (PACE- Duma working group [on Chechnya]) has outlived its usefulness. This was especially clearly manifested when part of the group, represented by Lord Judd, tried to ruin the fruits of their own labour by opposing the referendum in the Chechen republic on the draft version of the constitution, scheduled to take place in March'.³⁸⁶ Rogozin's words did create tremors in the PACE. As a result the PACE in its meeting on the 29th January amended the wording of a draft resolution and did not give support to the line which Lord Judd had taken. It only stated concern that the necessary conditions for the holding of the referendum may not be created by the stated date.³⁸⁷

In April the Russia – Council of Europe relationship became even more complicated. The PACE in its spring session adopted a resolution and a recommendation on human rights in Chechnya and proposed that the Council of Ministers should suggest that the international community consider setting up an international tribunal to investigate alleged war crimes in Chechnya. The resolution points out that the most likely reason for the continuity of human rights abuse is because both Russian servicemen and Chechen fighters are seldom if ever punished.³⁸⁸ This quite naturally received a fierce response from the Russian side. Even the Russian foreign minister expressed disappointment and unsurprisingly Dmitri Rogozin, already known for his strong words, said that Russia was considering cutting its annual financial contribution of \$25million to the Council of Europe.³⁸⁹

Eventually both Rogozin and Lord Judd resigned from the CoE-Russian negotiations over Chechnya. Their removal signalled the victory of a more accommodating stance on both

³⁸⁵ Interfax news agency, Moscow, 27 January 2003

³⁸⁶ Interfax News agency, Moscow 30 January 2003

³⁸⁷ RFERL/newsline 30 January 2003

³⁸⁸ RFERL/ newsline 3 April 2003

³⁸⁹ Idem

sides. The argument that the events of 9/11 were the reason for a shifting stance is not, however, conclusive. The softening of the CoE attitude was evident well before 9/11, indeed the Committee of Ministers can be seen to have acted consistently throughout the second Chechen war. Celine Francis gives one explanation to this: ‘There were two main reasons for this: the election of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency, and the formulation of his “Chechenisation” policy. With Putin’s election in March 2000, a new era began for Russia: the dynamic young president, now officially in charge, quickly gained the trust of Western leaders who were generally willing to believe in his ability to stabilise the country. Putin’s decision to reject once and for all the option of direct control of Chechnya, and instead to appoint non-separatist Chechens to manage the Republic, was a second reason for the European states to trust him: they were hoping that this new Chechenisation policy would turn out to be the political solution they had been waiting for since the outbreak of the conflict.’³⁹⁰ Furthermore in her in-depth analysis she comes to the conclusion that ‘terrorist acts had no real impact on the EU’s or the CoE’s definitions of the conflict in Chechnya’.³⁹¹

In the case of Putin’s presidency and, to some extent, with regard to Chechenisation policies this study comes to the same conclusion but not in the case of terrorism. However the Chechenisation policy became acceptable in the CoE by force and events that shook Moscow in October 2002. As John Russell has argued: ‘The October 2002 hostage-taking crisis at Moscow’s Dubrovka theatre not only allowed Putin to put an end to any prospects of negotiations with the separatists but also define them all as “terrorist”, a view hotly disputed in the West’.³⁹² Richard Sakwa in his analysis follows the same lines: ‘Although Putin sanctioned meetings with representatives of the insurgents in autumn 2001 and in October 2002 it appears that some sort of negotiation process was in train until disrupted by the seizure of the Dubrovka Theatre... Putin resolutely pursued his Chechenisation strategy.’³⁹³ Even if the Chechenisation strategy seemed to have been favoured by Putin from the beginning,³⁹⁴ it was not at all clear before the summer of 2002 when he announced the military phase of the conflict finished. The CoE reports reflect the belief that the Russian authorities were in the same lines with the CoE’s and especially PACE’s view. In the 2001 PACE report where it recommends the return of full credentials of the new Russian

³⁹⁰ Céline Francis, ‘“Selective Affinities”: The Reactions of the Council of Europe and the European Union to the Second Armed Conflict in Chechnya (1999 – 2006)’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60:2, 2008, 317-338, p.325

³⁹¹ Francis (2008), p.336

³⁹² John Russell, ‘Ramzan Kadyrov: The Indigenous Key to Success in Putin’s Chechenization Strategy?’, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.36, No.4, September 2008, 659-687, p.663

³⁹³ Richard Sakwa, ‘The Revenge of the Caucasus: Chechenization and the dual state in Russia’, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.38, No.5, September 2010, 601-622, p.605-606.

³⁹⁴ Russell, 2008, p.662-663

delegation, it also acknowledges that many important Russian officials dealing with the Chechen question share the view of the PACE representatives.³⁹⁵ The fierce fight of prestige between JMG Russian delegation leader Dmitry Ragozin and Lord Judd in January 2003 was the final blow for the CoE's resistance to Putin's Chechenisation plan. Up until then the PACE's decision to return Russia's voting rights and more conciliatory line came from how the PACE rapporteurs saw the situation. Partly the more positive tone in January 2001 and 2002 reports came from the fact that Russians had been cooperating with the CoE officials well and also expressed their own concerns relating to the situation in Chechnya. In the 2002 report it is stated: '...at least some progress has been made; it [the Assembly] notes that this is the result of positive changes of attitude which are now identifiable in the Russian Federation concerning the way to deal with the conflict'.³⁹⁶

The Russian side did portray the second Chechen war as a war against terrorism rising from North Caucasus. The course of events helped the Russian argument significantly also in a number of international organizations. The 9/11 attacks changed fully the attitudes in European organizations, among them the CoE, relating to the war in Chechnya. As Anna Politkovskaya observed 'things changed especially after 9/11. It (Chechnya) became an international conflict and conversations relating to Chechnya in Europe were about war against international terrorism'.³⁹⁷ Also the statements from the CoE's side like the Political Affairs Committee report in January 2002 says: 'The assembly recognizes that there are some terrorists, including foreigners, operating in the Chechen Republic who have no interests in a reasonable political solution'.³⁹⁸ Noteworthy in the same paragraph was also reference to the fact that no state should use war on terrorism as a justification for disrespect for human rights and rule of law. In the 2003 report the CoE tone had toughened and the terrorism element was clearly there: 'Chechen fighters should immediately stop their terrorist activities and renounce all forms of crime. Any kind of support for Chechen fighters should cease immediately'.³⁹⁹ In that report the theme of terrorism and human rights violations from both sides is more visible than before.

³⁹⁵ PACE, Doc.8949, Credentials of the delegation of the Russian Federation, Report, Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur: Mr. Eörsi, 23 January, Section II Explanatory memorandum by the Rapporteur, 2001, Part D paragraphs 8-11 and part E paragraph 12

³⁹⁶ PACE, Doc.9319, Conflict in the Chechen Republic, Report, Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Lord Judd, January 16, section I Draft resolution, 2002, paragraph 22.

³⁹⁷ Interview with Anna Politkovskaya, Moscow, 2002

³⁹⁸ PACE, Doc.9319, Conflict in the Chechen Republic, Report, Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Lord Judd, January 16, section I Draft resolution, 2002, paragraph 13.

³⁹⁹ PACE, Doc. 9732, The human rights situation in the Chechen Republic, Report, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Rapporteur: Mr Rudolf Bindig, 13 March, 2003, Section I Draft Resolution, paragraph 9:i

In Russia's relations to the CoE two elements that arise from the case of Chechnya are the effects of the war on terrorism and Russian diplomacy keeping the attitude of a Great Power as the dominating factor. The lower level of the CoE in the form of PACE gave the strongest criticism and took action but also its efforts were successfully managed by Russian diplomacy. One significant factor was also Mr. Rogozin's appearance as the leader of Russian representatives in the JWG. Despite the very small steps forward from the Russian side, the words made a strong effect in pushing the Russian critical voices into a minority in the PACE. The Committee of Ministers, the higher level, was from the beginning more cautious in its criticism of Russia. Personal relations are more important in the CM and contacts closer. In such circumstances Russia's bilateral relations with different member countries play a bigger role than at any parliamentary level, where member state politicians also play domestic politics. The Russian side made a significant effort in cleaning up its image in the CoE and clearly some of the issues brought up in the CoE relating to conflict resolution in Chechnya made a difference in details, but not in overall policy. The ideas of multilateralism played a constructive role but it was overtaken by Russian views on sovereignty and feelings of greatpowerness.

5.4 The Council of Europe's place in Russian foreign policy

One of the original ideas behind the creation of the CoE was that traditional greatpowerness would count less and that all states despite their size or abilities would have equal standing. As Churchill stated in 1948: 'The structure of the United States of Europe will be such as to make the material strength of a single State less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by a contribution to the common cause'.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore the CoE was the first institution created after the Second World War in Europe, whose aim was to safeguard human rights and democracy. All these ideas of equality in international politics, respect for human rights and support for democracy also became a part of being a Great Power in the post-World War Two world. This factor was also recognized in Moscow after the fall of the Soviet Union. Foreign minister Kozyrev argued that Russian membership in CoE would enable Russia to join Europe as an equal of its Western partners and at the same time suggested that for Russian democracy to succeed it

⁴⁰⁰Winston Churchill, 19 September 1946, Zürich (Switzerland), http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/About_Coe/DiscoursChurchill.asp

needed to share Europe's experience.⁴⁰¹ The Russian foreign policy concept from 1993 mentioned also the equality aspect as one of the priorities in Russian western European affairs: 'Further steps to ensure Russia's equal participation in the Council of Europe'.⁴⁰² The other argument was relating to Russia re-joining the mainstream of Western civilization or being an inalienable part of European civilization.⁴⁰³ Both of these arguments can be seen as Russia's strong need to confirm that first Russia is treated in Europe as an equal and secondly that Russia is part of Europe.

How Russia embarked towards the membership of the CoE showed the inexperience of the Russian political leadership over what multilateralism consisted of in an institution based on CoE principles. There was plenty of idealism. It seemed that the Russian idealism was based on the fact that it saw itself as a special case.⁴⁰⁴ One conclusion why this was the case is that Russian identity as a Great Power raised false expectations and assumptions. Membership in the CoE was seen as an easy access process but the objectives proved to be more difficult than generally expected.⁴⁰⁵ The prestige factor and the fact that Moscow had, arguably since Gorbachev's new thinking in foreign policy, recognized that institutional affiliation and liberalism were part of the modern Western Great Power recognition, played a major part in the fact that the Russian political elite united in their argumentation for the necessity of Russian membership in the CoE.

Russia was ready to execute several objectives for membership, but its attitude was, for example, that when the parliamentary elections in December 1993 as well as a referendum on a new Russian constitution were held, the Russian authorities sought to speed the process of admission since from their perspective two major conditions had been fulfilled. At the same time, the two events that from the Russian perspective should have ensured Russia's membership increased the CoE's hesitation and made it question even more Russia's democratic path.⁴⁰⁶

Interestingly the war in Chechnya and the worsening of the human rights situation in Chechnya as well as the turn in Russian foreign policy away from liberal ideas, was one of

⁴⁰¹ Mark Webber, 'Russia and the Council of Europe', in Mark Webber (ed.), *Russia and Europe: Conflict and Cooperation*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000, 125-151, p.133

⁴⁰² *Diplomaticheskii vestnik* (Diplomatic review), 1993, no.1-2, Special Issue, pp.3-23

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Nearly all of the interviews done in CoE, Strasbourg, France between 20-22.6.2006 confirmed this.

⁴⁰⁵ Andrei Zagorsky, 'Russia and European Institutions', in Vladimir Baranovsky, (ed.), *Russia and Europe*, SIPRI publication, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 519-540, p.536

⁴⁰⁶ Zagorsky, 1997, p.538

the triggering factors in admitting Russia to the CoE. Both the Russian and CoE side used the argumentation that it is better to have Russia in than out.

Each time Russia was showing willingness to cooperate, it was seen as a good omen from the CoE's side. Yeltsin's administration did think that Russia had made commendable progress towards CoE principles, Chechnya excluded.⁴⁰⁷ This also signalled how Russia in principle respected and recognized common rules and norms but at the same time saw exceptions - a view that is typical of Great Power thinking.

By the year 2000 and at the height of the second Chechen war Russia wrote in its new foreign policy concept as follows about the CoE: 'Based on its own needs to build a civil society, Russia intends to continue its participation in the activities of the Council of Europe'.⁴⁰⁸ This indicated that Russia did see the clear advantages of CoE membership. On the other hand the events and argumentation around Chechnya reveal Russia's attitude to a multilateral cooperation as one that expects treatment according to country specificities and not according to common norms and values. As Andrei Zagorsky wrote already in 1997: 'The impact of Russia's admission to the Council of Europe on domestic legislation could certainly be positive and help accelerate implementation of Russia's international commitments related to human rights. However, it may cause friction with the Council of Europe, given the inherited habit of the Russian authorities of explaining all deficiencies in the political, economic or legal system by the uniqueness of Russia among world civilizations'.⁴⁰⁹

The interesting aspect relating to the Council of Europe is the two different levels working side by side and thereby bringing a domestic aspect to foreign policy and vice versa. Russia insisted and still does that Chechnya is an internal matter of Russia. However, as was already the case in the first Chechen war, by making a case for exclusive domestic jurisdiction, Russia was in contradiction to international texts to which it had already acceded and which shared the spirit of key COE conventions.⁴¹⁰ This was not the only contradiction since Russia eventually made the case for internationalizing the Chechen wars first by seeing the place for international organizations, both the OSCE and COE, in solving both

⁴⁰⁷ Webber, 'Russia and the Council of Europe', p.134

⁴⁰⁸ Russian Foreign Policy Concept, *Diplomaticheskiy vestnik* (Diplomatic review), no.8, 2000, pp.3-11

⁴⁰⁹ Zagorsky, 1997, p.538

⁴¹⁰ Webber, 2000, p.133

humanitarian and legal aspects of the conflict⁴¹¹ and then in the second Chechen war arguing itself that the war in Chechnya was a war against international terrorism.

5.5 Conclusion

Russia is a special member of the Council of Europe, not only according to themselves but from the view point of the other members as well. Russia does have a strong feeling and need for belonging to something and the CoE gave it a platform where it feels that it is truly working in the European context. As Andrei Zagorsky points out: ‘The special value of the Council of Europe for Russia lay in the fact that it is the only West European institution of which Russia could become and wished to become a full member’.⁴¹² This was an important factor in Russia’s relationship with the West.

The situation today, of Russian membership in an organisation like the CoE and the organisation’s stand towards Russia, is defined by three main factors: the nature of the organisation as moral value and norm setter rather than enforcer, the decision making structure, and the way Russia joined the organisation. All these factors have come together in the cases of Chechnya.

The first factor that the organization is more of a moral value and norm setter than norm forcing organization has its roots in the very start of the organisation in 1949. It was then that a precedent was created for the way in which it functions in the Post-Cold War environment. When the enforcing function is dropped the prestige factor comes to play a strong role. The CoE has demonstrated its usefulness in pulling Russia closer to the European sphere of norms and values. In Russian foreign policy multilateral cooperation is a very central theme but at the same time it does include a line of thought that Russia should also belong to the group of ‘big’ members that have enough influence to protect Russia’s own line, and the CoE fitted in perfectly. This wish to be viewed as one of the big members is clearly demonstrated by Russia wanting to pay membership fees not according to its GDP but in the way of belonging to the ‘big’ five in the COE.⁴¹³ However this prestige factor was also a central reason why the case of Chechnya became such an important question for Russians. In the spirit of multilateralism, almost in a liberal institutionalist way, Russians acted in the organisations over a wide range of matters but when it came to Chechnya the limits of that thinking were

⁴¹¹ Liz Fuller, RFE/RL, Vol.1, No.14, Part I, 19 January, 1995,

⁴¹² Zagorsky, 1997, p.537

⁴¹³ Interview with Russian diplomat in CoE, Strasbourg, France, 20.06.2006

clearly shown. As the case of Chechnya shows, the principles of multilateralism and great power prestige made Russia seek membership and cooperate and contribute to the CoE. But in the end other elements of great power identity such as the principle of sovereignty and non-interference of outsiders in the affairs of a great power prevailed over the gains to prestige that could be made by submission to international scrutiny.

The second factor is the structure for decision making involved in the CoE. It is in the Committee of Ministers where Russia's position is affected by the fact that Russia is viewed as a European Great Power for better or worse. There the major decisions are made and that is where power lies. In the case of Chechnya this mechanism was crucial. This way diplomacy in the organization can also be selective. Furthermore Russia invested a lot of political prestige in the CoE and the Russian delegation has been put together from politicians that represent the highest ranks in their parties but are also professional diplomats by training. Thereby the CoE has acted as a learning forum for both Russian diplomats and Europeans, to get to know each other's way of thinking and acting. CoE was not able to enforce anything on Russia and the ultimate threat – throwing Russia out from the organisation - was not a thinkable measure for the Committee of Ministers, where Russia as a Great Power was a fact. The PACE questioned Russian greatpowerness but was not able to enforce its views on Russia. This divide inside the organisation has clearly helped the Russian stand. So interestingly Russian membership also changed the internal dynamic of the CoE, as the case of Chechnya created a rift between the Committee of ministers and the PACE. 15 years of Russian membership showed that some steps have been made but that there are issues which remain 'untouchable' from the Russia perspective.

The third factor - the time and the way Russia joined the CoE - is haunting in the background. From the Russian side, the expectation was that membership was automatic based on the idea of Russian great power identity. Russia as a Great Power should have been enough from the Russian point of view to grant membership. Yet when this view did not hold sway inside the CoE, the feeling and attitude from the Russia side started to turn more hostile. Furthermore the CoE side was disappointed that the process of democratisation in Russia had gone so slowly, as one CoE official put it: 'What matters is what conventions are ratified not the quantity.'⁴¹⁴ The frustration of the CoE side was taken out on the Chechen cases, sometimes very justly and sometimes with an element of overreacting which did not go down well with the Russian side. It was taken as an attack against Russian Great Power identity.

⁴¹⁴ Interview with a CoE official in Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, Strasbourg, France, 20.06.2006

Russia also learned that eventually the rules can be bent in the CoE. Since the accession process was filled with false expectations on both sides, the reality also hit harder. The concept of double standards, used by Russians, in the Russia-West relations originates from the times when Russia was admitted to the CoE. The case of Chechnya illustrates this well. It has also shown that Russia will think out its own policies and if they do not coincide with the Western views, they will only alter their ways, like the Chechenisation process or showing some cooperation such as allowing CoE monitoring in Chechnya, as a Great Power would do – that is to say, with limited and controlled access, and once things get heated it will pull out the card that a great power always has in its use - power resources and threat perceptions.

The Putin era has confirmed that Russia is quite firm in its commitment to its membership in the CoE. The first Putin era of 2000-2008 was also an era of strong revival of Russian greatpowerness. This did not change during the Medvedev years 2008-2012 and continued even more strongly in Putin's third period in the presidency. It should be noted that now and then the Russian administration has used the CoE as an advisor to its legislation and especially regional cooperation with the CoE is viewed from all sides as a very positive cooperation. The wars in Chechnya have left their marks on the cooperation. When Russian great power identity feels hurt the concepts of *ressentiment* appear in the Russian foreign policy elite's statements. How the Chechen cases developed and played a role in Russia's relationship with the CoE has been illustrated above. Even if in the case of Chechnya the organisations in the end failed to be influential, the process showed how important multilateralism is for Russian foreign policy, how a great power is ready to reconcile to common norms and where then lie the limits of integration of a Great Power.

Chapter 6: The Russian Federation and the European Union; The lost opportunity that Chechnya revealed

6.1 Introduction

Russia and Europe have always had a special relationship. There are different accounts what has made the relationship “special” but agreement that the relationship is special. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe was created with security matters in mind. The Council of Europe promoted democracy and the rule of law. When the EU was born in Rome in 1952 the economic integration of Europe was the starting point and the motivation. This naturally made the identity of the EC (European Community), as it was known in the beginning, very specific.

In Soviet times the EC figured only in lateral contexts for Soviet foreign policy, despite the fact that Western Europe was the USSR’s important trade partner. As Jackie Gower has pointed out ‘throughout most of the Cold War period, Soviet attitudes towards European integration in general and the European Community (EC) in particular were both sceptical and hostile’.⁴¹⁵ When Gorbachev introduced new thinking in Soviet foreign policy and the concept of the Common European home, Western Europe became more interesting from the Kremlin’s point of view. By 1995 Russian trade with the Western European countries was more than 50 per cent of its total foreign trade and even more interestingly the EU countries provided more than 60 per cent of Western economic assistance to Russia in 1990-1994.⁴¹⁶

Russia-EU relations developed from something in the background to one of the most significant foreign relations Russia has. Both the EU and Russia have changed significantly since the fall of the Soviet Union. The enlargement of the EU from 11 to 27 members has been a major contributor towards the growing ties, but it is also important that Europe has always been one of the main directions of Moscow’s foreign policy. The economic ties have increased the interdependence and the soft power aspect of Russian greatpowerness is strongly connected to Europe, but more importantly it can be argued that the European state identity has been the foundation of Russian great power identity.

⁴¹⁵ Gower, 2000, p.69

⁴¹⁶ Andrei Zagorsky, ‘Russian and European Institutions’, 1997, p.527

At the same rate as the Russia-EU relationship has grown in economic terms and both parties gone through significant changes, the academic literature on Russia-EU relations has expanded. The numerous writing from different aspect of Russia-EU relations include security cooperation, different agreement analysis on Russia-EU relations, economic aspect, different EU member country attitudes towards Russia, Russian domestic politics influencing the relationship, historical accounts to name just a few.⁴¹⁷ The features that seem to be common for nearly all the publication is to agree that the starting point is that there are big problems as well as clear closeness in the relationship -cooperation or conflict style.

The evolution of Russia-EU relations from a not so prominent place in Russian foreign policy and mainly focusing on economics to gradually becoming one of the most significant partnerships for Russia with values and norms on top of the agendas, has much to do with the Chechen wars together with the evolution of the EU itself. The expanding economic agenda has much to do with the enlargement of the EU but the norms and values and questions relating to identity belong to the internal developments of Russia, and there the wars in Chechnya play a major role.

The main issue for this chapter is to examine Chechnya as a test case for common values and integration ideas between Russia and the EU. At first the chapter examines to what extent the two Chechen wars can be seen as revealing test cases of the differences that cause time after time trouble in Russia-EU relations, and to what extent the wars also show why Russia and the EU are destined to be together for better or for worse. The next two parts go through the two Chechen wars in chronological order, showing some of the twists and turns in Russia-EU relations, while highlighting the differences and the points where good relations continue to hold.

The chapter then continues with an overview of the EU's place in Russian foreign policy, arguing that even if there is an interest based approached with historical roots in Russia's relationship with the EU, there are also clear identity based expectations, and in Russia the

⁴¹⁷ To mention a few from a vast academic and policy related literature: Derek Averre, *Russia and the European Union – Convergence or Divergence*, *European Security*, 2005; Tuomas Forsberg, *The EU-Russia Security Partnership: Why the Opportunity was missed?*, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 2004; Sergei Prozorov, *Understanding conflict between Russian and the EU: limits of integration*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006, Debra Johnson and Paul Robinson (eds.), *Perspectives on EU-Russia relations*, Routledge, 2005; Hiski Haukkala, , *The EU-Russia strategic Partnership: The limits of Post-Sovereignty in International Relations*, London: Routledge, 2001; Jackie Gower, Graham Timmins and Lord Robertson (eds.), *Russia and the Europe in the Twenty-First Century. An Uneasy Partnership*, London: Anthem Press, 2007; Michael Emerson, Nadezhda Arbatova, Timofei Bordachev and Aleksei Makarychev, 'The Elephant and the Bear try again: Options for a new agreement the EU and Russia', CEPS, 2007; Hanna Smith (ed.), *Two-Level Game: Russia's Relations with Great Britain, Finland and the European Union*, Helsinki: Kikumora publications, 2006.

EU is often viewed not as an international organisation but as Europe itself, which Russia should belong to, much more than in the case of CoE and the OSCE. This identity based search for cooperation and integration also has deep historical roots but not so much in the areas of trade and security as in cultural and historical aspects. It is argued that only by looking at both aspects of the Russian attitude towards the EU that a clearer picture of Russia's aspiration and aims regarding the EU can be identified.

6.2 Chechnya as a test case of common values and integration ideas

The conflict first started in 1994 and was then widely regarded in the West as a fight for independence, an anti-colonial war. The Russian Federation in turn insisted that the matter was internal and that the Chechen drive for independence posed a threat to the whole federation. This was especially the case throughout the course of the first Chechen war. The second Chechen war acquired a more international character as a result of Russian initiatives, but was still regarded by Russians as an internal matter. Gradually, new characterisations evolved both in Russia and in the West. The common Russian characterisation of the conflict turned into one of a guerrilla war linked to the fight against terrorism, and by 2003 and the EU-Russia summit in St. Petersburg the situation was being compared to that of the Basques in Spain.⁴¹⁸

The Chechen wars (1994-1997 and 1999 -2003) had different starting points and occurred in the context of different international environments. As detailed in chapter 3, in the first war the international dimension was minimal, even if international media coverage was more thorough. Russians considered it to be Russia's internal affair which had to be resolved by its own government, a view which was widely accepted abroad. The second war automatically took on a more international character from the start, with great emphasis on the links of Chechen rebels and their supporters with Al Qaeda. Thus an internal affair of the Russian Federation also became an international one. In the West as well, during the first months of the second Chechen war the international connection was strengthened in a different manner, with a more critical examination of Russia's commitment to human rights and international law.

This could be interpreted as indicating that the West, especially Europe, now regarded Russia as sufficiently stable as a state to be criticized over its conduct in regard to

⁴¹⁸ *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2003

international norms and values, the rule of law, and human rights. The argument here is that during the first Chechen war the EU regarded Russia as a country in transition, and so the relationship between the EU and Russia was that of an older brother towards a younger one. Russia was more willing to listen to what the EU had to say, but on the other hand the EU was careful not to do anything that would provoke a negative reaction. Furthermore during the first Chechen war it started to be clear that the questions of common values showed a big gap between Russian and the European Union's thinking, thereby indicating already that the integration process would not be a realistic future expectation and that even economic cooperation where there was clear common interests would present challenges. It needs to be noted that even if the differences between Russia and the EU started to show during the first Chechen war, it only became evident during Putin's presidencies and the second Chechen war.

When the second Chechen war broke out in 1999 the EU had recognised Russia as possessing a market economy, as stated at the Cardiff meeting of EU ministers in June 1998. A year later at its Cologne meeting, the EU published its common strategy on Russia, which expressed the cultural proximity of Russia and the EU: 'The European Union welcomes Russia to return to its rightful place in the European family in a spirit of friendship, co-operation, fair accommodation of interest and on the foundation of shared values enshrined in the common heritage of European civilisation.'⁴¹⁹ This marked a distinctly different attitude towards Russia on the EU's side, and laid the framework for more open criticism of Russian actions based on an equal relationship and mutual respect supposedly founded on common values.

Having welcomed Russia into the European family on the eve of the second Chechen war, the EU's response was one of frustration and disappointment at Russia's apparent violation of those values, as much as one of principle. At the heart of the EU's position was a tension between the desire to improve Russia's record on human rights on the one hand and the recognition, on the other hand, that continuing and closer cooperation in the long term presents the best opportunity for influencing Russia's behaviour and development. At the same time the EU, which as a multinational organization can and has put ethical considerations at a central place in its foreign policy, may have been at odds with individual member states, for who business and security considerations took priority. Thus Western values and norms, which are especially important in current debates about international

⁴¹⁹ Presidency Conclusion, 1999: 14

relations, are a source of both integration and confrontation between Russia and the countries of the European Union. The second Chechen war took Russia even further away from the common values idea but kept alive the notion that Russia was a European country and some of Russia's problems were also problems of the EU. Globalisation and geography played a trick on Russia and the EU and despite major problems and differences between the two actors, it also became clear that both are dependent on each other, very differently, but never the less permanently.

6.3 The first Chechen war

When the first Chechen war had started the EU faced a strategic dilemma. How was it possible to balance the development of mutually beneficial cooperation with Russia, support for the Russian reform programme, and criticism of Russian actions in Chechnya? The EU and Russia had drawn up the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) at Corfu in June 1994. This Agreement was to become a cornerstone of the future development of Russia-EU relations. The idea of strategic partnership between Russia and the EU was put on the table. It was established that common respect for democracy and human rights was to become a leading principle in Russia and EU cooperation. This was a mutual agreement and at that time Russia seemed to be committed fully to its principles.

The significance of the agreement on Russia's future orientation was underlined by Yeltsin himself at Corfu: 'Our country has made a strategic choice in favour of integration into the world community and in the first instance, with the European Union.'⁴²⁰ In its political aspects the PCA stressed the importance of common values shared by Russia and the EU. These values included promotion of international security and peace, respect for human rights, and the development of democratic norms, institutions, and practices.⁴²¹ By launching the Chechen conflict Yeltsin's Russia halted progress in this direction. From the EU's point of view, the war marked a departure on Russia's part from the principles which underlay the agreement.

From the start, the EU was very eager to influence and guide Russia. 'From the beginning, the EU energetically criticised Russia's behaviour, although at first mostly verbally and in a form of secret diplomacy'.⁴²² But initially there were two major areas

⁴²⁰ Yeltsin, 1994

⁴²¹ Gower, 2000, p.74

⁴²² Pursiainen, 1999, p.149

where the EU moved beyond secret diplomacy and threatened concrete action. The first was the ratification process of the PCA, which was temporarily suspended by the EU in early 1995. When peace negotiations in Chechnya started at the end of June, following a Russian military defeat after its 4 June offensive, and shortly after the Russians had walked out of the OSCE-sponsored peace talks, the EU resumed the ratification process.⁴²³ According to Jackie Gower: 'The action by the European Parliament in suspending the ratification of the PCA for several months in 1995 owing to its concern about the violation of human rights in Chechnya demonstrated that political conditionality is no empty threat'.⁴²⁴ While this reflects the most widely held view that the suspension of the process was purely due to Chechnya, according to the Delegation of the European Commission in Russia the complications in the ratification process were due to a number of different circumstances, only one of which was the Chechen war.⁴²⁵ Some even suggested that the Chechen war became a convenient excuse for the EU to halt the ratification process.⁴²⁶ There was a lot of doubt relating to the Russia-EU cooperation process, in much the same way as with the CoE.

The second issue was more clearly connected to the Chechen war. The aim of the so-called Interim Agreement between Russia and the EU was to precede the PCA and ease and accelerate the implementation of the PCA's trade and commercial portions. The agreement was very important for Russia but also for the EU trade partners. It covered trade regulations, as well as a number of aspects of customs, standardization, competition and protection of the rights to intellectual property. From the Russian side the agreement was seen as an agreement to remove numerous discriminatory restrictive measures. Furthermore the EU was not able officially to label Russia with the term 'transition-economy' which was branded in Russia as a political tool in trade relations by the EU. Aleksei Portansky in *Finansoviye izvestia* wrote: 'The entry into force of the interim agreement between the Russian Federation and the EU is also of considerable psychological and political significance for Moscow, since it relieves the unpleasant feeling of isolation that has intensified in connection with the war in Chechnya'.⁴²⁷ But the Interim Agreement that should have entered into force in March 1995 was postponed due to the conflict in Chechnya. In March 1995 representatives of the EU *troika* (France, Germany, and Spain) travelled to Moscow and laid down four conditions for

⁴²³ Lieven, 1999, p.124

⁴²⁴ Gower, 2000, p.74

⁴²⁵ http://www.eur.ru/en/p_243.htm A similar picture was also given by Finnish official and German official in two separate interviews, Moscow 2002 and Tallinn 2005.

⁴²⁶ Interview with Finnish diplomat 2004 and conversation with German diplomat 2005

⁴²⁷ Aleksei Portansky, 'Partnership with European Union becomes reality', *Finansoviye izvestia*, No.51, July 20, p.1, found in *the Current Digest*, Vol.XLVII, No.29, 1995, p.23

implementing the Interim Agreement: a cease-fire, progress in the political settlement of the crisis, free access for humanitarian aid, and the establishment of a permanent OSCE mission in Chechnya.⁴²⁸

Even here the Russian side questioned the connection to Chechnya. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Afanasyevsky responded by saying that if the war in Chechnya had not taken place another reason would have been found not to sign the agreement.⁴²⁹ This assessment contrasted with the mood of sections of the Russian press, which carried a number of concerned articles about the EU's move, for example: 'There will be no agreement on partnership with the EU – neither interim nor major – as long as the military action continues',⁴³⁰ and 'let us hope, our western partners will stop linking trade with politics'.⁴³¹ With Russia still finding her feet in international diplomacy after the Cold War, there may have been sound reasoning behind both points of view. Long-standing suspicion of the West, *ressentiment*, and a natural cynicism about the EU's intentions, together with a firm belief that Chechnya was a matter of Russian state sovereignty, fuelled the belief that acceding too readily to external pressure would only lead to further demands with nothing gained in return; on the other hand the liberal media and politicians saw support from Europe as essential at any cost, and saw no reason to disbelieve the sincerity of the EU's stance. The Russian 'liberals' saw Russia as a European country and therefore a part of the European community not separate from it.⁴³²

In the event, a policy of partial concessions seems to have been sufficient for both sides to save face and a policy of constructive engagement to be pursued. By the summer of 1995 such strong EU criticisms had softened, and by the June European Council ministerial meeting in Cannes the tone was far more conciliatory: 'The European Council here feels that the dialogue between Russia and the Atlantic alliance should be stepped up by using the existing mechanisms. All developments should though be compatible with NATO, WEU and the gradual integration of the Central European countries. In the near term the European Council, noting that progress has been made with regards to the situation in Chechnya and relying on confirmation of that progress, has decided in favour of signing the Interim Agreement'.⁴³³

⁴²⁸ Pursiainen, 1999, p.150.

⁴²⁹ Afanasyevsky, 1995, p.18

⁴³⁰ *Kommersant*, 1995

⁴³¹ *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 1995

⁴³² Interview with Nadja Arbatova, Moscow 2002

⁴³³ European Council, 1995

By the end of June 1995 Russia had demonstrated that it was indeed filling all the four conditions expected from it. The new cease-fire came into force on 19 June. The Interim Agreement was signed in June and played an important part in regulating Russia-EU relations. It provided a basis in the World Trade Organisation for the treatment of EU-Russia trade. At this point it seemed that the EU's pressure had worked, to the extent that Russia had fulfilled the requirements demanded of it. By doing so Russia obtained in return a great deal of good will from the EU, and in the end was also even admitted to the Council of Europe with the EU's approval, even if it was highly questionable whether Russia really was actually eligible for membership. The first two fulfilled conditions - a cease-fire and progress towards a political settlement - were very fragile and did not hold for long. The EU's readiness to accept what were little more than cosmetic measures was perhaps an early indication of the priority given to keeping Russia on board rather than forcing the issue of the conflict. Russia had responded to the conditions laid down by the EU, but in doing so had gained enormous benefits for a very small price.

In the second half of 1995 progress in political relations was steadier, while the fighting in Chechnya was pushed to the background. At the European Council's meeting in Madrid in December 1995 the tone seemed warmer and the search for more co-operation was more prominent: 'The European Council trusts that Russia will continue its actions to promote stability, development, peace and democracy. It means to support its efforts. It wishes to strengthen permanently the ties between the European Union and this great country.'⁴³⁴ In the same document the EU declared its support for Russia's efforts to become integrated into the international economic system, and for its admission to the WTO and other international organisations including the Council of Europe. It was clear that the EU side seemed to want, from the relationship with Russia, something that went beyond the purely economic cooperation which had dominated up until then. Already in November 1995 a 'strategy for future EU-Russia relations' was adopted which tried to balance the emphasis on economic matters characteristic of the PCA with broader political concerns, and in May 1996 the EU adopted an Action Plan which was intended to supplement the PCA by identifying priorities and laying out a work programme in a wide range of policy areas.⁴³⁵ While the war was still being fought in Chechnya, 1996 was also a presidential election year in Russia and in the first half of the year, western governments and institutions refrained from criticising Yeltsin in order to avoid any adverse affect on his campaign, fearing that any western comment on the

⁴³⁴ Press Release, 1995

⁴³⁵ Gower, 2000, p.80

Chechen issue might be to the benefit of the communists or Zhirinovsky's extreme nationalists. This as shown in the previous chapter was also the case with the CoE. The presidential elections of 1996, and the EU's handling of the situation, appeared to give substance to later Russian claims of double standards as exercised by the West. The Action Plan's main purpose was to send a strong political message of commitment and support to the reformers in Russia in the run-up to the 1996 presidential elections and to inject renewed dynamism into the relationship during the frustratingly long period while the PCA was still being ratified in the EU.⁴³⁶ However strong the objections to Yeltsin's record in Chechnya, in western eyes he was at least, and by a long way, preferable to any of the alternatives. Strobe Talbott has summed up the thinking of most western politicians: 'I doubted that withholding support from Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin would have strengthened Yavlinsky's party in the December parliamentary elections or his personal showing in the presidential race. More likely, it would have played to the advantage of Zyuganov and the communists in both the elections'.⁴³⁷

Arguably the first Chechen war coincided with an early phase of Russia's efforts to assert its own state identity and to find its own place in the new international order. It raised two kinds of concern in the West - the fear of Russia falling apart and being in flux, or alternatively and even worse, the prospect of a stable Russia with no concern for democratic development and respect of human rights. In the EU, initially some attempts were made to try to influence Russia through threats, but after the first six months of the war that approach seemed to have been aborted, with the issue of state integrity and good relations with Russia winning over objections to her conduct.

The EU, and especially the European Parliament, did persist in condemning the violation of human rights in Chechnya.⁴³⁸ However this line, firm and consistent as it was, did not negate the fact that the EU's general approach was supportive of the Russian government. The lessons of the episode could not be lost on the Russian administration and public: the EU had demonstrated considerable goodwill and a readiness to compromise, against the fears of both cynics, who doubted whether anything could secure genuine EU support for Russia, and of liberals, who thought no progress could be made as long as the war continued. On the EU side some success could be claimed as to the benevolent influence of international pressure, but Russia had also made clear that it would not accept everything the EU dictated, and was

⁴³⁶ Gower, 2000, p.80

⁴³⁷ Talbott, 2002, p.212

⁴³⁸ Gower, 2000, p.79

able to play the card of the extreme right and the extreme left in demanding its right to exercise sovereignty over internal affairs. On this basis, the future ground for cooperation was laid down but it took a second war in Chechnya, before the reality of the difficulties in the relationship started to be clear on both sides.

6.4 The Second Chechen war

On the part of the EU, Russia-EU relations had been improving since the signing of the Khasaviurt Peace Agreement, reaching an all time high during the summer of 1999, as stated in the Cologne presidency conclusions.⁴³⁹ This time the EU's reaction to the Russian offensive in Chechnya was faster and stronger than in the first war. Still the action itself was not condemned, but 'all disproportional and indiscriminate use of force in Chechnya which has given rise to severe hardship for the civilian population and the internally displaced persons'.⁴⁴⁰ The same sentence can be found in the Council's Conclusions in both December 1999 and February 2000. The European Council conclusion from its Helsinki meeting in December 1999 came down very harshly against Russia on the Chechen issue compared to the first time. It released a separate declaration on Chechnya, which stated: 'this behaviour is in contradiction with the basic principles of humanitarian law and commitments of Russia as made within the OSCE and its obligations as a member of the Council of Europe'.⁴⁴¹ The declaration included an ultimatum on human rights in Chechnya if implementation of the European Union's Common Strategy was to proceed and the PCA continued, as well as announcing the possibility of limiting the TACIS budgets.⁴⁴² Russia's territorial integrity and her right to fight against terrorism were nevertheless confirmed.

The strength of criticism reflected the feeling that this time the EU felt on more stable ground with Russia than before. Several times in January and April 2000 the Council stressed Russia's status as a major partner of the EU, but also that political dialogue with Russia could now take place at the level at which questions of mutual interest could be addressed on an equal and open basis, including issues of disagreement and concern such as the conflict in Chechnya. As the European Council expressed in its April 2000 Conclusions, 'The Council

⁴³⁹ Presidency Conclusions, 1999

⁴⁴⁰ European Council, 1999

⁴⁴¹ Presidency Conclusions, 1999b

⁴⁴² Presidency Conclusions, 1999b: point 7

underlined that an open and frank dialogue on issues of concern is an essential element of our long-term strategic partnership'.⁴⁴³

The closer cooperation and institutionalization of Russia-EU relations during the 1990s made a difference, compared to the first Chechen war, in the way that the EU felt more able to openly criticize Russian conduct over different issues. Also this time the EU proposed a number of actions in order to make its point. It could be argued that they were more symbolic than anything else, but the list of 'threats' was this time longer and more carefully thought through. They included the revision of the Presidency's work plan for the implementation of the Common Strategy of the EU on Russia, suspension of the signature of the Scientific and Technological Agreement, and the Commission's decision not to carry over 30 million euros of unspent funds of food aid from 1999 to the 2000 budget. In addition the Tacis 2000 programme was re-focused to core areas directly promoting democratic values as well as to promoting networking in civil society, and any uncommitted balances from it were to be transferred to humanitarian assistance. It was also decided to suspend consideration of the possible extension of additional GSP preferences for Russia.⁴⁴⁴

In his speech of November 1999, the EU's external relations commissioner Christopher Patten made it clear that the three main bodies of the EU - the Council, the Parliament and the Commission - had reached a consensus on condemning all kinds of acts of terrorism (this clearly referred to Chechnya as well), while at the same time condemning the use of strong military force, and the fact that political solutions were being disregarded as well as the human consequences of military action. He did, however, stress the fact that Europe should not make the same mistake they had made in 1917, by isolating Russia from European affairs.⁴⁴⁵ Patten addressed directly to Russians the point that they should understand that the situation in Chechnya was putting a strain on Russia-EU relations, that it would have an impact on the acceptance of Russia by the international community and on Russia's credibility as a political and economic partner.⁴⁴⁶

Patten's strongly expressed opinion was that Russia should allow international organizations, namely the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to again get involved and monitor human rights: 'I am concerned that so far neither the OSCE (in spite of assurances given by Russia at the Istanbul Summit) nor the Council of Europe, nor indeed we, have

⁴⁴³ European Council, 2000a & 2000b

⁴⁴⁴ European Council, 2000a

⁴⁴⁵ Patten, 1999

⁴⁴⁶ Idem

succeeded in persuading the Russian Federation of the need for a political solution and respect for human rights for the civilians caught in the conflict. Collectively we should be able to make a difference once Russia agrees to allow the international community to re-enter the conflict zone'.⁴⁴⁷

Statements about Chechnya from the EU side, and especially from Commissioner Patten, were issued with frequent regularity from the beginning of the second Chechen war up to and including the first half of 2000. One could sense a certain degree of frustration in Patten's statement of 25th February: 'Again and again we have made abundantly clear to the Russian Government our dismay at these allegations. We will certainly raise our concerns, notably on the mass grave and filtration camps allegations as well as on the fate of Russian journalist Andrei Babitsky, at the upcoming EU-Russia Ministerial summit on 2 March and the trilateral ministerial meeting with Russia and on the US on 3 March in Lisbon'.⁴⁴⁸

The Lisbon European Council Presidency conclusions sent a strongly worded message to Russia on the eve of its presidential elections in regard to the Chechen issue. Russia should put an end to the indiscriminate use of military force, should allow independent investigations of human rights violations, should allow competent international organizations and observers to perform their mission freely and should pursue without delay the search for a political solution.⁴⁴⁹ However, the loudly voiced demands of late 1999 and early 2000 about Chechnya, and how Russia should seek a political solution, should let international organizations get involved in the conflict, and should follow its international commitments, and that failure to do so would have far reaching negative consequences, had more or less disappeared by 2002.

This downgrading of the criticism indicates that the European politicians believed in what they call 'quiet diplomacy', that they could manage disagreements over Chechnya without upsetting overall ties with Russia through positive engagement rather than overt criticism. This shift was evident as early as the EU-Russia summit in Moscow on 17th May 2001, where the joint statement read, 'We agree upon the need to seek a political solution in Chechnya as a matter of urgency with due regard for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation ... The Russian side reaffirmed its readiness to cooperate with the EU in connection with programmes of humanitarian assistance to Chechnya'.⁴⁵⁰ In the first

⁴⁴⁷ Patten, 2000a

⁴⁴⁸ Patten, 2000b

⁴⁴⁹ Presidency Conclusions, 2000

⁴⁵⁰ EU-Russia Summit, 2001a

Chechen war the line of argument went just the opposite way. The EU started with ‘quiet diplomacy’ and then stepped criticism up until the election year 1996, when it was toned down.

This shift was not linked to any noticeable improvement in the situation in Chechnya (although according to the Russians the war had officially finished). Rather, by 2001 it started to be clear that tough language seemed to have little effect on Russia and that the EU was not ready to jeopardize the relationship they had already established by threatening concrete measures. This appeared to be the stand not only of the EU but of other international organizations, on the basis that it is more dangerous to isolate Russia than it is to let it have its way, and it seems that Russians have understood that this is how it stands - Russia could push the limits of international tolerance to a very high degree.

The war on terrorism, and the radically changed international climate after 11 September 2001, helped to ease even further the international pressure on Russia concerning Chechnya. Russia and the EU both joined the anti-terrorism coalition. At the EU-Russia summit of October 2001 the joint statement stressed the EU’s support for the Russian authorities’ efforts to reach a political settlement.⁴⁵¹ Christopher Patten’s tone in his speeches had changed markedly, moreover, and he had shifted his emphasis since 2000: ‘The arms reduction agreement with the US, and today’s decisions on a new relationship with NATO, have set a seal on Russia’s emerging role as a participant in our collective security. The war on terrorism has undoubtedly acted as a catalyst’.⁴⁵² He continued in the same speech: ‘In the case of Russia and the EU, the sheer size of the economic potential and the enormous commercial importance of proximity is singularly impressive; but my point is that with Russia, it goes way beyond commercial relations. We share culture, history and tradition’.⁴⁵³

Overall, all of the concerns and warning signs, which had been visible two years earlier, had now diminished. In that particular speech Patten mentioned Chechnya only once ‘we should be able to discuss things like editorial freedom, the treatment of religious minorities, and our differences over human rights abuses and access of international humanitarian operators in Chechnya’.⁴⁵⁴ The same kind of sentiments apparent in this article can be seen in other sources, and in November 2002 Patten replied to the criticism that not enough was being done to help humanitarian organizations to act and help in Chechnya and Ingushetia.

⁴⁵¹ EU-Russia Summit, 2001b

⁴⁵² Patten, 2002a

⁴⁵³ Patten, 2002a

⁴⁵⁴ Idem

He complimented the way the Danish Presidency had raised concerns over Chechnya. He also firmly stated: 'We continue to raise those issues and to raise them vigorously while of course at the same time deploring terrorist activities, especially the sort of activities which recently caused so much loss of life in Moscow'.⁴⁵⁵ This confirms the power of the anti-terrorist military campaign, but also the strong negative effect on any legitimate Chechen cause created by the Dubrovka theatre drama. At the tenth EU-Russia Summit the joint statement on the fight against terrorism stated: 'We strongly condemn the hostage taking in the theatre on Melnikov Street in Moscow in October 2002 and agree that taking innocent civilian people hostage is a cowardly and criminal act of terrorism, which cannot be defended or justified for any cause'.⁴⁵⁶ Finally, whereas the European Union had been accustomed to addressing the Chechen issue in each of their EU-Russia summit joint declarations, after the tenth summit in November 2002 Chechnya was left out from the official agenda.

In fact it could be argued that the 'tough approach' of the international community had already changed with the advent of the new century. The parliamentary elections in December 1999 sent out a positive wave of feeling about Russia across Western countries, aided by the fact that Yeltsin resigned and Putin became acting president and the most likely candidate to become the next full President of Russia, signalling a stable transition to a strong and more effective president. The British Foreign secretary Robin Cook, who had spoken out strongly at the Istanbul summit, while visiting Moscow in February 2000 replied to a question from western reporters as to whether it should be necessary to take tougher actions against Russia regarding the ongoing Chechen war: 'That's not at all the case. Russia has not remained deaf to the concerns of Europe and other countries regarding Chechnya. There's no need for tougher statements from the West, it is important that we maintain good relations with Russia'.⁴⁵⁷

The tone had changed beyond recognition from demands to gentle requests. The explanation the Russian side gave for the surprise (at least as far as Russians were concerned) change in approach was the fact that the West did not want to force Putin into the hands of the anti-western and isolationist camps in Russia. The bottom line was that the West needed partnership with Russia just as much as Moscow needed partnership with the West. Pami Aalto refers to the fact that in EU-Russia relations economic power is asymmetrical but that 'the EU's strengths in geo-economics do not automatically translate to strengths in

⁴⁵⁵ Patten, 2002b

⁴⁵⁶ EU-Russia Summit, 2002

⁴⁵⁷ Cook, 2000, p.1

geopolitics. Consequently the EU is in a clearly weaker position (in relation to Russia)'.⁴⁵⁸ Hence the attitude shift of the second half of the 1990s and the early years of the new millennium can be seen in terms of recognition by the EU of the geopolitical role of Russia. At the same time Russia recognised the EU in its own right (Russian foreign policy concept 2000) and as a serious player in European and world politics.

The beginning of a new political development in the Chechen crisis was a referendum on a new constitution for the Republic of Chechnya held on 23rd March 2003. At least that was the effect Moscow was hoping for. With the CoE Russia had to have very heated discussions and boiling points over the referendum. The Russian position eventually won in the CoE and so it did with the EU as well. The referendum was widely criticised in the EU in advance, but by May 2003 western criticism had almost disappeared. A joint statement issued from an EU-Russia summit stated: 'We took note of the recent referendum in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. We expressed the hope that the recently started political process as well as the economic and social reconstruction will lead to the restoration of the rule of law, thus promoting the protection of human rights and leading to a genuine reconciliation in Chechnya.'⁴⁵⁹ This was a striking statement considering how much criticism the referendum had got from the CoE and also from the EU side. In statements like this, it looked like Russia and the EU were addressing the Chechen issue with one voice.

6.5 The European Union's place in Russian foreign policy

The existing major foreign and security policy documents - Russian foreign policy concept, Russian security doctrine and national security concept from 2000 - left the role of the EU very vague in Russian foreign policy. The foreign policy concept defines the role of the EU in Russian foreign policy as follows: 'The Russian Federation views the EU as one of its main political and economic partners and will strive to develop intensive, sustainable and long-term cooperation with it, cooperation that would be free from any opportunistic fluctuations. The EU's emerging military and political dimension should become a matter of particular attention.'⁴⁶⁰ This indicates that for better and for worse Russia would be seeking cooperation with the EU, but also saw the potential problems arising – the many member countries of the EU will not share the same views on Russia always and the role of

⁴⁵⁸ Aalto, 2001, p.25

⁴⁵⁹ Joint Statement, 2003: point 21

⁴⁶⁰ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000

the EU in future world politics will be still open, therefore Russia will not define either its own position more clearly towards the EU.

In the 2008 foreign policy document the tone is rather similar. Here, the EU clearly has the role of an international organisation and the word European is used in a wider context than just relating to the European Union. It is mentioned in the concept that Russia, the EU and the United States should be treated on an equal basis in world politics. Relating to Russia-EU objectives the concept states the following: ‘The Russian Federation will develop its relations with the European Union, which is a major trade, economic and foreign-policy partner, will promote strengthening in every possible way the interaction mechanisms, including through establishment of common spaces in economy, external and internal security, education, science and culture. From the long-term perspective, it is in the interests of Russia to agree with the European Union on a strategic partnership treaty setting special, most advanced forms of equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation with the European Union in all spheres with a view to establishing a visa free regime’.⁴⁶¹ Both the council of Europe and the OSCE are mentioned before the EU and the concept argues strongly for a pan-European cooperation structure.

Since contemporary official documents are extremely guarded and offer very little new clarity on Russia-EU relations, one way of approaching Russia-EU relations is by adopting a more historical angle. Over a long period of time there have been increased tensions and then a period of *détente*. Russia has allied itself with those that had similar interests at a particular time, and the same actor that once was Russia’s ally can at a different time be Russia’s enemy. Dmitri Trenin has put it as follows: ‘Virtually anyone can be a partner [Russia’s] and practically anyone can be an opponent. The cooperation-to-competition ratio varies, depending on a particular field of interest, point in time and wider constellation of power relationships.’⁴⁶² This fact has also created some ‘survival’ strategies of Russia in diplomatic games. These are especially clear and needed in Russia’s relations with Europe and the EU. One of them is forging a special relationship with one of the European big powers and so managing to create confusion and diversions in the EU’s common stands.

⁴⁶¹ Foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, 2008, July 12, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>, accessed 08.07.2012

⁴⁶² Dmitri V. Trenin: ‘Getting Russia Right’, Carnegie Endowment for International peace, Washington D.C. 2007, p.76

Mike Bowker saw this trend for the Soviet Union as long ago as the 1922 Rapallo Agreement.⁴⁶³ The Rapallo agreement was very much based on Russia's economic interests.

In support of an interest-based approach as opposed to an ideological or value-based one, a historical example of Alexander III's foreign policy strategy is also a good example, 'In aligning itself with France and Britain against its fellow autocracies Germany and Austria-Hungary, Russia demonstrated the dominance of geopolitical and economic factors over dynastic ties and ideological affinities.'⁴⁶⁴ Furthermore fully contradicting Russia's domestic realities and practises Catherine the Great favoured Americans in the American War of independence and Alexander II sent Russian warships to New York and San Francisco to show support for the North in the American civil war. These examples illustrate well why Russian foreign policy is so difficult to interpret; Russia can engage in a bitter war against Germany or Britain but be allied with them in a matter of years after the war. Russia can also support liberal ideas against conservative ones contradictory to its own domestic political thinking. These trends are still very visible in Russia's policies towards the EU even during the period following the collapse of Soviet Union.

These historical examples would support the idea that Russian foreign policy formation is mainly interest based. As Bobo Lo has stated; 'None of the above [several factors showing very short-term interest based policies] is to deny that there were long-term priorities or interests. But they were not carved in stone; their importance fluctuated for all sorts of reasons, good and bad, objective and subjective.'⁴⁶⁵

The place of the EU is arguably somewhat special in Russian foreign policy even if it does not come through so much from the official documents. If it can be said that for better or for worse today's Russian Federation is the heir of the Soviet Union and Russian Empire, today's EU is very much the heir of 'Europe' in terms of Russian foreign policy. Therefore the EU does not represent a normal international organisation in the eyes of Moscow's foreign policy makers. Sometimes this is a fact that the Russian foreign policy would like avoid and treat the EU just as an international organisation. However, actions and talks speak more than official documents.

⁴⁶³ Mike Bowker, 'The place of Europe in Russian foreign policy', in Mark Webber (ed.), *Russia and Europe: Conflict and Cooperation?*, London: Macmillan Press, 2000, 22-45, p.24

⁴⁶⁴ Trenin, 'Getting Russia Right', p.59

⁴⁶⁵ Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy Making in the Post-Soviet Era – Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*, New York: Palgrave 2002, p.128

One of the most common roads of explanation about the reasons behind the difficulties and drifts between Russia and the EU is the fact that a huge part of Russia also belongs to Asia and for a long period of history Russia was connected to Mongol rule. This part of Russian history was, as Angela Stent expressed it ‘... the relationship between geography and civilization’⁴⁶⁶ which, together with the fact that Russia chose the Orthodox religion as its faith, has naturally had a rupturing effect on Russia-Europe relations. With the Eastern Christian tradition Russia became a European frontier state that had a European origin but expanded beyond Europe.⁴⁶⁷ But despite the differences in ideology, and a religion that introduced many values for societal and governmental development, some administrative practises and numerous wars between Russia and other European countries, Russian national identity in its origin is rooted in europeanness and Russia’s foreign policy priorities are based on that identity. This claim is not easy to prove in the light of both historical behaviour and today’s actions of Russia in regard to it’s neighbours in the West. And yet some evidence can be found by looking at Russia’s interactions with the EU during the two Chechen wars.

It can be argued that for better or for worse the EU and the European direction is the outside factor that very much determines Russia’s policy choices. Former Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov has written; ‘For most of their history, Russians have continually pondered the questions “Are we part of Europe?” Regardless of the answer, it is undeniable that the European vector has played the lead role in determining Russia’s foreign policy for the past several centuries.’⁴⁶⁸ Since the fall of the Soviet Union all Russian presidents have stressed the importance of Europe for Russia. President Putin made his vision of the future of the relationship in 2002 clear: ‘I consider it necessary today to once again firmly state our priorities in the European direction. Clearly in evidence here is our consistent position and the many specific steps to integrate with Europe’.⁴⁶⁹

Five years later Putin held a view that Russia and the Europeans share a common view of the world: ‘Today, building a sovereign democratic state, we share the values and principles of the vast majority of Europeans. Respect for international law, rejection of force to settle international problems and preference for strengthening common approaches in European and global politics are factors that unite us. In our joint work within the United Nations, the G8

⁴⁶⁶ Angela Stent, ‘Reluctant Europeans: Three Centuries of Russian Ambivalence Towards the West’ in Legvold (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*, 393-442, p. 393

⁴⁶⁷ Trenin, ‘Getting Russia Right’, pp.52-53

⁴⁶⁸ Igor Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002, p.92

⁴⁶⁹ Statement by President Putin, Webpages of the Delegation of the European Commission to Russia, www.eur.ru, 2002,

and other forums, we always feel we share a common view of the world⁴⁷⁰. Through these statements comes out clearly the Europeaness in Russian identity. This is not to say that the greatpowerness cannot trump the Europeaness. And yet the historical experience as well as current Russian statements continuously confirm how important Europe is for Russia even if Russia is sometimes seeking to discredit the European Union as an organisation.

6.6 Conclusion

The first Chechen war started at a very sensitive time in Russia-EU relations. Many things were going in the right direction. The Partnership and Cooperation agreement had been signed in summer 1994 and expectations were still high even if signs of difficulty had started to appear on other fronts. At the same time the first Chechen war gave the EU an opportunity to review its Russia politics. Arguably, the first Chechen war served as a learning experience both for the EU leaders and for Russian politicians.

From the Russian side, during the first Chechen war, the growing fear that Russia had underestimated Western reactions was visible. 'According to *Vremya*'s sources, Kremlin officials believe that Western pressure could force Russia to embark on a fundamentally different course of action in the world arena'.⁴⁷¹ Perhaps that was the case, and a number of adjustments on Russia's part were made in response to EU pressure. At the time, many Russians also thought that the deadlocked Chechen conflict would only be solved with Western assistance.⁴⁷² As far as Russians were concerned, what was meant by western involvement was western financial aid. The internal foreign policy community in Russia was divided about the outside involvement in the first Chechen war and that came through the Russian actions. This tension between fear of isolationism and defending sovereignty inside of Russia also confused the EU stand. In seeking to influence Russia politically, the EU had to strike a balance between applying short-term pressures and a more strategic long-term view of Russia's position in the world. The fear factor was not exclusive to Russian actions. The same seemed to apply to the EU. The EU failed to take advantage of the situation. Half hearted demands and actions quite often backfire. This was also the case with Russia and the EU after the first Chechen war.

⁴⁷⁰ Vladimir Putin , 'Russia is Europe's natural ally', *The Sunday Times*, March 25th, 2007

⁴⁷¹ *Vremya*, 1999, p.1

⁴⁷² Gromyko, 2002

When the second Chechen war started, the international environment was already very different from the early/mid 1990s. As was the case in the summer of 1994, Russia and the EU had tried to strengthen their relationship after a rather rocky winter/spring in the summer of 1999. However the illusion from the early 1990s that Russia would rapidly integrate with Europe had already been broken, in fact with the first Chechen war. Furthermore the attitudes from the EU side were more visible than five years earlier. Viacheslav Nikonov, director of the foundation 'Politics' in Russia, has also analyzed the change in Russia-EU relations as a shift from an economic emphasis and the EU's desire to see economic reform work in the first half of the 1990s, to the situation where at the beginning of the new millennium the EU was more interested in Russia's political processes and the maintenance of the democratic element.⁴⁷³

The second war in Chechnya interestingly was not criticized as much as the first one, even if the emphasis from the EU side was more on political processes and human rights than was the case with the first. It would seem wrong to argue that the second Chechen war was only criticized less because there was less media coverage, as has sometimes been claimed in the EU. Indeed for the first six months of the second war the criticism and the threats of action were perhaps stronger than during the first war, but they were later toned down significantly. A silent understanding between Russia and the EU had already been created during the first Chechen war regarding where the limits were and what could be achieved. And then there was a factor that played strongly into the Russia-EU dialogue over Chechnya: the war on Terrorism.

The terrorist attacks in America on 11 September 2001 helped Russia to be prominent in the anti-terrorist coalition, and its campaign in Chechnya gained new wings. The emphatic Russian claims during the autumn of 1999, that the second Chechen war was actually started as an anti-terrorist action, and the consistent view of the war as against international terrorism, came to fruition with the US launching its own 'War on Terror'. Thus Russia did not join the 'Western' anti-terrorist war but the rest of the world joined with Russia. Also Russia's claim that there was nobody to talk to in Chechnya, since even Aslan Maskhadov had contacts with terrorists, reduced western pressure for a political settlement and for the opening of negotiations with the Chechens. Russia's integration with the West only accelerated in this period. This was along the line of how Russia views its role in the world

⁴⁷³ Nikonov, 2001

and in its Great Power identity. The paradox of Chechnya in Russia-EU relations is that the war action that the EU criticized became the uniting factor.

The EU's need to keep Russia on side in the War on Terror provided additional impetus to Russia's Great Power arguments. This made the situation even more complicated. The EU was not only at odds between its own political (value and human rights) and economic (Russian economic integration with Europe) considerations but also with its member states who have increasingly viewed Russia according to each state's 'personal relations' with Russia. The increase of economic interdependence and historical factors spoke in favour of closer relations and flirting with Russian Europeanness. At the same time the Russian greatpowerness surfacing through the second Chechen war, as was the case with the first Chechen war, did put the EU and Russia at loggerheads with each other.

Putin and other Russian leaders appeared well aware of the leverage they had, continuing a policy of brinkmanship based on loud protests against interference with sovereignty together with minor concessions, which is not only a feature in the Russia - EU relationship but characterises also more generally Russia's dealings with the West ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The interesting question remains: would Russia and the EU have been able to integrate also at the new value- and norm-based level if there would not have been wars in Chechnya at all?

Chapter 7: The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Russia and the West working together in constant conflict

‘Russia has not remained deaf to the concerns of Europe and other countries regarding Chechnya. There’s no need for tougher statements from the West, it is important that we maintain good relations with Russia’⁴⁷⁴

7.1 Introduction

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation was a Soviet initiative towards all-European security. Some analysts put the date back to 10th February 1954 when ‘Molotov’s plan’ was published, but some put this Russian desire for a pan-European collective security arrangement back as far as the 1930s.⁴⁷⁵ The Helsinki final act from 1975 and creation of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) became one of the most important aspects in Soviet-West and especially European relations. ‘The road of multilateral preparations for the CSCE was not easy. The East and the West held very different concepts of European security. The NATO countries saw the armed forces and arms in Europe as the main issues. But the Warsaw pact countries wanted to have political consultations under the auspices of CSCE’.⁴⁷⁶ In the end one could argue that the political aspects of the Helsinki Final Act were the most significant for the future of European security and the fate of the Soviet Union.

The CSCE became an important balancing act in Soviet security thinking. Since superpower relations took up most of the foreign policy capital, Western Europe was left in the shadow of superpower politics. The CSCE kept Moscow involved in Europe and by the mid 1980s ‘elements in the Soviet leadership realized that this policy (concentration of Soviet-USA relations) had not just decreased Soviet security in Europe but had resulted in the Soviet Union’s isolation from an increasingly dynamic group of states’.⁴⁷⁷ This factor alongside Gorbachev’s new thinking policies with a greater focus on European affairs, gave CSCE more attention in late Soviet security and foreign policy thinking.

⁴⁷⁴ *Kommersant* 24th February 2001, p.1

⁴⁷⁵ Andrei Zagorsky, *Helsinki protsess*, Moscow: Izdatelstvo ‘Prava Cheloveka’, 2005p.22

⁴⁷⁶ Zagorsky, *Helsinki protsess*, p.43

⁴⁷⁷ Dov Lynch, ‘Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’, in Mark Webber (ed.), *Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation*, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 2000, 99-124, p.101

At the time of the first Chechen war Russia wanted to view the OSCE as a structure for dealing with security matters in Europe. To promote the OSCE's role as the main security organisation, countering NATO, Russia seemed to be willing to accept a role for the OSCE in the first Chechen war. 'Its (Russia's) general line toward security matters in Europe has been to propose a collective security system based mainly on the OSCE structures...' ⁴⁷⁸

As the beginning of the organisation indicated, the relationship between the West and Russia has not been easy. Even if Russia sees the OSCE as one of the main organisations to promote the idea of pan-European security, it is not happy how things have been evolving. As president Putin put it in Munich in 2007: 'What do we see happening today [with the OSCE]? We see this balance [between the political-military, the economic and the human dimensions] is clearly destroyed. People are trying to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interests of one or a group of countries.' ⁴⁷⁹

It can be argued that the overall foreign and security policy thinking in the Soviet Union and in Russia had an effect on what kind of a role for the OSCE was envisaged by Russians in both of the Chechen wars. The first one started when European structures and integration was still young and were receiving a new drive from the fall of the Soviet Union. In the Paris summit of 1990, the Soviet influence in drafting the charter was high and Gorbachev added fuel to already high expectations by stating: 'Great European minds have often dreamed of a united, democratic and prosperous Europe, a community and a commonwealth not only of nations and States but of millions of European citizens. It is up to our generation to tackle the task of making that plan an irreversible reality in the coming century.' ⁴⁸⁰ Why, from such high hopes, the road has been downhill and developments not as recent Soviet/ Russian leaders would have preferred it to be, also has a great deal to do with the wars in Chechnya.

7.2 The First Chechen war

At the 1992 CSCE Helsinki summit the organisation agreed that 'the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal

⁴⁷⁸ Pursiainen, 'International Security regimes', p.144

⁴⁷⁹ Vladimir Putin's speech is available on the website of the Munich Security Conference: <http://www.securityconference.de/Conference-2007.268.0.html?&L=1>, accessed 10.07.2012

⁴⁸⁰ Dov Lynch, 'The State of the OSCE', in *Russia, the OSCE and European Security*, *EU-Russia Center review*, issue 12, November 2009, pp.5-13, p.10

affairs of the State concerned.⁴⁸¹ At the 1994 Budapest summit the politically binding ‘Code of Conduct’ was signed. The code was meant to mark a major change in the way states conducted military activities.⁴⁸² Both of the summit outcomes were to be important markers of what was considered as an internal affair and when international involvement was expected and accepted by the member states of the OSCE. Russia, by accepting these facts, was also moving towards a sort of state identity that the Western countries had.

By the end of 1994 it started to be clear that NATO would enlarge despite Russian dislike and objections. The Budapest CSCE summit (the last as CSCE, from 1 January 1995 OSCE) reflected the mood in Russia-West relations. The East-West drift that was occurring shadowed the important factors agreed in the summit. From that summit onwards the concept of ‘Cold Peace’ cast a shadow over Russia-West relations. Yeltsin said: ‘There should be no longer enemies, winners or losers, in that Europe. For this time in history, our continent has a real opportunity to achieve unity. To miss that opportunity means to forget the lessons of the past and to jeopardize our future.... Europe, even before it has managed to shrug off the legacy of the cold war, is at risk of plunging into a cold peace’.⁴⁸³ After giving the warning concerning a cold peace president Yeltsin suggested ‘A roadmap for Europe towards the 21st century’. ‘Its essence is the creation of a comprehensive European security system. In this room there are now the leaders of more than 50 countries in the world! CSCE is, in its coverage of countries and the potential of its participants, a unique structure. It is designed to be a strong and effective instrument of peace, stability and democracy’.⁴⁸⁴ Yeltsin’s vision was that the programme would have been an agreement between NATO, the EU, the OSCE and the CIS. At that time Russian diplomacy pushed such an option as an alternative to NATO’s eastward expansion. For Russia it was still important to try to find an alternative to NATO enlargement, even if the indication from former East European countries and the US was that there is no stopping enlargement.

Only five days after the Budapest summit, the Russian army crossed the border between Russia and Chechnya. The decision for the full-scale military operation was however already made on 29 November, thus before the Budapest summit. When speaking in Budapest Yeltsin was aware of what would follow. Since both of the commitments undertaken in the

⁴⁸¹ CSCE 1992, Helsinki Summit declaration, 10th July, point 8

⁴⁸² Duncan B Hollis, ‘Accountability in Chechnya – Addressing Internal Matters With legal and Political International Norms’, *Boston Collage Law Review*, Vol.36, issue 4, No.4, 1995, 793-846, p.808

⁴⁸³ Talbott, *The Russia Hand*, p.141

⁴⁸⁴ Boris Yeltsin, ‘Obshchee prostranstvo bezopasnosti. Vystuplenie preazidenta RF Borisa Eltsina na vstreche SBSE v Budapeste’, *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, 6th December, 1994, No.236

Helsinki and Budapest summits were violated by Russia in its military operation, two conclusions relating to Yeltsin's appearance in Budapest can be drawn; he did not see any connection between Chechnya and the Helsinki and Budapest summits, or that he saw Russia's internal affairs as not to be included to these commitments. The first reason suggests inexperience in international multilateral commitments and their meaning, the other Russian arrogance in international cooperation. Great Powers have different rules than others.

The Secretary General of the OSCE Dr. William Höynck saw the conflict as a case for the OSCE: 'Although it is clearly an internal conflict, the international community wanted to make direct contributions to solving it. As OSCE commitments were violated, the OSCE had formal reasons to become involved. One possibility was the activation of OSCE mechanisms. But these mechanisms are not very flexible and may lead into blind alleys.'⁴⁸⁵ The warfare in Chechnya brought out a large Western European reaction, together with the United States. They all pointed out that Yeltsin had agreed in Budapest to commit Russia to the principles that in case a use of force cannot be avoided 'the armed forces will take due care to avoid injury to civilians or their property'.⁴⁸⁶

From the Russian side the response to the Western reactions were statements by several Russian high level representatives, among them a declaration from the Russian foreign ministry that said Russia was against involvement from the OSCE since the matter was an internal Russian affair. The Russian reaction reflected a similar attitude to that of Yeltsin in Budapest: internal affairs of Russia do not fall into the category of international involvement. The matter of outside involvement in Chechnya became a power battle in Moscow and showed well how divided the establishment was. First Ramazan Abdulatipov and justice minister Valentin Kovalev spoke against any OSCE observer mission. Then foreign minister Kozyrev interfered personally and met with OSCE representative Istvan Gyarmati. In that meeting Kozyrev agreed to receive the mission.⁴⁸⁷

Only days after Gyarmati and Kozyrev's meeting the deputy foreign Minister Igor Ivanov came out with a statement that OSCE participation in any political settlement of the Chechen conflict was out of the question. However Ivanov saw a place for the OSCE in humanitarian aspects of the conflict.⁴⁸⁸ Different signals continued to come out relating to the

⁴⁸⁵ Wilhelm Höynck, 'New Challenges On The OSCE Conflict Resolution Agenda', in *OSCE ODIHR Bulletin* Warsaw, winter 1994/1995, Vol.3, No.2, 3-10, p. 6, <http://www.osce.org/odihhr/17682> accessed 10.07.2012

⁴⁸⁶ Hollis, 'Accountability in Chechnya', pp.807-808

⁴⁸⁷ Vladimir Abarinov, 'The OSCE: A Mountain Gives Birth to A Mouse', *Sevodnya*, 14 January, 1995, p.1, translated in *The Current Digest*, 1995, Vol.XL VII, No.2, p.21

⁴⁸⁸ Abarinov, 1995, p.21

role of the OSCE in Chechnya. Foreign Ministry official Mark Entin was quoted by Interfax on 17th January ruling out any OSCE involvement in mediating a settlement of the Chechen conflict. Entin termed the conflict purely as ‘Russia’s internal affair’. But as Igor Ivanov had seen it, Entin also saw a possibility for the OSCE to be involved with the ‘humanitarian and legal’ aspects of the crisis. At the same time Chairman of the State Duma committee for International Affairs, Vladimir Lukin, told Interfax after his talks with OSCE emissary Istvan Gyarmati that the proposal to deploy OSCE observers in Chechnya is ‘legal and sound.’⁴⁸⁹ Lukin’s view was based on Russia’s obligation to comply with the OSCE Code of Conduct. Gyarmati himself wrote about his first visit to Moscow and why the OSCE was in the end able to negotiate a mandate as broad as circumstances allowed. ‘Help came from the place where we least expected it: the first glimmer of hope became visible when we met with the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Oleg Lobov, who was generally viewed as a conservative - apparently a very short-sighted view. To our great surprise he asked, with unexpected frankness, why the OSCE was not taking on a political role in the crisis.’⁴⁹⁰

There is some indication that Russians themselves thought that international involvement might be of some use in the war that they had launched. Kozyrev stated ‘I have now been trying to see to it that a mission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe comes to Chechnya. Because human rights are not an internal affair’.⁴⁹¹ Rene Nyberg, one of the members of the OSCE commission which visited Moscow and Chechnya (on a fact finding visit) before the establishment of a permanent OSCE mission to Chechnya, says that it was from Moscow’s side that the first indications came that Russians were interested in international involvement.⁴⁹² Gyarmati sensed, in his first visit to Moscow as a Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, a great resistance to international involvement in Russian internal affairs, but what in the end allowed the OSCE involvement were, according to Gyarmati, the OSCE principles. ‘What the Russian side accepted - surprisingly, to many people - was that an international organization should participate in crisis management. It did this on the basis of the OSCE principle which states that gross violations of human rights are not exclusively the internal affair of a state. It is an irony of

⁴⁸⁹ Liz Fuller, ‘What role for the OSCE in Chechnya?’, *OMRI*, Vol. 1, No. 14, Part I, 19 January 1995,

⁴⁹⁰ István Gyarmati, ‘The Hungarian Chairmanship and the Chechnya Conflict’, 175-184, p. 178

http://www.core-hamburg.de/documents/yearbook/english/95_96/Gyarmati.pdf, accessed 11.07.2012

⁴⁹¹ *Sevodnya*, October 20th, 1995, p.9

⁴⁹² Interview of the Finnish Ambassador Rene Nyberg, Moscow 04.11.2002.

history that Soviet diplomacy of the Gorbachev era took the lead as an advocate of this principle.⁴⁹³

After the Budapest speech it was important for Yeltsin to promote the OSCE in any way. ‘Cooperating with the OSCE observers in Chechnya, the Yeltsin administration wanted to emphasise the importance it attached to that international organization vis-à-vis NATO’.⁴⁹⁴ That is seen as one of the main reasons why the OSCE was able to establish the permanent Assistance Group in Chechnya in April 1995. It seems that the Russian administration was split on the matter and all of them viewed it as a Russian internal matter, but the Yeltsin-Kozyrev tandem was prepared for a ‘greater cause’ to cooperate with the OSCE. Opposition against the OSCE involvement remained. Ramazan Adbulatipov, Vice-Chairman of the Council of the Federation stated ‘If the OSCE gets involved in resolving the conflict, it will drag on for decades.’⁴⁹⁵

This has been seen at the time as a major breakthrough, at least from the point of view of the OSCE. It is seen as a striking factor⁴⁹⁶ and a success of European diplomacy since several factors pulled together in arguing for the OSCE involvement. The OSCE, the EU and the CoE all wanted to see international involvement in the conflict. The Assistance Group in Chechnya became the first official experience in Russia of the kind of a role an international organization can play in ‘internal conflicts’ and represented a break from Soviet tradition which strongly opposed other countries’ ‘right to monitor’ events from inside the Soviet Union. This act from the Russian side to allow the permanent presence of the OSCE on Russian soil could be seen as Russian agreement with Finnish President Urho Kekkonen’s opening words in the first CSCE foreign ministers’ meeting in Helsinki in June 1973: ‘Security is not gained by building fences; security is gained by opening gates’. The OSCE saw the Assistance Group as a big step forward. Dr. Höynck wrote: ‘Russia has come a long way. The possibilities for concrete action are improving. The prospects are good that OSCE involvement will make a difference, unfortunately not today but – hopefully – tomorrow. The precedent will be important.’⁴⁹⁷

After the establishment of the Assistance Group the official statements were marked by self-congratulation. This of course had a huge psychological effect and symbolism. Russia

⁴⁹³ Gyarmati, 2012, p. 177

⁴⁹⁴ Andrew Felkay, *Yeltsin's Russia and the West*, Santa Barbara, CA.: Praeger, 2002, p.113

⁴⁹⁵ *Sevodnya*, January 11th, 1995

⁴⁹⁶ Lynch, 2000, p.114

⁴⁹⁷ Höynck, ‘New Challenges On The OSCE Conflict Resolution Agenda’, p. 6

was a part of an international organization and for once in an internal crisis it has allowed assistance from an international organisation. This was the only way an outside involvement inside Russia could have happened – through an international organisation where it is a long term central member and where decisions were based on a strict principle of consensus, which did not have any supranational aspirations and no punishment mechanism.⁴⁹⁸ Anatol Lieven claims that the agreement was made under ‘fairly heavy diplomatic pressure from Western Europe and the USA (heavy that is by the standards of the pressure that the West applies to its friends, like Turkey or Indonesia, not of course by any objective standard)’.⁴⁹⁹ In the chairman’s summary of the Ministerial Council meeting in Budapest in December 1995 the role of the Assistance Group was described as follows: ‘The Assistance Group has achieved considerable success by developing a framework for negotiations between the parties and playing the role of facilitator in the subsequent military agreements’.⁵⁰⁰ In the Stockholm declaration of July 1996 the Parliamentary Assembly noted ‘... with satisfaction that thanks to active mediation by the OSCE Assistance Group, negotiations have taken place and an agreement has been concluded:... recognizing the contribution of the OSCE to security and cooperation in Europe through its constructive role in negotiations aimed at securing a peaceful resolution of the war in Chechnya.....’.⁵⁰¹ It is hard to find any really critical official OSCE documents, but one is the Ottawa Declaration, which reads ‘Condemning the Russian Federation for its gross violation of the international law and OSCE principles stemming from its military campaign in Chechnya’.⁵⁰²

It seems that the OSCE viewed its involvement in Chechnya more from the point of view of its own reputation (by being the first monitoring organisation accepted by Russia) than anything else. ‘A comprehensive security model for Europe will be based on OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security. The particular advantage of the OSCE is that it is a truly all-European organisation. Nobody regards its actions as an interference. This is evident in the way Russia has accepted the role of the OSCE in Chechnya.’⁵⁰³ Lieven sees that the continuation of OSCE work in Chechnya after the establishment of the Assistance Group became more and more controversial.⁵⁰⁴ Furthermore it started to become clearer and clearer

⁴⁹⁸ Pursiainen, *Beyond Sovietology*, pp.325-26

⁴⁹⁹ Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Politics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, p.122

⁵⁰⁰ OSCE Budapest, Chairman’s Summary; Decisions of the Budapest Ministerial Council Meeting, 8/12/1995, p.4

⁵⁰¹ Stockholm Declaration adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Stockholm 9/7/1996, Chapter I, points 28 and 27, p.7

⁵⁰² Ottawa Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 8/7/1995, p.5, point 52

⁵⁰³ OSCE ODIHR Bulletin 1995, vol.3, no.3, p.30

⁵⁰⁴ Lieven, pp.122-123

that there was no comprehensive pan-European security system on the cards and NATO-Russia cooperation was institutionalised in the Partnership for Peace programme. The Russian view of the future of the OSCE was not happening, in fact 'The West was willing to accept the OSCE as an alternative to NATO only as a complementary organization to NATO because it was proven in the Chechen conflict that the OSCE was able to go places where NATO could not. The OSCE was viewed as a useful channel for direct dialogue on security issues with Russia.'⁵⁰⁵

It was quite clear that the OSCE did not stop violence and Russia continued to break the OSCE's own code of conduct throughout the war, and the conflict prevention function which is one of its main aims would not have been of any use in the Russia-Chechnya conflict. It did not in any sense ease the cruel reality of the war and the pain the civilians had to go through. But the three most important achievements here are that the elections held in Chechnya 1997 were monitored by OSCE and declared by it free and fair, there was some objective information about the war available and, most importantly, Russia had indicated the importance of international organisations as a mediator.

The fact that Russia chose the OSCE as the organisation to let into Russia, became an issue for self-congratulation on the OSCE's part. The reason for that was the need for OSCE to redefine its role in the post-Soviet European order. Laslo Kovacs wrote: 'The new missions and other forms of involvement not only brought a quantitative increase in such activities by the Organization but opened up new qualitative opportunities for the OSCE'.⁵⁰⁶ One of the first examples in Kovacs' list was the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya. He saw the establishment of a permanent mission in Russia as a huge success: 'The establishment of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya meant that for the first time a large international organization could set up a long-term presence in Russia and was in a position to counsel and mediate there on an issue which not only Moscow but many OSCE countries had for decades regarded as being exclusively an internal affair; some still regard it as such.'⁵⁰⁷ In Moscow this way of presenting the matter was not an advantage for the Yeltsin-Kozyrev line, often also defined as the Westernisers/Atlanticist line. The Russian political establishment was not united behind the OSCE involvement and the military establishment was against it. In the overall picture, it started to look like Russia had bent

⁵⁰⁵ Felkay, 2002, p.113

⁵⁰⁶ László Kovács, 'The Future Role of the OSCE in the European Security Architecture', *OSCE Yearbook* 1995/1996, Hamburg: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, 1996, 57-68, p.62.

⁵⁰⁷ Kovacs, 1996, p.62

under international pressure – with all fronts from the West strongly pushing the OSCE involvement.

This can be seen as the underlying reason why, after the peace agreement had been signed and elections held in Chechnya, Russia was keen to get the OSCE out. This was made very clear in the statement the Russian Federation delivered to the OSCE Permanent Council on 13th March 1997: ‘the part of the OSCE Assistance Group’s mandate which is related to mediation efforts in the context of settling the armed conflict and smoothing the way to negotiations has been carried out in full.’⁵⁰⁸ When the second Chechen war became reality Russians did not want the OSCE back at all, but yet again somehow the international community managed to twist Russia’s arm at the OSCE Istanbul summit in November 1999.

7.3 The Second Chechen war

Prior the OSCE Istanbul summit the Secretary-General of the OSCE, Jan Kubis, visited Moscow at the beginning of October 1999 and his attempts to bring up the possibility of an OSCE mediation effort were dismissed from the outset. He was told continuously that Moscow did not see any grounds for involving third parties in a settlement of the situation in the North Caucasus.⁵⁰⁹ This indicates that the more conciliatory line, from the highest political level, that Russia clearly had in the first Chechen war, wanting to see international involvement, had changed fully. Earlier in 1999 the Kosovo conflict and the NATO intervention had increased suspicion from the Russian side relating to US policies which, in the Russian view, were deliberately undermining Russia’s role in the European security architecture.⁵¹⁰

The tendency to interpret events, causes and solutions differently was clear in Kosovo’s case and also very present in the case of Chechnya, as the first war had already shown. The politics of *ressentiment* started to enter more visibly into Russia-West relations. Steven Eke reported after the Istanbul summit, ‘Senior Russian military figures have gone further recently, even suggesting the US is striving to perpetuate tension in the Caucasus, with the

⁵⁰⁸ Odd Gunnar Skagestad, ‘How can the International Community contribute?’, in Lena Jonson and Murad Esenov (eds.), *Chechnya: The International Community and Strategies for Peace and Stability*, Stockholm: The Swedish Institute for International Affairs, 2000, p.125

⁵⁰⁹ *Kommersant*, October 6th, 1999, p.11

⁵¹⁰ Steven Eke, ‘Analysis: East-West relations must shift’, 19 November, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/528362.stm>, accessed 24.07.2012

aim of weakening Russia on the international stage'.⁵¹¹ These views were known also on the US side and formed around the rumour that Turkey, a US ally, was providing covert support to the Chechen rebellion.⁵¹²

The OSCE's Istanbul summit in November 1999 proved to be a real test case in Russia-West relations. Furthermore it also marked a watershed not only in Russia's attitude towards the OSCE but also a defining factor in Russia-West relations for years to come. 'For example, concessions made by President Boris Yeltsin at the last OSCE summit, held in Istanbul in 1999, in the military sphere, had a profound effect on Moscow's attitudes to the whole organisation, including the human dimension'.⁵¹³ The trend had begun already with the Kosovo-conflict but with the summit, it became institutionalized. The view of the OSCE in Russia and the future that had been envisioned for it from the Russian side had not materialized. 'The OSCE has not become the central structure for European Security, as was planned during the Gorbachev era. Instead, the OSCE has turned into a discussion club, a vegetative organization with good intentions'.⁵¹⁴

Emotions were high at the summit. The tensions between Russia and the West due to the Chechnya and Kosovo crises during that year had changed the atmosphere inside the OSCE as well. The Istanbul summit was meant to establish a new agenda of cooperation and goodwill at the start of the new millennium. Instead as Rogov put it, 'we are entering the 21st century in an atmosphere of very strong tension between Russia and the community of Western states'.⁵¹⁵

Yeltsin has been described as changing colour in his face and tapping his fingers and shaking his head during the speeches of Gerhard Schroder, Jacques Chirac and Robin Cook.⁵¹⁶ For President Bill Clinton Yeltsin showed his watch several times as if to point out that Clinton's speech was too long. President Clinton disagreed with Yeltsin especially on two counts relating to Chechnya. They were the use of force and whether or not Chechnya was fully an internal or also an international matter. 'If the attacks on civilians will continue,

⁵¹¹ Eke, 1999

⁵¹² Talbott, 2002, p.363

⁵¹³ Vladimir D. Shkolnikov, 'Russia and the OSCE Human Dimension: a Critical Assessment', *EU-Russia Center review*, issue 12, November, 2009, 21-29, p.22

⁵¹⁴ Sergei Rogov, 'We shouldn't slam the door', *Moskovskiye Novosti*, no.45, November 23-29, 1999, p.5, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.51, No.47, p. 6

⁵¹⁵ Idem

⁵¹⁶ Yelena Tregubova, 'President gets everything done', *Kommersant*, November 19, 1999, p.1, translated in *The Current Digest*, vol.51, No.47, p.2

the extremism Russia is trying to combat is only intensifying'.⁵¹⁷ Clinton also reminded Yeltsin of the events of 1991 when Yeltsin himself had stood on a Soviet tank opposing the coup attempt in the Kremlin. As Clinton put it for Yeltsin 'If they had put you in jail instead of electing you president, I would hope that every leader of every country around this table would have stood up for you and for freedom in Russia and not said, "Well that is an internal Russian affair that we cannot be a part of"'.⁵¹⁸

Yeltsin's own speech was very firm. He condemned those who criticised Russia's actions. 'At the same time, we do not accept the prescriptions of the so-called objective critics of Russia, those who have failed to understand that we are quite simply obliged to put a stop in good time to the spread of the cancerous tumour of terrorism, to stop it spreading far beyond the North Caucasus and even outside the Russian Federation'.⁵¹⁹

The understanding of the proportion of military force needed in the case of Chechnya was different in the West than in Russia. For Russians there was no other way than extensive use of military means to respond to terrorist activities in and from the North Caucasus. The Western leaders' comments at the Istanbul summit indicated that not everyone was convinced of that. British foreign minister Robin Cook said 'war cannot be of help in opposing terrorism; it can only strengthen it', Jacques Chirac called the Chechen operation a tragic mistake and Gerhard Schröder said that Russia was undermining faith in the OSCE principles.⁵²⁰ These different approaches towards warfare were also visible during the first Chechen war.

The Russian frustration with the Western leaders' attitude was clear in president Yeltsin's speech: 'Russia is firmly intent on businesslike co-operation in the context of this summit. I am convinced that both for Russia and for other members of the OSCE what is especially necessary is dialogue based on respect and not mutual recriminations and moralizing'.⁵²¹ Furthermore Yeltsin argued strongly against the concept of humanitarian intervention: 'Not all the ideas which have come up during discussion of the future of Europe seem well-founded to us. I refer to calls for humanitarian intervention in the affairs of another

⁵¹⁷ BBC News, 'Yeltsin walks out on world leaders', 18 November 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/525839.stm>, accessed 24.07.2012

⁵¹⁸ *Idem*

⁵¹⁹ Boris Yeltsin, speech to the summit of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Istanbul, 18 November, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/526343.stm>, accessed 24.07.2012

⁵²⁰ Tregubova, 'President gets everything done', p.2

⁵²¹ Yeltsin, 1999

state - a new idea, this - even when they are made under the pretext of defending human rights and freedoms.⁵²²

The Russian press after the summit picked on similar themes to those in Yeltsin's speech as well as presenting analysis on what actually happened in Istanbul. There were two accounts when analysing the summit results: one that saw Yeltsin to have succeeded in Istanbul and another that Yeltsin and Russians were humiliated. Dmitry Gomostayev wrote in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*: 'Russia went a distance and won. At the OSCE summit, the West failed to win any substantive concessions on the Chechen problem. What is more, Russia's diplomats found a way to effectively rescue the European forum itself from imminent failure while simultaneously accomplishing their own goals and defending Russia's national interests'.⁵²³ Otto Latsis in *Noviye Izvestia* saw that the strength that Yeltsin showed in Istanbul was due to the fact that the whole Russian nation stood behind him: 'That's what gave the President the strength to show, in his dialogue with the West, the firmness and resolve that television viewers observed with pleasure'.⁵²⁴ To balance the rather positive viewing of the Istanbul summit's result there were also articles that were very critical of Russian achievements in the summit. *Sevodnya* newspaper's correspondent Aleksander Portfiryev's analysis was not very complimentary towards the Russian delegation: 'In actual fact, unfortunately, there was no breakthrough. Russia's downfall came, as expected, because of Chechnya – Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's main area of work. Yeltsin's presence at the summit eased this situation only partially – not, sad to say, fundamentally.' Portfiryev's conclusion was that the summit results were interpreted in Moscow as consensus and in the Western media as a humiliation of Moscow, which meant that the summit results could not be interpreted in any other way than that Russia was isolated.⁵²⁵ Kostantin Varlamov saw an even gloomier picture when analysing what had been agreed in Istanbul: 'a closer analysis of the future repercussion of the documents that the Russian delegation signed in Istanbul allows one to say that Russia not only made "concessions", but carried out a full-scale retreat on the South Caucasus front. Russian diplomats, no matter how pleased they may be with themselves in the wake of the Istanbul summit, were caught in a trap laid by Western

⁵²² Yeltsin, 1999

⁵²³ Dmitry Gomostayev, 'Russia Takes Istanbul Round From West', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, November 20, 1999, pp.1 and 6, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.51, No.47, p.3

⁵²⁴ Otto Latsis, 'Has National Accord Finally Been Found', *Noviye Izvestia*, November 20, 1999, p.1, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.51, No.47, p.4

⁵²⁵ Aleksander Portfiryev, 'We're Back in the Agitprop Business', *Sevodnya*, November 20, 1999, pp.1 and 3, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.51, No.47, p.5

propaganda'.⁵²⁶ In Varlamov's view the West had used the Russian military campaign in Chechnya as a distraction so that they could get Russia to retreat from several CIS republics. The aim of the Istanbul summit was, in Varlamov's opinion, to drive Russia out eventually from all the former Soviet republics and put them under the protection of the United States.⁵²⁷

Yeltsin left Istanbul an hour earlier than planned and at 'boiling point', as Russian newspapers described it.⁵²⁸ This also meant that Yeltsin himself did not sign the Istanbul summit's charter for European Security. Foreign minister Igor Ivanov signed it for Russia. This naturally added to the speculation of how happy Yeltsin was about the situation. In the shadow of Russia-West tensions the Istanbul summit agreed to adopt the Platform for Co-operative Security, in order to strengthen co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations and institutions, to develop the OSCE's role in peacekeeping, to create rapid expert assistance and co-operation teams, to establish an Operation Centre in order to plan and deploy OSCE field operations, and to strengthen the consultation process within the OSCE by establishing the Preparatory Committee under the OSCE Permanent Council.⁵²⁹

The section of the summit declaration where Chechnya was taken up is worth citing here in full: 'In connection with the recent chain of events in the North Caucasus, we strongly reaffirm that we fully acknowledge the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and condemn terrorism in all its forms. We underscore the need to respect OSCE norms. We agree that in light of the humanitarian situation in the region it is important to alleviate the hardships of the civilian population, including by creating appropriate conditions for international organizations to provide humanitarian aid. We agree that a political solution is essential, and that the assistance of the OSCE would contribute to achieving that goal. We welcome the willingness of the OSCE to assist in the renewal of a political dialogue. We welcome the agreement of the Russian Federation to a visit by the Chairman-in-Office to the region. We reaffirm the existing mandate of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya. In this regard, we also welcome the willingness of the Russian Federation to facilitate these steps, which will contribute to creating conditions for stability, security, and economic prosperity in

⁵²⁶ Konstantin Varlamov, 'Was OSCE Summit a Defeat for Moscow', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, November 23, 1999, p.5, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.51, No.47, p.7

⁵²⁷ *Idem*

⁵²⁸ Tregubova 'President gets everything done', p.2

⁵²⁹ Charter for European Security, Istanbul, November 1999, available www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/istachart99e.htm

the region'.⁵³⁰ This point follows the same lines as the one confirming the OSCE role in the first Chechen war. Even if many viewed the paragraph as humiliating for Russia, the two important elements for Russia were once again stated in an official document: respect of territorial integrity and condemnation of terrorism in all its forms.

The Istanbul summit showed a real gap in thinking between Russia and the Western countries. The OSCE had become an arena where Russia and the US measured each other. In multilateral practical cooperation, both see an advantage but the side product of multilateral cooperation is that more fundamental issues, principals that are understood very differently, also surface. In all countries foreign policy is important and influenced by domestic politics but in cases like Russia where the state building as well as nation building was and is a work in process, foreign policy events and statements matter more. At the end of the 1990s Russia was searching for international approval and a significant global role as one of the Great Powers. But Russia was an odd Great Power, it needed Western assistance for its financial problems, it had a war in Chechnya, an antiterrorist operation, that burdened the country even more and showed up some fundamental weaknesses of the country. On top of that its internal politics was its own battleground. With the second Chechen war it seemed that internally Russia was pulling together better than ever after the fall of the Soviet Union, and externally the war was widening the gap between Russia and the West.

One could argue that for the OSCE, one of the most important outcomes from the Istanbul summit was that Russia confirmed its commitment and the mandate of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya. By this reaffirmation Russia showed that it was still leaving the door open to international involvement however symbolic it might be. The chair-in-office of the OSCE, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana expressed his clear satisfaction: 'Having the OSCE back in Chechnya is a major breakthrough for the Organisation. An important phase of our effort has ended. The most difficult has yet to come. The OSCE Assistance Group stands ready to facilitate a political settlement in the crisis'.⁵³¹ Despite agreeing to continue the OSCE assistance group's mandate Russia was not happy to see the return of the OSCE in Chechnya. Russia needed to be reminded time after time of its promise in Istanbul. Before Russia was ready to invite the OSCE head Knut Vollebaek to Chechnya, US secretary of state Madeline Albright had to give a call to foreign minister Ivanov before

⁵³⁰ OSCE Istanbul Summit Declaration 1999, point 23 at www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/istadec199e.htm

⁵³¹ OSCE press release, 15th June, 2001

the invitation was issued.⁵³² In March 2000 Vladimir Putin as the acting President told UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in Moscow that Russia was willing to let the OSCE play a role in Chechnya: ‘We spoke about how an ombudsman can attract cooperation with international organizations, including the OSCE and the Council of Europe’.⁵³³ However, from Putin’s statement it was not at all clear what role he had envisioned for the OSCE. Without continuous pressure from different Western leaders, the Assistance group would never have entered Chechnya again. From the Istanbul agreement to the actual return of the OSCE mission to Chechnya took one year and 8 months, finally being completed a few months before 9/11.

What seemed to have been a promising start for OSCE involvement in the second Chechen war at the Istanbul summit, ended before it had time to have any influence. The mandate expired on the 31st December 2002 and Moscow did not extend it. The Assistance group was able to be only a year and half in Chechnya. Sergey Markov, director of the Institute of Political Studies, analyzed the decision as a continuation of a conflict between the Russian authorities and European public opinion, and as a result of discussions of the methods that should be used in Chechnya.⁵³⁴ He also seemed to think that this decision from Moscow was only a matter of time, since there had been a feeling that the OSCE pushed Russia into signing the peace agreement with the Chechens in 1996 and that this kind of development could be prevented by expelling (or, more accurately, by not prolonging the mandate of) the OSCE. According to Markov the decision was also an example of the absence of mutual understanding between Russia and Europe, which was slowing down Russia’s integration with the European political and economic system.⁵³⁵

It was clear that the decision to end the OSCE mandate in Chechnya divided opinions in Russia. The official side did not see that the role of OSCE in normalizing the situation in Chechnya had been that great. First deputy Chairman of the Federation Council’s Defence and Security Committee Valeriy Manilov strongly criticised the OSCE mission: ‘As a rule, they focused their attention on negative things and disregarded positive changes. The termination of the OSCE’s mission in Chechnya will not be a serious loss’.⁵³⁶ The critical voices that did not agree with rejecting the continuation of the mission in Chechnya came

⁵³² Vitaly Mikhailov, ‘Russia Holds Peacemaking Competition’, *Kommersant*, December 7, 1999, p.3, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.51, No.49, p.23

⁵³³ AFP, ‘Putin says Russia sees role for OSCE in Chechnya’, March 11, 2000,

<http://reliefweb.int/report/russian-federation/putin-says-russia-sees-role-osce-chechnya>, accessed 25.07.2012

⁵³⁴ Interfax News Agency, Moscow, in English 1126gmt 5 jan 03

⁵³⁵ *Idem*

⁵³⁶ *Idem*

mostly from those known to defend human rights. In *Echo Moskvy*'s radio programme Ella Pamfilova, chairman of the presidential human rights commission spoke for the OSCE presence, 'I am convinced that it is absolutely necessary for the OSCE mission to exist in Russia... I am confident that the OSCE mission could now develop in a new way – first and foremost, it could boost the humanitarian components of matters involved in putting the necessary resources into improving the situation of forced migrants and refugees, not only in a material sense but psychologically, and that is something very important'.⁵³⁷ Lyudmila Alekseyeva, chairman of the Moscow Helsinki Group, was on the same lines, 'There are things in Chechnya to hide from the international public and from our own population...It's understandable (sending the OSCE home), but it's a great pity, because if we really want this peace process that has been announced, if we want it to be even a partial success, international observers would not be any hindrance to us.'⁵³⁸ Alekseyeva saw the role of OSCE as very important in establishing peaceful relations between the federal centre and the population of Chechnya.

There were also other kinds of objections. Vyacheslav Nikonov, president of the Politika Foundation saw the situation as follows, 'There are no other standards (reference to double standards) in the world. If we are to remain a civilized nation, we must observe the rules of the game. This is not a serious reaction and it is putting Russia in an awkward position'.⁵³⁹ Also a state Duma deputy from Chechnya Aslanbek Aslakhanov saw the decision to end the OSCE mission in Chechnya as a mistake. His reason related to the referendum on the Chechen constitution that was held shortly after the OSCE mission left Chechnya, 'They are providing grounds for people to assert that the necessary conditions for holding the referendum haven't been created and that this is so they (Russians) can conceal this and abolish the commission (OSCE)'.⁵⁴⁰

The statements representing the official line clearly indicate the splits and differences of opinion inside of the OSCE. The dividing line seems to be very much along a Russia-West line. Deputy foreign minister Vladimir Chizhov said that the reason for not prolonging the OSCE group's mandate was down to the fact that the OSCE's 55 member states failed to reach a consensus as to what terms the mandate would continue under.⁵⁴¹ Deputy speaker of the State Duma, Vladimir Lukin, opened up a bit more the Russian attitude on the OSCE

⁵³⁷ *Ekho Moskvy* radio, Moscow, January 3, 2003, 10.00 gmt

⁵³⁸ *Idem*

⁵³⁹ Interfax news agency, Moscow, January 5, 2003, 11.25 gmt

⁵⁴⁰ *Ekho Moskvy* radio, Moscow, January 3, 2003, 10.00 gmt

⁵⁴¹ Interfax New Agency, Moscow, January 5, 2003, 1207 gmt

involvement in Chechnya, ‘After giving our permission, after agreeing with the OSCE that it should monitor the humanitarian aspects of what is happening in Chechnya, humanitarian aid, the issue of observation of human rights, we should specify very precisely the mandate with the OSCE. They are not party to talks, since we don’t want them to participate in talks, because that does, to some extent, of course, bring the issue onto the plane of internal affairs, and we insist, not without justification, that this is an internal problem. They should operate, but within the framework of their mandate’⁵⁴². As Lukin stated, the Russian view of the OSCE mandate was that the OSCE had done more than agreed in Chechnya, trying to be a middleman in negotiations and making Chechnya an international matter against the Russian view that it was an internal issue. Interestingly Lukin saw in an interview in *Ekho Moskvy* a place for the OSCE in Chechnya but not a role in solving the problem.⁵⁴³ This was a confusing position for the Western side. As for the OSCE side the mandate they enjoyed in Chechnya in 2000-2002 was similar to that in 1995. In 1995 the OSCE Assistance Group was established to perform tasks such as promoting respect for human rights, assisting in preparation for possible new constitutional agreements, holding and monitoring elections and developing democratic institutions. Furthermore the OSCE was given the task of facilitating delivery to the region by international and non-governmental organizations of humanitarian aid, with ensuring along with the Russian authorities the speediest possible return of refugees and displaced persons, promoting peaceful resolution of the crisis, pursuing dialogue and negotiations through participation in round tables, with a view to establishing a ceasefire and eliminating sources of tension, and supporting the creation of mechanisms guaranteeing the rule of law, public safety and law and order.⁵⁴⁴ These points were accepted by Yeltsin and gave the OSCE officials at least a theoretical mandate to be involved in the negotiations towards the political and military solution of the conflict. In 1995 OSCE officials were not sure whether Russia would give a green light for the mission. ‘We proposed that the OSCE set up a long-term mission in Chechnya and that it be given a mandate to participate in the political and military solution of the conflict. We had discussed these proposals previously with our partners in the West. They thought them an excellent idea but did not believe they had much chance of success. We, to be honest, were also not convinced that they would work. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister (Hungarian Gyula Horn) and the Foreign Minister (Hungarian László Kovács) managed to convince Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in a long session that lasted well into the night. When I

⁵⁴² *Ekho Moskvy* radio, program with Aleksander Klimov, January 3, 2003, 1206 gmt

⁵⁴³ *Ekho Moskvy* radio, program with Aleksander Klimov, January 3, 2003, 12.06 gmt

⁵⁴⁴ OSCE, Decision No.35, 16th Plenary Meeting, PC.DEC/35, PC Journal No.16, Point 5 (a), April 11, 1995

look back on it, it seems to me that what they hoped for from cooperation with the OSCE was probably a reinforcement of their own point of view - which is what they got.⁵⁴⁵

In the case of the second Chechen war it seems that the OSCE acted as they did in the case of the first Chechen war; pushing Russia to use the OSCE in their internal conflict and seeing the role of the OSCE in the broadest possible terms. Russia on the other hand had agreed to the OSCE involvement in 1995 due to their own ambitions relating to the OSCE and while interpreting the role of the OSCE as symbolic. The Russian side seemed to think that if respect for Russian territorial integrity was mentioned in all the decisions and documents, this would guarantee a minimal role for the OSCE but a maximum gain for Russia in its quest for European integration – a Russia in rather than out approach. In the second Chechen war Russian politicians had taken a stronger stand on the politics of greatpowerness and so it became harder for Russians to see the OSCE's role as anything but symbolic and possibly an organisation to assist in humanitarian aid. After the Istanbul summit and especially the changing security discourses in the world after 9/11, Russia no longer saw any need to grant even a token role to this organisation. It is not surprising that Russia came increasingly to view the OSCE as an irrelevance to the extent that in 2008 they suggested a new security treaty for Europe, along much the same lines as the idea was in 1975. The Western position grew weaker with the war on terror that Russia had been fighting for a while before it became a war for the Western countries as well.

7.4 The OSCE's Place in Russian Foreign Policy

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe is an international organisation that on the one hand is central to the Russian understanding of multilateral cooperation shaping international security cooperation towards predictability in accordance with the view that Russia is one of the Great Powers in the world, and on the other hand it is an organisation that is not acknowledging Russia's Great Power status and which is countering time after time Russia's desire to be a shaper of pan-European cooperation. The Russian foreign policy concept from 2008 expresses this the following way: 'It is in Russia's interests that the OSCE fulfill in good faith its function of being a forum for an equitable dialogue between the OSCE participating States and for collective consensus decision-making on the basis of a comprehensive approach to military and political, economic and humanitarian aspects of

⁵⁴⁵ István Gyarmati, 'The Hungarian Chairmanship and the Chechnya Conflict', p. 177 http://www.core-hamburg.de/documents/yearbook/english/95_96/Gyarmati.pdf, accessed 11.07.2012

security based on the balance of interests. In order to fully implement this function the whole process of OSCE functioning should be underpinned by a solid regulatory framework ensuring the supremacy of collective intergovernmental bodies' prerogatives.⁵⁴⁶ Russia's national security strategy to 2020 has no direct mention of the OSCE but it does refer to Euro-Atlantic security arrangements: 'The long-term national interests of Russia are served by the creation of an open system of Euro-Atlantic collective security, on a clear legal and treaty basis.'⁵⁴⁷

One of the main drivers for Russia's cooperation and the best bargaining tool for the West has been Russia's fear of isolationism, especially from the European multilateral structures. This can also be seen as a factor behind the acceptance of the OSCE as a mediator in the first Chechen war. 'One of the major fears on the Russian side now is that increasing scepticism about the OSCE, which is now widespread over Europe, could result in Russia's increasing marginalization.'⁵⁴⁸ The fear of isolationism is fed by power political factors and Russia's attitudes towards NATO. Vladimir Baranovsky has analysed the organisation's place in Russian foreign policy as follows: 'The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is - in terms of its genesis, composition and operational mode - by far the most attractive multilateral institution for Russia. It corresponds to many of Russia's concerns regarding the organization of the continental political space, and one would expect Russia to make consistent efforts to promote this institution. However, Russia's attempts to increase the role of the OSCE are often perceived as motivated by the intention to oppose it to NATO - an effort which cannot but discredit any pro-OSCE design. Furthermore, Russia seems to fear that the OSCE might limit its freedom of action within the post-Soviet space (particularly with respect to peacekeeping, as was manifested in the developments around the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh) or even within Russia proper (for instance, with respect to attempts to suppress separatism in the North Caucasus). Thus, while having a clear interest in upgrading the OSCE, Russia remains one of its "difficult" participants.'⁵⁴⁹ Thus there are two rather conflicting aspects of the OSCE: one the one hand the OSCE as the organization putting forward Russia's very long term national interest of pan-European security arrangement, and on the other hand the organization's involvement in matters that Russia considers its internal

⁵⁴⁶ The foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, 2008, July 12,

<http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>, accessed 05.08.2012

⁵⁴⁷ *Strategiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii do 2020 goda*, 12 May, 2009, part II, clause 16, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.html>, accessed 05.08.2012

⁵⁴⁸ Zagorsky, 1997, p.527

⁵⁴⁹ Baranovsky, 2000

affairs. Both aspects of the OSCE do reflect in the OSCE's place within the larger framework of Russian foreign policy.

Dov Lynch has defined three different periods and two alternating trends in Russian (and Soviet) policy towards the CSCE/OSCE. Russia has seen the organisation as an agent to maintain the status quo and as an agent to transform European affairs. Between 1975-1989, in Lynch's view, the Soviet Union wanted to use the organisation for reinforcing the post-war status quo in Europe. In this picture the Soviet Union was drafting the rules so as to normalize East-West relations. Then from 1989-1995 the OSCE was seen as a useful context to transform European security affairs with the aim of eliminating the bloc system in Europe. After 1995 the policy turned back to the status quo aspect.⁵⁵⁰ In the case of the Chechen wars these periods are clearly reflected. In the first one Russia was ready to grant a role for the organisation in the hope of changing the European security architecture. In the second Chechen war Russian reluctance reflected the overall Russian foreign and security policy line that had shifted from multilateralism towards a stronger emphasis on sovereignty and greatpowerness, fuelled by feelings of *ressentiment*.

The OSCE would not have ever been created if it had not been for keen interest from the Soviet Union side. As Dov Lynch has observed: 'Russia is a historical champion of the idea of pan-European security cooperation based on inclusive and equal participation by all states.'⁵⁵¹ Interestingly the OSCE is an international organisation that has been accepted by most if not all the Russian political groups. Most of the OSCE principles stated in the 1975 Helsinki declaration -respect of the territorial integrity of states (inviolability of frontiers), centrality of UN and international law, non-intervention in internal affairs and equality, are still today at the core of Russian foreign policy. Those in Russia leaning towards the liberal Westernisers school see the human rights aspects as good for Russia. This is not a unanimous view. In order for those principles which were important to the Soviet Union and today's Russia to be included into the Helsinki final act, there was a price to be paid. 'The Soviet Union and its allies were forced to accept the "third basket" agenda of human rights in exchange for the benefits of baskets one (mutual recognition of existing borders and a range of confidence-building measures) and two (economic goods).'⁵⁵²

⁵⁵⁰ Lynch, 2000, p.104

⁵⁵¹ Lynch, 'The state of the OSCE', p.5

⁵⁵² Richard Sakwa, 'The problem of "international" in Russian identity formation', *International Politics*, Vol. 49, 4, 2012, 449-465, p. 455

A similar pattern to the one prior to the Helsinki Act can be detected in the case of the Chechen wars. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia wanted to be part of making a new European order. For Russia this included abolition of military blocs in Europe. The Warsaw pact disappeared, but NATO did not. Russia strongly argued for a stronger role for the OSCE and in that framework it was ready to accept some compromising positions like the humanitarian aspect in internal affairs as a matter for the international community in the Charter of Paris 1990, and signing into the Code of Conduct at the 1994 Budapest conference. The conflicting situation occurred when the Russian internal situation became one of the cases for the OSCE to tackle under the new framework the OSCE was operating under. There was internal opposition in Russia to outside involvement in Russia's internal matters as Chechnya became labelled. But since 'the Yeltsin leadership in the 1990s sought to make what had become in 1994 the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) the premier security organisation on the continent and endorsed the work of its various agencies, including the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights based in Warsaw'⁵⁵³, Russia intimated that it was ready to give a role to the OSCE in Chechnya.

The Russian policy and actions in the OSCE framework of the early 1990s showed the complex composition of Russian foreign policy. Medium term interests, such as multilateral cooperation with the West and transforming the transatlantic security arrangements towards the Russian view, were the driving forces. The picture became more complex, when long term underlying trends such as fear of isolationism, *ressentiment* and a traditional view of the role of Great Powers in the multilateral context, also became mixed into the picture. Fear of isolationism was one of the very strong arguments that persuaded the Westernisers or the pro-West line in Russian foreign policy to go along with Western wishes and demands as well as agreeing to give a role to the OSCE in Chechnya. A similar situation had occurred in the case of the Council of Europe and with the EU. At the same time when pushing forward the policy of consolidation with the West, Russia's policy had to face the reality with arguments that Kozyrev's foreign policy, obediently following the United States and through that ensuring its integration into the Western community and into world economic mechanisms, was not getting anything in return.⁵⁵⁴ Andranik Migranyan's views often appeared in the Russian media. He saw that with ideas of great power status, patriotism and law and order, Russia would find its internal political unity. For Migranyan the Western policy was fixed on a

⁵⁵³ Sakwa, 'The problem of 'international' in Russian identity formation', p.455

⁵⁵⁴ Aleksei Pushkov, 'Russia's Foreign Policy', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 November, 1995, pp.1 and 5, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.XLVII, No.47, p.6

course of Russian isolation rather than integration: ‘Considering that the West, through its action, is demonstrating an increasingly cautious attitude towards Russia and has embarked on a course aimed more at its isolation than at its proper integration into international structures, we do not have to do as much to gear our actions to consolidate power on a new ideological and political basis to the West’s reaction to this process.’⁵⁵⁵ The argument concerning the West’s tendency to push its own agenda and disregard Russia’s was very strong in Russia. As Kostantin Kosachev has put it: ‘In the eyes of the West, NATO is the main, if not the only, universal and irreplaceable security structure in the world. This attitude explains the tendency to deliberately devalue the UN role in security matters, and the desire to place all the eggs of the OSCE into one humanitarian basket. Other security structures, for example, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, are not viewed as potential partners, since any alternative collective security systems are out of the question.’⁵⁵⁶

The OSCE’s place in Russian foreign policy is very much two faced and therefore very contradictory. In Russia at the beginning of the 1990s the OSCE was viewed as an alternative to NATO which increased the suspicion in the West. At the same time Russia helped to develop the OSCE in the way that it found its place in the post-Cold War world. The OSCE assistance group in Chechnya was one of the best examples and became the flagship of how the OSCE could be used. The OSCE is also the framework where Russia has been, can and will be pushing the idea of a pan-European security architecture. The Russia-NATO relationship is therefore a central aspect when analysing the OSCE’s place in Russian foreign policy, but that remains outside the scope of this study.

The OSCE should have been the organisation where institutionalism ought to have worked best after the fall of the Soviet Union, since Russia was already a member and the historical role of the Soviet Union as the founding member, should have added positively to the possibilities. The reality turned out different. The OSCE became a framework where power politics, especially relations between the USA and Russia, dominated. This was also down to historical aspects, feelings that did not disappear overnight, when the Soviet Union fell. One of the biggest misperceptions in Russia-West relations in the early 1990s was over the question of how Russia-West relations would develop. Russians assumed that Russia would be directly differentiated from the Soviet Union. This was incorrect. The Russian

⁵⁵⁵ Andranik Migranyan, ‘A Year of a Great Turning Point or of the Final Collapse of the Russian State System?’, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 17 January, 1995, pp.1-2, translated in *The Current Digest*, Vol.XLVII, No.4, p.16

⁵⁵⁶ Konstantin Kosachev, ‘Russia and the West: Where the differences lies’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, No.4, October-December, 2007. http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_9777, accessed 05.08.2012

Federation had to carry on its shoulders the historical inheritance of the Soviet Union that played very negatively, especially in the framework of the OSCE. The West was prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to Russia, but wanted to see some significant changes in Russian policies, while covering its own back, before it was ready to compromise. Chechnya became a policy tool for the West in that respect as well as a huge burden for Russia. Russian attempts to turn the conflict in its favour by first working with the OSCE and then trying to find common ground in the war on terrorism failed.

7.5 Conclusion

The principals of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act are still relevant today for Russian foreign policy, even if the interpretation of the Helsinki process differs between Russia and the West on the process.⁵⁵⁷ The OSCE was, in the minds of many Russian foreign policy elites, the prototype of an international organisation where security questions could be handled. For the Soviet Union the OSCE was an important channel through which to cooperate with the West in security matters, a middle ground between the Warsaw pact and NATO. For Russians the OSCE, after the fall of the Soviet Union, was to replace NATO and create a pan-European security organisation. Since this was not on the cards Russian criticism towards the organisation increased year by year. Russian criticism of the OSCE reached its height fifteen years after the fall of the Soviet Union, with Putin's February 2007 comments in Munich (page 189). Chechnya is also much to be blamed in the development of the Russia-OSCE relationship.

The Soviet Union enjoyed always the hard security aspects that were needed for greatpowerness, but its weaknesses were always in the soft security and governance framework. Gorbachev started the trend to include soft security aspects and even good governance into Soviet greatpowerness. Paradoxically, the process that was meant to bring Russia and the West closer together and show Russian 'greatness' in other matters than hard security, revealed the big differences in understanding between the West and Russia. In the case of Russia and the OSCE the Chechen case shows that the tensions between Russia and the West were deep rooted and very easily revived. The concept of 'cold peace' was born out

⁵⁵⁷ Suri, Jeremy, 'Henry Kissinger and the reconceptualization of European security, 1969-75', and Rey, Marie-Pierre, 'The USSR and the Helsinki process, 1969-75: optimism, doubt, or defiance?', both in Andrea Wenger, Vojtech Mastny and Christian Nuenlist (eds), *Origins of the European Security System- The Helsinki process revisited, 1965-75*, London: Routledge, 2008.

of rather different interpretations over European security arrangements in general. This drift was reinforced by both the wars in Chechnya.

Russians did indicate, as in the case of the CoE in the spirit of multilateralism, that OSCE could play a constructive role in the first Chechen war. However their idea was that the involvement would be under Russian control. Russians seem to see the first Chechen war as the first case for the new OSCE to become a platform for post-Soviet mediation. The view from the OSCE side was different. Russia was seen as one of its cases, not as one of the shapers of the organisation. Russian views were neglected. Russians also felt that OSCE member states ganged up to take advantage of Russian initiatives to have OSCE involvement in Chechnya. That situation aroused Russia's Great Power identity. The aspiration towards becoming a modern Great Power, that was perhaps the Russian idea behind developing the OSCE and Russia's role in it, came into conflict with the traditional Great Power concept. It was clear that Russia was not ready to drop its position as a one of the world's Great Powers.

When the more Eurasianist line in Russian foreign policy took over from that of the westernisers with the change of foreign ministers from Kozyrev to Primakov, this return to traditionalism was also connected to the change in Russian attitude towards the OSCE. Without the first Chechen war, the Westernisers in the Russian foreign policy elite might have had a chance, but the domestic political situation created by the war removed any possibility of their ascendancy.

Russian domestic reporting on the 1999 Istanbul OSCE summit showed clearly how important it was to portray Russia as a strong power with an independent line. It has always been a worry for Russians if their line has been opposed to the West, often giving rise to *ressentiment* politics, but the Russian response has not been to show a consolidating line. It has been more important that Russia appears a strong player in global politics. The Istanbul summit was a watershed in Russia's relations with all the European based international organisations, not only the OSCE. The effects were seen in the cases of the CoE and the EU as well. From that point onwards Russia embarked on a less cooperative line with all of the three organisations.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The study of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation since 1991 inherited much of the methodology of Kremlinology. This was a method of investigating Soviet domestic and international political developments based in large part on deduction from extremely limited sources. Scholarship on the international politics of the Soviet Union remained largely divorced from mainstream international relations research throughout the Cold War and into the early 1990s. Following Christer Pursiainen, who analysed the possibilities of applying liberal, realist and constructivist international relations approaches to the case of Russia, this dissertation began with an overview of these three schools of international relations theory, which have most commonly been engaged with Russian foreign policy studies. When international relations theory was applied to post-Soviet Russia, initially it was the Liberal school of thought that dominated. This was in line with an approach adopted by policy-makers as well as some academics, who espoused an almost teleological idea of transition which offered Western models as the cure for all of the Soviet hangovers. In many ways this approach mirrored the mistakes of the modernisation theorists of the 1950s, with the difference that it was market forces that had priority over democratisation in holding the key to progress.

In this atmosphere it was natural for political scientists to also analyse Russian foreign policy in terms of efforts to integrate into the Western world in political as well as economic terms. This was, after all, the central message of Mikhail Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' which Boris Yeltsin inherited, and Russian cooperation in the first Iraq War signalled the highpoint of multilateral order through the United Nations. Russia's keenness to join or step up its role in international organisations after the end of the Cold War, as well as to accept the advice of Western economists in domestic reforms and international trade, gave further support to the Liberal analysis.

The early expectations of a smooth integration were soon disappointed, however, not least by Yeltsin's actions in Chechnya. This revealed that Russia was prepared to pursue its own agendas in the face of international disapproval, and tensions between Russia and the West emerged over NATO expansion, the Balkans, missile defence, and the Middle East. As long as concrete Russian interests could be seen behind each of these disagreements, they gave more fuel to the Realist school of international relations in explaining Russia.

These developments did not mean an end, however, to the liberal school's interpretation of Russian foreign policy. Russia still pursued integration internationally, and achieved much through its partnership with NATO followed by the Russia-NATO Council, joining the G7 to make it the G8, and so on. At the same time, however, leading academics from the constructivist school were turning their attention to Russia. Identity as a source of foreign policy became an increasingly popular notion as President Putin seemed to be injecting ideology into his foreign policy messages. As Christopher Browning noted in 2006, Putin's position on all major foreign policy issues has been ambiguous, reflecting uncertainty over whether to emphasise what Russia has in common with Europe or rather its differences.⁵⁵⁸ This meant that liberals, realists and constructivists could continue to debate the key drivers of Russian foreign policy.

As discussed in chapter 2, when it comes to the broader picture of a unipolar world dominated by the USA, Russia has not lived up to realist expectations any more than it did earlier on to the liberal ones. One approach adopted by Russia specialists has been to see elements of liberalism, realism and constructivism as more or less useful for the understanding of Russian foreign policy, depending on the particular time, issue, and organisations involved. Old-style Kremlinology has also undergone something of a revival, as a result of the relatively closed nature of the Putin regime, but when it comes to theoretical approaches to Russian foreign policy it is exclusively the major schools of liberalism, realism and constructivism that have been engaged, with other approaches marginalised by the closed nature of Russian politics. As shown in chapter 3, different Russian institutions do take different approaches to foreign policy priorities which can also be related to the liberal, realist and constructivist schools, which further strengthens the case for focussing on these three schools of international relations theory when it comes to understanding the foreign policy of Russia.

Hence, in its theoretical approach, this dissertation has focussed on the constructivist, liberal and realist schools which have dominated studies of Russian foreign policy. Rather than seeking to support exclusively one school of thought as providing the correct framework for the study of Russian international relations, this dissertation has focussed on a particular aspect – Greatpowerness – which can be of relevance to all three approaches, but which analytically falls into the constructivist framework due to the fact that greatpowerness is a question of state and national identity.

⁵⁵⁸ Browning, 'Reassessing Putin's Project', p.6

The central finding of the dissertation - that in terms of international institutions elements of Greatpowerness can be seen at work across the entire spectrum of Russian politics and in different institutional contexts - does not only provide greater understanding of an important specific aspect of Russian foreign policy. In identifying factors which persist across time and individuals, it also goes beyond both single-school explanations, and the approach of those scholars who have attempted to identify liberalism, realism and constructivism as at work at different times. This therefore provides some counterweight to the claim that Russian policies are often in flux. By looking at greatpowerness through different international relations theory lenses a more consistent underlying picture emerges.

The definitions of a great power offered by leading proponents of each school, which are summarised in chapter 2.3, illustrate important differences on the question of what constitutes a great power, differences which in turn are important when it comes to alternative political understandings of the position of particular powers in the world. The chapter went on to argue that, by contrast, *greatpowerness*, as a form of self-definition, has not been subjected in the same way to alternative definitions. As a form of state identity, greatpowerness has mostly been taken up by the constructivist school, as described in 2.4, where it is offered against the realist school as an explanation of certain aspects of foreign policy behaviour which do not always match objective interests of states.

Chapter 3 explained how greatpowerness in foreign policy can be closely linked to the needs of domestic policy, and goes on to describe the specific characteristics of greatpowerness in the Russian case. These features – imperialism, expansionism, sovereignty, *ressentiment*, isolationism, multilateralism and multipolarity – have all been repeatedly noted by both historians and political scientists as being present in Russian political thinking across a range of periods and contexts. Hence they are described as the *persistent factors* in Russian foreign policy, each of which can be linked to Russian greatpowerness.

The task of chapters five, six and seven was then to trace how greatpowerness based on these persistent factors was at work in Russia's experience of membership in three different international organisations. The context of this analysis was provided by the Chechen wars which sharpened the instances where the persistent factors in Russian greatpowerness clashed with other possible foreign policy priorities. As explained in chapter four, the domestic political arena as it was shaped by the Chechen wars provides the background to the interaction between Russia and international organisations. The chapter highlighted the differences between the first and second wars: whereas in the first Chechen wars public and

elite attitudes were split, there was more open protest, and hence it was harder for Russia to present a strong front in international contexts, in the second war Russia was more united and its foreign policy interactions were more confident, reflecting more clearly the great power aspirations. The tensions between ideas of Europeanness, modernity, and greatpowerness were also seen in Russian debates about the Chechen wars, which spilled over into foreign policy behaviour.

From the point of view of Russian self-perception as a Great Power, its participation in the Council of Europe has proved the most successful. Firstly, this was because the organisation itself was largely a prestige organisation, and secondly because Russia was able to establish itself as one of the 'big five' in the CoE. Here, however, there were also clashes over values. When it came to it, Russia's commitment to multilateralism was not great enough when it appeared that the principle of sovereignty and the territorial aspects associated with imperialism were called into question. As disagreements sharpened, *ressentiment* also became a factor, but the fear of isolationism as a countervailing force led to compromise and a more successful Russian integration in the CoE than in other bodies. Here we also saw how the liberal definition of a Great Power, which includes adherence to certain international norms and values, and which can be seen in the attitude of other CoE members, was not compatible with Russian greatpowerness.

Likewise, the issue of human rights interfered in Russia's relationship with the European Union. Ultimately, Russian greatpowerness provided one of the obstacles to closer economic integration with the EU, since Russian self-perception was out of line with the EU's view of Russia. From the Russian perspective the EU never treated Russia as an equal, but acted as a superior political entity. As a result the experience of the 1990s affected later Russia-EU relations with strong feelings of *ressentiment*. In chapter 6 we also noticed an interesting contrast between Russia-EU relations during the first Chechen war and during the second Chechen war. It showed that criticisms from the EU side were less pronounced during the second war, when the War on Terror provided a context where Russia was able to operate more freely with less official condemnation. Western governments were more open to charges of hypocrisy when they were themselves enacting legislation which restricted human rights in the wake of 9/11, but a further factor was that the international alliance against terrorism provided a greater impetus to the imperialist and multipolar aspects of Russian greatpowerness.

The OSCE, with which Russia had a longer history and initially showed the greatest commitment to, illustrated most clearly of all the significance of greatpowerness. Russia was willing to build up the OSCE as an effective organisation, one which could perhaps eclipse NATO as a security organisation, and allowed the OSCE a monitoring mission in the first Chechen war. However, chapter seven showed that it was the OSCE's failure to treat Russia as a Great Power rather than just one of many members which first led to tensions. The conflict in Chechnya turned Russia into a case for the OSCE to intervene in, which precluded Russia from assuming what it saw as its rightful place as a leading force in the organisation.

Analysing Russian foreign policy through its interactions with international organizations – in this case the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – it is clear that a strong Russian state identity based on greatpowerness has emerged. This Russian feeling of greatpowerness has been injected into foreign policy as an ideology. There has always been a tension, however, between this great power identity and Russia's desire to integrate in certain respects with Europe. The case studies in this thesis show that integration has proved much easier where cooperation does not threaten Russia's great power status.

The wars in Chechnya provided the ideal tool for highlighting this tension between Russian greatpowerness and Russian europeanness. Sometimes an internal conflict can reveal hidden agendas better than anything else. The contradiction between Russian genuine desires to be part of the West (Europe) and to be integrated into Western based multilateral organizations on the one hand and Russian Great Power identity on the other, revealed by the Chechen wars, plays a role in each of the three case studies. From the Western perspective Great Power status was understood as influence and status gained by hard and soft power combined with good governance. While this was clearly what Russia was also aiming at in the early 1990s, differences over the key elements of greatpowerness emerged, based on the different understanding of the persistent factors identified here as parts of Russian greatpowerness. Breaking down Russian greatpowerness, we can see it playing a role in each of the three cases. The emphasis is on different elements, but the same common factor of greatpowerness is found in all three.

Russian state identity as a Great Power and the different perceptions of Russia and the West as to what makes a state a Great Power in the contemporary world order are among the factors that complicate cooperation between Russia and Western countries. Mistrust and misperceptions, historical and even more recent events (the case studies in this thesis) and the

interplay of the persistent factors stem in part from the big pull in Russian foreign policy identity between greatpowerness and europeanness. By examining in depth greatpowerness as an aspect of Russian foreign policy making through the cases of international organisations, this study contributes to a better understanding of problems in Russia-West relations and adds an aspect to identity studies in general, the effect of greatpowerness.

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