European College at the University of Tartu

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Master's Thesis in EU-Russia Studies

Russia's role in the South Caucasus
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Possible implications of Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union for regional security

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Abstract

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) assumes that it is possible to identify certain regional "clusters" regarding common security threats. Essential elements of a Regional Security Complex (RSC) are an anarchic structure, boundary, social construction (patterns of amity and enmity) and polarity (the distribution of power). RSCs are durable, but not permanent features in the international system.

This thesis focuses on Russia's role in the post-Soviet RSC. Russia is the central regional power, but at the same time it also holds the status of a great power, which makes it special. It is argued that the South Caucasus can be seen as a subcomplex of this RSC. The Russian influence on the security dynamics in this region is analyzed against the background of the recent developments in Armenian-Russian relations, which serve as a case-study. The thesis aims to assess the impact of change caused by Russia's interference in the South Caucasian subcomplex.

Although Russia and the South Caucasus are part of the same RSC, the analysis shows that Russia's role in the Armenian case follows the same logic as great power penetration (GPP). Thus, the consequences of its involvement could be similar as well and include changes in patterns of amity and enmity or in the distribution of power. They could also lead to changes in the boundary, which means the subcomplex could "break apart".

Eventually, the study comes to the result that by looking at the Russian-Armenian relationship, it is possible to argue that the distribution of power in the region has already shifted to some extent. Patterns of amity and enmity still remain a uniting element, but they could also be affected by future developments. If geopolitical tensions continue, the boundary could be changed as well, but Armenia's mere decision for the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is not a sufficient indicator for this. Russia's role in the post-Soviet RSC can be characterized as very dominant; the RSC is clearly centred on Russia. However, subcomplexes with their own regional security dynamics continue to exist, albeit the post-Soviet RSC is, indeed, possibly (again) in danger of a Russian "takeover".

Keywords

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

AA……………………………………..   Association Agreement

CIS………………………………….   Commonwealth of Independent States

CSCT………………………………….   Classical Regional Security Complex Theory

CSTO………………………………….   Collective Security Treaty Organization

DCFTA…………………………………..   Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area

EEU……………………………………   Eurasian Economic Union

EU…………………………………..   European Union

GPP……………………………………   Great Power Penetration

IPAP………………………………...   Individual Partnership Action Plan

NATO………………………………….   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NSS………………………………….   National Security Strategy

OSCE…………………………………..   Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

PARP…………………………………..   Planning and Review Process

PAP-DIB…………………………………   Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building

PfPA………………………………….......   Partnership for Peace Agreement

RSC………………………………….....   Regional Security Complex

RSCT………………………………......   Regional Security Complex Theory

UNSC………………………………......   United Nations Security Council

WTO……………………………………   World Trade Organization

1   Introduction

The Vilnius Summit in November 2013 made visible some remarkable political developments in the European Union's (EU's) Eastern neighbourhood. After long negotiations on Association Agreements (AAs) with four of the EU's six so-called "Eastern Partners", only two of them, Moldova and Georgia, agreed to sign such an agreement. The ruling elites of the two other countries, Ukraine and Armenia, changed their (official) opinion in the very last second. Both Ukraine (under Yanukovich) and Armenia had close political ties with Russia and did not want to exclude the opportunity of joining the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which was largely seen as incompatible with an AA.

The 2014 Ukrainian revolution, the following annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation and the ongoing military crisis in Eastern Ukraine have led to a new security situation in Europe. All this can be traced back to the successful Russian efforts to convince Ukraine and Armenia not to sign the AA at the Vilnius Summit. The mid-term results of the events in 2013 have proven to be far-reaching. Therefore, it is of high relevance to analyze their present and possible future consequences.

While the case of Ukraine has captured a lot of attention due to the military conflict, there are other regions in the post-Soviet space which might also become seriously affected by the crisis in EU-Russian relations in terms of their security. Overall, the security aspect has become more relevant in international relations, especially referring to this specific region. This thesis focuses on security, because it is assumed that many, if not all, countries in this region are increasingly worried about their security.

The Baltic States have often been mentioned in this context, but these countries are at least members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and also of the EU, which would make a Russian intervention more complicated.[1] However, this cannot be

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[1] Buzan and Waever argued in 2003 that the Baltic States should be seen as one of the four subcomplexes within the post-Soviet RSC. In the current geopolitical crisis, the Baltics might rather play the role of an insulating mini-complex that has to be considered in terms of both post-Soviet and EU security dynamics.

stated about the South Caucasus. Georgia has already suffered from military conflicts with Russia in recent years and has lost control of its separatist regions Abkhazia and North Ossetia. Armenia and Azerbaijan may not have to fear direct Russian intervention in the near future, but they are dependent on Russia's position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which determines both countries' security concepts. All South Caucasian states belong to the alleged "Russian sphere of influence" and it is the Kremlin's declared interest to play an important role in this region.

According to Buzan and Waever, whose work on Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) serves as a theoretical foundation of this thesis, there are a number of regions with similar security concerns and a high degree of security interdependence; such regions are called Regional Security Complexes (RSCs). However, a small number of great powers has the ability to "largely transcend the logic of geography and adjacency in their security relationships" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 46). Russia is one example of a great power, but it is also seen as the central regional power in one of the RSCs identified by Buzan and Waever, the post-Soviet RSC. In their work Regions and Powers (2003), the two authors argue that there are four subcomplexes of this RSC, one of which is the Caucasian subcomplex. In this study, however, only the South Caucasus will be regarded as part of this subcomplex.[2]

The leading research question of this study reads as follows:

RQ1: What impact have Russia's efforts towards the South Caucasus in the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit had on security dynamics in this region?

It is the aim of this thesis to define and explain this impact. In order to do so, the case of Armenia's accession to the EEU, Russia's role in this context and implications on regional security dynamics in the South Caucasus will be analyzed in detail. This leads to two further (minor) research questions:

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[2] This will be explained in detail in chapter 2.2.

> ***RQ2a: To what extent does Armenia's accession to the EEU change its foreign policy approach and determine its relations with Russia as well as with other countries?***

> ***RQ2b: What are the implications of Armenia's accession to the EEU concerning regional security dynamics in the South Caucasus?***

Eventually, the answers to these questions could also facilitate conclusions with regard to Russia's (current and future) role in the post-Soviet RSC.

RSCT sees patterns of amity and enmity ("social construction"), the distribution of power ("polarity"), boundary and an anarchic structure as essential elements of an RSC (ibid.: 53).[3] Hence, it is logical to look at these aspects and at how they change with respect to Russia's foreign policy moves concerning the region. This thesis focuses on the first three elements (see Figure 1).

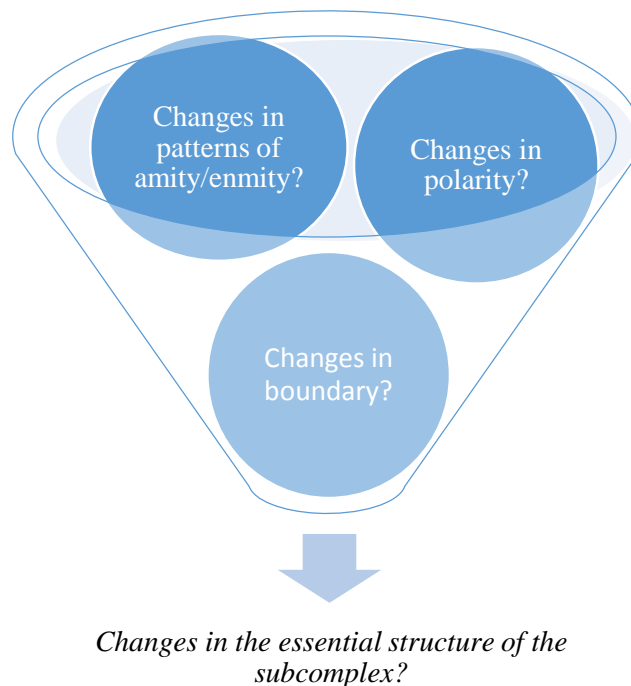*Changes in the essential structure of the subcomplex?*

Figure 1. Research design.

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[3] The same structure applies to a subcomplex as well; Buzan and Waever do not mention any differences between RSCs and subcomplexes concerning their essential structure.

It is argued that, despite the fact that the South Caucasus is (still) a part of the post-Soviet RSC, Russia's involvement in the region can be considered as a (special) case of (intense) great power penetration (GPP). Against this background, three hypotheses underlie this study. They refer to the mentioned three essential elements of an RSC.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Russia's GPP has led to changes in patterns of amity and enmity.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The distribution of power has changed due to Russia's influence.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Nevertheless, the RSC is not in danger of breaking apart. On the contrary, Russia's policy has even reinforced local security dynamics.

So it is assumed that Russia has fueled the already existing conflicts by drawing an invisible line between more "westward" oriented countries like Georgia and more "eastward" oriented ones like Armenia and by providing Armenia with resources that could be used against its neighbours, but the South Caucasian states remain tied by strong security interdependencies, even though the character of these interdependencies is clearly negative. This assumption might appear paradoxical at first, but it stresses the complex nature of regional security arrangements.

It has to be noted that the hypotheses are based on the recent developments; they do not refer to imaginable prospective changes. However, the results of this study might allow the prediction of future scenarios as well, not only concerning the subcomplex, but also the post-Soviet RSC as a whole.

The current geopolitical tensions, Russia's involvement in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea explain why this thesis focuses on Russia's role regarding security in the post-Soviet space; this topic might currently be one of the most important ones regarding security studies in general.

The regional level gained attention after the end of the Cold War; the bipolar structure of the international system had been overcome and there was room for new structures. Thus,

applying RSCT and analyzing the extent and consequences of Russia's activities in the post-Soviet space serves a clear purpose in this context. During the Cold War local security dynamics were obliterated to some degree; they were overshadowed by the power games between the two dominating blocs. The review of regional security interdependencies in a certain region, which is situated in the post-Soviet space, allows some (albeit limited) conclusions concerning the question of how similar the repercussions of the current East-West conflict are to the situation in the Cold War era in terms of security dynamics and the dominance of great powers.

RSCT as such relies, to a certain degree, on the state level; it considers domestic discourses and state-to-state relations, although it analyzes them against the background of regional security and the situation in the region as a whole. Usually, studies that apply RSCT take a broad look at the entire region. Analytically, this, of course, makes sense. RSCT is about security interdependencies among several units. This thesis, nevertheless, concentrates on one specific state, Armenia, and on how it is influenced by Russia. Taking into consideration that it is not possible to regard this as an isolated case study, references to the Georgian and Azerbaijani cases will be made where necessary. Eventually, patterns of amity and enmity and the distribution of power are discussed for the entire region. However, the Armenian case will be analyzed more thoroughly and the factor of GPP is constantly addressed from the perspective of Armenian-Russian relations, since Russia's influence is most obvious in Armenia. For example, changes in the distribution of power in the region will be discussed against the background of Armenia's accession to the EEU and the possible advantages and disadvantages of this decision in terms of military and political power. Reasons for the focus on Armenia are not only the limited scope of this thesis, but also the conviction that by studying one case thoroughly it is possible to gain a profound insight into how Russia's involvement shapes local security discourses.

Russia's role in the South Caucasus could challenge the stability of the entire region. This thesis stresses the special position Russia holds as both a great power and a regional power. Buzan and Waever have developed a theoretical framework with regard to both GPP and regional powers, but their work lacks practical examples. Nor have they specifically explained the role of regional powers in subcomplexes they are not part of in

detail; they only point out that regional powers have a considerable impact on these subcomplexes.

Although there have been previous works on the South Caucasus as an RSCT or a subcomplex, the research for this thesis has shown that the aspect of GPP has not been analyzed thoroughly enough yet. Even Kevork Oskanian, who dedicated parts of his thesis to this issue, did not concentrate on this aspect alone (Oskanian 2010). The special Russian role (compared to other great powers) as a regional power in the post-Soviet RSC in its relation with the South Caucasian subcomplex has widely been ignored. This thesis contributes a focus on this particular issue and a definition of this special Russian role and its meaning. To put it in a nutshell, three different levels of analysis are considered simultaneously with reference to the impact of Russia's foreign policy moves. It is argued that the country is a great power and thus relevant on the global level, it is the central regional power in the post-Soviet RSC and it influences the security dynamics in the RSCs subcomplexes through both its global and its regional importance (see Figure 2).
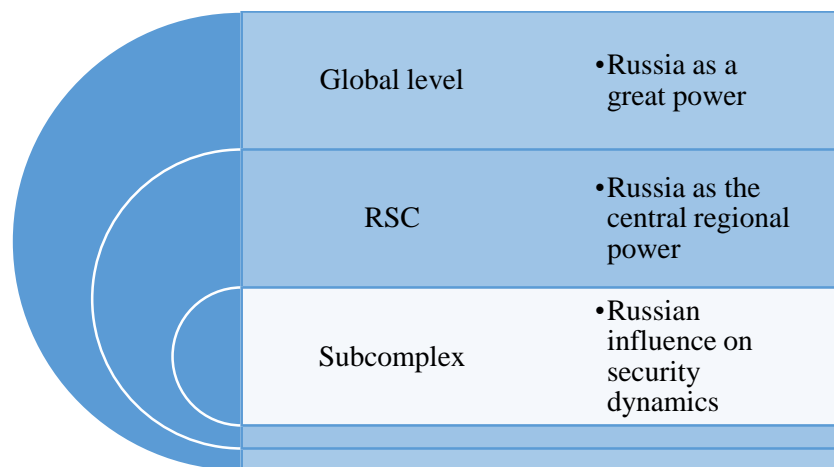

Figure 2. Three levels of Russian influence.

Generally, there is a lack of studies that use a regional approach in order to explain security dynamics in the South Caucasus. This might partly be due to the fact that Buzan and Waever included the North Caucasus in this subcomplex, which makes the study of security interdependencies considerably more difficult.

The security situation in the South Caucasus (and in the entire post-Soviet space) has changed drastically since the Vilnius Summit and the beginning of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Thus, even where this thesis refers to similar aspects as, for example, Oskanian's study from 2010, the results may be different. Consequently, this thesis can contribute to a better understanding of the impact of the recent events in the post-Soviet space.

The methodology applied in this study will be mainly qualitative. The discursive analysis of national security strategies and official statements by the Armenian government is one of its key elements. This appears appropriate, because discourses can reveal if common security issues exist, which might lead to security interdependencies. Accordingly, changes in the issues raised in these discourses could affect the nature of regional security dynamics. Moreover, RSCT itself and its consideration of securitization processes require some form of analysis of discourses. However, there are certain limits to this, which will be explained. One main issue is the reliability of Armenian sources. Another important aspect is that the observation of changes in the "objective conditions" in the South Caucasus is of high value when answering the research questions and, without considering these conditions, the discourses cannot be interpreted. For this reason, large parts of this thesis will be based on secondary literature, which will be discussed in the context of recent developments. Furthermore, data from opinion polls will be used. These data mainly serve as an illustration of Russia's influence on Armenia. The methodological approach will be outlined in further detail in the main body of this thesis.

This introduction will be followed by an overview of the theoretical framework and the methodology. First of all, RSCT and the Copenhagen School's approach in general will be explained and particularly relevant points will be highlighted. In a second step, the theoretical assumption that the South Caucasus can be considered a subcomplex has to be justified. Finally, an overview of the methodology and the sources used in this thesis will be given.

The next chapter will deal with the case study Armenia, the country's foreign policy and Russia's influence, while taking Armenia's accession to the EEU into consideration. In this part of the thesis, the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the Republic of Armenia

and the general determinants of the state's foreign policy will be presented. Following this, the circumstances of Armenia's decision in favour of the EEU and Russia's role in it will be analyzed. The chapter will be concluded with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of Eurasian and European integration and the importance of this issue for Armenian-Russian relations, Armenian foreign policy in general and Russia's role in the South Caucasus.

The final part of this thesis will be based on the lessons learned from the first two chapters. It will name possible implications of Russia's Eurasian project (and Russia's influence in general) for regional security in the South Caucasus. As already mentioned, several features of an RSC will be useful for this purpose. First, possible changes in patterns of amity and enmity will be considered. Subsequently, potential changes in the distribution of power will be analyzed. Last but not least, the option of changes in the boundary and a "collapse" of the South Caucasian subcomplex will be taken into account. The results of the entire study will be summarized in the conclusion. Some further remarks and predictions will be added.

2   Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This chapter will give a summary of the theoretical framework that will establish a basis for the analysis which will be conducted further on. It will do so by first presenting the general concept of RSCT with a special focus on the aspects most relevant to this thesis, namely regional powers, GPP, subcomplexes and the essential structure of an RSC.

In addition, the assumption that the South Caucasus can be seen as a subcomplex will be justified and the results of this will be explained. There have been entire studies on this topic and it is not possible to deliver a detailed justification in just one section of this thesis. Therefore, this section will mainly refer to other studies, but also add some aspects where necessary. Apart from this section, it should, however, be kept in mind that the special security interdependencies shown throughout the third chapter are also strong indicators for the existence of the subcomplex.

Eventually, the methodology and the sources used in this thesis will be outlined in the last part of this chapter; this will also include a look at some of the main issues that appeared when the research was conducted.

2.1 RSCT and the Copenhagen School

As already mentioned, RSCT will serve as a theoretical framework of this study and some of its aspects will be highlighted. RSCT is a theory of regional security by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, who both are considered to be members of the so-called Copenhagen School, which got its name from the fact that many of those who contributed to its work were connected to the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute. At this point it should be noted that RSCT is only one possible regional approach to security; there are others as well. Lake and Morgan's theory of "regional orders" may serve as a prominent example here (Lake / Morgan 1997).

The first draft of RSCT was outlined by Buzan in "People, States and Fear" (Buzan 1983: 105-110). Classical Regional Security Complex Theory (CSCT) focussed on political and military security and saw states as the main actors (Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 9-11). The original definition of an RSC was "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another" (Buzan 1983: 106).

Later, the theory was regularly updated and extended. The most relevant source in the context of this thesis is Buzan's and Waever's "Regions and Powers" (2003). Buzan and Waever identify a number of regions which belong to the same "complexes". According to their approach it is more likely that similar threats occur among neighbouring countries, because security concerns do not tend to travel over distances. The central idea is that, "since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters: security complexes" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 4). Following this logic, the security concerns of one state in an RSC might reflect developments in its neighbouring states. A regional complex is eventually defined as "a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another" (Buzan / Waever / De Wilde 1998: 12).

Whereas CSCT, the original theory developed by Buzan, focussed on military and political security, the Copenhagen School later "widened" its understanding of security (ibid.: 2). Against this background, security issues are grouped into five sectors: military, political, societal, economic and environmental (ibid.: 7-8). However, it is very important to say that sectors "might identify distinctive patterns, but they remain inseparable parts of complex wholes" and the analytical method "thus starts with disaggregation but must end with reassembly" (ibid.: 8). The consideration of sectors also led to a shift away from the state as the only referent object; especially in the societal sector this turned out to be important, although in practice the state still plays this role in most cases (Buzan / Waever 2003: 70-71).

The "updates" of RSCT also stressed the theory's constructivist roots. Firstly, factors like amity and enmity among the members of an RSC are more in the focus of the analysis. Secondly, security is being "constructed" in the political process. In this regard, the authors use the "securitization model", they argue that there is a high level of interconnectedness of the processes of securitization and desecuritization within an RSC. An RSC is defined as "a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another" (Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 201). The idea of regional clusters stays part of it. The concept of securitization had been developed earlier by Waever. It describes security as "a particular type of intersubjective policies" (ibid.: 19). In the traditional military-political understanding, security means that "an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object", which justifies "the use of extraordinary measures" (ibid.: 21). In this context, securitization is the act of labelling something a security issue; the securitizing actor does not have to be identical with the referent object (Buzan / Waever 2003: 71).

In a way, securitization "can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization" (Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 23). However, presenting something as an existential threat to a reference object "does not by itself create securitization", this is merely "a securitizing move", but "the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such" (ibid.: 25). Thus, securitization is "an essentially intersubjective process" (ibid.:

30). It should not be overlooked that "the possibility for successful securitization will vary dramatically with the position held by the actor" (ibid.: 31). Furthermore, urgency is an important determinant of a securitization process, if this is not given, an issue might simply be treated like normal politics (ibid.: 26).

RSCT breaks with neorealism by regarding the distribution of power and patterns of amity and enmity as "essentially independent variables" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 4). Cultural and historical factors play an important role. Nevertheless, there are also realist influences on RSCT, like the focus on distribution of power as such and the acknowledgment of the great power polarity in the international system, as well as the general recognition of "bounded territoriality" (ibid.: 4; 40).

RSCT considers four different levels of analysis, it is not limited to the regional level as such. Domestic developments, state-to-state relations, the region's interaction with neighbouring regions and the role of global powers in the region all are an essential part of it; these four levels together constitute the security constellation (ibid.: 51).

RSCT provides a conceptual framework that captures the emergent new structure of international security (1 + 4 + regions) (ibid.: 1; see Figure 3). It considers both global power interplays and the subsystem level, but focuses on the latter. To the authors' mind, after the end of the Cold War "both the remaining superpower and the other great powers (China, EU, Japan, Russia) had less incentive, and displayed less will, to intervene in security affairs outside their own regions" and thus a regional approach was more appropriate in order to theorize the structure of security issues (ibid.: 3).[4] This period saw a "shift away from global-level security concerns (…) towards local and regional ones" (Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 61). Local powers have now "more room for manoeuvre" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 3). Nevertheless, the global powers can still influence the subsystem level. RSCT knows the expression "great power penetration", which "occurs when outside powers make security alignments with states within an RSC" (ibid.: 46).

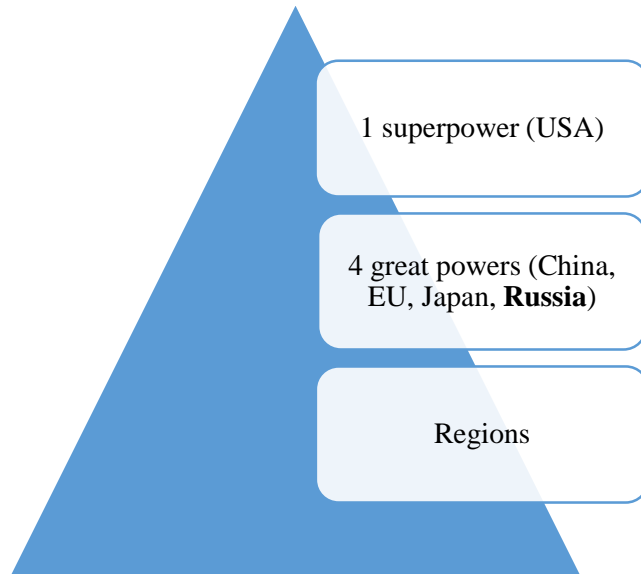[4] The "remaining superpower" refers to the United States.

Figure 3. New structure of international security (1+4+regions) according to RSCT.

Buzan and Waever define both superpowers and great powers. They also add the term regional power. Superpower status requires "broad-spectrum capabilities exercised across the whole of the international system" (ibid.: 34). Superpowers also "need to see themselves and be accepted by others in rhetoric and behavior as having this rank" (ibid.: 34-35). Achieving great power status "is less demanding in terms of both capability and behavior" (ibid.: 35). What distinguishes these powers from regional ones "is that they are responded to by others on the basis of system level calculations about the present and near-future distribution of power" (ibid.). Usually, they are treated as having the potential to bid for superpower (ibid.). Russia simply earns its great power status, because it has recently been a superpower and is thus still present and influential in more than just one region (ibid.: 398). As for regional powers, it can be said that they "define the polarity of any given RSC" (ibid.: 37). Their capabilities "loom large in their regions, but do not register much in a broad-spectrum way at the global level" (ibid.).

This thesis focuses on Russia's role in the post-Soviet RSC. In this regard, GPP might be a possible starting point. Although Russia is a regional power, it also holds great power status. Powerful states from outside the region and their relation to single members of the RSC can affect the RSC as a whole. Eventually, this can even lead to a situation where "the direct presence of outside powers in the region is strong enough to suppress the

normal operation of security dynamics among the local states"; such a condition is called overlay (Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 12). In this case, "local security dynamics of security interdependence virtually cease to exist" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 490). Despite this, Buzan and Waever see greater interdependence among the different states within an RSC, which is why cooperation between them is of special interest for them. They also stress that security complexes themselves "crucially condition how and whether stronger outside powers penetrate the region" (Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 12).

It is important to keep in mind that a security complex may face changes through various factors. As already mentioned in the introduction, the essential elements of an RSC are social construction, polarity, boundary and an anarchic structure. Changes can appear with regard to all of these elements. In the most extreme case, an RSC can break apart, since security complexes "are durable, but not permanent features of the international system" (ibid.: 12).

There are four broad structural options for assessing the impact of change on a RSC: maintenance of the status quo, internal transformation, external transformation and overlay (Buzan 1991: 198; Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 13). These options are very relevant in the framework of this study. Internal transformation refers to changes in patterns of amity and enmity or the distribution of power, but also to changes in the anarchic structure of an RSC (Buzan / Waever 2003: 53). External transformation means that "the outer boundary [of an RSC] expands or contracts" (ibid.). The most obvious way for this to happen "is if two RSCs merge" (ibid.). Patterns of penetration can possibly lead to both internal and external transformation, but also to an overlay.

2.2   The South Caucasus as a subcomplex

In their work "Regions and Powers", Buzan and Waever divide the world into only a small number of RSCs: the (EU-) European RSC, the Middle Eastern RSC, the North American RSC, the South American RSC, the Central African RSC, the Southern African RSC, the West-African proto-complex, the Horn proto-complex, the South Asian RSC, the East Asian RSC, the Asian super-complex and the post-Soviet ("Russian") RSC (ibid.: 350).[5] The (EU-) European RSC and the post-Soviet RSC form a loose supercomplex defined as "the Europes" (ibid.: 343). EU-Europe and the post-Soviet space are both seen as "centred" RSCs, the former centred on the EU, the latter on Russia (ibid.).

Generally, there is a division between centred and standard RSCs. A standard RSC "is broadly Westphalian in form with two or more powers and a predominantly military-political security agenda" (ibid.: 55). Moreover, all standard RSCs "are anarchic in structure" (ibid.).

There are three forms of centred RSCs. One form involves "a region integrated by institutions rather than by a single power", an example of this would clearly be the EU (ibid.: 56). The other two forms are unipolar and either centred on a great power or a superpower, rather than just a (normal) regional power (ibid.: 55). In these cases it is to expect "that the global level power will dominate the region (unipolarity), and that what would otherwise count as regional powers (…) will not have sufficient relative weight to define another regional pole" (ibid.).[6]

The post-Soviet RSC "is clearly centred on a great power" (ibid.: 398). In terms of power, it can be characterized as unipolar, but it is undecided whether it will operate around a centre holding some general legitimacy or whether it will be a unipolar balance-of-power system (ibid.: 438). Unifying factors in this region are Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), but also the forming of coalitions attempting to rein Russia

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[5] The definition of pre- and proto-complexes is not considered to be particularly relevant here and has thus been left out.

[6] In the context of the post-Soviet RSC this applies, for example, to Ukraine.

(ibid.: 397).[7] What is important to note in the framework of this thesis is that "the global arena is today much more important than Europe for Russia's attempts both to secure a larger role outside its region and to legitimize a regional empire" (ibid.: 398).

The South Caucasus is part of the post-Soviet RSC in Buzan's and Waever's study. However, they argue that there are also so-called subcomplexes and that the Caucasus could be seen as one of them. In total, they identify four subcomplexes within the post-Soviet RSC (ibid.: 397). Subcomplexes "have essentially the same definition as RSCs, the difference being that a subcomplex is firmly embedded within a larger RSC" (ibid.: 51).

Buzan and Waever include the Russian North Caucasus in the "Caucasian subcomplex". This opinion is not shared in this thesis. Buzan and Waever admit that there are differences between the North Caucasus and the South Caucasus, which is why they speak of a subcomplex with two parts (ibid.: 419). They see the "border-straggling groups", such as North Ossetia and South Ossetia, as the clearest proof of a security interdependence between these two parts (ibid.). They also refer to the war in Chechnya and spill-over effects in this regard (ibid.: 420).

However, despite the fact that there are still terrorist attacks in Chechnya and organized by Chechens and the "republic" is far from being peaceful, the leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov has nevertheless led to some sort of stabilization, even though it did so by using very questionable measures. At least to a certain extent, the topic has lost importance in the Russian's relations with the South Caucasian countries, compared to 2003 (even though it gained attention during the Sochi Winter Olympics). Similarly, the North Caucasian support for Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's fight for independence has somehow lost its topicality, because both regions have achieved a high degree of autonomy – with Russian support – and their situation is not likely to change soon. In any case, both the war in Chechnya and the situation in Georgia's separatist territories do barely affect Armenia, which is another argument for not considering the North Caucasus

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[7] However, the GUAM security alliance, which serves as Buzan's and Waever's example of anti-Russian coalition, has not turned out to play a role as important and counterbalancing as Buzan and Waever thought it would.

part of the same subcomplex. It should also not be overlooked, although this might be obvious, that the North Caucasus is a part of Russia and thus logically under stronger Russian influence than the southern part.

One assumption Buzan and Waever make is that the US "plays less of a role in this region" (ibid.: 398). Derghoukassian comes to the conclusion that the fact that this is assumption is not true (anymore) and that the US has shown increased interest in the region leads to changes in the security dynamics: "Thus, when applying the four levels of analysis of a RSC, as well as the four factors of the basic structure of the same, only the South Caucasus acquires analytical legitimacy to be defined as a RSC" (Derghoukassian 2006: 8). Indeed, the other great and regional powers, Iran, Turkey and the EU, and also the US are active in the South Caucasus, but not in the Northern part. This alone is not a sufficient argument to conclude that the North Caucasus is not part of the subcomplex, since outside alignments cannot define an RSC, they are rather the result of longstanding patterns of amity and enmity. The nature of the involvement is, nevertheless, a strong indicator for a South Caucasian subcomplex; the best example here is the EU's engagement in regional cooperation in the South Caucasus and its similar financial support of the three South Caucasian states through common programmes.

The North Caucasus is more a geographic than a political entity; this leads to problems concerning its boundary. The South Caucasus is a more coherent unit and its definition is clearer. Overall, the arguments for considering the South Caucasus a distinct subcomplex overweigh.

There have been other authors before who have defined the South Caucasus as a subcomplex, (or even an RSC), such as Kevork Oskanian, whose PhD thesis (in which he argues like this) was interestingly supervised by Barry Buzan himself. This indicates that even Barry Buzan might not completely deny (anymore) that the South Caucasus could be seen as separate from the North Caucasus. Moreover, it should be said that the definition of RSCs and the borders between them can change over time, the system is meant to be flexible and dependent on various factors. "Regions and Powers" was published 12 years ago and many things have happened since.

Oskanian is not the only author who has argued that the South Caucasus should be regarded as a subcomplex. Tracey German, for example, justifies this view with the "complex web of enmity and amity between the three states", which will be outlined in chapter 4.1 of this thesis and also points at the fact that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia "all seek to ally with other regional actors, notably Russia, Turkey, Iran and the West" (German 2012: 13-14). It is difficult to say the same about the North Caucasus, especially because it constitutes a part of the Russian Federation. Other authors agree with this, only the wording varies; Eder, for example, sees "special security dynamics" as a justification for regarding the South Caucasus as a separate subcomplex (Eder 2008: 23).

Khatchik Derghoukassian already published a work on balance of power, democracy and development in Armenia as part of the South Caucasian RSC in 2006. He even focussed on Armenia in this context, but he mainly concentrated on the influence of democracy building on the RSC. He did, however, mention that the aspect of "foreign penetration" would also play an important role in this context (Derghoukassian 2006: 1; 4).

Eder also argued that there is a South Caucasian RSC and worked on very similar aspects as Derghoukassian; he acknowledged that the Russian influence on Armenia should not be underestimated in this context, too, although he did not specifically highlight the aspect of GPP (Eder 2008: 186).

All in all, there are strong arguments for regarding the South Caucasus a distinct subcomplex of the post-Soviet RSC and this thesis is not the first to argue in this way. The deeper analysis of patterns of amity and enmity, the distribution of power and the boundary of the subcomplex, which will follow in the next chapters, should support this assumption, since there are numerous security interdependences between the three South Caucasian states. Many of the issues raised, especially the "decision" between the EEU and the EU and the future of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict do not affect the North Caucasus in the same way as they affect the South Caucasian states.

2.3   Methodology and sources

The methodology applied in this work is mainly qualitative and research-based. Due to the very nature of the theoretical concept of RSCT, the analysis of discourses has to be a part of it (against the background of securitization processes), but this is not the only reason why it is one of the multiple methodological approaches used. Discourses can simply reveal best if common security issues exist among the South Caucasian countries and this could lead to security interdependencies. Moreover, they help to evaluate Russia's impact on Armenia's foreign policy. In this context, especially changes between the NSS, published in 2007, and the situation in the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit could be relevant; this includes the option that certain issues could have gained even more attention (which is more likely than the disappearance of issues from the security agenda).

However, there are limits to the application of discourse analysis and the exclusive application of discourse analysis would not be the most suitable method given the type of analysis conducted in this study. The limited space makes a detailed interpretation of discourses impossible. Moreover, many official statements have only been released in Armenian (or sometimes also in Russian), but not in English. Even when there are English versions, these are not necessarily correct translations. Apart from that, the general quality of the Armenian media coverage is comparably low and so is the level of press freedom in Armenia. According to Freedom House, most of the dominant media in Armenia "are controlled by the government or government-friendly individuals"; Armenia's press freedom score is 62 (Russia: 81; Turkey: 62; Georgia: 47; United Kingdom: 23; Estonia: 16); overall the country is listed as "partly free", which means that it ranks above Russia, but far below all EU member states (Freedom House 2014). Although public debates take place in Armenia, the unequal influence of governmental and oppositional voices is obvious.

One available source are national security strategies and these are, indeed, very helpful and can serve as a main source of this study. Eder (2008) pointed this out as well and, consequently, based his analysis on the Armenian NSS. A problem in this context is that, as already mentioned, both the Armenian NSS and the national security concept of

Azerbaijan date from 2007 and one key point of this thesis is the change that has been made since 2013. Nevertheless, they reveal important issues and official views, which can be partly seen as a "starting point" referring to the change caused by Russia's influence. It is important, however, not to regard these strategies as isolated from other official statements, since they only represent the view of a small part of the political elite at a certain point of time. National security strategies are also not part of discourses in the actual sense, but rather results of discourses. Anyways, they have been very useful, which is partly due to the broad spectrum of issues included.

It has to be noted here that the discourses which are included in the NSS should be analyzed from a critical perspective. As Habermas states, language "is also a medium of domination and social force" and "serves to legitimate relations of organized power": "Insofar as the legitimations of power relations, whose institutionalization they make possible, are not articulated, insofar as these express themselves in the legitimations, language is also ideological" (Habermas 1970: 287). To take this into account is especially important in the context of a country like Armenia, since its elites are not controlled in the same way as in Western democracies. Thus, oppositional views have been considered where available and necessary in order to understand the nature of the discourse and this does not only include opinions of oppositional politicians. As Wodak stresses, it is important to follow a "methodological trichotomy" which consists of understanding, explaining and criticizing communicative actions (Wodak 2011: 627). In addition to this, Lam outlines that it is possible and necessary to "examine simultaneously multiple 'societal' levels" (Lamb 2013: 334).

Apart from national security strategies, speeches or simple statements (partly extracted from official documents) of leading politicians have also been used for the analysis. In her work on discourse analysis Hansen stresses the importance of political speeches, since they reveal both identities and policies (Hansen 2006: 82-87). Since there have only been a few statements translated into English, they rather serve as an additional confirmation for the arguments made; it has not been referred to a particular sample of speeches. Eder faced similar problems when conducting his research.

The analysis and comparison of secondary literature will also be an important part of the methodology applied in this thesis; it will be especially relevant in the fourth chapter which links the case study to the theoretical framework in order to provide an answer to the leading research question. What Buzan and Waever call "objective conditions" (as opposed to the "subjective reality" which is part of discourses) in the South Caucasus can be understood best by the critical discussion of secondary literature; and this is a necessary component of this study since Russia's factual power over Armenia cannot be ignored when analyzing security dynamics and interpreting discourses. Examples of such conditions might be the actual presence of Russian military in the region or the alleged economic benefits of an EEU accession. These aspects are very important in order to understand the background of the security discourses. Since the aim of this thesis is not to outline the interdependences between the three South Caucasian states as such, but to analyze the Russian influence on them and Russia's role in the post-Soviet RSC, the focus has often been more on the acts underlying the security discourses than on the actual discourses.

In some cases, secondary sources also point at "hidden agendas", which cannot be extracted from official statements, but are still (at least an underlying) part of the domestic discourse. Moreover, critical voices are often missing in the domestic debates. Secondary literature may close these gaps to a certain extent.[8] Another reason for the importance of secondary literature, especially articles, is the topicality of this thesis. Overall, the methodology applied in this thesis does serve a certain purpose and this is kept in mind throughout the entire work. It requires a mixed approach to serve this purpose.

The works of Barry Buzan and Ole Waever and other theoretical contributions to RSCT have been a foundation of this study. It has to be mentioned here that, although the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School has been applied, some of its aspects had to be left out in the main part of this thesis. A consideration of security aspects on a sector-by-sector basis was not possible, since this would require a much longer study. Other authors had similar problems before (Oskanian 2010: 35). Even Buzan and Waever themselves decided to narrow down their analysis on "Regions and Powers" in their 2003

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[8] The anti-Russian opposition in Armenia, e.g., is small and barely present in the media.

work, which comprised almost 600 pages, they "had to operate on a high level of generalization" and used "broad indicators of securitization rather than investigating each instance in detail" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 73). However, military-political questions are the most relevant in the post-Soviet RSC (ibid.: 75). Since the existence of securitization moves has been acknowledged, it would be wrong to conclude that this thesis is based on CSCT. It is taken into account that RSCT (in its most recent version) was developed against the background of a blend of realist and constructivist approaches, but due to the limited scope of this study and the necessary focus on the most important issues with regard to the research aim, some aspects had to be left out.

Apart from Buzan's and Waever's theoretical work, the Armenian NSS, the national security concept of Azerbaijan, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty and the opinion polls conducted by the Caucasusbarometer and the Civilitas Foundation, there are several other sources that need to be highlighted as well. Not only English, but also German sources have been used. This is, to some extent, due to the fact that the research was partly conducted in Germany and German university libraries were attended. Fortunately, this proved to be rather an advantage than a disadvantage, since a considerable amount of useful German secondary literature was found.

Articles published in the Caucasus Analytical Digest, a widely known source in the context of developments in the Caucasus region, and by foundations, particularly the German Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), have also been especially helpful in order to understand the "objective conditions" in the region. Referring to the case study, the research that had previously been conducted by Kevork Oskanian in the framework of his thesis and, to a lesser extent, by Khatchik Derghoukassian, has served as a basis of this study, though it had to be seen from a critical distance. Some fundamental literature on the South Caucasus as a region and the regional conflicts has also been taken into account, such as works by Tracey German and Aser Babajev.

Media articles have mainly been used either as a source of official statements or to include critical voices in the domestic discourse in the analysis. Fortunately, there is a number of

websites which provide translations of articles into English. Oppositional views are often expressed in publications supported by Western foundations or the Western media; Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty may serve as an example here.

Quantitative data have also been taken into account where this was perceived as helpful. The results of opinion polls of both the independent Caucasusbarometer and the Civilitas Foundation have been included where necessary to stress certain developments, to point out Russia's influence and to understand the dynamics of certain securitizations. These polls have proved to be very helpful, since they sometimes reveal tendencies which official statements (alone) would not show. They are also reliable sources, although the answers have to be understood against the background of a limited degree of freedom of speech, especially in the case of Azerbaijan. When asked about the state of their democracy, many Azerbaijani respondents might have hesitated to criticize it openly or simply been influenced by public "propaganda".

3 Armenia's "U-turn" – The end of complementarity?

This thesis focuses on Russia's role in the post-Soviet RSC. Russia is the central regional power, but at the same time it holds the status of a great power, which makes it special. In chapter 2.2 it has been argued that the South Caucasus can be seen as a subcomplex of this RSC. In the following two chapters, the Russian influence on the security dynamics in this region will be analyzed against the background of the recent developments in the Armenian-Russian relations, which serve as a case-study. Eventually, this thesis aims at assessing the impact of Russia's interference in the South Caucasian subcomplex on regional security dynamics. In order to achieve this aim, it first looks at recent events concerning the Armenian-Russian relations, particularly Armenia's choice to join the EEU, and their meaning.

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide an answer to RQ2a. It will be analyzed to what extent Armenia's accession to the EEU changes its foreign policy approach and determines its relations with Russia as well as with other countries.

The results of this chapter will then provide a basis for answering RQ2b and RQ1, but an answer to these RQs also requires a deeper look at the theoretical determinants (namely the essential elements of the subcomplex) and, especially with regard to RQ1, a consideration of the developments in the entire region. The next chapter will close these gaps and make the links between the case study and the overall research aim of this thesis clear.

Russia's current involvement in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea cannot be seen as isolated cases. On the contrary, these developments are a consequence of Russia's general recent foreign policy approach. There is a certain ideological framework behind this. Russia claims to protect its "near abroad", a term which refers to the ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking population in countries surrounding Russia and which was introduced in 1992 by the former Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev. At the same time, the Russian government is officially worried about the allegedly impending expansion of the American sphere of influence and the dominating role of the US in

general and specifically disapproves the potential expansion of NATO and the EU towards Russia's borders. The Kremlin's ideologists promote the idea of "special interests and rights" in Russia's "near abroad" and the concept of Eurasianism sees a "special path" as the only option for Russia (Tarkhan-Mouravi 2013: 18).

The Armenian-Russian relations have to be analyzed against this background. Armenia's choice to join the EEU needs to be seen in the context of Russian attempts to pressurize the Armenian government and use its leverage against it. Traditionally, the Armenian-Russian relationship has been very close, Armenia is considered Russia's closest (or even only) ally in the region.

This chapter will first give an overview of the determinants of Armenia's foreign policy with a special reference to Russia's role in it and to regional security issues. After this, Armenia's choice to join the EEU and to turn down the EU's offer of an AA will be analyzed. Eventually, the advantages and disadvantages of Eurasian and European integration and the meaning of Armenia's choice for Armenian-Russian relations and Russia's influence will be discussed.

3.1 Determinants of Armenia's foreign policy

The Armenian NSS defines both internal and external security threats. The latter, which are considered more relevant in the framework of this thesis, include the use of force (the trade and transport blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan is seen as such), ethnic conflicts, internal unrest and military activities in neighbouring countries (which underlines the security interdependence in the region), the disruption of transit through neighbouring states, the weakening or inefficiency of strategic alliances, terrorism and transnational crime, energy dependence, Armenia's isolation from regional projects (in this context the EU's TRASSECA and INOGATE programmes are stressed), a decline of national and cultural identity in the Armenian diaspora and epidemics and natural disasters (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 3-4). All these issues play an important role in the country's security discourses.

The term "complementarity" describes one of the two key features of Armenia's foreign policy as outlined in the country's NSS referring to external security threats. Complementarity describes "a partnership approach that seeks to simultaneously develop relations with all states in the region and with states with interests in the region" (ibid.: 10). Furthermore, such a policy "is aimed at maintaining an overall balance in the region" (ibid.). In this regard it is also stressed in the NSS that "positive trends in the dialogue and cooperation among the major powers (…) are conducive to Armenia's pursuit of its foreign policy of complementarity" (ibid.). Alexander Iskandaryan describes complementarity as "sustaining a constant equilibrium between a long-term, value-based European orientation and the country's current security situation" (Iskandaryan 2009: 17).

Complementarity had already been applied in the early 1990s, but became an official term in 1998 with the beginning of the first presidential term of Robert Kocharyan; it was regularly used by Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, Vardan Oskanian (Soghomonyan 2007: 88; Minasyan 2015: 7). In the midst of the Karabakh war in the early 1990s, "Yerevan received weapons and military equipment from Russia, resources for economic development from the U.S., food and humanitarian aid from Europe

(transported via Turkish territory until March 1993) and fuel for its army from Iran" (Minasyan 2015: 7).

Traditionally, Russia is Armenia's closest partner and serves as a "protecting power" for Armenia, especially with regard to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. This view is also supported by the Armenian population; according to the Caucasusbarometer 83% of the Armenians regard Russia as the country's main friend (Caucasusbarometer 2013; see Table 1). The strategic partnership with Russia is of high importance, because Armenia is politically isolated from most of its neighbours. The Turkish-Armenian relations are basically non-existing (and the border to Turkey is closed), and the country is technically still at war with its Eastern neighbour Azerbaijan. The dispute with Turkey over both the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the alleged genocide in 1915 does not seem to end soon. Armenia's NSS acknowledges that the "unnatural character of bilateral relations and the closed border with Turkey threaten the Armenian security and hamper its lasting development" (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 17).

Table 1. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Armenia: Main friend of the country (%).

Answer	Frequency
Russia	83
France	5
Georgia	2
Iran	1
None	4
Other	1
DK/RA	4

Despite its dependency on Russia and in accordance with the principle of complementarity, Armenia's NSS outlines that there is also a need for close cooperation with other powers such as the US, Iran and the EU. One of the main reasons for this, apart from its regional isolation, is Armenia's hope of being supported by its allies in the

ongoing conflicts with Nagorno-Karabakh and Turkey; but mistrust towards Russia, which appears to be justified looking at the recent Russian arms deals with Azerbaijan, might also play a role; the Kremlin seems - at least - not to have a severe problem with selling its weapons to both parties of a conflict.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the biggest threat to Armenia's security. The dispute goes back to the colonial politics of the Russian empire in the 19th century. 18,000 Armenians settled down in Nagorno-Karabakh between 1828 and 1830; this was a planned move with the aim of Christianizing the area (Rau 2007: 21-25). In the beginning of the 20th century, ethnic tensions led to bloody acts of violence (Gieler 2012: 27). In 1918 the area became part of the first independent Republic of Azerbaijan, which was followed by a bloody two-year long war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over a number of territories including this one (Langner 2009: 14; Geukijan 2012 7-8). Lenin then considered to give the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh, Nakhchivan and Sangesur to Armenia, but eventually decided not to do so in the case of the former two regions, since this contributed to an improved relationship with Turkey (Langner 2009: 14). Thus, a significant ethnic incongruence between the territorial borders existed until the end of the Soviet Union and only the oppressive regime prevented the outbreak of a war in the region (Geukijan 2012: 8-9). Moreover, Nagorno-Karabakh had an autonomy status which was taken away when the Republic of Azerbaijan was founded (Gieler 2012: 28).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the conflict soon turned into an open war between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Langner 2009: 19). Armenia claimed the territory back and argued that it had to save the local Armenian population, which constitutes the clear majority in Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1991 the region declared its independence. The conflict continued. The Armenian troops were better equipped and also widely supported by Russian troops, so that they eventually forced Azerbaijan into a ceasefire and won control not only over Nagorno Karabakh, but also over seven surrounding Azerbaijani districts (ibid.). De-facto, the Armenian army controls more than 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan (Dschafarow 2009: 31). More than 30,000 people died in the active war years (Langner 2009: 21). The overall number of deaths since the beginning of the conflict is several times higher, but difficult to estimate. The United Nations Security

Council (UNSC) condemned the occupation of Azerbaijani territory by Armenia in several revolutions in 1993 and 1994 (Rau 2007: 43). There are still regular deathly shootings around the ceasefire line, despite the Bishkek ceasefire agreement of 1994. Interestingly, the Bishkek agreement was initiated by Russia (Geukijan 2012: 204).

Armenia still gets supplied with weapons from Russia. However, Azerbaijan has recently also purchased Russian weapons. Russia was responsible for about 90% of Armenia's imports, but also for about 60% of Azerbaijan's imports between 2007 and 2011 (Halbach / Smolnik 2013: 29). In August 2013, President Aliyev stated that Azerbaijan had bought Russian weapons for about 4 billion dollars up to then, but Azerbaijan also purchases weapons from Turkey, South Korea and Israel and is not as dependent on Russia as Armenia in this regard (Halbach / Smolnik 2014: 6). In the first Karabakh war, similar things happened. Russia sold planes to Azerbaijan, but anti-aircraft missiles to Armenia (Langner 2009: 57). The Soviet forces also supported an Azerbaijani offensive known as "Operation Ring" in 1991 (Geukijan 2012: 185-186). Only after Armenia had abandoned its initial pro-Western approach under Ter-Petrosyan "the Russians became aware of the fact that only Armenia in its post-independence period could perform the role of a lever to protect Russian economic and political interests in the South Caucasus" (ibid.: 191). Only then the 366th Russian motor rifle regiment decided to help the successful Armenian counteroffensive (ibid.: 190).

Armenia does not even officially recognize the declared independence of Nagorno-Karabakh itself and neither does Russia or any other country. Nevertheless, the area plays an important role for the Armenian identity, even two of the country's presidents (including the current one) were born in Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia also supports Nagorno-Karabakh militarily, politically and economically (Krüger 2009: 113). In Armenia's NSS, it is admitted that Armenia is the "guarantor of the security and safety of the population of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 9).

The public opinion confirms that Azerbaijan is the main enemy of Armenia. 66% of the Armenians think so, 28% consider Turkey the country's main enemy (Caucasusbarometer

2013a; see Table 2). With regard to Nagorno-Karabakh, only 2% of the Armenians would accept that Nagorno-Karabakh would stay a part of Azerbaijan under certain circumstances, even if the breakaway republic would get a high level of autonomy (ibid.; see Table 3). Most Armenians (77%) would definitely prefer Nagorno-Karabakh to become a part of Armenia (ibid.; see Table 4).

Table 2. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Armenia: Main enemy of the country (%).

Answer	Frequency
Azerbaijan	66
Turkey	28
None	1
Other	3
DK/RA	2

Table 3. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Armenia: Favor/not accept - Have Nagorno-Karabakh with a high degree of autonomy within Azerbaijan (%).

Answer	Frequency
Never accept	95
Accept under certain circumstances	2
Definitely favour	0
I am indifferent	4

Table 4. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Armenia: Favor/not accept - Have Nagorno-Karabakh as a formal part of Armenia (%).

Answer	Frequency
Never accept	7
Accept under certain circumstances	13
Definitely favour	77
I am indifferent	3

In the peace negotiations, Russia plays a special role. At this point, 54% of the Armenians think that it is either very or rather likely that there will be a solution to the conflict through peaceful negotiations, whereas only 20% think that the same could happen through the use of force (ibid.; see Table 5 and Table 6). Russia is one of the leading negotiators in the framework of the Minsk Group of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); the other two are France and the United States. However, one may argue that the role of international actors eventually makes the peace progress even more complicated, since these actors have very different interests themselves (Gieler 2012: 32). Especially Russia's special influence might be considered an obstacle (ibid.: 38).

Table 5. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Armenia: Likeliness to find a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through peaceful negotiation (%).

Answer	Frequency
Very unlikely	16
Rather unlikely	15
Rather likely	26
Very likely	28
DK/RA	15

Table 6. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Armenia: Likeliness to find a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through force (%).

Answer	Frequency
Very unlikely	33
Rather unlikely	27
Rather likely	12
Very likely	18
DK	19
RA	1

Recently, the violence around the ceasefire line has increased again. Nagorno-Karabakh is "one of the most militarized regions anywhere in the world" (Minasyan 2014: 3). There were heavy shootings in August 2014, the situation did not escalate into a full-scale war, but was more dangerous than ever before since 1994 (ibid.: 2). Interestingly, the public debate linked the events to the conflict in Ukraine and the geopolitical tensions (ibid.). In January 2015, again "repeated gun battles and volleys of artillery and rocket fire" were observed and dozens of soldiers have been killed on both sides in recent months (Herzsenshorn 2015).

One reason for the escalation is the oil boom in Azerbaijan, which has led to a situation in which the country's budget is much higher than Armenia's, so that it can afford to increase its military budget and try to win certain territories back (Gieler 2012: 25; 32). This has, in turn, led to an arms race with Armenia, which has been forced to increase its military budget as well (ibid.: 32). In January 2015, the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, claimed that his country would spend more than twice of Armenia's entire annual budget just for military means (Herzsenshorn 2015). Serzh Sargsyan responded: "The hotheads should expect surprises" (ibid.). 2015 is also a special year, because it marks the 100th anniversary of the so-called Armenian genocide; this could lead to further provocations (ibid.).

As initially stated in this section, all issues presented as an external threat in Armenia's NSS are of high relevance for the country's security. The disruption of transit through Georgia, e.g., is also relevant in the context of Armenia's accession to the EEU (and will be considered in the respective section) and for the rivalry among the South Caucasian states (which will be taken into account in chapter 4.1). The membership of Armenia in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is a topic that will be highlighted in this thesis as well. Other aspects, such as terrorism and transnational crime or epidemics and natural disasters, cannot be outlined due to the limited framework of this study.

All in all and despite the high relevance of other aspects, this section has illustrated that there are two (connected) key issues (and key determinants) with regard to Armenia's foreign policy: the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the country's isolation due to the lack of relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. It has also been shown that these issues determine the principle of complementarity, since Armenia needs as much foreign support as possible and, therefore, has hesitated to clearly state that it is in an exclusive alliance with one global power. However, the country's recent decision to join the EEU has questioned this principle.

3.2   Armenia's decision for the Eurasian Economic Union

Armenia had worked on an AA with the EU for more than three years. On 3rd September 2013 it suddenly announced that it would like to become a member of the EEU. At the Vilnius Summit of the Eastern Partnership, two months later, the already prepared AA was not signed. On 10th October 2014 Armenia signed a membership agreement with the EEU. On 1st January 2015 it became a full member.

Experts differ in their opinions regarding the question whether this development could mean the end of complementarity. The Kremlin has obviously increased its pressure on Armenia to side with it. The geopolitical tensions caused by the crisis in Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation might have played an important role in this regard and increased the severity of Russia's push. Since Ukraine has obviously been "lost" to the West, Russia could see Armenia's accession to the EEU as a "consolation price" and the "minimal level of success" in this context (Hovhannisyan, D. 2013: 30).

Armenia has closed the door to further European integration, at least for a while. A membership perspective has never been given to Armenia and it has never been officially declared that an EU membership could be the country's aim. Nevertheless there has been a striving for closer ties with the EU according to official statements made by the Armenian government.

After the Armenian presidential elections in February 2013, President Sargsyan applied a more active foreign policy approach than before (ibid.: 23). From 1st April to 14th June 2013 he held 32 meetings with foreign representatives; among these meetings were 15 with EU officials, but only three with Russians and four with representatives from other countries from the CIS (ibid.: 26). On 28th May 2013 Sargsyan did not attend a CSTO summit in Bishkek; this was an obvious sign of tensions in the Armenian-Russian relations, connected to the planned AA (ibid.). Russia had just increased the gas price for Armenia significantly (as already mentioned above).

Eventually, the ties between Russia and Armenia were too close and the Russian pressure was too strong: the AA was not signed. The fact that this decision was made after an "abrupt summons" of President Sargsyan to Moscow was an indicator for the Russian role in Armenia's decision-making (Giragosian 2014). Russia's former ambassador to Armenia, Vyatcheslav Kovalenko, had even warned the Sargsyan administration very openly not to strive for an AA by stating that "the way to hell is paved with good intentions" (Shirinyan / Ralchev 2013: 5).

Referring to Russia, the Armenian NSS focuses on the following aspects (in this order): Russia's role for Armenian security, the "traditional friendly links", the "level of trade and economic relations", Russia's role in the Nagorno-Karabakh mediation talks and the Armenian community in Russia (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 13). As this order shows, the key aspect in Armenian-Russian relations is and has always been security.

There are numerous bilateral military and military-political agreements between Moscow and Yerevan, which include common training, studies of Armenians in Russian military academies, the stationing of Russian troops in Armenia and a common border control (Dschafarow 2009: 49). The friendship and cooperation agreement from August 1997 plays a central role in this context (ibid.). Already the Russian-Armenian agreement from March 1995 stated that Russia controls the 102nd military basis in Gyumri, where the 127th Russian Motor Rifle Division is stationed (ibid.). The contract guaranteeing Russia the rights of the use of the Gyumri military base was extended until 2044 in 2010 (Halbach / Smolnik 2013: 29). There are about 8,000 Russian soldiers in Armenia, most of which belong to the border control (Dschafarow 2009: 49). When President Sargsyan served as Armenia's Minister of Defense, he claimed that the Armenian army had been created on the basis of the Russian culture (Halbach 2001: 488). In 2006 a declaration on allied cooperation was signed.

Of special importance is the Armenian membership in the CSTO, the NATO-alternative in the post-Soviet space. Armenia interprets its membership like this: if Azerbaijan attacks Armenian troops in Nagorno-Karabakh and declares an open war, Russia will

have to defend its CSTO partner (Halbach / Smolnik 2014: 5). According to its NSS, Armenia views its membership in the CSTO "as a component of its security" and values the "privileged conditions for the supply of military equipment to CSTO-member states", which clearly refers to imports from Russia (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 11).

In an official statement announcing the accession of Armenia to the EEU, President Sargsyan called this step a "rational decision", adding that being part of a military alliance it would be "impossible and ineffective to isolate yourself from a corresponding economic space" (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 2013). Looking at the wording, the term "impossible" might reveal the Russian pressure on Armenia. In any case, security concerns were clearly used as the main justification for joining the EEU and Armenia's CSTO membership was particularly highlighted.

In fact, not only Armenia's military-political security, but other sectors face a high Russian influence as well. An "asset-for-debt" agreement which was concluded in 2002-2003 helped Russia to gain control over key sectors of the Armenian economy, including the energy sector (Giragosian 2013: 11). Moreover, Russia controls much of the communication structures and guarantees the function of the nuclear power plant in Metsamor (Oskanian 2013: 5). Interestingly, this power plant is identified as a threat in Azerbaijan's National Security Concept (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007: 7). More recently, Russia has also taken over Armenia's railway network and a significant share in the mining sector (Giragosian 2013: 11). Russia can use all these aspects to pressurize Armenia when necessary, since it is much less dependent on its partner than the other way round. In the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit, this has become particularly obvious.

Armenia does still not only cooperate with the CSTO (as a member of it), it also works together with NATO. Since the bilateral meetings of the Ministers of Defense Rumsfeld and Sargsyan in 2001 and 2002, Armenia's contribution to the worldwide fight against terrorism has largely increased and Armenia has improved its relationship with NATO (Langner 2009: 65). The country signed a Partnership for Peace Agreement (PfPA) in

1994, which was followed by the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) in 2005 and other agreements such as the Planning and Review Process (PARP) and Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building (PAP-DIP) (Telatin 2009: 68). The newest IPAP dates from 2011. Armenia's NSS stresses that the country "is intensifying its political dialogue with NATO" (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 11). However, there has not been any direct American military support yet, which might be caused by Russia's suspicions about the nature of the American interest in Armenia (Langner 2009: 65). Only 9% of the Armenians fully support a membership in NATO (Caucasusbarometer 2013a).

Armenia continues to cooperate with NATO and the US, despite the decision for the EEU. On 15 January 2015, President Sargsyan received James Appathurai, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, in Yerevan; both stressed that there had not been any major changes in Armenia's relationship with NATO (Davtyan 2015). Appathurai even highlighted that the relationship should get deeper in the framework of an Individual Partnership Action Plan, targeting especially military education, intercultural communication and anti-corruption efforts (ibid.).

From a security perspective, Sargsyan's decision was, nevertheless, understandable, at least at first sight. Russia simply exerted stronger leverage on Armenia than the EU and the CSTO membership as well as bilateral Russian support for Armenia is necessary due to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia's isolation in the region. Popescu even argues that Armenia's mere attempt to stick to complementarity and move closer towards the EU should worry Russia more than the "u-turn" should worry the EU (Popescu 2013: 1). Indeed, the step was somehow foreseeable, although its timing was very surprising.

Due to the strong links between Russia and Armenia as presented in this section and the fact that Russia has had the leverage over Armenia for years and has not just gained it recently, one could argue that Armenia's decision for the EEU was not as dramatic as it seemed. However, the situation has also to be considered in the framework of the current geopolitical developments. As a consequence of its now even closer alliance with Russia, Armenia has, for example, voted against a UN declaration condemning the annexation of

Crimea (despite the large Armenian diaspora in Ukraine). By giving up its complementarity, at least to a certain extent, the country has further weakened its position towards Russia and become even more dependent on a single great power. Due to the new East-West conflict, Armenia had to make a choice and has made it, although it might still be possible to limit its severity to a certain extent. Eventually, the circumstances rather than the decisions of certain actors may have put the country in this situation. Although it was not impossible to avoid certain decisions with regard to security issues, consequences would have been impending anyway.

3.3 Eurasian versus European integration

"When Vladimir Putin announced his intention to press for a so-called 'Eurasian Union' in the run-up to the 2012 presidential elections, his statement was widely dismissed as a pre-electoral ploy, playing as it did to the nostalgia for an idealised Soviet past held by part of the Russian population" (Oskanian 2013: 1). This statement by Kevork Oskanian might be true in terms of the perception of Putin's announcement. In the meantime, however, it has turned out that there is more behind this project.

On 29th May 2014, the treaty establishing the EEU was signed by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. As already mentioned, on 10th October 2014 a treaty aiming for Armenia's accession was signed in Minsk. On 23rd December 2014 a similar treaty with Kyrgyzstan followed. Kyrgyzstan is going to join the EEU by the end of May 2015.

The EEU guarantees the free movement of goods, capital, services and people, just like the EU. It also includes supranational and intergovernmental bodies; e.g., there is a Eurasian Commission. However, its market is much smaller and largely centred on Russia; moreover, at this point of time, the project focuses more on mere economic aspects than the EU does. After Kyrgyzstan's accession, the union will account for 15% of the world's land mass and include about 177 million citizens (Rosselli / Poli 2015). In terms of the economic output, it will not come close to these numbers at all.

The principle of equal representation might slightly limit the Russian dominance, as several differences in opinion, especially between Russia and Kazakhstan, have already revealed in the first few months of its existence; but Russia is still dominant enough to pressurize the other members, as the accession talks have shown. Russia accounts for 87% of the EEU's GDP and 82% of its population (ibid.). Moscow incorporated Crimea into the EEU and imposed countersanctions against the West without even asking for permission (ibid.). Equal conditions for business actors and investors are difficult to guarantee in semi-authoritarian states anyway. Overall, the EEU can be seen as a continuation of existing Russian-led projects of reintegration in the post-Soviet space,

such as the CIS, the Eurasian Customs Union and the Common Economic Space (Giragosian 2013: 11). It is often seen as a political, rather than an economic project.

Initially, the Armenian government was not euphoric about the idea of the EEU. It had repeatedly stated that an association with the EU was an important point on its agenda; this was not only mentioned in the country's NSS. To give an example, in 2011 Foreign Minister Nalbandyan stated that "rapprochement with the European family continues to remain as one of the Armenian foreign policy priorities" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia 2011). There were several reasons for the distrust towards the benefits of the EEU. In a Russian media interview Armenia's former Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan mentioned the absence of a common border with Russia, Belarus or Kazakhstan, as a major reason for not joining the EEU. Furthermore, he declared that "the structure of the Armenian economy is very different from that of the economies of the Customs Unions countries that have substantial deposits of energy resources and pursue a policy of supporting domestic manufacturers through quite high customs duties" (Giragosian 2013: 13). Thirdly, he listed the membership of Armenia in the World Trade Organization (WTO) as possibly imcompatible with an EEU membership (ibid.). Indeed, Armenia might have to re-negotiate its obligations in the framework of the WTO. Despite all this, later the Armenian leadership changed its mind.

When, on 3rd September 2013, Sargsyan declared that Armenia would join the EEU, Armenian officials still insisted that this was compatible with signing an AA (Hovhannisyan, M. 2013: 2). Sargsyan noted that the decision would "not constitute a refusal to continue our dialogue with European structures" (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 2013). However, while Moscow is critical of this for geopolitical reasons, Brussels has repeatedly claimed that "the two tariff systems are incompatible with one another" (Socor 2013a). Armenia will have to fully adjust its tariff system to EEU standards until 2022.

Armenia also had to pay an extra price for joining the EEU, as it turned out. The country provided "additional space for the dislocation of Russian military troops" and Russia also acquired the remaining 20% of Armenian shares from ArmRosGazprom as payment for

"a suddenly appearing state debt of $155 million" (Hovhannisyan, M. 2013: 4). Moscow had also increased the gas price by 50% while Armenia was negotiating the AA; later the price was decreased from then $270 to $189 per 1000 cubicmeters (Halbach / Smolnik 2014: 2).

While the National Security Council Secretary, Artur Baghdasarian confirmed Sargsyan's arguments and announced that "the most important is Russia's role in Armenia's national security", other officials highlighted additional points (Socor 2013c). Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Shavarsh Kocharian added that the EEU, unlike the AA, would not require a customs border between Armenia and Karabakh and thus an "unnatural border" between the two "republics" could be avoided (ibid.). This was highly debated during Armenia's accession talks, especially Kazakhstan initially insisted on such border controls between Armenia and Karabakh; this even led to considerable delays of the talks. Armenia was eventually successful in the negotiations in so far that there are, indeed, no controls between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh now, but it had to accept that Nagorno-Karabakh could not become a member of the EEU.

Yerevan used to draw a clear distinction between the military alliance with Russia and the economic integration with Europe; this was what complementarity was essentially about. However, Sargsyan now "seems to regard economic integration under Russian leadership as a corollary to Armenia's military reliance on Russia" (Socor 2013a).

The benefits of an EEU accession are questionable, but there are, indeed, reasonable arguments for it. First of all, Russia is Armenia's main trading partner (as a single country), accounting for 22.6% of the country's export and 24.8% of its import by the end of 2013 (Petrosyan, D. 2015: 33.). At the same time, Armenia exports 33.4% of its goods to the EU, which is more than to CIS countries. One of the already mentioned "carrots" is that membership in the EEU promises a 30% discount on the global price of oil and gas and up to over 200 million dollars in revenues from the 1.13% of the overall amount of customs duties of the EEU, "significantly exceeding the current revenues of Armenia's own customs" (ibid.). However, it should not be forgotten that Russia had

increased the gas price to exert pressure on Armenia while the country was debating the AA.

Moreover, one key to increasing the efficiency of Armenia's economy might be its reorganization (and demonopolization). Most technical regulations of the EEU are, in fact, "either very close or identical" to the EU regulations (ibid.: 34). Nevertheless, looking at the structure of the Russian, Kazakh and Belarussian economy, it is not very likely that this will result in the same degree of (controlled) liberalization and openness of the economy.

The abolition of export duties on rough diamonds and potential investment in oil refineries could be benefits for Armenia through its EEU membership (Kuzmina 2015: 8). Apart from this, the Russian-owned South Caucasus RailRoads promised a US$ 18 million investment in infrastructure projects (Babayan 2015: 86). The outcome of this should not be underestimated.

Despite the Russian "carrots", which can and have been used by the Armenian government in order to defend its "u-turn", studies have shown that the disadvantages of an EEU membership might possibly even surpass the benefits. The membership in the customs union which preceded the EEU, depressed real wages in Kazakhstan as a result of external tariffs (for non-EEU members), according to World Bank data, in 2012 by 0.5%, and the real return on capital by 0.6% (Michel 2014). Both the World Bank and the European Union's Institute for Security Studies feared that this could lead to a loss of productivity gains in the long-run (ibid.). Many observers come to the conclusion that only an accession of Ukraine could "save" the EEU against this background, but this has become an unrealistic scenario (ibid.).

The current economic crisis in Russia, caused partly by Western sanctions and countersanctions, reveals how dependent on the economic situation in Russia the Armenian economy now is. Already before Armenia entered the EEU, its economy had suffered from that. With the accession, Russia's recovery became "absolutely vital" for the Armenian economy (Grigoryan 2015). In theory, the EEU should lead to increased

trade between its members. However, while many Armenians had hoped that Western sanctions "would cause trade volume from Armenia to Russia to rise", Armenian exports dropped by 8.9% in 2014 (Abrahamyan 2015). Even in the first month of Armenia's EEU membership, "Armenian entrepreneurs have not noticed any positive change" (ibid.). In fact, the official Armenian forecasts had to be corrected; the prediction of higher growth rates was taken back. In this context, Nikol Paschinyan, one of the seven members of the Armenian parliament who voted against the EEU accession, referred to the aspect of migration to Russia; he fears that Armenia could lose even more of its young population than it has in the past (Petrosyan, T. 2015).

Armenia does in so far benefit from its EEU membership that it can now buy Russian weapons even cheaper than before. The country had always paid a special (lower) price, but now it can even purchase weapons for Russian domestic prices, which is a clear and necessary advantage over the richer Azerbaijan (Halbach / Smolnik 2014: 5). Nevertheless, as already mentioned before in this study, tensions have recently increased and ten Armenian soldiers and two civilians were killed in January 2015 (Abrahamyan 2015). These developments do not point at an easing of tension.

Despite various official statements from both the European and the Russian side, which allow little hope for a parallel process of European and Eurasian integration, Armenia has seemingly not given up its European path yet. President Sargsyan announced: "It is important for our partners to know that we will never set this against our dialogue with the EU. That will continue since we have numerous coinciding interests and a common heritage, the basis for our continuing process of democratic reforms" (Apakan 2015). The Armenian NSS notes that "further intensification of the country's diverse cooperation with the EU will promote the consolidation of democracy, strengthen the rule of law, and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms" and adds that the EU also "supports the country's economic development" (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 12). Consequently, close relations with the EU serve Armenia's long-term interests (ibid.).

Indeed, Armenia and the EU have started to work on an updated version of the AA. This is in line with the statement made at the Vilnius Summit, although these claims initially sounded like mere lip services. In Vilnius, the EU and Armenia "reconfirmed their commitment to further develop and strengthen their cooperation in all areas of mutual interest within the Eastern Partnership framework, stressing the importance of reviewing and updating the existing basis of their relations" (Council of the European Union 2013: 3). In contrast to this, in 2014, the former Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt, an expert on the Eastern Partnership countries, excluded the option of negotiating on a "small AA" for Armenia; but exactly this is what is happening now (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 2014).

The new version of the AA would not include a DCFTA and thus rather be a reaffirmation of Armenia's willingness to apply the political and judicial standards of the European community. Such a "small AA" could possibly already be signed at the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga in May 2015, but at the time of writing it is still not completely sure that this is going to happen. After a meeting with the Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian in Brussels on 20th January 2015, Johannes Hahn, the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement, said that the EU "should make best possible use of the already existing association agreement which we negotiated and safeguarded for future reference," and added that the AA needs "to be adjusted in order to reflect the new context but the substance of its political part (…) should be kept" (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 2015).

Anyways, the EU's financial support for Armenia remains remarkable. In November 2014, it promised to support Armenia with up to 170 million Euros until 2017 for reforms, especially in the judicial sector; in January 2015 it allocated 77.5 million Euros for agricultural, anti-corruption and civil-service reform projects (ibid.). On 16th January the Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan stated that such cooperation was "of fundamental importance" for the Armenian economy (Abrahamyan 2015).

Russia may not be happy with this development though. There are voices which say that there are already signs that Russia will try to prevent the "small" AA from being signed,

just like it did in the case of the original AA (Apakan 2015). Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan's unsuccessful visit at the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting in Moscow, where he did not manage to negotiate with his counterpart about a reduction of gas prices, may be seen as a warning in this regard (ibid.). According to the political analyst Stepan Safaryan, a former opposition MP, Moscow's interference "depends on the seriousness of the upcoming [EU accession] document" (Abrahamyan 2015).

At the end of this chapter, a look at the Armenian population's perceptions appears to be appropriate. According to the Civilitas Foundation's data, the Armenians are generally aware of both the EEU accession and the AA; 80% have heard of the former, 65% of the latter (the reason for this slight difference might be the presence of the EEU in the Armenian media coverage) (Civilitas Foundation 2014: 2). Both kinds of integration are regarded as good for Armenia by 60% of the population, but, while only 16% regard Eurasian integration as bad for the country, 24% do so in the case of European integration (ibid.: 3). A possible reason for this could be the fear of a Russian intervention.

As for the benefits, the population focuses on political aspects concerning the EEU accession; other aspects include engagement in trade and a reduction of custom fees, facilitation of labor migration and the creation of jobs in Armenia (ibid.: 4). The respondents named the loss of national traditions as the primary disadvantage of European integration, whereas the loss of national sovereignty was seen as the biggest pitfall of Eurasian integration (16% saw this as a problem in the context of the EEU, only 4% were afraid of it referring to European integration) (ibid.). Interestingly, many of the alleged disadvantages of European integration mentioned were connected to Russia: among them were a worsening of the relations with Russia in general, but also an increased gas price and the worsening of labour conditions for Armenians in Russia (ibid.: 4-5). Complementarity is still favoured. 51% see the simultaneous integration with the EU and the EEU as the best option, 34% would opt only for the Eurasian way, only 4% would exclusively choose European integration (ibid.: 6). In economic terms, the respondents were not very optimistic about the benefits of the EEU, the majority believes that it will be harder to find a job in 2017 (ibid.: 8).

As this chapter has shown, Armenia's accession to the EEU has certainly strengthened its ties with Russia and put a strong question mark to Armenia's European integration. It has revealed the unequal relationship between Armenia and Russia and also determined its future, since Armenia is dependent on Russia's economy now even more than before and is also becoming more and more internationally isolated, not receiving incentives to improve its relations with its neighbouring countries. The incompatibility of Eurasian and European integration is an important factor that has to be considered in this context; the implementation of a "small AA" could mitigate these effects to some extent, but Armenia's embedding in Russia's "sphere of influence" is in so far irreversible that, at least in the mid-term, the country cannot take any concessions to Russia back without risking to lose Russian support in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is no less than a question of survival for Armenia.

4   Possible implications of Russia's Eurasian project for regional security

The following part of this thesis will be based on the lessons learned from the first two chapters. Against the background of the theoretical framework outlined in the second chapter and recent developments in Armenian-Russian relations (especially regarding Armenia's accession to the EEU) presented in the third chapter, it should be possible to analyze possible implications of Russia's Eurasian project for regional security. These implications, in turn, might help to achieve the aim of this thesis, which is to assess the impact of change caused by Russia's interference in the South Caucasian subcomplex and, eventually, to describe Russia's role in the post-Soviet RSC. The results of this chapter will provide answers to RQ1 and RQ2b.

Both possible internal and external transformations of the subcomplex will be taken into account in this context. As already explained in the introduction, three of the four essential elements of an RSC, which are included in the analysis here, are patterns of amity and enmity ("social construction"), the distribution of power ("polarity") and boundary. This chapter will first focus on possible changes in the patterns of amity and enmity. Subsequently, potential changes in the distribution of power will be analyzed. Finally, the option of changes in the boundary and a "collapse" of the South Caucasian subcomplex will be considered. The order is explained by the fact that changes in the boundary would have the most serious consequences, so this aspect will be left for the last section.

4.1   Patterns of amity and enmity

According to Barry Buzan, patterns of amity and enmity arise from "border disputes, interests in ethnically related populations, and ideological alignments to longstanding historical links, whether positive or negative" (Buzan 1991: 189). Moreover, they are influenced "by various background factors such as history, culture, religion, geography, but to a large extent they are both path dependent and thus become their own best explanation" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 50). A relationship characterized by amity may range "from genuine friendship to expectation of protection or support" (Buzan 1991: 189). In contrast, a relationship characterized by enmity may involve "suspicion and fear" (ibid.).

In their 2003 work on "Regions and Powers", Buzan and Waever stress the importance of patterns of amity and enmity in the context of securitization. An RSC is characterized "by patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of subglobal, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 45). Accordingly, one factor that influences the security dynamics in an RSC is "the way actors, mostly but not exclusively states, construct their identity" (Derghoukassian 2006: 5-6).

There are three types of RSCs as a consequence of the dominance of either patterns of amity or patterns of enmity. In this regard, an RSC can be characterized as a conflict formation, a security regime or a security community (Buzan 1991: 218). These three options have to be imagined as placed along a continuum. Whereas a security community shows a high degree of so-called positive interdependence (and desecuritization), there is also interdependence in a conflict formation, but it is of negative nature (Buzan / Waever 2003: 489-491). Although typically the relationships between the members of security regimes tend towards rivalry, they differ from conflict formations, since a certain level of regional integration exists and mitigates the negative causes of patterns of enmity.

According to its NSS, Armenia "seeks the creation of a regional security system, and advocates the promotion of constructive relations among all neighboring states" (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 15). It promotes the idea of enhanced

dialogue and cooperation (ibid.). Even the wish for a normalization of the relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey is expressed in the document (ibid.). However, reality looks different and other sections of the NSS that have been outlined in the third chapter of this thesis reveal this.

In the context of the South Caucasus, Kevork Oskanian speaks of a so-called revisionist conflict formation (Oskanian 2010: 48). The term revisionist refers to the "lack of formal legal recognition that underlies [the] conflict", which "is based on the incompatible identities and values of the units involved" (ibid.: 105; 107). Conflict formation describes the existence of military competition "and a lack of formal security regimes aimed at resolving such military competition" (ibid.: 105). This description is, indeed, correct with respect to the South Caucasus. Oskanian also adds that "if the region is a revisionist conflict formation, governmental discourse at the unit level will see armed conflict as a constant possibility, and treat 'war' as a legitimate means of policy, as well as intensely securitising other units within the region as acute existential threats" (ibid.: 107). The Armenian NSS and leading Armenian politicians clearly securitise Azerbaijan as an acute existential threat and justify the war against the neighbouring country.

As the brief history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict outlined has shown, the 19th century plays a key role in understanding the ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus. The nationality policies in the Russian empire and later in the Soviet Union have caused a complex situation with regard to overlapping territorial claims and ethnic makeups. The "dramatically overlapping territorial claims and hopelessly mixed populations" then led to wars and massacres (ibid.).

The determinants of Armenia's foreign policy and the official reasoning behind its "u-turn", as declared in statements by President Sargsyan and other high-ranking politicians, show that, 21 years after the Bishkek ceasefire agreement, enmity still dominates the Armenian-Azerbaijani relationship and there is a strong degree of negative interdependence between these two countries. This impression has clearly been confirmed by looking at the Armenian NSS and the public opinion expressed in polls.

While Derghoukassian states that the Armenian-Georgian relations are dominated by rivalry, this is not an obvious conclusion (Derghoukassian 2006: 12). The same applies to his assumption that the Georgian-Azerbaijani relations are also "closer to the rivalry pattern than the amity" due to the role of the Azerbaijani minority in Georgia (ibid.). Georgia certainly "tends to play a centralizing role in the region" (German 2012: 27). Armenia's NSS states that "Armenia has traditionally enjoyed friendly relations with Georgia which have contributed to the maintenance of overall stability in the region" (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007: 16). In this context, infrastructure projects are highlighted and Armenia's hope is expressed that the inner-Georgian conflicts might be solved soon, so that Armenia could benefit from the Georgian highway- and railway-system (ibid.).

Whereas the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations could be analyzed in detail, because of their importance in the context of Armenia's accession to the EEU, the limited space in this thesis did not allow a closer look at the Armenian-Georgian relations, since the focus is on Russia's role in the region. Nevertheless, some aspects have been taken up, such as the transit issues.

Clearly, the Armenian-Georgian relations are, to a remarkable extent, shaped by the influence of foreign powers. This has also been part of the analysis so far, since Georgia has opted for the EU and against the EEU, for the exact offer that was declined by Armenia. It signed an AA in November 2013. Moscow divides the post-Soviet republics in two groups: those who are "friendly" to the idea of Eurasian integration and those who are "hostile" to it (Menabde 2014). The EU's Eastern Partnership countries also seem to be divided into at least two groups since the Vilnius Summit. In such a geopolitical environment, it might be difficult to maintain friendly relations. Moreover, the Georgian-American relations are the closest in the region. According to opinion polls by the Caucasus Research Center, 31% of the Georgians see the United States as the country's biggest ally (Caucasusbarometer 2013b; see Table 7). Russia, in contrast, is seen as the biggest enemy by 44% of the Georgians (Caucasusbarometer 2013b; see Table 8).

Table 7. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Georgia: Main friend of the country (%).

Answer	Frequency
USA	31
Azerbaijan	8
Russia	7
Ukraine	4
Turkey	3
Armenia	2
None	16
Other	4
DK	23
RA	2

Table 8. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Georgia: Main enemy of the country (%).

Answer	Frequency
Russia	44
USA	4
Turkey	3
None	17
Other	2
DK	29
RA	3

To sum it up, while Armenia and Azerbaijan might be bigger enemies, due to the ethnic conflicts and a difficult history (the countries are also divided by their religion and cultural differences), the Armenian-Georgian rivalry is mainly expressed in terms of alliances with different great powers, but this does not mean that such alliances do not play a special role in the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations as well.

Oskanian argues that "the competitive nature of great power penetration has played an essential role in maintaining the revisionist conflict formation" (Oskanian 2010: 103). To his mind, the "competitive penetration" has diminished "the chances for the emergence of a security regime" (ibid.: 116). However, he also points out that "while great power penetration affects the instrumental calculations of the regional units and actors, it has relatively little effects on their identities and values" (ibid.). Eventually, he concludes that changing patterns of penetration "would thus have a limited effect on any moves towards the more amicable parts of the amity/enmity spectrum because of their circumscribed influence on the argumentative portions of the security discourse" (ibid.: 123).

Both the Armenian-Georgian and the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations could become even more difficult due to Armenia's accession to the EEU. Since the two other countries will most likely not become members of the EEU soon, the Armenian "u-turn" could reinforce the "conflict formation" in the South Caucasus.

Armenia and Georgia strongly differ in their approach towards Russia and this is also reflected in the cultural context, not only in military-political decisions; this is an outcome of the special Armenian-Russian relationship outlined in the previous chapter. While many Georgians share critical views of Russia, this is not shared among large parts of the Armenian society. Recently a branch of Moscow State University has opened in Yerevan (de Waal 2014). The good Armenian-Russian relationship is also reflected in the language skills of the Armenians. Only 4% of the population have no basic knowledge, 85% say about themselves that they have intermediate or advanced knowledge of Russian (Caucasusbarometer 2013a; see Table 9). In a speech on 8th November 2013 the Russian former ambassador to Armenia, Vyacheslav Kovalenko, stressed that "Armenia and Russia are two Christian countries" (Ozinian 2013). Buzan and Waever call it "traditional Armenian behavior, as Christians, to seek Russian protection against Muslim neighbours" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 421).[9]

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[9] However, this contradicts Armenia's good relations with Iran to a certain extent.

Table 9. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Armenia: Knowledge of Russian (%).

Answer	Frequency
No basic knowledge	4
Beginner	12
Intermediate	60
Advanced	25

The EEU membership might reinforce a certain identity construction in Armenia, which brings the country culturally even closer to Russia. The opposite might happen in Georgia due to European integration. There have not been any direct border disputes between the countries, but disputes about ethnic minorities and transit issues. Conflict formation describes the existence of military competition; this is the case for the South Caucasus, but not for the bilateral Armenian-Georgian relationship, which, nevertheless, is of rival nature. As a consequence of the Russian influence on Armenia, cooperation between the countries might diminish, tariff issues discussed during the EEU association process could be seen as a first issue related to this development. So, the Armenian-Georgian relations show that the competitive nature of GPP in the region has the power to play an essential role in maintaining the revisionist conflict formation.

This is not Russia's responsibility alone; it is the result of the influence of more than one great power in the region. It is not likely that a "security regime" could evolve in the South Caucasus in the foreseeable future and the different interests of the great powers are an important reason for this; especially since these interests have even become more contradictory against the background of the events in Ukraine. The membership of Armenia in the CSTO and Georgia's close relations with NATO are also to consider in this regard. If Armenia managed to keep some level of complementarity, this could ease its relations with Georgia; but as stated in the last chapter, this depends on Russia to a certain extent as well, because Russia's reaction on the "small AA" is uncertain.

Azerbaijan follows the approach of a "balanced" foreign policy. There are no Russian troops on Azerbaijani territory anymore (which is different from both the Armenian and

the Georgian case) (Iskandaryan 2008: 533). Azerbaijan did not extend its contract with Russia on a radar station in Gabala in 2012 (Babajew 2014: 96). Due to its wealth, the country is confident enough to remain comparably independent from outside powers. The National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan sees the country "at the crossroads of the West and East", but "East" refers to the "Islamic world", not to the CIS (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007: 3). 91% of the Azerbaijani regard Turkey as the country's best friend, only 1% mention Russia in this context (Caucasusbarometer 2013c; see Table 10). The main issues in this regard have been pointed out in the last chapter.

Table 10. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Azerbaijan: Main friend of the country (%).

Answer	Frequency
Turkey	91
Russia	1
Iran	1
Other	1
None	1
DK/RA	5

The biggest enemy of the country is clearly Armenia, 90% of the population think so; but 7% are of the opinion that Russia plays this role (ibid.; see Table 11). As for Nagorno-Karabakh, the Azerbaijani population is sure that it should not be a part of Armenia (Caucasusbarometer 2013c; see Table 12). Azerbaijan argues that Armenia is behaving in an aggressive way in Nagorno-Karabakh, breaking international law and even committing a genocide (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007: 4). This "will inevitably continue to affect negatively relations between the two states also in the future" (ibid.: 6). While Azerbaijan "views regional cooperation as an indispensable factor for maintaining peace and stability in the region", its national security concept also says that "the aggressive policy of Armenia is a major obstacle to comprehensive regional cooperation in the South Caucasus" (ibid.: 8).

Table 11. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Azerbaijan: Main enemy of the country (%).

Answer	Frequency
Armenia	90
Russia	7
Other	2
None	0
DK/RA	1

Table 12. Caucasusbarometer 2013 Azerbaijan: Favor/not accept - Have Nagorno-Karabakh as a formal part of Armenia (%).

Answer	Frequency
Never accept	96
Accept under certain circumstances	0
Definitely favour	0
DK/RA	4

The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan is the key issue in the region in terms of negative security interdependence and the consequent status of a conflict formation. The historical dimension has already been touched upon in this section and adds up to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As for Russia's role in this, it can be said that it is not as obvious as in the Armenian-Georgian case. It has been outlined that Russia also sells weapons to Azerbaijan. A "balanced" foreign policy approach does not mean that Azerbaijan excludes the option of close cooperation with Russia; it rather results in the opposite.

Nagorno-Karabakh has not joined the EEU, which is a logical consequence of the fact that none of the EEU members recognize it. However, border controls have not been introduced. At least in this regard, Russia has supported the Armenian position. Anyways,

despite its close relationship with Armenia, which has even become considerably stronger within the last two years, especially due to Armenia's EEU accession and despite several unpleasant incidents (such as a murder case linked to a Russian soldier stationed at the military base in Gyumri), Russia does not hesitate to use its position as a great power and to cooperate with Azerbaijan as well.

Nevertheless, since patterns of amity and enmity have a lot to do with identity construction and cultural aspects, the Russian factor does certainly rather divide than unite Azerbaijan and Armenia in this context. The opening of a branch of Moscow State University in Yerevan is just one example, Russia's efforts to become more visible in its "near abroad" are strongly connected to cultural aspects and a value-system different from the liberal European one. Identities and values are usually constructed over a longer period of time. As mentioned above, according to Oskanian, GPP has usually little effects on identities and values. This is not disputed here in the framework of the analysis of short-term relations. In the long run, however, Russia's efforts might lead to even deeper enmities between Armenia and Azerbaijan and also between Armenia and Georgia.

Russia has made some proposals with regard to formal security regimes and actively participated in the Minsk Group. However, not only the competition with other members of the Minsk Group and other great powers active in the region, but also Russia's simultaneous interest in good relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan have hindered the creation of such regimes and a solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It does, eventually, not matter in this regard, if Russia is interested in solving the disputes at all or would rather prefer a "stable conflict" in the South Caucasus. The recent tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border are an indicator of the fact that Armenia's EEU accession might not lead to peace, as claimed by some Armenian officials, but rather cement the conflict. By contributing to the arms race between the two countries, Russia does also not help to achieve a peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

As presented in the third chapter, when asked for the pitfalls of EU and EEU integration, the Armenian respondents answered that they were afraid of a loss of traditions concerning EU integration and of a loss of sovereignty with regard to EEU integration.

This fear reveals the character of the Armenian-Russian relations and Russia's possible influence on patterns of amity and enmity in the South Caucasus. The "traditionalist" approach which the Kremlin proclaims seems to be successful in the context of the Armenian-Russian relations; the cultural ties are getting stronger. However, this development will take time and does not have a strong impact on current patterns of amity and enmity. Furthermore, by giving up its complementarity principle (at least to some extent), Armenia strengthens the patterns of enmity in so far that the alignments of the three South Caucasian states with different great powers are becoming even more contradictory than before.

4.2   The distribution of power

As in the case of patterns of amity and enmity, it is important to first consider the regional level alone when looking at the balance of power; effects of penetrating external powers should be added later (Buzan / Waever 2003: 47).

The character of the patterns of amity and enmity and the distribution of power are connected in so far that the dominance of enmity leads to a situation where the distribution of power becomes even more important than normally (Derghoukassian 2006: 4). Cruden sees the distribution of power as, in a way, subordinated to patterns of amity and enmity, stating that it contributes "to shaping the possibilities for alignment", but cannot "shape the entire character of the region" (Cruden 2011: 213). In so far, considering the results of the previous section, the change caused by Russia's influence on the distribution of power in the South Caucasus has its limits.

The distribution of power in the South Caucasus and especially between Armenia and Azerbaijan largely follows the neorealist logic. Both states want to increase their own power and security and pursue their own material interests (Babajew 2014: 91). Their relatively small size leads to a situation in which the South Caucasian states are influenced by great powers and the structures of the international system determine their foreign policy options (ibid.). Armenia's NSS, however, reveals a rather defensive-neorealist approach. Armenia's main concern with regard to its security is that the distribution of power in the South Caucasus could become unbalanced and favour Azerbaijan. So, it mainly aims at keeping the status quo.

Expecting that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could be directly solved due to Armenia's membership in the EEU and that Russia would multiply its efforts in this context, seems highly unrealistic, which has already been explained in this thesis. Arkady Areshev, a Russian specialist on security issues in the South Caucasus at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, called those who expect such a development "disconnected from reality" (Goble 2014). By saying this, he responded to Vladimir Lepekhin, the director of the Institute of the Eurasian Economic Community, who, earlier,

had claimed that "the simultaneous inclusion of Azerbaijan and Armenia into the Eurasian Economic Union would mean not only a new level of integration for the Union but also the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia" (ibid.). Armenian sources even predicted that the EEU accession would "boost the defense capacity of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and (…) force Baku into peace" (Stepanyan 2015).

In fact, rather the opposite could be true. Joining the EEU was "the last ace Armenia had to play with Russia" (IWPR Caucasus 2015). Consequently, Russia's focus could now become to convince Azerbaijan of joining the EEU as well (or at least to further strengthen its ties with Azerbaijan). Eventually, this could also change its position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict yet again. In any case, Russia can simply not afford to lose another country from its "sphere of influence", as it did in the cases of Georgia and Ukraine (Babajew 2014: 98). In 2013, at a visit in Baku, President Putin called Azerbaijan an "old, traditionally reliable partner" (Babajew 2014: 97).

There have also been mixed messages from Russia with regard to Armenia's claim that Russia would have to defend its CSTO-partner in case of an Azerbaijani attack. Col. Andrey Ruzinsky, commander of the military base in Gyumri, recently affirmed Russia's preparedness in case that Azerbaijan tries to restore jurisdiction over its breakaway region by force (Makarychev / Yatsyk: 4). Before, however, Russia had always declared that an attack on Nagorno-Karabakh would not be a direct danger to a CSTO member state, since Nagorno-Karabakh is not part of Armenia, but of Azerbaijan (Halbach / Smolnik 2014: 5). In 1992, the former Armenian President Levan Ter-Petrosyan even asked Russia officially for support in the war with Azerbaijan, citing the CSTO agreements, but the request was rejected as unfounded and inappropriate (Fuller 1994: 15).

Since Russia has an obvious economic and strategic interest in Armenia's enemy, there is no big military-political advantage Armenia gets by its accession except from cheaper weapons and a possible (but unlikely) boost for the economy in general. The real rationale behind President Sargsyan's decision is more likely to keep the status quo in the region for as long as possible. The maintenance of the status quo is also in Russia's interest,

since it allows the great power to use its leverage against both Armenia and Azerbaijan. This has often been referred to when Russia was criticized for not making serious efforts to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Babajew 2014: 98).

In a speech to government ministers in January 2015, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said: "The truth is that the continued occupation of our lands is not just the work of Armenia. Armenia is a powerless and poor country. It is in a helpless state. Of course, if it didn't have major patrons in various capitals, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would have been resolved fairly long ago" (Herzsenshorn 2015). In fact, "the indigenous polarity of a given region may become practically irrelevant if it is heavily penetrated by extra-regional powers" (Oskanian 2010: 99). GPP plays a major role concerning the regional distribution of power, since outside powers can provide regional states with a strength they would otherwise lack and thus shape the polarity more than significantly. Armenia is a member of the CSTO, Georgia is strongly supported by the West, Azerbaijan receives support from several sides and regards Turkey as its closest ally. Armenia's EEU membership and the fact that President Sargsyan and other parts of the Armenian elite used the accession to point at the importance of Russia for a (pro-Armenian) solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as well as Georgia's signature of an AA might lead to a further increase of the influence of foreign powers.

Economic aspects should not be underrated either, especially where they are indirectly relevant for the military-political strength of a unit. Azerbaijan can build on a growing economy, which will also lead to a further remarkable increase of its military budget in the mid-term (and this could severely affect Armenia through the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict). Armenia is dependent on economic support, for example by discounts on weapons or gas. Azerbaijan wants to keep its independence and thus denies to become part of either the "Western-bloc" or the "Eastern-bloc", but it can afford this at the moment. Russia's role in the conflict, however, is one major reason why the country had to give up its single-vector Western foreign policy orientation, which it pursued until the mid-1990s (Minasyan 2015: 8).

So far, only the possible Russian influence on the distribution of power has been discussed. But have there been any changes in the distribution of power recently, linked to Armenia's decision for the EEU? In fact, Armenia might have lost leverage towards Russia and risked its economic independence (which is particularly problematic because of the current recession in Russia), but it has gained some short-term benefits, such as cheaper weapons and investment in infrastructure. For the moment, the status-quo can be kept, despite Azerbaijani investments and increased efforts in gaining control over Nagorno-Karabakh back. As to Georgia, the country remains the "centre" of the region due to its diplomatic relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan.[10] Tariff disputes and further debates on transit from Russia to Armenia via Georgia might be impending in the near future, but so far the Armenian accession to the EEU has not seriously affected Georgia's power. Indirectly, Russia's military presence in Armenia, which has been reinforced by the country's EEU membership, might be a concern for Georgia due to its ongoing conflicts with Russia in Abkhazia and South Ossetia; but this is a theoretical and future-oriented issue.

The situation in Ukraine and Russia's new geopolitical role have triggered a stronger role of Russia in the South Caucasus. However, the analysis has shown that, up to now, the distribution of power has only been affected by this in that Armenia has been able to keep at least some level of balance towards Azerbaijan. Eventually, the Russian involvement might lead to more severe changes, though. This depends on geopolitical developments, but also on the behaviour of regional actors and the future regional discourse. It is still not very realistic, but, at least, it has possibly become more realistic that Russia could support its CSTO-partner Armenia actively in case of a large Azerbaijani attack on Armenian troops. Furthermore, Armenia's EEU accession and the war in Eastern Ukraine, absurdly, could have led to a situation in which the Azerbaijani government reconsiders its balanced foreign policy approach and moves closer towards Russia as well. Similarly, the Georgian government could have second thoughts regarding the signed AA. In such cases, Russia's role regarding the distribution of power in the South Caucasus could increase (again).

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[10] The subcomplex is not seen as „centralised" as defined by RSCT here. The notion might be a bit irritating, but "centre" only points at Georgia's role as the only country in the region with diplomatic relations to the two other countries.

4.3 Boundary of the South Caucasian subcomplex

In a unipolar centred RSC, it is, to a certain extent, to expect that due to the global orientation of the core actor, "the security dynamics of the region are hugely distorted and suppressed" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 56). In other words, penetration by great powers that are "indigenous" to a centred RSC "will logically have an element of automaticity about it; they will be deemed to be both members and penetrators of 'their' respective regions" (Oskanian 2010: 86).

In general, there is the option that "the regional level fails to function because the local actors do not generate their own patterns of security interdependence" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 61). There are two general conditions in which this can be the case: overlay and "unstructured" (ibid.). While the latter is not relevant in the context of this study, the former needs to be explained in further detail.

Overlay describes a situation in which great powers transcend mere penetration, and come to dominate a region so heavily that the local pattern of security relations virtually ceases to operate (ibid.). It emerges "as a relevant option at high degrees of disparity" to the advantage of the global powers (ibid.: 68). The usual consequence of this is "the long-term stationing of great power armed forces in the region" and "the alignment of the local states according to the patterns of great power rivalry" (ibid.: 61). The outside powers then "shape the main security dynamics of the region" (ibid.: 63). This is often achieved by force, which means by the invasion or occupation of a region, but there is also the option of a semi-voluntary acceptance of overlay, "when local states agree to subordinate themselves to a significant degree to an outside hegemon, and accept the stationing of its forces on their territory" (ibid.).

However, there is one important exclusion from overlay: the term cannot be applied to dynamics within regions "although the pattern in a centred RSC in some ways can be seen as analogous because a great (or super) power dominates a region" (ibid.: 62). Under these conditions, "the region has not succumbed to extra-regional dynamics and therefore the situation is not designated overlay" (ibid.).

So far, the term "great power penetration" has widely been used in this thesis in order to describe Russia's influence on Armenia. In fact, Russia is a great power and, in this regard, this notion is not wrong. However, it is also a regional power. Oskanian considers patterns of GPP in the South Caucasus to be "competitive-multipolar" (ibid.: 4). There are several great and regional powers competing in the South Caucasus, namely the US, the EU, Iran, Turkey and Russia. Russia's influence is objectively the highest among the great powers and it does exist independently from the current Russian government (Iskandaryan 2008: 532-533).

Concerning the issue of boundaries, first it should be asked if Russia's influence has become considerably bigger in recent years. As the case study has shown, this is true for Armenia. The country made a choice, which has led to an even more asymmetric relationship with Russia. Georgia, however, has decided to sign an AA. Although Bidzina Ivanishvili might be not as pro-Western as Georgia's former President Saakashvili and has applied a more pragmatic approach towards the big neighbour, this is a clear indicator for the fact that he has not changed the country's general approach until this point. Moreover, on the one hand, Georgia increased its trade volumes with Russia in 2013 remarkably, despite the signing of the AA (Halbach / Smolnik 2014: 3), but on the other hand the recent "Integration- and Association Agreements" of Russia and Abkhazia in October 2014 and of Russia and South Ossetia in March 2015 have complicated the Georgian-Russian relations yet again (Stöber 2014; Boden 2014: 1). In the case of Azerbaijan, the increased weapon imports could be an indicator for closer ties with Russia, but official statements have sent mixed messages and the Russian military support for Armenia has been criticized.

Just briefly after the Vilnius Summit, Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to Armenia. He ran a "victory lap" in Yerevan (Socor 2013d). According to Vladimir Socor, Armenia's no to the AA "was comparable with the 1947 rejection of the Mashall plan by the Moscow-dominated governments in Central and Eastern Europe, since once again Moscow creates an own economic bloc in order to guarantee long-term military control" (Socor 2013b). But has Armenia really turned into "Russia's outpost in the South Caucasus", as Duma chairman Boris Gryzlov already said in 2004? Is the relationship between Armenia and

Russia a "patron-client relationship" as a US commentator already stated in the early 1990s (Fuller 1994: 12)? And what does this mean for the South Caucasian subcomplex and Armenia's role in it?

The analysis conducted in the third chapter shows that Armenia is, indeed, on the way to becoming "Russia's outpost". The country has – more or less deliberately – given Russia manifold opportunities to exert power on it. But the door for sticking to the principle of complementarity might not be closed yet.

Overall, Russia faces one major issue in the South Caucasus: the idea of the "Russian world" does not apply here, or only to a very limited extent; there is no big ethnic Russian population in the South Caucasus (Makarychev / Yatsyk 2014: 2; Halbach / Smolnik 2013: 29). Some regions (like Abkhazia or South Ossetia) have to be excluded from this, though. Russia can, thus, not rely on its soft power (Makarychev / Yatsyk 2014: 5). Consequently, it has to look for other ways to pursue its interests in the region and guarantee its influence. As typical of Russia and unlike the EU, the leadership does not try to convince other governments of the superiority of its own approach; it rather forces them to follow Russia by excluding other options (ibid.: 3). In the case of Armenia's EEU accession, Moscow used the "security trump" and the fact that Armenia was of the opinion that its security was directly threatened (ibid.). Makarychev and Yatsyk even refer to the "neocolonial nature of the Russian reintegration project" in this context (ibid.). Furthermore, to their mind, "it remains doubtful that reliance on material interests and physical dependence on Russia (from economy to security) constitutes a solid foundation for Russian long-term hegemony in the South Caucasus" (ibid.: 5).

Whereas the occurrence of an overlay "subordinates" local security dynamics to the larger pattern of major power rivalries and may even "obliterate" them, a simple intervention "usually reinforces the local security dynamics" (Buzan / Waever / de Wilde 1998: 12-13). This is due to the fact that interdependence can also be negative and does not necessarily have to mean cooperation. However, as already explained, the term "overlay" is not suitable in the context of a regional power in a centred RSC anyway, albeit the penetration happens in an "analogous" way, since in such a case not extra-regional, but

intra-regional dynamics influence the internal situation. The question that remains is if the regional power's (Russia's) influence could, nevertheless, shape the boundary of the subcomplex in some way.

RSCT also includes the concept of insulators. The term insulator "defines a location occupied by one or more units where larger regional security dynamics stand back to back" (Buzan / Waever 2003: 41). Both states and so-called mini-complexes can serve this purpose. Buzan and Waever argue that the South Caucasus functions as an insulating zone between Russia and the Middle East (ibid.: 111). Nevertheless, it is has not transformed into a mini-complex (yet), but remains a subcomplex of the post-Soviet RSC (ibid.: 484). "Region and Powers" is twelve years old. Could it be the key to come to the conclusion that the South Caucasus functions as a mini-complex now, due to Russia's penetration? The answer is clearly no.

Russia does not push Armenia or any state towards the Middle East, but tries to tighten the boundaries of the post-Soviet RSC. Buzan and Waever themselves set the condition for a transformation of the South Caucasian subcomplex into an isolating "mini-complex", which would be a "continued weakening of Russian power and/or consolidation of statehood" (ibid.). This transformation could be supported by the consolidation of a bipolarized pattern involving both regional states and external powers (ibid.: 423).

Consequently, it is imaginable that the South Caucasus could form into a "mini-complex" under the condition that the subcomplex is "bipolarized". Indeed, some experts argue that two competing geopolitical "axes" exist in the South Caucasus: Baku-Tbilisi-Ankara-Washington and Moscow-Yerevan-Teheran (Dschafarow 2009: 45). The conclusion that this could mean that the subcomplex has transformed into an isolating "mini-complex" is, however, wrong. The reason for this is that the bipolarization does not take place along the lines of two neighbouring RSCs. The subcomplex cannot transform into an isolator between the post-Soviet RSC and the Middle Eastern RSC through a conflict which is mainly fought between Russia and the "West", namely the EU and the US. Turkey and Iran are merely supporting actors in this game.

The only option left for mid-term changes in the boundary caused by Russia's influence and Armenia's move to join the EEU would be a "classical" external transformation. In this case, the boundary would expand or contract. The most obvious way for this to happen would, as already explained, be the merger of two RSCs. This option will be analyzed here in two ways. The theoretical answer to the question if Russia can cause an external transformation could be that it is not an "external" power, but a part of the RSC and, consequently, cannot.

At least, such a conclusion appears to be logical considering Buzan's and Waever's reason for excluding the option of an overlay caused by a regional power which is a member of the same RSC. However, there is one important point in this context which has not been mentioned in this thesis yet. One could (in both regards) say that Buzan and Waever did actually not refer to a subcomplex when they excluded the option of an overlay through a regional power, but only to dynamics which concern the RSC itself. A counterargument to this would be that, in any case, the dynamics still remain intra-regional at some level and the natural interdependencies with regional powers from the same RSC are stronger than with other great powers. Eventually, it appears more logical that a subcomplex can, in fact, be "overlayed". Otherwise, there would, practically, be no chance for any external transformation with regard to subcomplexes. Buzan and Waever also argue that many regional processes were "overlayed" during the Cold War by the global Soviet-American competition and this includes countries which are now part of subcomplexes within the post-Soviet (or other) RSCs. If subcomplexes emerged from RSCs, there also has to be the option that they, again, merge with them.

At the end of this thesis, a practical answer to the question if Russia can cause an external transformation can and should be given as well, since the results of the analysis allow this. Armenia's mere decision for the EEU is no indicator for a possible collapse of the South Caucasian subcomplex. It has, so far, rather strengthened the (negative) interdependencies between the three countries. Russian military is stationed in Armenia, but neither is the number of soldiers impressive, nor has the presence of Russian military in Nagorno-Karabakh and Gyumri (and earlier also in Georgia and Azerbaijan) led to an

overlay of the subcomplex within the last 21 years; security interdependencies have continued to exist.

If the geopolitical tensions continued and a "New Cold War" with a similar scope broke out, this could change. But in such a (at this point rather unlikely) case, not only subcomplexes could cease to exist. An escalation of the geopolitical situation and a new bipolarity could mean the end of the regional approach to security in general. In fact, the post-Soviet RSC would, under such (unlikely) conditions, possibly be the first that would be "taken over" by Russia, since Russia's influence there is, already, strong.

5   Conclusion

It has been the aim of this thesis to define and explain the impact that Russia's efforts towards the South Caucasus in the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit have had on security dynamics in this region. In order to do so, Russia's role with regards to Armenia's accession to the EEU and its implications on regional security dynamics have been analyzed in detail. It has been outlined to what extent Armenia's "u-turn" has changed its general foreign policy approach and how regional security dynamics have been affected by this.

It has been argued that the South Caucasus is a distinct subcomplex within the post-Soviet RSC. With regards to possible changes in the essential elements of this subcomplex, the analysis has focussed on three of these elements: patterns of amity and enmity, the distribution of power and the boundary of the subcomplex.

The results of the study lead to the following conclusions on the three initial hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Russia's GPP has led to changes in patterns of amity and enmity.

This hypothesis has not (explicitly) been confirmed, since it has been argued that changes in patterns of amity and enmity require time and not enough time has passed yet to evaluate the impact of Russia's actions in the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit. It is, however, possible to state that Russia's GPP may lead to changes in the patterns of amity and enmity in the region. Armenia's EEU accession could reinforce certain differences in terms of cultural identity and, generally, Russia's GPP has the power to play an essential role in, at least, maintaining the revisionist conflict formation and, possibly, also strengthening this condition. The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Russia's role in it are key issues in this context. Furthermore, by giving up its complementarity principle (at least to some extent), Armenia strengthens the patterns of enmity in so far that the alignments of the three South Caucasian states with different great powers are becoming even more contradictory than before.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The distribution of power has changed due to Russia's influence.

The second hypothesis has been confirmed. Armenia's main concern with regard to its security is that the distribution of power in the South Caucasus could become unbalanced and favour Azerbaijan. So, it mainly aims at keeping the status quo (regardless of populist statements which claim the approaching victory of the Armenian forces in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict). While Armenia has, in a sense, lost its "last ace" it had to play with Russia by entering the EEU, and Russia could possibly shift the focus towards strengthening its ties with Azerbaijan in the future, President Sargsyan has, at least, achieved some, albeit limited, short-term military-political benefits for his country. Armenia does now get a (higher) discount on Russian weapons and Russia invests in infrastructural projects. The EEU accession could possibly also lead to a boost for the economy in general, although it has been argued in this paper that this is not very likely. In the short-term, the distribution of power has changed in favour of Armenia which does, however, not lead to any territorial gains for the country, but rather helps its leadership to maintain the status quo, at least, for a bit longer.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Nevertheless, the RSC is not in danger of breaking apart. On the contrary, Russia's policy has even reinforced local security dynamics.

The third hypothesis has been confirmed as well. It has become clear that the South Caucasian countries are still being closely tied by their security interdependencies, albeit the character of these interdependencies can be described as largely negative. This is a key point, which has been stressed in this thesis. Russia's GPP has not caused an external transformation (yet). Armenia's mere decision for the EEU is no indicator for a possible collapse of the South Caucasian subcomplex. It has, so far, rather strengthened the (negative) interdependencies between the three countries.

As stated in the second chapter, the authors of RSCT claim that after the end of the Cold War, the remaining superpower and the other great powers had less incentive and displayed less political will to intervene in security affairs outside their own regions. However, due to the recent developments in Eastern Ukraine, some commentators see the

emergence of a "New Cold War". This could lead to the conclusion that regional security dynamics could be subordinated to the new East-West conflict or even obliterated in the near future, similar to the situation during the Cold War.

If the geopolitical tensions continued and a "New Cold War" with a similar scope broke out, the boundary of the South Caucasian subcomplex could, indeed, change. The subcomplex could cease to exist. However, this is a hypothetical scenario. Moreover, such an escalation of the geopolitical situation could mean the (temporary) end of the regional approach to security in general.

In any case, there is a small number of great powers which have the ability to transcend long distances in their security relations. Russia is one example of such a great power. However, Russia is also the dominant regional power in the post-Soviet RSC. This RSC is clearly centred on Russia. Its role in the post-Soviet Russia can be characterized as very dominant and it aims at increasing its influence on other states in the RSC. As it has been pointed out, Russia's role in the Armenian case largely follows the same logic as GPP, although Russia and the South Caucasus are part of the same RSC.

This study has not only (but also) applied Buzan's and Waever's theoretical framework to a practical case and, in so far, complemented their study, since they did not have the space for detailed analyses with regard to all regions. It has contributed to the understanding of regional security dynamics in the South Caucasus, Russia's role in it and possible future consequences, which is highly topical due to the current geopolitical situation. Furthermore it has explained the special position of regional powers which are at the same great powers, and – by studying the Russian case - their relation to other units in their respective RSCs. This might even be its most important contribution, since this aspect had been widely ignored in the past and further studies could base their analysis on arguments highlighted in this thesis.

Regular updates of this study, potentially with a larger scope and an extensive sample of primary sources, could reveal how Russia's role in the South Caucasus and the entire

post-Soviet RSC is changing and what this means for all three levels of analysis mentioned in the introduction, the subcomplex, the RSC and the global level.

The conflicts in the South Caucasus remain. Armenia has made a decision which it may not be able to correct. It has opted for even closer ties with Russia and eventually approved that this could mean that it turns into "Russia's outpost", although official statements suggest that this is not in the elite's own interest. Its problematic position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its international isolation, as well as Russia's leverage against it, have led Armenia's ruling forces to this step. To a certain extent, this study has shown what this could mean for the country's future. Further studies focusing more on Armenia could deal with particular aspects, such as Armenia's economic advantages and disadvantages through its EEU accession or the exact distribution of power in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Russia's factual influence in terms of military power.

This thesis has made it clear that Armenia and the entire South Caucasus share a destiny with many other states and regions: They are influenced by outside powers. Nevertheless, it has also underlined that regional dynamics are considerably independent from this influence. The role of superpowers, great powers and regional powers is an important aspect, especially if an overlay is impending; but its scope should, nevertheless, not be overestimated or dramatised. If the regimes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were independent and brave enough to step forward and look for serious long-term solutions to the existing conflicts, they could possibly find the keys to their problems themselves and would not have to look for allies from outside the region.

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