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The EU Foreign Policy: Discursive Impact and 'Actorness'

Analysis of the EU-Russia Negotiations over the
Conflict in Georgia

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Abstract

This study is about rigorously motivating dynamics of the European Union – its discursive capacity to effectuate change as a *sui generis* actor in foreign policy. It builds on the case study of the conflict between Russia and Georgia, involvement in which proved to be one of the most successful diplomatic endeavors of the EU. Whilst effectuating positive change towards more inclusiveness and certain predictability with Russia, the EU arguably opened the door for a new political dimension to the east of its borders. The analysis also looks broader on some new features of the EU foreign policy ‘actorness’ extracted from the empirical observations.

It aims to disentangle counterintuitive interrelationships in interaction of the two political logics applying discourse analysis. It concludes that together with possibilities the unique nature of the EU consisting of 27 *soft* rationalities of its member states will always have to account for some contextual challenges. However, it does not render the EU as an actor impossible; rather it formulates its unique integrative framework.

Key words: EU/Russia negotiations, EU foreign policy, actorness, discourses, impact

Word count: 19643

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List of Abbreviations and Illustrations

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
EC	European Community
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EU	The European Union
EU FP	European Union Foreign Policy
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia
RS	Rational Supranationalism (Theory)
G20	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America
IR	International Relations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIS	Newly Independent States
NO	North Ossetia
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SO	South Ossetia
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America

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Chapter I

Introduction and Study Overview

1.1. Introduction

This study is about a rigorously motivating capture of current European Union (EU) dynamics - the EU as a foreign policy actor studied on the example of negotiations with Russia over the conflict in Georgia.

The EU relationship to its near abroad has never seized to grasp attention in many ways. Just as it is a complicated web of analytically fascinating interdependencies, it is arguably the biggest practical challenge for the EU in terms of framing of its political influence in strategically important region for its future.

Brief recap of the European and the Russian media coverage on the EU-Russia agreement for peace in Georgia demonstrated that the aspirations regarding the EU diplomatic role in this process ranged from deeply opportunistic to deeply antagonistic. Did the EU get it right? Did the EU *do* it right? Particular analysis departs from several empirical observations that despite the disagreements within the dynamics of negotiations, the talks with Russia proceeded and managed to generate certain impact.

The claim about EU ineffectiveness to confront Russian expansionism is probably not quite accurate both on the accounts of complete EU ineffectiveness and of the Russian obstinacy to react to the EU plead.

At least, softer measures could not be related to inability to generate a framework for the EU interests – the EU delivered consistent messages and pursued with several concrete policies targeted at the establishment and maintenance of peace in Georgia. At most, these messages effectuated some change, although limited, in the Russian behavior. Thus, the discourse of the EU can be measured though the lenses of reserved rationality, which does not contradict transformative ontology of the EU system both for itself and for other actors.

1.1.1. The conflict¹



The memorable date of '08.08.08' marked history as the Olympic opening in Beijing, and the outbreak war in Georgia - arguably one of the most uncivilized conflicts in modern history.

Close to midnight, Thursday, 7 August 2008. Georgia led by President Mikhail Saakashvili launched a surprise attack on Tskhinvali, the capital of the breakaway territory of South Ossetia (SO), Georgia's conflict-zone of two-decades, claiming to "restore constitutional order" (BBC 2008a, Lenta 2008a).

By Friday afternoon, the city of Tskhinvali is occupied by the Georgian forces reflected by the Russian and the Georgian peacekeepers mandated in SO. North Ossetia (NO) and Abkhazia send their reinforcement to Tskhinvali continuously urging Russia to take part (Lenta 2008a), while the international community pleads to stop hostilities. Thousands of refugees flee from SO, hundreds die or wounded. By late afternoon Russia pours its "58th" army and air force, which demobilizes the Georgian army in SO and

¹ The map adopted from www.stratfor.com, illustration of Kareli, Gori, Marneuli added by the author

military bases in Vaziani, Kareli and Gori, including air force base in Marneuli (see map) by early evening (Lenta 2008a.b).

August 9. Georgia declares “a state of war”; Russia and the US clash severely over Georgia at the UN Council (BBC 2008a, Lenta 2008b). The EU sends first delegation to the Georgian capital of Tbilisi attempting to stop fire, lead by the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner accompanied by the Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, also the president of the OSCE, who continue the talks in Moscow the next day expressing the need for “a new language and a new mode of co-operation” emphasizing the EU has no plans of “giving offence” (Telegraph 2008k). On August 10 Georgia begins ceasefire accusing Russia of invasion, yet operations on both sides continue providing increasingly controversial information; anger in Moscow escalates placing itself around the Georgian Black Sea coast (BBC 2008a).

Meanwhile, in the framework of the EU Presidency, French President Nicolas Sarkozy supported by Mr. Kouchner calls Moscow and engages into negotiations (BBC 2008a). He elaborates an agreement for peace, and personally flies to Moscow on August 12 to sit at the table with the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, hours after Medvedev announces the operation in Georgia can be complete (Medvedev 2008c). This gives birth to the ‘Sarkozy – Medvedev Agreement’ (also plan or deal) of 6 points, which will be brokered by the Presidency the same day between Moscow and Tbilisi securing the ceasefire. On August 13 the EU expresses “grave concern” and commitment to support the “lasting solution” in Georgia (Council 2008a.b). Yet, the Plan will have its ‘black holes’ formulating intensive negotiations between Moscow and the EU (Telegraph 2008i), and will be considered implemented only on October 8 2008 – 2 months after the outbreak of the war (Solana 2008l.m). The key events in the two discourses would be represented by the Extraordinary European Council on September 1 2008 in Brussels, and defining delegation to Moscow on September 8 2008 represented by Sarkozy and Kouchner with the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and the EU High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana.

1.2. Study Overview

This study is about the European Union and its discursive capacity as a supranational foreign policy actor. The aim is to analyze the impact of the EU on the Russian behavior as a result of negotiations around the conflict over the Georgian breakaway territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia framed by the 'Sarkozy - Medvedev Agreement'.

The interest rests also in the broader context of the EU as a foreign policy actor. Specific case-study will be used to generate several hypotheses about the factors that may have influenced the negotiation process and that can be extended to the EU foreign policy 'actorness' in general, such as reserved rationality in the EU logic and the importance of personal representation.

The study maintains the following analytical framework: the EU is a supranational foreign policy actor that exists in a complex international environment. Whilst pursuing with its foreign policy its unique nature, that after all encapsulates 27 'normal' states, challenges to overcome contextual pressures as well as historical bi-lateral ties of its members. Constructive capacity to change other actors' behavior here finds its limits (at least before circumstances change), which could be understood as *reserved* constructivist change.

This does not mean that these challenges render the EU as a foreign policy actor impossible. Although opinions in process of the EU discourse formation can sometimes differ, the member-states instead of stumbling into the process chose to follow the logic of *soft* rationality – measured both in relation to each other and to the framework of the EU. The EU discourse evolves with every step; its successful ventures such as negotiations with Russia over Georgia may help understand the new dimensions to the EU as a foreign policy actor.

The Russian case is fresh and remarkable in various respects. First, Russia is not just a random actor. It entails the legacy of complicated socio-political interdependencies with the Union member-states. Moreover, it tends to view the EU in close relation to NATO – which can be interpreted as essentially skeptic. Finally, Russia is the main strategic EU partner in energy and trade, therefore the Union cannot be viewed as a power superior to Russia in that sense. This context creates certain 'quality check' for the EU.

1.2.1. Problem Formulation and Questions

As rightfully noticed by one political scientist, studying illusive and complicated cooperation between the states would be undertaken by “no sensible person (...) on the grounds that its puzzles could readily be solved” (Keohane 1984: 10).

This study does not claim to simplify this reality. Conversely, it treats the EU discourse as representative of one

supranational actor – a complicated venture with various interdependencies, neither merely a number of bi-lateral relationships, nor a common political identity. This discourse encapsulates the interests of the EU members and changes behavior of other actors.

The analysis is concerned with 1) Specific context of the EU – Russia negotiation process, and 2) Broader context of the EU ‘actorness’. It combines constructivist observation of the impact of the EU negotiation process with the dynamics of its advance viewed through the prism of soft rationality extracted from the rational supranationalism theory.

The study will be guided by two questions, which are rather interrogative frameworks:

I. What was the impact of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior?

The aim here is in-depth assessment of the EU and the Russian discourses and their interaction. Firstly, the analysis observes two discourses in parallel comparing perceptions of the conflict. This is done with the purpose to highlight strategic contrast and correlation, which will help to elucidate the two narratives surrounding the conflict to subsequently test for change: ‘*Sharing Competencies in the Caucasus*’ and ‘*The New Security Architecture?*’.

Secondly, the impact of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior will be analyzed in interaction between the two discourses. Taking into account the specifics of the case, it is possible to observe discursive change both in relation to practical EU measures, and simultaneous penetration of its principles. Hence the second step is to assess the impact of the EU civil and diplomatic measures, finally, the impact around the narratives elaborated previously.

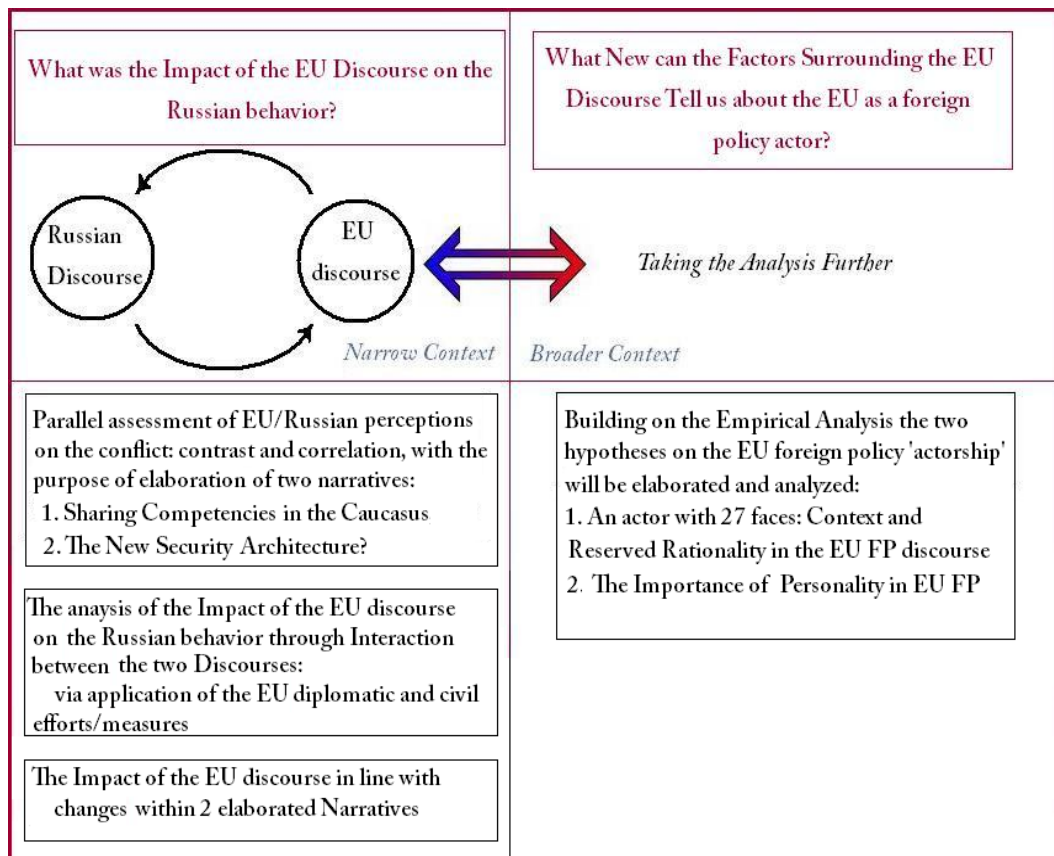
This will be presented in the Chapter 3, which is the main empirical part of the study and will provide grounds for elaboration of subsequent hypotheses about the EU ‘actorness’.

II. What new can the dynamics of the EU discourse tell us about the EU as a foreign policy actor?

The second interrogative framework seeks to explain the EU 'actorness' in a broader context. It will elaborate two working hypotheses: *An actor with 27 faces: Context and Reserved Rationality in the EU FP Discourse*, discussing reserved rationality and contextual limitations present in the EU discourse during negotiations; and another characteristic recurrent in the EU appearance in Moscow – *The importance of personality in EU FP*.

This is the Chapter 4. It serves as the follow-up to the Chapter 3, thus is not equal in breadth but it serves the crucial purpose of taking the analysis further.

Box 1: Problem Formulation



1.2.2. Approach

Analyzing a process which is essentially history in the making is not an easy task; therefore, it has its limitations. It will not seek to understand the past of the conflict: the relationship between Russia and Georgia, and Georgia and South Ossetia and Abkhazia is easily a scientific publication, just as is the analysis of the EU presence in the Caucasus over time.

Instead it will focus empirically on the factor of primary importance when analyzing the effect of negotiations - the fact of agreement (e.g. Hopmann 1996). In the EU-Russian negotiations the outcome is the 'Sarkozy - Medvedev Agreement' with two relevant events: the fact of ceasefire and the rest of the criteria targeted at longer term security set out by the Agreement. Hence it concerns the change in the Russian discourse allowing immediate implementation of measures and creating a background for the diplomatic presence of the EU. The study is concerned with the discourses surrounding this period stretched from August 8 2008 through October 21 2008.

The approach is to isolate various factors in the negotiation process to show that "they have implications for behavior that are often surprising and counterintuitive" (Elster 1989: 9-10). Discourse analysis will first outline parallel perceptions on the conflict, and then focus on the dynamics between the two: through application of the EU measures and around two elaborated narratives: *'Sharing Competencies in the Caucasus'* and *'The New Security Architecture?'*. Empirical categories would help to generate two broader hypotheses about the EU as a foreign policy actor: *An actor with 27 faces: Context and Reserved Rationality in the EU FP Discourse*, and *The importance of personality in EU FP*. Thus the EU is the analytical centre and Russia is the periphery.

Alternatively, the approach could be to study existing conceptions about the EU foreign policy, and then analyze how they reflect in the EU effect on Russia. However, the case of the Georgian conflict is interesting in its complexity and potential counterintuitive outcomes. The study strongly advocates treating the two frameworks together precisely because the case is considered a success in the EU foreign policy. Thus, minding the evolving nature of the EU, it may shed some light on its broader 'actorness'.

Theoretically and methodologically, entire analysis adopts the constructivist logic combined with rational supranationalism - emphasizing

the 'soft' rationalist (as opposed to fixed preferences of the member-states) reservations in the discourse formation. Thus the discourse is not only an illustration of interaction but also a series of steps pursued by the both sides.

1.2.3. Purpose and Contribution

The goal of the study is to create in-depth understanding of the EU negotiation process with Russia with the change it was able to effectuate, and to generate broader hypotheses about the EU 'actorness'.

Firstly, the study contributes to the theoretical debate maintaining that national presence in EU discourse is not necessarily in denial of transformative effects of the EU as an actor in foreign policy, both for other actors and the EU itself. Herein, the study introduces the mixture of constructivism and rational supranationalism.

Secondly, the study contributes with an empirical standpoint to the debate about the civil and normative power of the EU as a foreign policy actor which subsequently may concentrate on the EU diplomatic power as a distinct capacity.

Finally, expressing both academic and personal commitment, the study approaches the EU/Russia relationship as a positive step forward to creating equally beneficial political understanding between the two significant actors. Being able to exploit the ability to assess first-hand the discourse on the Russian side, the author hopes to bring the original perspective on the Russian behavior, too.

1.2.4. Structure of the Presentation

This presentation is divided into five chapters. This chapter introduced the case and outlined the research. Chapter II will create the context for the case through conceptual overview and theory, concluding with the method. Chapter 3 will concentrate on the empirical analysis aiming to answer question I of the study. Finally chapter IV will extend the analysis to the broader context and elaborate on two hypotheses aiming to answer question II. The conclusions will be presented in Chapter V.

Chapter II

Concepts, Theory and Method

2.1. The EU as a Foreign Policy Actor

Firstly, it is important to establish the context of the study for the EU FP as a *sui generis* phenomenon.

Albeit approached empirically from different angles, complexity of the EU FP does not allow to land easily neither within conventional IR theories, nor within the theories of European integration (Diez and Whitman 2000, Rummel 1994). The nature of the European foreign policy can bare essentially different ontological and epistemological considerations; even for the European Community it is troublesome – “too unique” and “not as unique” (Ohrgaard 2004: 26-27).

2.1.1. The EU Foreign Policy (EU FP) ‘Actorness’

How to relate an inherently state concept to the EU, and what is the EU FP ‘actorness’?

Roughly, there are three approaches to the EU FP. It can be discussed as the EC external economic relations, or Pillar I, including international trade and aid etc. (M. Smith 1998, Dent 1997). It can be approached as Pillar II issues – CFSP and CSDP – focusing on specific institutional practices, for example, in conflict management (Jørgensen 1997, K. Smith 2003). Institutionally the CFSP is represented by the acting Presidency of the Council; the Commissioner for external affairs and the High Representative for the CFSP also act on behalf of the Union (Elgström, Strömvik in Elgstom, Jönsson eds. 2005).

Finally, the EU FP represents the foreign policies of the member states, which includes concern with earlier framework of EPC and the role of the member states in its subsequent developments (Manners and Whitman 2000, Strömvik 2005).

The scope of this study is conflict-specific, therefore empirically it targets discursive practices emerged from the Pillar II. Yet, analytically these practices should not be limited by dismissing influences of other priorities derived from the Pillar I and the role of the member states. Thus, the study assumes that the *EU FP is a series of action towards the third party derived from complex framework of the EU multilateral governance.*

On this basis the EU 'actorness' should be conceived of as having a capacity to contribute and overlap with autonomy (Bretherton Vogler 2006) behaving "actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system" (Sjöstedt cited in Bretherton, Vogler 2006: 17). Serving the purpose of the study, the EU 'actorness' does not relate to the IR definition of international organization (Rosenau 1990), neither to performance of one of the EU institutions separately (e.g. Commission discussed by Hocking, Smith 1990), but to the overall impact of the EU. Its actions, or discursive practice, have impact with both intended and unintended consequences (Bretherton, Vogler 2006: 22).

2.1.2. The EU FP 'Soft Powers'

An as actor the EU developed some sort of supranational power, which received many labels: *soft, civil, diplomatic, normative, ideational*, and even *militaristic*. This indicates one thing – the EU FP power is very hard to define.

2.1.2.1. The Concept of Power

During the last few decades there has been a considerable shift in understanding of power - from traditional coercion to liberalist collective self-defense against aggression (Hoffmann 1998: 80). The evolution of strictly 'unethical' realist theory led to post-neorealist reshuffling of values as weak variables in state behavior (Waltz 1996, Jørgensen in Lucarelli, Manners 2006: 51-2), while the outcomes of military power strategies were increasingly challenged as "meaningless in a zero-sum context" (Schelling 1984: 269). The neoliberal perspective in its turn discovered complex interrelationships between institutions and state actions and multifaceted

nature of power in IR as possible with or without reference to “common purposes (...) or a shared belief in a set of values” (Keohane 1989: 159).

Nye introduced the concept of *soft power* ‘empowering’ it with intangible resources such as institutions, ideology or culture (1990) basically moving from ‘thick’ to ‘thin’ power. However, his confusion between power resources and scope upset several researchers (Karlsnaes, Risse, Simmons eds. 2002: 186).

Later Nye and Keohane explained power in condition of globalism and “issues connecting societies” substituting military with economic, environmental and socio-cultural explaining the discourse as not uniform but varying by region, locality, and issue area (2000). Yet to understand the impact of its power there is a need for somewhat more supranational, or particular, EU approach.

2.1.2.2. Civilian and Normative Power: *A long journey*

Already in the 60s Carr suggested three elements to the EC power: economic, military and power over opinion (1962: 108). Later, however, the military dimension mutated into diplomacy and the use of legally-binding supranational institutions to solve collective problems which defined the essence of the EC civilian power (Twitchett 1976, Maull 1990). Duchêne also tried to capture the transformation of military into collective civilian ends and means extending it to the sense of equality, justice and tolerance (1972: 20). He described the EC as an *idée force* capable to extent the ideas of Europe to widely differing political settings (1973: 7).

Galtung adopted more structural approach to ideological power emphasizing the EC strength on the sources of power, such as resource and structural (1973). Latter, Bull brought back the criticism of the EC as ineffective civilian power lacking military self-sufficiency (1982).

Later studies criticized the EU *civilian approach to exercise* of military power particularly with the development of CSDP in the Pillar II (Whitman 1998), which was extended to the question of whether the Union could lose its civilian status (K. Smith 2000). Zielonka argued that the EU strategic choices could acquire distinct profile precisely via military means (1998). Although discussed acutely, it is impossible to sustain grounded empirical observation of the ‘*military power Europe*’ in particular study, neither normative justification for its use (Diez, Manners in Berenskoetter, Williams eds.: 2007: 178). However, this is not to dismiss in further studies.

Another deviation of the civil power is pioneered by Manners. He avoided the civil/military dichotomy by diving into the normative power Europe with five core values embedded in the Treaties: democracy, peace, liberty, the rule of law, and respect for human rights (2002). He shifted the attention towards the long-term processes: the EU could define (reframe) the 'normal' in international politics (2002: 236). So far, it managed to demonstrate moral superiority, for instance, over the US in execution (Bretherton, Vogler 2006: 43).

Being just a part of the complicated whole the normative power may have a bearing to the study of the EU discourse. If the EU is to change the Russian behavior it would automatically introduce some of its principles; and at least will have to distance itself from the US.

On the ideational level the EU has another important feature – it is constructive for itself, thus evolving overtime identifying own 'actorness'. Either by "purposefully constructing" (Webber et. al. 2004: 23) own identity or involved in irreversible spill-over the EU discourse overtime tends to define its characteristics.

2.1.2.3. Measures and Principles

Thus, the EU discourse must also include some dichotomy between measures and principles that will constitute one whole of its impact. The CFSP rhetoric, from which the analysis derives, is a highly 'principled' venture bringing a whole battery of overarching values that may read as "human rights, the rule of law, international law and effective multilateralism" (Solana, Council 2009).

The European Security Strategy reads (Council 2003 in Lucarelli, Manners eds. 2006: 3):

Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world(...)Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order.

The EU principles penetrate the EU measures, for instance²:

- **conflict prevention:** preventing violence through co-operation, external assistance, trade policy instruments, humanitarian aid, social and environmental policies, diplomatic instruments and political dialogue etc.

² European Commission, External Relations, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/cfsp/cpcm/index.htm

- **civilian crisis management** as the core of strengthening the CSDP through ‘police, strengthening of the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection’

In the EU rhetoric the EU FP is a symbol of political ‘goodness’. In exercising its power the EU also manifests ‘peaceful’ measures. The EU FP does, indeed, have a substantial uniqueness: its development did not evolve against the framework of war, like say, NATO or UN (Strömvik 2005), but of sustaining peace (K. Smith 2003). The question arises, however, how did common sense become *the EU* values?

For failing to explain exactly this, other actors may relate the EU principles to its approach. That represents a more complex picture - it changes with the EU FP objectives. For instance, in environmental policy the EU is an advocate of human rights, whereas in trade it uses a more coercive top-down approach (chapters 3,4 in Bretherton, Vogler 2006).

In areas of conflict management the EU FP principles are contested (Nikolaidis, Howse 2002) and the policies tend to float from case to case (chapter 7 in K. Smith 2003). Inclusive identity of the EU suffers in FP since the EU often contrasts itself to the “significant other” (A. Smith 1992: 95), as in the case of EU-Russia relations.

2.1.3. The EU FP and Russia

Having said that it is useful to note what characterizes particularly the EU/Russia FP relationship, which started with the ‘Strategic Partnership’ agreement in 1999. Very generally, it is an unclear strategic vision of the ‘spaces’ added in 2003 of freedom security and justice, external security, research and education (Barysch in Johnson, Robinson 2005: 26-30).

Whilst sustaining economic, trade and energy dialogue Russia and the EU share the feeling of instability, distrust, even fear on the EU side, firstly, of Russia being an unstable partner, secondly, of disintegrative effect via close Russian ties with some bigger members for the EU itself (ibid.: 31). It results in securitization of various FP issues such as visa regime (Prozorov 2006).

Nevertheless, Russia and the EU share much in common, especially regarding post - 9/11 challenges to global security coincident with advent of

Putin's administration (Averre in Johnson, Robinson 2005: 75-6) signifying the uplifting of the Russian state.

Just as the EU needs Russia, Russia needs the EU not least for its regional initiatives. Medvedev noted already in 2000 that the EU is the "only institution" with structural capability "to deal with regionalization of Russia" (Medvedev quoted in Klitsounova in Johnson, Robinson 2005: 49).

Yet, Russia seems to remain the EU's "close outsider" (Aalto 2006). Discursive capacities are limited for the reason some call "incompatibility" (Kratochvil 2008). The values that shape the EU-Russia relations such as the rule of law, democracy and human rights do not seem to settle into a common ideational framework (Panebianko in Lucarelli, Manners 2006).

If, in this case, the EU should have an impact, there must be a renewed diplomatic approach that should include both measures and principles into one carefully designed framework considering the environment of the negotiations.

Albeit the empirics would serve the better purpose of measuring the degree and the nature of impact, the study needs a broader view on how the impact should be possible, and how it could be defined in relation to the EU members and supranational FP practice in process of its diplomatic discourse formation.

2.2. Theory

2.2.1. Constructivism

The analysis targets in-depth exploration of the discursive construction of influence of the EU on the Russian behavior under the limitations of contextual political reality. It seeks to view the EU as driven by a complex variety of factors in contrast to traditional approaches to foreign policy. The inquiry on how the EU can penetrate another sphere of influence creates the first theoretical framework.

Constructivism has the merit of pointing to the essential: any process obtains a different intellectual straightjacket for different observers and participants, influencing their interpretation and their actions.

It builds on the episteme of hermeneutic interpretation and views all aspects of reality as contextualized. Ontologically the world is anti-foundationalist but dependent on interpretation of knowledge relative to mutually constitutive interaction between an 'agency' (ex. an individual, a state) and a 'structure' (Adler 2002: 95, Marsh, Stoker eds. 2002: 26, Wendt, 1999, Wight 2007). Latter relates to the products of social interaction that constructs norms, which in their turn construct interests that finally, provide meaning to material conditions (Wendt, 1999: 139). Hence, the agents can either maintain or constrain structures, at the same time their behavior is a direct reflection of those structures.

Constructivism leads to inevitable importance of language and discourse (Habermas 1996). Discourse shares concerns about various tangible and intangible patterns behind the social artifacts. Postmodernists, for example, use the discourse to understand the EU as a site of power relations, where knowledge and power meet and construct perceptions of the EU building on methods such as 'genealogy', 'governmentality', and 'deconstruction' developed by Foucault, Derrida and Nietzsche (Manners 2006: 84-85).

Discourse analysis is also a method, which comes in various forms seeking to understand the social practice, power structures, political realities (Fairclough 1995, Gomm 2004, Philips, Hardy 2002). It can ideally be used in constructivist research, as chosen in this study, and will be elaborated upon more specifically in the methodology section.

2.2.1.1. Constructivism and Power

This study is concerned primarily with the relationship between the states, thus the dimension of power-politics. One weakness constructivism possesses in this respect is the diffuse relationship to power (Kauppi 2005: 22).

One reflection of this void can be found in the postmodern critical approach. Bourdieu, for instance, related the “social struggles” not only to cultural practices but directly to structural power relations causing novel forms of domination (Bourdieu 2001: 20). In support of that thinking, other theorist argued that in order to understand various effects of the European integration on politics one should mind the weaknesses of ideational notion of culture (Kauppi 2005: 22). Thus, the critical version sustains that the actions constitute indispensable notion of power in addition to cultural values and interests derived from shared competences at the European level.

2.2.1.2. Constructivism as an active theory

It can be assumed that constructivism becomes an active theory wherever and whenever a process of socialization takes place. In case of particular study this process is followed through the Russian and the EU discourses around the conflict in Georgia.

Constructivists outlined a number of conditions under which the process of learning should be considered effective, such as situations of high uncertainty, situations affecting legitimate norms and rules, equal deliberative environments (Checkel 2001, Johnston 2001). Even if the two first situations can be interpreted as the driving factors behind the EU involvement in the negotiations process with Russia, the latter fails to explain the environment of a complex political reality.

2.2.1.3. Rationality in constructive discourse

Communication is unequal and distorted already on the level of internal social interaction (e.g. ‘communicative action’ by Habermas 1996). On the level of political discourses it is affected by a myriad of internal and external constraints (ibid.). Majority of them derive from the behaviour of actors that corresponds at least marginally to their strategic interests and path-dependent established relationships. The EU member-states do not exist in a vacuum. They are the states with established long-term economic and foreign

relationships not only with their co-members, but also with the non-EU states - for instance, France and Germany through energy trade with Russia - which formulates the 'environment' of the study.

To explain such environment it is important to mind that the EU discourse is an outcome of complex process of interaction between the member-states' rationalities, as opposed to idealist constructivist ontology of normatively appropriate behaviour (March and Olsen 1998: 951). Thus, predominant strategic interests of the member states would most likely exhibit themselves in the EU discourse. However, they are neither fixed, nor manifest in the form of ultimatum in the EU institutions -they are 'soft' or reserved rationalities (see Textbox 1).

In this sense, the EU discourse cannot be simplified to Moravcsik's rationally-calculated expected outcomes. Instead, it finds itself within socialization of the European values and soft rationalist calculus - a combination of constructivism and rational supranationalism - an approach that goes deeper into constraining factors of soft rationality, but also self-reinforcing effect of the EU supranational practices, as will be explained further.

2.2.1.4. The framework so far

Constructivism sustains the explanation of impact of the EU discourse on the Russian discourse as: 1) changing the Russian behavior and perceptions based on its 'principled' FP agenda 2) evolving thus constructive for the EU 'actorness'.

Constructivism does not explain constraints and characteristics of the complexity of unequal political environment in which interaction takes place, and the fact that the foreign policy negotiation process continues even though the interests of some EU states within one discourse may be jeopardized.

As the purpose of this study endorses a deeper analysis of the EU foreign policy 'actorness' and seeks to understand also the constraining context of the EU discourse, constructive take on discourse analysis will be dissolute with presence of soft rationalism in the member-states' logic derived from their relations with Russia.

2.2.2. Rational Supranationalism (RS)

Supranationalism is specifically elaborated for the EU seeking to explain self-reinforcing nature of the EU integration and socialization processes (Schimmelfening, Rittberger in Richardson 2006: 84-86). It treats the EU as a *sui generis* actor. It shares the transformative nature of political reality and norms with constructivism. This is the major frontline where the two theories correlate.

2.2.2.1. Rationality in Supranationalist discourse

The self-reinforcement in the EU does not only derive from sociological value-exchange. Specifically rational supranationalism, as the name suggests, shares rationalist assumptions about the nature of institutions with intergovernmentalism. It treats the mechanisms behind integration as path-dependent striving to maximize collective utility, which makes them both enabling and constraining for the member-states (Schimmelfening, Rittberger in Richardson 2006: 84-86). It takes recourse to the logic of historical institutionalism emphasizing that not all consequences of political interaction are predictable but face the irreversible “unintended consequences” (Pierson in Schimmelfening, Rittberger in Richardson 2006, Scharpf 1998).

Values and preferences can be generated both exogenously and endogenously – in the member states and through socialization on the level of the EU institutions. Institutional practices help the member states to discover and upgrade their common interests (Haas 1961). Involving in this process the member states are not always aware of long-term outcomes.

Textbox 1

Soft, or **reserved** rationality in this essay may be used interchangeably. It indicates that rationality of the EU member states is not fixed and thus cannot be explained by purely individualistic interests. It is related to exogenous factors the EU states are in principle unable to change or ignore, such as their bilateral relationships with the third parties. The EU framework, however, unites the states to measure individual rationality against the rationalities of the co-members; therefore, the member states are ready to make sacrifices if the stake of another member-state is higher, even if they will not gain any real long term profit.

2.2.3. The Framework for the EU FP

Rational supranationalism is essentially integrationist. However, it supports that the EU states are, above all – *the 'normal' states*. The EU policy is the convergence of their contextual interests emerged through self-reinforcing spill-over processes. Therefore, it does not contradict the logic of constructive change – the ground philosophy of the study; yet does not explain how the EU as a *sui generis* actor can have an impact on other actors without constructivism.

Yet, RS is more accurate in understanding, firstly, the existence and limitations of exogenous factors in complicated political environment shaping the foreign policy negotiations process – *contextual nature of the EU FP discourse*, and the fact that cooperation, or negotiation process, continues even though the interests of some member states may periodically be favored – *soft rationality* (see textbox 1).

Secondly, it takes for granted that existence of certain constraints will always be present, which does not render further cooperation impossible, but helps to explain the nature of the EU foreign policy 'actorness' in a broader context.

It adds to the existing framework the following - the EU discourse is:

- 1) changing the Russian behavior and perceptions based on its 'principled' agenda, *although its outcome will depend on contextual limitations of complex political reality and path-dependent bi-lateral relations of its member states. However, even if the balance of interest is not perfect, cooperation continues because the members chose to measure their rationalities against the framework of the other members, and the EU (see box 1).*
- 2) evolving thus constructive for the EU 'actorness'.

Together this framework may be viewed through the logic of *reserved constructivism*, which means that the EU 'soft' power is able and/or willing to change behavior of other actors to the extent limited by its measured multilevel reserved rationality.

This will be used as a working 'ideology' for both interrogative frameworks of the study.

2.3. Method

The method chosen for the study of the EU impact on the Russian behavior is discourse analysis, which builds on constructivism and corresponds to the theoretical choices - bridging constructivism with unequal political reality of rational supranationalism - to assess complex variables surrounding the negotiation process between the EU and Russia.

2.3.1. Discourse Analysis

When I use a word...it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less. The question is, said Alice, whether you can make words mean so many different things. The question is, Humpty-Dumpty responded, which is to be master, that's all

'Humpty-Dumpty' by Lewis Carroll, 1960

The master of nonsense-verse Lewis Carroll pointed to the essential: reality is a product of wide variety of social arrangements and practices (Potter 1996: 12), where the truth is only a subjective image. This is also the basis of discourse analysis, which seeks for narratives beyond physically present manifestations.

Discourse analysis is both a method and a theory that essentially states that discourse matters - it has an ability to produce reality and define actions (Philips, Hardy 2002, Fairclough 1995). Specifically, discourse analysis seeks to examine certain discourses to understand and explain what they reveal about socially constructed reality and power relations in general.

As a technique, it supports the analysis of transformative nature of the EU discourse. Actors *can* change reality. On a deeper level, it chases the nature, or the circumstances, of this impact, allowing to generate assumptions about wider context affecting the EU 'actorness' in foreign policy. *How* the actors can change reality. Thus it is ideally fit for the two interrogative frameworks of particular research.

2.3.1.1. The definition of Discourse

As one scholar put it, the term 'discourse' is almost meaningless until the analyst fills it up with own meaning (Gomm 2004: 246). In essence, 'discourse' may be understood in different ways. Most commonly, discourse is the way in which the world is interpreted (thus created) by individuals, the patchy manifestations of which can be found in the social artifacts, or texts (Gomm 2004: 246). More descriptively, discourse may be presented as the words themselves and entangled in the ways the words are being arranged. In addition, the 'discourse' is the 'context'. It could be understood as existing independently of the social artifacts, with texts being reflections of broader ways of thinking (Gomm 2004, Philips, Hardy 2002: 3-4).

Particular study would treat the discourse as related to the actors - the EU and Russia - as producers of the discourse, as the logic suggests. As soon as it is produced, discourse involves into the process of interaction and has a capacity to change and affect other actors.

However, in particular case it is both inscribed in the texts and in the series of actions surrounding the conflict, which allows to unite the EU measures and principles in one discourse. Simultaneously, it is inevitably related to the context in which it is formulated, and reflects the capacities of the producer to construct reality, or exercise influence, in a broader sense (see textbox 2).

2.3.1.2. Adoption of Discourse Analysis as a Method

This study is concerned with the effect of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior assessed through interaction between the two, and the implications for broader understanding of the EU 'actorness'.

Thus it adopts the assumption that discourse analysis is able to assess different interrelationships of actors derived from the texts (Fairclough 1995). It treats the EU FP according to a two-dimensional guideline: though the social artefact itself it produces – or the text, and the discursive practice or other discourses that the text builds upon (Fairclough, 1995: 56-57, Philips, Hardy, 2002: 85-87, Marsh and Stoker 2002). This framework includes also a series of action, or measures, implemented via discourse.

Discursive practices are constraints formulated *in process* of the EU discourse formation. It is important that discursive practices are not directly representative of separately existing discourses surrounding the EU discourse (Philips, Hardy, 2002: 3-4, Fairclough 1995) but appearing in process of the EU discourse formation – thus, in process of production of the chosen texts. It will help to highlight contextual factors in the EU discourse, and to hypothesize further about the EU ‘actorness’ in a broader context (see textbox 2).

It may be argued that the social practice should be accessed separately from the text because it is the indicator of how the actors make use of various social practices, suggesting they may be different from the variables present in the text itself (Philips, Hardy 2002: 85-87). In this study, the emphasis is on the official discourse as a whole, therefore it is not necessary to deconstruct what the French government had to say at home and how the French President used it at the EU level, for instance (Philips and Hardy 2002: 85-87). Instead, it is assumed that priorities were formulated at the EU level.

The discourse will follow the dynamics of the negotiation process, thus major analytical emphasis would be on the *interaction* between the EU and Russia – e.g. how the Russian discourse changed in accordance with the EU measures or rhetoric. However, in order to outline the context, and find subsequent categories to test for change, the analysis (in Chapter 3) will start with parallel assessment of the EU and the Russian perceptions of the conflict.

Such categories in this study are called ‘narratives’ (Fairclough 1995), or the stories that the two sides told about the conflict. The points of coincidence and contrast will indicate their strategic spheres of interests and major points of disagreement. Subsequently it should be possible to observe the change in the Russian ‘plot’.

Textbox 2

Discourse is directly related to the actors’ negotiation process. It will be represented by the official texts, which will encapsulate also the discursive practices and the social practice. It is maintained that specific nature of official empirical material allows for this merger.

Discursive practice would be represented specifically by the inconsistencies *in process* of the EU discourse formation.

2.3.2. The Logic

Overall approach to the study is qualitative and inductive, which in contrast to traditional deductive methods, benefits from an open non-linear way of analysis highlighting new elements and relations of casualties (Babbie et al. 2007: 13; Flick 2006: 98-102).

Hence, the analysis relies heavily on the data from which hypotheses are derived during the research (Flick 2006). Essentially it seeks for probabilistic arguments to explain the data with the help of theoretical observations (Babbie et al., 2007). It does not seek to provide a definite answer but to presume about possible explanations based on the available material, thus does not strive for generalization but for elaboration of working hypotheses.

In contrast, quantitative methods are generally characterized with more credibility, preciseness and validity (Babbie et al., 2007), thus empirical generalization on the base of numerical evidence (Gomm et. al. 2000: 4). Qualitative understanding on the other hand is concentrated on forces driving individual actions, and explains causal links in real-life interventions too complex for survey (Yin 2003). Quantitatively, the prospective conclusions of this study may be tested in the long term by, say, examining the breadth of similar changes the EU discourse effectuates under similar circumstances.

2.3.3. The Case Study

This thesis concentrates on the case study of the Russian-Georgian conflict. On its basis, it seeks to understand and assess the dynamics between the EU and the Russian discourses. It inquires what these dynamics have to provide for the effect of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior, as well as for the broader EU foreign policy 'actorness'. Hence, it includes two contexts: the narrow context around the conflict and the broader context of the EU 'actorness'. The former is presumed as capable to explain specific factors, such as discursive limitations or possibilities that may be extended to the latter.

Case studies are considered to be a "full and thorough knowledge of the particular" (Stake 2000: 22, 24). Although this is a single case study, it is approached through comparison of the two discourses surrounding the same conflict and should help detect causalities that could not be detected otherwise (Gomm et al. 2000: 6) increasing the quality of the analysis.

By nature, the study includes not generalization but elaboration of hypotheses with the help of empirical and theoretical observations in the unique case in the EU foreign policy that can have something to offer for the EU foreign policy 'actorness'.

2.3.3.1. Empirical Data

Discourse analysis builds heavily on the data. This thesis has the sufficient amount of balanced data for the analysis with conservative framework of the official discourse of Russia and the EU around the conflict in Georgia. It builds on the material carefully collected and categorized chronologically from the EU and the Russian official databases. These sources are considered as credible, they also define the temporal framework for the analysis: August 8 2008 – October 21 2008.

To be able to extract discursive practices (see textbox 2) in process of the EU discourse formation it was necessary to support the official EU discourse with secondary material. A number of articles were selected to broaden the picture of the official documents following the logic of strategic, or "purposeful", sampling (Berg 1989: 110) - particular sources for particular purpose with account for trustworthiness of the data. Whilst it was not possible to encompass all relevant data, available material was selected to complement this as best as possible. Same was decided for the Russian sample to balance the outcomes.

The abovementioned techniques have been chosen to assist one another as triangulation of one qualitative method (Flick 2006), improving the quality of the results and providing with more interesting and complex data.

a). The EU discourse (Annex 1)

The official WebPages of the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament were searched for all official documents concerning negotiations with Russia over the Georgian conflict, which left the author with the amount of 16 official documents represented as official addresses, press releases and interviews (a-p). The nature of sources secured trustworthiness simultaneously increasing validity potential. All documents will be analyzed as formulating one whole. Moreover, further analysis showed that the EU official discourse was formulated consistently therefore the persons who formulated the discourse on behalf of the EU were not of particular importance; though in itself it was an interesting observation about efficiency of cooperation between the EU institutions in

that foreign policy case. The documents were organized chronologically serving the analytical purpose to follow the key events of the negotiation process.

As the next step, media sources were collected on the basis of their long-term international credibility and linguistic abilities of the researcher: 11 articles from BBC, Telegraph and the Guardian, FT, and EuBusiness (a-k). Ideally, they could have been contrasted to the addresses, say, in the French or German media. However, this is only a marginal caveat since the primary aim is not to highlight the differences in the individual member-states discourses.

b). The Russian Discourse (Annex 2)

This followed the same logic scanning the databases of the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (www.kremlin.ru), The Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (www.mid.ru), and the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin (www.premier.gov.ru): total of 24 documents represented by interviews and official addresses (a-x). Notably many of the addresses made by Sarkozy in Moscow will be found in the Russian sample.

The media sources were added to balance the EU sample and were used mainly to assess chronology of the conflict: *Lenta.ru* which is the internet information resource (part of Rambler Media Group) licensed by the Russian Ministry of Copyright (1999-2009), *NTV* which is one of the biggest Russian broadcasting channels, and *Vzglead* - one of the biggest business newspapers: coverage annexed in 4 documents (a-d).

2.3.4. Quality Check: *generalization, validity, reliability*

A case study is always followed by generalization concern: how should the case of the Russian-Georgian conflict be extended to other contexts? The possibility of this is debatable due to probabilistic results of the aggregates from the study (Gomm et al. 2000: 9) and the fact that some influential variables will always remain neglected to make the study 'do-able'.

In general, multidimensional nature of causation in the social world would always impose its limits. The task of such kind of study is to offer "transferability" as opposed to fundamental generalization (Gomm et al., 2000). It will generate some probabilistic propositions and expand existing

concepts (Yin, 2003: 10). Primary goal thus is to provide several analytical assumptions and hypotheses relevant to testing in further studies.

When it comes to validity, the central question is whether an indicator is deployed to measure the concept it is intended to measure (Babbie et al 2007: 15-17). Particularly qualitative research involves the social constitution of the author in the study, hence would always be challenged on the accounts of whether or not one sees what he thinks he sees (Flick 2006: 371). Validity can be approached through alternative criteria: trustworthiness and authenticity of the information gathered and produced (Bryman, 2004, Flick 2006: 373). This study capitalizes on the opportunity to relate to the official documents found in the official databases that correspond to the task of the research.

Reliability checks the quality of a measuring instrument by asking if the same results would derive again from the same method (Babbie et. al. 2007). Reliability is another difficult criterion in qualitative research, due to the presence of an individual researcher in the study. Yet it may address the quality of the issue and the theory of the study and can be increased through high quality collection and interpretation of material (Flick 2006).

There are, of course limitations of not directly quantifiable or comparable data, as well as the fact that some data have been missed out. However, the analysis is based on considerable amount of official data surrounding the conflict, and fits perfectly the timing and major events. The data is reviewable and carefully documented in the Annex 1 and Annex 2. The media sources have been selected critically. All of the data was carefully analyzed against itself and against the theoretical framework.

Chapter III

The Impact of the EU on the Russian Discourse

3.1. Introduction

The ‘strategists’ behind the outbreak of bombardments of the South Ossetian (SO) capital of Tskhinvali on the night of August 7-8 2008, with the Georgian President Michael Saakashvili ahead of the operation, remind a group of dilettanti script-writers in the theater of absurd that settled for a very bad plot. It entailed a sacrifice of too many innocent lives. A quick glimpse on the map, and a thought or two about the parties directly involved in the military operations - Georgia and Russia (which Mr. Saakashvili seemed to have neglected) – puzzles an independent observer: Whatever the reasons behind the outbreak of the conflict, what did Mr. President expect?

The territory of South Ossetia is adjusted to Russia both via its borders and the role that Russia proclaimed itself to play in the Region decades ago. Whatever the motives, such straightforward aggression could not have been left unrewarded. And it was not. Russia is a big country, and it is known to act big, too. Or at least when it comes to stepping on its blisters. The situation in Georgia is one of those painful ‘frozen conflicts’ inherited from the Soviet Union legacy (Medvedev 2008a.g, Putin 2008n). Yet, even though a good look from aside could have altered Mr. Saakashvili’s decision on the memorable night in his career, it is much too late to offer a hand for his political decadence. Neither is it the scope of this study.

Perhaps, one thing President Saakashvili planned rather well was the factor of surprise. The conflict, the timing, the logic, the strategy – all of it surprised greatly. It also angered Moscow quite the lot (see e.g. Putin quoted in FT 2008f). In principle, it may have escalated to a much more severe and

disturbing condition (Council 2008f). However, it also created instant resonance in Brussels (Council 2008a.b). The European Union that in contrast to NATO could increasingly be accounted for in the sharp-edged political frameworks engaged into active and persistent negotiation process with Russia emerging as the broker of a ceasefire agreement and the guarantor of peace in Georgia. It has not solved all the problems of course, yet through its discourse the EU managed to persuade Russia to reformulate some of its positions, on Georgia and on the EU itself.

Its impact, nevertheless, was opportunistic on some accounts and limited on others, which could be extended to several characteristics of the EU 'actorness' in foreign policy: the contextual nature, the 'soft' rationality in the decision-making, and the importance of representation in the EU leadership. Without these factors the understanding of the EU effect on the Russian behavior is limited. Similarly, without understanding the effect, it is hard to extract these factors. This essay starts with the impact and drives to the broader assumptions of the EU 'actorness'.

3.1.1. The Discourses

It is useful to remind the definition of discourses to be analyzed, and their order.

There are two major discourses: The EU and the Russian official discourses represented as official texts (statements, press-releases, interviews), and the texts extracted from the media that will be used interchangeably formulating the analytical whole. The period covered is the negotiation process between the EU and Russia from the outbreak of the conflict on August 8 2008 until October 21 2008 when the key agreement brokered by the Council Presidency, the 'Sarkozy - Medvedev Agreement', was confirmed as implemented.

Both discourses are represented as carriers of constructive change but also as reflection of a series of action. The texts are directly related to the political reality of the discourses because they are in themselves representations of how the politicians interpret their political environments. It is important that the discursive practices, or the other discourses surrounding the official discourses, also derive from those texts.

The conflict was a unique and unpredictable occasion. Hence, the first step of the analysis settles for the logical structure of the two discourses. It will

start with the outline of basic discourses of Russia and the EU and subsequently assess their interaction resulting into two narratives: 'Sharing Competencies in the Caucasus' and 'The New Security Architecture?'

Secondly, those narratives would be tested for change implying that the interest formation on the both sides is not static but prone to change.

3.1.2. Analytical Categories

Before commencing with the analysis in the Chapter 3 it is important to 'make sense' of the categories that the discourse analysis is based on. They related to what the data could offer and to the theoretical considerations in line with the question I of the study:

I. What was the impact of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior?

The analysis will commence with parallel assessment of the Russian and the EU perceptions of the conflict in terms of actors involved including own role, and their threats and priorities. This will help to elucidate the narratives (the same interests/strategies approached from two different perspectives) to subsequently measure how the EU can change the Russian discourse.

The second step would be to observe the dynamic change in interaction between the two discourses. Firstly, the EU is supposed to exercise some soft measures to which Russia must react; secondly, it must be able to effectuate constructive change to accommodate its principles, as the logic implies.

Entire chapter deals with the narrow context of the EU and Russian discourse around the conflict from August 8 2008 to October 21 2008.

The analysis is the representation of the general findings of all aggregate material and represents subjective interpretation of the author.

3.2. Dominant Discourses and Formulation of Narratives

Throughout the texts, it is possible to identify consistent discourses that formulate structural understanding of the relationship between the EU and the Russian discourses (Hansen 2006). These discourses will indicate some key narratives that will be tried for change under the EU impact in the subsequent section. This also relates to dialectics – the process of studying different positions without necessarily claiming to explain reality – to provide for the subsequent step of observing the interactive process between the two discourses.

3.2.1. Russia: *Perceptions of the Conflict and Own Influence*

I. Georgia, SO and the EU as a part of international community

The Russian discourse is represented by immediate reaction of the Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev followed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, and is generally very consistent.

Whilst reifying active presence of both Georgia as an aggressor and South Ossetia as a victim, persistent is positive image about Georgia as a country very close to Russia in all senses, the ‘neighbor’ and ‘friend’. The Georgian population is seen as a ‘brotherhood’ nation. Same historical pattern is used in reference to SO which has long been different in cultural and political sense from Georgia (Putin 2008o, Medvedev 2008a.b.d-h, Lavrov 2008p.q).

The discourse indicates ‘with one voice’ that the accountability for the conflict rests on the shoulders of the Georgian President Saakashvili as incompetent and dangerous politician, provocateur of the nasty operation supported, although perhaps unwittingly, by the US. (see e.g. Lavrov 2008q-v, Medvedev on NTV 2008c). (This point remarkably found its evidence with latter developments, BBC 2008c). Concerning the Georgian territorial integrity, however, the Georgian President himself buried all hopes (e.g. Putin 2008o).

The international community appears on the one hand, guilty of the Georgian militarization process by selling arms and training Georgian militants. Georgia could have been pressured on disarmament but it was not. The Foreign Minister Lavrov encouraged “to pay, at last, attention...to massive purchases of offensive armaments” by Georgia (quote from Lavrov 2008p, own translation). Very few states including some members of the European community, added Lavrov, answered the Russian plead to control the situation: “we frankly speaking cannot avoid noticing that those who ignored our warnings ... should be at least part of the responsibility for what is going on” (ibid.).

The image of the EU is equated to the rest of the international community – the other. In reference to its relations with Georgia there is a bit of irony: “Mr. Saakashvili is talking on TV every now and then at the background not only of the Georgian flag, but also of the EU flag. I asked yesterday the representative of the EU presidency, whether this was the practice for the EU flag to be used by whoever basically wants to use it and the answer was ‘no’. I was told that they would look into the legal aspects of the problem” (Lavrov 2008q). Same question was posed latter by a BBC reporter to President Sarkozy who limited his response to ‘clarifying’ that Georgia was not in the EU (Sarkozy in Medvedev 2008d).



The picture adopted from russia.foreignpolicyblogs.com, President Saakashvili famously chewing his tie during the phone interview with BBC Live on TV. On the right there is a capture of the EU flag.

On the other hand, the international community downplays the principles of the rule of law and democracy by applying double-standards, implicitly referring to Kosovo (e.g. Medvedev 2008g).

II. Perceptions of Own Role

Throughout the texts Russia emphasized own compelled presence in the war. Russian behavior should be understood according to the circumstances of blunt military provocation (see e.g. in Medvedev 2008a-n, Lavrov 2008p-x, Putin 2008o, NTV 2008d).

The 'geo-politics' of the initial Russian discourse is very interesting. It suggests that on the post-Soviet territory Russia is both *ex-ante* and *ex-post* power. Putin mentions NIS³, the states that are clearly most dependent on Russia in many respects, urging them to take efforts to stop military actions from the Georgian side (Vzglead 2008d, Putin 2008o). Putin clarified, "we are not planning to thrust anything on anybody. We understand perfectly well the world we live in.

We will strive for just, peaceful settlement of all conflict situations we inherited from the past" (Putin 2008o, own translation).

Overall, Russia uses actively history of the region setting straight that its own involvement is

inevitable and not only desirable but derives out of responsibility to protect peace in the zones of the 'frozen conflicts'. In some way, the Russian discourse consciously reifies the ironic 'Western' picture of the big Russian bear and the teasing child – Georgia. Russia consistently specifies the fact that the Georgian political provocation, such as arresting the Russian staff, has lasted for several years spilling finally the last drop (see e.g. Lavrov 2008s). When it comes to power, Russia is friends with Georgia, yet it is determined to take over political control of its post-Soviet legacy.

Secondly, Russia is feeling well, or finds itself steadily, as the close outsider in a Euro-centric order – while not being conceivably 'in', Russia and the EU are tied up to feel each other's presence (Aalto 2006). Medvedev emphasized



³ Newly Independent States, countries that until 1991 were constituent republics of the USSR, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The term can also include Russia and sometimes Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

the fact that Russia is used to political pressure from the outside (Medvedev 2008g). Yet, the definitive position is that of the EU being closer to the American continent than to Russia.

That also means that Russia sets its own rules of the game, by which it is determined to play. Russia has its vision of the rule of law and justice in security terms. The position for the Europeans and the West, as Lavrov put it, should be to understand the Russian principles (e.g. in Lavrov 2008q).

The Russian way to conduct 'foreign policy' has almost conventionally been criticized as a concentric circle demonstrating superiority in military terms (e.g. in Johnson, Robinson 2005, Krastev 2008). But unpredictable in the Russian discourse was not *what* Russia did, but *to what extent* Russia intended to deploy its military pressure on Georgia, and how strong it identified with its sphere of influence.

The fact that Russia, as any other state, has its own stakes is not novice. Of course, it would impose its limits on the EU. The question is to what extent will the EU be able to change Russia's claim to own sphere of influence in Georgia and the tactics it would choose to deploy.

3.2.2. The EU: *Perceptions of the Conflict and Own Influence*

I. Perceptions of Russia, Georgia and SO

The EU discourse starts with "grave concern" on deterioration of the situation in 'South Ossetia (Georgia) and the "disproportionate reaction of Russia" (Council 2008a-c) towards what can be summarized in the speech of Pöttering: "Although it is clear that in launching military action on the South Ossetian town of Tskhinvali the President of Georgia made a serious mistake, there is no justification whatsoever for Russia's response" (Pöttering 2008i).

The EU takes a smart diplomatic position – it does not directly blame Russia for the war, but for disproportionate reaction and force. Albeit in some addresses the words like invasion by Russia of the sovereign state are present (ibid.), Sarkozy does not bring direct accusations to Moscow (see e.g. Sarkozy in Medvedev 2008c.d, Sarkozy 2008d). President Medvedev mentioned in almost all his addresses regret about the inconsistency of the Russian and the EU positions on outbreak of the war, yet it did not appear a stumbling block for negotiations.

Interesting is also recurring emphasis on the Russian military in Georgia and only marginal mention of the Georgian military in South Ossetia, which nevertheless is included as one of the points in the Medvedev - Sarkozy plan. Yet, if Russia wants Georgia out of SO definitively, the EU is emphasizing Russia out of Georgia (Council 2008c).

II. Representation, and Perceptions of Own Role

The EU is consistently representative of the 27 member-states. Constant is the role of the Presidency that by mandate represented the EU in Moscow especially active throughout face-to-face negotiations with the Russian President Medvedev (see e.g. Sarkozy 2008d, Medvedev 2008b-d.l.m, EUbusiness 2008e, FT 2008f). Hence, the EU opinion in Moscow is coupled with France. In the interviews at the joint press conference held by Medvedev and Sarkozy both parties emphasize their personal close cooperation though “phone calls” and frequent meetings (Medvedev 2008b-d). It does not, however, jeopardize the capacity of the French President to speak on the Union’s behalf. For instance, Sarkozy speaks of the Polish decision to personally support Saakashvili in Georgia: “I cannot reproach the Poles, the President of Poland for his initiatives and the minister for foreign affairs for going (*to Georgia*). As you know, several other leaders also went there...And I am determined to preserve and support the European unity” (own translation, Sarkozy in Medvedev 2008d, italics added).

Similarly, he persists with polite and respectful note in Moscow and Brussels, being welcomed with political warmth in Kremlin. In general it seems like the two leaders matched perfectly.

The role of the EU is first expressed as the mediating efforts (Council 2008a.b), and extended to long-term commitment to sustain peace in Georgia “including through a presence on the ground, to support every effort to secure a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia” (Council 2008c) and ensure the full implementation of the Sarkozy - Medvedev agreement, which is latter reified by Pöttering as “decisive test of our political cohesiveness” (Pöttering 2008i) and credibility of the EU as not only the “observer or a mediator”, but what seems to be the guarantor of all possible ‘good’ values. Taking in account how the EU defines those values (the rule of law, the right for own territory, human rights, peace, life etc.) the point seems overemphasized as if Russia was a political beast from some other parallel reality where common sense does not really exist.

To note, Pöttering takes things very close at heart in this conflict. He recalls his visits to the Baltic States where people “remember only too well the tragic periods in their history which were marked by foreign rule, violence and terrorism”, obviously referring to Communism as terrorist regime. He goes on: “You are no longer alone! A threat to your country would constitute a threat to the European Union as a whole...If we fail to meet our joint responsibility today then Russia might act in the same way towards other States” (ibid.).

The fact that Pöttering personally, as the President of the EP, had only marginal role in the EU discourse in Moscow probably was a strong card for the EU itself. It is no secret for Russia that the ‘West’ identifies it with a type of Communist regime. No one likes his predecessors to be called terrorists, especially when Russia is involved in preserving global security.

3.2.3. Russia: *Threats and Priorities*

The threats, just as the role, presented by Russia are immediate, and long-standing - broad and deep regarding the implications of such conflict in the Caucasus. They relate to the logic in the first category, therefore will be elaborated in brief.

The foremost priority is to protect own citizens and peacekeepers, to stop the Georgian invasion of SO, and subsequently Abkhazia, to restore peace and secure aid to SO (Putin 2008o, Medvedev 2008a.c.g.h.n, Lavrov 2008p-x). The Georgian troops must leave Southern Ossetia and the positions which they can use to continue attacks, definitively. Georgia has to sign a judicial pact on non-use of power (Lavrov 2008p-r).

Lavrov clarified in normative terms: “Russia’s aim is to keep peace. This is not just Russia’s aim, this is Russia’s obligation” (Lavrov 2008q). This is the overall picture recurring most in the Russian discourse.

Secondly, the parallels are made to Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the terrorist groupings in Tajikistan and Chechnya.

Russian priorities are also ‘principled’. Yet it seems peace and justice should be measured through the Russian prism. They are usually coupled with the rhetoric that the aggressor should be ‘punished’. Unwittingly, although exaggerated of course, it reminds of immortal Dostoyevsky’s ‘Crime and Punishment’: the old money-lender Alyona was, indeed, very unpleasant but did she, and her sister who unfortunately witnessed the procedure, really deserve death? The officials emphasized determination to “protect the life

and dignity of the Russian citizens wherever they are” by punishing “the guilty as deserved” (own translation, Medvedev, 2008a).

3.2.4. The EU: *Threats and Priorities*

The EU discourse shows great unity and demonstrates its ‘principled’ agenda from the first official address on August 13 through the whole covered period by stating “the absolute priority...to stop the suffering and bring the fighting to an end” (Council 2008b). It goes on: “military action of this kind is not a solution and is not acceptable”. The Council “deplores the loss of human life”, “the suffering”, “displaced persons and refugees, and the considerable material damage” (Council 2008c) emphasizing throughout the discourse “peaceful and lasting solution...on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law and UN Security Council resolutions” (Council 2008b).

So, the first priority is immediate cessation of military action. Secondly, Georgian territorial integrity must be preserved as “European States have the right freely to determine their foreign policy and their alliances, while respecting international law and the principles of good neighbourliness and peaceful cooperation” (Council 2008c).

Just as Russia refers to the effect of the conflict in the region, the EU finds own parallels via stepping up its neighbourhood policy, the development of the ‘Black Sea Synergy’ initiative and an ‘Eastern Partnership’ (ibid.) extending own concern with, for example Ukraine and Moldova (Pöttering, 2008i) - the ‘dangerous’ post-Soviet sphere.

Closer to the end of the key post-emergency summit, the EU outlines what seem to be its vital long-term priorities that are present though the whole studied period: security of energy supplies, and, most importantly, the “crossroads” of the EU-Russia relations, which is to be “fundamental choice” for “mutual interest, understanding and cooperation” on the basis of “responsible manner” from Russia. The EU is “willing to engage in partnership and cooperation, in keeping with the principles and values on which it is based” (Council 2008c). The exact terminology of principles except for all-encompassing values is obviously to be decided in process of this cooperation.

Box 2: Findings of Parallel Analysis

	RUSSIA	The EU
PERCEPTIONS:		
GEO-POLITICAL	<i>The Russian Sphere of Influence, EU as representative of 'West', or Other</i>	<i>European and International, EU as a Supranational Agent for Peace</i>
GOAL	<i>Regional stability, Georgia out of SO</i>	<i>Regional stability, Russia out of Georgia</i>
FOCUS	<i>Georgia, SO, Abkhazia</i>	<i>Georgia</i>
MEANS	<i>Coercive</i>	<i>Diplomatic</i>
INTEREST	<i>Demobilizing the Aggressor</i>	<i>Peace Mediation</i>
CORRELATION CONTRAST	Strategic territorial interest Tactical difference	

3.2.5. Formulation of Narratives

The observation of the EU and the Russian discourses allows to assume the following: the EU and Russia share strategic territorial interest (the Caucasus), the conflict within which enacted the process approached though the mutual goal of implementing 'peace' an 'justice', yet with own underpinning of *how* they should be secured. There is a strategic correlation but a tactical difference.

In the above context one may recall the Laeken Declaration, European Council, 2001 (cited in Lucarelli, Manners 2006: 3):

Does Europe not, now that is finally unified, have a leading role to play in the new world order, that of a power able both to play a stabilizing role worldwide and to point the way ahead for many countries and peoples?

So, the role of the EU, reified by the discourse, is one of "dealing with (...) abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights" as "the best means of international order" (European Council 2003).

Apart from *how*, here is also a tempting '*who*' should secure peace in Georgia. For Russia it is clearly its own sphere of influence. The EU does not think so.

Thus the two narratives for the study of the EU impact could be formulated: *'Sharing Competencies in the Caucasus'* and *'The New Security Architecture?'*. These two narratives will be measured in the second part of the next section, after the observations of impact of the EU measures on the Russian behavior have been outlined.

3.3. The Impact of the EU Measures

How to assess the fact that the EU managed to re-account some of Russia's ends and means? This category starts with the EU impact in interaction with the Russian discourse though the implementation of the EU measures to provide ground for subsequent test of change within the Russian narratives.

Obviously, after stating its positions, the EU implemented some measures, more or less successful in relation to the context of Russia and measured rationality of the member-states in this process.

The measures are important not only because they demonstrate which tools the EU is able to deploy setting the EU in context of its civil and normative power, they also most vividly demonstrate the 'angry voices', or the displeased member states in process of the EU discourse formation in particular case.

Important, that not all but only the measures that may have implications for the Russian behavior will be outlined. The measures of the EU are both the outcome of its discourse and a series of reasonable actions, thus, will relate to chronology in the discourses.

3.3.1. Diplomatic Efforts

I. First Diplomatic Success

Major EU undertaking relates to the conflict management efforts via political dialogue and mediation. It is reflected in the 'Sarkozy - Medvedev Agreement' of August 12 2008, which is the central element throughout both discourses (Council 2008c, Medvedev 2008d):

1) Not to resort to force;

- 2) To end hostilities definitively;
- 3) To provide free access for humanitarian aid;
- 4) Georgian military forces will have to withdraw to their usual bases;
- 5) Russian military forces will have to withdraw to the lines held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Pending an international mechanism, Russian peace-keeping forces will implement additional security measures;
- 6) Opening of international talks on the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The first three points implemented after 5 days of the outbreak of the conflict related to the EU stated commitment to stop hostilities and the Russian commitment to protect own citizens and demobilize the aggressor. The fourth and the fifth, however, were not as straightforward. Firstly, Russia was serious about the removal of *all* Georgian militants: “if the Georgian side...withdraws the military to the initial positions...then the path to incremental normalization...would be open. It is up to Tbilisi” (own translation, Medvedev 2008d). Moscow created the ‘buffer zones’ along the borders of SO and Abkhazia and insisted to stay there referring to prior international agreements – the dark area of the Sarkozy - Medvedev deal.

II. Effectuated Dynamics

Obviously, these two points bared strategic importance both for Russia and the EU. For Russia it meant sharing its sphere of influence with international control mechanisms. For the EU, own monitors instead of the Russian military forces ahead of OSCE or any other observers meant for the first time actually playing a role in interrupting the cycle of conflict (K. Smith 2003: 167) without resorting to inexistent military force, strictly speaking.

In the meantime the Russian discourse formulated another important step – unilateral decision to recognize the independence of SO and Abkhazia on August 26, 2008 presented as the only viable solution to prevent further ‘genocide’ on those territories (Medvedev 2008e-j). However, except of the opportunity to solve one two-decades-old ‘frozen conflict’ there may have been another factor formulated by the pressure of the EU discourse – Moscow may have been taken aback not only by the conflict itself but also by the EU persistence of pushing Russia out of Georgia. BBC published the opinion of the president of the New Eurasia Foundation, Andrei Kotunov: “I don't think Russia had any plan or master design for this conflict...was reacting, and improvising - probably not always successfully” (BBC 2008b).

By the end of August it became clear the EU seriously targeted own presence in Georgia, which has been visibly inclining to the ‘West’.

Inevitability of 'foreign' presence may have rushed Moscow's decision, which also breezes with acceptance of the EU presence.

III. Second Diplomatic Success

The next EU diplomatic triumph followed on September 8 in the Mayendorff presidential residence near Moscow, one month after the outbreak of hostilities, when the Presidency managed to establish clear-cut provisions for the 'fishy' zone: the removal of the checkpoints between Poti and Senaki in one week (see map), and complete withdrawal of the Russian military forces from Georgian territory outside South Ossetia and Abkhazia in condition of complete removal of Georgian forces from SO, the guarantee of non-use of force towards SO and Abkhazia, finally, with the EU commitment to deploy 200 observers before 1 October 2008 to Georgia instead of the Russian military forces, all of which was effectively implemented (Medvedev 2008m, Council 2008n, Solana 2008j.k.l).

The withdrawal of the Russian troops was confirmed by EUMM monitoring mission and by Solana on October 8 2008 – two month after the outbreak of the war (Solana 2008l.m).



Finally, point number six in the agreement related to bridging political dialogue between EU and Russia. It has its own value for further analysis of the study.

3.3.2. Civilian Measures

I. Mediation

This leads to verification of the EU civilian power – the establishment on October 1 of the EU monitoring mission to Georgia (EUMM) under ESDP with 350 staff, over 200 monitors and a EUR 35 million budget to monitor the implementation of the Agreement and further state of affairs in Georgia, including the fact-finding mission' initially for the period of 12 months. It is the fastest deployment that the EU has ever undertaken and serves three major purposes: stabilization, normalization and confidence-building applicable to the 'key-words' such as human rights and international humanitarian law, governance, rule of law, and public order, as well as practical security of transportation links, energy infrastructures and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees (Solana 2008j). Thus it is also 'principled' and the EU-role oriented, to "bring a sense of security to the people" demonstrating the EU "capacity to act with determination and speed" (ibid).

II. Sanctions and Regional Cooperation

The question of sanctions is very important in the EU discourse. This was the major point of contestation in process of the EU discourse formation.

Through August until the beginning of September the question of the Russian troops remained factually open. This enacted another measure – diplomatic sanctions on Russia via suspending the new partnership agreement, which Medvedev appreciated as a rational move (ex. Medvedev 2008i). Economic sanctions which were pushed strongly by the UK, Poland, the Baltic States did not receive any factual value under the pressure of France, Germany and Italy (Brown 2008d, Eubusiness 2008e, Telegraph 2008h.j), which will be discussed further.

As to regional cooperation, the EU committed to 'stepping-up' of the relationship in the neighborhood through the Black Sea Synergy and the Neighborhood Policy (Council 2008c), which would be further discussed in the framework of the opening for the EU expansion policy.

III. Financial and Humanitarian

The strongest asset of the EU in conflict solving has always been its economic power (cf K. Smith 2003, Manners, Lucarelli eds. 2006, Bretherton, Vogler 2006). Particular case is no stranger; the discourse emphasizes the EU Commission's rapid preliminary humanitarian aid concentrating on Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and infrastructure damage. Together with the World Bank/UN Joint Needs Assessment mission (JNA) it focused on Georgian economic recovery. It also settled for a package of EUR 500M over three years for post-conflict recovery, as well as enacted such international mechanisms as the Donor's Conference for Georgia (Barroso 2008o). Particular measure does not directly support the research problem, yet it reifies the EU solid status as the civil and humanitarian power.

3.3.3. 'Angry Voices' Echoing EU Approach

The 'angry voices' reacted to two major events in process of the EU/Russian discourse dynamics: delayed removal of the Russian forces from Georgia (point 5 of the Agreement), and the Russian decision to recognize SO and Abkhazia. The Russian response signaled irrevocability: "We pay attention to the position of our partners, but in this situation another thing is important: to protect the interest of the people who live in South Ossetia and Abkhazia" (own translation, Medvedev 2008m).

Albeit the EU showed strong unity condemning the Russian territorial regrouping in Georgia, it equally strongly disagreed on the approach to Russia.

The dichotomy in the EU discourse demonstrates certain historical pattern reminding the clash of interests over the war in Iraq in 2003, however, this time negotiations continued full-speed and succeeded in bringing results.

The UK and Poland, the Baltic States, to some extent the Czech Republic pushed for "root and brunch" review of the relationships with Russia (Brown 2008d) including economic sanctions such as blocking Russia in G8, OECD and WTO negotiations, and other such as boycott of the 2014 Winter Olympics in the Russian city near the Georgian border, Sochi (Telegraph 2008h). Mr. Brown also managed to 'reflect' on NATO positions, stressing re-evaluation of the "alliance's relationship with Russia" (Brown 2008d).

France, Italy and Germany obviously accounted for own context and expressed very different positions insisting that Russian was not a "hostile"

country, coupled with caution not to “aggravate” Russia in sidestepping sanction demands emphasizing the importance to substitute the term with “dialogue”: “Either we want to re-launch the Cold War, point our finger at Russia, isolate it and stamp on it as was the case for a decade...or we choose the option of dialogue” (F. Fillon cited at Telegraph 2008h).

The members of the European Parliament contribute to this dichotomy. Bulgarian representative appreciated the Sarkozy approach as “timely, balanced, and mature”, while the Polish MEP contested that the EU can either be satisfied with verbal action, or make Russia obey its rules. French representative was “pleasantly surprised” with the outcome, while Germany stressed the importance of “joint EU leadership and a common flag”, and Belgium evoked “more cooperation, not more confrontation” (Parliament 2008h).

Box 3: Dynamics under the Impact of the EU Measures

MEANS	OUTCOME	CHANGE	NO CHANGE
DIPLOMATIC	Sarkozy-Medvedev Agreement	<i>Russian commitment to withdrawal of forces, with EU substituting the Russian</i>	<i>Recognition of SO and Abchazia</i>
CIVIL	EUMM	<i>Acceptance of the EU presence in Georgia by Russia</i>	
			Outcome: divisions of interests in the EU discourse

It is crucial to keep in mind the measures and this dichotomy in the EU discourse for subsequent analysis: firstly, it may help understand the effect of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior with its limitations and possibilities in the following part, which will observe the two narratives elaborated previously: ‘*Sharing Competencies in the Caucasus*’ and ‘*The New Security Architecture?*’. Secondly, it provides the empirical grounds for subsequent opening in the Chapter IV of the essay: the importance of context in the EU FP, and the importance of measured rationality (textbox 1) of the EU members both against each other and the framework of the EU.

3.4. The Impact on the Narratives:

Russia and the EU: The New Architecture?

If Russia is to be visualized as the big brown bear, then Georgia is a bee-nest, or at least a nest for economic and political challenges. Yet, the Caucasus is obviously of strategic importance both for the East and the West Europe. One of the major underpinnings in the EU discourse looking into the future should be penetrating in the Russian 'sphere of influence'.

Subsequent part will measure how the EU discourse in line with its principles, interests and contextual limitations facilitated change in the Russian discourse following the two narratives: '*Sharing Competencies in the Caucasus*' and '*The New Security Architecture?*'. It will also discuss possible implication for the EU as a constantly evolving FP actor.

3.4.1. Narrative 1 - Sharing competencies in the Caucasus

The EU discourse formulated a clear message that the conflict in Georgia was not only within the Russian competence but the matter of regional and international importance in the fate of which the EU was determined to take part: "The EU is here in Georgia to work for the stability of the country. Our engagement is serious" (Solana 2008j).

Sarkozy made an elegant entrance in Moscow (own translation, Sarkozy in Medvedev 2008c):

Europe thinks that Russia is a great power and is able to understand that the last decades have been uneasy for Russia in the world, which needs Russia for peace and security...There are two ways to solve the problem: to look back, but we will not find a solution, or we look forward and try to find this solution...what France and what Europe wants – is peace. And we will make all efforts to reach this goal....

Medvedev, obviously, was determined to look forward: "We see in the European Union our natural partners, our key partners" (Medvedev 2008m). Of course, Russia will always trace its own interest just as the EU will, as Sarkozy put it (Sarkozy in Medvedev 2008c), the important achievement is that the EU, regardless of the 'angry voices', found a tactical coincidence reifying itself as a skillful negotiator, which facilitated further cooperation.

One of the most obvious changes in the Russian discourse is the switch of the EU from being a part of the international community that ‘failed’ Georgia to the distinct guarantor for peace in Georgia. Moreover, the EU soothed initial Russian aggression against Georgian actions. What can this change signify?

I. Credibility and Stability

The Russian discourse secured several strategic positions: demonstrated the will and ability to protect its citizens, demobilized the aggressor, and recognized the birth of two states of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. However, it remarkably stepped out of Georgia on the grounds that “particularly” the EU stepped in (Lavrov 2008v).

This signifies one important element that has never characterized the EU-Russia relations – the sense of measured *credibility* in Moscow. The EU emerged first as a mediator between the two conflicting sides, then as the “guarantor for peace” in Georgia – the *stability* would then depend on the EU: “We very much hope that now when the EU became the guarantor regarding the actions of the Georgian side, Georgia, and the Georgian government will implement their obligations” (ibid).

The discourse expends the notion further concerning relationships with the EU which have been guided by fair judgment and “maximal openness” that Russia hopes to be reciprocal (Lavrov 2008v, Medvedev 2008m.n).

In a way Moscow accepted it was time to build a new relationship with the EU in the Caucasus offering the “new security architecture” (Medvedev 2008j). It seems that maintaining regional monopoly lost its attractiveness. Especially since Russia does not want (neither it possible) to isolate itself from the ‘West’ in political terms, as Medvedev consistently stated (Medvedev 2008j.m.n). The Russian discourse confirms one important finding – the

...when Mr. Sarkozy flew to Moscow on August 12 for emergency talks with Dmitry Medvedev, the Russian president, and Mr. Putin a few days after the conflict began, Mr. Putin told him: “I want to hang Saakashvili by the balls.”

“Hang him?” a startled Mr. Sarkozy interjected.

“Why not,” Mr. Putin replied. “The Americans hanged Saddam Hussein.”

“But do you want to end up like [George W.] Bush?” Mr. Sarkozy asked.

Mr. Putin apparently paused, and said: “Ah, there you have a point.”

Financial Times, ‘French president ‘soothed’ Putin’s rage’, 14 November 2008

EU is not NATO, although some parallels exist. The EU is not necessarily, and

increasingly quite contrary, the American 'watchdog'. Despite own interests, the EU is *really* coming with peace (tracing back to the discussion that the 'normative' power of the EU is stronger in its commitment to stated principles – if the EU says it comes with peace and not to isolate Russia, it may mean so). It is not in the EU interests, neither it is in the Russian, to fight for supremacy of regimes.

II. The Opening of the regional frontiers?

How can this be one of the greatest EU foreign policy achievements at this point?

By receiving Moscow's approval for its mission for peace in Georgia the EU arguably contributed with some assertiveness in the Caucasus to its expansionist dilemma. This does not mean that Georgia should be any closer to the EU enlargement agenda. On the contrary, given the disposition of affairs it is unlikely that Georgia is on the way to foreseeable enlargement prospects. However, the EU is constantly re-mastering its neighborhood agenda.

On December 4 2008 the EU promised an increase of long-term aid to the Caucasus, and a 'partnership package' for six countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (Guardian 2008). In this light some stability in the region, as well as certain status of the EU, would help take further steps. Whatever the reasons, the point of this study was to emphasize that the change in this direction was effectuated.

III. Guarantor for Peace and Agent of Diplomacy

Other intrinsic question derived from the discourse is: how does the EU actually define peace? Sarkozy stated: "...the European Union is resolved to serve the interests of peace. Since 12 August, we, Mr. Barroso, I myself and the French Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, have been working for peace" (Sarkozy 2008d). He adds: "...this is a wrong decision – war" (own translation in Medvedev 2008m).

Is peace merely the absence of war, or does it entail the EU 'principles', except that it is all-encompassing? Without this 'normative power' dilemma resolved, the analysis renders it hard to measure the change in the Russian discourse on this account.

However, there is a difference in the means to achieve peace between the EU and Russia – only through diplomacy for the former, and by all means for

the latter. Peace for EU is inseparable to diplomatic conflict-solving contrary to the Russian ‘punishing’ of the aggressor. The EU is a diplomatic power – a specific feature both in its civilian and normative dimension that may itself emerge as a ‘power concept’ specific to the EU foreign policy.

If peace means re-accounting of future means, then there is no substantive argument in the Russian discourse for change, except the fact that it stepped out of one particular territory – Georgia - to allow the EU exercise own measures. If it is the absence of conflict the Russian discourse met the suggestion as welcoming. Medvedev’s position in response to the EU discourse was rather frank – Russia will be interested in cooperation in the Caucasus and will not be interested to see military provocations against itself in Georgia. Whilst establishing its presence in Georgia as the guarantor for peace, thus non-use of force, the EU may decrease further American provocation in the region, guessing the Russian logic. This is tentative but interesting for further investigation in light of current NATO endeavors in Georgia.

3.4.2. Narrative 2 – The New Security Architecture?

After the conflict in Georgia President Medvedev formulated 5 ‘positions’ for his future conduct of foreign policy presented in an interview on August 31. The were developed in conjunction with the proposition for a new “security architecture” in Europe (Medvedev 2008n). Briefly the positions can be summarized and interpreted as (Medvedev 2008h):

1) Supremacy of international law defining relationships between civilized nations

The fact that Russia decided to ‘institutionalize’ the rule of law as a principle in its political rhetoric is good news. The EU’s concern with “judiciary modernization” in Russia is genuine as it relates to security of trade, for instance (Ferrero-Waldner 2008p). Yet, there is one thing for the EU and Russia to decide upon: what exactly is the rule of law? So far in foreign policy it has been associated with double-standards on the both sides: the EU recognized Kosovo against Russia’s will, but condemned Russia for doing the same with Abkhazia and SO. Same goes the other way around.

2) Multi-polar world. “We can not accept the decisions to be taken by one country only, even such a serious and authoritative one as the United States of America. This kind of world is unstable...”

At the first sight, Russia rejects NATO expansionism and claims own interests. Russia does not want NATO military bases at its borders, this is clear.

Simultaneously, after the EU in Georgia Russia feels the need to redefine itself within international politics. This relates to the system of cooperation and trust, for instance. The Russian discourse repeatedly emphasized the gratefulness for involvement and hinted it would be interested in the EU's role in security matters in general (Lavrov 2008v.x). Taking into account that Russia's monopoly in the Caucasus is in danger it would much rather see the EU as a foreign policy actors on its outskirts – an actor from the 'West' who actually, for whatever reasons, talks to Russia without threats and offences.

This 'change of heart' may be beneficial for the EU, too. The US supported Saakashvili in committing a crime against civilians - something the EU cannot tolerate in its neighborhood. It also stamped Yugoslavia; finally, with Iraq it became clear the world is not so 'peaceful' under the US leadership. Georgia needs a new 'hand' and after the interaction with Russia is it possible to legitimately offer one.

3) No confrontation and no isolation. "We will develop as much as possible our friendly relations with Europe and with the United States of America, and with other countries"

Finally, the EU provided some evidence that Russia has a partner in conflict situations, who does not reject the possibility of Russia ending up with some benefits. This is an important opening because the point of concentric zero-sum games gets lost. 'No isolation' may actually become something more than rhetoric.

There is also point six in the 'Sarkozy-Medvedev Agreement', which settled for the new level of international discussions in Geneva since October 15 2008. While Russia emphasized that it will not reverse its position on the recognition of the two new states, Sarkozy pointed that "there is something to discuss", and Lavrov conveyed the feeling of "growing interest", "readiness" and the possibility for a "candid talk" (Lavrov 2008x).

Even if the international conferences most of the times serve to express opinions rather than generating binding decisions this is the impact worth noting. There is a problem, however, that relates to the first point, the rule of law, and the two remaining ones: whose voices, really, will be taken into account? Except the EU and Russia, what is the role of South Ossetia and

Abkhazia (the talks are, after all, about security in the region), and what is the role of the US?

4) Protection of citizens “wherever they are” and 5) Regional Interests

The two remaining categories point to something the EU did not achieve and support the argument about its own reflexive discourse, as well as reserved rationality in negotiations with Russia – the UK, Poland and the Baltic States did not like it to the point they openly supported Saakashvili’s policies, yet the discourse did not stumble but continued due to preferences more weighty for the EU than Transatlantic tango or ‘historical wounds’.

The *fait accompli* of the Russian recognition of sovereignty of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to “...secure the life and dignity of those citizens who live in South Ossetia”, and prevent “subsequent genocide” remained irreversible emphasizing further close cooperation with those regions.

Providing an explanation, Medvedev found his dichotomy of territorial sovereignty (own translation, Medvedev 2008d):

What is sovereignty? It is the command of central authority. Does Russia accept the Georgian sovereignty? Without a doubt it does ...if sovereignty is based on the will of the people and the Constitution, than territorial integrity usually shows the real state of affairs. It is the will of the people to leave in one state.

Sarkozy replied (own translation, Sarkozy in Medvedev 2008d):

We have to exit the crisis...We are in an extreme situation, and our goal is not to solve all the problems...Georgia is an independent country, a sovereign country, and I think this formula is broader than formulation of territorial integrity. There are two words, sovereignty and independence...and they are important. We have to stop the sufferings...and we have agreed on the respect for sovereignty.

All of the above is basically wordplay. The Sarkozy variant does not explain how the EU prefers to tractate the “full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law” (Council 2008c), neither does Medvedev’s variant provide solid legal grounds for the Russian decision. Overall, it may be fair to assume that Sarkozy ‘got the point’ at the negotiation table, somewhere through the phone calls, or just by reasonably measuring what such a step back could have entailed for Russia’s political esteem.

By the same token the EU may want Russia to elaborate on what “wherever they are” means when it comes to the protection of citizens.

Box 4: Impact of the EU Principles on the Russian Discourse

PRINCIPLE	BEFORE	AFTER
OPENNESS	<i>Closed Sphere of Influence</i>	<i>Suggestion for multipolarity in the Russian discourse</i>
CREDIBILITY/STABILITY	<i>Distrust, Antagonism</i>	<i>Reserved Credibility in the EU offering Stability of own Commitments, Readiness for 'candid talk'</i>
THE RULE OF LAW	<i>Ambiguity</i>	<i>Ambiguity though 'institutionalized in the discourse'</i>

3.4.3. Concluding Remark

This part of the study concludes the Chapter III aimed at the analysis of the impact of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior around the remarkable case of the conflict in Georgia. It indicates that the effect can be observed along two dimensions: securing the EU's 'principled' positions in Georgia serving as an opening to the Caucasus, and turning the page in the EU-Russia relations to the level somewhat higher than 'only business' engaging into constructive dialogue where the words credibility and stability in the framework of peace and security emerge in the two discourses flagging the possibility of some sort of long-term approach to partnership.

What the EU could push for, however, was limited by complex multilevel context of negotiations. Reserved rationality measured by bi-lateral relationships as well as commitments towards the EU defined the negotiations process. The dynamics also indicate evolving, self-reinforcing nature of the EU discourse that adds the new character to the broader context of its 'actroness'.

Chapter VI

Taking the Analysis Further

4.1. Introduction

The final chapter of the study serves the purpose of broadening the context of the analysis towards the EU FP 'actorness' based on the empirical observations of the EU and the Russian discourses.

It will build on two working hypotheses: *An actor with 27 faces*, discussing reserved rationality and contextual limitations present in the EU discourse acute in the 'angry voices' section, and a characteristic recurrent in the EU appearance in Moscow – *The importance of personality in the EU FP*. Uniting constructivist and rational supranationalist theories used in process of the analysis, it will expand to the 'reserved constructivist' observations.

This analysis is devoted to the second interrogative framework: *What new can the dynamics of the EU discourse tell us about the EU as a foreign policy actor?*

Whilst analyzing the EU future as a foreign policy actor it is necessary to marginalize the effect of the theories elaborated for a particular case (Lakatos 1972). This is just a part of the complicated whole of the EU FP 'actorness'. Instead, the question is whether there is something conceptually new to the interaction between the EU and the Russian discourses. This essay maintains there is, at least to the extent of expanding existing knowledge on the basis of empirical findings.

4.2. An actor with 27 faces:

Context and Reserved Rationality in the EU FP Discourse

Particular hypothesis maintains that the EU FP constructive discourse both in terms of practical and ideational change particularly in conflict management will always depend on 1. Context, 2. The logic of reserved rationality of the member-states. These features are acutely present in particular case study, and may be extended to the broader notion of the EU 'actorness'.

4.2.1. Possible Explanations

Several existing explanations may be outlined in relation to contextual nature of the EU and to the logic of the member-states behavior.

4.2.1.1. Context

'Contextuality' is not new. Existing studies already discussed the EU as a negotiator determined by contextual mobility (cf. Elgström, Strömvik in Elgström, Jönsson 2005). They built on the critique of traditional view of the EU institutional complexity with absence of clear leadership (Meunier 2000), the problems of coordination, synchronization and linkage (Foster 2000), immobility and rigidity both in bargaining and problem-solving negotiations (cf. Elgstrom, Strömvik in Elgström. Jönsson 2005).

Those studies relate mainly to the EU negotiating capacities elsewhere – in aid and trade, or environment, for instance, where the EU is clearly one of the global leaders. Prior EU FP engagements particularly in conflict solving concerned the states to whom the EU was superior (cf. Strömvik 2005).

This study sees the FP context as starting with external relationships existing between the member states and Russia – a remarkable partner on several accounts.

The EU found itself in the situation of greater economic and political complexity that determined its discourse formation, which explains its limitations whereby the EU performed as a participant more than a power. Despite the fact that the EU discourse was *status-quo* oriented in terms of

preserving the virtue of international law and Georgian territorial integrity, thus expected to have been more conservative (Elgström, Strömvik in Elgström, Jönsson 2005), some other logic prevailed during the negotiations.

4.2.1.2. Conflict of Rationality

Various studies explain the EU negotiations behavior. For instance, the importance of coalitions according to policy interest or cultural affinity has been raised increasingly (Elgstrom et al., 2001).

The possibility of the larger members to dissent can be understood by inclination of the smaller members to mediate their interest according to the majority, especially so in the Council (Zimmer et. al. 2005). This facilitates not only economic but also territorial, historic and cultural clashes (A. Smith 1991: 14). Hence the conflict arises when weighty rationalities are endangered or gain on others' expense (Hix 1999: 73). In internal negotiations the EU is associated with the logic of the most conservative member, or the lowest common denominator (Elgström, Jönsson 2000). Extending to the FP, if the logic is too conflicting as in case with Iraq, the negotiations would rather stumble than continue.

In particular case this sum was represented by the much displeased the UK-Poland-the Baltic coalition, which nevertheless did not affect the process.

The character of negotiations is also known to be floating: from tough bargaining to problem-solving consensus normally prevailing in day-to-day negotiations and dependent on level of politization and type of policy (Elgström, Jönsson 2000). This relates to the heated debates about the reasons behind the member-states' behavior unfolded between social constructivists and rationalists. Broadly, it is the rational logic of expected consequences, or "consequentialism" (Risse 2000) vs. social constructivist "logic of appropriateness" (March, Olsen 1998). While former focuses on the narrow profit calculations failing to encompass the complexity of socialization processes in the EU discourse formation, the latter concentrates on utopian notions of good will, strong norms and the role of identities.

Checkel provided a good middle-ground combining constructivist theory of social learning with rationalist instrumental and non-instrumental processes whereby domestic contexts delimit the role of persuasion and social learning facilitating compliance via "argumentative persuasion" (Checkel 2001).

Rise approached constructivist conundrum by differentiating the processes of argumentation, deliberation, and persuasion based on

Habermas's communicative action theory, as a distinct mode of social interaction contrasted to both strategic bargaining and the "rule-guided behavior". He dived, however, too deep into notions of "truth seeking" on the way towards reasoned consensus (Risse 2000).

Pierson through more skeptic glasses of historical institutionalist path dependency introduced the logic of "increasing returns" penetrated by big or small or contingent events, all of which being "critical moments" in locating irreversibility of political development (Pierson 2000).

4.2.2. The Logic of Soft Rationality in Constructive EU FP Discourse

Building on such analogies this study finds a correlation between constructivist logic of the EU as having impact on other actors emanating change for the EU FP 'actorness' with the logic of 'softly' calculated rationalities against each other and against the framework of the EU, as derived from rational supranationalism.

First, it is important to outline which empirical observations particular hypothesis builds upon.

4.2.2.1. How Was the EU Discourse Limited?

The EU stakes can be roughly summarized as follows: 1. economic and trade relations with the "emerging market right on our doorstep" necessitating continuing growth and modernization of Russia, 2. security of energy supplies 3. the role in "effective international community" and "non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" (Ferrero-Waldner 2008p).

Thus in reviewing its relations with Russia the EU found "no better way to pursue our own interests, and make our concerns listened to" by postponing new cooperation agreement, but not through other economic or diplomatic sanctions.

The above can be explained by the EU being, after all, a supranational actor uniting the 27 path-dependent bi-lateral relationships. For instance, Germany and France are known for their special ties with Russia. Germany imports 34 percent of its oil and 36 percent of its natural gas (Telegraph 2008h). If economic relations functionally drew Germany, France and Italy with Russia, the UK on the contrary has been 80 per cent self-sufficient and is pioneering the green agenda (Brown 2008d). Moreover, it is closely allied with the

American political stance. The Baltic States in their turn are known for political sensitivity against the Russian 'regime'.

Apart from constant poling between the EU and Moscow of whose stakes in cooperation are higher, the logic of EU discourse followed a rule of measured rationality in the EU demands taking into account its partner-negotiator. The EU was limited both by context and bi-lateral ties of its members.

4.2.2.2. The logic of Reserved Rationality in the EU 'actorness'

The analysis indicated that the EU discourse had an impact on the Russian behavior engaging into constructive dialogue evoking the notions of credibility and stability in the framework of peace and security.

What the EU could achieve and how, was limited by complex multi-level context of the member states' reserved rationalities derived from the aforementioned factors.

There is another important factor. The EU FP is closely related to constructing its international image (Elgström, Jönsson 2000). Should the leaders have destroyed their conceivable unity, the restoration of the EU image would have been very costly. Hence some states, as the UK in particular case, would probably chose to *agree*, if not act, beyond their national interests if the EU process is enacted and at stake.

For instance, whilst the 'UK-camp' limited itself with public accusations outside the EU negotiations, France and Germany were equally vocal with the UK and Poland, about strong condemnation of Russia's geo-political, or territorial, divisions of Georgia clearly represented in Moscow on behalf of the EU.

Additionally the EU capitalizes on driving forward its integration process via its discourse: "solidarity" "in the energy sphere is a principle laid down in the Lisbon Treaty". "The events in Georgia dramatically underline the necessity of the Lisbon Treaty" (Pöttering 2008i).

In this sense the EU FP is not merely a practice; it is a constellation of various practices dependent on multi-layered interdependencies existing in IR.

So, what is reserved rationality (see box 1)? It is the rationality of the members states carefully measured against the framework of other EU

members, with the common denominator usually being the state(s) with higher stakes. Simultaneously it is measured through the framework of the EU: when cooperation is enacted even the influential actors would choose to agree, if not act, against own national interests. All of that derives from complicated contextual factors such as bi-lateral historic ties of the EU members.

This reserved rationality is borrowed from rational supranationalist theory that maintains that the EU institutional practices can be limiting or encouraging depending on the context and path-dependency. By analogy to Pierson's increasing return, the point of departure for this measured rationality probably rests in the members(s) with the highest stakes in negotiations, e.g. energy relations. The EU does not exist in a vacuum and cannot claim to redefine exogenous contexts of its members, especially when the stakes are high, which may define its FP, particularly in security as one of the most complicated policy spheres.

This logic differentiates between the discussion of the social processes (appropriate behavior) and the level of political discourses where neither the powers nor the possibilities are equal or constant.

It can not be explained by strictly rational outcomes or consequentiality. Even if the balance of interest is not perfect, cooperation continues because the members chose to measure their rationalities also against the framework of the EU.

This formula maintains that the EU will serve to change other actors via discursive practices to the extent its own context sees it viable. It is a possibility in terms of the capacity to balance the EU interests and conduct a dialogue within tense political environment. It is a constraint because this reflexivity may tend to erase the borders of how much compromise the EU can make.

The above may be subsumed by the following statement by Solana (Solana 2008k):

The point is not that we have abolished national interests in the European Union. Rather, the point is that we agree that the best way to safeguard these interests is by working together. Moreover, working together helps to create and identify common European interests. So, it is a two-way street. This is a fundamental truth, which bears repeating.

4.3. The Importance of Personality in EU FP⁴

I would like to pay tribute to President Sarkozy whose strong reaction and leadership have shown what the EU can do when it is united in determination and in action. The extraordinary European Council on 1 September sent a strong and clear message and we can already see the results. Not everything has been done but a very important part of what has to be done has been agreed and done.

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During a press conference in Moscow Sarkozy noted to Medvedev: “as you see, I did not listen to those who said I should not come here. By the way, I would like to say, it seems hard to solve crises without talking to each other”. To which Medvedev responded: “Nikolas, you made a right decision to come. I told you on the phone yesterday that only the one who takes an active stand reaches success” (own translation in Medvedev 2008c).



Going back to prior argument that the two leaders in France and in Moscow may have been a perfect match – both being ‘sober’ politicians with a set of appropriate personal qualities – it is possible to speculate on what the



outcome could have been if, say, PM Gordon Brown headed the EU diplomatic discourse.

Perhaps, the EU-Russian relationship would have not reached a ‘crossroads’ but an effective deadlock counterproductive both for the EU and for Russia. Plus, the Russian troops may have remained in Georgia. Finally, the situation may

⁴ Pictures adopted from russia.foreignpolicyblogs.com and www.daylife.com

have caused much greater tension on the international arena, between Russia and the US for instance. After all, the EU discourse managed to complete its 'historical mission' originated in the EPC framework elaborated against the Cold-War tensions in Europe (K. Smith 2003).

Sarkozy remarkably represented the European Union Council Presidency, which together with the Council of ministers itself is the central mechanism in the II Pillar, or CFSP, decision-making (Elgström, Strömviik in Elgström, Jönsson 2005). The EU Presidency has already been discussed with utmost attention (Elgstrom et. al. 2001, Tallberg 2004). Just as the Council of ministers itself is considered to be intergovernmental activism, the Presidency ahead of it is an inherently biased enterprise. It is represented by a national leader factually putting one state in front of the EU, thus, it can either encourage the 'visions of the future' suppressing the national interests, or, indeed, exploit its opportunity to pursue with those interests on the EU arena (the possibility for which was discussed in the above sections). It can shape the agenda of the negotiation process by pooling, structuring or excluding the issues; moreover, it possesses the informational and structural resources to resolve incompatibilities of national interests on the EU level (Tallberg in Elgstrom et. al 2003, Tallberg 2004).

In particular case the importance of leadership and representation in the EU negotiation process is constant, perhaps reifying all of those findings. During the EU discourse formation, the Presidency solved at least two grand problems: time-efficiency, and process efficiency - resolved negotiation complexity of the EU by holding a strong grasp of the process. Notably, on both levels: determining the path of external negotiations process, and internal discourse formation. It contributed to effectuating practical and ideational change via measured diplomatic approach.

It is not only the role of Presidency *per se*, but the role of the French President Sarkozy. Whether it is the 'French' or 'Sarkozy' that is the key word here is debatable. Probably, it is a mixture of both. France is a powerful country, and may be assumed to have played on its weight and political ties of France and Russia which Sarkozy personally decided to sustain.



For the EU 'actorness' it is important because it impersonates the 27 leaders, each with own diplomatic qualities and personal attributions, which makes the EU FP process (un)predictable. It defines *how* the leader pushes out the national or the EU agenda and the EU ability to find the tactical coincidence with other discourses.

At the same time one successful personality is a quality test for the EU. Sarkozy pursued with remarkable Presidency and emerged as an agent for peace. He also proved unusual leadership skills persuading some states to agree against their preferences, and sitting at the table with Russia. However, while massaging his own, he must have bruised some other egos, which may echo in future EU FP endeavors.

This is the final for this study, and probably the most charismatic point for the EU's foreign policy future.

Chapter V

Conclusions

This study analyzed the discursive capacity of the European Union as a supranational foreign policy actor in changing the Russian behavior as a result of interaction between the two discourses around the conflict over the Georgian breakaway territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia framed by the 'Sarkozy - Medvedev Agreement'.

It also extended the framework to the broader context of the EU as a foreign policy actor.

It asked two major questions: 'What was the impact of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior?' and 'What new can the dynamics of the EU discourse tell us about the EU as a foreign policy actor'?

The conclusions that can be made on the basis of the empirical analysis were that participation in the fate of Georgia was, indeed, very opportunistic for the EU FP. Of course, the extent to which the EU could affect the Russian behavior was limited. Also, the point was probably not to make Russia act, feel or think *like* the EU but to act in a conceivable peaceful manner.

The dynamic process of the EU and the Russian discourses demonstrated several new variables. The EU made a successful step to *sharing competencies in the Caucasus* firstly, by finding a tactical coincidence with Russia through excellent diplomatic undermine, and secondly, by evoking long-awaited rhetoric in the Russian discourse of measured credibility, stable commitments and readiness for future cooperation based on, if not full agreement, than strategic openness, beneficial for the future of the EU.

The thing that differentiates the EU from 'superpowers' is that it does not mind other actors to gain from the process – that makes it a true carrier at least of the value of inclusiveness in the international system, or true multipolarity.

There is a limit to what the EU can do, of course. In trying to pursue with successful negotiations the EU will always be dependent on the reserved rationalities of 27 (or more) members. They will lift the priorities according to domestic interest on the case-to-case basis. However, united with a common framework they will also measure it against other members probably accounting for the member with the highest stake, and the EU itself sustaining its image.

Thus the EU can be credited with supranational commitment – its members have an ability to agree, if not act, against own national interests. This is a very empowering feature. The EU FP, however, is a complicated multilayered system of various practices that are reflexive to context and constantly evolving.

Finally, the EU bears, indeed, the 27 faces – personalities of its leaders each with own charisma and habits. They should, however, be able to promote the international identity of the EU that may sometimes force to step over own interests, hopefully without personal resentment.

As to the EU and Russia, they have probably a future of some pan-European policy ahead. As Solana put it in the interview to Interfax in February 2009 (Solana 2009):

Building trust takes time, but we have learnt from our own experience in the EU, that it can be done through a combination of common interests, values, rules, and institutions. This has allowed us to remove dividing lines between us in an unprecedented way.

The journey of prospective conclusions...

Abandoning this research, suffice it to say the world today is an analytically exciting place. Changed irrevocably by economic and financial crises, environmental and humanitarian challenges international politics also audits the policy accounts of its influential actors.

The US is losing its global monopoly (e.g. Keohane, Nye 2000). Russia is increasing its long-lost might and goes to a direction a bulk of observers, probably including Russia, are curious about (e.g. Krastev 2008). Perhaps, it is a journey more than a destination. Yet when it comes the 'Minesweeper' - USA vs. Russia – the attempts to 'reset' relationships feel much like porcelain, take negotiations between Presidents Medvedev and Obama on NATO, and their 'easy-going but serious' agreement to disagree only on Georgia in G20.⁵

⁵ <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/93911.php>, Interview with: Konstantin Kosachev, Duma International Affairs Committee Chairman, 4 April 2009 - Issue : 828

The EU on the other hand, is marching steadily into the future with its 'soft' power, as the study sustains. Even though most of the EU members are also the members of NATO, and thus have a potential, if not a tendency, to act militaristically, it may be assumed that the EU framework itself is constraining to the exercise of diplomacy. It is not necessarily because of the "capabilities – expectations gap" (Hill 1993), neither it is only the normative constraints of the testaments at the heart of the EU integration process. It has a generic predisposition to civil/diplomatic leadership. It does possess the power to influence other actors' behavior through its diplomatic discourse, which is also evolving and self-reinforcing as seen from the perspective of the study.

The relationship with Russia is crucially important. The EU is being increasingly remembered by the states to the East of its borders. All of them are in one way or another related to Russia, which is simultaneously the biggest EU energy partner. The Iron Curtain has long been gone for good, and the two are close in many respects.

The EU brokering deal may be an exciting opening for its future. Recent elections crisis in Chisinau, Moldova, for example, already evoked the EU to participate.⁶ The on-going Ukraine discourse is moving closer and closer to supporting the Union rhetoric and the EU, against all odds, seems to drive closer to Ukraine. Even Georgia may be interpreted as moving closer to the EU. What could be the EU future in the region, and in global politics? How will the EU establish itself as a buffer between NATO and other international actors?

⁶ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/moscow-warns-eu-over-moldova-1666848.html>

Executive Summary

This study is about the European Union and its discursive capacity as a supranational foreign policy actor. It drives on the discourse analysis of impact of the EU on the Russian behavior as a result of negotiations around the conflict over the Georgian breakaway territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia framed by the 'Sarkozy - Medvedev Agreement' during the period of August 18 2008 – October 21 2008.

The interest rests also in the broader context of the EU as a foreign policy actor. Hence, specific case-study will help generate several hypotheses about the factors that may have influenced the negotiation process and that can be extended to the EU foreign policy 'actorness' in general, such as reserved rationality in the EU logic and the importance of personality in the EU FP.

The study maintains the following analytical framework: the EU is a supranational foreign policy actor that exists in a complex international environment. Whilst pursuing with its foreign policy its unique nature, that after all encapsulates 27 'normal' states, challenges to overcome contextual pressures as well as historical bi-lateral ties of its members. Constructive capacity to change other actors' behavior here finds its limits (at least before circumstances change), which could be understood as *reserved* constructivist change.

This does not mean that these challenges render the EU as a foreign policy actor impossible. Although opinions in process of the EU discourse formation can sometimes differ, the member-states instead of stumbling into the process chose to follow the logic of *soft* rationality – measured both in relation to each other and to the framework of the EU. The EU discourse evolves with every step; its successful ventures such as negotiations with Russia over Georgia may help understand the new dimensions to the EU as a foreign policy actor.

The Russian case is fresh and remarkable in various respects. First, Russia is not just a random actor. It entails the legacy of complicated socio-political interdependencies with the Union member-states. Moreover, it tends to view the EU in close relation to NATO – which can be interpreted as essentially skeptic. Finally, Russia is the main strategic partner in energy and trade, therefore the Union cannot be viewed as a superior power. This context creates certain 'quality check' for the EU.

Theoretically and methodologically, the entire analysis adopts constructivist logic combined with rational supranationalism - emphasizing 'soft' rationalist (as opposed to fixed preferences of the member-states) reservations in the discourse formation. Thus the discourse is not only an illustration of interaction but also of a series of steps pursued by the both sides. Discourse analysis, which is the method chosen for the study, follows the logic of dynamics of the negotiation process, thus major analytical emphasis would be on the *interaction* between the EU and Russia – e.g. how the Russian discourse changed in accordance with the EU measures and rhetoric. Simultaneously, it captures broader context of the EU 'actorness'.

The study asks two major questions, which serve as interrogative frameworks: 'What was the impact of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior?' and 'What new can the dynamics of the EU discourse tell us about the EU as a foreign policy actor'?

The aim of the first interrogative framework is in-depth assessment of the EU and the Russian discourses and their interaction. Firstly, the analysis observes two discourses in parallel comparing perceptions of the conflict. This is done with the purpose to highlight strategic contrast and correlation, which will help to elucidate the two narratives surrounding the conflict to subsequently test for change: '*Sharing Competencies in the Caucasus*' and '*The New Security Architecture?*'.

Secondly, the impact of the EU discourse on the Russian behavior is analyzed in interaction between the two discourses. Taking into account the specifics of the case, it is possible to observe discursive change both in relation to practical EU measures, and simultaneous penetration of its principles. Hence the second step is to assess the impact of the EU civil and diplomatic measures, finally, the impact around the narratives elaborated previously.

The analysis concludes that the effect can be observed along two dimensions: securing the EU's 'principled' positions in Georgia serving as an opening to the Caucasus, and turning the page in the EU-Russia relations to the level somewhat higher than 'only business' engaging into constructive dialogue where the words credibility and stability in the framework of peace and security emerge in the Russian discourse flagging the possibility of some sort of long-term approach to partnership.

What the EU could push for, however, was limited by complex multilevel context of negotiations. Reserved rationality measured by bi-lateral relationships as well as commitments towards the EU defined the

negotiations process. The dynamics also indicate evolving, self-reinforcing nature of the EU discourse that adds the new character to the broader context of its 'actorness'.

This bears ground to assess the second interrogative framework: *What new can the dynamics of the EU discourse tell us about the EU as a foreign policy actor?*

Herein, the analysis seeks to explain the EU 'actorness' in a broader context. It elaborates two working hypotheses: *An actor with 27 faces: Context and Reserved Rationality in the EU FP Discourse*, discussing reserved rationality and contextual limitations present in the EU discourse during negotiations; and another characteristic recurrent in the EU appearance in Moscow – *The importance of personality in EU FP*.

It concludes that while pursuing with its foreign policy, the EU will always be characterized by contextual dependence resulting from reserved rationality of its members. It is carefully measured against the framework of other EU members, with the common denominator usually being the state(s) with higher stakes. Simultaneously it is measured through the framework of the EU: when cooperation is enacted even the influential actors would choose to agree, if not act, against own national interests. All of that derives from complicated nature of the EU foreign policy.

Also the EU foreign policy will always be dependent on personal representation of the EU. For the EU 'actorness' it is important because it impersonates the 27 leaders, each with own diplomatic qualities and personal attributions, which makes the EU FP process (un)predictable. It defines *how* the leader pushes out the national, or the EU agenda and the EU ability to find the tactical coincidence with other discourses.

At the same time one successful personality is a quality test for the EU. Sarkozy pursued with remarkable Presidency and emerged as an agent for peace. He also proved unusual leadership skills persuading some states to agree against their preferences, and sitting at the table with Russia. However, while massaging his own, he must have bruised some other egos, which may echo in future EU FP endeavors.

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