Russia–EU Relations and the Common Neighborhood

Examining Russia–EU relations in terms of the forms and types of power tools they use, this book argues that the deteriorating relations between Russia and the EU lie in the deep differences in their preferences for the international status quo. These different approaches, combined with economic interdependence and geographic proximity, means both parties experience significant difficulties in shaping strategy and formulating agendas with regards to each other.

The Russian leadership is well aware of the EU's "authority orientation" but fails to reliably predict foreign policy at the EU level, whilst the EU realizes Russia's "coercive orientation" in general, but cannot predict when and where coercive tools will be used next. Russia is gradually realizing the importance of authority, while the EU sees the necessity of coercion tools for coping with certain challenges. The learning process is ongoing but the basic distinction remains unchanged and so their approaches cannot be reconciled as long as both actors exist in their current form.

Using a theoretical framework and case studies including Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine, Busygina examines the possibilities and constraints that arise when the "power of authority" and the "power of coercion" interact with each other, and how this interaction affects third parties.

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Russia–EU Relations and the Common Neighborhood

Coercion vs. Authority

Irina Busygina

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To my parents, and to Sascha, Lisa, Sophia and Iliya

*****

The General and his troops march forth to battle,
The Sickling and the Timid stop at home,
The Rich Man purchases a costly dome.
The Proud Man falls, and Laughter mocks his fall,
The Crafty Man makes cat's-paws of them all!

Friedrich Schiller, "The Game of Life"

"This book by Irina Busygina offers a broad comparative analysis of controversial and less than consistent policies pursued by Moscow and Brussels towards the 'grey zone' between them. Using the contraposition of coercion and authority, the author offers compelling conclusions about the roots and the dynamics of the current Russia–EU crisis. A balanced, highly readable volume which should be a reference book for policymakers and scholars on both sides of the European divide."

Andrey Kortunov, Director General of the
Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)

"Irina Busygina is one of the most thoughtful Russian experts on EU–Russia relations. In her new book, she takes up the challenging task of sorting out the once promising, but by now woefully broken relationship. Irina, however, is looking beyond the current alienation. She urges both sides to learn from their failure in order to build more viable ties going forward."

Dmitri Trenin, Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center

"In her new book, Irina Busygina offers an elegant, theoretically informed analysis of EU–Russia relations that is much needed for grasping the nature of the present confrontation. Looking at their interaction as well as their policies in the common neighbourhood from the perspective of different forms of power, Busygina sheds light on both similarities and differences in their strategies. Her insights are sobering: while coercion can work in the short-term, the EU's mode of existence is better suited to build more stable authority relations although this has proven to be complicated in the time of crisis."

Tuomas Forsberg, Professor of International Politics
at the University of Tampere, Finland

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Introduction
And yet another book

And yet another book on Russia–EU relations? Another repetition of the well-known story with a sad statement about the rupture of mutual relations, and, therefore, another confirmation of our unreasonably high expectations of the past and our present impotence to change at least something in the relations of two powers that seem to be doomed to partnership by objective prerequisites, if not to friendship? The future is unclear but so far there are no signs that the situation may suddenly change for the better. It is often claimed that the current situation is a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent conflict in Eastern Ukraine. But this is not quite true: Russia–EU relations have been constantly deteriorating over at least the last ten years—the crisis in Ukraine was only the straw that broke the camel's back.

The old security order in Europe has been broken, and uncertainty is painful. We want to "survive uncertainty," even if there is no possibility "to have the last word" as well (Taleb, 2012, p.3). Obviously, in Europe we cannot survive uncertainty either by ignoring it or by distancing ourselves from it. What we can do is try to explain it, and thus to incorporate it into our calculations, assessments and forecasts. This is what I have tried to do in this book, which represents the culmination of over ten years of research. That is why, yes, here is yet another book…

My childhood and early youth were spent in the Soviet Union, and, to be frank, in those days I did not ask many questions about why the relationship of my country with the outside world looked the way it did, and not a different way. I took for granted the "greatness" of my country and condemned the aggressive US and West European capitalism, though at the same time I truly loved jeans, chewing gum and Coca-Cola alongside most of my peers. And when I finally started to ask questions, the Soviet Union suddenly collapsed—I fell asleep in the Soviet Empire, and woke up in a country which (as I thought then) had made a genuine choice in favor of democracy domestically and in favor of Europe externally.

In the '90s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, life did not get better, though it did get much more interesting. A lot then was copied "from Europe"—from institutions to "Euroremont" (house repairs according to

European quality standards), and much was copied quickly and, therefore, inaccurately and transiently. But the '90s were a time of heated discussions, naïve ones, as I see them today, though mostly honest. Ten years, only ten years passed, and the Russian people "woke up" in a new country that was now declared by the elite not a "European country," but a "Eurasian power." The questions multiplied, but fewer and fewer people were looking for the answers. The passionate discussions of the '90s were completely forgotten, and the whole period was labeled as "wild." Russia's relations with the European Union constantly deteriorated and now have turned into open conflict. This rupture of Russia–EU relations and its unpredictable consequences increased my incentives to look for answers to three questions: *What* has happened? *Why* did this happen? Were there any ways to prevent escalation of the conflict?

These questions on Russia and the EU have caused an avalanche of new, more ambitious ones. With regard to interstate relations, can we talk about the emergence (at least in some territories) of a new order, a new format of relations that is based on credible commitments, and where conflicts are solved by any means except war? Or do we still live in a world where brute force and coercion absolutely dominate, and there is no way to stop them? And are we seeing an expansion in the ranks of those who not only consider the use of force and unlimited coercion possible, but are fascinated by them and their effectiveness?

In other words, this book is not about Russia–EU relations as such, but about forms of power and power relations in global politics. We see that globalization has led to the development of economic institutions and regimes shared by many states, though it has by no means led to a standardization of power types. On the contrary, the differences are growing. Only recently most experts believed that authority as the mode of interaction between states ("soft power" in particular) was gradually replacing the use of coercion, but now we are observing a rise in the revisionism and coercion that often accompany the state-building process. The Russian case is probably the best confirmation of this trend. On the other hand, the European Union is authority-based internally and adheres to the authority approach in external relations.

The main aim of this book is to examine the possibilities and constraints that arise when the "power of authority" and the "power of coercion" interact with each other, and how this interaction affects third parties. In general terms, what I want is to compare the incentives of establishing authority and coercive relations, as well as their comparative benefits and costs, and the outcomes they produce for third countries. I study all of these issues in the cases of Russia and the EU, as their interaction produces a unique situation. Both Russia and the EU are major powers in international relations (IR) which are principally different in terms of both preferences and modes of behavior in external relations. Thus, there are deep dissimilarities between the two in terms of preferences for the international status quo. In addition, in external relations the EU could be described as an "authority power," while Russia

clearly behaves as a "coercive power." At the same time, geographical proximity and economic interdependence prevent them from maintaining distance from each other, and lead to direct collision.

Neither Russia nor the EU is a "status quo power," though in very different senses. Both are territorially "open" projects in the sense that the ultimate borders of these entities are unclear—they could gain more territory, but they could also lose it. At the same time, both systems are fragile, internally heterogeneous and at risk of failure and disintegration: Russia because its present state is one that only the current political regime is capable of maintaining, and the EU because there are (too) many power loci and solving the collective action problem involves great difficulties.

As for the third countries (that is, the countries in between), in this book I present the cases of Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine and Turkey. The first three belong to the "post-Soviet space" and are weaker actors in IR (in comparison with Russia and the EU). Turkey is a different case as it is a strong actor with no Soviet past. However, in all four cases *power relations* (and not just "relations," for instance, in trade) do exist between a particular country and both Russia and the EU, and the external policy choices of these countries are conditioned by geographical proximity and economic dependence on Russia and the EU as well as on the character of the relations between these two. Their internal dynamics are obviously relevant for understanding variation in their transformations, though external factors (the type of power relations with the neighboring major powers) also significantly affect the trajectory of transformation by breaking it, or accelerating it, or by changing its direction. In studying the cases, I proceeded from the assumption that Russia and the EU interact with these countries separately, meaning that the former do not agree either on doing things together (taking concerted action), or on separation according to spheres of influence (and not intervening in each other's sphere), be it geographical or dimensional/sectoral separation. As such, the four countries need to build their relations with one of the two on a comprehensive agenda.

The logic of the book is divided into two. In the first five chapters I present my theoretical framework, and then come to Russia's and the EU's internal development, and how they affect the types of power relations that the two build with the outside world. I then turn to Russia–EU relations, and the fifth chapter focuses on Russia and the EU within the "common neighborhood" area. The subsequent chapters are devoted solely to four country cases.

The **opening chapter** is critical for the book as it presents an analytical lens, through which I then look at Russia–EU relations and their projection across the "common neighborhood." This lens is the distinction between the two major forms of power in IR, that is between (relational) authority and coercion, proposed by David Lake. I argue that the authority-coercion distinction allows us to learn more not only about the use of concrete power instruments in international relations, but also about the nature of relations

between nations (or groups of nations), as well as about the nations themselves, through the prism of the power relations that they can or want to build with the external world. This "point of entry" looks promising since there are numerous manifestations of authority and coercion in the modern world, the scope for using both of them is expanding, and these forms are becoming increasingly sophisticated with the passage of time.

According to Lake, relational authority premised on a social contract is based on an exchange between the superordinate and the subordinate: the former provides a political order of value to the latter, sufficient to offset the loss of freedom incurred in its subordination to the former; the latter confirms the right of the former to impose restraints on the behavior of the latter. In the chapter I indicate the three pillars of authority that define its nature (and thus allow us to distinguish authority from coercion), namely the legitimacy of relations for both actors, the voluntary character of relations, and credible commitments meaning that both parties not only assume initial obligations that constitute the essence of the authority "deal," but are able and willing to maintain them during the whole period of the contract.

In international relations, coercion in broad terms is the power to use threats and implement them if necessary in order to influence another's behavior. At the same time, however, coercion is a process that happens during the use of force, or during the actual use of other punishments, for instance, economic sanctions. In this chapter, I explain the difference between democracies and nondemocracies with regard to using coercion.

The final section of this chapter focuses on economic sanctions as coercive tools that are available to all states—both ones with democratic and nondemocratic political regimes. I argue that there are profound differences between democracies and nondemocracies with regard to the reasons for imposing sanctions, their success rate and the choice of target countries.

In **Chapter 2** I attempt to find a domestic explanation for Russia's inclination to use coercion in external relations. I argue that the explanation lies in the state-building process in Russia under Putin's leadership, and is particularly linked to the characteristics that this desired state should have. I start with some theoretical considerations on state-building by authoritarian rulers, and then turn to Russia, examining Putin's conception of the Russian state, Yeltsin's legacy, Putin's ways of accumulating resources, and nation-building as part of Russia's state-building project. The last section is devoted to the external dimension of state-building and the use of coercion.

At the outset, Putin was—and after 15 years still is—deeply convinced that Russia has all the objective prerequisites to be a "great power." But in order to make Russia "great" these objective prerequisites, in his view, needed to be combined with the "correct" mode of government, wherein the immanent features of such a mode are: a strong and beloved leader, the *Sistema* (the governance style that relies on indirectness and interpretation rather than command and control) managed by the leader, a central bureaucracy and the *siloviki* as the leader's main agents, in addition to a happy

populace subordinated to the state apparatus. Last but not least, a "great state" should be great in all things, so the "greatness" of Putin's foreign policy is a mandatory and natural element of his state-building strategy—this means an independent foreign policy, (very) active involvement in world affairs, protection of Russia's national interests (as the Russian leadership understands them) and building a pro-Russian coalition. What is important is that demonstration of considerable and visible successes is absolutely necessary to achieve these goals.

I conclude that from the state-building perspective (taking into account the timing and nature of this process), the Russian state's choice of using coercion in foreign policy looks quite rational. First, for the simple reason that it is *possible*. In many cases it can quite easily use objectively existing dependence on Russia (primarily in terms of energy resources), and this alone fuels the temptation of using dependence as a tool for exerting pressure on its partners. Second, the Russian incumbent can make serious decisions alone and very quickly, has no responsibility for mistakes and never admits his mistakes—this is his principal position. The price of using coercion, as well as its long-term, strategic effects, are not calculated: for instance, nobody writes about the losses to Russia's economy due to mutual sanctions; the discussion is only about the EU's losses and about sanctions as an incentive for import-replacement in Russia. All the greater are Russia's uncalculated non-material, reputational losses. Third, coercion gives rapid results when the goal is, as in the Russian case, the revision of the previous international order. For instance, it is possible to quickly start a "small victorious war." It is also possible to quickly impose sanctions, and just as quickly cancel them. Coercion produces a strong demonstrational effect—both for the internal audience (demonstrating the might of the Russian "great state") and for the external world. Finally, playing with coercive instruments allows the Russian president to maintain the high level of unpredictability that he considers to be one of his important advantages. In fact, the Russian state feels no need to choose between coercion and authority power in foreign policy; the task is to combine and coordinate coercion in various domains depending on the specific situation. Russia's approach has brought results: the West has acknowledged that Russia is a power to be reckoned with.

In **Chapter 3**, I turn to the EU to analyze what toolkit for external interactions its multilevel governance system has produced and now has at its disposal. Neither member states nor supranational institutions can monopolize decision-making on foreign policy issues in the EU's political arrangement, so the use of authority mechanisms and instruments is not a choice for the EU (in the presence of other alternatives), but the only possible main way to structure its internal and external relations. The Union uses authority as a standard internal procedure and then projects it onto the international environment. Authority logic lies at the heart of the Europeanization strategy and stands behind the tactics of conditionality, designed to produce incentives for change in neighboring countries in the desired direction.

The distinguishing feature of the EU's use of authority is the fact that the target subordinate is assisted in changing its political and economic institutions under the EU's guidance (first stage) and is then required and expected to shape its policies in a desirable fashion (second stage). When a third country enters an authority arrangement with the EU, it automatically finds itself in a subordinate position and maintains it up to the culmination of the arrangement, when the EU's "carrot and stick" policy results in the "golden carrot" of membership. The EU provides no guarantees that this will happen as the ultimate result of the interaction and initially sets no concrete time frame for the "membership deal" to take place. In the reform process that a third country undergoes in pursuit of membership, coercion is inherent in the EU's authority-type approach, because the withdrawal of benefits serves as a punishment for noncompliance. The Copenhagen criteria function as a set list of universal demands by the EU which a partner has to fulfill in order to transform from a subordinate in the EU's network of authority relations into one of the superordinates (member states) in its political system. The critical juncture of this transformation is the moment when a third country eventually gains full EU membership.

Given the limited range of rewards the EU has to offer to third states, the use of authority is not fruitful when the target country does not aspire to membership, or at least regard membership as an option for the distant future. Where a counterpart is resistant to the EU's authority efforts, it can potentially be subjected to EU sanctions, especially if its foreign policy priorities coincide with those of the EU and shape the same environment in the opposite direction. Sanctions represent a form of coercion that is inherently available to the EU, but the constraints to using it are built into the EU multilevel governance system. Not only does the launch of a sanctioning strategy require the unanimous consent of all member states, but its continuation requires this unanimity to be reaffirmed again and again, very often before the results—the change in the target's country's behavior—are achieved, while the European national economies are already experiencing substantial losses.

In **Chapter 4** I argue that from the beginning of their interaction in the '90s, Russia and the EU failed to establish a sustainable strategic status quo in their relations. The EU's attempt to establish (weak) authority relations with Russia in the '90s failed, and over the following 15 years a relationship was formed that rested on mutual distancing and the separation of the political and economic elements of cooperation. This status quo proved to be fragile and was ultimately destroyed by Russia, resulting in both parties turning to the use of coercion with regard to each other.

The authority instruments that the EU developed and implemented in the '90s for interacting with Russia did not bear fruit. The EU did not manage to strengthen Russia's state capacity and good governance, while successful projects launched by the EU became "invisible" within the huge territory of the country. The instruments were too weak and not designed with any coercion in mind, as the EU was frightened to punish Yeltsin for any wrongdoing.

In addition, the member states' "practical" (in other words, unscrupulous) approach to Russia undermined even the weak actions that the EU had taken, and made the Russian leadership prioritize bilateral relations with EU states over those with the EU as a single entity. For Yeltsin, rapprochement with the EU very soon stopped being a survival strategy.

Despite numerous declarations and signed documents, Russia and the EU have never been *strategic* partners in the true sense of the word. In the '90s, the rhetoric of partnership masked the attempt to establish authority relations by the EU, one which proved ineffective as the EU lost momentum at the beginning of the '90s and later was unable to introduce the principle of conditionality (with its coercive possibilities) in relations with Russia. On the contrary, in the 2000s, it seemed that Russia was beginning to attain the possibility of using coercion with regard to the Union through the latter's energy dependence on Russia.

During the 2000s, it seemed that Russia–EU relations were gradually approaching a status quo that was beneficial for both sides. In Russia, President Putin was busy building the "great state," while the EU was busy with enlargement. In both Russia and the EU, politicians relied on the continuing external tensions as a mechanism for generating internal consensus while implementing the respective transformations of their political systems. At that time member states were left to develop their own relations with Russia almost fully in accordance with their national priorities, be it dependence (or independence) of national economies on Russia's gas, capital or exports.

This status quo, despite all predictions, proved to be very fragile and was destroyed with the political crisis in Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea. At that moment we observed multilevel governance in full effect: while domestic politicians of EU member states openly demonstrated divergence and disagreements over the proposed sanctions, in the end the European national leaders unanimously supported sanctions in the European Council. Russia has imposed "tit-for-tat" sanctions, combining them with tools of "hidden coercion" used to split the EU along various dimensions and to undermine trust in it.

Two questions are of particular interest to me in **Chapter 5:** what are the key goals of Russia and the EU within the "common neighborhood" (CN) area, and what kinds of power tools do they use to achieve these goals?

The differences in Russia's and the EU's approaches to the CN are evident—both in terms of general strategies and in terms of the use of concrete power instruments. Russia's main interest in the CN countries stems from the need to build a coalition to confirm its aspirations to great power status. The CN countries suit this purpose as Russia has the capacity both to reward and to punish them. Russia needs coalition partners, but the problem is that there are physically not enough potential candidates—countries that would be geographically close, reliable, and that could be firmly and permanently bound to Russia. The dearth of potential coalition partners pushes Russia to perceive each country that could enter a Russia-centered

coalition as being of great value. From this perspective, the CN countries appear exceptionally attractive, given their dependence on Russian energy supplies, as well as the cultural and historical affinities that these states share with Russia. The task of building a coalition around Russia and the apparent "availability" of the CN countries has made the Russian establishment think that these countries are doomed to make a "final choice" between Russia and Western Europe.

Unlike Russia, the EU has never wanted to include the CN states in any kind of coalition, or to someday see them as members of the Union. Nor has the EU ever put forward the idea of a "final choice." The key word in the EU's strategy towards the CN has been "security," which is to be achieved by surrounding the EU with a "ring of friends." Thus, the EU's main goal with regard to common neighbors was and is to create a safe neighborhood area. In order to achieve this goal, the EU has developed a set of authority instruments based on the conditionality principle, designed to initiate certain reforms in target countries by shifting these societies into a course of Europeanization. The desired stability along the EU border requires changes, and therefore creates instability (at least in the short term) in the CN countries. This temporary instability that emerges as a by-product of Europeanization is, however, principally different from the "managed instability" that is part of Russia's larger strategy toward neighboring countries.

The EU's approach is based on building authority relations with the CN, and consequently, it uses authority instruments combined with some coercion *within* the general authority approach. For Russia, relations with the CN states are predominantly built on coercion (real and virtual) with the appearance of authority-building (while the details of that appearance depend upon the individual country-specific situation). Furthermore, there is a diffusive effect of coercion when the "waves" of instability spread to adjacent areas, with the coercer turning into a source of security problems for the larger region. In other words, there exists a principal difference in the combination of authority and coercion within Russia's and the EU's agendas towards the CN countries, and therefore these are different *types of power relations*, "parallel worlds," so to speak, that Russia and the EU strive to establish with the CN countries.

I argue that one of the main problems is that authority is not a response to coercion, while the opposite is possible, and coercion could be a response to authority at least in the short run. One consequence of this fundamental incompatibility is the mutual incapability of Russia and the EU to predict not only the strength of reaction with regard to each other's actions, but sometimes even the character of this reaction.

Russia–EU rivalry has led to a deep divide in the area of the "common neighborhood" between the countries that have joined the Eurasian Economic Union (i.e., Belarus and Armenia) and those that have signed the Association Agreements (AAs) and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) offered by the EU under the Eastern Partnership (i.e., Georgia,

Moldova and Ukraine). Russia has "lost" Georgia and Moldova as well as the most strategically important country—Ukraine. However, the game is not over, and the sustainability of the choice of *each* CN country remains an open question for the long run.

Chapter 6 explores the first country case, Belarus. It is well-known that the relations between Russia and Belarus are extraordinarily close and free from major crises. On the surface, the Russia–Belarus relations look like relations of close authority. However, this is in fact an imitation of authority, since Belarusian President Lukashenka has very few choices in defining both his general external strategy and concrete foreign policy moves. For Belarus, the threat of Russia using coercion is very real. In this situation, the role of the EU with its authority instruments is and will remain marginal, as the Union simply does not have enough "points of entry" to the country.

President Lukashenka is in a dual position: on the one hand, he is responsible for the economic survival of his country, for which Belarus needs subsidies from Russia. On the other hand, he is the guarantor that there will not be "too much Russia" in Belarus. It seems as if such a duality should give Lukashenka broad room for maneuver, but the opposite is actually happening: the amplitude of his tactical moves is small as the "red lines" drawn by Russia that mark the borders of his opportunity corridor, and which he cannot cross, are quite close to each other. It may appear that Lukashenka is balancing between Russia and the EU (though under Russia's "supervision"), but I argue that in fact this is balancing between Russia and sovereign statehood, while interaction with the EU is an external expression of the latter alternative.

Lukashenka's commitments are in reality not credible—neither with regard to Russia, nor with regard to the EU. His periodic "flirting" with Europe is not a "turn towards Europe," even a situational one, but just an attempt to show his ability to be an independent actor by interacting with the union of countries that is—at least to some extent—interested in what is going on in Belarus. Starting genuine authority relations with the EU would at some point inevitably mean genuine, and not demonstrative, reforms, which could easily get out of control. Lukashenka's commitments to Russia are stable only under the current status quo: the thing that can turn Belarus away from Russia is obvious and irreversible attenuation of the latter. If this happens, and only then, can the European Union start to work with Belarus. The rise of Belarusian sovereignty will be with great probability conducted within the context of an authoritarian system, but this is surmountable with time as Belarus will remain a small Eastern European country without a self-sufficient economy. The EU knows well what kind of authority instruments it could offer Belarus, but it does not know how to "release" Belarus from Russian influence.

Chapter 7 brings the reader to Georgia, a country noted for its very dramatic political development; in particular, the second transition that started after the Rose Revolution of 2003, and the subsequent reforms undertaken by President Saakashvili and strongly supported by the West. This support

presupposed active authority involvement by the European Union and the US in Georgia's political and economic development. On the other hand, for neighboring Russia, coercion in various forms was practically the main means of interaction with Georgia. Georgia is the country where Russian coercion directly faced two types of authority—American and Western European. In both cases, Georgia's voluntary compliance was at a high level and the involvement of these two actors in the political process in Georgia was considered legitimate. While the authority involvement of the US puts a particular emphasis on military education and assistance as well as on humanitarian help, that of the EU has a multidimensional character and is based on a more active exchange at different levels. Westernization (and Europeanization as part of it) has become a survival strategy for President Saakashvili. During his presidency, Saakashvili took a firmly pro-Western course, and this was a huge risk for him as this choice meant starting an open confrontation with Russia, the scope and duration of which Georgia was not able to control or predict.

But Saakashvili has left and the ruling elites in Georgia have changed. Moreover, so far there have been no tangible economic results that would come as a reward for Georgia's European choice. This circumstance has been unhesitatingly used by Russia, which is trying to quickly repair its relations with Georgia. The failure of the European project in Georgia would not only mean a failure of Western (above all, the EU's) authority relations with Georgia, but it would negatively affect the pro-European aspirations of countries like Ukraine or Moldova. It would also send a signal to the Russian leadership that Georgia's "European choice" was situational rather than long-term and sustainable. Thus, the Georgian leadership has to make a strategic choice—either to confirm the choice made by Saakashvili, or to fundamentally undo it in favor of Russia. The idea of maintaining "proper" relations both with the EU and Russia, as proclaimed by the current Georgian leadership, for all its apparent attractiveness has no chance of working.

In **Chapter 8**, I focus on Ukraine. So far Ukraine's political destiny has been that of a country trapped between two entities that have significantly more political weight. This double asymmetry between the EU and Ukraine on the one hand and between Russia and Ukraine on the other hand places the country in constant tension, as its spectrum of external action is limited by the interests of the two dominant powers on its borders. For Russia, within the whole post-Soviet space there is no other country as strategically important as Ukraine. The entire post-Soviet political history of Russia–Ukraine relations is a history of ever-increasing coercion—from punishing Ukraine with cancelation of special prices on gas (it is a known fact that if rewards are regularly given, they can be withheld as a punishment, and vice versa) to its culmination in the annexation of Crimea and support of insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. Even the periods of "normalization" were in fact times of camouflaged coercion. Russia persistently continued attempts to ensnarl

Ukraine in authority relations and insisted that the country should make a final choice between Russia and the EU. In 2014, Ukraine made its choice—and not in favor of Russia. Now, for Russia, coercion in various forms seems to be the uncontested option for dealing with Ukraine.

For the EU, the political crisis in Ukraine, its speed of escalation and its scale came as a shock; all of a sudden, Ukraine became very important to the EU, though not in itself, but rather as a threat to stability in Europe. The EU is often criticized for offering Ukraine too little, keeping in mind the Union's reluctance to offer the country "potential for membership," which significantly weakens its leverage over Ukraine's development and reduces support for pro-reform forces in the country. However, membership in the Union is a question of the will and capacity of the elites to conduct certain (often painful) reforms with the consent of larger social groups, and their capacity for making credible commitments. The EU's cautious approach with regard to membership is completely justifiable, especially in the case of Ukraine, where once high hopes have been replaced with deep disappointments.

Thus, the problem of increasing state capacity is absolutely central for Ukraine, and much more relevant than the issue of returning Crimea. Without an efficient state (and a strong national center that unites the country in reality rather than on paper), it is impossible to challenge the oligarchic power and corruption that persistently grips Ukraine. Without a sufficient level of state capacity, it becomes impossible to establish sustainable authority relations with the EU. Otherwise, under the conditions of economic dependence on Russia, the country becomes easy prey to coercion. The task of the EU is therefore to support the stabilization of the Ukrainian economy and to increase state capacity and quality of governance, while constantly and strictly monitoring to ensure that the processes developing in Ukraine do not contradict the general idea of Europeanization but contribute to it. In the coming years the question of Ukraine's membership will arise in any case, which is why following the conditionality principle in relations with Ukraine is so important for the EU.

Chapter 9 explores the authority/coercion relations of Turkey with Russia and the EU. So far, as with all emerging markets, Turkey is essentially playing catch-up, trying to close the gap with the advanced economies of the world. What makes it principally different from other countries in Russia's and the EU's neighborhood is its territorial size, key geostrategic location and economic and military capabilities. Both Russia and the EU are Turkey's most important economic partners, though its list of priorities in external relations includes many other states and regions.

Russia and Turkey are similar in many respects: both countries have imperial legacies, and both perceive themselves as decisive regional and global actors, which does not correspond to their actual capabilities. Russia cannot exercise power over Turkey through authority relations, playing a dominant role; with regard to Turkey it pursues a policy of "carrot and stick"—the situational and selective use of coercion. Despite any declarations that could

come from the Russian leadership in the future, it would be unreasonable to count on the emergence of a Russian-Turkish strategic alliance, at least while the current political regime in Russia is preserved.

As for EU–Turkey relations, there is reason to expect that these relations will change—from predominantly authority-type ones to predominantly partnership-type in selected spheres of mutual interest. The "Turkish model," based in particular on the country's "European choice" and EU membership as the final goal, has proved not to be sustainable enough to cope with domestic and external pressures. Despite the still existing official goal of Turkey's accession to the EU, the EU has reached the limits of its power to extend its rules to Turkey, while a combination of domestic and external factors has made the Turkish leadership abandon the country's steady rapprochement and later full membership in the Union as its survival strategy. In addition, the direction of refugee flows (from Syria to the EU through Turkish territory) gave the Turkish executive a bargaining chip in negotiations with the EU, transforming authority relations into a different type of exchange.

In the **Conclusion** I summarize my ideas concerning the choice in favor of building authority or coercive power relations by major powers, as well as the constraints on such a choice. I also propose some considerations about the attractiveness of Russia's mode of behavior in IR and the EU's "global mission."

Reference

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1 Forms of power in international relations

Lake's distinction between authority and coercion

It would probably be no exaggeration to assert that studying international politics by and large means studying various types of power relations and the application of different power instruments by actors operating in the international arena. As Kay (2004, p.14) observes, "Regardless of the reasons for attaining power, the standard reply to the question 'What is the nature of the international system?' has been the further question 'Where does the distribution of power lie?' " However, in the contemporary world, power, understood as the ability of a state (or group of states) to make another state do something that it otherwise would not do (Morgenthau, 1978; Keohane and Nye, 2001), works through increasingly numerous channels, not least due to the processes of globalization. Manifestations of power impress with their diversity.

That is why trying to achieve a better understanding of the "power problem" in international relations implies, in particular, scholars' efforts to structure the forms of power applied in IR. Indeed, in recent years, scholars of IR have made many attempts to progressively refine the distinctions between different types of power. The distinction between hard and soft power won, perhaps, the greatest popularity (Josef Nye [2004] is considered to be the first to identify the latter), though scholars did not stop at this distinction and continued the process of "refinement." As Petersen (2012, p.10) writes, "In the last couple of decades alone scholars in IR have developed terms like hard power, soft power, and smart power, compulsory power, institutional power, structural power, and productive power, normative power, and network power." She herself distinguishes four different types of power in international relations: *coercive power*, *bargaining power*, *concerted power* and *institutionalized* (or *political*) *power*. Her typology is ultimately motivated by the desire to develop a clearer understanding of the distinction between power and violence (Petersen, 2012). Some types of power are "pure" (like soft and hard power), while others lie "inbetween," like smart power, which Nye conceptualizes as a "third way" in power relations. Nye stresses that smart power goes "beyond" hard and soft types (Nye, 2004, 2008a, 2008b; Armitage and Nye, 2007).

Without debating the significance of these distinctions between forms of power in IR, I will use that proposed by David Lake (2010), namely the dichotomy of coercion and authority, for the purpose of studying relations between Russia and the European Union and the projection of these relations onto the area of the "common neighborhood."

Lake (2010, p.3) argues that

> Power comes in two primary forms. In coercion, A threatens or uses violence … to get B to alter his actions. B may choose to comply with A's demand to avoid pain (threatened violence) or remove it once imposed (actual violence). A's purpose is to alter B's incentives so that the latter chooses to behave in the manner A directs.

In effect, coercion is used to produce the outcomes that A desires. On the contrary,

> In political authority, according to standard conceptions, A commands B to alter his or her actions, where "command" implies that A has the right to issue such orders. This right, in turn, implies a correlative obligation or duty by B to comply, if possible, with A's order. B's obligation, finally, implies a further right by A to enforce her commands in the event of B's noncompliance. In any authority relationship, B chooses whether to comply with A's commands, but is bound by the right of A to discipline or punish his noncompliance.
>
> (Lake, 2010, p.4)

Sovereignty, the subject of enduring and extensive studies, is one of the manifestations of authority.

What is the essence of the distinction between authority and coercion? Lake (2010, p.4) states that "Authority differs from coercion in being fundamentally a collective or social construct. … With authority, … the *right* to punish noncompliance ultimately rests on the collective acceptance or *legitimacy* of the ruler's right to rule" [emphasis added]. Imagine that a state wants to be a member of a certain union of states, intending to extract specific benefits (for instance, more security) from the membership and agreeing to comply with all of the union's rules. Complying with the rules means that the state would need to constrain its sovereignty. The union can either reject the state's membership application, or the union can accept it and lay down membership criteria that presuppose certain reforms in the target state. In pursuit of membership, the target state agrees to fulfill them, thus recognizing them as legitimate. This is an example of authority relations. If the target state fails to meet the membership criteria for whatever reason, denial of membership in the union will follow as a punishment. Consider another situation: a powerful state persistently offers to establish a union with a neighboring sovereign state, but the neighboring state rejects the offer. In response, the dominant partner

uses its coercive resources (e.g., it unilaterally changes the rules of trade or embargoes imports from the subordinate partner). Under such conditions, the neighboring state may be forced to join the union. This is an example of relations based on coercion and not on authority.

Modern states are very complicated organizations where numerous actors with different interests coexist and interrelate. Consequently, the decision to establish authority relations (with the subsequent restriction of freedom for the subordinate state, and probably for the dominant state as well) will create groups of winners and losers in both states. If the losers-to-be cannot block the decision, they will have to abide by it. For instance, this was the case with the EU enlargement to incorporate countries of Central and Eastern Europe: the strategic decision of these countries' elites to join the EU, as well as the consent of the existing member states to accept them, created groups of losers within existing member states as well as within the candidates. A "burden of membership" can arise as a byproduct of a country joining the WTO or any other international organization. Lake (2010, p.5) argues that "Political authority is never a dyadic trait between a ruler and a single subject, but derives from a collective that confers rights upon the ruler." Thus, in authority relations, new rules must be accepted by all or a majority of the groups within a particular state. According to Blau (1963, cited in Lake, 2010, p.5), if a subordinate is treated as integral, its compliance with authority is regarded as voluntary. But from the perspective of any individual subordinate, compliance comes as a result of "compelling social pressures."

Coercion and authority, for all their analytical differences, are not easy to distinguish from each other. As Lake (2010, p.5) writes,

> Although distinct, political authority and coercion are intimately related in the use of violence to enforce commands … They are deeply intertwined in their reliance on violence, making it difficult for analysts to conclude whether, in any given instance, a subordinate followed the ruler's command out of duty or force. … there is no bright line separating authority and coercion.

The main difficulty in distinction stems from the fact that both coercion and authority relations are hierarchical orders, meaning that they are not built on an equal basis. If equality served as the foundation for such relations, they would not be *power* relations anymore, as power relations rest on the domination/subordination dichotomy.

Beyond that, hierarchies built on authority and on coercion are principally different. Making a distinction between various hierarchical orders, Lanoszka (2011) writes about two categories. One consists of states voluntarily following other states that they commonly designate to lead them, while still acknowledging the possibility of coercion in such relations. The other category, however, consists of a dominant state that supervises the policy choices made by other states and exercises prerogatives over their status. In

fact, this is the distinction between liberal and imperial hierarchical orders. Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990, cited in Lanoszka, 2011, p.5) define imperial arrangements as those in which dominant states coerce subordinate states into compliance. This means that weak countries have no choice but to follow the commands of their more powerful counterparts within arrangements that might differ in their levels of institutionalization. By contrast, liberal orders are characterized by their open and inclusive form. From our perspective we can thus make a distinction between (predominantly) authoritative and (predominantly) coercive hierarchical orders.

Authority requires some coercive capability, as Lake (2010, p.14) argues. This is why there is always a slight "taste of hopelessness" in authority relations (putting coercive ones aside), as in any restrictions put on freedom. In practice—as authority relations between two states do not develop in a vacuum—this feeling of hopelessness can be strengthened when subordinates need a superordinate because they feel threatened by another major power. For instance, this was the case with the states of Central and Eastern Europe that rushed toward the EU immediately after the collapse of the "socialist camp" as they were terrified by the existence of the unpredictable Russian giant in the East. It is also the case with South Ossetia and Abkhazia currently seeking refuge with Russia against the Georgian threat.

But what is "some" coercion? How much coercion can authority contain while still remaining authority? Strictly speaking, the only thing that allows us to confidently claim that we observe authority relations in a given case is the fact that the dominant state (or union of states) cannot use force in principle, due to its domestic institutional design and principles of operation. However, such cases are rare. In thinking about how much coercion authority contains, it would be useful to look inside the dominant state, specifically at its political regime. Contemporary world politics continuously provide evidence that both democracies and non-democracies (autocracies) do use coercion. But what about authority? For democratic nations (or groups of nations) which are major powers in IR, authority relations may play a significant role in increasing influence beyond their borders. A completely different situation emerges with autocracies. They can establish relations that can *appear* to be authority ones; in other words, they can only imitate authority relations with weaker states. In fact, authority can camouflage (successfully or otherwise) a permanent and real threat of coercion, finding new and sophisticated tools for applying it. Despite any declarations, subordinates can never know when the contract will be revised and coercion used. The contract between a superordinate and a subordinate state can be changed unilaterally at any time by the dominant autocratic power, meaning that this power cannot credibly commit to maintaining genuine authority relations. While seeming authority-based on the surface, the relations between a dominant autocracy and its subordinates are similar to patron–client relations (about patron–client relations in IR, see, for instance, Ciorciari, 2013). It can be also assumed that if a nondemocratic state strives to establish itself as a "great power," displaying its might to the

outside world, coercion as well as authority-like relations (predominantly with regard to its neighbors) would be a quick and natural way of doing so.

I am not arguing that the distinction between authority and coercion is better than other distinctions between different forms of power, for instance that between soft and hard power. I only argue that the authority–coercion distinction allows us to learn more not only about the use of concrete power instruments in international relations, but also about the nature of relations between "A" and "B" states, and about the states themselves, through the prism of the relations that they can or want to build with the outside world.

The pillars of authority

There are numerous manifestations of authority relations in the modern world, and the scope of the use of authority is expanding. Lake (2010, p.6) states that in different historical periods the sources of authority lay in the charisma of leaders (that is, charismatic authority), or in tradition (traditional authority), or in religion (religious authority). He considers Nye's concept of "soft power" to be a form of charismatic authority (Lake, 2010, p.6).

However, today, he argues, there are two primary foundations of political authority: law (the foundation of formal-legal authority) and the social contract (the foundation of relational authority).

> In formal-legal authority, A's ability to command B, the community of subordinates, and the willingness of B to comply, follows from the lawful position or office that A holds. … Since there is no duly constituted *legal* authority above states, it follows that there can be no authority between states.
>
> (Lake. 2010, p.6, emphasis added)

However, the European Union illustrates that such authority does exist: the EU has a legal identity and its own legal order as such. Furthermore, European Union law has a direct or indirect effect on the laws of its member states and, once in force, becomes part of the legal system of each member state (The European Parliament, 2016). As for candidate countries, they have to adopt the *acquis communautaire* (the whole massive body of EU legislation) once accepted into the Union.

"Relational authority, premised on a social contract," continues Lake (2010, p.7),

> is founded on an *exchange* between ruler and ruled in which A provides a political order of value to B sufficient to offset the loss of freedom incurred in subordination to A, and B confers the right on A to exert the restraints on B's behavior necessary to provide that order. In equilibrium, a ruler provides just enough political order to gain the compliance of the ruled to the taxes and constraints required to sustain that order, and B complies

just enough to induce A to actually provide it. A gets a sufficient return on effort to make the provision of political order worthwhile, and B gets sufficient order to offset the loss of freedom entailed in accepting A's authority. If A extracts too much or provides too little order, B can withdraw his compliance, and A's authority evaporates. In this way, relational authority, contingent on the actions of both the ruler and ruled, is an equilibrium produced and reproduced through ongoing interactions [emphasis added].

Two vivid examples of authority deals are the admission of new states to the union of American states and the voluntary accession of Eastern Georgia into the Russian Empire. The US Land Ordinance of 1784 stated that once an area in colonized territory reached 20,000 inhabitants, it could call a constitutional convention and establish a provisional government. The draft constitution of a prospective state had to guarantee the foundation of a republican government form. The new state had to commit to the acts of Congress and to the Articles of Confederation. Upon the fulfillment of all above mentioned conditions, the state could enter the Confederation of 13 founding states *on equal footing* after reaching a population number equivalent to that of the least populated members. Thus, before entering the Union, the candidates had to prove their capacity for institution-building in the form prescribed by the Union, that is, the republican form.

The second example is the voluntary accession of Georgia into the Russian Empire. Prior to taking an oath of allegiance to the Russian Empire, the territory of modern Georgia was subjected to the competing expansionist ambitions of the Persian and Ottoman empires (modern Iran and Turkey respectively) struggling for dominance over the South Caucasus. Following the victory of the Russian Empire against the Ottomans in the war of 1768–1774, the tsar of the Eastern Georgian kingdom Kartli-Kakheti officially asked for Russian patronage over Eastern Georgia. In the bilateral Treaty of Georgievsk, Georgia recognized the supremacy of the Russian monarch in exchange for guarantees of its territorial integrity. Articles 8–11 equated the Georgian privileged social strata (nobility, clergy and the merchant class) to those of the Russian Empire. Georgia maintained a high degree of autonomy in domestic affairs but had to coordinate its external policy with that of the Russian Empire and to provide the imperial center with military assistance. Four secret articles of the treaty determined the conditions for stationing the Russian military in Georgia, and prescribed for Georgia to avoid internal strife. Immediately after the death of its tsar, Georgia asked the imperial center for help again because of disputes surrounding the heir to the throne. This time, Georgia officially entered the Russian Empire as a government (*guberniya*) with no special privileges.

Who can initiate authority exchanges in international relations? The first criterion for becoming a superordinate in authority relations is that of being a successful and effective actor *that has something to offer others*. Since relational authority implies the ability to project authority exchanges far beyond

state borders, according to Lake (2010, p.8) international authority is basically limited to "great powers," "although limited authority may also be exercised by regional powers." However, the list of actors with the ability to establish authority relations is not limited to states with "great power" status. The European Union, being not a state but a union of democratic states, *nolens volens* poses a challenge to many regular formats of relations between states in the modern world. Using different forms of authority relations, the EU strives to *change* its external "others." Thus, in shaping its relations with the world (beyond the West), the EU proceeds "from the belief that world countries should adapt international political norms to the European standards. Normative convergence is thus the starting point for developing relations with emerging countries" (Geeraerts, 2011, p.62). The EU is, of course, not a pioneer in using authority relations. However, it is certainly a pioneer in searching for and experimenting with various (occasionally, very sophisticated) forms of authority. For the EU, authority relations can be asymmetric with regard to different issues and policy directions. In other words, in some directions the rules can have a more binding character than in others. For instance, the Copenhagen criteria, which were formulated by the EU for Eastern European countries striving for membership in the Union, included the stability of institutions that would guarantee democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, as well as a functioning market economy and adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union, but said nothing about the foreign policy of candidate countries.

Authority principally differs from coercion with regard to the definition of the national interest of the dominant actor. According to Lake (2010, p.12),

> in authoritative relations, dominant countries, at least, do not define their national interests in narrow self-seeking terms, as implied in a world of only coercion. Rather, they see an *interest in political order*, in general, and are willing to pay costs and to forgo actions they might otherwise choose to create and sustain their legitimate right to rule over others [emphasis added].

The EU is unable to formulate its national interests in narrow terms, since it simply does not have any; its interest with regard to the territories beyond its borders relates first and foremost to maintaining security and stability.

The three pillars of authority that define its nature (and thus allow us to distinguish authority from coercion) are:

- *legitimacy* of relations for both actors: the subordinate actor respects the constraints that the dominant actor puts on its behavior, and accepts punishment for violation of the dominant actor's rules as legitimate, while the dominant actor must preserve its legitimacy in the eyes of the subordinate;

- *voluntary character*—authority "deals" are based on pure or partial voluntarism, in which the coercive power of the dominant actor is felt by the subordinate in the background, and not used directly (Lake, 2003, p.304);
- *credible commitments*, meaning that both parties not only assume initial obligations that constitute the essence of the authority "deal," but are able and willing to maintain them during the whole period of the contract.

Genuine authority relations are an equilibrium, since, as Lake (2010, p.15) argues, "Subordinate (and dominant) states eventually develop vested interests in the authority and order of the hegemon, which give them incentives to actively support the dominant state, its efforts, and its uses of force when necessary." This brings Lake (2010) to the conclusion that it is easier to maintain authority than to create it, and that authority relations become more robust over time. If authority declines, it happens because "the subordinates withdraw their consent, the hegemon abuses its authority by acting in its self-interest, rather than in the general interest, … or the hegemon can no longer provide the required order" (Lake, 2010, p.15). However, the story can be more complicated. Using the example of Russia–EU relations, below I will show how the formal institutions that structured authority relations de facto not only declined, but were replaced by coercion.

For the subordinate state, the decision to enter authority relations with a dominant power is strategic, and this is only natural: right from the start of the "deal," the subordinate loses a measure of its sovereignty, as it becomes obliged to follow someone else's rules. In addition, there is always the threat that the dominant state will abuse its authority, and as the dominant states are mostly "great powers," the threat of unlimited domination becomes acute. Hence, there is a problem of trust in the dominant state's commitments—in a certain environment, the temptation may become high for the superordinate to break its commitments for its own profit. Meanwhile, to maintain successful authority relations, the dominant state needs to convince subordinates of its readiness to follow through on its commitments at any time, including international crisis or even war. Such guarantees of the credibility of commitments can be provided only by liberal democracies, due to the structure of their domestic institutions and the expectations with regard to their decision-making process (Cowhey, 1993; Reed, 1997; Walt, 1997; Martin, 2000; Mansfield, Milner and Rosendorff, 2003; Leeds and Savun, 2007; Mansfield, Milner and Pevehouse, 2008; Leeds, Mattes and Vogel, 2009).

The problem of unlimited domination and breaching of commitments does not apply to a single "great power"—it would also be applicable to supranational organizations if not for the EU's multilevel governance structure, which constrains in the highest degree the Union's capability for coercion. The other factor which can lead a subordinate to make a strategic decision that leads to curtailing its sovereignty is the dominant state's behavior with regard to its other subordinates in the past. Thus, candidate countries trust

the EU, in particular, because they have the evidence concerning the Union's behavior in the course of its previous enlargements.

Why use coercion: benefits, costs and risks

David Lake's appeal was to return authority to the study of international relations, and that is what he did. Coercion as the second basic form of power interests him much less. However, coercion in modern international politics is on par with authority, and the frequency of use of the former is increasing.

Scholars give various definitions of coercion. Some restrict coercion to the threat or use of severe deprivation, physical violence or even loss of life (Bierstedt, 1950; Dahl, 1957, cited in Molm, 1997, p.115; Bachrach and Baratz, 1963), while others argue that coercion must entail restriction of freedom (Bierstedt, 1950; Etzioni, 1968, cited in Molm, 1997, p.115). Molm (1997, p.115) defines coercion as "the use of punishment to obtain rewards from another." In international relations, coercion in broad terms is the *use of threats* to influence another's behavior (Bratton, 2005, p.99). At the same time, however, coercion is a *process* that takes place during the use of force, or during the actual use of other punishments, for instance, economic sanctions (Bratton, 2005, p.102). States use coercive power when, instead of compromise and bargaining, they strive to unilaterally control the outcome of an inter-action or the behavior of the other state (Petersen, 2012, p.6). The coercer wants to hurt the opponent, and does so, but, as Bratton argues, not always with all its might, "leaving open the threat of even more pain if the opponent still does not comply." Coercion can appear in the form of a single action, when the coercer wants to force the opponent to change a concrete decision, or to refrain from a certain action. Coercion can also take a form of a calculated strategy where the coercer applies, and then if necessary increases, pressure on the opponent in different forms and spheres, thus limiting the choices available for the opponent until it is left with only the option desirable for the coercer. In this respect, coercion differs from "brute force," where the goal is achieved using violence no matter what it takes (Bratton, 2005, p.101).

Coercive tools are diverse and complicated; they include not only the use of military force, but also coercive diplomatic strategies. Usually the latter come first, and the former follows in case of noncompliance. For instance, coercive diplomacy was used by the US with regard to Libya in the 1980s. The US leadership made a set list of demands that Gaddafi did not comply with. Then in 1986, the Americans bombed Tripoli and Benghazi. The same logic functioned with the case of Kosovo—air strikes against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic followed the failure of coercive diplomatic efforts to make him comply with externally defined rules (de Wijk, 2014). Here it is worth noting that in order to evaluate the effectiveness of coercion, we need to take into account both the implications of using force and those of imple-menting coercive diplomacy. The example of NATO's air war over Kosovo in 1999 is very indicative in this respect. If coercion is seen only as the use of

force, then Operation Allied Force was a success, because NATO's bombing campaign forced the Serbs to withdraw from Kosovo and to allow the presence of NATO peacekeeping troops. However, NATO's coercion of Serbia began in 1998, but the Serbs ignored a full year of coercive threats. From this perspective, as Bratton (2005, p.104) stresses, Kosovo looks at best like a limited and belated success, if not a failure.

The forms of coercion have become increasingly sophisticated with the passage of time; most common tools of the recent past—naval blockades, strategic bombings and economic sanctions—are now complemented by other instruments, which are occasionally combined in surprising and unusual ways. This makes scholars and experts invent new concepts to explain what is happening, and try to predict the development of coercive strategies in the future. In their attempts to do so, scholars have come forward with the concepts of "cross-domain coercion" (see Chapter 2) and "hybrid warfare." The latter is conceptualized by Lanoszka (2016, p.178) as

> a strategy rather than a new form of war. It is a strategy, because it deliberately integrates the use of various instruments of national power so as to achieve foreign policy objectives in the light of the believed goals and capabilities of the adversary. … In waging hybrid warfare, the belligerent is actively striving to undermine its target's territorial integrity, subvert its internal political cohesion and to disrupt its economy. Hybrid warfare can serve such revisionist goals as territorial expansion and the imposition of indirect rule over another (nominally) sovereign state.

Despite the fact that the "hybrid warfare" concept has quickly gained prominence and continues to enjoy widespread popularity in both scholarly and policy circles, its utility as an analytical tool is heavily contested. First, the "hybrid" approach to war is not new, and second, in being used to explain the Russian case in particular, it inadequately reflects the direction of Russia's military modernization and leads to a skewed understanding of Russia's military capabilities (Renz, 2016).

The new developments not only contributed to the discussions on the necessity of new concepts, they also changed the focus of debates on coercion: until recently most studies were devoted to the successes and failures of US coercion against third parties, whereas now Russia's coercion against Ukraine is the "hottest" issue.

Indeed, coercion has played a major role in world history. For instance, territorially distinct states in Europe were consolidated around permanent military establishments. The ability to use coercion by achieving military superiority granted larger states better chances to survive (Tilly, 1990, p.46). It is difficult to think of a state that has never used coercion against others in the long-term perspective. Countries have always used coercion, and recent events like Russia's annexation of the Crimea, the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the war in Syria give grounds to expect that states will continue to

use coercion as a foreign policy tool. And, indeed, why should powerful states use authority with all its conditions and constraints, when they can simply use coercion? Such a wide range of benefits, both material and symbolic, can be achieved with coercion! Coercers can get results quickly. They can redraw the world map by expanding their territory or by creating new—nonrecognized— states; they can force governments to resign or simply destroy them. A coercer can gain direct access to new resources, or it can demonstrate its might to neighbors or to the whole international community.

From this perspective, we can only wonder why powerful countries do not perpetually use coercion against weaker ones, and why the world has not yet turned exclusively into an arena of multidirectional pressures from some states against others. But in reality, world politics is much more complex than that. There is enough evidence of coercion being in use, but a state's choice in favor of coercive strategies is constrained by both objective and subjective factors and considerations.

In most cases coercion is expensive, so one of the initial factors determining whether coercion can be used or not is the availability of political, financial and military resources. This factor applies to all states (or groups of states), regardless of their political regimes. When making a choice in favor of coercion, a state should be ready not for a single political step involving massive investments, but for a series of costly steps that have to be continued until the desired result has been achieved. In addition, the coercer must also calculate that coercion can imply losses for its own economy (for instance, when economic sanctions are imposed, both the imposer and the target states suffer economic losses) as well as costs in human capital and the threat of diminishing legitimacy of the incumbent political elite. In other words, there are *always* costs involved in using coercion, and these costs tend to disproportionally grow with the passage of time. At the moment when the use of coercion starts, it is very difficult (or even impossible) to accurately calculate its long-term costs.

With regard to using coercion, a distinction should be made between democracies and nondemocracies. In most cases, democracies use coercion against nondemocracies. "Democratic peace theory" helps to explain the reason. The theory was first postulated in Kant's work *Perpetual Peace* (1957) and then developed within normative and institutional approaches. According to the normative reasoning, all democracies share and abide by certain norms (separation of powers, rule of law, respect for human rights) that breed trust and respect among them (Doyle, 1997). Nondemocracies are perceived by democratic leaders as inherently unjust, able to withdraw the basic rights of their population if needed, and more inclined to use force to suppress internal uprisings. In turn, autocratic states perceive democracies as weak negotiation partners that eagerly make concessions in order to avoid military conflict by any means. If political bargaining appears fruitless, an autocratic state will inevitably either directly attack a democracy or threaten it with warfare. In this case, the political rationale for a democracy would be to use a proactive

strategy by launching a preemptive strike against the autocracy (Owen, 1997). If it does not, it will have to respond reactively by defending itself against a nondemocracy at war. The institutional reasoning implies that democratic leaders are held accountable by the population and make decisions under constant pressure stemming from the opposition. Democracies have strong institutional frames and strong armies, which is why they are reluctant to fight against each other—defeat is more probable and its cost is exceptionally high. Meanwhile, institutions in autocracies are weak, because autocratic leaders aim at neutralizing all forces that may challenge their power monopoly. Therefore, a democratic politician can start a war against an autocracy more eagerly and with better chances to win.

Democracies mainly resort to coercion when they consider the domestic or external policy of the leadership in a certain nondemocratic state unacceptable, meaning that this state poses a threat to the international community. In this case, the coercer's national interest will be determined not in narrow terms, but more broadly—as an interest in the maintenance of order and security, and the observance of international rules and commitments. It is expected that material losses from coercion will be compensated by long-term political and security benefits. However, at least theoretically, there is a way to transform "unacceptable" behaviors into "acceptable" ones by turning non-democratic countries into democratic ones, coercing them into democracy with the further ambitious goal of spreading democratic rule across the whole world. It is the US that developed the strategy of "coercion to democracy," pursuing it based on two alternative grounds: threat to US national interests (whatever these may be) and the "Responsibility to Protect"—the UN regulation prescribing that massive infringement of the basic rights of the local population by the incumbent authorities of a given country permits external forces to violate its sovereignty for the sake of protecting ordinary people.

The rise of terrorism added another rationale to the interventionist approach: after the terror acts of 9/11, the US official stance was formulated in the phrase "America is at war against terrorism" (The White House, 2002). The official position of the American authorities was that rogue states provided fertile ground for terrorist organizations by failing to maintain internal order and security within their territory. This position justified military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria. It was claimed that regime change could bring to power political forces able to establish a stable efficient democracy, which would defeat terror.

The reasoning of nondemocracies in using coercion is different from that of democracies. By applying coercion against weaker states, nondemocracies can be motivated by the idea of revenge or punishment of "disobedient" states while at the same time demonstrating their might to the international community. Coercion can also be triggered by a "favorable" situation, for instance, when central authorities in a "disobedient" state experience a legitimacy crisis—this was the case with Ukraine in early 2014, when Russia used the sharp weakening of the central state to annex Crimea under slogans of

"Now or never!" and "Carpe diem." In this case, coercion was not a strategy calculated beforehand (although the readiness to use coercion certainly existed prior to the annexation), but a reaction to a specific situation, while Russia's justifications for the coercion came after its actual use. Finally, nondemocracies can use coercion "by force of habit," when they have previously done so—domestically and internationally—without a proper reaction from other states and international organizations. For such a situation there is another slogan (allegedly belonging to Catherine the Great): "Winners are not judged!"

Coercion is successful when the target state concedes to a significant part of the coercer's demands, and fails when it does not (Bratton, 2005, p.109). There is no consensus among scholars on the question of whether coercion is an effective foreign policy tool. For instance, Homans ([1961] 1974, cited in Molm, 1997, p.117) and Blau (1964, cited in Molm, 1997, p.117) argue that coercion is ineffective and produces resistance and retaliation rather than compliance. Keck (2014, no pagination) argues that "It shouldn't come as a surprise that coercion often fails, regardless of the kind of pressure applied to the target." Other researchers, on the contrary, have found that use of coercive power shows high efficiency (Willer, 1987, cited in Molm, 1997, p.117). According to Molm (1997, p.117), most actors would avoid using coercion in relations of mutual exchange, due to the high risks inherent in it. These risks are reduced (and the probability of using coercion increases respectively) only in one situation: when the exchange frequency between the two partners is so low that there is little to lose. Molm narrows the analysis to exchange between two counterparts, though the relations between a coercer and its opponent state do not develop in a vacuum, so the coercer should also consider the risks coming from the regional level and the level of the international community as a whole. Meanwhile, as stated above, it is impossible to calculate the risks of using coercion in the long run. The high probability of mistakes in the aggregation of risk calculations for different arenas and time periods leads one to the conclusion that coercion should be an exceptional foreign policy tool for rational actors. Full-scale coercion is only worth using in special situations where there are major common threats; it is in no way a substitute for "traditional" foreign policy options. The choice in favor of coercion in external policy has a strategic character, meaning that by using it, a state shapes its future (at least to some extent), since it creates certain expectations with regard to its behavior in international politics.

Economic sanctions: coercion, available to all

As discussed above, coercive tools differ greatly, and not all are available to every country that would want to use them. However, there is one tool of coercion that is available to all countries (though the rationality of its use is another question). This tool is economic sanctions or a threat to impose them. Only countries that are completely isolated from interactions with other

states are deprived of the opportunity to use sanctions, which is extremely rare in the globalized world. Even unions of states can impose sanctions acting collectively—in this case they must reach an agreement on the matter, which is much more difficult to achieve than in the case of a single state. Thus, even actors as fundamentally different as Russia and the EU have at least one feature in common: they can both impose sanctions, and this is what they are currently doing against each other.

According to Drezner (2003, p.643), sanctions are "the threat or act by a sender government or governments to disrupt economic exchange with the target state, unless the target acquiesces to an articulated demand." Sanctions are among the oldest (we can trace their application to the times of Greek city-states) and most frequently used tools of coercion. The practice of using sanctions has become unprecedentedly widespread since the Cold War. But not only is the frequency of using sanctions rising, they are increasingly acquiring a multilateral character (where previously, sanctions were in imposed unilaterally in most cases [Lopez, 2007]). Moreover, new regimes of "targeted" and "smart" sanctions have emerged (Franco, 2015, p.1). As Harrell (2015) shows, US and European sanctions against Russia mark a significant evolution of the sanctions toolkit. Novel types of financial and energy sanctions have been developed, driven by the need to take an innovative approach to sanctions against an economy twice the size of the combined gross domestic products of all other countries subjected to significant EU and US economic sanctions.

There are many reasons to impose sanctions. The most general one is to change the behavior of the target country by punishing it economically. In many cases, the threat of using sanctions is used as a signal of wrongdoing for the target state, and if the expected reaction by the target state follows at once, a sanction policy is not launched. Sanctions can also be used by a state to demonstrate its might, and therefore its belonging to a certain group (for instance, to the club of "great powers"). States can impose sanctions to express solidarity with another state (or states) that have already imposed sanctions with regard to the target state. Finally, sanctions, or more precisely countersanctions, can be a tool for a state's revenge against those countries which were the first to impose sanctions against it. This is known as the "tit for tat" approach. In 2014, when Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia as a reaction to the annexation of Crimea, Russia reciprocated with its own sanctions. As Nalbandov writes,

> On August 6, 2014, Putin signed decree #560, "On the Use of Specific Economic Measures," which mandated an effective embargo for a one-year period on imports of most of the agricultural products whose country of origin had either "adopted the decision on introduction of economic sanctions in respect of Russian legal and (or) physical entities, or joined same."
>
> (Nalbandov, 2016, p.169)

Sanctions are a flexible policy tool, because they are relatively easy to commence and to cancel, and this is one of the reasons for the expansion of their use. For instance, the US began its sanction policy against Russia with Presidential Executive Order 13600, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine." That order imposed sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Eleven days later, another executive order expanded the scope and depth of economic sanctions. US sanctions against Russia were followed by other individual states (Canada, Japan, Australia and others) and also launched collectively within the framework of international organizations (G7, NATO, the EU, etc.) canceling various forms of sector-specific international cooperation with the Russian Federation. As Nalbandov (2016, p.168) argues, the sanctions were aimed at punishing "Putin's inner circle in hopes that it would, in turn, put pressure on Putin to abandon the selected course of actions disrupting regional peace in Europe." This ease of imposing sanctions is obviously not applicable to the situation within the European Union, for which it is incomparably difficult to approve a joint sanction policy (I will come to this in Chapter 3).

It is noteworthy that despite the widespread use of sanctions throughout the world, there is no consensus among scholars and practitioners on their effectiveness and utility. Some consider them a "notoriously poor tool of statecraft," and estimate their rate of success as very low (Nossal, 1994, cited in Baldwin, 1999–2000, cited by Bratton, 2005, p.113), while others, on the contrary, think of sanctions as a reasonably effective tool of coercion (Dreyer and Luengo-Cabrera, 2015). However, what policymakers really want to know is the comparative utility of sanctions, i.e., whether sanctions show more utility than other coercive strategies and instruments, such as the use of military force. The comparative utility of sanctions depends both on their effectiveness and on the costs they imply (Baldwin, 1998, cited by Bratton, 2005, p.110). So, as Bratton argues, quoting Baldwin, "It is quite possible for sanctions to be more useful than force even in situations in which they are less effective" (Baldwin, 1998, cited by Bratton, 2005, p.110). Bratton (2005, p.113) goes on to say that "The costs and benefits of economic sanctions must be evaluated within the context of other instruments that policy makers have at their disposal, such as military force or diplomacy."

As I have already said above, sanctions are coercive tools available to all states, both those with democratic and those with nondemocratic political regimes. However, it is important to stress that there are profound differences between democracies and nondemocracies with regard to the reasons for imposing sanctions, their success rates and their choice of target countries.

As democracies opt for the application of military force as a last resort, they very often prefer to use economic sanctions to exert pressure on target countries. General reasons for sanctioning include violation of human rights or of the rule of law, ethnic cleansings and the violation of the territorial integrity of third countries. Democracies use sanctions not only as a reaction

to a target country's behavior, but because of the arrangement of their domestic actors. As Lektzian and Souva showed (2003), democracies impose sanctions more often than other regime types, because they encompass a greater variety of interest groups. The rate of success of economic sanctions used by democracies is higher than of those launched by other political regimes (Hart, 2000). Importantly, democracies prefer sanctioning nondemocracies to sanctioning other democracies (Lektzian and Souva, 2003; Cox and Drury, 2006). Examples of democracies sanctioning nondemocracies are numerous and include such different countries as Belarus, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Russia and Syria. There is every reason to expect that sanctions will remain one of the key foreign policy tools used by democracies towards nondemocracies in the years to come.

When it comes to nondemocratic regimes, the literature discusses mostly their resistance to sanctions imposed by democracies; in other words, nondemocracies are analyzed as targets of sanctions, not as their senders. Thus, scholars draw attention to the fact that sanctions against autocracies can have the opposite effect on the regime in power: instead of weakening the regime, they can strengthen it and allow the leaders to extract a higher rent (Allen, 2008). Nondemocracies can also show remarkable resilience under the pressure of sanctions as they can "simply pass on the costs of the sanctions to the governed and rely on armed forces to deter political opponents who are dissatisfied with policies" (Nossal, 1999, cited in Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 2007, p.902). Another reason why nondemocratic regimes can be strengthened under sanctions is the ruler's capacity to incorporate the existence of sanctions into a regime's legitimation strategy (Grauvogel and von Soest, 2013).

As nondemocratic regimes differ from democracies, they behave differently under pressure from sanctions, with some of them being easier to destabilize than others. Woo and Verdier (2014) argue that dictatorships are more responsive to foreign aid and economic sanctions than autocracies. Escribà-Folch and Wright (2010) have found that rulers in personalist regimes and monarchies are more likely to be destabilized by sanctions than leaders in other regime types because they are more sensitive to the loss of external sources of revenue (such as foreign aid and taxes on trade) needed to fund patronage. In contrast to that, the reaction of the rulers in dominant single-party and military regimes would be to increase their tax revenues and to reallocate their expenditures to increase the levels of cooptation and repression.

Another important question arises with regard to selectivity of using sanctions against nondemocracies. How are target countries selected by democracies? Which autocracies are punished, and which are not? Von Soest and Wahman (2013) argue that some of the world's most repressive authoritarian regimes have never been subjected to sanctions, while other more competitive autocracies were repeatedly put under sanctions pressure by Western democracies. Using a dataset on democratic sanctions between 1990 and 2010, they found strong support for the suggestion that senders select economically and

politically vulnerable targets where the expected probability of sanction success is high.

But nondemocracies not only have to resist sanctions; they can also apply them. For instance, China has recently threatened to impose sanctions on US defense companies that sell arms to Taiwan (Forsythe, 2015). Russia launched its own sanction policy in response to the Western sanctions that were imposed on it after the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Are there any differences between democracies and autocracies in the reasons and the manner of imposing sanctions? The answer is yes. First, as imposing sanctions presupposes resource availability as well as an active foreign policy, the circle of imposing autocracies will be limited to those that consider themselves to be "great powers." Second, decisive factors for the introduction of sanctions will be the structure of domestic institutions and therefore the nature of the sender's foreign policy (disposition to use coercion) and the degree of public support for the incumbent government, as well as resources for compensation for those suffering in the incumbent's inner circle. Third, nondemocracies will use sanctions regardless of the type of political regime in the target country (i.e., against both democracies and autocracies). And fourth, the aim of imposing sanctions by a nondemocracy will be not to change the target's political regime or even policy, but to change the behavior of the target country solely towards the sender. In other words, for nondemocracies sanctions would be motivated only by national interest, free from values and principles such as the need to respect human rights, rule of law, the necessity of following commitments, etc. The motives of revenge ("tit for tat"), political pressure and status demonstration as well as simple intimidation of the target country (especially if this country is highly dependent on the sender, for instance, in terms of delivery of natural resources) can be thought of as popular reasons for nondemocracies to impose sanctions. In other words, nondemocracies can impose sanctions against other countries (and also cancel them) almost arbitrarily (wherein the real reasons can be very different from the officially declared ones) and at any time. These features of sanctions determine that, unlike democracies, nondemocracies can join sanctions imposed by international organizations but cannot form "pro-sanctions" coalitions with other countries; they are doomed to act alone.

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2 State-building in Russia and the choice for coercion in external relations

Today, the state-building process is still going on in many parts of the world. While recent studies on state-building have focused mostly on the cases of Iraq, Afghanistan or Africa (Scott, 2007, p.5), this set could be beneficially expanded with the cases of post-Soviet states, where the Russian one is among the most pertinent.

The state is an absolutely central topic for Russia, and its construction and reinforcement is the highest-priority task for the authorities. In principle, all that authorities do should be work toward this task—to build a state, and not just one state among others, but a state the greatness of which no one must doubt. Indeed, the president of Russia considers himself to be a great builder of a great state; he wants to be remembered in Russian and world history as a powerful political figure comparable to Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible. Putin has his own conception of the "ideal" great Russian state and he acts in accordance with this conception. The remarkable thing, however, is not Putin's conceptions as such, but the fact that he *has* built the contemporary Russian state on their basis. He has created a state that he genuinely considers great. Since 2014, Russia has been in press headlines all over the world—due to the crises in Crimea, Eastern Ukraine and Syria. Russia's population warmly welcomes the decisions and actions of the president, equating them with the success of the Russian state. Artists compose songs and poems for his birthday. In October 2014 in his speech at the Valdai Club, Volodin, the deputy head of the presidential administration, put forward his famous thesis: "While there is Putin—Russia exists; no Putin—no Russia" (Sivkova, 2014, no pagination). This thesis may be even considered correct—if we equate "Russia" with the current Russian state.

Foreign policy plays an especially important role in the state-building process, as successes in foreign policy (or what is presented as success by national elite) should legitimate Russia's great power status in the eyes of both its citizens and the outside world. Most of Russia's foreign policy tools belong to the coercive arsenal. Why does the Russian state tend to use these instruments?

From the state-building perspective (taking into account the timing and nature of this process), the Russian state's choice to use coercion in

foreign policy may seem optimal. First, for the simple reason that it is *possible*. Indeed, in many cases Russia can easily use the objective fact that other countries are already dependent on it (primarily for energy resources), and this alone gives rise to temptation. In addition, the Russian incumbent can make decisions alone and very fast (serious political decisions such as the annexation of Crimea or the introduction of sanctions against Turkey were made in a couple of days!), he bears no responsibility for mistakes and he never admits them—this is his principal position. The price of using coercion, as well as its long-term, strategic effects, are not calculated: for instance, nobody writes about the losses to Russia's economy due to the mutual sanctions; the discussion is only about the EU's losses and about sanctions as an incentive for import replacement in Russia. Russia's nonmaterial, reputational losses receive even less consideration. Second, coercion *gives results quickly* when the goal is, as in the Russian case, the revision of the previous international order. For instance, it is possible to quickly start a "small victorious war." It is also possible to impose sanctions quickly— and cancel them equally quickly. Coercion produces a strong demonstrational effect—both for the internal audience (demonstrating the might of the great Russian state) and the external world. Finally, playing with coercive instruments allows Russia to maintain the high level of unpredictability that the Russian president considers to be one of his important advantages. In fact, the Russian state does not choose between coercion and authority; its task is to combine and coordinate coercion in various domains depending on the concrete situation. The strategy that the Russian elite applies in order to build the great state naturally has its price, namely total distrust of Russia: "Almost anything Vladimir Putin touches these days is perceived by the West as a weapon, and almost everything he does is seen as an attack" (Trudolyubov, 2016, n.p.).

State-building by authoritarian rulers

Building a state is a complex task, as to do so means to create institutions, practices and structures to make and enforce top-level decisions throughout a certain politically defined territory (Chesterman, Ignatieff and Ramesh Thakur, 2005, p.2). Goldsmith (2007, p.27) defines state-building as "the creation of effective organs of central government" in order for the state to "develop respected and effective public institutions to carry out policy." Thus, state-building presupposes *changing the previously existing characteristics of the state.* Building a state means that ruling elites do not just preserve the status quo but conduct certain types of activities. In other words, "State-building refers to interventionist strategies to restore and rebuild the institutions and apparatus of the state, for example, the bureaucracy" (Scott, 2007, p.5).

An essential prerequisite for state-building is that those who do it (elite groups or the leader) have sufficient resources, both material (possibilities for financial redistribution) and symbolic (such as popular support). For

instance, as Slater and Fenner (2011, p.20) argue, "coercive state apparatuses must be well-funded to be able to repress broadly when the time comes." State-builders need resources to be able to reward their supporters; therefore, successful state-building will depend on developing a political network that distributes power and patronage throughout the nation (Myerson, 2011). Thus, for territorially large states with multiethnic populations, building a network of loyal regional leaders by selectively granting them privileges will be of particular importance. In addition, as Hanson (2015, p.1) shows, rulers face threats to their rule, both horizontal and vertical. The former emerge from within the ruling elite, while the latter come from the other societal actors. As such, the existence of such threats, their intensity and the ruler's ability to cope with them will be an essential factor in explaining the ruler's state-building strategy and the speed of its realization, as well as the likelihood of its completion.

The state-building process should be separated from that of the evolution of the political regime. As Hanson (2015, p.1) stresses, "Disentangling the two can be thorny (especially) in the authoritarian context, where the institutional organization of the regime may be fused with that of the state to some degree." Slater and Fenner (2011, p.16) develop the idea further:

> The intellectual division of labor between studies of regimes and states is both essential and unfortunate. … The separation is essential because states and regimes are analytically distinct, but unfortunate because states and regimes are empirically intertwined. Though all metaphors have their limits, we find the notion of the state as a kind of machinery that is linked but not reducible to the actors who operate it helpful.

Thus, the operator (of the regime) can come and go, while the machinery (the state) exhibits greater permanence (Hanson, 2015, p.3). Neil Robinson (2008), for instance, has shown the necessity of distinguishing between state and regime for understanding Russia's political development.

In authoritarian regimes the outcome of the state-building process will be, to a large extent, determined by initial state capacity, which will influence the choice of state-building strategy (Hanson, 2015, p.10). Also of great importance is the degree to which the regime is able to capture control over the state.

> The situation is not static. Over time, the ruler or ruling group can build new institutions or gain incremental control over the state. We thus have different combinations of initial strategies for grappling with the problems of authoritarian control and power sharing, as well as different possible trajectories for these combinations.
>
> (Hanson, 2015, p.10)

According to Myerson, the role of political leaders is essential in *any* state-building process. "The simple fact is that states are founded by leaders, and

the relationship between these founding leaders and their supporters can determine the nature of the state" (Myerson, 2011, p.92). In cases where the authoritarian regime has pronounced personalistic features where one individual dominates the military, state apparatus and ruling party, the role of the leader in state-building will progressively increase.

There can be no doubt that the state-building process is in principle a slow process, one that takes time. However, authoritarian rulers will be tempted to accelerate it in order to see the desired results while they are still in office. This temptation could stem from their desire to secure their "place in the nation's history" by preserving and maximizing their political power since "states are the ultimate institutional weapons in the authoritarian arsenal" (Slater and Fenner, 2011, p.17). Two things follow from this perspective. First, the continuity of staying in power and building the state according to the ruler's plan without interruptions will be crucial. Thus, even if the rulers can't run for another term because the national constitution forbids it, they can "organize" the transfer of power to a chosen successor (often formally following the election procedure) and return to office when the successor's term is over. And second, the "desired results" that prove the success of state-building process can be achieved in the sphere of foreign policy—and much faster than in the domestic sphere. The results can come in the form of victorious war, the increment of the state's territory as a result of annexation, or other revisionist actions to which other states have to respond.

It is equally important to note that for authoritarian rulers the tasks of making real improvements to state capacity, such as creating and enforcing rules or delivering services, may not be of the highest priority, especially in comparison with the task of securing and strengthening their power. In other words, gaining state *autonomy* from various interests—regional, oligarchic or parliamentarian—will be more important than increasing state *capacity*.

State-building cannot be completed without building the nation, i.e., creating and developing within the country's borders a community of citizens with shared beliefs in a common belonging and destiny. As Scott (2007, p.5) shows, most scholars consider a well-functioning state to be a requirement for the development of a nation, and therefore state-building is a necessary component of nation-building. However, following Hippler (2004, p.9), nation-building can be viewed as "a political objective as well as a strategy for reaching specific political objectives." For neo-patrimonial or personalist rule this political objective will be securing the position of the leader and state apparatus, which is why nation-building follows the building of state institutions: the task of nation-building can only be accomplished after the fundamentals of the state have already been built. Thus, nation-building is the final stage of the state-building project.

State-building is simply not "a series of discrete steps taken one at a time" but a process that takes considerable effort and time (Zartman, 1995,

p.273). As the Russian case shows, the efforts involved in state-building are considerable indeed, but the results can be achieved in a relatively short time period.

Putin's conception of the Russian state

During his first year in presidential office Putin repeatedly declared that building the Russian state was crucially important for Russia and therefore this task was his highest priority. It is noteworthy that many Western scholars shared this idea with Putin. As Hanson (2000, p.1) writes,

> Prominent Western analysts and advisors, too, proclaim that successful state-building in the Russian Federation is the prerequisite for sustainable political and economic development—as well as the only means of attaining reliable control over Russia's stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

Moreover, Western analysts offered their own recipes on how to improve the Russian state—by finding an honest and devoted bureaucracy or by increasing the state's political accountability (Hanson, 2000; Taylor, 2011). Putin, however, did not heed their advice as he had his own recipe, one which was simple but efficient.

When entering presidential office in 2000, Putin already had resources greater than those that had been at Yeltsin's disposal. First, oil prices had begun to rise after late 1999 (Bashmakov, 2006). Second, Putin was supported by governmental officials as well as by his former colleagues from St Petersburg (*piterskie*) who had moved to work in Moscow, and by former colleagues from the KGB. And third, his main political resource was the Russian population who gave him the mandate to rule.

The state was central to Putin for many reasons: to ensure Russia's "rightful place" in global politics and to provide Russian people with external security, stability and order. Very early on, before the 2000 presidential elections, Putin stated that "Russia needs a strong state power and must have it" (The Globalist, 2000). In July 2000 in his first State of the Union address he argued that coping with the various challenges facing Russia was "impossible without strengthening the state" (Taylor, 2003, p.1). And as with every ruler, from the very beginning of his rule he had certain ideas about what an "ideal" Russian state should look like. These ideas were vague in the eyes of the experts and public at that time, though now, looking back, we can state what they were with high probability.

Putin was (and after 15 years still is) deeply convinced that Russia has all of the objective prerequisites (where they come from—from God, or Mother Nature—does not matter) to be a "great power." These include the world's largest state territory, huge resources and a long history. An

excerpt from Putin's "Turn of the Millennium" manifesto clearly demonstrates his ideas:

> Russia was and will remain a great power. It is preconditioned by the inseparable characteristics of its geopolitical, economic and cultural existence. This determined the mentality of Russians and the policy of the government throughout the history of Russia and this cannot but do so at present.
>
> (Putin, 1999, n.p.)

In order to make Russia "great" these objective prerequisites need to be combined with the "correct" mode of government, wherein the immanent features of such a mode are a strong and beloved leader, the *Sistema* (the governance style that relies on indirectness and interpretation rather than command and control) managed by the leader,[1] a central bureaucracy and the *siloviki* as the leader's main agents, in addition to a happy people subordinated to the state apparatus. This might sound like a caricature, if it were not for the fact that the project became a reality. In addition, Putin strongly believes in a "technocratic approach"; as a competent technocrat he is convinced that there is always a right (and simple) formula for solving any problem.

A great state should be great in all respects—this goes without saying. Therefore, the "greatness" of Putin's foreign policy is a mandatory and organic element of Putin's state-building strategy. This means independent foreign policy, (very) active involvement in world affairs, protection of Russia's national interests (as the Russian leadership understands them) and building a pro-Russian coalition. What is important is that to achieve these goals, a demonstration of considerable and visible successes is absolutely necessary.

In this way, in order to build "his" state Putin had first to deal with Yeltsin's legacy, then to accumulate resources, and from this springboard go on to build the "great Russian state" by combining objective prerequisites with the appropriate form of governance, while constantly showing the world its ever-growing might.

Yeltsin's legacy

As Slater and Fenner rightly emphasize, "Regime leaders are not usually the original architects of the states they operate … State apparatuses are typically inherited rather than originally constructed by the regimes that run them" (Slater and Fenner, 2011, p.16). This thesis is true for Russia, as indeed Putin did not (and could not) build the Russian state from scratch; he had to rely on the legacy that Yeltsin left him.

Many scholars of Russian politics were fairly optimistic about the future of a Russian *democratic* state right after the Yeltsin era (see, for instance, Smith, 1999). However, there were exceptions: Brown described the legacy Putin inherited from Yeltsin as a very mixed one at best. On the positive side

he listed freedom of speech and the press and certain elements of democracy that were written into the constitution, as well as price liberalization and privatization. On the negative side, however, there was negative growth, capital flight and lack of industrial investment, in addition to the demoralization of the armed forces and growing corruption and alcoholism (Brown, 2001a). Some of the issues mentioned by Brown are not directly related to state-building, but they are important as contextual factors for an assessment of Putin's state-building activity.

Thus Brown (2001a, p.4) comes to the conclusion that "The Russia Putin inherited from Yeltsin was in substantially worse shape than the Soviet Union of the perestroika years, or for that matter, the Brezhnev era." To Brown's list (on its negative side) I would add the fragmentation of Russia's political space due to the process of chaotic and uncontrolled regionalization, and severe problems in interethnic relations. Furthermore, Yeltsin's decisions were subject to severe criticism from all of the political parties, which existed at that time, while the State Duma, with which he constantly clashed, tried to oppose his reforms. In attempting not to "justify," but to better understand Yeltsin's "space of possibilities," I should mention that unlike his successor, Yeltsin had few resources—be they financial (the country's economic system was in deep structural crisis and aid from the West did not principally change this situation) or symbolic (the credibility of the president in the eyes of the people was progressively decreasing during the '90s). All in all, as world chess champion Garry Kasparov nicely put it in January 2000, "Mr. Yeltsin's battering-ram power was sufficient to destroy the prison of the past, but he lacked the education and creativity to design the palace of the future" (The Globalist, 2000, n.p.).

An undoubtedly positive development under Yeltsin was the creation of a market economy in Russia; however, as Yasin (2011, p.9) shows, its efficiency was low, primarily due to incomplete institutional transformations. In other words, market reforms were not followed by the formation of a *modern state* capable of constant adaptation to internal and external challenges (Busygina and Filippov, 2012). And it wasn't just that the Russian state was not modern, and thus weak and noneffective, but even worse—the state was captured by vested interests, namely by regional executives and big business (oligarchs).

Direct elections of governors, changing the procedure of formation of the Federation Council (wherein regional executives became deputies of this upper house of parliament), and bilateral treaties signed during the '90s between Moscow and the regions contributed to a dramatic increase in regional autonomy. Thus, during the '90s the federal center was progressively losing its leverages of influence over the situation in the regions, and the degree of uncontrolled decentralization in Russia reached its zenith. Political regimes in the regions were centered around the head of the regional executive, while the federal center played more the role of an external actor (Gel'man, Ryzhenkov and Brie, 2000). Regional executives saw federalism as a tool for constant pressure on the center. As the central state failed, regional elites were able to

capture their "pieces" of state, declaring themselves as "complete masters" of their territories. With the central state's failure, citizens turned more and more to the regional leadership as a source of security and order (Myerson, 2011).

Critically important for Russia was the character of privatization in the first half of the '90s. After the first wave of voucher privatization, in spring 1995 came the second, when state property was redistributed through mortgage auctions (*zalogovye auktsiony*). These auctions have left many "tasty morsels" (mainly of oil and steel companies) in the hands of several banks and financial groups who have close links with the federal bureaucracy.[2] The result was the formation of a cohort made up of the largest financial structures (the *semibankirshina*).[3] These were the oligarchs who, together with Abramovich, established the closest relations with the "Family," that is, with Yeltsin and his entourage in the Kremlin. Additionally, at lower levels, big business actively interacted with high state officials over the lucrative process of distributing political rents. By 1996–1997 a system was formed whereby financial capital was in fact the main political actor; this was not lobbyism, but the direct participation of financial capital in political decision-making (Peregudov, 2011, p.153). As Peregudov notes, in interacting with bankers, the state officials were not driven by any kind of national or state idea; they merely used the momentum of favorable conditions for the purpose of personal enrichment (Peregudov, 2011, p.148).

However, even the weakest state and the most incapable government could not be captured fully and forever. And even the most corrupt officials do not sell all of their authority, but only some portion of it and for a certain time. The financial collapse of August 17, 1998 brought major changes to the system. The banks were severely weakened, and at the same time Russian industrial companies became less dependent on the banks. Lukoil, Surgutneftegas and the other oil companies were turning from amorphous holdings into vertically integrated structures (Peregudov, 2011, p.154). No less important, however, was the fact that the decision-making center was moving from the president and his administration to the government—this process was initiated by Primakov as prime minister, continued by Stepashin and decisively completed by Putin. The autonomy of the federal executive was substantially increased (Peregudov, 2011, p.156). Here it is important to note that Putin began the process of power concentration in the hands of the federal executive even before he took presidential office.

In fact, the only more or less happy sphere under Yeltsin was relations with the West. Indeed, as Makarychev (2015, n.p.) shows, there were Western countries that provided Russia with many "chances to augment its international influence, and boost its status and role in the world." Russia was recognized by consensus as the successor of the Soviet Union, and this safeguarded its permanent seat in the UN Security Council. It was accepted as a member of the most important international institutions, such as the Council of Europe and the G7 (extended to G8 as a gesture of goodwill from the West). Russia signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the

EU. Germany launched its *Ostpolitik* that was in fact a pro-Russian policy built on a "Russia first" principle, and within this framework Russia enjoyed the status of Germany's most privileged partner. Finally, since the early '90s the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe promoted Russia-friendly policies with regard to the situation with Russian speakers in the Baltic states (Makarychev, 2015).

Putin inherited from Yeltsin a weak and ineffective state dominated by informal institutions, and one which was captured by vested interests. These "invaders"—the regional elites and oligarchs—who had played a major role in determining Putin's state-building agenda in the early stages of his presidency soon became the main target of his reforms. Meanwhile, a frustrated population crying out for "order" and a "strong hand" became Putin's key source of support. Relying on this resource, Putin gradually built up the power of "his" state.

Russia's position in the world had to be fully reviewed: what was normal and even good for Yeltsin's Russia was absolutely insufficient and not "great" enough for Putin's. The world had begun to lose its fear of Russia, and for the Russian authorities this meant only one thing: it had ceased to respect it.

Putin comes into office: accumulating resources

As Willerton and McGovern (2010, p.21) argue, "It is little wonder that both elites and citizens were so disdainful of the Yeltsin record and so anxious to support an assertive Vladimir Putin advancing a state-centric political formula." However, the support which Putin gained from Yeltsin's negative legacy needed to be confirmed and strengthened. The new president began with the task of gaining confirmation of his democratic mandate from his main political resource, the population. Putin addressed a frustrated and disoriented population not with the promise of an immediate comfortable life, but with promises of order, security and a strong and effective state. The other important topics were the battle with terrorism, and peace in interethnic relations, in the first place in the North Caucasus. Addressing and solving the crisis of the Chechen War was an integral part of Putin's state-building project as it confirmed the seriousness of his intentions to the public. As he declared when he came to power, "my mission, my historic mission—it sounds pompous, but it is true—is to resolve the situation in the North Caucasus" (cited in Gevorkan, Kolesnikov and Timakova, 2000, p.133). Putin's state-building projects would demand more wars, this time outside Russia, but at the beginning of the 2000s nobody could predict this.

The success of the state-building mission depends to a large extent on key decisions about how power in the new regime is to be distributed. So, like any good builder, before starting the construction process Putin had to secure his leading role in the process and provide order at the construction site by placing the building blocks where they belonged. As Kryshtanovskaya

(2009, p.27) argues, "Putin therefore sought to bring under control centers of power that until then had competed with the Kremlin—in particular, the oligarchs, regional governors and the State Duma." He started by neutralizing alternative sources of political influence, i.e., by excluding regional executives and oligarchs from the ruling coalition. Prior to the elections of March 2000, in an interview Putin stated that "From the very beginning, Russia was created as a super-centralized state. That's practically laid down in its genetic code, its traditions, and the mentality of its people" (cited in Brown, 2001b, p.51).

The president solved the problem of the political autonomy of the regional executives, and their disproportionate influence on the national decision-making process, by introducing several reforms. In the summer of 2000, seven new federal districts ruled by Putin's representatives were created. Then the governors lost the opportunity for direct contact with the president as a new administrative layer was formed between the Kremlin and the regions. Governors were also deprived of their right to serve as deputies in the Federation Council, the upper chamber of the Russian parliament. These reforms effectively transformed the governors from independent politicians with their own power bases into executives who were fully dependent on Moscow's favor (Kryshtanovskaya, 2009, p.28). This new system has been labeled a "power vertical"; however, as Myerson (2011, p.5) points out, "Any successful state, whether democratic or autocratic, must be able to recruit local leaders and assure them some share of the long-term benefits of state power." Thus, it became clear fairly quickly that this vertical was not rigid: outside the agreements with the federal executive (which fundamentally comprised provision of political stability in the regions and certain guaranteed results for United Russia at the elections) the governors had a fairly free hand.[4] In other words, this freedom was granted in exchange for maintaining local order and authority.

At the very beginning of his presidency, Putin already expressed his intention to keep all oligarchs "equidistant" from interfering in the formulation of state policy. In 2000 the cases of Gusinsky and Berezovsky, who were pushed out of the country, clearly demonstrated the vulnerability of the oligarchs. Although up until 2002 Putin had maintained the practice of holding personal meetings with representatives of big business, and various problems were discussed at the meetings held by the president with the bureau of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, from 2003 these meetings stopped abruptly. The dialogue between big business and the federal executive authority was interrupted on the initiative of the latter. As a consequence, the political role of big business has declined.

Khodorkovsky, the head of the Yukos corporation and the most politically active oligarch, was arrested in 2003 and after a show trial sentenced to a long term in prison. The Yukos case was not just an outstanding episode, but an important milestone in the development of business–state relations; this case was a clear and cruel signal to the oligarchs about the "red line" that

they should never cross if they valued their businesses and their freedom. Indeed, after this case, representatives of big business had two options—either to accept the new reality or to leave the country (Kryshtanovskaya, 2009, p.27). Prominent amongst those who "accepted the reality" were the Rotenberg brothers, Timchenko, Kovalchuk, Abramovich and Usmanov. Closeness to Putin has allowed these oligarchs, and many others, to enrich themselves even despite the personal sanctions that have been imposed on them and their companies. As compensation for their losses, Timchenko and the Rotenbergs' companies have been given much wider access to government contracts (*goszakazy*) (Novosti Ukrainy, 2014).

Yukos was ultimately broken up (with the state corporation Rosneft gaining the largest share) and this marked the beginning of the process of nationalizing corporate property. Before long, Gazprom, Alrosa and Bashneft all fell under full state control. In addition, large corporations such as Rosatom and Russian Railways (RZhD) were created under the auspices of federal ministries—the argument used by the federal authorities was that under conditions of globalization the state should preserve control over the key sectors of the national economy and thereby defend Russia's strategic interests. In 2005, the government created an "A-list" of 27 companies and a "B-list" of 44 companies in all branches of the economy, including fuel and energy (in particular, the electric power and atomic industries), the military-industrial complex, infrastructure (for example, transport and communications), banking and electronic media. As Kryshtanovskaya (2009, p.32) argues, "The more important the company, the more likely it is that ministers will sit on its board of directors." The boards of large state corporations were soon dominated by government officials, servants, employees of the presidential administration and *siloviki.* From 2007 the state launched a program of creating large corporations (e.g., Rostechnologii in the field of engineering) which were tasked with the role of becoming "modernization locomotives" (Peregudov, 2011, p.301).

In 2004 the president proposed a new federal law on State Duma elections that eliminated the single-mandate districts: since the 2007 election, Russian voters have been able to vote for deputies who belong to party lists. Together with the cancelation of gubernatorial elections, this contributed to a decrease in the influence of big businesses in the regions as the governors were not interested in building good relations with them. A new hierarchical order was established in the regions following the blueprint of the federal level (Peregudov, 2011, pp.278–279).

It is noteworthy that the elections of governors were restored in 2012 and single-mandate districts returned for the Duma elections in 2016. But the devil is in the details: the candidates for governor's office have to pass a "municipal filter." More than 40 elections have taken place since 2012 and in all cases the incumbent governors were reelected. With regards to the single-mandate districts, the federal center uses election manipulation techniques, in particular, the suppression of independent observers and the new and

original divisions of election districts where the urban electorate is mixed with rural constituents, which are much more easily controlled by the authorities (Petrov, 2015).

Putin had learned a good deal from Yeltsin's mistake of not gaining the support of a parliamentary political party. Thus, by creating his own party—United Russia—and building it into the hierarchical power pyramid, Putin has successfully tamed the State Duma and is able to use the party as an instrument of his state-building ambitions. Since its birth, the party's decisions have been "secondary" in character, duplicating documents elaborated in the presidential administration or the government. This was the case with the "Putin Plan" that became United Russia's main program document at the 2007 Duma elections. The same thing happened with "Strategy 2020" and the anticrisis program.

As regards potential horizontal or vertical threats to his rule, Putin has been able to build an effective system of defense. He succeeded very quickly in his quest to emasculate rival power centers and has been able to consolidate his position through the use of various "carrots and sticks." There has not been a single real threat to his position. Indeed, the state's weakness together with the economic troubles of the '90s made power maximization quite difficult for Yeltsin, but Putin's maximization strategy has been much more effective, and in fact he has had a free hand to do more or less what he wishes during his tenure in office (Gel'man, 2015). In 2011, after national elections to the State Duma and the rise of civil protests in Russia's largest cities, it looked like the situation was changing—but this was an illusion: presidential elections in March 2012 have shown that the slogan "For Putin, for stability!" is still more attractive to Russians than any appeals by the opposition. As my co-author Filippov and I have demonstrated, pro-democracy protests and support for political and institutional reforms are not spreading in modern-day Russia, and remain limited to specific social groups and large cities. It is highly probable that this situation will continue in the future. The explanation for this fact lies in Russian citizens' concerns over the highly uncertain redistributive consequences of political reforms (Busygina and Filippov, 2015).

Thus, Putin's behavior has not been defined by real dangers, but rather by constraints. First, the new state was built on the basis of the old "Yeltsin" Constitution: Putin has resisted the temptation to drastically change it and further accelerate the state-building process (for instance, by the abolition of federalism). Second, for his state-building strategy the continuity of remaining in office has been crucially important. Putin was constrained by a four-year term of office as well as by a two-term limit. These constraints were elegantly overcome by the prolongation of the presidential term from four to six years (initiated by Medvedev and approved by the parliament in 2008) and by his "castling" maneuver with Medvedev in 2012 (whereby President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin swapped posts), which Putin himself confirmed had already been agreed upon in 2008 (Top News, 2011).

The authorities have thus built a secure power base that now dominates Russia. In fact, Putin has accumulated unlimited political resources that, in addition to high levels of support from the population, include the "party of power," state control over big business, the federal, regional and municipal bureaucracies, and last but not least control over the army, police and various law enforcement agencies. In the absence of a functioning judicial system and secure property rights, and given the marginal role that the parliament and civil society play in the political system, there have been ample opportunities for Putin to exercise these extensive powers. To build the state in Russia, Putin has captured it.

Nation-building as part of the state-building project

Support from the population has been Putin's main political resource since he took office in 2000. Nevertheless, taking into account the degree of polarization within Russian society, its multiethnic composition and its general propensity for opportunistic behavior, maintaining this support is the subject of ongoing work by the state, and the president in particular. After the foundations of the state were constructed (and only then), Putin began systematic work on building the Russian nation as a political community and at the same time as a constituent part of his state-building project. The main goal was to build a nation that not only would create no problems for the state, but that would show absolute loyalty and be the source of permanent recruitment for state service. At its core, the task was to build the nation for the state.

Below I shall attempt to give an outline of the main directions of state work on the creation of the Russian nation. Some of these factors have been extensively discussed, while others are relatively new.

After Putin took presidential office, his first task was to secure at least some degree of unity within the population. As Cannady and Kubicek (2014, p.1) show, Putin has made appeals to nationalism far more than Yeltsin or Gorbachev. He had repeatedly recognized that his first challenge was "restoration of the country's *unity* [and the] establishment of sovereignty of the Russian people, rather than the supremacy of individuals and groups, across its entire territory" (Putin, 2012, no pagination) [emphasis added]. This shows that his views on the nation are very simplistic and that he rejects pluralism (Cannady and Kubicek, 2014, p.4). The basis for this unity is the "*Rossiyskaya ideya*" which is derived from a set of traditional Russian values including *patriotizm*—a feeling of pride for Russia, its achievements and great history; *derzhavnost'*—Russia as a great power; and *gosudarstvennost'*—belief in a strong state that ensures order and protects its citizens from foreign enemies (Tolz, 2004). In addition, in legitimizing these values a prominent public role was given to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Construction of the common political past was another important dimension of nation-building. This has been achieved mainly through education,

in particular through history textbooks. Ismailov and Ganieva argue (2013, p.381) that

> In the context of Russian textbooks one can also explore the re-presentation of historical events or reinvention of historical narratives by providing an emotional connection between the student and the country's past through bringing to light the notions of *pride, feelings* and *a sense of continuity*.

In Russian academic circles the "struggle with the falsification of history" (by foreign historians) has become common. The victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War has been used by the state to forge a greater sense of unity and a distinct national identity (Nikitina, 2014, p.4). At the same time, Russia's post-communist history, in particular the period of the '90s, has been portrayed as "wild" and "a time of troubles."

Whilst the various nation-building measures have done their job, it soon became clear to Putin and his administration that the main resource of nation-building in Russia was the figure of Putin himself. The policy of "using Putin" has had various manifestations. Thus, the most traditional and familiar feature of Putin's presidency was *Direct Lines with the President*, which Ryazanova-Clarke describes as "three or so hours of simultaneous radio and television broadcasts of President Putin's questions and answers with the general public" (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2008, p.311). The format of *Direct Lines* has been kept unchanged since its inception in 2001. Such direct contact between the president and "ordinary Russians"

> constructs feelings of admiration and love towards the President. The public usually start their speech moves by expression of gratitude for his work and his care for the people, which brings the conversation within the socio-cultural paradigm of paternalistic relations between the power and the populace.
>
> (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2008, p.328)

Putin's work with Russian youth, as an investment in the future, deserves special mention. Indeed, the format of *Direct Lines* was not dynamic and energetic enough for young Russians. Instead of *Direct Lines*, they have been able to engage with Putin at youth camps such as the "Territory of the Senses" camp, which was organized under the patronage of the presidential administration and which replaced the "Seliger" camp.

Young Russians want to see a "tough" president, and they do: Putin is seen diving underwater to the seabed (and he never returns without a trophy), he flies in the sky with cranes, goes hunting in Siberia and the Far East, does judo and plays hockey. He is the main patron of Russian sports and show business and he is also a fashion line; T-shirts with the inscription "*Vova, ya s toboi!*"

("Vova [as short for Vladimir], I am with you") were distributed at the youth camps, where they enjoyed great popularity.

State-run initiatives—like the first Putin-era youth formations Idushchie Vmeste and Nashi—became the largest of their kind since the Soviet-era Komsomol (Lassila, 2014). These associations, which also attracted volunteers and entrepreneurs, were principally oriented toward the mobilization of youth around two magic concepts: "Putin plus the *Rossiyskaya ideya*." Recently Putin has extended the range of those who are to be included in the nation-building process: in October 2015 he issued a decree on the establishment of the Russian School Children's Movement. This organization, which is an analogue of the Pioneers in the Soviet era, will be financed directly from the state budget (Kozlov, Makutina and Surnachaeva, 2015).

More recently we have witnessed a number of sophisticated policies aimed at building the "right" nation in Russia. The first is the policy of "cultivating citizens' dependence" on the state: state employees (*byudzhetniki*) will be reluctant to engage in any oppositional steps against the state, as they know that to do so they will be putting themselves at great risk of punishment—they could be demoted or their jobs could simply be cut (Slater and Fenner, 2011, p.23). The second policy could be termed "preemptively cleansing society of dissenting voices." The first step of such a policy is "overreaction," when the state demonstrates an openly negative and even outrageous reaction to people or organizations which in reality are relatively harmless to the state. This was the case with the law on foreign agents as well as with the massive campaign that began in Russia after the annexation of Crimea, which was directed against "friends of the junta" and "national traitors." The campaign was enthusiastically supported by the federal mass media. Such a reaction could seem suboptimal if we do not take into account its expected strategic implications. The task of the "overreaction" is to make those dissatisfied with Putin's politics feel insecure and frightened, eventually goading them into leaving the country. To realize this decision a special border regime for Russian citizens is maintained (and this is the second step of the policy)—holding the border open for the disloyal and closed for the most loyal citizens. The Ministry of the Interior, the FSB and some others have asked their employees to refrain from traveling abroad. In reality this request turned into an unofficial ban. (Interestingly, this practice strikingly contradicts the Soviet-era experience whereby citizens had to prove their loyalty to the regime if they wanted to travel abroad). The policy of "cleansing" has damaged the reputation of the Russian state in the eyes of the West; however, this, it would appear, is a price that the president is willing to pay.

As Hutchings and Tolz (2015, p.25) argue, "the construction of a compound identity for the peoples of Russia, with the help of an authoritative discourse of nation-building, has been part of Vladimir Putin's broad agenda of strengthening the Russian state in the new millennium." This nation—for the state and under the state—has now been built.

The external dimension of state-building and the use of coercion

As state-building is first and foremost a process of restoring the authority of the state (Lake, 2010, p.22), it can be achieved through both internal and external policies. In Russia the external dimension of the state-building process plays an immense role and has had several manifestations. The first to appear was "sovereign democracy," an interim concept[5] that allowed Russia to distinguish itself from other democratic states whilst formally remaining within the democratic framework.[6] It is notable that in the Russian context this concept has been employed to emphasize state power and the central role of the state (Cannady and Kubicek, 2014). The next manifestation was the idea of "diversion"—the combination of economic openness to the West, maintained mainly because of the need for foreign investments, with political distancing from it (Busygina and Filippov, 2013). Starting in the mid-2000s if not earlier, the Russian official rhetoric as well as the mass media have progressively introduced into the consciousness of Russians the idea of the West as a biased actor that is hostile to Russia. The West, Russian mass media claim, does not understand Russia; this wrong evaluation leads to wrong conclusions, and wrong conclusions lead to wrong political decisions. Nevertheless, according to this approach the West is perceived as a strong actor that Russia needs, if in a limited sense.

After the political crisis in Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea the diversion approach has lost its purpose, as Russia has opted for marked revisionism in external relations.[7] The approach was generally built on the idea of global opposition between Russia and the West, and a Western conspiracy against Russia. Who are the conspirators, and on what pillars is the conspiracy built? The conspirators are the US and European national governments,[8] and the rationale of conspiracy is based on an old idea: the West doesn't need a strong Russia. And Russia is strong not only for its military power, but first and foremost for its right values. Today Russia strongly supports the discourse of cultural distinctiveness, presenting itself as a global defender of conservative values (Tsygankov, 2016). As Karaganov (2016) argues, Western elites have largely detached themselves from their societies, while the Russian ones are inextricably linked to the population. Russian values include support for the traditional family, patriotism, centralization and the pursuit of justice in contempt of formal rules and laws. In international relations, they include support of state sovereignty and a political pluralism that objectively opposes Western universalism. One of Russia's ideological messages to the world is that consumption is not a purpose, that the main thing is service (*sluzhenie*) to higher goals. Interestingly, the Russian establishment is not concerned with the fact that its declared values do not correspond with the Russian reality. Thus, for family values, Russia occupies the second place in Europe after Ukraine on the percentage of divorces (Russia-On, 2013), and is the absolute leader in the percentage of abortions (Ulyanov, 2010). The desire for

personal enrichment by Russia's state servants is well-documented (see, for instance, Ryavec, 2005; Cheloukhine and Haberfeld, 2011; Milov, Nemtsov, Ryzhkov and Shorina, 2011; Zaslavskaia, 2012; Danks, 2013), as is the gap between declarations and behavior: for instance, even after the "five-day war" with Georgia, Russia proclaimed respect for international law and its supremacy, and in particular, for the inviolability of borders (Romanova, 2009, p.55). Essentially, "great power" status entails special rights (different from those of other states) in pursuing foreign policy free from constraints (norms and values) yet in accordance with Russia's understanding of its international commitments.

In principle, there was not much new to this approach.[9] However, the novelty of the current situation lies in two things. First, while Russia is still presented as a strong and fair state, the West is seen not only as unfair (which is not new), but as weak and degenerating (this specially relates to the EU). Indeed, political conflict with Ukraine, support for insurgents, anti-Russian sanctions and most importantly the annexation of Crimea have made Russia a "great state" in the eyes of the majority of citizens. "Krym nash!" ("*Crimea is ours!*") was not just an idea—this was a real thing, a genuine confirmation of Russia's "greatness." According to an opinion poll carried out by the Levada Center in October 2014, 86 percent of the respondents gave a positive answer to the question "Are you proud of the fact that you live in Russia?" During the same poll 78 percent of respondents agreed with the statement "It is better for me to be a citizen of Russia than of any other country in the world" (Zorkaya, 2015). In November 2015 the percentage of those who agreed with this statement increased to 85 percent (Petrenko, 2015). The "militarization" of the Russian mentality has reached its peak. At the same time, as Kofman and Rojansky (2015, p.6) argue, "Moscow wants as much of the global audience, and certainly its own citizens and those in the post-Soviet space, to question anything and everything coming from the West." Second, Russia's struggle with Western conspiracy has for the first time shifted to "enemy territory," that is to the territory of the EU (see Chapter 4). Russia has turned to a proactive policy with extensive use of sophisticated coercive tools.

At the same time, in Crimea, Ukraine and the Middle East, Russia has been developing a strategy that Adamsky calls *cross-domain coercion*—

> the Russian art of orchestrating *non-nuclear*, *informational*, and *nuclear* influence within a unified program for the sake of coercion (both to deter and to compel). … Informational struggle choreographs all threats and moves across conventional and nuclear, military, and non-military domains to produce the most optimal correlation of trends and forces. It is a coercion "master of ceremonies": by nuclear manipulations, it constructs a *cordon sanitaire* that enables immune maneuver space (*strategicheskii prostor*), a sphere of the possible, within which other forms of influence can achieve tangible results with, or preferably, without the use

of force. Ideally, the image of unacceptable consequences, produced by this cross-domain coercion should paralyze Western assertiveness and responsiveness.

(Adamsky, 2015, p.37)

Special operations were combined and coordinated with information warfare, both technological and cognitive-psychological. In turn, these tools were synchronized with political, diplomatic and economic measures regionally and worldwide. Then the next stage came, with demonstrations of the resolve and capability to use force and by facilitating the flow of volunteers and arms to opposition forces. In this way the Kremlin tried to coerce Kiev to accept its terms of political settlement (Adamsky, 2015, p.37). Adamsky emphasizes that in all three cases, Crimea, Eastern Ukraine and the Middle East, Russia has "demonstrated aptitude for organizational and conceptual learning and transformation, and scale of improvisation that are rather unorthodox for the post-Soviet Russian military practice" (Adamsky, 2015, p.41). To paralyze the West, Russia is also using "virtual coercion" that comes in the form of Russian "constant presence and closeness"—that is, military exercises simulating the invasion of Poland (Shleifer and Treisman, 2011) or the Baltic states, or violations of territorial waters and airspace belonging to Scandinavian countries.

Today militarization affects all areas of public life. "Russian society has been militarized for decades, if not centuries," writes Kolesnikov.

> Being prepared for a lightning-fast military mobilization was arguably the main shared value in the Soviet Union, during and after Joseph Stalin's rule. The badge that Soviet children received upon successful completion of athletic challenges was even named "Ready for Labor and Defense." Soviet discourse was replete with rhetoric about the "struggle for peace," which gave birth to a rather canny joke about struggling for peace until the world was torn into pieces. Exorbitant military spending contributed to the Soviet Union's collapse. But this lesson has been completely forgotten now.
>
> (Kolesnikov, 2015, no pagination)

Militarization of public life is combined with a sharp increase in military spending, as is only natural: according to the information that Russia has provided to the UN, its military spending in 2015 reached 2.9 trillion rubles, increasing by almost a trillion compared to 2014 (Tkachev, 2016).

Within the post-Soviet space, Russia is investing considerable effort in building a coalition that on the surface resembles authority relations but in reality can be at best described as authority-like. As Lake (2010, p.12) argues, when projecting authority far from their borders, great powers

> must create and maintain political orders of value to subordinates even when it is inconvenient for them to do so … Dominant states must also

discipline subordinates who violate the rules of the international order they create or challenge their authority.

This is definitely not what Russia is doing (see Chapter 5). Within the post-Soviet space, Russia is building a coalition with a hegemon, working to recruit new subordinates into its international order. While Lake (2010, p.15) points to the authoritative rather than coercive roots of hegemony, these "authority-like" relations cannot hide the fact that the coalition rests largely on explicit and implicit threats of coercion.

It should be recognized that Russia has received from the West what it has long wanted: Western acknowledgment that Russia is a force to be reckoned with. Western experts recognize Russian capabilities and Moscow's activism, which are able to project Russian influence, in contexts where Western interests overlap with Russia's (Giancarlo, 2016, p.8). However, as Trudolyubov rightly states,

> If you have the reputation of turning everything you touch into a weapon, everything you say and do might be construed as an attack. You become everyone's enemy. Russia's leaders have become so adept at their game of projecting menacing ambiguity that it is now impossible for them to persuade anyone that sometimes the Russians might just simply want to do business.
>
> (Trudolyubov, 2016, no pagination)

Notes

1 As Pavlovsky describes it, Putin

> has crafted his own version of *sistema*, a complex practice of decision-making and power management that has long defined Russian politics and society and that will outlast Putin himself… While managed democracy lasted, wealthy players knew that once a contract, sale, or merger of theirs reached a sufficiently high level, it was time for them to see Putin to explain the project. If Putin accepted it, they were told that his agreement was "placed on deposit." Yet in his third presidential term, Putin added a layer of uncertainty to this process by extending the power vertical, building a higher level that he alone occupies: a private penthouse. Today, he is only "kept up to date with the situation," as his press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, usually reports. Those who meet with Putin leave with only a vague idea of what they are supposed to do. They try their best to remember every word Putin said, so that one day, they can quote him. Those words are the only license they have… This new governance style relies on indirection and interpretation rather than command and control.
>
> (Pavlovsky, 2016, no pagination)

2 The speed and mechanisms of privatization led not only to extremely rapid enrichment of the winners, but also resulted in the weak legitimacy of the new property relations: the danger that the results of privatization would be canceled, and of prosecution, hung over the winners like the sword of Damocles. The businessmen were on the hook of the federal executive; a hook it would later use in the 2000s.

3 The largest banks were Interros (headed by Potanin), Menatep (Khodorkovsky), Inkombank (Vinogradov), SPb-Agro (Smolensky), Most Group (Gusinsky) and Logovaz (Berezovsky).
4 The best illustration of this thesis is the situation in the Chechen Republic: President Kadyrov, being, in his own words, "Putin's watchdog," has virtually unlimited freedom of action in his region.
5 Sovereign democracy, as defined by its ideologist Surkov, is a system in which "political powers, their authorities and decisions are decided and controlled by a diverse Russian nation for the purpose of reaching material welfare, freedom and fairness by all citizens, social groups and nationalities, by the people that formed it" (Surkov, 2006, cited in Cannady and Kubicek, 2014, p. 7).
6 It is noteworthy that since 2014 (and even earlier) Putin has stopped playing these "games of democracy" with Western countries. Today "sovereign democracy" is not needed and has been forgotten by all.
7 According to Combes,

> revisionist power would be described as a state primarily concerned with its own power and prestige above all other considerations, seeking *to remodel the international system* and order for its own benefit and in its *own interests*. This makes a revisionist power a staunchly realist one. Realism posits that states are the primary actors in the international system which is anarchic, referring to the fact that there is no higher power than the state i.e. no world government.

> (Combes, 2011/2012, p.5)

8 International rating agencies are also included in the list of conspirators, as they tend to assess Russia "unfairly." However, Russia is unable to reach these private actors with any of its coercive tools.
9 In Russia there is a popular expression, "*Anglichanka gadit*," which can be translated as "the English lady is spoiling things" (though in Russian it sounds much ruder) and has existed since the time of the conflict between the Russian and British empires.

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3 Multilevel arrangements in EU external relations

Stimulating authority, constraining coercion

The EU's external action strategy—launching institutional isomorphism in the common neighborhood—is determined by the essence of the Union as a political entity. In the '50s the EU (then the EEC) was established by the elites of six initial member states, and until now national executives have retained the final say in setting the main vectors of the EU's foreign policy. According to Benz, inwardly the EU represents a compound governance system, which "fuses incompatible components of competitive and consocional democracy" (Benz, 2001, p.4) and this very specific system determines the "boundaries of the possible" with regard to the EU's external actions.

The EU has acquired many titles, as politicians and experts are still trying to grasp the essence of the system. Holding the office of British prime minister, Tony Blair once said that "The EU should be a superpower, not a superstate" (Blair, 2000, cited in Cameron, 2007, p.2). Most definitions of the EU use the term "power," with different scholars stressing different dimensions of this power and deriving definitions based on what element of it they place in the spotlight. Thus, Duchêne coined the term "Civilian Power Europe" (Duchêne, 1972, cited in Orbie, 2006, p.123), emphasizing that the EU is a *civilian power* in the sense that its strength lies in its ability to promote and encourage stability by economic and political means (Duchêne, 1972). Manners (2000, p.29) came forward with the concept of *normative power*, defining it as the power and ability to shape and impose the superordinate's understanding of what is "normal," whereby norms are "collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity" (Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein, 1996, p.54). Norms lie at the core of Manners's approach. He explores different types of norms: utilitarian norms that help states define their "utility" in the sense of a rational choice; social norms that lie at the foundation of interests and identity; moral norms that set boundaries to acting in pure self-interest; and narrative norms that legitimate "proper" narratives (Manners, 2000, p.32). The EU particularly specializes in the creation of the last three types of norms.

Six elements shape the Union's normative power: contagion (unintentional norm diffusion), strategic and declaratory communications, institutionalization of relationship, transference (exchange of benefits between the EU and third parties), physical presence of the EU in third states and the cultural

filter (cultural diffusion and political learning in third-party states) (Manners, 2000, p.35).

The functioning of normative power is subdivided into normative intent, normative process and normative impact (Manners, 2000). Reflexivity for the EU implies changing its behavior if faced with convincing argumentation or evidence, anticipating adverse consequences of its own actions and adjusting policy to manage these consequences (Neimann and de Wekker, 2010, p.9). Whitman (2013, p.175) stresses the predisposition of the EU to develop as a normative power due to the historical context of the twentieth century (the legacy of the world wars), its hybrid polity with supranational elements and its treaty-based nature. It is worth mentioning that the concept of normative power differs from that of civilian power, because the latter describes real, physical capabilities, whereas the former draws attention to cognitive processes and approaches (Neimann and de Wekker, 2010).

What is the foundation of the EU's normative power? Meunier and Kalypso (2011) conclude that the EU bases its normative power on trade. Nottebaum (2012) gives the EU the status of "a formidable power in trade" in terms of the export of standards. In his opinion, the Union's power extends its influence in bilateral interactions by symmetric and asymmetric bargaining over market access. The regional dimension is covered by the Union's "market power" (Woolcock, 2011) via enabling reciprocal market access. The global dimension of the EU's trade power is arranged by means of specific and diffuse reciprocity—the EU contributes to gradually shaping the multilateral world system by transforming the trade agenda on a deep level (Nottebaum, 2012). Forsberg and Seppo (2008, p.4) raise the issue of the convertibility of the EU's different power modes and the importance of the organizational resource for calling the EU's power into being at its full scale.

There can be no doubt that the EU is a power; moreover, it is an unconventional one. It is capable of building power relations with the outside world, though in quite a specific manner. In this chapter, I will be building my argumentation on the fact that it is its multilevel governance system that allows the EU to act unconventionally not only within its borders, but also externally. This "unconventionality" has neither a positive nor a negative connotation per se, either for the EU or for third countries. It creates both new possibilities and constraints to building relations with the latter. The EU has proved to be able to develop a distinct approach, enabling it to either to offer the promise of membership, or to delay this decision depending on the concrete situation. By saying "maybe" (in other words, "under certain conditions"), the EU does not close the "opportunity window" that can potentially stimulate domestic change in target states, and at the same time avoids being subject to the blame game for being an unreliable counterpart that does not keep any promises. However, the EU's strategy of external action is open-ended and potentially costly: the conditions of the EU's "presence" in third countries do not allow it to exert control, or in many cases even to monitor how the money targeted for reforms is really being allocated and spent.

This chapter consists of four sections: I will first show how the multilevel governance system influences the EU's power relations, then move on to analyze how the authority-type approach is manifested in the Europeanization policy and in conditionality tactics. Part three explores the fruitfulness of the EU's use of the "golden membership carrot." The following, final, section explores the coercive instruments used by the Union (namely, economic sanctions) as well as the constraints that multilevel governance places on their use.

Multilevel governance interplay in the EU

The EU is a multilateral authority-type system. The initial arrangement between states and supranational authorities implies that supranational institutions decrease the costs of coordination and bargaining for member states, while member states delegate enough power for supranational institutions to fulfill their functions. This arrangement was institutionalized in the concept of "multilevel governance." In the EU multilevel governance (MLG) (also labeled as "poly-centric governance" and "FOCJ"—functional, overlapping, competing jurisdictions) is a way of "sharing authority across an institutionalized, hierarchically structured set of actors with varying degrees of unity/ coherence, commitment to EU norms, and power resources" (Smith, 2004, p.743). Stephenson (2013) argues that MLG emerged as a vertical arrangement and then developed into a less hierarchical approach with coordination as its centerpiece. Enlargement of the EU, especially the largest one, the Eastern Enlargement of 2004, raised demand for "internalizing externalities" because decentralized jurisdictions could better the reflect heterogeneity of preferences (Marks and Hooghe, 2003). MLG presupposes in the first place the existence of overlapping competences in multiple levels of government, whereby the power of nation-states is redistributed both to the supranational and to the subnational levels (Awesti, 2007). We observe vertical layering of governance processes, and the relations themselves evolve directly between different governance levels (Peters and Pierre, 2001). According to Keukeleire and Justaert, MLG transforms the EU into a system of multiple networks—

> semi-stable informal clusters of independent actors, who have or take specific interest or stake in solving a certain policy problem and who dispose of resources required for shaping and implementing the policy, and who are willing to mobilize and pool these resources
>
> <div align="right">(Keukeleire and Justaert, 2008, p.2)</div>

for which the European Commission is a policy broker.

There are two basic levels in the EU with regard to foreign policy—a supranational and a national level. They are autonomous, though strategically interconnected by authority-type relations that function in both directions: in some spheres, European institutions direct and constrain the policy

choices of member states, while member states may behave proactively in others. The thesis that the EU's foreign policy is decentralized and fragmented can be supported by the fact that the European Council is the EU's main decision-making body for foreign policy. The Commission is endowed mainly with the function of representation, though it is responsible for the budget and acts as the EU's ultimate borrower in international markets. An example of a purely top-down initiative by the Commission with regard to foreign policy is the European External Investment Plan (EEIP) for Africa. Greece's call for the EU to change the name of Macedonia, which Greece considers to be historically inaccurate, as an obligatory requirement for accession negotiations to proceed, meanwhile, is an instance of individual bottom-up initiative. Collective bottom-up initiatives include the most recent Franco-German Defense Plan on the establishment of a joint EU military headquarters to consolidate the EU after Brexit, and a Germany–Belgium–Luxembourg initiative aiming to establish a European anti-terror agency.

Key participants in multilevel games have to take into account the consequences of interactions at different levels simultaneously. Each actor assigns a different significance to the outcomes of different games. The choice of whether to cooperate on one level or not can at least partially explain decisions—similar or different—made at other levels. The mutual interrelation of these levels remains the key to understanding the EU's foreign policy. On the one hand, the emergence of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has not diminished the importance of the national foreign policies of member states (Busygina and Filippov, 2015, p.4). On the other hand, the existence of different national foreign policies did not stop the EU from investing efforts into the elaboration of a CFSP. It is impossible to predict the outcome of decision-making at the EU level simply by aggregating the messages articulated by national leaders (Busygina and Filippov, 2015, p.5).

Decision-making by consensus makes it principally possible for each individual member state to become a veto power with regard to a proposal that contradicts its interests. This mode of policy-making also leads to the so-called Abilene paradox: a group of actors collectively decides on a joint action that contradicts the preferences of each of the individual members (Toje, 2008). Technically, the Lisbon Treaty introduced a "*passarelle*" clause, which enables the European Council to unanimously introduce qualified majority voting on a specific issue or a whole policy area. Qualified majority voting may also be proposed by the High Representative at the request of the Council (Paul, 2008). In practice, the use of these options would be equal to progressive delegation of authority in the sphere of foreign policy, something nation-states reject in order to preserve their sovereignty. It is hard to compromise over a particular policy, but once it has been adopted, it becomes extremely difficult to abandon. Even if a policy vector is not particularly active, once it has been launched, it persists, because any transformation would require new rounds of bargaining.

Multilevel governance architecture exerts specific pressure on member states to pay particular attention to the timing and capacity for coalition-building. Three components are needed for an idea to be transformed into a concrete policy: a window of opportunity, a committed single policy entre-preneur and a convergence of ideas in the coalition of the willing (Wegge, 2012, p.10). The idea of the EU's core (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Germany) to use the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome in 2017 as a milestone for the development of a reform program for the Union may serve as an example of an attempt to exploit the timing factor.

National executives have to be able to "sell" their foreign policy priority to at least one other EU country. The initiating country has to "package" its initiative in a way that sends the right signal to the right people. Otherwise, this initiative may easily be blocked or at least suspended by a confrontational coalition. The latter usually emerges more rapidly, because there is no need to find a compromise among players seeking to freeze a proposal without offer-ing an alternative.

There is a side effect that stems from defining the EU through the notion of power. It lies in the tendency of European policymakers within the MLG structure to become involved in as many matters of external action as possible, extending the structure's unconventional power. The EU is running a wide spectrum of regional policies, including the Black Sea Synergy, the Middle East Peace Process, the Northern Dimension, the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. Most of these are offers of multilateral authority-type relations to countries residing in particular regions. The inter-action proposed is the EU's sponsorship in exchange for domestic political and economic reforms in target states. Traditional areas of EU external action include Common Foreign and Security Policy, Trade, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, Combating Terrorism, Crisis Response, Development and Aid. New policies include the EU's International Cyberspace Policy, Science Policy and Arctic Policy. Additionally, the EU tends to establish financial ties with an exceptionally wide range of third countries. This extension across space provides the EU with the image of the world's biggest donor, though this can be counterproductive for setting priorities. When the "stream of prob-lems" is packed with an enormous number of issues, focus dispersal makes it difficult for the Commission to address them and to "catch" the right ones to shift into the "policy stream." However, while this rationale functions for the EU's interests, supranational institutions as policy entrepreneurs act accord-ing to rationales of their own. Each new policy domain potentially creates new competences for them and increases the possibility of greater delegation of authority.

The EU's interests as a single entity do diverge from the interests of indi-vidual member states. It is commonly argued that the EU is barely capable of taking tangible external action, and has no common position on major issues like Russian ambitions in the Caucasus, Ukraine and the growth of Chinese power (Simms, 2012, p.49). Indeed, the CFSP is often criticized for

having much rhetoric and little substance, weak central institutions and a gap between expectations and delivery, as well as for a lack of political will. As Peterson states,

> most support the conclusion that the CFSP has been crippled by three fundamental defects, none of which can be repaired in any simple way… The first is a lack of identity. … A related problem is one of interests. … The CFSP's third defect—its weak institutions.
>
> (Peterson, 1998, p.3)

Another reproach to the CFSP is that the EU has attempted to establish it without first creating a parallel single federal political authority within its borders (Simms, 2012, p.61).

This belief in the severely limited capacity of the EU's CFSP has spread well beyond the EU itself, reached beyond the expert community and penetrated into the realm of the political decision-making of foreign states. Indeed, not all EU members are ready to act for the good of the EU if such action could theoretically harm their national interests or actually does so—at least in the short term. By joining the EU, its current members have committed to power delegation, but they still need a sense of ownership and the right to withdraw from any arrangement that may potentially harm them. However, as the case of sanctions against Russia has shown, in the case of a common major challenge, all members can reach agreement despite significant economic losses asymmetrically distributed among them.

Europeanization through conditionality

Authority relations are central to the EU both internally and externally, first and foremost with regard to its neighboring countries. The EU has absorbed political systems of different origins and sharply varying legacies, and manages to accommodate them in a single mechanism, capable of reproducing its governance principles and of projecting them abroad. The EU's drive for external reproduction provides credible evidence that its system is consolidated enough to address issues outside its locus of control. At its borders, the EU has the zone of states that are much weaker economically and structurally. By assisting their transformation according to the pattern of Europeanization (a process to which the EU is accustomed), the Union enriches its raison d'être with an external dimension.

Indeed, the Union has a lot to offer neighboring countries. To prove this, it is enough just to look at the advantages available to the countries that are already members of the "club." The EU functions as an incomplete contract between the supranational and the national governance levels for the provision of the EU's "club goods"—benefits associated with common currency, a visa-free space, cohesion and welfare. This incomplete contract resembles a marriage of convenience, where both parties agree on the framework

arrangement to mutual advantage, but there is no full commitment and no unconditional trust.

The parties in the EU's incomplete contract avoid the risks associated with trust and feel free to deviate from the framework arrangement by interpreting its details favorably to themselves if something goes wrong. Trust is a key word here—as Luhmann argues,

> Trust … presupposes a situation of risk. You may or may not buy a used car that turns out to be a "lemon." You may or may not hire a babysitter for the evening and leave him or her unsupervised in your apartment; he or she may also be a "lemon." You can avoid taking the risk, but only if you are willing to waive the associated advantages. … If you choose one action in preference to others in spite of the possibility of being disappointed in the actions of others, you define the situation as one of trust. … Trust is only possible in a situation where the possible damage may be greater than the advantage you seek.
>
> (Luhmann, 2000, pp.97–98)

The EU's multilevel governance system produces a specific situation where EU member states are simultaneously superordinates and subordinates with regard to supranational institutions. Whether it is the former or the latter depends on the policy area and on the grade of authority delegation there. In foreign policy, member states act as superordinates, on equal terms with supranational institutions.

How does authority function in the EU? Inside the Union, the above-mentioned "marriage of convenience" stimulates Europeanization, which is at the same time the process of development of authority relations and the goal of the whole project. According to Radaelli (2004, p.3),

> Europeanization consists of processes of construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies.

Börzel and Soyaltin (2012, p.8) understand Europeanization as "the emergence of new rules, norms, practices, and structures of meaning, to which member-states are exposed and which they have to incorporate into their domestic rule structures." Europeanization is developed and implemented through conditionality—the method of practicing authority within and outside the EU.

Europeanization presupposes significant engagement by both supranational institutions and those of member states. Thus, member states "upload" national preferences to the EU level, while the EU "downloads"

regulations and norms to the national level (De Flers and Müller, 2010). "Downloading" occurs though elite socialization, by means of bureaucratic restructuring, constitutional changes and changes in public perceptions. Policy projection "uploading" happens by institution-building, via the use of agenda-setting power by the European Commission, and by example-setting and ideational export (Kaminska, 2007, p.7). Domestic Europeanization is a *bottom-up* process first aggregated at the level of member states and then resulting in changes in how the European level deals with its external environment. The reverse *top-down* logic is in play during the implementation period, when commitments and stimuli at the EU level produce change in various aspects at the national level (De Flers and Müller, 2010). It is worthwhile noting that with regard to countries with candidate status, EU authority tools show the greatest efficiency when the perspective of membership is real but the final goal of membership is not yet achieved, as at this time the incentives of national elites for domestic reforms are the strongest. At the same time candidate states were very differently affected by the process of Europeanization; Cowles, Caporaso and Risse have described Europeanization as "domestic adaptation with national colors" (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, 2001, p.1).

External Europeanization also follows the top-down logic, and the EU's motivation in launching it lies primarily in increasing the level of security beyond EU borders, although there are other important reasons, including the wish to facilitate economic interaction with third states and to equip their markets for the entry of the EU's firms and producers. In addition, external Europeanization helps the EU to develop its identity. By trying to explain its governance mode to third states and even to impose it on them, the EU can better understand what it is and what it is not.

The EU as a whole is most interested in maintaining the status of a superordinate, which means that it wants to establish power relations with its counterparts to its advantage by using the practice of political conditionality. Evidently, this is not always possible, especially with states that do not want to join the Union and therefore are reluctant to comply with its rules and regulations.

The EU does not hold the patent for the invention of conditionality tactics. In the '80s that instrument was first used by international economic institutions such as the IMF, which linked financial aid to an economic reform package. As Smith argues, the European Community/Union began to use conditionality in relations with third countries only after the end of the Cold War, though not all countries formally labeled part of the "West" were perfect democracies. Conditionality was not used by the EU with regard to the "Third World" for fear of reviving associations with the colonialist past. During the period when the Community refrained from using conditionality, it was the European Parliament that favored linking aid to the protection of human rights. When the Single European Act (1987) entered into force, the Parliament gained the power to approve association agreements and membership applications and used it to promote conditionality (Smith, 1997).

Conditionality acquired special importance for the EU following the 2004 enlargement. Due to enlargement fatigue, European policymakers started to develop new mechanisms to avoid creating dividing lines within Europe, doing so by structuring external political space so as not to grant third countries access to European institutions (Balfour, 2012).

At the beginning of the '90s, the "socialist camp" collapsed into a number of states with dysfunctional institutions, and the shocks of painful political and economic reforms were to follow. Externally, these countries predictably made a choice in favor of the EU—as an alternative to a weak, unpredictable and therefore even more frightening Russia. This situation was used as an opportunity for the EU to launch authority-type Europeanization in the post-Soviet area, and former socialist countries were incorporated into the Union in 2004–2007, in the course of by far the largest EU enlargement. This was the timing with which the EU entered these countries' political stage with its Europeanization toolkit and the tactics of conditionality. Asymmetric negotiation power in favor of the EU explains the patronizing nature of the authority relations between the EU and these states, with the EU unilaterally defining the rules of interaction (Anastasakis, 2015). Though the EU has invested much effort and a high amount of resources in building state capacity in these countries, the process has not been finalized yet, and the Union still shares a border with some weak and unstable regimes.

Europeanization takes place when the EU starts to define the "grammar of political action" for its subordinates. To make it real, the Union has to discourage domestic veto players while supporting and empowering agents of change. Much depends on the presence and availability of domestic incentives for change and on the regime type. De Fler and Müller (2010) put forward the "goodness of fit" argument: the compatibility of worldviews and political aspirations between the EU and the party subject to Europeanization define the effectiveness of domestic transformation. A consensus-oriented decision-making culture is another factor facilitating Europeanization—it enables negotiating a common position through dialogue, and overcoming veto points by marginalizing veto players (Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012). Ensuring the sustainability of change after the incumbents in the third country leave office and new people come to power is the most difficult part of the Europeanization process (Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012).

If the EU's pressure for adjustment is very specifically targeted, coercion, which is inherent in authority-type Europeanization, is launched at the highest level. If the EU's adjustment pressures are less specified, coercive elements appear at the lower level of the hierarchic authority relations. If rules are solely offered by supranational institutions, mimesis is the most the EU can expect from a third state, and there is a high probability for regulatory competition to emerge between it and the EU (Schmidt, 2002, p.897). Tracing the results of Europeanization is a challenging task, because its outcome is never universal and has no linear time pattern—there may be a considerable gap between supranational stimulus and national feedback (Radaelli, 2004). The

side effects of the EU's authority-type Europeanization efforts are also difficult to calculate in any particular case.

Within the Europeanization strategic process, conditionality is the method aimed at making nonmember states comply with European principles of legitimate statehood. Solana explained the essence of conditionality as follows: "We just ask the countries which are interested in participating in our structures to comply with our rules and to share our values" (Solana, 2003, cited in Veebel, 2009, p.208). "By engaging in the conditionality relationship with the EU, a third country agrees on upfront risk-taking (Luhmann, 1989) by deliberately abstaining from checking whether the information the EU provides about benefits and setbacks of cooperation corresponds with reality" (Börzel and Risse, 2015, p.8). The EU, in turn, "buys a pig in a poke" and engages in an open-ended adventure.

The EU's positive conditionality defines the "carrot" in "carrot and stick" with such subcomponents as legitimacy based on mutual benefit, interest or voluntarism, one-way shaped (pooled) sovereignty, economic reasoning and creation of independent institutions to safeguard the process (Veebel, 2009, p.210). The Union commits itself to changing the domestic economic and political environment in a target country by reacting either to fulfillment or to nonfulfillment of the imposed conditions by rewarding or by withholding rewards (Smith, 1997). The strategy excludes both the use of force and full engagement in the comprehensive support of a target state with the range of available policy tools for Europe (Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel, 2003).

The EU does not have enough "power to hurt" to make the compliance of subordinates "as voluntary as our custom of wearing clothes" (Blau, 1963, cited in Lake, 2009, p.19). Nonmember subordinates have no sense of duty with regard to the EU, because they do not perceive its assistance in their development as an altruistic act. Multilevel governance and shared sovereignty have made domestic Europeanization possible. Nonmember states *de jure* have complete sovereignty and, therefore, freedom to choose (at least, theoretically) whether to comply with externally defined rules or not. The choice in favor of the EU is a difficult and strategic (long-term) one, so there is no reason to expect that the EU's efforts with regard to third countries will always be sustainable and successful.

It is not inevitable that the EU will establish power (authority) relations with all of its neighbors; that is either impossible or unnecessary. In the EU's bilateral contracts with equal partners, namely Switzerland and Norway, there is no need for Europeanization, because the counterparts agree to limit the ambitions of communication by reaping the fruits of sectoral agreements. Switzerland and Norway may selectively fill the emerging gaps in the fields of their interest by incorporating part of the EU's acquis and thereby voluntarily constraining sovereignty to ensure access to the EU's market. However, these countries carefully avoid signing binding agreements that presuppose automatic incorporation of the EU's norms in any policy area.

The "golden carrot" of membership

EU membership is a very specific carrot. It offers access to the EU's "club goods," but the use of these goods is conditional and the more advanced the stage of integration, the more commitments applicants sign up to. Nevertheless, membership is perceived as a "golden carrot" by the national elites of many third countries because of the attractiveness of the associated gains. This motivation is powerful enough for the elites, though the benefits of membership can be nonobvious for the citizens. Explaining the "European choice" together with selective sharing of information enables national elites to persuade their population to opt for the "European path," but when the veil of ignorance vanishes, referenda are needed to restore the connection between ordinary citizens and incumbent politicians (as in Hungary's case) (Agh, 2003). From the other side, as we see from the examples of Norway and Switzerland, the situation of being in Europe geographically without belonging to the EU institutionally, though sharing with it certain institutional arrangements, can be quite profitable. Interestingly enough, democratic vote against EU membership in these countries has no major adverse effects on the functioning of these arrangements. The problem, however, is that Norway and Switzerland are special cases, and there is no reason to expect that other "outsiders" could at least partly repeat that pair's path of development while remaining outside the EU.

The reasoning behind EU enlargement is another controversial issue, as it is a process that seemingly threatens to disturb the EU's internal order, to create new external borders and ultimately new divisions on the continent (Sjursen, 2002). The EU has set fixed membership criteria, but the choice of countries eligible for membership is limited purely geographically. Moreover, the enlargement strategy is based on the "unrealistic assumption about the ability of one potential new EU member to commit [itself] on all future behavior as a full member" (Heinemann, 2001, p.4). The absence of a "compulsory withdrawal" clause in the treaties makes it legally impossible to withdraw membership in case of noncompliance after the accession.

Nevertheless, the evidence is that the EU has already witnessed six rounds of enlargement: Denmark, Ireland and the UK joined the project in 1983, Greece became a member in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986. Then, in 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the Union. The fifth enlargement round was a compound one and included the enlargement of 2004, the largest by far, which featured the entry of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as the enlargement of 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania acquired EU membership. The sixth and most recent enlargement involved Croatia's accession in 2013 (The European Commission, 2013).

The rationality of the EU enlargement lies in the interplay between the internal and external facets of the European integration multilevel governance system. Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002, p.503) define enlargement as

"gradual and formal horizontal institutionalization of organizational rules and norms," where "Institutionalization means the process by which the actions and interactions of social actors come to be normatively patterned." This normativity is the main driving force in the EU's attempts to structure its external space by means of institutional isomorphism and absorption of new members. The EU uses various mechanisms of injecting and supporting its norms in third countries: it ensures its dominance in the authority-type approach, it creates conditions for internalization (making noncompliance for membership aspirants painful even if it is connected with direct material benefits) and it obliges membership aspirants to incorporate its law and makes its application binding via treaties. Finally, it threatens the elites of membership aspirants with reputational losses if they drift away from the course of the EU-assisted transformation (Axelrod, 1986).

Enlargement is "a formalized act and at the same time a gradual process that begins before, and continues after, the formal accession" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2002, p.503). According to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, the decision on enlargement proceeds by unanimous vote in the Council, and absolute majority vote in the European Parliament in consultation with the European Commission. The application procedure starts with an official letter from a candidate country, which is submitted to the rotating EU presidency. The Council forwards this application to the Commission, which has to prepare its opinion (*Avis*) on the third country's fitness for further reforms. The whole process, from the EU Commission screening the situation in the third country to the actual delivery of the *Avis* back to the Council, may last more than a year. The Council then makes a decision about subsequent steps the candidate has to take on the way to EU membership (The European Commission, 2016b). The phase of developing the accession treaty starts upon the "closure of chapters" and, once the application treaty has been signed, the candidate acquires the status of "acceding country." Even at this stage, the actual accession can be blocked by any EU member, because the accession treaty must be ratified by all member states in accordance with their constitutional rules. Recently the EU has developed a special procedure for the Western Balkans—they were offered the status of "potential candidates" (The European Commission, 2016a). The Union committed itself to granting them official candidate status upon the fulfillment of special conditions. The list of current candidate countries includes Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. On September 20, 2016, the EU Council forwarded Bosnia's membership application (which had been submitted on February 15, 2016) to the Commission to assess the country's readiness to begin membership talks (Gotev, 2016).

Indeed, the potential for the accession of the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and previously Croatia) to the EU has naturally given birth to an appropriate authority tool, namely the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), initiated in 1999, which laid

the groundwork for negotiations between national governments and the EU. The SAP's purpose was the stabilization of these countries in order to achieve three main goals—to ensure transition to a market economy, promotion of regional cooperation and eventual membership in the EU (The European Commission, 2012).

The SAP is a multistep process. Once the Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA) were signed with the Western Balkans countries, they were ratified by all the member states as well as by the European Commission. After this first step, the countries were to gain access to preaccession assistance programs and use the programs' funds to assist the reform process. Then the aspiring member country was expected to deliver a national program for the adoption of the *acquis*. As Nenadović (2012, p.26) describes,

> the SAA monitoring is coupled with intensive political dialogue and Progress reports that track the countries' successes and obstacles in completing the set terms. Once a country receives candidate status, official accession negotiations with the EU begin and determine under which conditions that country will join the European Union.

The criteria that set the directions of reforms for acceding countries, and at the same time allow the EU to evaluate and compare the progress that these countries are making with regard to Europeanization, are central to the enlargement project. The Copenhagen criteria consist of three sets of requirements: a political criterion, implying stable democratic institutions; an economic criterion, which sets the requirement of a market economy capable of coping with competitive pressures inside the Union; and a legal criterion, which requires the capacity to subscribe to the objectives of a political, economic and monetary Union (Tulmets, 2005). Here the EU cannot do without coercion playing a significant role: as Börzel and Soyaltin (2012, p.7) stress, "membership Europeanization works to a large extent through legal coercion." In addition to setting mandatory goals and criteria, the EU tries to shape third countries' markets indirectly, "by placing them in a regulative competition framework through more or less forceful opening of their economies" (Bruszt, 2002, p.134).

In negotiating accession, the positions of the EU and applicant countries are definitively not those of equal partners; in fact, the start of the accession process marks the beginning of authority relations between superordinate (the EU) and subordinate (the applicant country). Indeed, applicant countries find themselves in a weaker, subordinate negotiating position vis-à-vis the EU in the preaccession period and concede much in exchange for membership (Moravcsik and Vachudova, 2003, p.44). But the expected reward is alluring: by joining the Union a new member principally changes its status— from the "club of subordinates" it enters that of superordinates, where it can from now on decide the fate of those striving to join. In this sense the carrot is "golden" indeed, as a sovereign state, as a superordinate, cannot offer the

same possibility to its subordinates within an authority relations framework. Heinemann (2001, p.4) writes that

> Pre-entry, a candidate has no impact on the acquis and basically is confronted with one choice: to join the community with the constitution defined by the old member countries or to stay out. Post-entry, the same country takes part in the decision-making process both on day-to-day policy and the evolution of the constitution with the same rights as the old member countries.

However, entering the struggle for membership status is voluntary, and submitting a membership application is not the same as buying a one-way ticket: in May 2015 Iceland bought a "return ticket" by requesting to no longer be regarded as a candidate country.

Enlargement appears to be a very sensitive issue for "old" members of the EU, and not all of them welcome "new" ones. This was very clear with the EU's Eastern Enlargement, when the coalition countering it included Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Heinemann, 2001). To overcome this coalition's veto, as Christina Schneider (2007, p.86) has concluded, the EU had to launch "transitional allocation of limited membership rights" ("discriminatory membership"). Plümper and Schneider (2007, p.569) remind us that the EU's Eastern Enlargement was only possible when "most of the accession countries agreed to be temporarily excluded from agricultural subsidies, structural aid, and the free movement of labor as a means of paving their way to the European club." Thus, the distributional conflict of enlargement pushed the EU to restructure ongoing authority relations.

The effects of accession of certain countries to the EU can be very asymmetric—they can be nearly invisible for some members while being very significant for others. As Schneider shows, the unanimity rules of the Council vote on accession serve as an "airbag" to guarantee that the position of already existing members does not significantly worsen after EU enlargement. They allow all EU governments to delay the accession of new members until they are satisfied with the arrangement according to which this process will take place. Generally speaking, enlargement may be more beneficial for prosperous EU economies in search of new markets. By contrast, weak members have to bear most of the costs, because they "do not have enough power to avert the negative consequences of increased competition from candidates that have rival claims to the same benefits" (Schneider, 2011, pp.7–8). Thus, it is institutional bargaining that allows weak members to exert influence which goes beyond their actual capacities, specifically in the pre-enlargement period. This is possible because strong members will bear the greatest costs if enlargement negotiations are suspended or frozen, which is why they may choose to "buy out" the refusal of smaller states to use their veto power with "side

payments" in other areas in order to make urgent unanimity on their priority vote possible (Schneider, 2011).

Obviously, the "golden carrot" of membership cannot be offered to all the countries that might wish to join the Union. It was in 2002 that Romano Prodi, who then held the office of Commission President, voiced his concerns that the Eastern Enlargement could "water down the European political project and turn the EU into just a free trade area" (Prodi, 2002, cited in Vasconcelos and Bonvicini, 2006, p.8). Even so, only after the big-bang enlargement of 2004 did the EU start to seriously consider alternative variants of control over its external political environment so as to avoid the threat of "breaking the camel's back" by overcomplicating its domestic arrangement (Leuffen, 2006). The proposal of Commissioner Frans Andriessen to institutionalize second-class, "affiliate membership" in the form of the "European Political Area" (Baun, 2000), with states having a seat in the Council with rights equal to that of full members in specific areas only, had been rejected a year earlier. However, in order to maintain the membership aspirations that enable reforms in third countries, the EU did not set ultimate physical borders. Instead, it concentrated on efforts to move its legal border beyond its actual physical border (Vasconcelos and Bonvicini, 2006). The launch of the European Neighborhood "proximity" policy (ENP) was a critical juncture and a turning point from the politics of exclusion to the politics of inclusion (Kahraman, 2005).

The ENP was designed to export good governance, democratic institutions and decentralization to countries in Eastern Europe, in the Caucasus, in the Middle East and in North Africa. The program was later split into subprograms according to geography—into the Southern Neighborhood, which included Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia, and the Eastern Partnership, which institutionalized the EU's cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. This extremely wide geographical scope allows us to assume that the ENP was not about enlargement but rather was a double-edged sword of a prize (Moldovanu, Sela and Shi, 2008)—and indeed, by agreeing to cooperate in this framework, a third country excludes itself from the membership race, because the ENP is not aimed at assisting enlargement.

The ENP allowed the EU to start developing an alternative to enlargement, while at the same time "preventing future EU borders from becoming hard exclusionary boundaries and developing instead into integrated borderlands" (Vasconcelos and Bonvicini, 2006, p.7). In part, the initiative outsources the EU's security policy by stimulating the build-up of state capacity (though to a limited extent) in countries that may become refugee exporters as well as in countries that share a border with the EU and therefore expose the Union to specific threats. In other words, there is little altruism in the EU's approach to external policy—the EU is entirely rational; it serves its own interests and pays to pursue them. The EU cannot coerce its ENP subordinates into

compliance—the case of Belarus shows this well enough. It can offer its part-
ners something, though of course it will not be as "golden" as a membership
perspective, and itis their choice whether to accept the offer or not.

By developing the ENP format, the EU became a policy transfer plat-
form (Bulmer and Padgett, 2004, p.104) and created different types of
subordinates—reciprocators, defectors and those opting out. In his work on
behavioral economy, Simon Gächter has analyzed a cognitive experiment
of individual-level voluntary cooperation and come to a series of important
conclusions.

> The game … considers three strategies: non-participation, defection and
> cooperation. In this game, very small incentives lead to an unstable pat-
> tern of non-participation with bursts of cooperation. When the incen-
> tives are very large, a stable uniform population of cooperators emerges
> … The most remarkable outcome of the study occurs when intermedi-
> ate incentives are offered and participation is voluntary. In this situation,
> slightly increasing the severity of punishment above a very low level
> results in stable populations of cooperators. By contrast, rewards of at
> least medium size are needed to cause a shift in the population from the
> majority who opt out of participation to a stable mixture of cooperators
> and defectors. When participation is voluntary, only very large rewards
> could generate a stable and uniform population of cooperators.
>
> (Gächter, 2012, p.40)

Applying Gächter's logic to the analysis of international authority rela-
tions (in particular, to the case of the EU and its neighboring countries)
brings us to the conclusion that a viable medium-size reward is needed to
initiate authority-type cooperation. When authority relations are already
functioning and the subordinate country is carrying out the requirements of
the superordinate, at least to some extent, it is possible for the EU as a super-
ordinate to slightly regulate compliance either by increasing reward or, if this
does not bring satisfying results, by engaging minor coercion. To ensure max-
imum compliance, the EU has to offer a reward that is very significant—and
not only from the EU's perspective, but from the viewpoint of the subordinate
country. (From the other side, driving coercion to the maximum possible is
likely to have the opposite effect of causing resistance and refusal to comply.)

The evidence from the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the
Eastern Partnership reveals that alternatives to membership have fundamen-
tally limited ability to "generate a stable and uniform population of coopera-
tors" inside subordinate countries.

Economic coercion: the effects of multilevel governance

It follows from all of the aforesaid that the European Union is "doomed" to
exert its power externally mainly through authority instruments, resulting in

the gradual Europeanization of target countries; however, it also has coercive instruments at its disposal, and these are, first of all, economic sanctions. By using these, the EU is in fact converting its economic power into a foreign policy tool.[1] As Portela (2014, p.35) rightly notes, "Sanctions create bargaining chips, but their effective employment in extracting political concession is part of a negotiation whose success often depends on the skillfulness and flexibility of the sender. Sanctions *per se* do not display 'corrective' or 'healing' effects." In this section my task is to show what kind of constraints multilevel governance puts on using this form of coercion as well as on choosing among numerous concrete instruments within it. But before moving onto this issue, I need first to describe briefly the EU's general approach to sanctions.

The EEC has used sanctions as an instrument of political influence since the Rome Treaty of 1957, and since the 1980s they have been imposed by the EU fairly frequently with the general aim of pressuring targeted countries into policy changes (Portela, 2010, p.xiv). In other words, as the EU has been confronted with situations that require a firm response—and such situations have been emerging with increasing frequency—sanctions have become almost a standard reaction. It was the Maastricht Treaty that in 1992 created the Common Foreign and Security Policy and formalized the decision-making procedures for sanctions (Kreutz, 2005, p.11). According to the European Commission, "sanctions are an instrument of a diplomatic or economic nature which seek to bring about a change in activities or policies such as violations of international law or human rights, or policies that do not respect the rule of law or democratic principles" (The European Commission, 2008, cited in Leenders, 2014, p.4). In 2004, the Council came forward with the objectives the EU wishes to achieve by adopting sanctions: the Council will impose autonomous EU sanctions in support of efforts to fight terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and as a restrictive measure to uphold respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance (The Council of the European Union, 2004, cited in Leenders, 2014, p.7). What is important is that by setting out these objectives, the EU has in fact declared that the international system that the Union is striving to promote is based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance (Giumelli, 2013, p.396). It is also worth mentioning that, in developing its sanctions policy and evaluating its outcomes, the EU has gradually come to the idea of targeted sanctions (or "smart" sanctions) such as travel bans, commodity boycotts, financial sanctions "aimed at nonstate actors (i.e., individuals, groups or companies for the most part) and/or … only specific economic sectors or specific products" (Giumelli, 2013, p.395). The objective is "to design the restrictive measures in order to maximize their impact on the actors responsible for the wrongdoings, and to minimize the unintended consequences on innocent civilians" (Giumelli, 2013, p.395). In other words, "targeted" sanctions are intended to minimize the effect of sanctions on the civilian population by targeting specific groups or individuals rather than the economy as a whole, thereby increasing the sanctions' legitimacy (Esfandiary,

2013, p.2). By looking at several case studies from a set of 47 independent EU sanction cases, Leenders (2014) comes to the conclusion that, despite various challenges, the coercive nature of the sanction instrument nevertheless makes it a relevant foreign policy tool which allows the EU to react to external crises.

A nation (or group of nations) imposing sanctions against another nation signals that there is a conflict between them, and that both sides (not only the sender) will necessarily bear the costs of the conflict, while these costs will greatly increase should the nations be interdependent. Therefore, due to rational fears of economic loss it is much more difficult to punish economic partners (not declaratively, but practically) for international wrongdoing, and the difficulty of making this decision will be proportional to the degree of the sender's dependency upon the target country. What matters is that the costs will be distributed asymmetrically across the sender's territory: with the termination of exports of certain goods, the regions that specialize in production of these goods will suffer the most significant losses. However, in a sovereign state the decision to impose sanctions is taken by the national executive only, and in calculating the losses to the national economy due to sanctions, the national executive can take into account these asymmetries between subnational regions, with those most hit by the effects of this decision then receiving compensation through redistribution mechanisms. However, the regions cannot block the center's general decision to impose sanctions.

In a union of states (such as the EU) this scheme does not work. As the EU brings together 28 member states, all of them inevitably pursue their own particular interests (Leenders, 2014, p.8). The EU member states' individual interests play a decisive role in the EU's sanction practice. Of course, much depends on the EU's ability to manage sanctions consistently (and a good deal of criticism has been expressed about this), but the initial agreement of all member states is critical. In each concrete case of imposing sanctions, member states have varied greatly in their willingness to do so. As Gebert (2013, p.11) shows, in Iran's case, Spain and Greece were reluctant to impose oil sanctions because of their dependence on the export of oil from Iran, and likewise France was eager to lift sanctions on Myanmar because of its investments in the country. Poland was very much in favor of sanctions against Belarus, but not against Ukraine (Gebert, 2013, p.7). Furthermore, the factor of the UN mandate also playes a role: some EU countries are less comfortable imposing sanctions that have not been mandated by the UN, as such measures are perceived as politically more sensitive (Esfandiary, 2013, p.3).

If a union imposes sanctions, the costs of interrupting trade relations will vary significantly among its members. However, in contrast to developing foreign policy for a state, doing so for the EU demands building voluntary commitment without any form of enforcement. This is possible solely when national executives preserve certain "room for maneuver" at the bilateral level. And this is not a sign of failure, but a mechanism for reaching a broader consensus on EU foreign policy. Thus, to agree on sanctions means to reach consensus among member states: as the decision is based on the principle of

unanimity, each member must give its agreement. It is clear that reaching consensus is not an easy task since while the decision is taken by national executives in Brussels, the costs (asymmetrically distributed among member states) will be at the national level. These costs can undermine political support for the incumbents and therefore lower their chances to stay in office after the next elections. With the system of multilevel governance, national executives find themselves in a twofold situation: they vote for sanctions in the Council and bear the costs of the decision at home. In addition, sanctions work slowly, and this creates another difficulty: it is difficult enough to reach initial agreement of all members of the Union, but much more difficult to maintain consensus among the member states long enough to achieve desired results.

What could be done to overcome the problem of "individual national interest"? The EU can leave defining the character of the sanctions to the member states. This was, for instance, the case with South Africa in 1986, when the EC sanctioned new direct investments but left it to member states to declare if the sanctions would be binding. The two major investors—the United Kingdom and Germany—failed to impose binding sanctions (Hefti and Staehelin-Witt, 2014). In such cases, the EU can impose not formal but informal sanctions, which encompass measures that were not adopted in a formal sanction framework, but can consist of just the same types of sanctions, though usually they do not entail heavy measures such as embargoes. For example, in Cuba's case, a number of diplomatic measures were agreed, but via Council conclusions instead of a legal document (The Council of the European Union, 2003). In the cases of Pakistan and India, informal sanctions allowed the EU to react even when there was no consensus in the Council (Portela, 2010, p.117). According to Portela (2010, p.126), informal measures may come in useful if member states do not wish to be tied down by legal decisions, or if disagreement impedes an EU reaction, but they do not seem fit to pursue an effective and coherent sanction strategy. Leenders (2014, p.23) stresses the particular role of informal sanctions: they allow the EU to signal disapproval, while not inflicting too much harm on strategic relationships. However, the best thing for evening out the costs of member states and alleviating tensions would be the introduction of a burden-sharing mechanism—a suggestion that looks good, but, unfortunately, is not feasible in the foreseeable future.

The EU's use of coercive instruments has increased exponentially in recent years: at the beginning of the century, the EU targeted fewer than 20 countries with restrictive measures, while in 2014 the number went up to 30. The EU used a very broad range of sanctions regimes—from traditional arms embargoes on countries such as Myanmar and asset freezes in Egypt to more complicated and multilayered regimes in Iran and Syria (Esfandiary, 2013, p.2). However, up to 2014, when the EU started sanctioning Russia after the annexation of Crimea, the targets were mainly geographically distant countries where imposing sanctions did not cause significant trouble for the EU member states. The case of Russia stands apart in the "EU sanctions story," as for the first time the common challenge has reached a scale where

the EU member states have unanimously agreed to impose sanctions against the neighboring giant Russia, trade with which is very important for many of them.

As de Galbert (2015, p.1) argues,

> with military coercion options constrained, and public condemnations considered inadequate in light of the severity of the situation, hard power economic coercion in the form of sanctions quickly emerged as a realistic response to hold Russia accountable and to deter it from escalating the conflict further.

But the costs of the sanctions regime have been calculated to be high for European economies, significantly higher, for instance, than what the Iran sanctions have cost the European economy in the past decade (de Galbert, 2015, p. V).

Experts often point to the fact that itis the EU's design (multilevel governance in particular) that prevents it from acting efficiently in international relations, and that member states will not be able to reach an agreement because individual national security concerns are too important to them (for these arguments see, for instance, Kreutz, 2005). However, Kreutz (2005, p.3) notes that the inclusion of sanctions as part of the CFSP corresponds to the recent development of the EU as a more active security provider. And indeed, the Ukrainian crisis has shown that, when faced with a major common challenge, all 28 EU member states are capable of agreeing on costly joint measures such as sanctions against Russia. Moreover, it shows that EU members are capable of consenting to bear the significantly variable costs of this joint action caused by the interruption of their economic relations with Russia. Thus, the Ukrainian crisis has demonstrated the ability of EU institutions to obtain and sustain compliance, if not necessarily consensus, despite significant differences in the interests of the national states. The EU sanctions against Russia revealed readiness to accept the de-facto supremacy of all-union decision-making institutions over bilateral relations. While the political leaders of many member states expressed a desire to maintain amiable relations with Putin, at the EU level (the European Council, the Council of Ministers) they supported united action against Russia.

The Ukrainian crisis created a unique opportunity to formally upgrade the role of the EU's common foreign and security policy institutions to reflect their evolving de-facto significance. Theoretically, the greater reallocation of decision-making authority from national to EU institutions requires an issue of overwhelming importance for all member states, and the conflict with Russia over the annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine appears to be such an issue. At the same time, the multi-level nature of the EU allows members to hold to their specific national concerns to a degree. Member states with economies that are more dependent upon economic cooperation with Russia still preserve institutional means of

maintaining a more benevolent tone in their bilateral discourse, while placing the responsibility for the "angry voice" on the European Union as a distinct actor in which they can pose as a minority. The same actors—national executives—continue playing different games in different arenas. In general, the "sanctions story" proves that the EU's institutional arrangements can be more robust than is traditionally considered, though this robustness manifests situationally, in the event of the EU encountering a real and large-scale common challenge. From the other side, the crucial role of the national executive will guarantee that the EU will refrain from "arbitrarily" extending its use of coercion.

As coercive tools, sanctions regimes do play an important role in EU external relations, though the roles of sanctions and authority are absolutely not comparable. The role of sanctions will remain supporting, or additional, while the uniqueness of the EU and its power relations through which it impacts on external spaces is embodied in authority relations.

Note

1 It is important to mention that there also exists the possibility of using sanctions within the EU—against its own member states. These are sanctions in response to deterioration of democracy in the EU's member states, and such cases are multiplying: Romania, Hungary and Poland are the "best" examples. According to Sedelmeier,

> the EU can use two types of sanctions against democratic backsliding in member states: hard (material) sanctions and soft (social) sanctions. The main hard sanctions are defined in Article 7 TEU. In Article 7, the Treaty of Amsterdam gave the EU the possibility to punish "serious and persistent" breaches of the liberal democratic values contained in Article 2. If the European Council agrees unanimously that such a breach exists, the Council can decide by qualified majority to suspend "certain [membership] rights … including the voting rights" … Soft sanctions against democratic backsliding consist of social pressure, i.e. shaming through open criticism of illiberal practices in a member state.
> (see Sedelmeier, 2016, p.8)

However, Article 7 has never been used so far, and, as Zalan points out, "the new 'rule of law framework', adopted in 2014, did not introduce any new sanctions or any new mechanisms for holding EU states accountable. Instead, it simply codified the political dialogue between Brussels and the offending member state" (see Zalan, 2016, no pagination). It can be expected with a high probability that due to the effects of multilevel governance, "soft sanctions" as a form of diplomatic warning will remain the EU's only practical tool for intervening in a member state's internal affairs.

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4 Russia and the EU

From failed authority to mutual coercion

In 2016, Russia's Valdai Club published a report titled "Russia and the European Union: Three Questions on New Principles of Relationship" with the main idea being that Russia should flatly refuse any kind of integration with the EU. Russia should turn to the East (in particular, to China) and cooperate with the EU exclusively on a set list of specific problems. The report also demands that the Union cancel sanctions against Crimea (Valdai Discussion Club, 2016). As Inozemtsev (2016) has rightly noted, the report not only supports the statement that Russia is drifting away from Europe, and Europe from Russia; in fact, the report presents a kind of ultimatum on what the EU must do in order to restore communication with Russia. The EU has not put forward an ultimatum to Russia—its tone is quite discreet—but experts are deeply concerned by "an unresolved question of how to achieve a lasting agreement on the rules and norms for regulating the international political associations between the European security community and its various neighbors" (Ferguson, 2017, p.19), primarily, Russia.

Russia and the European Union are two of the major powers in Europe, but due to a combination of two factors—geographical proximity and strategic economic interdependence—the relations between the rising European Union[1] and the rising Russia are very different from those between other "rising powers." Indeed, the border between the two partly *is* the border between Russia and Estonia, and Russia and Latvia (these Baltic republics were part of the USSR). The Kaliningrad region, Russia's exclave within the Union's territory, is located between Poland and Lithuania. Over the past 20 years, the EU and Russia have become increasingly economically tied (Gottlieb and Lorber, 2014), and it was due to an excessively high degree of economic interdependence that the EU called relations with Russia a key strategic challenge in its latest Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EEAS press team, 2016). Forsberg and Haukkala (2016, p.77) stress that economy is the true foundation of EU–Russia relations, while "The structure of trade between the EU and Russia reveals natural complementarities suggesting a good match between the economies." In this case a "good match" is a very asymmetric "match," as it is energy relations—Russia sells natural gas and

oil, the EU member states buy them—that form the main pillar of economic interaction between Russia and the EU.

In 2014, prior to the launch of the sanctioning spiral, the EU was Russia's primary trading partner while Russia was the EU's third most important partner. The EU exports pharmaceutical products (8 percent), chemicals, machinery and equipment (22.8 percent) and cars and trucks (10 percent) to Russia, while its imports from Russia are vastly dominated by oil and gas. In 2015, Russia came fifth among the EU's trade partners (with 6 percent of exports and imports), and for Russia the Union accounted for 44.8 percent of total exports and imports (Russell and Sabbati, 2016). Such an extent of economic interdependence between Russia and the EU is the first big difference compared to the Cold War period. The second is the new status of the EU and Russia in the world, as both have acquired the status of rising powers (Busygina, 2017).

Geographic proximity and strategic economic interdependence create objective conditions for cooperation between the "rising antipodes," while the deepest dissimilarities between them lie in two domains—preferences/values and contrasting institutional systems. Developing the theoretical argument of Organski and Kugler, who posit that a dissimilarity of preferences for the international status quo—or the security, military, economic and diplomatic rules and norms of engagement—is an essential determinant of wars between great powers (Organski and Kugler, 1980), Benson proves that dissimilarities of preferences serve as fundamental motivation for conflict between nations (or groups of nations). Disagreements over the structure of the international status quo impact relationships between states in a number of different ways that are pertinent not only to the most intense wars in the international environment, but also to disputes that fall short of war (Benson, 2007). Indeed, after the crisis in Ukraine, there are few grounds to doubt that Russia and the EU do have a difference in preferences over the international (European) status quo. Moscow views the world as a multipolar one, where the poles (and only they) are important players in the international system, and where each pole has unconditional freedom of action in its sphere of influence. It is from this perspective that Moscow has tried to build relations with Georgia, Ukraine and other post-Soviet states. In this respect, the EU is by its nature a challenge to Russia's approach, undermining the idea of "free rein in my sphere" that is so dear to the Kremlin.

However, institutional dissimilarities do not necessarily lead to conflict in relations, though, as Souva argues, dyads with similar political and economic institutions are less likely to experience conflict than other types of dyad (Souva, 2004). In the case of EU–Russia relations, institutional dissimilarities are only natural. The salient point is that policy outcomes created by the institutional arrangements of one party are incomprehensible and unpredictable to the other. Moscow has repeatedly stressed that the Russian system is based on the "power vertical." In foreign policy, this vertical is virtually limited to one main actor (the president) who makes decisions. The unpredictability comes from

the absence of information on the main actor's intentions and the degree of his rationality. But the story with the European Union is completely different.

The nature of the European Union cannot be described with the same hierarchical principle, as it is much more a system of multilevel governance, where, as Benz and Zimmer argue, "attention is focused on multiple actors including regional governments, national governments and parliaments, the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as on their patterns of interaction, which are described as networks and negotiations" (Benz and Zimmer, 2010, p.18). A number of scholars have already stressed the importance of the multilevel nature of EU–Russia relations, focusing on the interactions between the all-Union institutions and the Russian government, on Russia's bilateral relations with member states, and on cross-border cooperation at the sub-national level (see Smith, 2004; Busygina and Filippov, 2008; Gjovalin and Kalypso, 2014; Nechiporuk, 2014).

Thus, the multilevel system of governance is an adaptation of decision-making to the circumstances of territories under multiple jurisdictions. In practice, this means (in addition to numerous other manifestations) that the declarations made by national executives for their national communities could principally differ from the decisions made by the same actors on the same matter in Brussels. It was exactly so with the sanctions against Russia: in counting on declarations made by national executives prior to the sanctions, the Russian leadership grossly underestimated the willingness of the EU member states to stand together against Russia's annexation of Crimea (White and Troianovski, 2014). The reality proved to be very different, and the decision on sanctions was perceived by the Kremlin as an unexpected and very unpleasant surprise, a kind of "betrayal of Russia" by at least some European leaders.

These principal and very deep differences make the EU a very troubling neighbor for Russia, one which Russia can neither understand nor accept. For Russia, the US is much more understandable, though considered more hostile. "The dyadic relationship between the EU and Russia has oscillated between conflict and cooperation," argue Forsberg and Haukkala (2016, p.236). It is worth noting, however, that cooperation has been developing almost exclusively in the spheres where the parties have had no other choice of potential partners and the cooperation has had a long history, being rooted in the times of the Soviet Union. Other spheres of potential cooperation have produced either deadlocks or conflict.

In this chapter, I am interested not so much in Russia's "incompatibility" with the EU, but in what follows from it: what interests both sides will choose when they are "doomed" to interaction. In this chapter I argue that from the beginning of their interaction in the '90s, Russia and the EU have failed to establish a sustainable (strategic) status quo in their relations. The EU's attempt to establish (weak) authority relations with Russia in the '90s failed, and in the 15 subsequent years a relationship was formed that rested on the distancing of both parties and the separation of the political and

economic elements of cooperation. This status quo proved to be fragile and was destroyed by Russia, resulting in both parties turning to the use of coercion with regard to each other.

The '90s: failure of authority

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, managing relations with Russia became important both for several EU member states and for the EU as a whole; for the former, the reason was their reliance on Russian natural gas. For the Union, the reasons were less prosaic. Russia required special attention because of its significance for stability on the European continent: an economically weak, turbulent and corrupt Russia could seriously threaten security in Europe. In Russia, the elites around President Yeltsin counted on European support for making the reforms in the country irreversible. This support was the source of their legitimization in the eyes of the Russian citizens. For the EU, Yeltsin was the only guarantor for nonrestoration of Soviet rule. This status, which the EU granted Yeltsin from the very beginning, determined the EU's attitude towards the Russian president to a large extent, making it hard to criticize him, and even more so to use coercion towards his regime.

During the '90s, national executives and EU commissioners traveled to Moscow more frequently than to any other capital outside the EU. Relations with Russia developed into the EU's most active external dimension. All in all, as Joan De Bardeleben (2013, p.46) argues, "A relatively high degree of unanimity about Russia prevailed amongst EU member states in the early to mid-1990s, a period of post-communist honeymoon when the newly democratising neighbours posed relatively few problems." During this period, it was the Union, not Russia, which had the initiative in developing mutual relations, while their character and basis were co-determined by Russia. In relations with the EU, Russia was playing the role of recipient. The EU was aiming at establishing authority relations with Russia under conditions where the degree of interest in Russia differed greatly between EU member states.

Indeed, EU member states were unevenly attuned to events in Russia. Thus, the German government was among the most involved, and it had put forward the strongest initiatives for conducting close relations with the Russian post-Cold War leadership. In the '90s, bilateral German-Russian relations were probably the most important element of West–East relations within Europe, and Germany established the most active engagement with Russia among the EU member states. The United Kingdom and France regarded active diplomacy towards Russia as symbolic for their status as major European powers and both had a significant cadre of experts on Russia (Wallace, 2003, p.55). With the 1995 enlargement, the EU extended to include states for which a common policy towards Russia was one of the highest foreign policy priorities. Finland and Sweden joined the EU and developed the concept of the "Northern Dimension" (1997), which became an important pattern of relations not only with Moscow, but also with the regional authorities of Russia's

northwest. The rest of the EU members, however, displayed much milder interest in developing relations with Russia (Busygina and Filippov, 2013, p.108). However, most of the powerful member states as well as Russia's northern neighbors in the EU supported the idea that the Union should actively develop its relations with it.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between Russia and the EU,[2] signed on June 24, 1994, defined the basic framework for the Union's relations with Russia and laid the basis for authority relations between the two. The PCA played a very important role in the development of ties between the European Union and the Russian Federation because it sealed the transition from purely bilateral relations between Russia and EU member countries to relations with the European Union as a whole, provided political and legal foundations for such relations, and established institutions for political dialogue. Article 106 of the Agreement stated that it was to be extended automatically every year. At the same time, the PCA was also influenced by the principles of the Common Foreign and Security Policy; it constituted what can be described as a mixed external action of the EU with a cross-pillar dimension (Hillion, 2000, p.1219). This "cross-pillarization" of the PCA facilitated policy coordination across the EU pillars (see Blair, 2003; Stetter, 2004). The Agreement was not only aimed at promoting economic cooperation between the EU and Russia, but also at developing political dialogue within the multilevel institutional framework.

What is important is that the Partnership was established exclusively based on European values. Thus, Art. 1 stated that

> A Partnership is hereby established between the Community and its Member States, of the one part, and Russia, of the other part. The objectives of this Partnership are: to provide an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the Parties allowing the development of close relations between them in this field, to promote trade and investment and harmonious economic relations between the Parties based on the principles of market economy and so to foster sustainable development in the Parties, to strengthen political and economic freedoms, *to support Russian efforts to consolidate its democracy* and to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy… [emphasis added]

Art.2 of the Agreement laid down general principles of cooperation and postulated that

> Respect for democratic principles and human rights as defined in particular in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a new Europe, underpins the internal and external policies of the Parties and constitutes an essential element of partnership and of this Agreement.
>
> (The European Commission, 1994)

The next EU authority instrument appeared in the late '90s. By the mid-1990s, the EU proposed expanding the tools of common foreign policy. The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) for the first time introduced a new instrument, Common Strategies, in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. The first Common Strategy (CS) with regard to Russia was developed and adopted by the European Union in 1999. The draft of the Strategy was created under a German presidency by the group of member states feeling the most concern—France, the United Kingdom and Finland—and approved by the others practically without discussion. The list of the main priorities for the CS included fostering democracy and rule of law in Russia, preserving stability on the European continent, working to improve the investment climate and nuclear safety, and fighting organized crime.

In 1991, in order to assist and to guide political and economic transformations in 12 countries of the collapsed Soviet Union and in Mongolia, the EU developed the TACIS program.[3] TACIS determined five priority sectors for cooperation and funding: training, energy, transport, financial services and food distribution. Cooperation with target states was implemented on two basic tracks: creating a functioning market economy and establishing pluralistic democracy. On the first track, the sub-targets for Russia included privatization and human resource development. On the second track, Russia was expected to launch decentralization, to promote good governance and to enable sufficient participation of civil society in decision-making (The European Commission, 2000). In the National Indicative program for Russia, a special accent was placed on the development of Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia's exclave in the EU (The European Commission, 2003). TACIS provided financial assistance in the form of grants to a wide range of recipients, such as state or local government institutions, cooperative associations, state or private enterprises and educational or training institutions (The European Commission, 2016).

The EU allocated over €7 billion to TACIS between 1991 and 2006, with Russia being the largest beneficiary country, receiving around €200 million (Tuomiola, 2006). The total amount of financing from EU to Russia in 1991–2000 within TACIS comprised €2 billion (The European Commission, 2000). In 2006, the EU invested €8 billion in good governance projects in cooperation with Russian authorities (€6 billion in reform of the judicial sphere and €2 million in the development of e-governance) (Shapovalova, 2011).

The impact of TACIS on Russia has been asymmetric: according to OECD evaluation, it was comparatively high in education and training, moderate in governance and moderate to low in enterprise restructuring and building a framework for a market economy (OECD, 1999). Other estimations are less optimistic and state that the TACIS approach of financial assistance in exchange for reforms generally did not deliver. Buscaneanu calls TACIS a hierarchic top-down strategy with limited flexibility to its programs, which were too detailed and therefore could not match the constantly evolving needs either of the EU or of the target states (Buscaneanu, 2013). Other experts

point to the incoherence of TACIS projects with each other (Lainela and Sutela, 2004), and insufficient evaluation in process as well as rare national co-financing and "lack of a sense of ownership on the Russian side" (Tuomiola, 2006, no pagination). All in all, the TACIS program has proved incapable of significantly affecting the course and the character of Russia's political and economic development.

The second Chechen War revealed significant differences in attitudes between the EU as a whole and its member states. The European Council declared the violations of human rights in Chechnya "totally unacceptable" and decided on a set of punitive measures, including termination of credits for food and trade preferences, as well as a substantial reduction in TACIS aid. The EU proposed a resolution condemning Moscow's actions in Chechnya at the UN's Commission on Human Rights. Six months later, the EU restored its cooperation with Russia (Portela, 2010, p.114). The Union's punitive measures had practically no impact on the behavior of the Russian political elites. At the same time, the national executives of the member states (especially of the larger ones) chose a more practical approach to shaping their relations with Moscow. Tony Blair and Gerhard Schroeder visited Moscow to meet with yet-to-be-elected Vladimir Putin in order to establish good relations with the future Russian president. As Haukkala (2010, p.119) argues,

> the member states used the European foreign policy and common strategy on Russia as avenues through which they expressed collective disapproval of the Russian actions while simultaneously using them as shields under which they were able to carry on business as usual in their bilateral ties with Moscow.

In the 1990s, basic consensus between the EU's institutions and its member states, as well as among the member states, was established only around the thesis of the overall importance of Russia to the European Union, not around real policy priorities towards Russia. The very combination of challenges posed by Russia at the time (a powerless giant that needed assistance to prevent a return to communism), together with the attraction of its new market for European businesses, plus the need for energy supply from Russia, all pushed the EU's national executives to negotiate their separate foreign policy interests with Russia. The Union's still-weak institutions for consensus-building were not truly triggered by the Russian case. The EU was inclined to consider the two Chechen crises as isolated regrettable incidents, if not altogether Russia's internal affair, and not worth undermining the progress already made by Russia and in relations with the Russian government.

The authority instruments that the EU developed and implemented in the '90s with regard to Russia did not bear fruit. The EU failed to strengthen Russia's state capacity and good governance, while successful projects became "invisible" within the huge territory of the country. The instruments themselves were too weak; they did not foresee any coercion—the EU was frightened

to punish Yeltsin for wrongdoing. The EU miscalculated: it considered non-restoration of Soviet rule to be the guarantee of Russia's democratization, and this was not so. In addition, the member states' "practical" approach to Russia undermined even the weak actions that the EU had undertaken, and made the Russian leadership prioritize bilateral relations with EU states over those with the EU as a single entity. For Yeltsin, rapprochement with the EU very soon stopped being a survival strategy—when Kozyrev, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a passionate supporter of Russia's pro-Western orientation, left office in 1996.

2000–2014: the foundation of a new status quo

After the new Russian president came to office in March 2000, it quickly became clear that the relationship between Russia and the EU was doomed to change. This change was all the easier since the previous system of relations was emasculated and did not produce "added value" for the parties. Under the new, much more favorable economic conditions provided by a sharp increase in oil and gas prices, and Putin's presidency, Russia stopped positioning itself as a Western-oriented country. President Putin wanted relations with the EU to be built on the basis of pure economic interest, rather than on common values (interests replacing values). At this time, the Russian establishment already did not hesitate to explain the crisis of the '90s as the West attempting to involve itself in Russia's internal affairs, with disastrous consequences (Simonov, 2014, p.235), and to declare the Union as a "cynical power Europe" (Forsberg and Haukkala, 2016, p.251). However, during this period Russia still considered itself to be European, though different from the EU: it made a sharp distinction between Europe and the EU, and presented the European continent as based on two pillars: a Western pillar (led by the Union) and an Eastern pillar (led by Russia) (Trenin, 2009, p.73). With regard to the concept of power, Gomart has defined this Russia as "a resurgent superpower [whose] system is based on a close association between the prestige of the state and that of the army" (Gomart, 2008, p.5). The Russian elite would agree with such a definition.

The cost of conflict between nations (or groups of nations) significantly increases for all of them should they be interdependent. Therefore, this condition theoretically should reduce the likelihood of conflict. Furthermore, due to rational fears of economic loss, it is much more difficult to punish economic partners (not declaratively, but practically) for international wrongdoing. As EU–Russian relations illustrate, European concerns about relationships with major Russian companies, such as Rosneft and Gazprom, factored heavily in the EU's reluctance to impose sanctions on Russian businesses. At the same time, Russia tried to expand its access to the EU energy market because the EU's increased dependence on Russia could be turned into a powerful source of coercion in case of conflict (Gawdat, 2006). Russia has planned the construction of several additional pipelines running from Russia to the EU and

has attempted through Gazprom to gain ownership of the EU's refineries and domestic distributing pipelines. Gazprom wanted to control the pipelines running through the major transit countries and further into the EU, as well as the pipelines running within countries to deliver gas products to distributors who then deliver them to the end consumer (Orban, 2008, p.5). Russia's use of gas as a coercive foreign policy tool in third countries (for instance, gas-related clashes with Ukraine in 2006 and 2009) had direct adverse effects on EU consumers: the citizens of Slovakia and Bulgaria have experienced this to their discomfort (Popescu, 2014, p.2).

The most recent breakthrough in mutual relations that at least to some extent was based on their previous rationale occurred when both sides agreed on the Strategic Partnership and Four Common Spaces in 2003, and thus set a new format for subsequent interactions. As Ferguson describes it,

> The Common Spaces agreement constituted the EU–Russia relationship as an association of equals with plans for four broad areas of regional cooperation. Partnering with the EU in the governing of Common Spaces appeared to give Russia what it has been denied since the end of the Cold War; namely, an equal voice and authority with Europe in regional security affairs.
>
> (Ferguson, 2017, p.19)

However, the very notion of equality has been understood differently in Russia and in the EU: "For Russia, equality meant equal to the EU, while for the EU, it meant equal to the other nonmembers aspiring to have a relationship with the EU" (Forsberg and Haukkala, 2016, p.240).

Russia and the EU put their signatures under a number of commitments that, while appearing serious, remained on paper for the most part. For instance, the EU and Russia formally agreed to create a Common Economic Space, and in 2007 talks were launched on a new enhanced agreement that was supposed to provide a legal basis for, inter alia, closer economic integration. These talks have remained in limbo (Popescu, 2014, p.1). Russia and the Union have also committed themselves—e.g., in the "Road Map for the Common Space of External Security"—to cooperate in the establishment of a "greater Europe without dividing lines and based on common values"; in "the development of principles and modalities for joint approaches in crisis management"; and "in the settlement of regional conflicts, *inter alia* in regions adjacent to EU and Russian borders." However, as Adomeit shows, in practice Russia used the conflicts over Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh as levers to retain influence over the domestic and foreign policy orientation of the countries concerned (Adomeit, 2011, p.65).

The only authority instrument that was agreed in the framework of the Fourth Common Space and is still in operation, but a very important one, is Russia's membership in the all-European Bologna Process, a series of

agreements between European countries aimed at ensuring comparability in the standards and quality of higher education, responsible for the creation of the European Higher Education Area. This was in October 2007, when the Russian State Duma passed the bill that brought Russia's higher education system in line with Europe's Bologna Process, and, as Haukkala argues, "In this space, and in stark contrast with the lack of progress in terms of normative convergence in the other spaces, the Union's agenda seems to be inching forward in Russia" (Haukkala, 2010, p.177). However, for Haukkala, Russia joining the Bologna process is a "seeming anomaly" in the domain of Russia–EU relations, in the sense that it does not threaten Russia's sovereignty at all (Haukkala, 2010, p.177). For me, the anomaly is more the fact that despite the current stage of Russia–EU relations, Russia still has not canceled the Bologna agreements.

In the mid-2000s, scholars indicated that while Russia had a strong indigenous tradition of higher education, which had to be preserved in the process of accommodation to the Bologna system, this tradition was rather conservative and inert, plagued by corruption and sometimes by credibility problems in the West (Entin, 2005). Equally, one of the experts' main concerns was the danger of blindly imposing external standards on Russian higher education (Pursiainen and Medvedev, 2005). Today, after more than ten years, differences between the education systems and traditions still exist, and many problems persist (Kupriyanov et al. 2015). Very critical attitudes towards the implementation of the Bologna agreement in Russia's higher education system generally prevail among both practitioners and scholars. These attitudes give Russian authorities good reason for a decision to terminate membership in the Bologna Accords—a decision that would be fully in accordance with the general logic of Russia–EU relations. However, this has not happened, and that is a great stroke of luck, as the significance of Russia's membership in the Bologna system goes far beyond education.

Despite numerous declarations and signed documents, Russia and the EU have never been strategic partners in the true sense of the word. In the '90s, the rhetoric of partnership masked an attempt by the EU to establish authority relations, which proved to be invalid as the EU failed to build momentum in the beginning of the '90s and later could not introduce the principle of conditionality (with its coercive possibilities) in its relations with Russia. On the contrary, in the 2000s, it seemed that Russia was beginning to attain the possibility of using coercion with regard to the Union through the latter's energy dependency on Russia.

Relations between Russia and the EU gradually came to an equilibrium that was beneficial for both sides. In Russia, President Putin was busy building the "great state" (see Chapter 2), while the EU was busy with enlargement. In both Russia and the EU, politicians relied on the continuing external tensions as a mechanism for generating internal consensus while implementing the respective transformations of their political systems (Busygina and Filippov, 2008, p.216). As Popescu (2014, p.1) notes, "summits turned less

mercurial and became mainly box-ticking affairs." This gradual deterioration of relations between Brussels and Moscow created a void in which member states were left to develop their own relations with Russia almost fully in accordance with their national priorities, whether those were dependence (or independence) of national economies on Russia's gas, capital or exports. Trade volumes were growing to the satisfaction of both sides. The basis of this equilibrium was the ever-growing lack of connection between the economic and political components of the relations. Filippov describes this as follows:

> The multi-level and multi-agent design of Russia's relations with Europe resulted in a counter-intuitive trade-off in Russian foreign relations—the better the economic relations with the West, the greater the tensions that could be sustained in political relations. For instance, the greater the mutual energy-trade dependence between the EU and Russia, the more the Russian government can afford political tensions with the EU without causing a rupture. … With the high energy prices of the 2000s, EU–Russia relations began to manifest an increasing lack of connection between their economic and political components: as Europe's reliance on trade with Russia increased, political relations deteriorated.
>
> (Filippov, 2009, p.1843)

An attempt to close this growing gap between the economic and political elements of relations was made under Medvedev's presidency through the Partnership for Modernization initiative of 2010, which could have turned into a powerful EU authority tool—had Russia really wanted modernization. But this was not the case, and the attempt brought miserable results.

Generally speaking, at the beginning of "Medvedev's time," many in Russia hoped for domestic liberalization and, as a consequence, better relations with the EU. But these hopes were soon betrayed, and no real policy changes occurred. Under Putin's constant supervision, Medvedev continued to address the task of protecting the domestic political system from external influence and interference (Moshes, 2012, p.18). Whatever Medvedev's intentions, his real policy choices were highly constrained by the framework of Putin's state-building project.

The Partnership for Modernization was launched by the EU and Russia at a summit in Rostov-on-Don with the aim of complementing and energizing high-level political dialogue, as well as multisectoral dialogues in areas of common interest, by helping Russia to diversify and revitalize its economic model (Fischer, 2013). This initiative seemed timely, taking into account the fact that modernization had become the most popular issue under Medvedev's presidency, and that he repeatedly declared that Russia would face terminal decline unless it radically reformed its economy. Moreover, a survey published by the EU–Russia Centre in the beginning of 2010 showed that Russian policymakers overwhelmingly believed that Russia needed external help with

modernization (Barysh, 2010). And if so, there were no other candidates for the role of an "external helper" but the EU. With regard to the partnership, the EU's idea was to stop lecturing Russia and to offer help in Russia's own interests, and encourage cooperation which would focus on technical, environmental or social issues. That, in turn, could then facilitate progress on more contentious political and economic issues (Barysh, 2010, p.28). It was expected that the EU's help with modernization would produce a spillover effect and in the longer run contribute to making Russia more accountable, better governed and democratic. However, with President Putin's return to office in 2012, the Partnership collapsed, and modernization issues faded away, at least relative to the rhetoric of Medvedev's time.

While the Russian leadership was busy with state-building, the EU was changing as well, in particular with regard to Russia. With the 2004 enlargement, the EU expanded to include East-Central European countries as well as three former Baltic republics of the Soviet Union. All these countries distrusted Russia and feared its imperialist ambitions (Motyl, 2003, pp.24–25). The track of Russia's subsequent political development under Putin only validated these quickly resurging suspicions. The enlargement also drastically increased the gap in attitudes among EU member states towards Russia. As Carta and Braghiroli (2011) show, the least friendly of these are located in Central Eastern Europe: Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. These new EU members insisted that the EU's Eastern policy required special attention, and that the EU had to develop special relations with the Eastern European countries beyond EU borders. The UK was the most hostile to Russia among the major member states; Italy, Greece and Austria were among the most supportive.

Leonard and Popescu argue that the enlargement sharpened the split in the EU between two approaches towards Russia. The first approach—supported by Germany in particular—defended the view of Russia as a potential partner that could come closer to the EU through a process of "creeping integration." The second (with Poland as its main proponent) saw Russia as a threat and advocated the strategy of "soft containment" in order to limit its expansionist tendencies (Leonardt and Popescu, 2007).

New member states soon articulated their position towards Russia, with Poland the most active state in this regard. When the PCA between the EU and Russia expired in 2007, both Brussels and Moscow expressed the intention of negotiating a new deal; however, Poland vetoed negotiations due to the Russian ban on Polish meat imports. In fact, the Polish government showed that joining the EU did not necessarily mean following the course of the "European core" members. Rather, it was quite the opposite: by joining the Union, Poland acquired a channel for defending and even advancing its national interests. The Polish leadership spoke about its "unique mission" in the EU, being a "guardian of the memory of totalitarian crime in Europe" (Geoffrey, 2006, p.144). In subsequent years, negotiations on the New Basic Agreement between the EU and Russia developed slowly, without

any significant results, as politicians on both sides had weak incentives to seek a compromise. On the contrary, both in Russia and the EU, politicians relied on the continuing external tensions as a mechanism for generating internal consensus while implementing the respective transformations of their political systems (Busygina and Filippov, 2008, p.216).

In the 2000s, Moscow did not want to launch a real political conflict with the EU, no matter how helpful such a confrontation would have been for managing its domestic audience. This logic, however, did not work with regard to Russia's post-Soviet neighbors. Filippov argues that the

> The Russian government had many reasons to believe that managed conflicts in the post-Soviet space would not cause a real breach with their Western counterparts. The resulting political tensions with the West would not be likely to reach a level that would harm their trade relations.
>
> (Filippov, 2009, p.1829)

As the "five-day war" with Georgia has shown, these calculations proved to be correct. Moscow successfully separated its foreign policy from its domestic audience (Busygina and Filippov, 2013), and marginalized the EU in foreign affairs by concentrating on bilateral relations with individual member states instead. This explains why, despite growing political differences between the EU and Russia in the 2000s, most observers expressed confidence in the prevalence of the cooperative status quo, which seemed to have been ensured by the shared rationale of maintained economic interdependence that would keep the growing political differences muted (Busygina and Filippov, 2013). As the PCA expired in 2007, Russia and the EU began to negotiate a new Basic Agreement, though without definitive progress, as well as the visa liberalization regime on which the Russian leadership strongly insisted.

As Moshes (2012, p.19) rightly argues, despite few real changes in Russia's approach, the EU tended to positive evaluations with regard to Russia. In fact, there was some progress in the relations between Moscow and certain EU member states, for instance the normalization of Russian-Polish relations, an improved Russian-Danish understanding, and a certain softening of Russia's approach towards the Baltic states (Moshes, 2012, pp.23–24). This was another confirmation of the fact that while the EU was busy with internal transformations, its member states were very flexible in dealing with Russia. In addition, Brussels was not too worried with regard to Russia's potential rise and growth in global influence, taking into account the country's economic and social problems. This attitude would have been quite reasonable had Russia continued moving along its existing track, but it suddenly made a "knight's move," annexing Crimea and supporting separatists in East Ukraine.

The international calamity with regard to Ukraine has abruptly changed the situation and, insofar as the European actors are concerned, triggered a

process of realignment to a new and completely distinctive equilibrium via the mechanisms of multilevel governance.

From 2014 onwards: coercion against coercion

As Kahneman and Tversky stated, when actions can produce either gains or losses, and the probabilities of both outcomes are either unknown or equal, loss aversion produces a phenomenon known as the status quo bias (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984, cited in Molm, 1997, p.119). And under conditions of uncertainty, choices favoring the status quo tend to dominate decision-making (Samuelson and Zeckhauser, 1988, cited in Molm, 1997, p.120). However, Putin acted in contradiction of this logic with regard to Crimea. In making the decision to annex the peninsula, the Russian leadership must have understood that in geopolitical terms there would be an exceptionally high price to pay, not only in terms of Russia's reputation in the world but also in terms of its relations with the West, particularly with the EU. Nevertheless, Putin chose to do this, an act which seems to go against the rational approach (Simonov, 2014, p.236). But his choice seems less irrational if we assume that he underestimated the level of uncertainty in Russia's relations with the West, and believed that the West would "swallow" its actions with regard to Crimea in light of the five-day war in Georgia, the status quo would be preserved and "business as usual" would continue with the EU. If so, he miscalculated. Judging by the reports in global media, the Russian leadership grossly underestimated the scale of the world's reaction, and in particular, the willingness of the EU to stand against Russia's annexation of Crimea (White and Troianovski, 2014; Yardley and Becker, 2014). Some Russian observers suggested that if the Kremlin had known about the extent of the Western reaction, it would have acted differently (Overchenko, 2014). Russia's calculation was also to take the EU by surprise, and, indeed, the Union was unprepared. As Speck notes, the EU never intended to get into a geopolitical confrontation with Russia; rather, it has "sleepwalked" into it (Speck, 2014). Nevertheless, to Russia's unpleasant surprise, it managed to mobilize and to produce a joint reaction.

As Molm (1997, p.121) points out, actors who have the incentives to apply coercive strategies often do not risk doing so because they are too dependent on their partners, as the costs of such actions are expected to be very high. In addition, the probability of making a certain decision (in our case, the decision to impose sanctions) decreases hugely if each actor among those who make the joint decision is a veto player and unanimity is needed to make a decision. Considerations of the EU's dependence on Russian energy imports, and the extreme difficulty of agreeing on joint sanctions under conditions of required unanimity, brought the experts and mass media to the conclusion that attempts to reach an agreement on sanctions against Russia among the 28 EU members would eventually fail. In June 2014, the TV channel Russia Today, referring to "confidential sources," argued that "Preliminary consultations show that

today almost no leaders of EU states find it necessary to impose trade and economic sanctions on Russia" (Russia Today, 2014b). According to the same channel, "France, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, and EU President Italy see no reason in the current environment for the introduction of sectorial trade and economic sanctions against Russia and at the summit, will block the measure" (Russia Today, 2014a).

However, these predictions proved false, although of course there were considerable difficulties due to the divergences in the member states' positions. Some national economies felt the impact of the EU's economic sanctions and Russia's retaliatory embargo on a wide range of food exports more than others. It was clear that the burden of any joint sanctions against Russia would be highly unevenly distributed across and within the European economies. Some EU members, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and Italy, rely heavily on Russia's gas deliveries and energy; others, such as Finland, suffer from Russia's ban on exports of dairy products. These countries have only reluctantly gone along with sanctions, which is not surprising.

Since March 2014, the EU has repeatedly agreed to impose increasingly restrictive sanctions on Russia. As Freedman (2014, p.25) argues, the main Western effort was to deter yet more Russian aggression. In announcing the sanctions, the EU observed that

> Any further steps by the Russian Federation to destabilize the situation in Ukraine would lead to additional and far-reaching consequences for relations in a broad range of economic areas between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand.
>
> (The Council of the European Union, 2014,
> cited in Freedman, 2014, p.25)

On March 3, 2014, as a direct reaction to the issue of Crimea, Russia's participation in the G8 was suspended. The EU also considered freezing bilateral talks on visa matters and on the New Agreement with Moscow. As early as March 17, the first list of sanctions against 21 Russian officials was elaborated. Following the entrance of Crimea and Sebastopol into the Russian Federation, 12 additional names were added to the list and subjected to visa bans and asset freezes. Crimea was put under a special import ban regime: all export goods from Crimea and Sebastopol had to be granted a certificate of origin by the Ukrainian authorities, which was not possible in practice. In July 2014, the list of Russian persons under individual sanctions was expanded by 72, while the assets of Crimea and Sebastopol in the territory of the EU were frozen. Gradually, by November 2014, the number of persons under sanctions rose to 132, while the number of entities under the EU asset freeze rose to 28. The tendency was reinforced in 2015, with the same measures used against another 19 persons and 9 entities "involved in actions against Ukraine's territorial integrity." June 2015 saw a tightened grip of sanctions against Crimea: imports of

products from the peninsula were officially banned, EU-based companies were obliged not to invest into the peninsula in any form, cruise ships were legally prevented from stopping in Crimean ports (except in case of emergency) and exports of technological products to the peninsula were strictly limited. The most recent prolongation was extended to March 15, 2017. Special sanctions against Crimea are not time-bound, according to the EU's strategy of nonrecognition. The final number of persons subjected to anti-Russian sanctions (as of September 2016) is 146, and the number of entities is 37 (The Council of the European Union, 2016). The classification of targets includes

> private entities and individuals via visa bans and freezes on assets; financial markets by banning long-term EU loans for the five main state-owned banks (Sberbank, VTB, Gazprombank, Vnesheconombank (VEB) and Rosselkhozbank); the energy sector through restrictions on Rosneft, Transneft and Gazprom Neft activities; the defense industry by means of blacklisting dual-list Russian technology manufacturers.
>
> (Dolidze, 2015, p.1)

Each new round of sanctions required EU institutions to secure the unanimous support of member states. Such successful consensus-building is a remarkable institutional achievement of the EU and an important step in the development of the EU's common foreign policy. The EU's response to Russia's annexation of Crimea indicates that the Ukrainian crisis has created new opportunities for moving the EU's institutions towards a common foreign policy. As Lehne argues, "The Ukraine crisis could transform EU foreign policy, much like the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks transformed U.S. foreign policy" (Lehne, 2014, no pagination). While the domestic politicians of EU member states openly demonstrated divergences and disagreements over the proposed sanctions, in the end the European national leaders unanimously supported sanctions in the European Council. The Russian politicians failed to anticipate this institutionally induced difference between public statements by national leaders at the national level and their actual consensus at the European level (Busygina and Filippov, 2015).

In Russia, President Putin proceeded from the conviction that the West (and the EU in particular) was plotting the destabilization of his regime even before the introduction of anti-Russian sanctions (Bechev, 2015, p.346). Therefore, imposing "tit-for-tat" sanctions against the West was quite logical, being simply the transformation of ideas into actions, as well as "punishment" for the West and a signal that Russia was "not afraid." As I wrote in Chapter 1, non-democracies' aim in imposing sanctions would be not to change the target's political regime or even policy, but to change the behavior of the target only with respect to the sender. This was exactly the Russian case.

Russia's first sanctioning list appeared on August 7, 2014 and included the US, the EU, Canada, Australia and Norway. The second sanctioning list (of August 3, 2015) added Albania, Montenegro, Iceland and Lichtenstein. The

so-called "Veto Russo" included a ban on imports of agricultural products in such categories as fish, meat, milk products, fruit, nuts and vegetables (Gazeta. ru, 2015). It was sealed in law that goods from the sanctioning list must not come from Europe into Russian territory. However, interestingly, *trade* of these goods was not banned as the respective law on trade of sanctioned foods was rejected during the legislative process (Amirjanyan and Kondratyev, 2016). This resulted in the massive flow of illegal reexport of these items (falsely labeled) to Russia through its borders with Kazakhstan and Belarus (the "Belarusian oysters" phenomenon). Initially, the Russian establishment presented the product embargo to the population as a necessary measure to respond to Western sanctions. Then the narrative was changed: it was stated that Russia had chosen import substitution as a strategy aimed at the development of national agricultural firms. This was supported by an appropriate policy towards the mass media. For instance, the Russia 24 channel started the program *Vesti s Poley* ("News from the Fields"), aimed at covering successes in Russian agriculture. There began to appear messages on how the product embargo has triggered agricultural productivity in the regions, such as in Ingushetia (see, for instance, Regnum, 2016). Occasionally, the establishment has made attempts to show the electorate "fair play" and care for domestic consumers. In March 2016, news emerged that San Marino will provide Russia with cheese and meat products (Fomchenkov, 2016)—as San Marino is a small peaceful country, its parmesan appears less harmful than that from other states in Europe.

As a result of the product embargo, imports of foods from Europe to Russia fell by over 40 percent (Bulin, 2015). The pan-European farmers' association Copa-Cogeca estimates the overall losses of European farmers and agricultural cooperatives at €5.5 billion (Michalopoulis, 2016). The product embargo hit farmers in the Baltic states, Austria and Belgium, as well as in the CEE countries (Teffer, 2015). Nevertheless, their discontent has so far not resulted in a change in the EU's approach to Russia. In response to Europe's prolongation of sanctions towards Moscow, Russia prolonged its product embargo to the end of 2017.

The timing of the product embargo coincided with falling oil prices, which resulted in high inflation rates. This impacted on Russian citizens, but did not lead to public resentment. According to the opinion poll conducted by Levada-Centre in May 2016, 44 percent of those questioned experienced considerable difficulty in purchasing food, but 75 percent of respondents said that Russia had to continue its policy despite Western sanctions (Levada-Centre, 2016). The argumentation in support of this position includes such mottos as "we should support domestic farmers," "this is a response to sanctions against Russia" and "Russian products are better than Western ones" (Zhuravlev, 2016, no pagination).

As the Russian sanctions regime was repeatedly violated by Russian companies, what followed was the demonstrative and widely publicized liquidation of EU food products on Russia's borders that started in the summer of 2015 (Makarychev, 2015, p.313).

Besides economic coercion, Russia began to actively "penetrate" into European societies, canvassing and looking for supporters, and striving to split the EU along various dimensions. This Russian "coercive soft power" was packaged in a rigid framework of Kremlin-designed narratives and themes (Lutsevych, 2016, p.4). In late 2014, the New York-based Institute of Modern Russia published a report that outlined how the Kremlin manipulates the media, ethnic tensions, trade and financial transactions abroad to further its own ends (Trudolyubov, 2016). Trudolyubov (2016) gave an example of a news story by Russia's state-run television in January 2016 about the alleged rape by migrants of a German girl of Russian origin in Berlin. German prosecutors said the allegations were not confirmed. But the Russian media succeeded in blowing the incident out of all proportion, stoking anti-immigrant protests and resentment among Germany's nearly six million Russian speakers. The general idea is simple: to show that the EU as well as its member states are not able to control the situation, and "our girls are raped in the streets." Since finding support within Russian-speaking groups in West European countries became a priority, the "Russian Germans" that were previously labeled by mass media as nonpatriots that left their Motherland are now—with the "flexibility" inherent to the Russian mass media—declared to be almost "defenders of Russia's national interests abroad." Similar methods have been employed to mobilize compatriots in EU countries, for instance, in Britain (Forsberg and Haukkala, 2016, p.187).

Russia has also supported the Italian right-wing opposition Northern League, whose representative described Russia in the European Parliament as "a major economic partner for Italy and Europe, and as a model example of national identity and protection of family." In October 2014, members of the Northern League formed the Friends of Putin group in the Italian Parliament (Phillips, 2014). Experts stress that

> Russian organizations have begun to cooperate with and support radical and anti-establishment groups in the West. This includes extreme right parties, such as the Front National in France, but it also appeals to some representatives of the Linkspartei in Germany. The crucial factor here is that these groups can contribute to weakening the existing European (value) system. Thus Putin's Russia has become a partner to many anti-US, anti-EU and anti-globalization groups in the EU. By defying the US, the West, and the "bureaucrats" in Brussels, Putin becomes a surface on which a possible alternative can be projected. In this way, Moscow plays on various existing fears and frustrations in Western societies.
>
> (Meister and Puglierin, 2015, p.5)

Another Russian strategy was to strengthen the split between the EU member states by choosing the "weakest link"—a state that has either been strongly hit by the crisis, or a state that is deeply dependent on Russia economically and, furthermore, has a government known for extreme populism. It is clear

that in the first case we are talking about Greece hit by the Eurozone crisis, to which Russia has repeatedly offered financial help and talked about investing in Greece's pipeline infrastructure. In the second case, it is Hungary under the Orban government. Indeed, the Hungarian case is the most telling one. Experts express deep concern about Russia's "penetration" into Hungarian politics, building a corruption network and working mainly through the Fidesz party. As Hegedűs shows,

> Three business deals in particular—the Paks Nuclear Power Plant deal, the MET gas supply scheme, and the modernization of the subway cars on the Budapest Underground Line 3—offer examples of high-level political corruption linked to Russia at the expense of the Hungarian state budget. Not only are they making it possible for private individuals connected to the Fidesz party to amass enormous fortunes, but these deals are also increasing Hungarian dependence on Russia.
>
> (Hegedűs, 2016, p.4)

For instance, the nuclear deal was not discussed publicly, and the government made its decision without any announcement. Not only does the deal greatly strengthen Hungarian dependence on Russia, it prolongs it by approximately fifty years (Hegedűs, 2016, p.4). As Hegedűs (2016, p.7) concludes, "Bearing these networks of corruption in mind, it could be rather difficult for the Fidesz-led Hungarian government to free itself from the Russian grasp without tremendous political injury."

Moscow claims that what it is doing is merely copying the instruments and techniques that the West itself uses and considers legitimate for the purpose of promoting democracy in Russia and the post-Soviet states (Meister and Puglierin, 2015, p.1). But this is not about "copying." What Russia does is called "hidden coercion," which supplements other coercive instruments and contributes to manipulating and weakening the opponent. These tactics—which are incidentally not cheap—are aimed at undermining European unity and the Union's capacity to act. Furthermore, as we see in Hungary, Russia's links to the politics of individual EU member states provide it with unprecedented access to those states' policymakers (Hegedűs, 2016, p.7).

Notes

1 I consider the EU to be a "rising power," though the sources of its "rise" are fundamentally different from those of a "rising state power," in particular from those of Russia (see Busygina, 2017).
2 At that time this was not yet the European Union, but the Community.
3 TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States) was designed as a tool to assist and to guide political and economic transformations in 13 recipient countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

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5   Russia and the EU

No winners in the common neighborhood

The political map of Eurasia is laid out in such a way that Russia and the EU have a common border and, furthermore, there are countries on the map that form the area of a "common neighborhood" (CN). This area represents simultaneously the Western-facing side of Russia and the Eastern-facing side of the EU, consisting of Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Both Russia and the EU have particular interests with regard to these countries and therefore formulate goals that stem from these interests. In pursuit of said goals, both major powers use the power instruments that they have at their disposal. The aim of this chapter is to explain the power relations that Russia and the EU establish with the CN countries, as well as the choices CN countries make in favor of one major power or the other.

What is Russia's and the EU's interest in the CN area? Economically, these countries, with their relatively small markets (with the exception of Ukraine), are not very promising partners, so the main interests of both Russia and the Union lie outside the sphere of economy. However, this does not mean they are similar. Russia's main interest in the CN countries stems from the necessity to build a coalition to confirm its aspirations to great power status. CN countries are suitable for this purpose as Russia has the capacity both to reward and to punish them. Russia needs coalition partners, and the problem is that there are physically not enough potential candidates—countries that would be geographically close (and not at the other end of the world like, say, Venezuela), reliable, and that could be firmly and permanently bound to Russia. The deficit of potential coalition partners pushes Russia to perceive each country that could enter a Russia-centered coalition as having great value. From this perspective, the CN countries look exceptionally attractive, given their dependency on Russian energy supplies, as well as the cultural and historical affinities that these states share with Russia. Moscow has regarded this area as within Russia's sphere of influence, an area in which Russia has "special," "vital" or "privileged" interests (Adomeit, 2011, p.63). "Special interests" imply "special rights" for these territories, though these rights have never been formally specified. However, as Freedman stresses, informally "Moscow felt that it had the right to intervene in the affairs of former members of the Soviet Union" (Freedman, 2014, p.17). In fact, Moscow has never

treated the sovereignty of these countries as inviolable, whereas the principle of Russia's undivided and uncompromised sovereignty was and remains the cornerstone of the Kremlin's political philosophy.

The task of building a coalition around Russia and the apparent "availability" of the CN countries has made the Russian establishment think that these countries are doomed to make a "final choice" between Russia and Western Europe. According to Moscow, if the elites of the CN countries do not recognize this necessity or make the wrong choice, then there are ways to "help" them choose the right path—that of joining a Russia-centered coalition. It is not by chance that Russian leadership always demands and expects assurances of "eternal love" ("Russia is our best friend") from the leaders of CN states. This is strongly evocative of the Soviet past, and the mode in which the leaders of fraternal socialist countries addressed Leonid Brezhnev.

The fulfillment of Russia's goals does not lead to changes in the CN countries; on the contrary, Russia's general principle is to support the status quo in these states, or to assist their return to the status quo if its foundations have been shaken (by a "color revolution," for instance). An integral part of this strategy is a policy of "managed instability" in countries torn by separatist conflicts. Thus, Russia supported separatist Transdniestria in its political bargaining with Moldova, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia in their fight for independence against central authority in Georgia. Moscow established relations with these entities' governments, and launched the process of granting Russian citizenship to people living in their territories. This strategy provoked periods of destabilization in Moldova and Georgia, and the artificially created instability was "managed" by Russia's military and peacekeeping forces (Kuznetsova, 2005, no pagination).

In contrast to Russia, the EU has tried to maintain the attractiveness of the "European model" for neighboring countries without offering them prospects for membership, but rather by deepening economic and political cooperation. Thus, the goal of including these countries in its coalition was not a question on the Union's agenda. At the same time, the Union has never attempted to force the CN countries to make a "final choice" between the Russian and Western European coalitions. The European strategy toward the CN was established in the first place on the basis of the need to strengthen the EU's security and increase internal consolidation. In order to create the necessary prerequisites for the acceleration of political cooperation and further economic integration, the EU has developed a set of authority instruments based on the principle of conditionality to ensure the Europeanization of its common neighbors. Thus, the desired security of the EU borders implies forced short-term instability in the CN countries, induced by the course of Europeanization. Yet this forced instability has nothing in common with the "managed instability" pursued by the Russian government as an integral part of its strategy toward neighboring countries.

The images of the CN countries' "desired future" presented by Russia and the EU are, alas, incompatible. Not only are the interests and strategic goals

of Russia and the Union within the CN area principally different, but equally different are the power instruments and power relations that the two dominant players offer to their counterparts there. The EU relies mainly on authority, modifying the instruments that it used in preparing the great enlargement of 2004, while Russia relies on the systematic use of coercion, making its instruments progressively more sophisticated. In the literature, Russia and the EU are defined as competitors, and their "common neighborhood" is commonly referred to as a "battlefield" (incidentally, this "battlefield" definition appeared long before the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 and subsequent events [Löwenhardt, 2005, cited in Gower and Timmins, 2011, p.1]). However, Russia and the EU are competitors of a special kind, and their competition is far from traditional in nature.

What we observe in the CN area is in fact the outcome of a two-level game. The first level is the relations between the two major powers. As Trenin (2005, p.7) has rightly noted, it is clear that "The overall state of EU–Russia relations will be a key variable in the future development of the countries that lie between them." At the second level are the relations of each of the CN countries with Russia and the EU. CN countries have a choice between the EU and Russia, which is conditioned by various domestic factors (whether this choice is "final" or "fated" is another question). Meanwhile, the relations between Russia and the EU (at the first level) are designed in a way that the CN countries can neither make the choice in favor of both powers at the same time depending on the domain, nor refuse to choose between them. At the same time, in making their choice, the CN countries must take into consideration "the shadow of the future" (Axelrod, 1984, cited in Molm, 1997, p.118)—the likelihood that the choice they make now will influence how the major powers will respond to them later. This means, in particular, the possibility of being punished by Russia for a choice in favor of privileged relations with the EU. The CN area clearly demonstrates the possibilities and constraints of using authority and coercion by major powers with regard to subordinate counterparts.

Russia: why building a coalition is so important

In Russian official and unofficial political discourse, the area of the former Soviet Union (which includes all the countries of the common neighborhood) is referred to as "post-Soviet space." Focus is directed onto the shared historical legacy. The Russian establishment has continued to use this concept, combined with another concept of the "near abroad" (*blizhnee zarubezh'e*), which puts Russia in the center and places each post-Soviet country in a certain category depending on its political and economic distance from Russia. Geographic proximity to Russia—be it immediate proximity or not—is the key location feature for all countries of the CN. The Russian vector of their foreign policy is (and will remain) by default the most important one. In developing relations with the CN countries, the Russian leadership bases its

calculations on this feature, while pursuing the goal of building a sustainable Russia-centered coalition and preventing the growth of the influence of third states (or their alliances) in the common neighborhood.

From the 2000s onwards, Russia has undertaken numerous attempts to show the world its growing might as a "genuine" great power. But why does Russia need a coalition[1] to prove it? In comparison with the bipolar world system, in the contemporary world the role of coalitions has increased significantly. In other words, coalitions matter. However, there are many different kinds of coalition, and there are different principles of classifying them. One is to make a distinction between coalitions without a hegemon (like the EU) and those with a hegemon (for instance, NAFTA, or all coalitions in the post-Soviet space with Russia's participation). Regarding the latter, theoretical approaches to international relations, for all their differences, share a position on the key role of alliances/coalitions around (and also against) states that claim great power status. In fact, it is the ability to form and to maintain a coalition that proves the legitimacy of a claim to great power status. This status cannot emerge as a result of individual claims—it requires recognition by other actors in the first place. Thus, great power status implies that the country "is treated in the calculations of other major powers as if it has the clear economic, military and political potential to bid for superpower status in the short or medium term" (Buzan and Waever, 2003, p.35). However, such recognition can be granted not only by major powers, but also by smaller ones, in the form of building a coalition around the great power. Therefore, great powers need to compete for potential coalition partners, and the competition intensifies, as, unlike in the times of the bipolar world, countries can relatively easily change coalitions. This means that other states have the *choice* (admittedly conditioned by many factors, but a choice nevertheless) of whether to join a coalition with certain "great powers" or not. This capacity for choice significantly increases their role in international relations.

Great powers face particularly complex problems with regard to coalition-building. To be sustainable, coalitions with a great power assume that this power takes on a disproportionally large part of the costs of maintaining a coalition, while the contribution of lesser members is much smaller (Olson and Zeckhauser, 1966; Sandler and Hartley, 2001; Fang and Ramsay, 2009). But this is only part of the story, and one which is not too problematic as in most cases great powers take on such costs without objection (though the concrete size of the costs can obviously be a matter for negotiation). The other part of the story is how to create conditions, i.e., guarantees, that would put constraints on the unlimited domination of the great power in a coalition. This problem can be reformulated as a problem of the demand for the other coalition members to trust in the great power's commitments. Guarantees of these can only emerge when the great power is a (liberal) democracy, when smaller coalition members can rely on its domestic institutional mechanisms and form reliable expectations with regard to the great power's decision-making process.

All of the above allows us to formulate some preliminary conclusions with regard to Russia. In order to convince the outside world of its great power status, Russia needs a coalition, and this is not a luxury, not even a voluntary choice, but a necessity. Many in Russia declare that "Russia is fated to be a great power" because the "list" of great powers is set a priori (meaning that competition for partners is unnecessary). However, such declarations are hardly convincing even for their authors—in reality, Russia needs a coalition to prove its claim to great power status, and Russia does indeed fiercely compete for partners. Russia is ready to bear large costs for maintaining its coalition, and does so. However, it is not possible in the Russian case to solve the problem of trust and to guarantee the credibility of Russia's commitments. Therefore, it would be logical to expect increased use of coercive tools by Russia against its coalition partners, as well as the entry of weaker countries into the coalition—those which cannot count on reliable allies and are forced to side with their powerful neighbor.

Generally speaking, there is nothing surprising in the economic integration processes around Russia; it would be more surprising if such processes were not developing. From the economic viewpoint, neighboring countries join Russia-centered integration projects because Russia is the biggest and most accessible market for their exports. It is also rich in natural resources, which is particularly important, for instance, for Belarus (Yarashevich, 2014). Russia is a source of investment, which is highly relevant for the economies of its satellites. However, Russia's ambitions go far beyond economic integration. Russia seeks to form a rigid political coalition, similar to those of the days of the bipolar world, a task which is extremely difficult, if at all possible, nowadays.

How does Russia build its coalition? What power instruments does it use? Creating a legal institutional framework (or frameworks) seems like a logical first step. Indeed, several integration projects with Russia as a hegemon have been launched since the beginning of the '90s. This "integration fever" started with the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991. More recent integration projects include the Eurasian Customs Union of 2010 between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. In January 2012, the three countries agreed to establish even closer economic ties by signing an agreement to form a "common economic space," which later transformed into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), starting in January 2015. Armenia became the fourth member of the Union, and the Kyrgyz Republic joined as a fifth member in May 2015. Moscow played a pivotal role in all these projects. Analyzing the CIS, Adams observes that "Without Russia, there would be no Commonwealth" (Adams, 1998, p.51). The same applies to all other post-Soviet integration projects.[2]

What is surprising, however, is how many countries Russia has lost between the era of the CIS and of the Eurasian Union. The CIS followed a principle of accepting all comers: all 12 former Soviet republics (minus the 3 Baltic States) joined the Commonwealth. Now the number of members in the Eurasian

Union has more than halved—only those with which Russia has managed not to spoil relations, and those who have no real choice, have remained. The scale and composition of the Russian coalition indicates that the "resource" of Russia's allied neighbors has been exhausted (at least for now). Therefore, every individual member of the coalition is critically important: Russia cannot afford to lose any of them.

When an institutional framework is created, be it in the loose form of the CIS, or in the form of the more consolidated EAEU, order in the coalition can be maintained either by granting rewards, or by using punishment (coercion). The former took place in the early '90s, but more demonstratively than as part of a consistent strategy. As Kuznetsova argues

> Even in the early 1990s, when Russia was passing a painful period of economic reforms, it continued to provide financial support to the former Soviet republics. The provision of technical credits and the rescheduling of old debts was a common practice at that time. Perhaps the new sovereign states took this for granted, but in reality this was simply a goodwill gesture on the part of Russia. Incidentally, Russia has never received those debts: after long and difficult negotiations, they were formalized as state debts—only to be recognized as repaid under various pretexts.
> (Kuznetsova, 2005, no pagination)

For instance, in the case of Ukraine, the repayment was for basing Russia's Black Sea fleet in Sebastopol (Kuznetsova, 2005). This paints quite an idyllic picture. However, in reality, according to Drezner's calculations, in the '90s the Russian state used economic sanctions against former Soviet republics 39 times in order to extract concessions and influence important policy decisions. Drezner claims that these sanctions were successful in 38 percent of cases. With regard to the countries of the common neighborhood, instruments of coercion included raising tariffs on exports to Russia (Azerbaijan) and reduced energy subsidies and/or supplies to energy importers (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova) (Hillebrand and Bervoets, 2013, p.2).

During the 2000s, the Russian government continued using economic leverage to reap economic benefits and to increase political influence over the CN countries (Hillebrand and Bervoets, 2013, p.2). Russia had an impressive array of coercive tools at its disposal to exert pressure on the countries of the common neighborhood, the most obvious of them stemming from these countries' energy dependency on Russia. Thus, Russia's energy leverage over its neighbors included supply interruptions (total or partial), threats of supply interruptions (covert or explicit), manipulation using pricing policy (preferential prices and their cancelation), usage of existing energy debts, creation of new energy debts, and hostile takeovers of companies or infrastructures (Larson, 2006). Sanctions also went far beyond energy issues, and the explanations for introducing them became increasingly sophisticated. The favorite one, used for the internal audience, was the concern of Russia's authorities

for the health of Russian citizens—for this reason, Moldavian wine and Georgian mineral water were embargoed (as containing harmful impurities), as were Ukrainian candies (because of carcinogens). Interestingly, Russia presented its coercive instruments as more "gracious" ones than the EU's authority tools: by using coercion, Russia could strike (punish) suddenly and then quickly provide reward simply by stopping coercion, while the EU's authority approach in form of Europeanization would "torture" target countries' populations for much longer and with unclear results. Similar arguments are often used to explain why the Baltic states "have made the wrong choice in joining the EU": that this decision was fatal for the local population. These countries have even received the derogatory nickname *Vymiraty* ("emirates" combined with a Russian word for "dying out").

Russia has not only economic but also ideological tools at its disposal for building a coalition. The proximity of the values and ideological norms of potential counterparts is a facilitating factor for the formation of coalitions. With this regard, Russia offers the overarching concept of the "Russian World" (*Russkiy Mir*) to its coalition members. This is promoted by a collection of nongovernmental organizations used as instruments of Russia's soft power, a concept understood by authorities in Moscow as "the power of coercion rather than that of attraction" (Lough et al. 2014, p.3). At the same time, the "Russian World" is presented as a reward to its members—as the honor of belonging to something genuine, morally right and eternal.

The "Russian World," a combination of words that Putin first officially used in 2001, in his speech before the first World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad, is defined by Laruelle as follows:

> The concept of the "Russian World" offers a particularly powerful repertoire: it is a geopolitical imagination, a fuzzy mental atlas on which different regions of the world and their different links to Russia can be articulated in a fluid way. This blurriness is structural to the concept, and allows it to be reinterpreted within multiple contexts. First, it serves as a justification for what Russia considers to be its right to oversee the evolution of its neighbors, and sometimes for an interventionist policy. Secondly, its reasoning is for Russia to reconnect with its pre-Soviet and Soviet past through reconciliation with Russian diasporas abroad. Lastly, it is a critical instrument for Russia to brand itself on the international scene and to advance its own voice in the world.
>
> (Laruelle, 2015, p.1)

In the mid-2000s, the Russian government began to set up the groups and organizations that were to bring the message of the "Russian World" into the public space. These organizations included the Russian World Fund (2007), the Foundation for Compatriots (2009) and the Gorchakov Foundation (2011). The Federal Agency for CIS, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) were

established in 2008. After Putin returned to office in 2012, even more money was streamed to these NGOs: the Federal Agency received $78 million annually from the state budget, and the smaller agencies (the Russian World Fund, Compatriots, Gorchakov, etc.) received $22 million divided between them (Lough et al. 2014, p.3). One of the main target groups for Russia's ideological influence in the direct neighborhood is youth. Moscow aims at consolidating pro-Russian young people and providing them with access to Russian public figures and standards of journalism and diplomacy. For this purpose, various forums were established for pro-Russian youth from neighboring countries—Seliger International, Dialogue for the Future, Balkan, Caucasus and Baltic Dialogues, Slavic Integration Forum etc. (Lough et al. 2014, p.4). Not only does Russia invite and educate people from abroad, it directly sponsors the activities of Russia-friendly associations in these countries, in particular, in the states of the common neighborhood (Laruelle, 2015, p.10).

One of the advantages of the "Russian World" is its flexible geography. The Russian World Fund defines the "Russian World" as consisting of

> not only Russians [*Russkie*], not only Rossians [*Rossiyane*], not only our compatriots in the Near and Far Abroad, émigrés and their descendants. It also includes foreign citizens, speaking Russian, studying it, and all those who are honestly interested in Russia and care for its future. … In forming the Russian World as a global project, Russia is creating for itself a new identity, new possibilities for effective cooperation with the rest of the world, and new incentives for its own development.
> (The Russian World Fund, 2015, cited in Laruelle, 2015, p.13)

The concept implies that if you belong to the "World," wherever you are, it is a global power that stands up for you. In this sense, the "Russian World" is a truly global ambition.

Each great power needs to constantly affirm its status, most of all by maintaining a sustainable coalition. Russia has many tools for this purpose, though they are primarily coercive and designed in the form of short-term tactics. The threat that some coalition member may leave is ever-present (the examples of Georgia and Ukraine perfectly demonstrate this). By insisting that Russia's partners must make a "final choice," Russia wants "eternal guarantees" (almost blood oaths) of its partners' devotion. But this is not going to happen.

EU: modest offers produce modest results

Compared to Russia's "Napoleonic plans" with regard to the common neighborhood, the EU's interests and plans towards this area are much more modest. Apart from the frozen conflicts scattered around the area, the EU did not focus on the states comprising the CN until the emergence of the EU's

European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), initially outlined in 2003 (Gower and Timmins, 2011, p.1). Of course, declarations have been made: as Averre notes,

> the EU's approach to its Eastern neighborhood constitutes an extension of the internal "European project," based above all on norms and values which place good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as an attractive economic model for modernization, at the forefront of its policy concerns.
>
> (Averre, 2011, p.9)

However, I suspect that the basic rationale behind the EU's concern for the CN countries was the aim of gaining greater security (and, therefore, more quiet) after the unprecedented Eastern enlargement of 2004, without paying an excessively heavy price in terms of both commitments and money.

There would be no ENP (and later no Eastern Partnership) without enlargement, "the EU's perpetual motion engine" (Forsberg and Haukkala, 2016, p.194). Due to enlargement, the strategy of extending the European zone of peace and stability eastwards (by creating a "ring of friends") appeared on the EU's agenda. The ENP was the first carrot that the EU offered to the countries of the CN in an attempt to provide guidance for their economic and political transformations by "re-injecting the EU's normative agenda" (Forsberg and Haukkala, 2016, p.195) and granting financial support for adherence to it. Russia was the only country that rejected this interaction framework. Other EU initiatives—the Black Sea Synergy[3] (launched in 2007), as well as the Northern Dimension (1997)—were tools complementary to the ENP.

However, the bargaining game of promoting various member states' interests beyond the EU borders did not end with the ENP. France supported further implementation of the Mediterranean Union project with special focus on the EU's southern flank, while Poland, putting special attention on the unequal treatment of southern and eastern EU neighbors, has been actively trying to develop and to promote an initiative supporting Eastern neighbors, especially Ukraine and Georgia (Łapczynski, 2009, p.145). Even before entering the EU, Poland was trying to push the European Union towards the creation of an Eastern Dimension policy, drawing on the example of the Finnish Northern Dimension initiative launched in 1997 (Meister and May, 2009). Inside the EU, Poland found an ally, Sweden, and the two member states proposed the Eastern Partnership Initiative (EaP) focusing on the Union's eastern flank. The European Council approved the EaP, and the Commission officially presented its proposal in December 2008 (Łapczynski, 2009, p.143). The EaP became a new authority instrument and the EU's first attempt to propose an agenda of gradual convergence only to the large group of post-Soviet states (though without the prospect of full membership), namely Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Compared to the ENP, the EaP represented a remarkable shift in the scope and depth of authority relations: while the ENP was initially developed on

the basis of political, nonbinding instruments (e.g., Action Plans offering guidance for reforms in each partner country), the EaP proposed a new contractual framework consisting of Association Agreements (AAs) together with Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) premised on massive legal convergence with the EU's *acquis communautaire* (Delcour, 2015, p.317). The Eastern Partnership is based on the foundations of shared ownership, responsibility, differentiation and mutual accountability, wherein each partner can freely choose the level of ambition and the goals to which it aspires in relations with the EU (The Council of the European Union, 2015). For the incumbent political elites of the six countries it was important that the EU's offer did not (at least initially) entail political costs for them, as the EU mainly focused on sectoral conditionality related to the trade acquis (Delcour and Wolczuk, 2015). In addition to sector reforms, EU support within the EaP framework is given to promoting civil society, local and regional cooperation, etc. A new generation of Action Plans for each country, some including "clear benchmarks and linkage to the alignment towards EU legislation, standards and norms," have been drafted and signed. Importantly, assistance funds to the partner countries are distributed in a way that reflects progress in implementing reforms and according to the principle of differentiation. With those partners who wish to make a far-reaching commitment to the EU, new individual and tailor-made AAs can be negotiated. These agreements would establish, in particular, advanced cooperation on Common Foreign and Security Policy/European Security and Defense Policy, and on developing a Comprehensive Institution Building Program (CIBP) that would help partner countries to improve administrative capacities in all sectors of cooperation with the Union (Łapczynski, 2009, p.151).

As Bechev (2015, p.344) shows, from a purely functional viewpoint EaP is moving forward and advancing its economic mission, at least vis-à-vis the frontrunners—Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. However, as a security promotion and democratization tool the Partnership gets low marks. Indeed, there are few issues on which scholars of European politics agree, but, as Schimmelfennig observes, in the literature there is broad agreement not only on the overall inconsistency of the EU strategy, but also on the generally low impact of the EU on democracy and human rights in noncandidate third countries (Schimmelfennig, 2012, p.18). There are various grounds to criticize the authority instruments that the Union is applying to the CN countries. For instance, even before the political crisis in Ukraine, experts noted that the "Russian factor" had eclipsed the real domestic problems of the EaP countries, and they were much more rarely discussed than Russia's development, which had taken pride of place in the debates (Youngs and Pishchikova, 2013). Furthermore, the Union's attention was dispersed very unevenly between the CN countries: the spotlight was suddenly placed on whichever country was assigned frontrunner status among the other countries of the Neighborhood during a particular period. At different times, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine performed this role (Kobzova, 2015), while others remained in the darkness.

There is an interesting argument that explains the interrelation between stability (as the "grand" EU goal within the CN space) and change. As Börzel (2011, p.15) writes, "The Commission and the member states should acknowledge that the main goal of the EU's external relations with its neighbors is promoting stability rather than change." However, changes are inevitable, as the reforms that the Union's political conditionality prescribes for these countries necessarily lead to increasing instability, as any reforms do, at least in the short or medium term. From this standpoint comes the statement that the EU strategy within the CN is self-contradictory by nature. Pänke describes this contradiction as follows:

> The EU exposes a dual face in its regional policies, aiming at the marriage of two principles: stabilization in the Union's own interest and Europeanization as norm transfer. Both principles mutually restrain each other in terms of efficiency and lead to a pretense, in which both sides of the partnership imitate integration … The conflicting principles of stabilization and Europeanization reflect the imperial nature of the European Union. Terming EU regional politics as imperial, does not imply an aggressive and consciously applied policy of expansion, e.g. aiming at the exploitation of resources, but rather identifies an incremental approach of norm diffusion based on asymmetrical relations of power to stabilize the peripheries—typical for historical empires, as Rome in ancient times, or Habsburg in the 19th century.
>
> (Pänke, 2015, p.351)

This argument, however, can be challenged. Yes, it would be ridiculous to deny that Europeanization initially leads to a decrease in the stability of subordinate countries, but in the medium to long term, stability should emerge and be sustainable on a new basis. The idea is to achieve a new quality of stability that is expected to emerge as a result of Europeanization.

Besides that (and those who evaluate the EaP should take this into account), the success of the Partnership does not fully depend on the EU. Authority relationships are quite complex: dominant powers should be able to develop and offer authority instruments, while subordinates, and this is no less important, should be able to properly apply them to their benefit. Thus, the "difference in potentials," i.e., the mismatch between the EU institutions and policies on the one hand, and domestic ones (which is to say those of the subordinate country), which must be prepared to change, on the other. Börzel and Risse have shown that the difference in the degree and character of possible changes across different domestic environments is considerable. There must be mediating factors facilitating or prohibiting domestic change. Facilitating factors include the virtual absence of veto actors and the presence of supporting institutions (following the logic of rationalist institutionalism), or the presence of "norm entrepreneurs" as "agents of change" and a cooperative political culture (sociological institutionalism) (Börzel and Risse,

2000). Also, as Börzel shows with the example of Western Balkan countries, the EU's authority tools lead mostly to formal institutional change, rather than to the transformation of informal institutions and behavioral practices. Uncontested sovereignty and sufficient state capacity in subordinate countries are mandatory conditions for making Europeanization work (Börzel, 2011, p.14).

Literature on the CEE accession countries confirms that the effectiveness of the EU authority tools highly depends on a credible accession perspective, when the countries see clear, not illusive, potential to enter the Union. The absence of this "golden carrot" of membership drastically decreases the transformative power of the EU (Tocci, 2005), and damages its international credibility as a "normative power," creating a new "capacity-expectation gap" (Hill, 1993; Holland, 2003). Börzel (2011, p.15) asks a fair question:

> Why should the European Neighborhood Countries and other countries engaged with the EU make any efforts to fulfill EU expectations for the respect of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance, if the EU is neither willing to reward those, who comply, nor is capable of punishing others, who do not?

The CEE countries have credible possibilities before them, but these of the CN area do not. In its relations with EaP countries, the Union has made a shift from a "more for more" approach (which implies positive conditionality and strong authority) to a "less for less" approach (which is negative conditionality and much weaker authority) (Parmentier, 2013). From the other side, however, membership, even if offered by the EU, is not feasible for countries with problematic state capacity and the presence of a power in close proximity that puts severe constraints on their domestic political development, in particular, blocking incentives to engage in Europeanization reforms.

Russia, the EU and the choices of "common neighborhood" countries

The differences in Russia's and the EU's approach to the common neighborhood is evident—this is true both in their general strategies and in terms of the use of concrete power instruments. Moscow and Brussels possess drastically dissimilar foreign policy tools (Makarychev, 2015, p.314), and the fundamental disparity between them lies in the scale and frequency of coercion. But to see and stress this difference is not the end of the story; it is the beginning. Scholars often tend to explain the divergence between Russia's and the EU's approaches towards the common neighborhood by placing it into a postmodern/modern dichotomy. Thus, the EU seeks to extend a European "postmodern" security community, without offering the CN countries the prospect of accession. This is done through trade and assistance programs to encourage the maximum possible convergence with European norms and values, and the rule of law—this was the main idea of the ENP and the European Security

Strategy (The Council of the European Union, 2003; also see Cremona and Hillion, 2006, p.3), and was reinforced in the European Commission's Communication on the Eastern Partnership (The European Commission, 2008). The EU's approach involves the exercise of normative or civilian power to project security and create prosperity. On the other hand, Russia seeks to maintain or recreate a traditional, realist "sphere of influence" by manipulating a range of hard and soft power instruments to exploit its predominant structural power in the post-Soviet space (Gower and Timmins, 2011, p.6). As Averre (2011) argues, there is a deep-rooted incompatibility between the EU's use of postmodern, normative power and Russia's use of modern, structural power, an incompatibility which presents a range of complex challenges to developing any tangible meaning to the concept of "strategic partnership" between the two actors.

The postmodern/modern dichotomy does not, however, explain how and why these differences emerge. In the previous chapters I attempted to explain what constrains the use of authority and coercion instruments by Russia and the EU. Here I would like to stress one of the manifestations of the difference that is particularly clear in the case of the CN area. The authority tools that the Union uses with regard to the CN countries presuppose some use of coercion (depending on the particular tool). For Russia, on the contrary, the tools are predominantly coercive with the appearance of authority-building, while the concrete country-specific situation suggests the form of said appearance. Moreover, while directed against a specific target country, the coercion diffuses into adjacent territories, increasing the degree of instability there, so the coercer creates security problems for the larger region. The key point is that the combinations of authority and coercion within Russia's and the EU's general approaches are principally different despite the fact that they may sometimes appear similar.

The temporal aspects of these relations also deserve mention. Bechev (2015, p.342) argues that Russia can mobilize (coercive) power resources to attain short-term goals, while the EU's policies are calculated for the long term and pursue structural change at the level of institutions, norms and practices. In comparison with Russia, the EU is less flexible as it is legally constrained in ways that Russia is not.

Long before the political crisis in Ukraine, scholars began to define the relations of Russia and the EU with the CN countries as a competition. For instance, Adomeit argued that the Putin system and the EU's aim of "integrating Russia into a common European economic and social space" are mutually exclusive and the reality of the EU–Russia relationship in the common European neighborhood has not been that of a "strategic partnership" and cooperation but of competition (Adomeit, 2011, p.64). However, this is competition of a special kind, with, as Bechev defines it, sui generis forms. He states that

> While Russia cannot replace the EU as a purveyor of functional integration, the EU is in no position to effectively balance and contain Russian

might with coercive means. In consequence, the competition between
Moscow and Brussels is at its most acute in the area of discourse. What
we witness are two rival narratives: Europe's story of political, economic,
and institutional transformation in line with its liberal democratic credo,
on the one hand, and a counter narrative blending traditionalism, reli-
gious values, nostalgia for the Soviet past, and the historical myths of
victimhood and resistance linking Russia to its neighbors, on the other.

(Bechev, 2015, p.341)

The discourse, however, cannot maintain itself, especially given how tense and
even dramatic it is. It needs to be supported and confirmed by certain activi-
ties of both rivals, in other words, by the use of power instruments. As Bechev
nicely puts it, "the EU and Russia operate at very dissimilar wavelengths"
(Bechev, 2015, p.342).

The main problem, which has both theoretical and practical aspects, is that
authority cannot be a response to coercion, while the opposite is possible,
and coercion can be a response to authority at least in the short run. One
consequence of this fundamental incompatibility is the mutual inability of
Russia and the EU to predict not only the strength of reaction with regard
to each other's actions, but sometimes even the character of this reaction (in
Chapter 4 I attempted to show this with the example of the EU sanctions
against Russia).

Russia's self-exclusion from the ENP has had the effect of creating a
competitive agenda between the two major actors (Haukkala, 2008, p.38).
Russia's reaction to the Eastern Partnership was much more negative—from
the start, the initiative was denounced by Russia as an attempt to extend the
EU's sphere of influence into its neighborhood (Freedman, 2014, p.18). The
Union did not fully appreciate how potentially threatening the EaP would
appear to Moscow (Freedman, 2014, p.23). Meanwhile, in Moscow, the ini-
tiative caused sincere confusion and indignation: "Where do you think you're
sticking your nose?" In Russia, the Partnership was perceived as the first
truly—and dangerously—political initiative of the Union, aimed at bringing
six post-Soviet countries, Russia's "legitimate booty," into the EU's orbit and
separating them from Russia. At that time, Russia's approach had already
changed: it did not want to spend more time coaxing the leadership of these
states to enter the coalition around Russia—rather, it was now ready to pun-
ish the disobedient. The EU repeatedly stressed that the EaP initiative was not
directed against Russia and that partner countries needed to maintain good
relations with Russia as well, but all in vain. The Russian side reproached
the Union and its member states for numerous examples of direct pressure
against EaP members, pressure which it felt had a distinct anti-Russian orien-
tation (Malysheva, 2014, p.43). In its turn, the European Parliament passed a
resolution condemning Russia for allegedly pressuring the post-Soviet coun-
tries to prevent them from signing association agreements with the EU at the
Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2013. However, it may be

useful to stress that even if the EU did not fully take into account how hurt Russia could feel with regard to EaP, this was still an authority instrument for a transformational economic effect—an offer that the six countries could either accept or reject voluntarily. The EU thus did not change the rules of the competition—Russia did it on the very day of the annexation of Crimea.

The common prediction with regard to the ENP and the EaP was that their impact on the domestic and foreign policy orientation of the six countries concerned was likely to be small, and that Russia would retain "good cards" in the competitive game with the EU (Adomeit, 2011, p.67). However, the reality proved much more complex. First, the Russia–EU rivalry has led to a deep divide in the area of the common neighborhood between the countries that joined the Eurasian Economic Union (i.e., Belarus and Armenia) and those that signed the AAs and the DCFTAs offered by the EU under the Eastern Partnership (i.e., Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) (Delcour, 2015, p.316). Although the course of development of these countries is primarily framed by external actors' interests and agendas, these interests affect domestic practices through the power instruments that the major powers use. As Delcour (2015, p.317) argues, "While the decision of these countries is certainly shaped by external players' stimuli and pressures, it derives primarily from elites' interpretation of these stimuli and pressures." In Chapters 6, 7 and 8 I will explain in detail how this happens in Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine respectively.

Azerbaijan is the only country in the CN that has chosen to keep a distance both from Russia and from the EU, and is able to do so. Falling far short of the democratic standards envisioned by the EU, the country does not need a level of integration with the Union that could pose even a minimal threat to its incumbent political establishment. It also has no dependency on Russia with regard to energy resources, and this gives Azerbaijan freedom of maneuver, unlike Armenia. Baku's loyalty to Russia will always be doubtful, so when faced with the need to choose between Azerbaijan and Armenia as a coalition member (the relations between them make it impossible to choose both at the same time), Russia has chosen Armenia.

Azerbaijan is the most "independent" among the six CN countries, while Belarus (see Chapter 6) and Armenia are the most "dependent." Both countries have taken part in all Russian-led regional initiatives in the post-Soviet space. Between 2010 and 2013, faced with an imperative need to launch modernization, Armenia increasingly expanded its political and economic cooperation with the EU (Delcour, 2015, p.321). This was a case of "silent Europeanization" (Delcour and Wolczuk, 2015), when the country's leadership was not vocal in highlighting its achievements in the sphere of European integration and never expressed any membership aspirations. It seemed as if Armenia was trying to cooperate with the Union without Russia's knowledge, while simultaneously maintaining security cooperation with the latter (Delcour, 2015, p.322). This strategy is understandable—Armenia was in no position to resist Russia; it was not self-sustaining and was under constant pressure. In September 2013, during Armenian President Sargsyan's

negotiations with Vladimir Putin in Moscow, Sargsyan announced that Armenia would not be initiating an agreement with the EU, but would join the Customs Union and, later on, participate in the building of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Moldova, Georgia (see Chapter 7), and Ukraine (see Chapter 8) have made a choice in favor of Brussels, though the sustainability of this choice may be doubtful. Moldova, being the poorest country in Europe, nevertheless had more power to resist Russia than Armenia—when Moldova was warned by Russia not to sign an Association Agreement, neither references to the contested position of Transnistria, nor Russia's embargoes of Moldavian wine exports had any effect. Moldova still signed the Agreement with the EU. As in Armenia, for Moldova the EU's offer was perceived as a model for the country's modernization (Delcour, 2015, p.320), and this was the main reason for an official choice in favor of Europeanization. However, it is not easy to translate official commitments into practice. Moldova was slower to do so than others within the ENP framework, and it was also slow in the implementation of legislation within the EaP. The main reason for this was that the adoption of laws in line with EU demands stumbled against vested interests in sensitive areas such as judicial reform and the battle against corruption (Delcour, 2015, p.320).

In other words, even if the choice is made in favor of the EU, its implementation strongly depends on the capability of the subordinate country to "master" authority instruments in its territory and to overcome the resistance of those groups that would prefer to keep the old status quo. The fulfillment of the choice also depends on the quality and strength of the authority instruments. As Delcour (2015, p.320) shows, the EU has not exerted any pressure (apart from the soft recommendations contained in the annual progress reports) on the country's elite and oligarchs. Finally, Russia's efforts to oppose Moldova's pro-European choice also play an important role. In this regard, Russia has its own agenda—it supports Moldovan political and societal actors who are less favorably inclined towards the European choice. Moscow facilitated the emergence of new actors inside the country, including the Party of Socialists (PSRM), which supports canceling the Association Agreement with the EU. It also supports the Transnistria and Gagauzia regions, focusing on their individual identities and close economic links with Russia. In these regions, Russia's image is that of a powerful and friendly country, a protector against a threat of a Moldovan unitary state based on Romanian heritage, and an alternative to integration with the EU (Delcour, 2015, p.321).

Fairly recently, an important signal about the change in Moldavia's external choice came with the republic's presidential election in November 2016. Igor Dodon, a pro-Russian candidate from the Socialist Party, won the race, promising to pursue closer ties with Russia by canceling the Agreement with the EU in favor of joining a Eurasian economic union (EurActiv, 2016). Such plans obviously contradict the current Moldavian government's pro-European stance, making political conflict within the country almost inevitable. The

situation is complicated by the fact that, according to the election results, this split between "pro-Russians" and "pro-Europeans" divides the country into almost equal parts—similarly to the situation in Ukraine prior to the crisis.

All in all, the division that cuts across the common neighborhood currently appears as follows. Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia belong to one side, the European camp, while Belarus and Armenia belong to the other, the Russian camp. Russia has lost Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the last being the most important country in the long term. Russia's revisionist behavior and extensive use of coercion have produced considerable threats to pan-European security. In the words of Japaridze (2013, no pagination), Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, in the common neighborhood there is a "regional architecture of such a kind that would not exclude Russia but would not provide for its leading role, either. … Being 'with Russia,' but not 'in Russia' might become our common goal." This is an appealing sentiment—the problem, however, is how to constrain Russia, as its leadership equates "with" and "in" with regard to this area.

Notes

1 The terms "alliance" and "coalition" embrace all possible forms of associations of states—from commonwealths to communities, unions, confederations and federations (Snyder, 1997). An alliance or coalition is a *commitment*, formal or informal, that binds sovereign states to cooperate in certain spheres in aid of certain goals. Regardless of the form of alliance (coalition), reliable commitments are crucial (Walt, 2009).
2 The Eurasian Union has "two fathers"; it is a personal project for both President Putin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.
3 The Black Sea Synergy involves Armenia, Azerbaijan, (Bulgaria), Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine and was intended to develop concrete initiatives in regard to transport, energy, environment, fishery, migration and organized crime.

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6 Belarus
Strangulation in a fraternal embrace

Belarus is a small country, but small countries can still set records. While Belarus is not a member of the Council of Europe, its president Lukashenka is currently Europe's longest-serving political leader. Belarus remains the only European state which has not joined the Bologna Process, which aims at the creation of a single European space for university education. The country is also known for its extremely hostile media environment and for having one of the worst records on freedom of expression. Here is a small but telling detail: in 2005, the Independent Institute for Socio-Economic and Political Studies, which studies political processes in Belarus and is independent not only in name but in the nature of its research, moved to the European Humanities University in exile in Vilnius, Lithuania, due to increasing repression at home.

Having such an advantage as a geographic location in the central part of Europe, Belarus is nevertheless a deeply peripheral country in the worst sense of the word. And therein lies its tragedy. We usually use the word "tragedy" in regard to a country when talking about violent conflicts and the victims they produce, but tragedies can come in some very different forms. In Belarus we observe an enduring but hidden tragedy where a European country's human development is artificially constrained for decades by state authorities. It's noteworthy that the population doesn't perceive the situation as tragic—it is used to it and considers its life to be normal, even better by comparison, say, with all the turbulences that the Ukrainians are experiencing now. But this habit of being content with little (indeed, very little) is also one of the dimensions of the nation's tragedy.

This tragedy has its explanations, and the most important of these relates to Russia, or more precisely, the authority-like relations between Russia and Belarus. While constraining the freedom of Belorussian authorities, these relations nevertheless place them in a "comfort zone" by facilitating the maintenance of an ineffective status quo within the economy, and control over society.

Some experts often talk about the special "Belarusian way." I am not convinced by the reasoning that the "Belarusian way" can definitively be said to exist because it is not imposed by state authorities but "is supported actively

by Belarusian society as it is congruous with expectations and demands of a significant part of the country's population" (Vadalazhskaya and Matskevich, 2008, p.5). Equally insufficiently convincing is the argument that explains President Lukashenka's popularity by his matching the "Belarusian peasant archetype" (Okara, 2001, cited in Ioffe, 2004, p.104). Ioffe (2004, p.108) argues that the infamous Belarusian conservatism has peasant roots, comparing it with the conservatism of the regions of southern Russia's "Red Belt." I would say that this conservatism, or more precisely, its sustainability, is greatly exaggerated, just as it was with the Red Belt, which was the subject of heated discussions in the '90s and which today no one remembers.

On the contrary, in my opinion, it would be absolutely feasible to commence true political and economic modernization in Belarus with EU assistance and to achieve fairly rapid results, though not under current conditions. Under those, even the European Union's attempts to at least establish closer relations with Belarus are on the whole doomed—there are just too few "points of entry" into the country's system.

The "Belarusian system"—how and why does it persist?

When talking about the "Belarusian system," I am referring not merely to the economy, but also to identity issues, the political regime and the type of social contract between the elites and society, as well as external sources for preserving the Belarusian status quo. These constituent elements are closely interrelated; they support each other and together form a system.

For all post-Soviet states, the first years after the break-up of the Soviet Union were decisive with regard to nation-building. Belarus is not an exception, but rather exceptional in how little the country was able to achieve. The "Belarusization" project has overall failed. Bekus argues that the fate of the Belarusization policy was sealed when in 1994 Alyaksandr Lukashenka took presidential office. As early as May 1995

> he initiated a referendum in which Russian was introduced as a second official language. In practice this meant that all achievements in promoting Belarusian were reversed, and the very idea of forcefully replacing Russian with Belarusian was brought to an end.
>
> (Bekus, 2014, p. 34)

In contrast with other post-Soviet states, in Belarus in particular an anti-Soviet identity rooted in Belarusian language had no chances to develop. In turn, this has led to the weakness of an opposition that has lacked the basis for mobilization of activists or popular support (Way, 2006). Incidentally, today this lack of individual identity is clear to see in the images of Belarusian cities: they combine the cultural narratives of the Soviet era with features of faceless mass consumption (Shirokanova, 2010, p.377).

This was (and still is) the foundation for the establishment of the country's political regime. A weak opposition and constant support from Russia led to the consolidation of the authoritarian rule of President Lukashenka, who during his reign has not experienced serious threats to his rule either from other branches of authority (horizontal), or from oppositional elite groups or political parties. (Such a situation can't fail to recall Russia, where President Putin also did not face any serious threats to regime consolidation). But a political regime can't be held only on the personality of the president, however beloved and popular. The Belarusian bureaucracy is large and composed of two sizeable groups—Soviet-era bureaucrats and supporters of the Belarusian president, many of whom come to the capital from the deep provinces of the country. The liaison between the two groups has proven to work quite successfully (Bohdan, 2013, p.5). As Nalbandov (2014, p.87) writes, "Belarus is among those consolidated authoritarian regimes, especially with a high degree of legitimacy (but not legality), which quite naturally would show 'better' from political and economic standpoints than the number of liberal democracies."

The Belarusian president claims that his system rests on opposition to Western-style capitalism and market economics, and avoids "throw[ing] unprepared people into the market abyss" (Lukashenka, 2002a, cited in Ambrosio, 2006, p.422). It has been defined by scholars as a "Soviet theme park," which "establish[es] a Soviet-type model, without a Communist Party" (Åslund, 2002, cited in Ambrosio, 2006, p.422). Using surveys conducted in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, McAllister and White show that nostalgia for the Soviet past is both widespread and persistent in all these countries, but only in Belarus do these feelings have implications for contemporary political opinions (McAllister and White, 2016).

In terms of economic policy Belarus is also a special case in Europe; a lot has been written about the main features of the country's economy, such as preservation of key elements of central planning, and a marked degree of monopolization in most industries that results in a lack of competition in domestic markets. Belarus attracts very little direct foreign investment, and its investment climate is poor. The service sector is heavily underdeveloped, with incomes and wages extremely low (Havlik, 2009). Belarus is highly dependent on Russian supplies of raw materials and energy. In the last few years the economy has shown a dangerous decrease in growth (Eastern Europe Studies Centre, 2014, p.1); modernization attempts—understood mainly as capital investments without changes in incentives and type of management—have failed (Eastern Europe Studies Centre, 2014, p.2). Another negative trend is gradual diminishing of labor resources since 2008, in particular due to external migration, which contributes to significant human capital losses (Antipova and Fakeyeva, 2012, p.129).

This picture contains nothing positive, though the above-mentioned features do not fully describe the situation. The Belarusian economy also has

another, more encouraging, side. The Country Report of the Bertelsmann Foundation (2015) tells us that

> Compared to other post-Soviet republics, excluding the Baltic states, Belarus appears to have a relatively high level of socioeconomic development. The Human Development Index ranked Belarus in 53rd place worldwide in 2013, the highest among CIS countries and higher than two EU member states, Romania and Bulgaria. According to the World Bank, Belarus has the lowest poverty rate within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and one of the lowest Gini coefficients in the world. The 2011 economic crisis which swept Belarus actually narrowed inequality as the relatively rich were hit hard by the crisis.
>
> (BTI, 2016, p.15)

The social contract between the Belarusian authorities and society is built on the motivations of stability and safety, and the idea that any changes in the system would undermine these achievements. As a result, the state exercises total control over society while the latter gains state patronage in form of state support for various social groups as well as for economic sectors (for instance, agriculture with an inbuilt system of social protection). This social contract is supported by the vast majority of Belarusians; the proportion of those who wish to change the contract with the state has never been significant and is dropping further, in particular, as a result of the situation in Ukraine.[1] It is worth noting that this type of social contract (control of society in exchange for state patronage) existed and demonstrated its efficiency in Belarus even before it was introduced in Russia. In Russia, President Putin introduced such a contract during his second term in office, when it was transformed from the previous contract—control in exchange not so much for patronage, but for "Russia as great power" and the feeling of national pride—by the end of the 2010s. Belarus is a quiet country indeed: not only do mass protests not occur, but there is no reason to expect a sudden rise in political activism and therefore a break with Belarusian tradition (Wilson, 2012). Balmaceda explains it through the clever use of subsidies from Russia by Lukashenka's administration—with their help he avoids economic reforms, and consequently, the large groups of sufferers inevitable during the first stages of reforms do not arise (Balmaceda, 2014). However, there is another explanation for the lack of protests, which lies in citizens' concerns over the highly uncertain redistributive consequences of political reforms, and is applicable not only to Belarus, but also to Russia (Busygina and Filippov, 2015).

As I will show in the next section, the "Russian factor" is clearly present in all elements of the Belarusian system. Ioffe (2004, p.102) believes that Belarus "simply cannot be understood and categorized on its own. To be sure, it does possess some defining socio-cultural features, but each of them can be discussed sensibly *only* in conjunction with Russia…" [emphasis added]. The current status quo in Belarus is based internally on Lukashenka's autocratic

leadership and externally on Russian economic subsidies and political support (Nalbandov, 2014, p.88). This statement allows us to formulate the conditions under which reforms in Belarus could be launched (although, of course, with no guarantee of success).

Russia and Belarus: in a fraternal embrace

With no other republic of the former Soviet Union does Russia have such close relations as with Belarus, and on the surface relations between the two countries look almost idyllic. As official propaganda in both countries periodically reminds us, this is a relationship of brotherly and eternal love. It comes down even to claims that the countries "flow into one another," whereby, despite huge differences between Russia and Belarus in terms of territorial size, population and size of national economies, heaven knows which is the extension of the other: Belarus of Russia, or Russia of Belarus. "Russia," writes Akudovich, "is not to the east of the Belarusian lands, Russia is the east of Belarus. It means that Russia by means of its certain contour (just like Europe) is naturally situated inside our own selfness" (Akudovich, 2006, cited in Bekus, 2014, p.38). Such a claim sounds truly strange, and strongly resembles the experience of Hašek's Good Soldier Švejk in the madhouse where he met a patient who argued that inside the globe there was another sphere, much larger than the outer. However, the absurdity is not important; what is important is that claims of this kind seek to grasp the essence of relations between the two countries—their extraordinary, and not situational but existential closeness.

Indeed, Belarus is a permanent member of all Russia-centered integration projects. In the '90s this was the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)—Russia has two strategic military bases in Belarus. In 2007 Belarus entered a Customs Union with Russia and Kazakhstan, and then the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which was officially launched on January 1, 2015. This last project allowed Lukashenka "to extract more subsidies from Russia—such as the $3 billion in loans that he obtained in 2015 for continuing to go along with the EEU" (Krivoi and Wilson, 2015, p.4).

The history of Russia–Belarus relations contains lamentable chapters as well, the most important of which is the story of Gazprom and Belarus's gas vulnerability. The former has exploited this through pricing policy, namely subsidies with the threat of increased costs, as well as through restriction of gas supplies, ranging from small reductions to a full cut-off (for more information, see Bruce, 2005). However, this story did not undermine the general climate of friendship, and the "institutional culmination" of rapprochement between the two countries took place in 2000, when Russia and Belarus ratified a treaty that established a Union State. The treaty guaranteed equal labor rights for citizens of both countries, "removed border controls, and was intended to lay the foundation for the unification of legislation and creation of a single economic space and single currency" (Nice, 2012, p.5). However,

one feature of this Union State is the lack of a single constitutional act that would determine the status of the State as well as its citizens. Let us examine the inner workings of this state without its own status or citizens.

As Silitsky (2006, p.30) argues, the political cooperation of Russia and Belarus is an example of cooperation between two "preemptive authoritarianisms," where one of the reasons for this cooperation is that "smaller authoritarian regimes often need backing and cover-up from larger ones that possess more resources and influence on the international arena." Silitsky (2006, pp.6–7) defines preemption as

> a strategy to combat the democratic contagion that is pursued in anticipation of a political challenge, even when there is no immediate danger of a regime change. Preemption thus aims at political parties and players that are still weak. It removes from the political arena even those opposition leaders who are unlikely to pose a serious challenge in the next election. It attacks the independent press even if it reaches only small segments of the population. It destroys civil society organizations even when these are concentrated in a relatively circumscribed urban subculture. Last but not least, it violates the electoral rules even when the incumbent would be likely to win in a fair balloting. This type of preemption (attacking the opponents and the infrastructure of the opposition and civil society), that can be named *tactical preemption*, does not exhaust the repertoire of available means of combating democratic contagion. Another, more profound instrument, is *institutional preemption* that consists of tightening of the fundamental rules defining the political game, once again, before the opposition becomes strengthened.

Preemption as a regime strategy is indeed important in the cases of Russia and Belarus: the regimes in both countries have extensively used (and continue to use) it, learning from each other. Interestingly enough, it is the dominant Russia which is learning from the subordinate Belarus, which was first to apply the strategy. Thus, the Belarusian regime, by easily suppressing democratic protests in 2006 and 2010, sent the Kremlin the signal that the "color revolutions are over" (Padhol and Marples, 2011; Tarkowski, Fathy and Melyantsou, 2011) and then preemptively began to restrict internet access and blogging websites, close independent media outlets and suppress NGOs, presenting them as a fifth column. In Russia this strategy was applied systematically somewhat later, generally after the 2011–2012 protests.

Ambrosio (2006), stressing that the relationship between Russia and Belarus has been a political success for both Lukashenka and Putin, defines it as an antidemocratic alliance aimed at insulating Belarus from political reforms. But what gives this alliance sustainability, bearing in mind that it is not possible to rely on the credibility of commitments made by nondemocracies?

According to Ioffe, the most important thing that maintains these relations is the control that Russia has over Belarus: "But what is truly unusual

about Belarus," argues Ioffe, "is the degree to which external factors control every fibre in its national fabric, every facet of Belarus' ethno-national setting: the economy, politics and indeed language and identity" (Ioffe, 2004, p.110). The country's information sphere is dominated by its powerful neighbor. As Krivoi and Wilson (2015, p.5) show, Russian TV channels are more popular in Belarus than domestic ones: of those watching television, over 65 percent watch Russian state TV as their main source of news.

Wierzbowska-Miazga (2013, p.6) continues the topics of control and domination: "Moscow's long-term goal is to establish control over the Belarusian economy, which would also, in effect, allow the Kremlin to influence the way other areas of the Belarusian state are governed." In my view, however, sustainability also comes from another source, and that is the two countries' mutual dependence.

Wierzbowska-Miazga paints a convincing picture of Belarus's comprehensive economic dependence on Russia. It is true that Belarus depends heavily on various subsidies from Russia, and that the volume of Russian aid is rising. Russian energy subsidies to Belarus account for up to approximately 15 percent of the country's GDP (Alachnovič, 2015). Russia gives Belarus preferential pricing on Russian raw materials, as well as low-interest loans. Belarus purchases Russian oil without export tariffs (Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2013, p.7). It has also received money from the Anti-Crisis Fund of the Eurasian Economic Community, controlled by Russia. In 2012 Russia opened a credit line for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Belarus (Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2013, p.8). Russia is constantly strengthening its presence in the Belarusian energy sector. As Wierzbowska-Miazga writes,

> It has effectively monopolized the country's gas market by securing not only an exclusive deal for the supply of natural gas to Belarus but also by gaining complete control over the transit and distribution of gas in the country. At the same time, Moscow has blocked the possibility of geographical diversification of energy production in Belarus by taking over the supervision of the construction and operation of a nuclear power plant in Belarus and by ensuring that it has full control over the export of electricity generated at the plant.
>
> (Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2013, p. 16)

Belarus heavily depends upon oil from Russia, and for years the Russian Gazprom has been the sole supplier of natural gas to Belarus. Most direct investments come to Belarus from Russia, and Russia has a very substantial presence in the Belarusian petrochemical and telecommunication sectors. It is also Russia that purchases around 35 percent of all Belarusian exports (Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2013, p.22). This Russian penetration into the Belarusian economy has great inertia, so it is unlikely that the process will be reversed, certainly in a short-term perspective.

However, this dependence is not unilateral; Russia also needs Belarus. It needs the Belarusian geographic location, as the Russian energy export to Europe runs through its territory. This transit role of Belarus becomes even more important as Moscow would like to limit the volume of gas transported via Ukraine (Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2013, p.11). But no less important—and more strategic—is the role that Belarus plays as proof for Moscow's geopolitical ambitions. Belarus demonstrates that Russia is an attractive coalition partner, and that Russia really does have a coalition within post-Soviet territory. Knowing the nature of the relationship between Moscow and Minsk, this proof is far from credible and cannot be taken seriously from a Western perspective, but the argument exists and is used at least for Russia's domestic audience.

As we can see, the dependence between two countries has a highly asymmetric character: The Belarusian economy "lives" through Russia, while for Russia Belarus is mostly a confirmation for its geopolitical ambitions. In addition, the two partners have totally unequal power with regard to politics and economy. In refusing to support Lukashenka and thus breaking off current relations, Putin would risk losing a weak ally as well as one of the arguments that support Russia's claims to regional power—and that's it. It would not be fatal at all. But in the case of Lukashenka showing disobedience to Moscow, he risks losing the country, as without Russia's economic support his social contract has little chance of working. It is not Russia but Belarus that has "defective sovereignty," in particular in terms of its external dimension: its freedom of decision-making on key foreign policy issues is gradually decreasing.[2]

Thus, the degree of dependence between Russia and Belarus determines the closeness of their relations, while their asymmetric character, as well as the nature of the political regimes, determines their essence. Relations between Russia and Belarus are authority-like relations, which differ from genuine authority in that the commitments of both partners with regard to each other are principally not credible, and consequently their unilateral revision (more likely by the dominant power and not excluding the use of massive coercion) is always possible.

Recent disputes between Belarus and Russia over prices for Russian gas support the famous saying "With great power comes an even greater electricity bill" (Cool Funny Quotes, 2016). Indeed, since the beginning of 2016 Belarus has been attempting to obtain a discount on gas and not recognizing its debt to Russia. Lukashenka took the decision to increase the prices for transit of Russian oil through Belarus's territory, and then announced his intent to open negotiations on oil purchase with Iran. As for Russia, Medvedev has declared that additional discounts on gas prices for Belarus are not being planned, and said prices will remain the same (Podobedova, 2016).

It is important to understand, however, that the situational conflicts and tensions that periodically arise between two countries do not change the basic character of their relations, and on the contrary, even support them.

From time to time Moscow needs to remind Lukashenka of his place in the system. This was the case with Russia's sanctions against Belarusian dairy and meat companies, or the critical NTV documentary with the eloquent title *Krestniy Bat'ka* ("Godfather"), shown during the 2010 presidential elections. Furthermore, relations between Russia and Belarus do not develop in a vacuum, and in certain situations Lukashenka behaves in ways that defy Moscow's expectations. For instance, in 2008 after the "five-day war," Belarus refused to recognize the sovereignty of the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Russian leadership swallowed this disobedience as it understood that too much pressure could result in destroying comfortable relations, while recognition would not lead to strengthening the pro-sovereignty coalition because such a thing simply does not exist and is impossible to establish in the first place. Again, the cyclicality of Russia–Belarus relations does not change their basic character (Nice, 2012, p.6).

Both political elites and public opinion in Russia and Belarus support the idea of deepening integration between the two countries. However, Filippov observes that over more than 15 years the parties have been unable to agree on the details. The respective political leaderships are not capable of creating conditions that would provide guarantees for credible commitments. In practice, they can sign any commitments they want, but there is no way to convince their partner that they will follow them. Therefore, under "normal conditions" the compromise in the form of a confederative union is absolutely unreachable; the union is possible only in a case where Belarus is forced to seek Russia's protection on any terms. Filippov (2007) claims that the case of Russia and Belarus is a brilliant illustration of how unpromising the idea of political integration around Russia is within the post-Soviet space.

Russia and Belarus can't agree on a form of integration as they are not capable of creating commitments. But do they really need to agree on this? Being connected by authority-similar relations, both sides follow their own interests and gain their own benefits. Under the conditions of preservation of authoritarian regimes in both the dominant and the subordinate state, they have found and supported the most convenient of the feasible forms of symbiosis.

The issue of Russia's plans to annex Belarus has been discussed since the beginning of the 2000s, and for obvious reasons these discussions have intensified since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. In August 2002, at a joint press conference with Putin and Lukashenka, Putin suggested that the six regions (*oblasti*) of Belarus be accepted into the Russian Federation as constituent entities, meaning the complete disappearance of Belarus from the political map. Lukashenka dismissed these remarks as insulting to his country, saying: "Even Lenin and Stalin did not get as far in their thoughts as splitting Belarus and including it that way in the Russian Federation or the USSR" (Lukashenka, 2002b, cited in Ioffe, 2004, p.108). Such provocations are one of the methods to keep Lukashenka "behaving properly," but reliable calculations show that Russia is not interested in the annexation of Belarus,

as instead of a subordinated ally, it would have to deal with six more regions that would be subjects for financial redistribution from the federal center, and Russia already has too many of those. According to an opinion poll by the Independent Institute for Socio-Economic and Political Studies (June 2014), 26 percent of respondents believed that the "annexation by Russia of the whole of Belarus or part of its territory" was "highly probable," and another 4 percent believed that it was "unavoidable" (Moshes, 2014, p.4). However, the respondents are obviously not people who can professionally judge the probability of such an event, and the answers to this question in essence reflect their feelings, be this fear, anxiety or hope.

Of course, certain media in Russia support discussions on Belarus's accession into the Russian Federation. For instance, in 2015 a columnist from Russia's Vzglyad website passionately argued that Lukashenka should hold a referendum on this issue. As is usual for such kind of publications, the discussion was in terms of "global transformation of the world," "the agonizing West that seeks to destroy the world, and Russia first of all," and "the time for self-determination—who are you and whom are you with?" Belarus must feel the "historical necessity" to make the "critical decision" because this is "a question of common survival and development" (Birov, 2015).

But these are not rational calculations. This is ordinary hysteria that nevertheless helps Russian authorities to deal with the subordinate state, never letting it forget: if it misbehaves, coercion is always possible.

EU–Belarus: very few "points of entry"

Against the background of the achievements of the "brotherly love project," those of the European Union look very modest indeed: this statement is correct if we, following Nice (2012, p.5), proceed from the assertion that Belarus is a case of political competition between the EU and Russia for their "common neighborhood." Then, the logical conclusion is that the EU is constantly losing to Russia in this competition. Some scholars consider that the main reason for this is the EU's inconsistent approach toward Belarus and the inability of the Union to offer Belarus a "pragmatic deal" and demonstrate "realistic prospects of cooperation with Europe" (Bohdan, 2013, p.5; Marin, 2011). In my view, however, these starting points, and consequently the conclusions they lead to, are fundamentally misleading. There is *no* competition between the EU and Russia for Belarus—neither political, nor economic. There is no way for the EU to offer Belarus a "pragmatic deal" and demonstrate "realistic prospects." Under current conditions there is exceedingly little that the EU can do for Belarus, and the results of this minimal offer are predictably small. In other words,

> "Today the West could not offer any package to compete with Russian economic incentives or protect Belarus from a conflict with Russia, even if it were inclined to do so. For the foreseeable future, interaction between

the EU and Belarus will be ad hoc and technocratic, not strategic. This is an outcome Moscow can tolerate.

(Moshes, 2014, p.5)

We can, of course, look for explanations of the EU's failure with regard to Belarus in the persistent divergences within the EU, when member states prefer to develop bilateral relations with the country, decide to do so through modifying the EU's common foreign policy and, as Marin argues, "lobby for other member states to follow their stance." "Conversely," continues Marin, "when the EU's common foreign policy threatens their national interests, they revert to bilateral frameworks." She illustrates this approach through Poland and Lithuania's relations with Belarus (Marin, 2011, p.3). Furthermore, in her eyes, the member states are incapable of envisaging Belarus outside the frame of relations with Moscow. The result is "(too) many foreign policies on Belarus" (Marin, 2011, p.2). However, for the EU member states this is an absolutely normal mode of behavior—some of them are more interested in developing relations with certain third countries (like Poland and Lithuania, who are located in direct geographical proximity to Belarus), and some less. It is the nature of the EU common foreign policy that allows it to produce many national foreign policies instead of one strong voice. This problem has been intensively discussed within the EU for years, though so far even with regard to Russia, it is unclear if the EU could sustainably speak in one voice with a country of such importance. And Russia is certainly not a country on the same "scale" as Belarus; it can create incentives for EU members to present a united front. Of course, the aforementioned persistent divergences are a legitimate explanation, merely not one special to Belarus, but relating to any country outside the EU. The key to the EU's "incapability" with regard to Belarus lies outside the former: this is the authority-like relationship that has developed between Belarus and Russia and firmly tied the two countries together.

In building relations with Belarus, the Union does not have at its disposal the main authority tool that it can use in relations with Ukraine and Georgia—its "golden carrot" of the possibility, if a very distant one, of membership in the EU. Indeed, it would be a joke to talk about this today, so the general (and more or less feasible) aim of the EU toward Belarus is to stimulate gradual changes in public policies and people's attitudes. To do this the EU has only two real means of operation: to use coercion against Belarus in the form of economic and political sanctions, and to selectively involve the country in EU initiatives and programs.

As an autocracy, Belarus is more inclined to become an alliance partner of another pragmatic player (Russia) rather than of a normative one (the EU) because the former does not require any reforms and does not threaten the stability of the elites' positions in office. The conditionality toolkit lacks attractiveness for Belarus, as its economy is relatively successful compared to that of Ukraine and Moldova. Belarus is aware of the experiences of the Baltic states and Poland, where Europeanization was accompanied by the

closure of some enterprises. Authorities in Minsk are reluctant to replace their attractive model with a model in transition, which is inevitably associated with high costs (Hett and Meuser, 2016). As the EU admits its inability to establish authority relations with Minsk in the form of normative means of conditionality, and the Belarusian regime successively and "preemptively" violates human rights, the EU inevitably turns to using coercion. The story of EU sanctions against Belarus reminds one of a dance where both partners are walking on the spot.

The relationship between the EU and Belarus was institutionalized in 1994 when both parties signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and sanctions were first imposed on Belarus as soon as 1996. They were suspended in 1999, and then reimposed after Minsk refused to grant visas to EU monitors. In subsequent years, new sanctions—a visa black list and asset freezes—followed. In 2008 most targeted sanctions were suspended, and the thaw in EU–Belarus relations lasted until 2010. It ended after the fraudulent elections in December 2010 and the ensuing repression of the opposition. Sanctions were reintroduced and have gradually expanded in subsequent years (Gebert, 2013, p.2). In 2012, the European Council introduced an embargo on arms and related materials; banned EU export to Belarus of equipment which could be used for internal repressions; and froze the funds and economic resources of a number of persons, entities and bodies. Most of the EU's sanctions against individuals were targeted at the representatives of the court system (47.3 percent) and law enforcement employees (23.7 percent). The blacklist was expanded from 6 individuals in 2004 to more than 250 in 2014 (Krivoi and Wilson, 2015).

In early 2016 Belarus released a number of political prisoners, and EU officials decided to unfreeze the assets of the president and of 170 other Belarusian officials, although the arms embargo remained in force. President Lukashenka welcomed the lifting of sanctions with a symbolic visit to the Vatican. Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Makei made an official comment: "The lifting of sanctions means for us a possibility to normalize relations with the EU. However, we will not do this at the expense of our relations with Russia, which remains our main economic, political and military partner" (Informburo, 2015).

Political prisoners were released, but no policy changes occurred in the directions desired by the EU. As Moshes and Racz (2015, p.7) show, the prisoners

> were granted a presidential pardon in the same arbitrary manner as before, by dint of a personal decision issued by the president … This means that in future anyone may easily be imprisoned again on political grounds. It is worth remembering that the political prisoners were not rehabilitated, and from the point of view of Belarusian legislation they remain convicted criminals, which makes it practically impossible for them to participate in public politics.

The EU sanctions, clever policy instruments though they were, have nevertheless failed to deliver the desired results, namely the end of political repressions, and general liberalization (Gebert, 2013, p.2). As Moshes and Racz (2015, p.8) warn, "The West and the EU in particular should not mix individual, occasional positive steps with major systemic changes, and reward them as if they were more substantial than they really are."

The Union has made various attempts to establish an authority relationship with Belarus, working in different formats. Thus, while under sanctions, Belarus was invited to participate in the Eastern Partnership cooperation format. This was the first broad instrument of EU political authority aimed at developing closer relations with the countries within Europe's east (EurActiv, 2011). As of September 2011 Belarus has temporarily withdrawn from the Partnership initiative and was not represented at the summit in Warsaw. Today, however, Belarus is still a member, and the only Eastern Partnership country with no frozen territorial disputes.

In 2012, the European Commission launched the "European dialogue on modernization with Belarusian society" and shortly afterwards also established the REFORUM project, implemented by the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (The European Commission, 2014a). Furthermore, it introduced the MOST (Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts) program (Halubnichy, 2015). Cross-border cooperation (that is, a form which is practically oriented, works at a "low politics" level and is intended to preserve some cooperation even in case of political conflict at the level of "high politics") was developed in the trilateral formats of Poland–Belarus–Ukraine and Latvia–Lithuania–Belarus. The initiatives were successful, but only on a limited scale. Belarusian authorities appeared awkward with regard to them but did not interfere much with their work.

In 2014 the EU introduced a wide spectrum of instruments to provide financial support for Belarus, including such programs as ENPI Bilateral, TAIEX, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Nuclear Safety and others. About 30 percent of the total EU funds for Belarus were invested in social inclusion, 25 percent in environmental protection, 25 percent in regional and local development, 10 percent in support of civil society and 10 percent in support of capacity development (The European Commission, 2014b).

The EU has also been trying to mobilize higher education as an instrument of authority; this instrument has proved its worth in most European Neighborhood countries, but Belarus has demonstrated very limited engagement in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) project and in the Bologna Process. According to Polglase, the reasons for Belarus's exclusion from the EHEA can be abstracted into two simple points: first, the country failed to reform its system to standards acceptable by the EHEA member states, and, second, it proved not to be capable of ensuring academic freedom. In 2012 the Bologna Follow-Up Group assessed Belarus's readiness to join the EHEA and stated that the principles and values of the Bologna Process, such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy and student participation

in managing higher education, were not sufficiently upheld in the country. As such, Belarus's accession to the EHEA was blocked at a meeting of EHEA ministers (Polglase, 2013).

All in all, the EU has invested a lot of energy in trying to find the "points of entry" to Belarus by using different approaches. But both coercion and authority have achieved few results, giving weak, marginal and nonsustainable effects. The EU is simply "doing something" in the country—and that is all it can do under current conditions. It can only wait.

Bat'ka Lukashenka: a hostage to his own image

Belarus's President Lukashenka is in a dual position: on one hand, it is he who is effectively responsible for the economic survival of his country by obtaining subsidies from Russia; on the other, he is the guarantee that there will not be "too much Russia" in Belarus. This duality is clearly seen in his speeches, which, if viewed together as an expression of his position, give a highly eclectic impression. As he admits,

> No one will replace Russia for us. And when we are in dialogue with the West, with the EU, with America, with others, we ask [only] one question, and I talk about this openly—will you replace Russia for us? No. Then why are you trying to pull us in?
>
> (Tut.by, 2015, cited in Krivoi and Wilson, 2015, p.3)

Lukashenka has obviously made his choice, but he still insists that Belarus does not want to have to choose between the European Union and Russia. "If the partners which we're in dialogue with try to insist that we have to choose between Russia, Poland or the EU, we don't want to be put in this position," he said in March 2016 after Brussels lifted sanctions against Belarus (Makhovsky, 2016).

As Krivoi and Wilson (2015, p.4) argue, ironically Lukashenka's model of survival depends on the credibility of his image as "the last dictator in Europe," an image for which Russia is willing to pay. In other words, Lukashenka is a kind of hostage to his image, from which he currently benefits while being at the same time unable to change it if he wanted.

Simultaneously Lukashenka emphasizes, at times very passionately, the primacy of his country's national sovereignty. He has stated that "Those who think that the Belarusian land is part of what they call the Russian world, almost part of Russia, should forget about it! Belarus is a modern and independent state" (Yahoo! News, 2015, cited in Krivoi and Wilson, 2015, p.2). As Nice argues, "The inconsistencies of Lukashenka's foreign policy mask a deeper continuity—the consolidation of Belarusian statehood and identity as an independent state" (Nice, 2012, p.1). To demonstrate the statehood of his country, Lukashenka from time to time steps up campaigns to strengthen Belarus–Europe ties by sending envoys to European national governments

and welcoming embassies from the EU and the US. In April 2015 he also expressed his concerns about the rise of pro-Russian NGOs in Belarus. Lukashenka suggested that extremist Russian groups were active in his country and claimed he had "taken measures against them" (The official internet-portal of the President of Belarus, 2015).

It seems that such duality should give Lukashenka large room for maneuver, but the reverse is actually happening: the amplitude of his tactical moves is rather small as the "red lines" that mark the borders of his opportunity corridor and that he cannot cross are not far from each other. Nice calls Lukashenka's tactics a form of "sovereignty entrepreneurship" that he uses to trade political loyalty, with threats of geopolitical reorientation, in order to extract support from Russia (Nice, 2012, p.5). Scholars often stress Lukashenka's skill at the balancing game (Krivoi and Wilson, 2015, p.3). What is important, however, is that this is not balancing between Russia and the West, but between Russia and the desire for sovereign statehood, while interaction with the West is rather an external expression of the latter alternative.

It is true that he balances between Russia and national sovereignty, and, as sovereignty presupposes independent foreign policy that is not oriented solely around Russia's, it is also a balance between Russia and the West. However, this balancing game is played by the authorities of a country with *already* somewhat limited sovereignty, so the rules of this game and, therefore, the "scale" of balancing is defined not by Lukashenka, but by external forces, and permitted only by those forces.

Unlike the relations between Russia and other post-Soviet countries, the relations between Russia and Belarus are extraordinarily close and free from major crises, and allow Belarus to take a role of a mediator, which necessarily presupposes a certain distance (at least nominally) from both parties. After the "five-day war" of 2008 and the subsequent crisis in Russian-Georgian relations, Minsk took the role of an intermediary in trade between the two countries, which also generated additional revenue for Belarus (Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2013, p.30). As Moshes (2014, p.2) shows, in the crisis in Ukraine

> Lukashenka has personally done a lot to emphasize the distance between the Belarusian and Russian approaches to Ukraine. Even though Lukashenka did not show any sympathy for the Euromaidan movement and called the change of power in Kyiv an "unconstitutional coup," he immediately recognized the legitimacy of Ukraine's new authorities and met with acting president Olexander Turchinov. After the May 25 election, Lukashenko congratulated newly elected president Petro Poroshenko on his victory and even attended his inauguration. Lukashenka recognized Crimea's entry into Russia de facto but not de jure, and he publicly supported Ukraine's territorial integrity and the maintenance of a unitary state. Consequently, Belarus refused to recognize the results of the independence referenda held in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Minsk was accepted as a mediator by Russia and by the Western powers, though Belarus's mediatory role should be understood with a high degree of conditionality, as a facilitator of negotiations rather than an actor capable of influencing their outcome.

Lukashenka's commitments are in reality not credible—neither with regard to Russia, nor with regard to the EU. His periodic "flirting" with Europe is not a "turn to Europe," if a situational one, but rather no more than an attempt to show that he is capable of being an independent actor by interacting with a union of countries that is at least to some degree interested in what is going in Belarus. To commence genuine authority relations with the EU (let's for a moment forget about the "Russian factor") would at some point inevitably mean genuine, and not demonstrative, reforms, over which he may easily lose control. From the other side, Lukashenka's commitments to Russia are stable only while maintaining the current status quo: the only thing that can turn Belarus away from Russia is obvious and irreversible weakening of the latter. If this happens, and only then, can the European Union start to "work" with Belarus. The rise of Belarusian sovereignty will in all likelihood be conducted within the context of an authoritarian system, but this is surmountable with time as Belarus will remain a small Eastern European country without a self-sufficient economy. The EU knows how to work with this, but it does not know how to release Belarus from Russian influence.

Lukashenka, and following him the whole Belarusian nation, designates himself as *bat'ka*, something between "father" and "daddy," a title that is also actively used in the Russian army—the soldiers call low-ranked commanders *bat'ka* or *batya*. This warm and domestic name turns the nation into one big family where the *bat'ka* is the patron and defender of his numerous children. Consequently, he makes decisions for his entire nation, and nobody contests them. It was his choice to make Belarus into "a society largely without politics, even at the elite level" (Krivoi and Wilson, 2015, p.3). But one day it will have to learn them.

Notes

1 According to the polls, only 3.6 percent of Belarusians support a "revolutionary" scenario similar to Kiev's (Eastern Europe Studies Centre, 2014, p.1).
2 Moshes and Racz (2015) mention the example of the vote in the UN General Assembly in March 2014, when Belarus had no choice but to vote against condemning Moscow for the annexation of Crimea, and the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga in May 2015 when it refused to approve a critical resolution on Russia.

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7   Georgia
The story of one coercion and two authorities

Unlike the Belarusian "society without politics," Georgian society does have politics, both at the elite and at the mass level. Georgia is noted for its very dramatic political development. At the end of the '90s, Georgia "became the frontrunner in the political emancipation in the Soviet Union after the Baltic republics" (Aphrasidze and Siroky, 2010, p.127). Over two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, scholars see a major distinction between Georgia and its former brother republics in the country's second transition, which started after the Rose Revolution of 2003 (Aphrasidze and Siroky, 2010, p.122). However, the question of whether this was a transition to genuine democracy, or to a more effective state with increased coercive capabilities, remains open. The degree of sustainability of this transition is also unclear.

As Nodia (2005, p.69) argues, "the Georgian national project derives out of [the] desire for access to Western modernization." This project involves pervasive political and economic participation by the EU and the US in the development of Georgia as a democratic state. At the same time, Russia, which uses coercion as the main tool in its relations with Georgia, actively intervenes in this interaction as part of pursuing its own national interests. In its efforts to influence Georgia's political course, Russia is confronted with the US's and the EU's authority relations, representing two different types which, however, are both perceived as legitimate in Georgia. The American type of authority is primarily focused on military assistance and humanitarian aid, whereas Western European authority encompasses close multidimensional cooperation with active exchange at various levels. For President Saakashvili the course toward Westernization and Europeanization has become his survival strategy. Whether it is being carried on by his successor is an open question.

Georgia: national context

Experts on Georgia like to stress its special nature, and its difference from other republics both in the Soviet and the post-Soviet periods. And indeed, this is true. During Soviet rule Georgia was a special republic in the Soviet Union, standing out not only due to its lovely subtropical and Mediterranean climate, but also with the irrepressible (at least, by Soviet standards) cultural,

political and entrepreneurial energy of its population. Georgian intellectuals were famous not only in the Soviet Union, but far beyond its borders. Political protests enveloped Tbilisi in the darkest Soviet times, such as in 1956 after the exposure of Stalin's personality cult, when Georgians protested against Moscow's insult to their national pride. Protests spread in the capital again at the end of the '70s—the years of deepest stagnation—when mass student demonstrations took place. In the Constitution of Georgia, it was written that there were two state languages in the country—Georgian and Russian. Protesters demanded to remove Russian as state language from the Constitution.

During the times of the Soviet command economy, in the absence of an alternative the entrepreneurial energy of the Georgian population concentrated in the "shadow economy." As Shelley argues, "during the Soviet era, Georgians played a major role in the shadow economy of the entire USSR, and ethnic Georgians represented a large proportion of the thieves-in-law (the elite of professional criminals)" (Shelley, 2007, p.1). When Shevardnadze, the future president of independent Georgia, appointed the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia in 1972 (under the patronage of the KGB chief Andropov), he vowed that he would clean up this Georgian "capitalist pigsty." And he did indeed begin a campaign against underground business (*tsekhoviki*), but very soon new businessmen, patronized by Shevardnadze himself, replaced the previous shadow businessmen (Shved, 2016, p.184). The latter moved to the European part of Russia, mainly to Moscow, Leningrad and southern regions of Rostov-on-Don and Krasnodar.

Underground factories in the Soviet Union (*tsekhi*) specialized in small, simply manufactured and easily transportable consumer items such as "ladies' underwear, meat *pirozhki*, brooches made of a couple of plastic cherries, or fashionably tailored artificial leather jackets" (Simis, 1982, cited in Sampson, 1987, p.129). These factories were normally "hidden" inside official state factories, using them as covers to conceal the illicit use of supplies, funds, labor, transport and distributional networks (Sampson, 1987, p.129). Georgians ran underground factories throughout the Soviet Union and were known as clever and cunning businessmen. On the eve of the Soviet Union's collapse there were many Georgians in Georgia and in Russia whom the "shadow economy" had made exceedingly rich. It is not by chance that a new saying appeared in Russia in the '90s: "New Russians are actually 'old Georgians'."

After gaining independence, Georgia's distinctive feature was an extremely high speed of political time. As Jones writes, "since independence (and till the Rose revolution) Georgia has undergone two wars of secession, a civil war, a number of failed (and badly planned) coups, and at least two assassination attempts on former president Shevardnadze" (Jones, 2006, pp.248–249). "Georgian history is conflict, and therefore conflict is Georgian" (Jones, 2006, p.249). During the decade after gaining independence, all post-Soviet republics experienced significant challenges, but in the Georgian case, the challenges

were even greater than in other post-communist states (Nodia, 2005, p.44). As Nodia (1998, p.6) shows, there was a set of three main challenges for the new independent Georgia. The first challenge, which Georgia shared with all other newly independent republics, was the need to create a new Georgian political elite and to build new (and well-functioning) political institutions. The second challenge derived from the need to manage ethno-territorial conflicts (the conflicts between the Georgian political elites and the population, and the elites and ethnic groups in the regions that did not want to be part of the new Georgian state and pursued separate political arrangements for themselves, namely the Abkhazian and Ossetian minorities). The third challenge involved relations between Georgia and Russia. Each challenge represented its own institutional arena, and these three arenas were to some extent autonomous from each other, so the development of each had its own internal logic, though at the same time all three were strategically interrelated.

Three Georgian presidents attempted to cope with the challenges (and a fourth is now in office), each of them based on his own experience and ideas, and taking into consideration the constraining internal and external conditions. The first was Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who came to govern the country with his Round Table coalition as a result of the democratic elections in the fall of 1990. Gamsakhurdia came to power on a nationalistic wave, and it was the energy of this wave that he tried to use to build a Georgian nation-state. This first attempt was a failure. Per Gahrton described the first president of sovereign Georgia as a "tactical fanatic," and an "attractive and even efficient leader and a symbol of national liberation movement … [but] a catastrophe as executive administrator and president" (Gahrton, 2010, cited in Nalbandov, 2014, p.60). He failed to establish institutional mechanisms for dealing with the opposition, and this turned out to be fatal for him—the reign of the first Georgian president ended very quickly, after two weeks of fighting in December 1991–January 1992. What followed was a messy period when state institutions were almost completely dysfunctional. The economic crisis was dramatic: by 1994, Georgia was producing only 25 percent of the total output recorded in precrisis 1990, the last year when the country was stable. The weak Georgian central state lost the war in Abkhazia, which paradoxically contributed to the gradual stabilization of the country in the long run (Nodia, 1998, p.7).

Georgia's second president, Eduard Shevardnadze, was a leader of a completely different character and political style. Having served as a minister of foreign affairs in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, he belonged to the Soviet federal *nomenclatura*, albeit having preserved close relations with his republic. Shevardnadze gradually solidified his support base, and his victory was finalized in the elections of November 1995 (Nodia, 1998, p.8). Thereafter, general stability in the country was maintained by using the president's ability to mediate between different interest groups rather than by enforcing common rules. Political parties were poorly developed, Shevardnadze's "party of power," the Citizens' Union of Georgia, growing alongside the state

bureaucracy (Chiaberashvili and Tevzadze, 2005, p.189). The political process in Georgia was dominated by clans, wherein Shevardnadze's own family was the largest and the most powerful, prevailing in major businesses and political posts (Chiaberashvili and Tevzadze, 2005, p.190). As for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, no significant efforts were made to truly integrate them into Georgia's "mainland" during Shevardnadze's reign. As Nodia (2005, p.47) writes, "Abkhazia and South Ossetia were turned into 'frozen conflicts'—there was no war, but neither was there a settlement promising a lasting peace." In general, under Shevardnadze, known for his ability for mediation, the country could probably continue to exist and to live, but without sources for development and growth. Shevardnadze's legacy "is tarnished by unresolved conflicts, thousands of refugees, and absolute economic downfall, but, paradoxically, quite stable although stagnant domestic political environment" (Nalbandov, 2014, p.62).

In November 2003, parliamentary elections took place in Georgia. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe called them a "spectacular fraud" organized by Shevardnadze's political regime. Numerous falsifications brought dissatisfied citizens to the streets of Tbilisi and other major Georgian cities. Mass protests were led by Mikheil Saakashvili (frontrunner of the National Movement), Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania (leaders of the Burjanadze-Democrats opposition bloc). The TV channel Rustavi-2 featured thousands of Georgian citizens paving the way to the capital city to voice their protest against the election results. On November 22, 2003, during Eduard Shevardnadze's official speech in front of the new Georgian parliament, opposition leaders entered the conference hall guided by Saakashvili, who was holding a rose in his hand (which later gave the name to the revolution). As Shevardnadze left the hall for security reasons, Saakashvili took the floor and proclaimed the victory of the revolution (Ria Novosti, 2003). Saakashvili accused Shevardnadze of massive manipulation of votes, and his followers stormed the Georgian Parliament (Nalbandov, 2014, p.69). Shevardnadze lost presidential office as a result of the Rose Revolution, meaning that two first presidents of Georgia were forced to leave office and did not give way to legitimate successors chosen through elections (Nodia, 2005, p.66).

The most important feature of the Rose Revolution was its nonviolent character—something rare for post-Soviet politics. In addition, it is interesting that it was the government and the people of Georgia rather than the opposition that became driving forces of the Revolution (Nodia, 2005, p.70). The Revolution brought to power Mikheil Saakashvili, who was fundamentally different from Gamsakhurdia, and even more so from Shevardnadze, in terms of his background and political style. The Saakashvili government's first priorities were strengthening the state and fighting corruption, a Georgian chronic illness. Pursuing revolutionary nationalism instead of the ethnic nationalism of the early '90s (Aphrasidze and Siroky, 2010, p.127), Saakashvili passionately (even aggressively) began to enhance state capacity

in Georgia, mainly the state's police and military sector. As Aphrasidze and Siroky (2010, p.122) argue, "in focusing so centrally on the state's coercive capabilities, we suggest that the government has neglected to address the infrastructural and participatory aspects of state capacity." However, stressing that the focus of the reforms was on the coercive capabilities of the Georgian state is not enough to understand them. Thus, describing Saakashvili's reforms, Nalbaldov (2014, p.117) writes:

> Anti-corruption activity, judiciary reform, revision of taxation—these are a few examples of institutional norm emergence. The process of norm cascading started with the gradual transformation of Georgian society where the spillovers went beyond their functional areas and started affecting an increasing number of institutions. For instance, corruption, a typical Soviet-type Georgian institution, was eradicated not only in law enforcement or judiciary but also in education, health, urban planning, etc.

In fact, Saakashvili's government succeeded in modernizing the state in Georgia within a very short time period.

Burakova explains the tactical success of the reforms in Georgia by placing emphasis on three main components. The first is the consolidation of the whole state apparatus, as progress is impossible without a jointly developed position. The second component is an adaptive approach, meaning that the state should concentrate on feasible reforms rather than on all of them. The third component is the effective use of political capital—it should be invested quickly (rather than be saved for the future) and in a way that allows maximum returns (Burakova, 2011).

Various indicators prove the success of Saakashvili's reforms. For instance, in comparison to Belarus and Ukraine (prior to 2014), Georgia was the least politically stable country; however, paradoxically, it also possessed the best indicators for effective governance. According to the Worldwide Governance Indicators, Georgia was the champion of "Control of Corruption" (Nalbandov, 2014, p.24). In the *Index of Globalization*, produced by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, which focuses on the economic, social and political openness of countries, Georgia was evaluated as the state most open to economic globalization (Nalbandov, 2014, p.28).

Many in Georgia have been predictably unhappy with Saakashvili's tough political course. Berglund stresses that Saakashvili's system of dominant-power politics enabled state-building reforms, but atrophied political competition (Berglund, 2014). Political opponents have criticized Saakashvili for his authoritarian style of governance, for distorting the division of powers, as well as for voluntarist actions such as granting Georgian citizenship to 1,000 Turkish nationals, bypassing regular procedures, and suddenly pardoning 200 prisoners, some of them sentenced for murder, manslaughter or trafficking narcotics (Tsulukiani, 2013).

Unlike Gamsakhurdia and Shevardnadze, President Saakashvili lost his office in a legitimate way: in October 2012, the United National Movement (UNM) party under Saakashvili lost parliamentary elections to its main contender, the Georgian Dream, and the Dream named Giorgi Margvelashvili as its candidate for presidency.[1] After the elections, Georgia's fourth president made the decision to grant amnesty to some 9,000 prisoners. They were sentenced during the times of Saakashvili; therefore, such a defiant undertaking could be considered a principal departure from Saakashvili's priorities. After Saakashvili's departure from Georgia to start political activity in Ukraine, President Margvelashvili declared that his predecessor Saakashvili had "insulted" the Georgian presidency and the country when he chose to renounce Georgian citizenship in favor of Ukrainian (Civil Georgia, 2015b). According to Georgian ex-prime minister Ivanishvili, immediately after Margvelashvili came to the presidential office, he showed himself to be striving to obtain even more power than Saakashvili had (Gruzinform, 2016).

Russia–Georgia: costs and benefits of using coercion

For Georgia, relations with neighboring giant Russia are of the foremost priority. In the words of Nodia (1998, p.7), "if you are a Georgian, you are likely (at least that is what I would expect from a lot, though not all Georgians) to choose relations with Russia as the factor that determines everything else." On the other hand, while for Russia its relations with Georgia unquestionably matter, they do not belong among the first priorities of national foreign policy. Nevertheless, Georgia is an uneasy neighbor for Russia, and the Russian leadership is confident (or so it claims) that the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia is directed against Russia and represents a threat to its national security.

The Russian approach and interests with regard to Georgia (and other former Soviet republics) are explained by scholars in a variety of ways. One explanation relates to Russia's geopolitical goals—"getting up from its knees," Russia is making an effort to reassert itself as a regional and global power (Galbreath, 2008), and to constrain Georgia's development as regional power within the Caucasus. Others postulate that Russia's approach is determined by its domestic policy. As Filippov argues,

> For domestic purposes, the Russian government maintains some optimal level of "diversionary tensions" with the West, and achieves this through manipulating level of conflict with the post-Soviet countries. In particular, since 2004, Russia has used the conflict with Georgia as an instrument in this broader strategy of keeping political tensions with the US and Europe at the preferred level.
>
> (Filippov, 2009, pp.1826–1827)

However, regardless of the explanation, in relations with Georgia Russia consistently uses one type of power in promoting its interests, and that is coercion in its various forms—from hidden pressure on the central Georgian government through support of the separatist ethnic regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to economic sanctions and open military conflict. The only exceptions were, perhaps, the attempts in the very early '90s to establish joint Russian-Georgian control over external Georgian borders,[2] and Georgia joining the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the times of Shevardnadze. The CIS did not mean much in reality, though even this undertaking by the Georgian president was perceived by Georgians as a sort of dismantling of the national project (Nodia, 1998, p.11). Shevardnadze, however, took this political risk hoping that in exchange Russia would facilitate the integration of Abkhazia into Georgia (Filippov, 2009, p.1831). As we know, these hopes proved to be totally unfounded. Within the CIS, Georgia tried to follow its own line and pursued a policy of preventing the organization from becoming a Russian-led tool of supranational reintegration. Instead, Georgia began to actively cooperate with Turkey, and the GUUAM group, in opposition to Russian interests. The *raison d'être* of the CIS was, in particular, strongly called into question by Georgia after Moscow's recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's sovereign status, because, as it turned out, commitments within the CIS framework do not prevent the violation of the territorial integrity of some of its members by others.

The reasons for Russia's choice in favor of coercion are quite rational. The Russian leadership does not intend to tolerate the possibility of Georgia's growing influence in the Caucasus, or its pro-Western orientation that finds support both in the US and in the EU. However, there are also no ways for Russia to include Georgia into the Russian post-Soviet coalition by using authority (as it did, for instance, with Belarus)—Georgia's general distrust of Russia is too high, and it was Russia that was blamed in Georgia for the loss of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In addition, in Georgia's case Russia cannot play the card of comprehensive dependency as it did with Belarus, where Moscow–Minsk authority relations are based directly on this kind of dependency.

As Kapanadze (2014, p.2) shows, Georgia's economic dependence on Russia is very different not only from that of Belarus, but also from that of Ukraine, Moldova or Armenia. Four areas make the Georgian economy vulnerable in relation to Russia: investments, trade, energy and remittances. While Georgia is in real need of investments, immediate Russian FDI withdrawal does not pose a serious threat to it. Georgia's dependence on Russian energy is relatively low, and Azerbaijan remains its main trading partner in oil and gas. The only thing Russia can do, and does, is to use all possible levers in order to prevent the construction of transport corridors, so as to avoid transportation of Azerbaijan's hydrocarbon resources through Georgian territory (LeVine, 2007). Thus, trade bans and a remittance ban are the most obvious instruments in Moscow's arsenal, though the latter is a complicated tool that

implies credibility costs as well as practical challenges for Russia (Kapanadze, 2014, p.3). All in all, under the given combination of conditions, using coercion remains the only feasible strategy for Russia. But this is only the case with Georgia. With South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Russia has chosen the strategy of building relations of extensive authority.

The first Georgian government under Gamsakhurdia introduced an economic blockade against Russia by blocking the railway close to the city of Samtredia. As a result, economic communications between Georgia and Russia were interrupted earlier than was the case with other post-Soviet republics (Papava, 2012, p.71). However, a more powerful strike against Russian-Georgian relations came with Russia's behavior during the Georgian wars with Abkhazia and South Ossetia at the beginning of the '90s. In its attempt to implement a state-building project, the Georgian leadership failed to establish clear national boundaries, which was very important as Abkhazia, like South Ossetia, borders Russia. Unlike South Ossetia, in Abkhazia the "titular nation" (Abkhazians) did not constitute a numerical majority; the largest community was the Georgian one that defended Georgia's territorial integrity and opposed Abkhazian separatism. In pursuing their aspirations, Georgians in Abkhazia needed an ally, and this role was played by Moscow.

In August 1992, Georgian troops entered Abkhazian territory. Interethnic confrontation escalated into an armed conflict. By October 1993, Georgia had de facto lost its sovereignty over Abkhazia. The Moscow ceasefire agreement, signed with Russia's mediation in May 1994, legally alienated a part of Georgian sovereignty over the region in favor of peacekeeping forces under the auspices of the CIS (in reality, however, peacekeeping operations in 1994–2008 were implemented exclusively by the Russian military) (Markedonov, 2012, p.64). As Nodia (1998) states, for the Georgian people, armed conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia was primarily a war with Russia: it was Russia that benefited from the war, with the rationale of punishing Georgia for its pro-independence orientation.

The situation was similar with regard to Georgia and South Ossetia. Military conflict ended with the signing of the Dagomys (Sochi) agreements in June 1992 by the presidents of Russia and Georgia (Yeltsin and Shevardnadze respectively). In July, peacekeeping operations began. Again, the agreements limited Georgian sovereignty over the conflict zone (Markedonov, 2012, p.95). Kemoklidze (2011) argues that Russia encouraged and supported separatist movements under the cover of self-determination, and Georgia's opponents in both ethnic conflicts were not only Ossetians and Abkhazians, but also Russians. "Russia," writes Goldenberg, "was not acting in a neighboring fashion … but was intent on defending its own interests as the regional great power" (Goldenberg, 1994, p.108). In other words, officially Russia made statements of taking Georgia's side, but in fact it played against both sides, encouraging the conflicts and subsequently making use of the results by becoming the main peace broker in both. By doing this, the Kremlin received important leverage over Georgia. In Georgia, the predictable consequence

of the conflicts was a radical change in Shevardnadze's pro-Russian attitude. The country began to show political drift towards the West, culminating (for Shevardnadze's reign) with the president's promise of bringing Georgia into NATO (Nalbandov, 2014, p.61).

In general, during the Yeltsin era, coercion (as a strategic instrument against Georgia with different, at times quite sophisticated, forms) was not yet a conscious choice by the Russian leadership. Yeltsin's administration was trying to preserve a military, political and economic presence in the Caucasus, but to spend a minimal amount of resources for this purpose. As Filippov (2009, p.1830) argues, "As with almost everything during the Yeltsin period, policy towards Georgia was characterized by bureaucratic chaos and ineffective implementation." Yeltsin's administration combined "coercive interventions and peacekeeping operations" (Lynch, 2000, p.4) with various forms of economic, political and diplomatic pressure and positive incentives (Filippov, 2009, p.1830).

From 1999 onwards, Russia began to increasingly accuse Georgia of providing support and refuge to Chechen terrorists. In August 2002, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov even called Georgia a "nest of terrorists" (Filippov, 2009, p.1833). This gave Russia an excuse to strengthen coercive measures against Georgia: Russia's delivery of gas to Georgia was repeatedly cut off during the winter of 2000 (causing the EU external affairs commissioner to criticize Russia for using gas supplies as a means of political pressure). In December 2000, Moscow imposed a visa regime for Georgian citizens (Filippov, 2009, p.1833).

With the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia, on the contrary, actively started to develop authority relations: the visa regime with Georgia did not apply to the residents of these regions, and Russia also accepted applications from Abkhazian and South Ossetian residents for Russian citizenship. Abkhazian residents received Russian passports via an organization called the Congress of Russian Communities in Abkhazia. In 2002, it facilitated the issuing of 117,000 Russian passports within 22 days. In 2008, holders of Russian passports in Abkhazia received Russian state pensions of 1,600 rubles, which was 16 times the amount provided by the Abkhazian government on a monthly basis (Kirova, 2012). Following the recognition of Abkhazia's status of an independent state, Russia's passportization process was stalled. Moscow's authorities resumed it only in 2014, under the strategic partnership bilateral treaty between Russia and Abkhazia (Kubatyan, 2013). Between 2003 and 2008, the Russian Foreign Ministry also issued 32,519 Russian passports to the citizens of South Ossetia (the vast majority of its population) at a symbolic cost of 1,100 rubles (approx. €15) each (Kuprina, 2009). Georgian authorities labeled Russia's passportization policy in the two separatist regions a "creeping annexation" of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

As Baev argued in 2002, "Georgia is the only post-Soviet neighbor—and, in fact, the only country in the world—with which Russia has a protracted and

carefully cultivated political conflict that periodically escalates and generates serious military tension" (Baev, 2002, cited in Filippov, 2009, p.1834). In his opinion, Russia's main purpose is to keep the US out of the region. Moscow has always been incomparably more concerned with a US presence in Georgia than with the EU's efforts to exert influence through a normative approach.

With Saakashvili's rise to power, Russia's attitude to Georgia steadily deteriorated. I want to stress here that, in all likelihood, the Russian leadership hated no other politician as much as Saakashvili.[3] They hated him for his independence, for his aggressive and sometimes adventurous political style, for modernization—and especially for the fact that he succeeded; for his very clearly defined Western orientation. As always in Russia, the mass media were sensitive to this hatred and understood the demand: "Georgian demagogue" was the mildest label that Saakashvili received in the Russian media. In 2006, Saakashvili took second place as the person with the most negative image in the Russian media: he ceded the first place to American President George W. Bush, but overtook notorious Chechen terror organizer Basaev, who was rated third (Filippov, 2009, pp.1836–1837).

The Russian media severely criticized Saakashvili for his attempts to get rid of Georgia's Soviet legacy by opening a museum of the occupation and ordering the demolition of a World War II memorial in order to erect a new parliament building in its place (Ragozin, 2016). The episode of Saakashvili chewing his tie while talking on the phone before his BBC interview became a newsmaker whereby the Russian media called a criminal psychiatrist to comment on Saakashvili's mental state. The tabloids issued a rich palette of satirical comments ranging from Saakashvili's inability to control his actions to his being hungry for American help to Georgia (Malpas, 2008). Saakashvili's PR team was claimed to be unable to lobby for increased financial support from Washington (Rimple, 2013), which reportedly pushed him to sign a contract with an influential US lobbying firm, the Podesta Group, for it to provide Tbilisi with lobbying, government relations, PR and media services (Makarova, 2010). The Russian mass media welcomed Saakashvili being deprived of Georgian citizenship by condemning the "export of Georgian politicians" to Ukraine. Saakashvili's appointment as head of Ukraine's Odessa region was described as "spitting in the face" of the Ukrainian people (Sputnik International, 2015).

Interestingly, Saakashvili, realizing that the West expected constructive gestures of him, made some attempts to normalize relations with Russia. He declared a unilateral commitment to the nonuse of force to resolve issues of territorial integrity and repeatedly offered to open negotiations with Moscow. The Russian leadership, however, showed no flexibility and stood firm—Saakashvili was "unhandshakeable" and the improvement of bilateral relations could not occur prior to his departure from office. The position of Russia's authorities only worked in Saakashvili's favor, as he merely needed to demonstrate his good will towards Russia to his Western allies (Sharashenidze, 2014, p.52).

In 2006, Moscow began to step up economic coercion. Russia's Chief Sanitary Doctor closed the country's market to Georgian wines, mineral water and agricultural products (though this ban did not apply to Abkhazia). Officially, the sanctions were introduced due to the low quality of Georgian goods. At the same time, Russia declared a blockade of Georgia for all means of transport—aviation, rail, marine, automotive and postal. Persecution of Georgians, including Russian citizens, became widespread in Russia (Papava, 2012, p.77). Some scholars argued that Georgia was fully lost for Russia economically (Lunev, 2006, p.26). The transportation blockade was accompanied by an informational one: in her book, Burakova quotes famous Russian satirist Zhvanetskiy, who exclaimed: "Tell us what is happening in Georgia. Because no one talks about it, there is a feeling that it's a paradise there" (Zhvaneckij, 2010, cited in Burakova, 2011, p.10).

In Georgia, Saakashvili's main problem turned out to be his inability to reach a settlement with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which he had to do under unfavorable conditions. For Moscow, which had chosen to increase coercion against Georgia, the significance of these two "frozen conflicts" on Russia's borders increased dramatically for the purpose of exerting pressure on Georgia. As Aphrasidze and Siroky write,

> Russia's policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia was critical to the escalation of tensions into violent conflict. Worsening relations between Tbilisi and Moscow, Russia's growing ambitions in the former Soviet space and the western brokered independence of Kosovo all influenced Russia's position regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia's involvement in Georgia's conflicts and support to the local regimes has never been a secret, but Moscow's "hidden hand" turned into even more direct and open engagement in early August 2008. After Kosovo's independence, Moscow began the de facto recognition of the Ossetian and Abkhazian regimes by setting up direct institutional links between Russian and corresponding public agencies in both regions.
>
> (Aphrasidze and Siroky, 2010, p.133)

In fact, Russia was pursuing a policy of creeping annexation of the regions. All this led to a five-day war between Georgia and Russia within the territory of South Ossetia, as a result of which Georgia lost both South Ossetia and Abkhazia for good.

Russia blamed "certain foreign powers" for the outbreak of this war. According to Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, these powers had "decided to test the strength of Russian authority and our peacekeepers" via Saakashvili, and even "to force us to embark on the path of militarization and to abandon modernization" (Lavrov, 2008, no pagination). Famous Russian foreign policy analyst Trenin (2009, p.144) also put responsibility on the US's shoulders, arguing that the "Bush administration was responsible for not stopping Tbilisi's attack on Tskhinvali, for sending apparently ambiguous

signals to President Saakashvili, for the Republicans 'investing' in 'Misha [familiar form of Mikheil]' as their own 'social project', and so on."

Two unrecognized states emerged as a result of the war. The coalition of those who recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia included Russia (the first one to recognize both "states"), Nicaragua, Venezuela and some tiny states of Polynesia. However, in recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Russia has not found support among any of its formal allies under the Collective Security Treaty or its partners in the Eurasian Economic Community. According to Georgian law, both Abkhazia and South Ossetia are regions illegally occupied by Russia (Venice Commission, 2009).

Not surprisingly, Russia has sharply intensified its authority relations with both regions (especially in the military and political spheres) after the war. As early as September 2008 Russia and Abkhazia signed a treaty on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance, assuming an increase in Russian military-political presence in Abkhazia. In 2009, both parties signed the agreement "On joint efforts in protecting the state border of Abkhazia," which established the Border Guard Department of the Russian FSB in the Republic of Abkhazia (Markedonov, 2012, p.78). In 2010, Moscow and Sukhumi agreed to establish a joint military base for Russian troops in the territory of Abkhazia.

The planned Russian financing for Abkhazia for 2016 lies at 7.9 billion rubles. Official redistribution of financial help is within the jurisdiction of Russia's Ministry of North Caucasus Affairs. Russia and Abkhazia are negotiating over 14 projects concerning joint lawmaking in the customs sphere and in education. According to the Abkhazian prime minister, there are 350 Russia-financed initiatives at work, with 184 of the sites that require major repairs to be totally reconstructed by the end of 2016 (Interfax, 2016). Indeed, Moscow cares about the increase of living standards in both regions compared to the situation prior to 2008. This is a matter of prestige. Most of the Abkhazian citizens questioned in 2010 admitted that the situation in Abkhazia was better than that in Georgia and estimated the direction of their country's development as generally correct (O'Loughlin, Kolossov and Toal, 2010).

South Ossetia has a very limited state capacity, even compared with Abkhazia. Being relatively independent in its domestic policy, it nevertheless lacks a strategy for progressive development and remains hugely corrupt. Its external policy is centered on its relations with Russia due to historic ties with Russia's North Ossetia and to the demand for Russian financing.

In April 2010, Moscow signed an agreement to place a joint military base in South Ossetian territory. If with regard to Abkhazia experts doubt whether the region can be categorized as a Russian protectorate, there is no question that this is the case with South Ossetia. The authors of the International Crisis Group's report "South Ossetia: the burden of recognition" stated in 2010 that the region was no closer to real sovereignty than it had been in August 2008. The territory lacked genuine political, economic or military autonomy. It was Moscow that formed the largest part of its government, transferred 99 percent of the budget and was responsible for the security of the republic (Crisis

Group, 2010, cited in Markedonov, 2012, pp.111–112). In 2017, republican authorities are planning—quite predictably—to organize a referendum on joining the Russian Federation.

In accordance with Ossetia's constitutional law "On state languages of the South Ossetian Republic," Russian is one of the country's state languages along with Ossetian. Moscow finances two religious foundations operating in the country, Renaissance of Orthodoxy and the St. Andrew Foundation, and supports the Caucasus Institute for Democracy, a soft power institution with branches in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Russian mass media in Abkhazia and South Ossetia include South Ossetian FM radio station Aizald-FM and Abkhazian newspaper *Gudok-Abkhazia*; locals also have access to Russian federal TV channels (Popescu, 2006). Rossotrudnichestvo (the Russian federal agency responsible for ties with the CIS countries) has established offices in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali; the Russkii Mir foundation (Russia's official state-financed cultural foundation) is responsible for the promotion and popularization of the Russian language. About a third of Abkhazians speak only Russian and do not use the Abkhaz language in everyday life (Kirova, 2012). The leading parties in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have practically the same titles as United Russia ("United Abkhazia" and "United Ossetia" respectively). Residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (with Russian passports) voted in Russia's parliamentary elections of 2011, as Russia installed 12 polling stations in these 2 breakaway entities.

So what did Russia gain and what did it lose by using coercion on Georgia and authority on Abkhazia and South Ossetia?

Russia lost Georgia. As Trenin (2009, pp.145–146) argues,

> The results of a referendum on the question of Georgia's membership in NATO and leaving the CIS were very telling as a vote of no confidence in Moscow … Georgia has probably lost Abkhazia and South Ossetia forever, but Russia, for its part, has lost Georgia as a friendly country for a long time to come, regardless of the personal make-up of its leadership.

This loss is not an economic one: after Saakashvili's departure and the change of government in Georgia, Russia lifted restrictions on Georgian products, and trade resumed. Exports from Georgia to Russia have been showing a rising trend (Kapanadze, 2014, p.3). However, political traumas cannot be cured as easily, and the "loss of Georgia" is a political phenomenon. Furthermore, Russia suffered serious reputational damage in the eyes of the Western powers. And finally, the five-day war has demonstrated that the commitments of the CIS members are worth very little, and this poses natural questions about commitments in other Russia-centered integration projects.

What Russia gained were two economically weak regions, the recognition of which was apparently useless geopolitically, and the statuses of which are unclear as their existence as sovereign states is not recognized by the

international community. So far neither of the two is a success story: Russia's "political revenues" from them are sinking while economic costs are rising, taking into consideration the growing number of "clients" in the Russian federal center's patron–client arrangements. Indeed, economic support for these regions implies changes in the scheme of financial redistribution according to which Russia's recipient regions gain financial transfers from the federal budget. In 2008, the Russian government invested 500 million rubles in South Ossetia's economy. Moscow's financial help to this minor satellite was at its highest in 2009 (when it reached the sum of 10.6 billion rubles). The total amount of financial help to South Ossetia between 2008 and 2014 lay at 43 million rubles. This sum is exceptionally large: 41 billion rubles accounts for the revenues of Russia's Leningrad oblast, with a population of 1.5 million people, compared to that of the approximately 53,500(!) residents of South Ossetia (Kommersant, 2016). Of the total financing volume, 30 billion rubles came as Russia's state subsidies, 10 billion rubles were invested by Russia's gas supplier monopolist Gazprom, 2 billion rubles were granted by the Moscow government and 1 billion rubles were obtained from charity donations (Sedakov, 2011). The revenues of South Ossetia's budget for 2015 lay at 7.3 billion rubles, with 6.7 billion rubles being Russian subsidies. In 2016, Russia's financial help will account for 8.2 billion rubles, of which 3.6 billion will be provided as part of the investment program issued by the Ossetian Government for 2015–2017 (Latuhina, 2016).

The story of two authorities

Creating a positive international image of Georgia was an important element of President Saakashvili's strategy (Falkowski, 2016, p.15). Since the times of his presidency, Georgia has been gaining a lot of sympathy from the West as a small but proud and brave country that opposes the giant Russia. Saakashvili, as a president educated in the US, was well able to use this image to appeal to the West for support of his reform course. Indeed, changes in Georgia were fostered and supported from outside by developing authority relations with two Western powers—the US and the European Union. However, these are authority relations of two different types. US relations with Georgia were developed primarily on the basis of security (mainly against the Russian threat) and democracy promotion, so the main instruments were institutional rapprochement with NATO structures as well as military and financial aid. In EU–Georgia relations the military component was absent, and the focus was placed on conditionality: Georgian involvement in the institutional arrangements that the EU developed for neighboring countries (without the possibility of membership) in exchange for sustainable reforms.

By building authority relations with Georgia, the US (and NATO) and the EU shared responsibility over Georgia in a sense, though in different fashion. In no case was the EU's policy in Georgia a reflection of American interests in the country; both the US and the EU represent independent

(though interconnected) versions of authority relations that should complement each other for better exposure (though a lack of cohesion between the US and the Union over governance and economic issues in Georgia is sometimes quite noticeable). Thus, according to Mchedlishvili (2016, p.1), the US was generally regarded through the lenses of hard security and geopolitics, whereas the European Union and European governments were considered to be forces for a gradual spread of democracy and institutional efficiency. Unlike the US practice of "exporting democracy" (including by military means), in the Union democracy is treated primarily as a cultural value, which must evolve without external pressure and over a lengthy period of time (Malysheva, 2014, p.43). In addition, the United States in pursuing its policy tends to regard the role of traditional, ethnic and religious factors as less significant, and therefore frequently underestimates them. The EU, unlike the US, proceeds from the assumption that these factors are of exceptional importance in Georgia, where their role is no less important than the national and state identity.

Initially, the US was much more active than the EU in developing relations with Georgia, as Nalbandov argues:

> The United States has been the primary lobby state of Georgia ever since its independence, supporting it mostly financially. … Georgia regularly led the list of world states in terms of per capita U.S. economic aid. Between 1992 and 2010, Georgia has received U.S.$3.3 billion.
>
> (Nalbandov, 2014, p.63)

In 2015, Tbilisi received 20 million dollars of American Foreign Military Financing aid (Kucera, 2015). 2016 has witnessed the US-assisted launch of a five-year Economic Resilience Program for Georgia with a total funding of $15 million. Another $1 million followed as assistance from the Department of Labor for an International Labor organization program, in addition to the existing $2 million US contribution. In the field of education, in 2016 the US funded three Fulbright Graduate Student Program scholarships for Georgia. Security assistance of $20 million was secured for Tbilisi through the European Reassurance Initiative. The U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation has funded 14 preservation projects with more than $1 million (U.S. Department of State, 2016). In July 2016, the US Secretary of State paid a visit to Georgia, signing a bilateral memorandum for defense and security partnership between Washington and Tbilisi, aimed at modernization of Georgia's armed forces (Markedonov, 2016).

In the security sphere, the US's projects with regard to Georgia include the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP), which began in 2002, and the Sustainment and Stability Operations Program (SSOP; in place since 2005). As part of these programs, the United States has funded reforms in the Georgian army, and provided equipment and training for soldiers and officers (Falkowski, 2016, p.20).

One of the main US priorities in Georgia has been the country's steady integration into NATO. The April 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit named Georgia (together with Ukraine) as an aspirant country for the first time, and stated that it "will become a member of NATO." However, no concrete date was specified for when this event, historic for Georgia, would take place. At the Summit, the Baltic states, Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic sided with the United States in support of Georgian (and Ukrainian) bids for the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP), but this was thwarted by the "old Europe" states, in particular by Germany (Mchedlishvili, 2016, p.10). The US's failure to persuade its allies to include Georgia in the MAP was a serious blow not only for Georgia, but for the Bush administration as well.

After this blow, the authority relations between Georgia and the US developed in such formats as were feasible. In January 2009, the US-Georgian Charter on Strategic Partnership was signed in Washington, DC, envisioning greater integration of Georgia into the Euro-Atlantic alliance; NATO's promises to open its doors to Georgia's entry into the alliance also remained in force. In November 2011, at the opening of the NATO-Georgia Commission in Tbilisi, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen named further reforms as the condition for Georgia to join the Alliance, calling them "Georgia's ticket to membership in NATO" (Civil Georgia, 2011).

After the change of government and Saakashvili's departure, the Georgian Dream government continued to cooperate with NATO, in forms which included the involvement of Georgian troops in NATO operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and the launch of the NATO–Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center in August 2015 (Falkowski, 2016, p.5). However, it seems that the question of Georgian admission to NATO is losing its urgency. The US did not finish the job; everything stopped halfway (Sharashenidze, 2014, p.48). At the NATO Warsaw Summit (July 2016) the Georgian government firmly demanded acknowledgment of Georgia's progress in political and military reforms, hoping to participate in the MAP. However, no new members were invited to join the alliance as there was no political will for NATO enlargement.

Unlike those of the US, the presence of European institutions in Georgia was relatively small until the mid-2000s (Sabahi and Wamer, 2004). The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1999 was the only major legal institution that shaped relations between the EU and Georgia. It was the Rose Revolution in Georgia that prompted the European Union to include not only Georgia, but other countries of the South Caucasus into its Neighborhood policy in 2004, contrary to its previous decision to leave this issue for the more distant future (Nodia, 2005, p.70).

However, since the Russian-Georgian war, the vector of Georgia's foreign policy has shifted away from the United States towards Europe, and the EU has also made some institutional "steps" towards Georgia. For Saakashvili, the rapprochement with the EU (preferably with the possibility of full membership in the Union) was of strategic importance. His reforms had a coercive

character and therefore led to the rise of much discontent and resentment. The reforms also failed to address the infrastructural and participatory aspects of state capacity. It was only the development of comprehensive authority relations with the Union that could make the reforms sustainable and irreversible, and turn Saakashvili's tactical success into a strategic one. For the West, support of Saakashvili's reforms has led to some reputational losses, as it continued to support them even when Georgia began to show increasingly authoritarian trends.

Saakashvili's ambitious plans with regard to potential EU membership have remained unfulfilled, though some progress has been made. Georgia was invited to participate in the EU's Eastern Partnership program initiated in 2009, and a huge leap towards closer integration with the EU was made by signing the Association Agreement with the Union in June 2014 (including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, or DCFTA). The Agreement came into force in September 2014. The ratification process of the EU's national parliaments was completed in December 2015. Being the "classic" authority instrument of the EU, the Agreement contains serious reform commitments on the part of Georgia in exchange for visa regime liberalization and access to the EU's internal market. For instance, one of the conditions of the country's EU Association Agreement was an obligation to pass anti-discrimination legislation. The parliament duly did so in May 2014. The European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM), which was established after the war in 2008, is still operating in Georgia and monitoring compliance with the Agreement. Finally, in December 2015 Brussels announced that the EU would abolish visas for Georgian nationals in 2016 (Falkowski, 2016).

In 2007–2013 the EU provided €452 million for Georgia within the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) program (for budget support, communication and energy infrastructure development, support for the private sector, internally displaced persons, etc.). Within the "Single Support Framework," the Union committed itself to funding Georgia on a scale of €410 million for the period of 2014–2017. On July 1, 2016, the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU entered into full force (Vedomosti, 2015). There is an operating project for combating money laundering and terrorism financing, with a budget of €500,000 co-financed by the EU (90 percent) and the Council of Europe (10 percent). In 2015, the European Assistance Package for Georgia accounted for €100 million. Half of the sum was invested in the spheres of agriculture, food safety and quality standards. €30 million was invested in support of public administration and public service delivery. €14 million was paid to assist Georgia in meeting European standards on energy, transport and combating crime. €6 million was given as subsidy to support civil society and engage it in the decision-making process (Civil Georgia, 2015a). Georgia has so far adopted over 7,000 European standards in the areas of safety and environment protection. Around 15 projects are currently in operation under the Mobility

Partnership. The EU contributes to Georgia's economy vehicle by providing macro-financial assistance of €46 million. Georgian researchers have access to Horizon 2020, an initiative aimed at boosting innovation (The European Commission, 2015). The country also benefits greatly from the Union's assistance in the form of expert support (which concerns mainly the implementation of reforms and adaptation to EU standards) and training for the civil service and state functionaries. As Falkowski (2016, p.19) stresses, "Hundreds of development projects have been implemented year after year by Western development agencies, embassies and non-governmental organizations."

However, not everything is so rosy in the EU–Georgia relationship. Disappointment came with the Russian-Georgian war. From the Georgian side, the disappointment was caused not only by the fact that both the US and the EU chose not to confront Russia openly, but also by the fact that no explanations were articulated as to the reasons for the war. Thus, the Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia could not definitively answer the question of why the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia had begun.[4] Welt (2009, p.2) notes that "the Report aspired to produce a collective *mea culpa*: in effect, recognition by all parties that waging armed conflict and violating human rights are bad, and that all are to blame for taking part." The EU's Fact-Finding Mission failed to produce a common narrative regarding the causes of the war.

This is, however, no accident, but a reflection of the special character of the EU foreign policy arrangements that I attempted to explain in Chapter 3. According to Filippov, the

> Western reaction to the Russian actions, meanwhile, is influenced by the background of strategically connected multi-level interactions that Russia has with its Western partners on various issues. In the case of the EU, these are interactions between the all-Union institutions and the Russian government, or Russia's bilateral relations with member-states, or cross-border cooperation at the sub-national level. In the light of such a strategic linkage, it is reasonable to assume that while some actors in Europe focus more on the relations between Russia and the EU as a whole, other key actors are more interested in good bilateral relations or in economic cooperation. Similarly, some players focus on specific issues, such as security, environmental issues, energy supplies or democratic development. It means that the Council, the Commission, the Parliament, individual member states, regional blocs and sub-national governments of the member states are all likely to select different strategies *vis-a-vis* Russia.
>
> (Filippov, 2009, pp.1842–1843)

"Unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia," continues Filippov, "generated a fully predictable ostracism of Russia in the world" (Filippov, 2009, p.1842). However, the problem is precisely that Russia's behavior

did not generate ostracism; on the contrary, the US and the EU have sent Russia a clear signal that coercion works, and that they in fact recognize Russia's special interests within the post-Soviet space. Russia has received the signal, and made it a presupposition for its subsequent actions in Ukraine. At the same time, the involvement of the Western powers in the Caucasian region (in particular, in Georgia) is diminishing (Falkowski, 2016, p.6).

Is Georgia still exceptional?

Is Georgia still exceptional among post-Soviet countries? Is Zurab Zhvania's statement at the Council of Europe meeting in 1999, "I am Georgian and therefore I am European" (cited in Nalbandov, 2014, p.98), still correct? Is Georgia still of the same relevance to the political agenda of the West? Given the latest political developments in Georgia, these are not idle questions.

During his presidency, Saakashvili took a firmly pro-Western course, and this was a huge risk, as this choice meant starting an open confrontation with Russia, one whose scope and duration Georgia was not able to control or to predict. This courageous and outstanding reform experiment during Saakashvili's rule in Georgia was the focus of attention for both the EU and the US.

Nalbandov, however, describes Georgia as a country that is "highly adaptive to fluctuations of the geo-political environments" mainly due to its geographic location (Nalbandov, 2014, p.97). Georgia is still located in geographical proximity to Russia, and, unlike the times of Saakashvili, the pro-Russian stance of the current Georgian leadership is highly conspicuous, despite its declarations that it is aiming at irreversible integration with the EU (Tsulukiani, 2013, p.2). Georgia is restoring relations with Russia—and not only in the cultural and economic spheres (such as sending Georgian athletes to take part in the Universiade Games in Russia in 2013 and Georgia's participation in the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, as well as the resumption of Georgian exports to Russia), but also in politics, by making official statements that show aspirations to rapprochement with Russia-centered integration projects. According to Falkowski (2016, p.25),

> As far as relations with Russia are concerned, [the current Georgian government's] policy has been different from that pursued by Saakashvili. It is a priority for the government to normalize relations with Russia and not to provoke Moscow, irrespective of the hostile actions it takes. Tbilisi has been trying not to raise the Abkhazia and South Ossetian issues on its own initiative.

Institutional and policy reforms in Georgia were strongly supported by the West, but as Nodia (2005, p.69) argues, "The country's social and historical experience with 'Westernness' is minimal. Never in its history has Georgia been in close contact with the West." When developing authority

relations with US and the EU, the incentives of the Georgian leadership were certain rewards associated with pursuing reforms that would bring the country closer to "Western standards." Therefore, it is logical to expect that if Georgian efforts were not rewarded, this would result in disappointment in Georgia's "Western choice." This disappointment is strengthened by the deterioration of the economic situation: the country's economy did not really improve. On the contrary, it contracted and did not provide the expected increase in employment (BTI, 2016). Stagnation has begun in Georgia; in some areas the situation seems to be reverting to the "pre-Saakashvili" status (including rising crime levels, corruption and nepotism) (Falkowaski, 2016, p.6). The Georgian economy has been adversely affected by the short-term effects of the DCFTA agreement concluded with the EU (the need to adopt a number of EU regulations, e.g., labor legislation, or the increase in electricity prices for households [Falkowaski, 2016, p.41]). All in all, so far there have been no tangible material results—no rewards for Georgia's European choice—but Georgians want them, and want to feel them as soon as possible.

These "weak points" have been immediately exploited by Russia, which is trying to quickly "repair" relations with Georgia. For instance, direct flights between Moscow and Tbilisi have been restored, and Russia is increasing its cooperation with Georgia in the areas of energy and transport. The restrictions on Russian television broadcasting have been lifted (Falkowaski, 2016, p.27). There are more and more pro-Russian organizations in Georgia, used by the Russian state as "points of entry" to Georgia for further development of authority-style relations with the country. Among these pro-Russian organizations are political parties (for instance, Democratic Movement–United Georgia), nongovernmental organizations (Eurasian Choice of Georgia and the Eurasian Institute), and the media (Sputnik Georgia and Georgia and the World) (Falkowaski, 2016, p.33). Many of them promote the central idea on which Russia's authority relations with post-Soviet countries are based—the idea of the reintegration of the post-Soviet space around Russia. That which was unthinkable in Saakashvili's days is now becoming the norm in Georgia. Overall, the idea is gradually gaining popularity that Georgia made the wrong decision by openly confronting Russia, and that it should instead have developed proper relations with it. Even Russia's annexation of Crimea, and Russian support for insurgents in Eastern Ukraine, have not reversed this trend.

The elites of the country are highly split with regard to their attitude to Russia. In an interview with *EUobserver* in summer 2016, President Margvelashvili said that though Russia is a "factor" in Georgian policy-making, it does not have a veto on Georgia's foreign policy. He also said that in order to retain influence, Russia is now ready to activate any of the frozen conflicts in its neighborhood and "to destabilize half of the Eurasian continent if need be" (Rettman, 2016). At the same time, the political clan of ex-prime minister and billionaire banker Ivanishvili, who exerts strong influence on the government, advocates a "pro-Russian" strategic choice by Georgia.

The failure of the European project in Georgia would mean the failure of Western (first of all the EU's) authority relations—with regard to Georgia, but also with regard to the neighborhood. It would also negatively affect the pro-European aspirations of countries like Ukraine or Moldova. And any stagnation in the development of authority relations between the EU and Georgia *is* a failure, as it shows the Georgian leadership that the EU's interest in and support of Georgia is situational rather than long-term and sustainable. Under such circumstances, the Georgian leadership has few incentives to suffer the losses (even temporary ones) that result from maintaining authority relations with the Union. Authority relations of the EU type are developed as principally long-term relations; as they presuppose changes by the subordinate, they can't provide benefits in the short run, and in this sense they negatively differ from the authority-similar relations that Russia is proposing to Georgia. With this in mind, the Georgian leadership has to make a strategic decision—either to confirm the choice made by Saakashvili, or to fundamentally change it in favor of Russia. The idea of maintaining "proper" relations both with the EU and Russia, one proclaimed by the Georgian leadership, for all its apparent attractiveness, has no chance of working. These choices are different at their core, and there is no way to combine them.

Notes

1 At that time, it was often said in Georgia that Margvelashvili was only a puppet in the hands of Ivanishvili, the prime minister (and billionaire).
2 In 1992 Georgia and Russia signed an agreement on joint control of the Georgian-Turkish border.
3 This was, of course, in the past. Since 2014, the main objects of hatred have been Ukrainian politicians.
4 On September 30, 2009, the Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia was presented to the parties to the conflict, the Council of the EU, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (The Council of the European Union, 2009).

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8 Ukraine

The "battlefield"

Compared to Belarus and Georgia, Ukraine is considerably larger in territorial size, and this alone hampers both the initiation and—more importantly—the completion of reform processes. This factor also significantly decreases the ability of the state to implement guidance of the country's development. However, its large size is not Ukraine's only difficulty with regard to successful reforms. Throughout its post-Soviet history, regional cleavages, expressed in electoral behavior and political attitudes, have been one of the central features of its political development. In all presidential and parliamentary elections, western Ukrainian regions have supported nationalist and pro-Western political parties and politicians, while eastern regions have supported pro-Russian ones (Katchanovski, 2007).

A cleavage that splits the country into two communities comparable in size is the least favorable for building institutions acceptable to all. If such a state is headed by a president (and the authority of the presidential office holder is real rather than symbolic), the president will necessarily represent one of the communities, while members of other equally-sized communities will feel slighted. This has increasingly been happening in Ukraine. Let us recall the second round of the 2010 presidential elections, when Kiev and sixteen regions voted for Yulia Timoshenko (who embodied the country's "Western choice"), while nine regions and the city of Sebastopol supported Viktor Yanukovych as the "Russian choice." These two parts of Ukraine were almost equal in terms of population size: 24 million lived in the western part of the country and 21.3 million in the eastern. During the worst crisis since the country obtained independence in 1991, a crisis Ukraine has been experiencing since 2014, this division has materialized as open separatism pursued by the eastern parts of the country and the appearance of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics.

Regional cleavages pose a serious problem for national development. However, in Ukraine this problem is aggravated by the other major Ukrainian feature, the chronic weakness of the national central government. This brings us to the central problem of Ukraine, which is of decisive importance not only for its internal development but also for the country's external positioning—the deficit of state capacity. I would hesitate to define Ukraine as a failed state

as many experts do (Bershidsky, 2015; Gil, 2015; Sapir, 2015), but the question of "Ukrainian" independent agency is regularly raised by Ukraine's own politicians and scholars. At various conferences, I regularly hear the argument that Ukraine's future is fully dependent on the relations between Russia and the West. And I ask myself: Where is Ukraine in this thesis?

The issue of how to increase state capacity greatly matters for Ukraine, and is currently much more relevant for it than regaining Crimea. Corruption and the rule of oligarchs, which have become the two most significant challenges for the country, cannot be tackled without an effective state that presupposes, inter alia, a powerful national center which would unite Ukraine in practice and not just declaratively. While it continues to remain economically dependent on Russia, Ukraine is unable to create lasting authority relations with the EU, which require state capacity, and it may become subject to coercion at any time.

So far Ukraine's political destiny has been that of a country trapped between two political entities that have significantly more political weight. This double asymmetry between the EU and Ukraine on the one hand and between Russia and Ukraine on the other hand places the country in constant tension, as its spectrum of external action is limited by the interests of the two dominant powers at its borders. Until recently Ukraine was incomparably more important for Russia than for the EU, however, this strategic importance did not make Ukraine "the subject," it rather remained an object of Russia's geopolitical ambitions.

Both authority relations and coercive relations operate within a "superordinate-subordinate" framework, where Ukraine plays the latter role. Ukraine is and will very likely remain in a vulnerable position towards the EU and Russia in the years to come, but it can at least influence the degree to which this vulnerability plays out.

With regard to EU–Ukraine relations, the first criterion of authority relations, which is legitimacy, is partially in effect. Ukraine considers the EU to be in a position to place conditions on the bilateral relations between the two, but at the same time it finds the EU's demands too strict and the required pace of reforms too fast. The EU, meanwhile, recognizes Kiev's government as legitimate and has made it the sole negotiation partner speaking on the part of the whole population. The situation with the second criterion of authority relations, which is their voluntary character, is not as straightforward as it might seem. Naturally, the European choice for Ukraine is associated with "rewards" such as access to the visa-free area and overall better living standards for the population. But disillusionment with these hopes is already present among ordinary citizens. Meanwhile, a voluntary choice requires the existence of options to choose from, which is currently not the case for Ukraine, taking into consideration Kiev's attempts to disregard the Russian factor. The third criterion of authority relations, namely the ability of the actors involved to make credible commitments, is problematic as well. The EU is reluctant to grant Ukraine the possibility of membership, as Europe

perceives Ukraine as an unpredictable partner, able to withdraw its commitments and to change its set of beliefs and attitudes in a way that is difficult to anticipate.

National context: much ado about nothing?

Ukraine became an independent state on January 1, 1992, when there was no consolidated political community enclosed within its borders. This was not unique to Ukraine: after gaining independence, the majority of former Soviet states faced similar challenges of state- and nation-building. Today, after 25 years of independence, both the state and the nation in Ukraine have still not been built. Again, this is not unique to Ukraine; many post-Soviet countries (including the largest) are in the same situation. However, in the case of Ukraine, this factor invites greater puzzlement—perhaps because more was expected from this developed, educated and (at least geographically) European country than from others?

To date, five presidents have ruled Ukraine. Leonid Kravchuk, the first president of the independent Ukraine, attempted to centralize power and to reproduce "a smaller version of the Soviet economy instead of a true market economy." This system copied the governance style of the Soviet administrative market economy. As Kravchuk left as a result of the 1994 elections, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) fell by almost 50 percent (Wilson, 2013, p.1). And that is all there is to say about him. With regard to the legacy that his successor, Leonid Kuchma, left Ukraine, scholars' conclusions differ radically. Thus, according to Wilson, Kuchma succeeded neither in state-building nor in market reforms. He expanded presidential authority, but not to the benefit of the whole nation—instead he used this expansion to become the oligarchs' patron. Thus, there were literally no obstacles that could emerge from the central authority, or from effective economic institutions, or from both, to prevent oligarchs from capturing the economy in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Control over heavy industry, the core of the Ukrainian economy, was parceled out to rival regional clans by Kuchma in insider deals (Wilson, 2013, p.1).

Kuzio holds a different view on the period of Kuchma's reign. He considers the period from 1994 to 1998 under Kuchma as a productive time of consolidation. The first three years of the Kuchma era were, according to him, exceptionally fruitful as they secured their reversibility of Ukraine's independence (Kuzio, 1998, p.1). Territorial integrity was by 1997 no longer in question, as the inhabitants of Crimea gave up slogans calling for reunification with Russia. And

> between 1994 and 1997 Ukraine became a strategic asset of the West. The launch of economic and political reform, the peaceful resolution of domestic disputes, removal of the last nuclear weapons by June 1996 and support for NATO enlargement were just some of the factors

which worked to convince the West that Ukraine was the "linchpin" of European security.

<div align="right">(Kuzio, 1998, p.2)</div>

"By 1996," argues Kuzio, "President Kuchma could claim that Ukraine had completed its state-building" (Kuzio, 1998, p.3). Kuzio's statement is about the completion of state-building, but not nation-building. However, even this was premature: the Orange Revolution very soon proved that the Ukrainian state under Kuchma was not able to withstand pressure from below.

In December 1999, Kuchma appointed a pro-Western prime minister, Viktor Yushchenko, who launched economic reforms that boosted growth, but at the same time enriched the oligarchs (Wilson, 2013, p.1). The great East/West geographic divide was combined with political, economic and cultural fragmentation, allowing for several powerful centers of gravity, while the rivalry between them created an environment that negatively affected both political stability and economic development (Nalbandov, 2014, p.69). Corruption skyrocketed.

In 2004, thousands of Ukrainian citizens voiced their discontent with the governmental policy vector in the national capital over two months. This was the Orange Revolution, triggered by an attempt to falsify the presidential election results. The revote brought victory to the oppositional candidate, former prime minister Yushchenko, and this was seen by many as Ukraine's breakthrough to democracy and an example for other post-Soviet countries. However, the Orange Revolution euphoria quickly turned into disappointment. It did change the elites, but did not change the system. After the failure of the Orange Revolution to fulfil its pledges, political regionalization in the country was exacerbated further (Nalbandov, 2014, p.71). As Wilson (2013, p.1) argues, "Moreover, pro-Orange voters were nearly all in Western and Central Ukraine, allowing defeated candidate Viktor Yanukovych, backed by Russia, to question the revolution's legitimacy in the east and south." Unlike Saakashvili's government in Georgia, which was pursuing the course of reforms virtually at the same time, Yushchenko's government appeared incapable of implementing real and tangible changes. Also unlike Saakashivili, Yushchenko's reputation (as a pro-Western politician) did not stand him in good stead when it came to his country. At the same time, the failure of the Orange Revolution provided a powerful argument to the opponents of reform and supporters of stability in Russia: if the Orange Revolution was supposed to be positive, then where were the results? The absence of progressive change means that the costs of reforms, such as political instability and falling living standards, are not only painful—they are borne in vain. Therefore, the best option for Russia, according to this line of argument, would be to preserve the status quo.

In 2010, Yanukovych won the presidential elections, mainly due to the disillusionment of the revolution's supporters and the increased hope for Russia as the only source of desperately needed funds. Unlike his predecessor, he

started his term by actively prosecuting his political opponents, trying to centralize power (taking into account the errors of the past), and to improve economic resilience by means of raising the pension age. However, all this could not replace thorough economic reforms. Ukraine remained a rentier state, similar to Russia, but with a difference in the sources of revenue: in Russia, the state and oligarchs extracted rent from gas and oil sales, while in Ukraine, oligarchs and politicians extracted rent from energy transit. As Wilson (2013, p.3) wrote, "Various licenses and concessions depended on political favor, facilitating corrupt lobbying, and oligarchs manipulated the political process to ensure the supply of subsidized gas, coal, and electricity." The existence of strong regional and sectoral interest groups and their constant struggles made the launch and especially the completion of thorough reforms virtually impossible. The rent-seeking strategies of the elites poisoned and perverted Ukraine's political system and political institutions (Torbakov, 2001, p.468). Corruption levels under Yanukovych were extremely high. According to a survey conducted by Transparency International in Ukraine, in 2010 about 34 percent of respondents admitted they had had to engage in bribery at least once in the previous 12 months. In 2011, Ukraine had the same corruption score as Tajikistan and its results were worse than those of Uganda, Togo and Nigeria (Glukhov, 2011). In 2012, the country was 144th in the worldwide Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2012). According to Ukraine's union of employers, the main spheres where corruption schemes flourished were state procurement, fiscal service, customs, grain sales, lease of land and licenses for the development of natural resources. Ukraine's official statistics service published data according to which *all* state procurements during Victor Yanukovych's reign were accompanied by bribes at a scale ranging from 15 percent to 50 percent of the purchase's total sum (Censor.net.ua, 2014). In his article, Torbakov quotes Alexander Motyl, who describes the worst-case scenario for Ukraine as the country's transformation into a corrupt and impoverished state, or in Motyl's words, "Zaireization"—Ukraine's transformation into an Eastern European version of the former Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The essence of such a development is that "corrupt elites feed off their state, their society, and their economy, ultimately driving them all to possible perdition" (Motyl, 1998, cited in Torbakov, 2001, p.471). This picture could be of Yanukovych's Ukraine.

In the western parts of the country Yanukovych was hated as Russia's protégé. However, curiously, in Eastern Ukraine people despised him for turning into a politician who was, as Kuzio (2015, p.456) remarks, "neither pro-Russian, nor pro-European, but pro-Yanukovych." During his official time in power, negative attitudes towards him were very cautiously articulated. Six days after Yanukovych's escape from Ukraine, he participated in a press conference in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, where he claimed to be the only legitimate president of Ukraine and voiced an appeal for a coup d'état that would enable him to resume his presidential term. Ukraine's new power holders, representing the interests of the inhabitants of Central

and Western Ukraine, used this occasion to open a legal investigation against him. Among the population of these regions, Yanukovych was openly treated as the political figure responsible for the Maidan shootings and a cowardly ("ostrich-like") president who used his office to enrich himself and his closest circle, "the family" (Taylor, 2014). Soon after his exile, Ukraine's General Prosecutor's Office accused Yanukovych of unconstitutional power seizure in 2010, as after his coming to presidential office, he altered the constitution by introducing amendments that significantly widened the head of state's competences. What Yanukovych could not suppress during his reign was a civil society that proved surprisingly resilient (Wilson, 2013, p.5). He was also unable to make the people forget the rise and euphoria of the Orange Revolution, even if this collective action proved unsuccessful.

In the late fall of 2013, large-scale protests that soon came to be referred to as "Euromaidan" began in the national capital in response to the regime's decision to renege on a promise to pursue closer relations with the European Union through the Association Agreement. The outrage of Ukraine's citizens was caused not only by the fact of the refusal to sign the document with the EU, but also by the manner in which it was made: very suddenly, without any public discussion, on the eve of the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius. Protests intensified, and the government was powerless to tame them. It should be noted that the issue of the Agreement was only a trigger for the outbreak of large-scale protests. Among their deeper reasons were inability to tolerate an extremely corrupt political leader and absolute unwillingness to come under Russia's authority (see Kurkov, 2014; Peisakhin, 2015; USAID, 2015; Walker, 2016). Yanukovych fled the country in February, seeking protection (and money) in Russia. His ousting prompted the interim government to call an early presidential election. In February 2014, the parliament voted to return the balance of institutional power to the parliament and away from the presidency, a consistent with earlier constitutional revisions (Herron and Boyko, 2015, p.5).

Petro Poroshenko came to power on May 25, 2014, in the first round of elections with a result of 54.7 percent of votes. It may be noteworthy that prior to his political engagement, Poroshenko used to be a confectionary businessman (the owner of the Roshen chocolate factory, rated 18th in the Candy Industry Top 100 in 2012). His political activity was launched when he invested in the creation of the Party of the Regions and then provided financial support for Yushchenko's campaign. Before the Maidan started, Poroshenko was not a popular figure with Ukraine's population and mostly remained in the shadows. But the then political frontrunners such as Arseniy Yatsenyuk (former leader of the All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland") and Oleh Tyahnybok (leader of the far-right Svoboda party) showed themselves to be incapable of providing viable solutions in a crisis. Consequently, their popularity rapidly evaporated. Poroshenko was able to select the right niche for himself by calling for a peaceful crisis resolution, and successfully took the presidential office by riding the resulting

wave of popularity (Palinchak, 2016). Soon after his election, Poroshenko announced the dissolution of parliament in August, with early elections to be conducted in late October (Herron and Boyko, 2015, p.6). Herron and Boyko (2015, p.1) found the Ukrainian parliamentary elections of 2014 to be an opportunity to investigate how state capacity is maintained in an environment where sovereignty is threatened. They came to the conclusion that these elections can generally be considered a success.

Of 29 parties registered for Ukraine's parliamentary elections of 2014, 6 reached a result over the 5 percent barrier and got through to the parliament. Voter turnout in Ukraine's regions fluctuated around 52 percent, with the exception of Lviv Oblast, where it reached 70 percent, and the Luhansk Oblast, where it was only 32 percent (Ukraine Elections, 2014). Yatsenyuk's National Front party came first (21.61 percent of votes), closely followed by Poroshenko's Bloc (21.45 percent of votes). A total of 423 deputies were elected instead of the legally prescribed 450. Crimea and Sebastopol were at that point parts of Russia, with 12 majoritarian constituencies; Kiev's Central Electoral Commission also banned the vote in 15 of 32 constituencies in the Donbass Region (Ria Novosti, 2014).

The resulting trilateral institutional arrangement between the parliament, the government and the president was fragile. A new round of Ukraine's political crisis, this time under Poroshenko, began when Minister of Economy Abromavičius declared his intention to resign. This event triggered a series of verbal firefights and a blame game within political institutions for the failure of the fight against corruption. In mid-February 2015, the parliament called the government's functioning inefficient and opened a vote of nonconfidence against Prime Minister Yatsenyuk. As this attempt to remove him from office did not succeed, the Self-help and Fatherland parliamentary factions came to view his remaining as a deal between the oligarchs and government officials and left the parliamentary coalition as an expression of protest. However, after their exit, the coalition remained de jure because the Radical Party was still present (Khomenko, 2016).

Eventually, Yatsenyuk still had to resign, which was regarded by many as a result of shadow political bargaining among Ukraine's "grey cardinals." The reconfiguration of the parliament brought about the establishment of the new government under Volodymyr Groysman, the president's protégé (Tischenko, 2016). The reconfiguration allowed Poroshenko to proceed with the reforms of the Ukraine2020 program, for which the country was offered financial assistance by the IMF and the US. Experts argued that the balance of power had shifted significantly towards strengthening the president. Many feared it was a sign of Poroshenko entering a Yanukovych-like vicious cycle.

The new Ukrainian government included virtually no representative figures with whom the majority of citizens in the Eastern and Southern regions could identify. Nominated ministers were presented for "popular approval" to the Euromaidan before the vote in parliament, thus sending a strong and clear message to the East and South of the country: the interests of those who had

failed to accept the Euromaidan movement were not going to be taken into consideration (Halling and Stewart, 2014, p.2).

Following the annexation of Crimea, the Donetsk and Luhansk regions voiced aspirations that they could repeat this experience and join Russia by first gaining independence from Ukraine. On April 7, 2014, the Donetsk separatists declared the independence of the Donetsk Republic, occupied local key infrastructural facilities and demanded that central authorities in Kiev officially bring the Donetsk region out of Kiev's authority. The referendum on Donetsk's independence took place on May 11 and was recognized neither by Kiev nor by external observers such as the EU and the US. On May 16, the Constitution of the Donetsk Republic was nevertheless adopted. It proclaimed Donetsk a parliamentary republic with two official languages. The "Russian spring" in Luhansk was a practically identical scenario. In response, Kiev's General Prosecutor's Office declared Donetsk and Luhansk terrorist organizations (Korrespondent.net, 2015). Ten days later, Kiev began an "anti-terrorist operation" against these entities in order to keep them within the country by any means necessary (War in Donbass, 2015). A trilateral attempt (by the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine) to stop bloodshed in Eastern Ukraine by signing the 1st Minsk Protocol was unsuccessful. The authorities in Kiev refused to stop military coercion with regard to Eastern Ukraine, or to implement decentralization, improve the humanitarian and economic situation in the Donbass region or withdraw the military. Minsk II replaced the first arrangement in February 2015 and featured a leading role by the Normandy Four (Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia), but did not bring groundbreaking success either. Currently, a huge part of the Donetsk republic's territory is controlled by Kiev's authorities, with around one-third of the territory ascribed the status of "temporarily occupied land." The Donetsk and Luhansk unrecognized republics have agreed on the creation of a soft confederation called Novorossiya.

At the moment, as has been the case throughout Ukraine's post-Soviet history, its main problem is neither an absence of an authentic history of its own, nor a failure to formulate a common national idea in the years of independence. The main problem is the chronic lack of state capacity. The rise of Ukrainian nationalism, which can be predicted and even expected, but manifests at times in ways too wild even for tolerant European observers, comes as a result of a combination of three factors—excited masses, a weak and incapable state, and the "Russian factor."

"My brother, my enemy"

Across the whole post-Soviet space there is no other country that is as strategically important for Russia as Ukraine. On this point, the fair and repeatedly quoted words of Zbigniew Brzezinski (1997, p.46) immediately come to mind: without Ukraine, he argues, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire. I have some doubts as to whether Russia could build a Eurasian empire *with*

Ukraine, but without it, this project is unfeasible for certain. Russia used a targeted approach towards Ukraine, and it did its best to achieve its goal. And all in vain: no other country—both within the post-Soviet space and beyond—has brought so many disappointments to the Russian leadership.

Russia's annexation of Crimean 2014 and its support for the separatists in Eastern Ukraine have led some observers to the idea of a "paradigm shift" in Russia's foreign policy: from state-driven foreign policy to one driven by ethno-nationalist ideas (Rutland, 2014; Zevelev, 2014). However, even if this paradigm shift is really occurring, evidence for it must be sought elsewhere than in Russia–Ukraine relations, as nothing principally new is happening between the two countries. The entire post-Soviet political history of Russia–Ukraine relations is a history of ever-increasing coercion—from punishing Ukraine through cancelation of special prices on gas (it is known that if rewards are regularly given, they can be withheld as a punishment, and vice versa) to its culmination in the annexation of Crimea and support for insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. Even the periods of "normalization" were in fact times of camouflaged coercion. Russia persistently continued its attempts to ensnarl Ukraine in authority relations and insisted that it should make a final choice between Russia and the EU (wherein it was implied that this choice would certainly be in favor of Russia). Russia's insistence that Ukraine should make this choice implies that making the choice is an easy task, because Ukraine is not fully capable as a sovereign state and requires externally administered frameworks. As Kazharski (2017) argues, these were "de-sovereignizing" discourses that legitimized Russia's intervention in Ukraine's domestic affairs in the eyes of Russia's authorities.

Meanwhile, Ukraine was almost constantly showing signs of drifting away from Russia's geopolitical space, and Russia activated mechanisms of political and economic pressure in response. With regard to Ukraine, the autocratic Russian leadership has used all its capabilities and displayed the art of coercive diplomacy by constructing threats that were combinations of deeds and words, but still has not reached its political goals.

Indeed, the Russian leadership had serious objective reasons for maintaining hope for Ukraine's "right" final choice. One reason was the divide between Western and Eastern Ukraine, where the latter is very closely linked to Russia culturally and economically. The other reason was the traditional dependence of Ukraine on Russian gas (and the rent from gas transit to the EU countries), as well as on Russian investments—Russia has traditionally been one of the largest foreign investors in the Ukrainian economy. Nalbandov quotes the words of Boris Heifetz: "Russian businessmen own four out of six oil refineries, almost all nonferrous metallurgy plants; have special interests in the energy sector, steel industry and have begun the expansion in engineering, chemical industry, and the financial sector of Ukraine" (Heifetz, 2013, cited in Nalbandov, 2014, p.75).

Ukraine's dependence on energy exports from Russia is an issue of critical importance, being one of the factors that set the format of Russia–Ukraine

relations. Ukraine depends on Russia for 60 percent of its natural gas (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, 2015), and this greatly corrupted Ukraine's elites when, after 1994, Ukraine's centralized energy system began to decentralize into the hands of gas traders. Around 95 percent of Russia's energy exports to the EU pass through the territory of Ukraine, and so the EU member states are also dependent on Russia–Ukraine energy relations. Consequently, Russia can use its energy exports as political leverage not only for interfering with Ukraine's internal affairs, but also for trying to affect the EU countries.

Russia's latest transit contract with Ukraine was signed in 2009 and will expire in 2019. However, in early 2016, Kiev raised the price for Russia's energy transit through its territory, which led to Moscow making an effort to ensure the availability of alternative transit routes. Nord Stream2 (an additional branch of Nord Stream) and South Stream (which soon fell victim to the EU's Third Energy Package) were projects planned for this purpose. The already functioning Nord Stream, which connects Russia and Germany via the Baltic Sea, is already filled to capacity and cannot fully substitute for the Ukrainian route. After the annexation of Crimea, Gazprom became able to build a new pipeline through the Black Sea by avoiding Turkey and bringing gas to the surface in Bulgaria. In February 2016, Gazprom signed a memorandum with the Italian company Edison and the Greek DEPA to organize gas supplies to Europe (Expert Online, 2016a). The joint Russian-European company New European Pipeline is responsible for the implementation of Nord Stream2. Gazprom owns 51 percent of the company's assets, 9 percent are the property of the French Engie, and E.ON, Shell, OMV and BASF own 10 percent each. Gazprom's head Alexey Miller stated that gas supplies via Ukraine are 20 percent more expensive than those via Nord Stream2, which is to be launched in 2019 (Expert online, 2016b). The EU's weak point with regard to the situation is that its energy security as a gas purchaser is constantly endangered by the reliability of Russia as a gas purchaser and Ukraine as a transit area. The attempts of the European countries to diversify gas imports are perceived by Russia as hostile steps that question Moscow's reliability as a gas supplier.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine continued to receive cheap energy from Russia, and it was in 1992–1994 that Ukraine developed a massive debt to Russia for its imports (Balmaceda, 1998, p.261). In living with this debt for years, Ukraine gave Russia a continuous and trouble-free coercive instrument. In the winter of 1999, Russia introduced an oil embargo against Ukraine due to "alleged illegal reexport and stealing of gas, and foot-dragging on its gas debt to Russia" (Balmaceda, 2008, p.54). Until 1998, Russia–Ukraine gas relations were determined by government-level arrangements, according to which the country received: 1) discounted gas to resell to internal consumers (sales abroad were not allowed); 2) "free" gas as a reward for facilitating transit through the country's territory. Ukraine's huge debt to Russia for the first type of gas is explained by the fact that the country's industrial plants wanted to pay by barter deals,

which did not suit Russia's Gazprom gas monopoly. To solve the problem, the parties decided that Ukraine's plants could sell their products to the CIS area via mediator firms, such as the Russian Itera between 1998 and 2001, and Eural TransGas (led by the Ukrainian side) between 2001 and 2004. But starting in the 2000s, Kiev began violating these arrangements by selling gas instead of secondary products to the mediator firm. A Ukraine-led broker company started reselling this gas abroad and getting revenues due to the discounted rates at which Gazprom was exporting gas to Ukraine (Bershidsky, 2016). This situation triggered a series of gas wars between Moscow and Kiev.

In June 2014, Russia cut off gas supplies to Ukraine due to Kiev's failure to pay back the energy debt (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, 2015, p.13). A new gas agreement between Russia and Ukraine was signed at the end of October 2014 with the help of EU mediation. Ukraine partly paid its debt to Russia using money borrowed from IMF Western credits (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, 2015, p.13). It is clear that this was a measure that postponed the problem, rather than a productive solution. It can be argued that gas wars between Russia and Ukraine are likely to continue, at least until the two countries reach an agreement on the question of Eastern Ukraine (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, 2015, p.13). This endlessly repeated situation, where Russia holds all the cards, should push Ukraine's leadership towards a healthier energy policy. So far, Ukraine has been one of the most energy-inefficient countries in the world (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, 2015, p.13), much too lavish for a country with such a debt.

The recent conflict in energy relations between Russia and Ukraine concerns Kiev's unsanctioned extraction of gas during its transportation to Europe through Ukraine's territory. After Ukraine tried to find a legal solution to Gazprom's increased gas prices by appealing to the Stockholm Arbitrage Court (in 2014), Kiev also introduced a so-called virtual reverse gas scheme. Kiev made a deal with European ultimate gas consumers according to this model, such that the transit gas extracted by Kiev from Gazprom's pipeline in Ukraine's territory should be categorized as "reversed" (transported back from the ultimate consumer and sold to Ukraine). This "virtual reverse" scheme was defined by Gazprom as illegal for two reasons. First, the ultimate consumers do not own the gas until it has been physically delivered to their territory. Only afterwards does it become possible for them to manage this gas as their property and to resell it. Second, if the gas has not been transported from the ultimate consumer via the pipeline to Ukraine, no gas supply has taken place in legal terms (Nikolaev, 2016). During the acute phase of the military confrontation in Eastern Ukraine, Ukraine's Naftogas stopped gas delivery to Donetsk and Luhansk. In response, Gazprom started direct gas supplies to these entities and claimed Naftogas to be responsible for payment (Tretyakov, 2015). However, in July 2016, Naftogas declared Russia's gas supplies to the "occupied territories" illegal and refused to pay out the $718.5 million debt for them (Mirnews.su, 2016).

For Russia, the best proof of Ukraine's final choice (and the signal of the country's readiness to develop authority relations with Russia on the latter's terms) would be its joining Russia-centered integration projects in the post-Soviet space. However, Kievhas showed a very cautious and selective approach with regard to this issue. Ukraine became a founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) at the end of 1991, but has firmly resisted any attempt to turn this project into a supranational organization. Ukraine has also held observer status within the Eurasian Economic Community since 2002, and it helped to establish the Single Economic Space in 2003, although it has remained outside the Collective Security Organization established in 2002 on the basis of a treaty that had originally been concluded ten years earlier (White, McAllister and Feklyunina, 2010, p.349).

A real blow to Russia came with Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2003. Russia's President Putin had openly backed Prime Minister Yanukovych, and massive donations were invested into his campaign. But this strategy failed, and it was after the revolution that Russia commenced the first serious campaign in mass media to discredit the revolution itself and the government in Kiev, portraying the revolution as a phenomenon completely orchestrated by Western powers and a product of Western conspiracy, and the Yushchenko government as a Western puppet. Today we are already used to seeing terms like "fascists" and "neo-Nazis" describing the Ukrainian government in the Russian media, but in the early 2000s such a campaign represented something entirely new. As Freedman argues, Putin was deeply troubled by the possibility of color revolutions being initiated in Russia (Freedman, 2014, p.16), although there were absolutely no preconditions for it. In the eyes of the Russian leadership, Ukraine's power holders engaged in a double betrayal of sorts: not only did they behave independently and establish a pro-Western government, but they also taught other countries in Russia's neighborhood a very dangerous lesson. For example, Yushchenko made attempts to establish a strategic partnership with Georgia. During President Saakashvili's visit to Kiev in March 2005, the two presidents signed a joint declaration on mutual support of aspirations to join the EU and NATO. They even launched a joint initiative that called for the creation of a Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) with the purpose of building a common front of democratic states in the region. In addition, Yushchenko attempted to revitalize GUAM, a regional group composed of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova, transforming it into a formal regional organization. These initiatives have increased Moscow's concern with regard to Ukraine's external policy choices (Larrabee, 2007).

However, Russia's fears never came true, as, to Russia's delight, the Orange Revolution project failed. However, the Kremlin's bet on Yanukovych as a president with a unique pro-Russian orientation has overall failed as well. It is true that, compared to Yuschchenko, Yanukovych placed less emphasis on western alliances and more on the improvement of relations with Ukraine's Slavic neighbors, including granting the Russian language the status of an

official language equal to Ukrainian (White, McAllister and Feklyunina, 2010, p.350). Even so, his thinking in general fluctuated between Russia and the EU—and with no apparent benefits for his country. Russia continued to exert pressure on Ukraine, which in August 2013 culminated in a temporary halt to all Ukrainian imports.

In November 2014, Yanukovych turned away from the EU and towards Russia, tempted by a $15 billion loan and cheap energy supplies (Freedman, 2014, p.8). This was the last straw for the Ukrainian people, the "point of no return" and the final end to Russia's hopes to establish authority relations with Ukraine. With the Euromaidan in late fall 2014, Yanukovych was gone, and after some time the new government in Kiev was established. Russia did not recognize the legitimacy of the new government, and defined the situation as "an unconstitutional coup and armed seizure of power" (Kremlin.ru, 2014, cited in Valdai Discussion Club, 2014, p.38). Initially Moscow stressed that Yanukovych would remain the legal president until the election scheduled for May 25. However, after Yanukovych fled to Russia, Moscow discounted his chances to retain leadership of the country (Valdai Discussion Club, 2014, p.35). Russian experts close to the Kremlin explained the Ukrainian events as "a materialized and politicized desire of one group of economic elite to 'hide in Europe' from another group, [which] eventually became a fight of all against all" (Valdai Discussion Club, 2014, p.11) They also stressed—and in this I can agree with them—that the two most popular statements in Ukraine, "Ukraine is not Russia" and "Ukraine is Europe," said nothing about Ukraine itself. Interestingly enough, some Western scholars, echoing their Russian colleagues, put the blame for the conflict in Ukraine at least implicitly on the West for its "lack of recognition for Russia's values and interests in Eurasia, on the one hand, and the critically important role that Ukraine played in the Kremlin's foreign policy calculations, on the other" (Tsygankov, 2015, p.280).

With Kiev in chaos, Russia turned to open coercion against Ukraine. Freedman (2014, p.9) describes Russia's coercive actions in the following way:

> On 27 February, Russian special forces combined with local activists to take over government institutions in Crimea, as well as Sevastopol, the home of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. On 18 March, they were annexed by Russia. That was not, however, the end of the crisis, as there were then a number of deliberate measures by Russia, again with local support, to destabilize Ukraine, largely by taking over government buildings in the main cities of eastern Ukraine. Meanwhile, a substantial military capability was maintained on the other side of the border, ready to invade. In addition, efforts were made to further destabilize an already unstable economy through export embargoes and threats to gas supplies.

From start to finish, the annexation of the peninsula took less than two weeks. In the case of Crimea, Russia constructed a demand for authority relations with Russia by the local population exceptionally quickly and without

much care for its plausibility, and then satisfied this demand with equal speed. As Lanoszka explains,

> Russia did not launch a traditional invasion to wrest Crimea away from Kiev's control; instead, it fomented local pro-Russian demonstrations, inserted unmarked militia groups ("little green men") to occupy official government buildings, and oversaw a local referendum to lend an air of legitimacy to the annexation effort.
>
> (Lanoszka, 2016, p.175)

In Eastern Ukraine, Russia's position was not as strong as in Crimea. A separatist scenario was implemented there when the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics were proclaimed on April 7 and May 12, 2014 respectively. However, while the population there definitely wanted more autonomy from Kiev (being convinced that its interests would be ignored by the new regime), it did not articulate an interest in joining Russia (Freedman, 2014, p.22). For Moscow, the difficulties of occupying and governing a territory of contested boundaries, and with a less coopera- tive population, would be tremendous. Furthermore, at this time Moscow was already facing numerous practical problems in Crimea, such as issuing passports, introducing the Russian currency, changing legal frameworks, keeping shops supplied, making local services work, renaming the streets, etc. (Freedman, 2014, pp.22–23).

Moscow fiercely denied that it was directly involved in armed hostilities between Kiev and the rebel groups of self-proclaimed republics. Nevertheless, it established authority relations with their leaders by providing separatists with diplomatic cover, heavy munitions and logistical support.

As the situation around Ukraine was highly incomprehensible, every- body began trying to guess Putin's intentions, and this guesswork and general confusion were converted into important elements of his coercive strategy. President Poroshenko was in principle ready to grant these two regions of Eastern Ukraine a significant degree of decentralization and autonomy, while the national government in Kiev would be responsible for issues of national policy. However, Putin's plans were very different. At first, he wanted a radical change in Ukrainian territorial relations, turning the country into a decentral- ized federation where territorial entities could veto foreign policy decisions, similar to membership in NATO and institutional rapprochement with the EU (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, 2015, p.10). This plan, however, did not work out. The second best option for the Russian authorities was to keep two long-term "frozen conflicts" in the Eastern Ukraine. This, as we know from the Georgian experience, makes the state constantly vulnerable to coer- cion, especially when the "freeze" can be lifted at any moment.

What are the costs of Russia's political and military coercion with regard to Ukraine? According to Freedman,

> The main costs to be faced by Russia lay not in countervailing military pressure by NATO but in the loss of any prospect of Ukraine joining a Eurasian Union, along with its potential economic revival in association with the EU, and, more immediately, a sharp deterioration in Russia's own economic position.
>
> (Freedman, 2014, p.10)

In addition, developing Crimea's structurally weak economy is an unprecedentedly costly project, as the peninsula threatens to become a major drain on the overall Russian economy (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, 2015, p.7). Having annexed Crimea, Russia acquired five naval ports, a 645 km railway and 6,255 highways (Sergeeva, 2016). However, the political strain has resulted in the cessation of railway traffic between Crimea and Ukraine. The Crimean recreational facilities that came to be Russia's property leave much to be desired in terms of quality of services. The Federal Target Program presupposes an investment of 70 billion rubles (€978.5 million) by 2020 to develop the region. Russian authorities have also commenced a major infrastructural project—building a bridge over the Kerch Strait—at a total cost of 227.9 billion rubles (€3.2 billion) (Ria Novosti, 2016b).

In March 2016, the BBC conducted a survey of the inhabitants of Crimea, asking how their lives had changed following the annexation. Some said that consumer goods which used to be brought to the peninsula from Ukraine were being gradually replaced by Russian ones. Kiev's attempt to engage coercion against Crimea through a product blockade has largely failed. Kiev's other coercive move—blackouts—was more painful for the citizens but was nevertheless perceived as a symbolic aggressive act towards Russia, and did not appear successful either. Because of logistics, prices for food in Crimea are drawing closer to those in Moscow, as average salaries are much lower. The citizens, however, hope that the bridge over the Kerch Strait will be a solution to their survival challenges (Nehezin, 2016).

As Paul argues, "Crimea has quickly become a millstone around Russia's neck and this financial burden is likely to get heavier rather than lighter as time goes by and the realities of international isolation begin to hit home on the Peninsula" (Paul, 2015, p.4). And this is not just a matter of the financial burden on Russia's shoulders, but also of the new and difficult problems that the act of annexation has created. One of them is the property losses that Ukrainian citizens are suffering in Crimea. Russia promised to protect private assets in Crimea, but this has not happened. Now many Ukrainian citizens are going to the European Court of Human Rights asking for "arbitration to determine compensation for expropriation, damages or loss of value" (Ostryzniuk, 2014, p.8). In addition, Ukrainian companies, including Ukrnafta and Stabil among others, have submitted claims to The Hague concerning protection of their property in the Crimea. Russia has declared that it does not recognize the jurisdiction of The Hague's arbitration in these matters

(Ria Novosti, 2016a). But the Ukrainians do not intend to give up. This is going to be a long story…

Another problem arises with regard to the territorial waters surrounding Crimea. The Russian side believes that the inclusion of Crimea in Russia's territory automatically means that the Crimean waters now belong to Russia. However, in this case "automatically" does not work: Kiev intends to apply to the Court of Arbitration. Ukraine is accusing Russia of violating the provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's statement says this is a matter relating to the waters of the Black and Azov seas and the Kerch Strait, including rights to the natural resources of the continental shelf (Politforums.net, 2016).

Meanwhile, Russia also has to invest much to maintain the independent existence of the two unrecognized states in the Eastern Ukraine, after Kiev refused to provide public services to the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk. In Donetsk, approximately half of the population are elderly people. The percentage of vulnerable social strata is also very high. Russia pays most of the expenses, although authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk prefer to say that they raise revenues from taxes (which is doubtful, as after the establishment of the economic blockade, many enterprises re-registered in the territory controlled by Ukraine's central authorities, and began paying taxes to Kiev). It was officially recognized that there was not enough cash circulating in hryvnas, which is why Donetsk and Luhansk established a multi-currency zone allowing payments in Russian rubles as well as in dollars and euros. Russia's humanitarian aid to Donetsk was primarily in the form of medicine, building materials and food (Golunov and Artemev, 2015). Russia has sent around 580 thousand tons of humanitarian assistance to Luhansk since 2014 (Information Agency Regnum, 2016).

The informational space of the independent republics is completely outside the influence of Kiev's authorities. After the establishment of governing institutions in Donetsk, the oldest traditional newspapers, *Vecherniy Donetsk* and *Donbass*, stopped being published. Instead, Donetsk began to issue a new newspaper, *Novorossiya*, and to run its first radio station, DNR. Internet providers were ordered to block access to over 40 Ukrainian websites (Censor.net. ua, 2015). This, nevertheless, does not imply asymmetric rise of Russia's influence over the informational space in the two unrecognized countries. Real-life conditions matter more than lofty ideals, and the Crimea-like euphoria period for the local population has already come to an inevitable end.

EU: the Ukrainian dilemma

Interestingly enough, Ukraine's constant fluctuations between the choice in favor of Russia and that in favor of Europe were almost as unpleasant for the EU as they were for Russia. Indeed, it is difficult to maintain and to perpetually revive an interest in developing authority relations with a country whose strategic intentions are not entirely clear, and where power holders replace

necessary and already agreed-upon reforms with declarations of intent. Thus, up to the beginning of 2014, the EU did not consider Ukraine a prize worth extraordinary effort (Freedman, 2014, p.23). After the political crisis, the situation became very different, but no easier for the EU. The EU was caught by surprise by the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis, and when it came to crisis management, many observers evaluated the EU's efforts very poorly (Freedman, 2014, p.13). As Ukraine made its strategic choice in favor of Europe, the EU stopped wondering whether the country could be thought of as its geopolitical "prize" and became preoccupied with more practical issues such as what should be done after the "hot" stage of the crisis was over and the new government was in office. The Union almost immediately faced challenges related not only to the effects of the "Russian factor," but to internal developments in Ukraine: the rise of militant nationalism, the split within the elites and the extremely low level of state capacity. All these processes and factors are poor preconditions for developing authority relations.

Ukraine had had a mixed record in its relations with the EU since the '90s. After gaining independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine received signals from the European Union that it would gain palpable advantages were it to behave like a democracy (Nalbandov, 2014, p.114). Under President Kuchma, the country failed to show reliable signs of transforming itself "into a fully European country, measured by stability and prosperity, rather than just a country which is located in Europe" (Tedstrom, 2001, p.33). The EU was in doubt not only about the adherence of Ukraine's political class to European values—democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights—but also about Kiev's commitment to the establishment of a functioning market economy (Wolczuk, 2003, p.2).

Kiev's relations with Brussels are based on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed in 1994. Ukraine was the first CIS country to sign the PCA. The EU has offered the same type of agreement to the entire post-Soviet space (except the Baltic states). The main EU assistance program, TACIS, was also tailored for the entire post-Soviet space (and Mongolia). The contractual framework that established initial authority relations between the EU and the post-Soviet states offered little differentiation between the countries based on their geopolitical and economic importance. However, some differentiation was nevertheless present: both Ukraine and Russia were placed in the same category and offered more economic and institutional possibilities by the EU than other countries. Thus, in their PCA, Russia and Ukraine (as well as Moldova) were offered the possibility of a free trade area with the EU, whereas other post-Soviet states were not. Russia and Ukraine acquired a more extensive institutional setup for contact with the Union. In order to enhance cooperation, the EU Common Strategies were adopted in 1999, also only for Russia and Ukraine (Wolczuk, 2003, p.16).

The PCA for Ukraine and Russia resembled the association agreements signed between Central and Eastern European states and the EU as a prelude to full membership. However, in contrast to such agreements, the PCA did not

envisage full access to EU institutions (Wolczuk, 2003, p.17). With regard to the PCA, the position of the pro-European Ukrainian elite was ambivalent: they considered this framework to be insufficient for Ukraine, which declared joining the EU to be its strategic aim. At the same time, the elites lamented that the PCA put unrealistic demands on Ukraine, the implementation of which could harm the country's economy, which was only partially reformed and hence fragile (Wolczuk, 2003, p.18).

The evidence showed conspicuous breaches of the PCA from the Ukrainian side in the late '90s. This was a result of a fundamental underestimation of the implications of the PCA's demands, as well as of the ramifications of violating the laws and agreements to which Kiev had committed itself (Pavliuk, 1999, p.12). As Sherr observes, "Ukraine's political leaders have sometimes acted as if they could achieve integration by declaration, or simply by joining and participating in international organizational and political clubs rather than by undertaking concrete structural changes" (Sherr, 1998, p.12). Wolzcuk (2003, p.2) stresses that the Ukrainian elites were either incapable or unwilling to bring about reforms in order to confirm their "European choice."

Another cause for the EU's concern with regard to Ukraine (and at the same time a possible explanation for the lack of incentives for Ukrainian elites to conduct reforms) is related to the country's institutional design. It was the Ukrainian president who declared a "European choice" on behalf of his nation. The key documents outlining the goals and strategy approved in 1998 and 2000, namely the "Strategy of Ukraine's Integration with the European Union" and the "Program of Ukraine's Integration with the EU," were adopted by presidential decree. This means that Ukraine's European project is supported (at least declaratively) only by the president and his followers, and the "presidential" elite segment neither sought nor obtained endorsement from other institutions such as the parliament or society at large (Wolczuk, 2003, p.14). However, the pro-European commitments even of this segment alone were not fully credible. Some in the presidential administration continued to openly favor a "multivector" foreign policy, meaning simultaneous orientation both towards the EU and towards Russia. Equally, very few reformist policies were launched by the executive authority. As Wolczuk (2003, p.14) concludes, "Paradoxically, although it is the source of European aspirations in Ukraine, the presidency simultaneously appears to be the greatest obstacle to realizing these aspirations."

On its end, the EU has not always behaved in full accordance with its declarations, and its official representatives have allowed themselves to say harsh words towards Ukraine. In September 2002, at the European World Economic Forum in Salzburg, Austria, when Ukraine's President Kuchma was arguing that Ukraine should be incorporated in the EU as "a big Christian nation belonging to a united Europe," Guenter Verheugen, a top EU official in charge of enlargement, retorted that Kiev had little chance of getting so much as a time schedule for accession (KyivPost, 2002). In Ukraine, this was perceived as a humiliating rebuff (Ioffe, 2004, p.113).

In 1999, at the Helsinki European Council, the EU Common Strategy for Ukraine was adopted. The document added a degree of differentiation to the EU's approach to the former Soviet countries. However, the implementation of the Strategy was given a poor evaluation by observers, as it reflected the general weakness of the CFSP (Wolczuk, 2003, p.20). In 2000–2001, Ukraine unilaterally came forward with a number of initiatives to enhance cooperation with the EU in justice and home affairs, security and energy transportation. Most of these initiatives were not accepted. The leading member states of the Union did not see Ukraine becoming a full member of the EU in the foreseeable future. In general, the EU's policy towards Ukraine lacked clear vision, being poorly targeted and sometimes improperly managed (Wolczuk, 2003, p.2). By the beginning of the 2000s, the mismatch in the EU's and Ukraine's agendas, as well as the gap between declarations and real inclinations and capabilities that existed on both the Ukrainian and the European sides, became obvious.

What the Orange Revolution and Yushchenko's victory promised were *changes*. After the Revolution, the EU "rediscovered" Ukraine, so to speak, and experts appealed for increased economic and political assistance for the country, expecting that this rediscovery would ultimately reshape Europe's political map (meaning Ukraine's membership in the Union) if the state's transformation under the new Yushchenko government were successful. These expectations were based on the assumption that Yushchenko was serious about domestic reforms, and therefore his push toward EU membership would become credible (Sushko, 2004). None of these aspirations were fulfilled; the expectations were too high and too premature.

While Yushchenko made it clear that he believed Ukraine's place in the EU was secured a priori—through being a European country and possessing European values[1]—within the Union, the issue of Ukraine's membership became a topic of heated debates. Poland was the most ardent supporter of Ukraine's integration both into the EU and into NATO. A new strategic alliance was beginning to emerge between the two countries. Former Polish President Kwasniewski contributed greatly to mediating the roundtable that de-escalated the crisis in Ukraine in November–December 2004, ultimately leading to Yushchenko's election as president. Moreover, on Kwasniewski's personal initiative, Javier Solana, the High Representative for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, became directly involved in the negotiations, giving them a broader European character (Larrabee, 2007, p.35). Besides Poland, three Baltic States, the Central European countries (the Visegrad Four), as well as Slovenia, Austria, Finland and Sweden, were ready to launch a more ambitious strategy towards Ukraine than the PCA could offer. However, some of the older and stronger EU member states, namely Germany, France and the UK, showed much more caution, preferring to postpone the issue. Thus, the EU was split, whereas membership issues necessarily demand a unanimous decision by all members. The positions of the EU institutions also differed significantly. While the European Parliament

called on EU leaders to provide Ukraine with a "membership perspective," the Commission's position was that the EU and Ukraine should first show substantial progress within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (Wolczuk, 2005, p.1). This split has revealed that the EU cannot offer such an important authority instrument as the possibility of membership merely to encourage a country's democratic development. This instrument is too valuable and should in no case be devalued.

Ukraine became a priority partner within the ENP, in connection with which a joint Action Plan was approved in February 2005 (White, McAllister and Feklyunina, 2010, p.350). Assistance to Ukraine was provided under the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). In 2009, the EU's new initiative Eastern Partnership (EaP) was established, and Ukraine, together with five post-Soviet states, was named a state of "strategic importance" for the EU. Under the EaP, Ukraine, in particular, acquired new visa agreements, which replaced visas (for traveling into EU member states) with simplified permits for Ukrainians residing within 30 km of the border. Ukraine was central both for the ENP and for the EaP due to its long border with the EU and its market potential (Kapanadze, 2014, p.7).

However, the EU's cautious approach with regard to Ukraine's membership prospects proved to be prophetic. Two years later, the Orange Coalition collapsed due to excessive political ambitions and personal animosities. It was replaced by the coalition headed by Prime Minister Yanukovych. To stimulate Ukraine to move forward with reforms, the EU opted for a strategy of small rewards such as market economy status, relaxation of visa restrictions and expanded educational opportunities. In 2010, when Yanukovych came to presidential office, Brussels considered it very important that he was democratically elected. The EU accelerated negotiations on the Association Agreement and visa-free regime with Ukraine, and it was only at the end of 2010 when the European Parliament expressed its first serious concerns about his authoritarian tendencies (Haran and Zolkina, 2014, p.3). With regard to the West, Yanukovych's idea was to "diversify" the country's approach to the EU and to NATO: the law that laid down the foundations of Ukraine's foreign and domestic policy excluded integration with NATO and established a policy of "nonalignment," emphasizing the EU membership as a priority.

Since February 2014 the situation has changed dramatically. While the experts saw the Ukrainian elites as key driving forces for the country's Europeanization and subsequent EU membership, the reality proved to be different. As Wolczuk (2005, p.3) argues, "society remains simultaneously divided and ambivalent about foreign policy orientation in general and although it is supportive of Ukraine's EU's membership, the elites do not face societal pressure for pursuing this particular foreign policy option." Even so, the people went to the streets of Kiev, insisting on a European choice for Ukraine. European governments began to move feverishly, trying, in Freedman's words, "to sound resolute without being reckless." As he describes the situation,

High-level conversations continued with calls between national capitals, emergency sessions of international organizations and face-to-face meetings. In effect, Western capitals soon judged that there was little to be done in the first instance to reverse the annexation of Crimea and so the focus was on preventing further challenges to Ukraine's stability and sovereignty, and to that of other vulnerable states, notably Moldova.

(Freedman, 2014, p.13)

Russian experts declared that with its position with regard to the Ukrainian crisis, the EU had in fact betrayed both itself and Ukraine. A report by the Valdai Club stated that

The Ukrainian crisis revealed the complete incompetence and dependency of European politics. In fact, Europe effectively provoked the crisis, as it compelled Ukraine to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union on fairly disadvantageous terms, and ignored Russia's opinion on the potential consequences of this political move. Many European officials and European Parliament members visited the Maidan at the beginning of the crisis to encourage the protesters and to accuse Russia of imperial ambitions.

(Valdai Discussion Club, 2014, p.37)

Such connivance and non-compliance with declared European values, and a vision of the world in black and white, with deliberate blindness to its actual motley colors, has borne fruit hat the European strategists never expected as they shrugged off Russia's warnings.

(Valdai Discussion Club, 2014, p.38)

This critique—with regards to its tone and claims—was predictable. The EU, however, concentrated its efforts on building an institutional and financial basis for its authority relations with Ukraine.

The political chapters of the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement were signed at the EU Summit of March 21, 2014, and the remaining sections of the Agreement came into force on June 27. The Agreement replaced the EU–Ukraine PCA as the legal basis and framework for relations, establishing a shared commitment to a close and lasting relationship based on common values. The Agreement also included provisions for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) that offered Ukraine a framework for modernizing its trade relations and for economic reforms—the opening of markets via the progressive removal of customs tariffs and quotas, and an extensive harmonization of laws, norms and regulations in various trade-related sectors. All of this was intended to create the conditions for aligning key sectors of the Ukrainian economy to EU standards.

There were also greater EU efforts with regard to more substantial financial aid to Ukraine. The Union agreed on a financial-assistance package of at least €11 billion in loans and grants from the EU budget and EU-based international financial institutions. The IMF funds were also important as without them the possibility of Ukraine's bankruptcy was quite real. As Freedman notes, payments for Russian gas represented an additional economic burden for Ukraine, as their price was raised very steeply and very quickly (Freedman, 2014, p.27).

For the EU, it is clear what it can offer Ukraine, but only in very general terms. Halling and Stewart draw attention to the Ukrainian dilemma: on the one hand, Ukraine's economy requires immediate assistance; on the other hand, there is a danger that such support would give the elite the impression that the West is placing virtually no conditions on the assistance provided, or that the danger from Russia is relieving the country of the need to observe any conditions (Halling and Stewart, 2014, p.6). The EU's task is, therefore, to support the stabilization of the Ukrainian economy and to increase its state capacity and quality of governance, while constantly and strictly monitoring to ensure that the processes that develop in the country do not contradict the general idea of Europeanization, but contribute to it. That is why following the conditionality principle in relations with Ukraine is of vital importance for the EU.

Naturally, Yanukovych's sudden refusal to sign the Association Agreement, and the subsequent outbreak of a major political crisis in Ukraine that followed, gave clear signals that the country's political system was not mature enough to ensure internal continuity, to say nothing of offering credible commitments to its external partners. After the acute stage of the crisis was over, the European Commission revised its attitude towards Ukraine. The Commission's President Jean-Claude Juncker declared on March 3, 2016, during his speech in The Hague, that Ukraine can raise the question of EU membership no earlier than in 20 years' time. The tone of the EU's official declarations with regard to Kiev became exceptionally awkward, as it was clear that in this case "talk is not cheap" (Driedger, 2016). In another round of negotiations concerning Ukraine's EU membership, two antagonistic groups of countries formed. The Baltic states, Poland, Great Britain and Sweden were in favor of including the membership issue in Ukraine's association agreement, whereas Germany, France, the Netherlands and Austria were bluntly against it (Pieters, 2016). Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte gave an interview a week prior to the referendum where the Netherlands voted against Ukraine's EU membership. He said that Ukraine should never become an EU member because its role as a buffer state between Russia and the EU is of strategic importance to Europe (DutchNews.nl, 2016).

Ukraine: a "coherent" foreign policy?

After Russia and Turkey, Ukraine is the most densely populated non-EU country on the European continent. It shares a long common border with

Russia as well as with the EU (bordering three EU member countries: Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). For Russia, Ukraine has been strategically the most important country within the post-Soviet space. It is significant in itself, meaning that the foremost priority for Russia is that Ukraine is *with* Russia—ideally through authority mechanisms, but if they do not function, then through coercion. No trust equals no authority, and so there is no possibility for Russia of establishing authority (or in Russia's case, authority-like) relations with Ukraine in the foreseeable future. In this regard, coercion seems to be the uncontested option.

For the EU, the political crisis in Ukraine, its scale and speed of escalation came as a shock, awakening the security concerns of days gone by. As Freedman (2014, p.9) argues, in the crisis "there were the seeds of something much larger, with immediate effects within the area of the former Soviet Union but extending much beyond." All of a sudden, Ukraine became very important for the EU, though, unlike Russia, not in itself but rather as a threat to stability in Europe. Stability and its preservation in Ukraine is the EU's highest priority, while Ukrainian membership in the Union is not.

The EU is often criticized for offering Ukraine too little, keeping in mind the Union's reluctance to offer the country potential for membership. This significantly weakens its leverage over Ukraine's development, reduces support for pro-reform forces in the country, and makes Ukrainians more skeptical of the EU (Wolczuk, 2003, pp.4–5). However, the EU has no problem in maintaining enthusiasm in neighboring countries, even in the most important ones. Membership in the Union is absolutely not a question of enthusiasm and sentiments; it is much more prosaic—a question of the will and capacity of the elites to conduct certain (often painful) reforms with the consent of larger social groups, and their capacity for making credible commitments. The EU's cautious approach with regard to the membership issue is completely justifiable, especially in the case of Ukraine, where once high hopes and lofty ideals have been replaced with deep disappointment.

On the other hand, the Ukrainian leadership finds itself at a stalemate. According to Haran and Zolkina (2014, p.1), none of the various Ukrainian presidents have been able to conduct a coherent foreign policy. But what is "coherent" in Ukraine's case? If "coherent" means unidirectional, i.e., directed exclusively toward the EU, then this is unattainable, and the question itself is wrong. It is clear that no Ukrainian president can afford to alienate Ukraine from Russia (Barysch and Grant, 2004). As Petro (2016) argues, the main impediment to stability and economic growth is the government's suicidal choice to cut the country off from its main investor, Russia, as there is no alternative to Russian subsidies. He states that the West and Russia need to work together to promote Ukraine's economic development. Freedman, however, is of a very different opinion. He believes that Ukraine as a cooperative project between Russia and the EU is impossible (Freedman, 2014, p.28). Deep and lasting reforms are needed for Ukraine to become closer to the EU, while entering a Russia-centered

coalition means, on the contrary, avoiding reforms. These two options are definitively not compatible.

Ukraine represents a very difficult case, as its current entirely understandable European orientation is coupled with the constant presence of the Russian coercive factor. This situation will continue in the future, and the only thing that could lighten this burden for citizens and for elites is to focus, throwing away temptations and ambitions, on building a capable state. As we saw in the Georgian case, the sustainability of EU–Georgia authority relations may be in danger due to the possible turning of the country's leadership towards Russia, which would call the credibility of its commitments toward the EU into question. For Ukraine, a turn towards Russia is not on the agenda, but its commitments could lose credibility due to the weakness of the central state and to the chronic deficit of state capacity. Building a capable state is the basic concern of Ukrainian elites and citizens, but the EU can significantly assist them in pursuing this course. So with regard to the EU, Ukraine's leadership should by all means show its good faith, confirming that the country's Europeanization is not a declarative resource utilized by the elites both for domestic and foreign policies, but their honest and credible strategy. The interventions of the "Russian factor" in Ukraine's domestic affairs, as well as their effect on EU–Ukraine authority relations, is unavoidable, but the more successful Ukraine is in increasing state capacity, the less destructive their negative effects will be.

Note

1 As Yushchenko explained during the Davos World Economic Forum in January 2005: "I don't feel comfortable striving to join Europe, I feel like I am a European. I live in a European country and possess European values" (cited in Wolczuk, 2005, p.1).

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9 Turkey
Not-so-terrible coercion, not-so-needed authority

Turkey is the only country among my cases that does not belong to the post-Soviet space. Being located at the crossroads of Asia and Europe and connecting the Black and Mediterranean seas, Turkey occupies a key geostrategic position. In recent years, Turkey has attracted an extraordinary amount of expert and scholarly attention; it has managed to emerge as a prominent regional player with a strong economy, having tripled its GDP from $230 billion in 2002 to $820 billion in 2013. In 2015, Turkey was the 18th largest world economy by GDP according to the World Bank (2016). However, the big news from Turkey is not always good. It has also been a source of very sad stories—like the failed military coup with about three hundred dead, thousands injured and nearly six thousand arrested. In the West, there were fears that the Turkish authorities could exploit the failed coup to crack down on political enemies and to reinforce authoritarian rule.

Turkey is often called "the most important political experiment," which is to say the establishment of a country that is Muslim, democratic, secular, stable, economically strong and aiming to share European values. Turkey is debated as a candidate for membership in the group of "rising powers,"[1] and experts say that Turkey is a country with "near-rising" status (Önis and Kutlay, 2013). However, in this group Turkey stands alone, as Oguzlu (2013, p.774) argues:

> [It] has finally reached the league of rising powers … However, Turkey cannot be put in the same category with other rising powers, such as the BRICS, for the main reason that Turkey has long been a member of the Western community and the Westernization/Europeanization processes continue to shape Turkey's ongoing identity transformation. Unlike other rising powers, Turkey's claim to rising power status cannot be convincingly understood and explained without taking into account Turkey's decades-long interaction with established Western powers within the existing international institutions.

However, these truly amazing Turkish successes are only part of the story. The country is affected by numerous cleavages; it has yet to make its

strategic choice. Experts interpret this choice differently—as a choice between Islamism and Kemalist secularism, between conservative Anatolia and the modern coasts, between egalitarianism and elitism, or between democratic and authoritarian political choices. The supporters of the "Turkish model" bravely declare that the strategic choice has been made, but the newest political developments make this declaration doubtful. The very recent years have been especially difficult: Turkey has increasingly been becoming a country under martial law with a dramatic increase in government spending, above all on defense. In fact, antiterror operations have become almost the main driver for the country's economic growth. Turkey is now one of the world leaders in the quantity of migrants that come to its territory, while the effectiveness of its state institutions is decreasing (Shlykov, 2016b).

The Economist explains the uniqueness of Turkey's geopolitical location in the following way:

> Few countries occupy a geopolitical space of such sensitivity as Turkey, or have played such a range of critical and overlapping international roles. It has been a gateway and a bridge to Europe, most dramatically in recent months for hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, as well as a conduit for energy supplies. It has been a buffer to revolutionary Iran, and a barrier to Russia's southward ambitions since long before it joined NATO in 1952 (and even more so since Vladimir Putin decided to leap into Syria's maelstrom). It has been an anchor to the ever-turbulent Middle East, and in some ways also a model to other Muslim countries of a relatively tolerant, relatively democratic and economically quite successful government.
>
> (Rodenbeck, 2016, p.12)

Turkey borders the European Union, and the Black Sea connects Turkey with Russia. Both Russia and the EU are Turkey's most important economic partners, and its relations with both are strained. Russia cannot exercise power over Turkey by playing a dominant role within authority relations. The only theoretically possible framework for this would be Russia's neo-revisionist concept of Greater Europe—an alternative vision of European unity based less on full-scale institutional integration, and more on a variable geometry of engagement whereby both Russia and Turkey could overcome their outsider status in Europe (Sakwa, 2010). But the Ukrainian crisis has killed that concept. With regard to Turkey, Russia pursues a policy of "carrot and stick"—the situational and selective use of coercion.

Unlike many other EU candidate and neighboring countries (Ukraine being an extreme case), Turkey has, at least until very recently, suffered much less from a lack of state capacity. The other features that make it principally different from other countries in the EU's periphery are its territorial size, its key geostrategic location and its economic and military capabilities. This lack of a power differential between the EU and Turkey

(Müftuler-Bac, 2016) greatly constrains the EU's ability to make itself the dominant partner in EU–Turkey authority relations. Despite the declared goal of Turkey's accession to the EU, the EU has reached the limits of its power to extend its rules to Turkey, while a combination of domestic and external factors has made the Turkish leadership abandon the country's steady rapprochement and further full membership in the Union as its survival strategy.

The Turkish model: Did it ever exist? Does it now?

In this section I study the questions of what the "Turkish model" is and the sources of its sustainability. These questions are important as they allow us to proceed to others: how resistant is the model to external coercive influences, and how capable of establishing and developing authority relations?

As Altunisik shows, the history of the Turkey-as-a-model argument goes back as far as the '50s, when Turkey endeared itself to modernization theorists. A blow to them came in 1960 when the democratically elected civilian government was overthrown by a military coup. Civilians regained power a year later, but another coup occurred in 1971, causing unrest and political polarization, and then a third came in 1980 (Kubicek, 2013). Since then, the "Turkish model" argument has gradually come into use again: President Clinton's Special Assistant Anthony Blinken stated that

> Turkey sits at the crossroads—or, if you prefer, atop the fault lines—of the world. Because of its place … its history … its size … and strength, and most important, because of what it is—a nation of mainly Islamic faith that is secular, democratic, and modernizing—Turkey must be a leader and can be a role model for a large swath of the world.
>
> (Blinken, 1999, cited in Altunisik, 2005, p.45)

Then in the mid-'90s discussion of Turkey as a model faded once again due to weak governments, human rights problems and fighting in the southeast with Kurdish separatists, combined with the growing strength of Islamist political parties. During all these years, the "Turkish model," when it became a subject of discussion, was considered to be Kemalism—a statist, authoritarian, secular order imposed "from above" with the goals of modernization and Westernization (Kubicek, 2013).

A new interpretation of the "Turkish model" arose in the 2000s, and was associated primarily with developments under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the astonishing recovery of the Turkish economy. This time the model's concept embraced a more moderate type of political Islam, exemplified by the ruling AKP. As Kubicek states, "Turkey demonstrates, at least potentially, that you can have it all: economic development, democracy, and political Islam, a form, perhaps, of 'Islamic' democracy" (Kubicek, 2013, p.169). In other words, this model is a combination of things that potentially

fit together poorly, but in the Turkish case not only combine consistently, but also contribute to boosting and maintaining development.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the popularity of debates on the "Turkish model" has been increasing exponentially, while the tone of debates has almost always been very positive. According to Mango (2005, pp.17–18), "the Republic of Turkey is a model of a secular, democratic, Muslim country aiming to achieve Western standards in partnership with the West by applying liberal free market policies." "The Turkish model remains an example to observe, learn from, and emulate," stresses Ibrahim (2013, p.5). Until very recently, assessments of the Turkish experience had traces of pathos: "the AKP led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the most charismatic Turkish leader since Mustafa Kemal, transformed Turkey into a *stable* political system and a dynamic market which attracted huge international investments as never before" (Magri, 2015, p.1, emphasis added). The degree of praise gradually increased; it transcended Turkey's borders, acquiring a macro-regional or even global character: commentators—both in the West and in the Arab world—called Turkey a "bridge" between the Muslim world and the West or a "pivotal state," and even a valuable "strategic asset" for preventing a clash of civilizations (Samaan, 2013, p.63; Sengupta, 2014, p.25).

It is amazing how quickly profound admiration changed to complete disappointment. With regard to the Turkish present and future, the road from optimism to pessimism proved to be very short. Now observers claim that the country's "golden years" are over, "the 'Turkish model' no longer looks as appealing as before" (Talbot, 2014, p.7) and "The successful cycle that witnessed Turkey as an assertive regional player and a model for Arab countries in transition has come to an end" (Talbot, 2014, p.8). Experts say that Turkey failed (and this is already presented as a fait accompli) to consolidate a democratic political regime due to structural and deep-running causes: the imprint of authoritarian legacies, institutional imbalances privileging the executive branch against the legislative and the judicial, the dominance of the AKP that distorts political competition, and President Erdoğan's divisive personality and leadership style (Bechev, 2015b).

Such abrupt change inadvertently makes one wonder whether the "Turkish model" really existed, or whether it was a case of wishful thinking, where a certain and short stage of the country's development—its "golden years"—which was possible due to a unique combination of favorable internal conditions and international environment, and which came to its natural end, was taken for a development model.

I do not have an answer to this question in the form of "this model did exist" or "it did not," but I have my doubts that the model is stable and can effectively cope with internal and external challenges—which is what we expect from it. My doubts are fed by several considerations.

Right now Turkey is experiencing a painful restructuring of its military–civil relations; in fact, what is happening in Turkey is the revision of the social contract between the army and the state on Erdoğan's initiative. In Turkey,

the military has traditionally played a crucial role in politics, and, as Shlykov notes, Turkish society is surprisingly loyal to this powerful social group. This is explained by geopolitical factors, as external threats create the need for trust in the army, as well as by institutional and historic ones—the army has played an important and somewhat constructive role in building the modern state in Turkey, and its constitutional development. The Turkish army is based on age-old tradition and its own value system. In addition, the national education system maintains the army's popularity in the eyes of the younger generation (Shlykov, 2016a). However, since the 2000s the Erdoğan government has begun to attack the army's political position, and to try to change the balance between the army and civil servants (the state bureaucracy) in favor of the latter. The coup of July 2016 was an attempt by the military to regain its political positions, but its failure and subsequent repressions do not mean that the problem is over, and Erdoğan is trying to achieve a new equilibrium in military–civil relations. His policy fits well with the AKP's pattern of undermining secularism and promoting Islamization, as the military has traditionally been the main source of support for secularism in Turkey. The present situation is highly uncertain, and national reconciliation has not been reached.

The "Turkish model" necessarily presupposed sustainable economic growth, and indeed, Turkey succeeded in ensuring considerable, and moreover, uninterrupted growth rates. However, experts say that the Turkish economy has now reached a new threshold, namely the middle-income trap, which necessitates new momentum to ensure high and sustainable growth rates. In this context one of the most urgent problems is declining economic growth in recent years (Kutlay, 2015, p.1). To overcome this challenge, transition to high value-added production is the *sine qua non* (Kutlay, 2015, p.2). However, whether Turkey is able to do this, and in what time frame, is not clear.

Another challenge for the national government is the emergence of a "fresh" territorial split (against a background of many others) relating to the fast rise of the "Anatolian tigers"—the conservative business middle class living primarily in Turkey's southeast, in Anatolia. Anatolia, with its rural economy and patriarchal Islamic culture, was always considered as the "backyard" of the modern and advanced "other" Turkey. Yet in the last ten years, the region has witnessed an economic miracle, a sudden and powerful rise of entrepreneurial activity. Socially, however, Anatolia remains a conservative and religious society, undergoing what some call a "Silent Islamic Reformation" (European Stability Initiative, 2005). Gradually, the Anatolian Tigers have reached upper levels in national business associations and have even achieved a global reach. This change has not only broken serious taboos in the Turkish economy but also realigned Turkish businesses. The Anatolian Tigers now make up about 10–11 percent of annual Turkish exports and about 10 percent of the gross domestic product (Tremblay, 2014). The Tigers support a shift of Turkish external economic relations toward the Middle East and Northern Africa, seeing these markets as the most promising due

to geographic proximity, cultural affinity and, most importantly, a relatively low level of competition. Indeed, Anatolian business plays the role of promoter for Turkey's rapprochement with these regions, while the question of EU membership is not a priority for them.

There have been deep changes not only in Turkish internal policy, but also in the external; the turning point for Turkey's Middle East policy came with the outbreak of the crisis in Syria. Until then, the Turkish approach was based on the principle of "zero problems with neighbors," with the aim of creating an area of stability and economic integration in the Middle Eastern region. With the crisis, Turkey moved to a policy of independence: its leadership decided not to play a frontline role in the US coalition and not to allow the use of its territory and air bases for military operations against the Islamic State (IS). The US tried to press Ankara, but the latter's priorities did not converge with those of Washington. The Turkish government's priority was not the IS, but removing Bashar al-Assad's regime and preventing the empowerment of Kurds in Syria (Talbot, 2014, p.2). The Turkish government lost its "above the fray" position and became involved. Charges followed immediately: Turkey was accused of backing jihadist groups (something the government has consistently denied), and condoning illegal traffic across the country's southern border and the passage of foreign fighters into Syria (Talbot, 2014, p.2). As Talbot (2014, p.5) argues, "Turkey has remained with no friends in its neighborhood, with the exception of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq, which surprisingly has become its best partner." From the Turkish side, this warm friendship is based on its hope for access to the KRG's energy resources. This situation of regional isolation is very new for the Turkish authorities—their policy of independence has, apparently, not been very successful.

Challenges and changes—these are what characterize Turkish development for the moment. The challenges are serious and urgent, and the changes are not superficial, but structurally deep enough to pose questions about the end of the "Turkish model," because the discussion is about changing its very basics.

Russia and Turkey: the "carrot and stick" policy

Russia and Turkey—the centers of once powerful continental empires—used to be the worst of enemies. The Russian and Ottoman empires fought more than a dozen wars. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and Turkey belonged to opposing coalitions. In the post-Cold War period and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation changed drastically, and bilateral economic ties have been booming since the late 1990s, with the first sign being the Blue Stream pipeline that connected mainland Russia with Turkey across the Black Sea, delivering gas to the Turkish market.

By 2015, Russia was Turkey's most important energy supplier, responsible for 55 percent of the Turkish domestic consumption of natural gas and crude

oil at a price of roughly $15 billion. This made Turkey Russia's second gas export market after Germany. Turkish companies also sold up to $6 billion worth of food, chemicals, textiles and other goods to Russia (Aydintasbas, 2016, p.4). Furthermore, Turkish construction firms were among the leading international contractors in Russia, and millions of Russian tourists visited Turkey every year, making Russia the number two source of tourism to Turkey (after Germany). If these economic relations were able to develop in a vacuum—without interference from geopolitical considerations—then the idyll between the two countries would be broken only by bargaining over prices. But in reality the situation is not idyllic at all.

Unlike with post-Soviet countries, Russia has no way (even hypothetically) to draw Turkey into its orbit and play a dominant role in authority relations with it. Russia can only trade and bargain with Turkey, punish Turkey by using coercion in the form of economic sanctions and rejection of previously agreed projects, and reward it by lifting sanctions and launching new projects favorable for Turkey. In this context, the collapse of the "Turkish model" is in Russia's interests for at least two reasons—the collapse means Turkey's distancing from the EU as well as from the movement toward liberal democracy. The strengthening of authoritarian trends in Turkey places relations between Putin and Erdoğan in a format familiar to the former, where he feels confident since the relations are "free" from discussions of human rights, the rule of law and the like. As Göksel (2014, p.5) argues, "in … Russia, Turkey stands to derive benefits from not jumping on the European bandwagon in areas such as human rights advocacy and democratic reform." Moreover, Russia's anti-Western state ideology, with its focus on the Russian Orthodox Church, shows a surprising similarity to the Islamic-conservative project of the Turkish AKP (Alaranta, 2016, p.7). The leaders' leadership styles and concerns are also similar in both countries, which are led by popular figures increasingly concerned about mass protests challenging their centralized statehood projects.

In 2010, Turkey and Russia agreed to establish the High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC), an intergovernmental mechanism designed to monitor mutual collaboration and establish a coherent practical framework for its support and further enhancement. At the first HLCC summit in Ankara numerous cooperation agreements were signed, two of which were highly important: Russia and Turkey agreed on the construction of a nuclear power plant in Mersin Akkuyu (Turkey) and on visa-free travel (which was implemented in less than a year, further increasing the already powerful tourist flows from Russia to the Turkish coasts [Gürel and Tzimitras, 2015, p.29]).

Under the conditions of Turkey's dependence on Russian natural gas for more than half of its consumption, Turkish companies having major construction contracts in Russia, and incomes from agricultural export and huge tourist flows, it is hardly surprising that Turkey greatly appreciated developing economic relations with Russia—to such an extent that it was trying to avoid conflict arising from geopolitical reasons. At the same time, however, this policy did not prevent it from seeking to influence neighboring countries.

Competition for such influence was taking place not only between Russia and the West, but also between Russia and Turkey. Thus, Georgia played a key role for the Turkish strategy in the South Caucasus, as the only country that lies between Turkey and Russia. It is the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline that has delivered oil from Azerbaijan to Turkey via Georgian territory since May 2006. Turkey has also tried to launch another project, the Kars–Tbilisi railway intended to connect the railway systems of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey (Aktürk, 2016, p.2). Georgia's defeat in the "five-day war" in 2008, and the subsequent increase in Russia's military presence in the region (within the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia), was a hard blow for Turkish plans for the integration process in the South Caucasus. However, Turkey did not support Georgia in this conflict in any way (Aktürk, 2016, p.3).

Ankara has also remained silent from the start of the political crisis in Ukraine at the end of November 2013 up to Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014. It was the only NATO state that did not join the sanctions regime against Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine. As Göksel (2014, p.2) argues,

> when the issue of Crimea's status came to the fore, Ankara abstained from overtly criticizing Russian aggression. Turkish authorities reiterated support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and underlined the need for a diplomatic solution. They limited their demand to Moscow guaranteeing the protection of Tatar rights in annexed Crimea. Turkish government ministers deliberately framed the crisis as a standoff between Russia and the West, keeping Turkey out of the crossfire.

In other words, the Turkish government consciously distanced itself from Western efforts to "punish" Moscow. Moreover, Turkey benefited economically from Moscow's decision to embargo food products from Western countries—due to increased exports of agricultural products to Russia—as a consequence of which Turkey appears to have effectively enabled Russia's expansionism (Göksel, 2014, p.3). Experts began to speak of the probable emergence of a Russian-Turkish strategic alliance (Aktürk, 2016, p.2), exalting the unique cordiality of their top-level political dialogue, and "the long-established bonds of respect and even trust between Erdoğan and Putin" (Baev, 2014, p.46). In 2013, at the meeting of the High-Level Russian-Turkish Cooperation Council in St. Petersburg, Erdoğan asserted that other countries could envy the dynamics of Turkish-Russian relations.

Indeed, Russia royally rewarded Turkey for its loyalty. On December 1, 2014, at a joint press conference with President Erdoğan in Ankara, President Putin made announcements that greatly pleased the Turkish government. Putin announced the cancelation of the South Stream gas project, which had been envisioned to carry Russian gas to Europe across the Black Sea. The explanations he gave were about resistance from the European Union that stymied the project and ultimately led him to drop it. South Stream is dead,

long live Turkish Stream: the gas intended for South Stream, according to Putin, would instead go to Turkey and onward to Southern Europe (this project would allow Russia to bypass the territory of Ukraine). Putin said that Russia's state-owned Gazprom and Turkey's state-owned energy transportation company BOTAŞ had already signed a memorandum of understanding (Makovsky, 2015, p.1). A memorandum is not a binding legal agreement, so Russia or Turkey could change their intentions without legal effect or penalties for nonadherence (as indeed happened a little later). Pipeline projects are born and die—for instance, in 2013 the Nabucco-West pipeline was canceled after more than a decade of planning and discussion at both political and commercial levels (Makovsky, 2015, p.3). Still, Russia's intention to launch Turkish Stream perfectly matched Turkey's ambitions to become an important energy transit state, or even an energy hub, in order to enhance its global strategic importance.

Despite the fact that the project was not formalized at all, Ankara began to bargain hard for a price discount on future gas purchases from Russia. Makovsky (2015, p.5) tells this story:

> Putin pre-emptively announced a 6 percent discount for Turkish Stream gas on December 1, 2014, increasing that discount to 10.25 percent in February 2015. Turkey has not accepted these offers, and is instead holding out for an even better deal, reportedly hoping to receive a 15 percent discount on future Russian gas imports… It is unlikely that Turkish Stream will move forward before Turkey reaches an acceptable deal on gas prices.

However, Russia's rewards for Turkey were not limited to the Turkish Stream; at the same press conference (December 1, 2014) Putin also claimed that Turkey and Russia were discussing a "free trade zone agreement" which would raise bilateral relations to a completely different level. In saying this, he apparently did not care whether it would be feasible: Turkey is a member of the EU Customs Union, and can enter into free trade agreements only with the approval of the European Union. This announcement was made purely for demonstrational effect.

And yet all Turkish attempts not to spoil relations with Russia were in vain when the Russian military came dangerously close to Turkey's core interests along the Syrian-Turkish border. From the very beginning, Syria was a thorn in Russian-Turkish relations. Aydintasbas (2016, p.6) argues that

> Despite being unable to garner US support for toppling the regime of Bashar al-Assad, Ankara remained wedded to the idea of regime change in Damascus and continued to support Sunni opposition groups on its borders. Russia, on the other hand, was determined from the beginning not to let Syria become "another Libya," where multilateral action led

to a regime change that was a step into the unknown, and remained unwavering in its support for the Assad regime.

Numerous high-level discussions between Turkey and Russia on a mutually acceptable solution to the war in Syria brought no result. Russia began its direct military involvement in Syria in October 2015, and when Turkey downed a Russian jet over Syria in November 2015, Russia's reaction led to a sudden rupture in the Russian-Turkish bilateral relationship. Diplomatic ties were frozen and economic ties weakened sharply, though asymmetrically. Russia imposed economic sanctions on Turkey, though with several notable omissions. Negotiations on the Turkish Stream project were temporarily suspended, though Russia did not declare it canceled. Russia still intended to build Turkey's first nuclear power plant. While Russia enforced a harsh embargo on Turkish food exports, the sanctions did not target several products such as lemons or nuts (Newsweek, 2015). Tourism to Turkey was curtailed, and Turkish construction companies blacklisted, though some of them continued to function on Russian territory. The most noteworthy is, however, that Russia refrained from using its most powerful coercion tool: it did not stop delivering gas to Turkey, which remained Russia's second-largest gas customer (Aydintasbas, 2016, p.4). All in all, Russia's blows to the Turkish economy were meaningful, but not too destructive. In fact, its ideological blow to Turkey was more powerful than its economic one: Russia's state media launched an aggressive campaign against Turkey. In December 2015, according to research done for the independent Russian news channel RBC, Turkey overtook Ukraine, the US and even the IS extremist group as Russian news media's public enemy no. 1 (Sharkov, 2015).

This situation, however, did not endure for long. Since spring 2016, the Turkish leadership has shown signs that it would like to restore its relationship with Putin. In June, Erdoğan sent a letter to him expressing a wish for better relations. At first, Russia insisted on Turkey fulfilling three conditions before dialogue could commence: issuing a public apology, punishing those responsible for killing the pilot, and paying compensation (Aydintasbas, 2016). However, after Erdoğan sent another letter to Putin and both presidents began to talk over the phone, dialogue, or more precisely, bargaining, began. Putin was able to achieve what he wanted—to determine the conditions of restoration of relations with Turkey. The main subject of the negotiations is compensation, though there are many questions where a compromise must be found: how to lift sanctions, what to do with Turkish Stream (Gazprom is now suing BOTAŞ, its Turkish partner state company, in international arbitration over undelivered discounts) and how to bring their positions closer on the Syrian crisis (Shlykov, 2016b).

There are no quick-fix solutions to Turkey's energy dependence on Russia. But in Turkey's case, Russia is using this coercive heavy-impact foreign policy tool with caution, even given that Turkey has no serious retaliatory measures at hand. Indeed, Moscow so far has not taken any steps to reduce the amount

of gas it supplies to Turkey, nor threatened to do so. In order to normal-
ize Russian-Turkish relations, experts propose to use a strategy of compart-
mentalization, which should enable the coexistence of political tensions with
deepening economic ties by "compartmentalizing" (separating) economic
issues and geopolitical rivalries in order to avoid the negative spillover of
certain disagreements into areas of bilateral cooperation (Onis and Yilmaz,
2015). The strategy necessarily implies that both sides consistently follow this
"principle of compartmentalization," but Russia has few incentives to do so.
On the contrary, the penetration of economic issues into geopolitics, when
economic coercion (real or in the form of threats) comes as punishment for
undesirable behavior, would bring it more benefits.

There are no reasons to expect the emergence of a lasting alliance between
the two countries, although scholars are trying to find some (Aydintasbas,
2016, p.1). No one can guarantee that the restored relationship will not col-
lapse once again, with selective use of coercion and the rise of ideological
hatred instead of statements of mutual respect.

EU and Turkey: Is the game lost? What next?

The history of the relationship between the European Union and Turkey is
extraordinarily dramatic and complicated. It was assumed until quite recently
that the Turkish leadership had bet on membership in the EU, and after the EU
summit of 1999 that made this feasible, the EU became an anchor for Turkey's
political liberalization and reform process (Müftuler-Bac and Gürsoy, 2010,
p.412). Experts have argued vigorously that for Turkey, Europeanization had
become synonymous with modernization and development (Talbot, 2015b,
p.85), while the Copenhagen political criteria constituted the leverage that
was making Turkish modernization and democratization more pluralist,
multicultural and consolidated (Aydin and Keyman, 2004, p.1). As Müftuler-
Bac and Gürsoy (2010, p.411) note,

> It is through the prospect of becoming an EU member state that the
> Turkish government initiated a series of political reforms from 1999. The
> EU's political conditionality and the Turkish desire to fulfill these pol-
> itical criteria in order for accession negotiations to begin became crit-
> ical in triggering a vast political transformation in Turkey, which in turn
> impacted collective identity formation in Turkey.

Indeed, the "Turkish model" assumed rapprochement with the EU as its
integral and important constituent element, so the model was based in par-
ticular on establishing sustainable authority relations between the EU and
Turkey, manifested through Turkey's consistent process of Europeanization.
Although experts have regularly stressed the difficulties that awaited both the
EU and Turkey on this path, nevertheless, the general belief was that both
parties were following this particular pathway of developing authority, and

not another. And some day (probably quite far in the future) this would culminate in Turkey's full membership in the EU, when Turkey would turn from being a subordinate country in authority relations to one of the dominants, the same as all other member states of the Union. Today this belief has almost completely evaporated.

So what happened? Europeanization means changes, and indeed, in Turkey institutional and societal changes were recorded by experts (and changes are taking place right now as well, as Turkey is trying to meet the conditions for a visa-free regime with the EU). Perhaps these changes were not sufficient or not irreversible, and too fragile and unable to resist external shock in the form of a series of sudden and abrupt changes in the international environment? Or did the goal of membership cease to be profitable to the incumbent Turkish leadership?

The EU and Turkey established relations a long time ago, in 1963, with the signing of the Association Agreement; in 1995 they established a customs union. At the European Council's Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey officially became a candidate country for EU membership, and this constituted the turning point in enhancing the EU's influence over Turkey for inducing political change, as formulated in the Accession Partnership Document issued by the EU in November 2000 (which was incorporated into the National Program adopted by the Turkish government in 2001). With the beginning of accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005, this was considered "a historic step for Europe, for Turkey, and for the world" (Dervis, Emerson, Gros and Ulgen, 2004, p.108), and the EU's impact on the Turkish political structures and norms was enhanced by EU conditionality. At that time, the Turkish government demonstrated a passionate desire for accession: as Erdoğan (2005, cited in Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012, p.12) expressed it,

> Turkey should be accepted into the European Union. If not, we'll change the name of the Copenhagen criteria to the Ankara criteria and continue with the reforms. … There's no turning back on the road that Turkey's been taking to integrate with Europe, and there are no other alternatives.
> (Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during an address to the Azerbaijani Parliament in 2005)

In its turn, the EU was struggling "to 'sell' Turkish accession to European voters" (Wolczuk, 2005, p.3).

A major obstacle on this path—and the most obvious one—was the Turkish responses to EU conditionality on Turkey's Cyprus policy. The "Cyprus stalemate" emerged as Turkey refused to extend its customs union with the EU to Cyprus and to open its ports and airports to Greek Cypriot vessels and airplanes. Turkey does not officially recognize the Greek Cypriot administration as the official representative of the Republic of Cyprus; as such, it considered the opening of borders to Greek Cyprus to be its de facto recognition, something Turkey obviously did not want to do. However, this

was an open contradiction of the commitment undertaken with the signing of the Ankara Protocol in 2005. In response, in December 2006 the European Council halted eight negotiation chapters with Turkey. In 2009, the Cypriot government stated that it would not allow the opening of six negotiation chapters (Talbot, 2015b, pp.85–86).

The EU member states were very much divided on Turkey's accession; some preferred to consider the process of accession an "open-ended" one, meaning that membership would not necessarily be the final result. Among those who openly opposed Turkish accession were France, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. In particular, the German idea was to offer Turkey "privileged partnership" as an alternative to membership. Cyprus and France simply blocked certain negotiations chapters. There was also a general lack of support for Turkey's membership among EU citizens, even where national government had been traditionally in favor of it, for instance, in Italy (Talbot, 2015b, p.86).

Therefore, it was critically necessary for the EU to find convincing arguments—both for national governments and for the EU citizens—that Turkey deserved the "golden carrot" of membership. Here, the argument of Turkey's titanic efforts to change in order to meet the EU criteria[2] was one of the most powerful. Indeed, experts noted considerable changes in Turkish domestic and foreign policy.

From 2001 to 2004, various political reform packages were adopted in order to fulfill the EU Copenhagen criteria. Thus, on October 3, 2001, Turkey adopted a major constitutional package that addressed the articles on freedom of expression and revised the death penalty, with 34 amendments to the 1982 Constitution. In 2002, three more packages of constitutional reform were adopted, abolishing the death penalty in peacetime, revising the Anti-Terror Law and allowing for broadcasting in languages other than Turkish. The August 2002 package, in particular, was a major step toward fulfilling the political aspects of the Copenhagen criteria. After the AKP emerged as the victor of the November 2002 general elections in Turkey, it adopted several further major packages of political reform. In June 2004, the constitutional reform package removed the already abolished death penalty from the Turkish Constitution and changed Article 46 of the Penal Code by converting death penalty sentences to prison sentences (Müftuler-Bac, 2005).

Turkish foreign policy has also experienced a process of gradual Europeanization, specifically in procedural changes (as a reflection of reforms in civil–military relations in domestic policy-making) and the increased use of diplomatic and economic instruments, as opposed to the use of military instruments (Müftuler-Bac and Gürsoy, 2010, p.421). Turkey actively participated in NATO missions in Afghanistan, in Lebanon in 2006 and in the EU-led operations in the Balkans, and all of this indicated Europeanization of foreign policy "where Turkey demonstrated its ability as a team player for the EU" (Müftuler-Bac and Gürsoy, 2010, p.412). It seemed that the Turkish general approach in foreign policy had undergone a conceptual change: a

coercive regional approach based on national security-centered understanding was replaced by a zero problem policy toward neighbors, based on trust and cooperation in the economic and political spheres. This new approach translated into an active role in neighboring regions: Turkey played mediation and peace-maker roles in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East (Müftuler-Bac and Gürsoy, 2010, p.414). Thus, the conclusion was that Turkey had redefined its national interests, and, correspondingly, its foreign policy approach.

However, these remarkable changes in Turkish domestic and foreign policy proved to lack general sustainability. Thus, in domestic policy, growing authoritarian trends manifested in the erosion of the democratic process as well as the weakening of the country's checks and balances system, which became a matter of serious concern for the EU (Talbot, 2015a, p.96). It would be wrong, however, to say that all domestic reforms were blocked or reversed, though these changes have definitely become more asymmetric across different policy dimensions. As Börzel and Soyaltin (2012, p.6) note, while the reform process has stalled in some areas such as the resolution of the Cyprus conflict or the recognition of the Armenian genocide, domestic change has continued with regard to minority rights and asylum policy.

At the moment, the issue of the visa-free regime with the EU is highest on the Turkish agenda. There are now seven benchmarks that Turkey must focus on to qualify for this regime, including ones it has not met so far: the implementation of the National Strategy and the Action Plan on the Fight against Corruption, signing and implementation of an Operational Cooperation Agreement with EUROPOL, and revising the legal framework regarding organized crime and terrorism in line with ECHR and European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law, the EU acquis and EU member states' practices.

As Ovali shows, the global financial crisis of 2008 led to the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy. Not only did the crisis alter the course of Turkey–EU relations, it also impelled Turkey to solidify its position in the East and to rearrange its national priorities. Thus, Erdoğan reverted to a more nationalist position on Cyprus, Turkish-Armenian dialogue collapsed, and the Turkish-Greek rapprochement failed to produce lasting solutions to current problems (Ovali, 2015). However, this de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy did not come only as a result of an external shock, but was caused by the change of incentives for the country's leadership. As Börzel stresses, Europeanization, and the speed and the depth of corresponding reforms across different policies, can be explained by domestic actors' survival strategies; in other words, Europeanization is more likely to occur when the reforms overlap with the existing agenda of domestic political actors (Börzel, 2012). As scholars argue, domestic actors (ab)use the EU as a "legitimization device" (Tsarouhas, 2012) to push their own political interests (Ademmer, 2011; Ademmer and Börzel, 2012; Börzel and Pamuk, 2012), and "domestic change in Turkey is less driven by the EU and its fading conditionality, than

by the political agenda of the Turkish ruling elites and their preference for consolidating their political power" (Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012, p.16).

Börzel and Soyaltin have shown how this worked in Turkey. Between 1999 and 2002, the coalition government in Turkey initiated some political reforms, but at the same time resisted Europeanization pressures in sensitive areas related to the Copenhagen political criteria (minority rights, judicial reform, asylum policies, the fight against corruption), where EU policies challenged the very foundations of the Turkish polity and the political agenda of the ruling elites. The next AKP government had a more reformist stance, though in a rather utilitarian way: it instrumentalized the promotion of EU accession to widen its support base, but again left untouched the areas that were key to its political agenda, e.g., the resolution of the Cyprus and Armenian conflicts, the promotion of freedom of expression, or the reform of the Law on Political Parties. For the AKP government, the EU has provided it with legitimacy, helping to overcome the resistance of veto players in the state apparatus (like the military and large parts of the judiciary and bureaucracy [Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012, p.13]). But "since the AKP gained electoral support and the membership perspective became less credible in the post-2005 period, the EU has lost relevance for domestic institutional change" (Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012, p.14).

As Talbot (2015b, p.89) concludes,

> Today Turkey is farther away from fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria and EU standards than it was in 2005, in particular, as far as the rule of law, civil liberties, the principle of separation of powers, and the democratic process are concerned.

Moreover, the current "refugee crisis" and the urgent need to cope with this challenge has added a new, unexpected and unpleasant note to EU–Turkey authority relations, which are already losing credibility. After the summit of EU leaders on October 15, 2015, German Chancellor Merkel made an emergency trip to Turkey, where she and President Erdoğan agreed to set out an "action plan," under which Ankara blocked refugee flows across the Aegean to Greece in return for financial aid of €3 billion, visa liberalization and pledges to accelerate Turkey's EU accession negotiations (Mcdonald, 2015). Commentators suspect this deal to be based on an unprincipled approach that disregards the proper requirements and procedures of the accession process. The EU claims it to be a risk for its influence over Turkey's domestic politics (Han, 2015, p.3), which signals a general degeneration of EU–Turkey authority relations.

There are also other signals for the EU that relations with the Union are losing their priority character for Turkey. According to Turkey's New European Union Strategy released in September 2014, Turkey's EU accession is still "a strategic goal which is pursued with determination" (Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs, 2014, cited in Karbuz, 2014, p.3). However, during 2012–2013, President Erdoğan spoke on several occasions about his willingness to end

Turkey's bid for EU membership if the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), headed by Russia and China, were to grant Turkey membership. Erdoğan actually compared the Organization favorably with the EU, evaluating it as "better and more powerful" (Keck, 2013) and claiming that Turkey and the SCO states share "common values." So far Turkey is not welcome in the SCO—three times it has been rejected for "guest membership," and its status is as a dialogue partner, which groups it with Belarus and Sri Lanka, a level below the observer status granted to Afghanistan, Iran, India, Mongolia and Pakistan (Makovsky, 2015). But this situation could change, and the SCO could look at Turkey through a different lens, especially taking into account that for Turkey, becoming a full member of the EU would be "something close to a miracle" (Karbuz, 2014, p.4).

The limits to swinging, or who wants Turkey

Turkey belongs to the club of "rising powers," although, together with Mexico, it is considered second-tier. There is no reason to expect a sudden collapse of Turkey's "rising" status; however, its long-term sustainability could be problematic, as the task of maintaining this status is in no way easier than the task of achieving it. As such, its main strategic goal is clear— to convert the country's "gross" advantages (territorial size, large economy, young population, etc.) into long-term sustainable development, transitioning to a model based on sustainable domestic consumption, high-quality services and high value-added manufacturing. So far, as with all emerging markets, Turkey is essentially playing catch-up, trying to close the gap with the advanced economies of the world. Thus, the main challenge for the country is to reroute growth from a catching-up process into value-added, efficient production-oriented growth (Busygina, 2017). This is a grand goal; at the moment, however, the task of national reconciliation is the most urgent. Whether Erdoğan survives in a polarized and antagonistic domestic environment remains an open question.

But Turkey belongs not only to the "rising powers" group; it is also one of the "global swing states" together with Brazil, India and Indonesia, and this classification allows us to draw attention to another important Turkish feature. All these countries have large and developing economies, strategic geographic locations and have made a political choice in favor of democracy (though, in Turkey's case, an extremely illiberal one). What is critically important is that the position of these states in international relations is not defined with certainty, but is swinging. And it is these swinging political orientations that give them more weight and significance than we might expect based on their population size and the size of their national economies (Kliman and Fontaine, 2012). In other words, it is swinging that gives these states "added value" and increases their role in global affairs. These states swing not because they are weak, but because they consider this to be their most profitable strategy. At the same time, however, in the Turkish case the "swinging strategy"

inherently undermines the "Turkish model" based, in particular, on the exceptional Turkish orientation in authority relations with the EU.

Indeed, the "Turkish model" as we knew it is over. Turkish "swinging" in recent years has been very noticeable, the main foci located in relative geographic proximity. Turkey has swung between regions including the Middle East, Russia, the SCO (to a lesser extent) and, of course, the EU. How much profit has this strategy brought Turkey? Turkish active involvement in Middle Eastern affairs has so far been unsuccessful, and led to its isolation rather than to the expansion of its influence as a regional power. The SCO so far does not want Turkey, and this is understandable: there are two hegemons in the organization already—Russia and China—which makes its functioning very difficult. The emergence in the SCO of another major power, and a member of the NATO alliance at that, would with high probability lead to its collapse.

Russia and Turkey are similar in many aspects: both countries have imperial legacies, and both perceive themselves as decisive regional and global actors in a way which does not correspond to their actual capabilities. As Önis and Yilmaz (2015, p.2) note, this element of mismatch between expectations and capacity clearly distinguishes both Turkey and Russia from many other emerging powers. Russia, however, has larger-scale ambitions and more room for maneuver in using power instruments, particularly coercion. Russia is not going to make a "perfect enemy" out of Turkey (or out of Ukraine); this role is reserved for the EU. With regard to Turkey, it is much more profitable for Russia to play the "rewards and punishments" card as it has before—using economic coercion (sanctions) as punishment and their lifting as reward. Despite any declarations that could come from the Russian leadership in the future, it would be unreasonable to count on the emergence of a Russian-Turkish strategic alliance, at least for as long as current political regime in Russia is preserved.

As for EU–Turkey relations, there is reason to expect that these relations will change—from predominantly authority to predominantly partnerships. In principle, this is not new for EU–Turkey relations: it was the too-slow pace of the accession process that made the EU launch the "Positive Agenda" in 2012 to complement and enhance the negotiations by fostering cooperation in a number of areas of joint interest (Karbuz, 2014, p.7). One of these areas will, naturally, be partnership on energy issues. In its 2013 Enlargement Strategy, the European Commission (2013) stressed that "given Turkey's further development potential as an energy hub and the common energy challenges it shares with the EU, it is important that the enhanced dialogue develops on all issues of joint interest." Bechev (2015a, no pagination) emphasizes that

> as its Energy Union is starting to take shape, Europe should involve the Turkish government, e.g. through an institutionalized dialogue. As energy consumers, the EU and Turkey share an interest in the stability of supply and lower prices, including through the completion of the Southern Gas Corridor.

The notions of "cooperation" and "dialogue" may become more widespread in EU-Turkish relations than they previously were, at the expense of the authority power language of "conditionality" and "rules and norms transfer." Using the authority tools at its disposal, the Union has already acted as a significant player in Turkish economic and political transformation. To date, the EU has basically reached the limits of its power to transfer its rules onto Turkey, and this is felt by both parties, although neither the EU nor Turkey is willing to make the first move to stop the "game" and abandon the accession process (Karbuz, 2014, p.4). This can be explained by multiple factors: the lack of a power differential between the EU and Turkey (Müftuler-Bac, 2016), which distinguishes the Turkish situation from those of Central and Eastern European countries; the probable challenge to, or even undermining of, Turkish statehood by the EU authority tools (Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012) (while in the cases of other member states, candidates and neighboring countries the EU has, on the contrary, strengthened rather than weakened state capacity [Börzel, 2011; Börzel and van Hüllen, 2011]), which force the Turkish leadership to try alternative survival strategies not solely attached to the EU; and lastly, the EU's decreasing attractiveness to Turkish citizens, with frustration and the belief that the EU "no longer provide[s] comfort, prosperity and wealth to its citizens" (Vachudova, 2005, cited in Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012, p.16).

Börzel and Soyaltin (2012, p.16) see the future of EU-Turkish relations thusly: "Similar to the European Neighborhood Countries, we are likely to see at best a 'Europeanization à la carte', where Turkish incumbent elites will pick and choose EU policies to satisfy their constituencies and consolidate their political power." Besides this selective Europeanization, there will be areas where the relations rest not on power, but on equal cooperation and partnership. This is definitely not what the EU and Turkey wanted in 2005, but it is far from the worst possible scenario. However, recent statements by Erdoğan show that he is turning further and further away from the "European choice": thus, he has accused the European Union of funding terrorism in his country and stated that he does not care if the West brands him "a dictator" (Christys, 2016). At the same time, for practical reasons, he is turning to Russia—in November 2016 Turkey and Russia signed an intergovernmental agreement on the construction of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline (RusCable.ru, 2016b). Russian experts consider the project to be equally beneficial to both countries: the Turkish government wants to make the country the world's main hub for oil product sales, while for the Russian Gazprom, the recovery of the gas exports lost over the last 15 years is a matter of highest priority. Russia's further strategic task is to abandon the transit route that goes through the territory of Ukraine (RusCable.ru, 2016a).

Notes

1 All rising powers are large in territory, have a large (or very large) population and (relatively) strong national economies as well as large domestic markets. They are rich in mineral resources or workforce or both (Turkey, incidentally, has the most

valuable natural resource a country can have: a young population). Rising powers are important players in global politics. When listing rising powers, experts usually include Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), as well as second-tier powers—Turkey and Mexico (Tank, 2012).

2   The accession process involves a set of intergovernmental negotiations in 35 policy areas, known as "chapters," of the *acquis communautaire*, the total body of the EU law.

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Conclusion

Russia's "coercive attractiveness" and the EU's "global mission" in maintaining authority relations

The contemporary world is the world of power; to say that "power matters" in international relations is to strongly downplay its significance—what else matters besides power? There is a permanent struggle for power, there is a struggle between powers for power, and there is a struggle for power between powers using different forms of power. This book is about the last of these: the main aim of the book was not to show the evolution of the Russia–EU relations and of the relations between these major powers and neighboring countries, but the interrelation between various forms of power and the choices made in favor of this or that power instrument. Following Lake, I defined the main distinction between forms of power in international relations as the distinction between coercion and authority (keeping in mind that coercive relations can imitate authority and authority relations are built on some coercion).

The spaces between Russia and the EU, as well as these two powers themselves, were the grounds for my research; I suggested that within these territories the choices, possibilities and constraints with regard to using coercion or authority, by two major powers that can neither distance themselves from each other nor from their "common neighborhood" countries, should be very demonstrative. And this was indeed the case.

Russia's objective characteristics—huge territorial size, abundance of natural resources, nuclear weapons and, finally, its Soviet imperial legacy—create a potential predisposition to using coercion in foreign policy. It is these features that confirm Russia's "great power" status in the eyes of the country's political elite; thus, these features are "embodied" in the state that is under construction in Russia. Through the state-building process, Russia's features are converted into revisionism in foreign policy and various manifestations of coercion. Unlike Russia, the EU has none of the abovementioned "advantages"; the Union is severely constrained in its use of forms of power in external relations. Thus, its predisposition to using authority follows not only from the EU's norms and values, but also from objective constraints imposed by multilevel governance. The use of authority instruments in building relations with neighboring countries has its advantages—it allows the EU to establish long-term relations and create "zones of security" by decreasing the degree of uncertainty and instability in the long run.

Coercion is attractive as a form of power. Obviously, coercive diplomacy needs resources, political will and sometimes even courage—but if it can be made to work, it has the potential to achieve foreign policy objectives quickly (at least, much faster than authority). It can serve not only externally, but also domestically, in particular for increasing the legitimacy of the political incumbent at home, supporting his strategy of state-building. Coercion is far from primitive, its forms are constantly being improved, and it can be used in different sectors of the target country—economic, political, military, diplomatic and informational. Moreover, coercion implies not only actions, but increasingly works with perceptions. Indeed, to convince the target country to change its behavior or to not resist the actions of the sender country, it is possible not only to use direct coercion, but to shape in the target country perceptions profitable for the sender about its willingness and ability to use "real" coercion.

Both democracies and autocracies use coercion; the main difference between them lies in the grounds that they consider compelling for recourse to this form of power vis-à-vis other countries. With regard to autocracies, the distinction should be made between the declarations that their elites make to legitimize the use of coercion, and their real reasons for using it. The declarations can include, for instance, the argument of "the need to ensure the rights of compatriots abroad," though the real reason for using coercion may be very different. Another difference between democracies and autocracies lies in their ability for fast and active reaction to nonstandard situations. Freedman (2014, p.13) argues that

> many commentators have given Western countries poor marks so far for their crisis management over Ukraine. It must be doubted whether liberal democracies can ever be adept when trying to keep up with fast-moving events. It is in their nature to be distracted, risk-averse and superficial when assessing developing situations, and then to appear to be at a loss when they are caught by surprise. Autocratic governments have a natural advantage, especially when executing a dramatic move for which they have all the capabilities in place.

With the crisis in Ukraine "the attractiveness" of using coercion in international relations has increased considerably. Indeed, not all national crises provoke such serious implications for wider regions as the Ukrainian one that has shown the highly incomplete nature of post-Cold War resettlement in Europe, while one of the main consequences of the crisis was the rise of realism, in particular, in academic and expert circles. The famous article of Mearsheimer demonstrates this well enough: he argues that these are US and European liberal politicians that share most of the responsibility for the crisis (Mearsheimer, 2014, p.1). According to Mearsheimer, these liberals tended to believe "that the logic of realism holds little relevance in the twenty-first century and that Europe can be kept whole and free on the basis of such liberal

principles as the rule of law, economic interdependence, and democracy" (Mearsheimer, 2014, p.2), and this was their strategic mistake. Therefore, realism should be returned to the discourse about European security. This rise of realism has at least two implications. First, it postulates that world politics belong to major powers, and that the role of smaller countries is principally marginal. Mearsheimer openly defends this approach:

> This is a dangerous way for Ukraine to think about its foreign policy choices. The sad truth is that might often makes right when great-power politics are at play. Abstract rights such as self-determination are largely meaningless when powerful states get into brawls with weaker states.
>
> (Mearsheimer, 2014, p.11)

Second, the rise of realism means the rise of coercion in international relations and points at ineffectiveness of authority tools both now and in the future.

In the Ukrainian crisis Moscow has from the beginning appeared to have the initiative; its turn to coercion in international relations was and continues to be Russia's means of practicing its revisionist approach in foreign policy. Russia's policy towards Belarus, Georgia and Turkey shows that coercion can be very fruitful, at least in the short and medium term. Within European societies there are (and there always will be, as the price of diversity) groups which consider Russia's way of achieving results in external relations attractive and prefer to ignore violations of commitments, support for insurgents within the territory of a sovereign country and annexation of a piece of said territory. Some say that "it is necessary to understand Russia's natural interests" (which is to say understanding and prioritizing their own economic interests), while others are fascinated by Russia's "great power" concept (*velikoderzhavnost'*) and disappointed in the European idea. These groups are and will be Russia's "points of entry" to European societies. However, considering matters strategically, Russia's coercion produces short-term results and long-term costs, both material and reputational. Through extensive use of coercion, the country sends a specific signal to the outside world, a signal that will work, shaping perceptions about Russia not only today but also in the future. In other words, by using coercion today, you to a certain extent lay the foundations for relations in the future. As for the material side, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to calculate the volume of resources that a country will need in order not only to act in a coercive way, but to keep paying the price "won" by coercion.

While instruments of coercion can be sophisticated, to describe authority power I would use the term "delicate." Authority relations are very complicated by definition; they do not "like" crisis situations, being designed for a stable and long-term relationship between superordinate and subordinate. Authority relations don't work (or work badly) when the subordinate has shown a lack of state capacity as the country's elite is simply not capable of

launching and then supporting necessary reforms; this problem is crucial for Ukraine and its relations with the EU. As Georgia's case demonstrates, since all authority instruments function slowly, authority relations are in jeopardy when a new leader comes to presidential office and, being under pressure from another major power, starts questioning the external priorities of the previous leader. These relations also have practically no chance to develop when the subordinate country is "monopolized" by another major power and is completely dependent upon it. Under such conditions, the superordinate has simply no "points of entry" into the subordinate, even if the leadership of the subordinate indicates that it would be eager to develop (some) authority relations. The case of Belarus presents this situation well enough. Finally, the very distinctive case of Turkey illustrates that insufficient difference in "potentials" between superordinate and subordinate can place serious constraints on authority relations between the two. Furthermore, despite Turkey's several decades of rapprochement with the Union with the possibility of full membership, the EU seems to have reached the limits of its authority power with regard to it, and Turkey has had to abandon its previous model (one that presupposed, in particular, a clear choice in favor of Europe by the elites) and turn to selective and opportunistic cooperation with Russia.

All in all, unlike coercion, authority relations are not self-sustaining; they require a whole range of conditions, and, as authority instruments are designed for the long term, these conditions must not only exist at the moment when relations are initially established, but must be preserved over a longer period of time. Furthermore, authority relations include a significant element of social innovation—Europe once "invented" the nation-state, and now it is "inventing" authority. When Taleb (2012, p.5) writes that "The process of discovery (or innovation, or technological progress) itself depends on … aggressive risk bearing rather than formal education," this is, unfortunately, not applicable to the EU's authority—that is principally *fragile*. And still the EU develops these "difficult" relations—both internally and externally—and as I have attempted to show in the book, this is not luxury or whim, but the EU's fundamental mode of existence.

Experts often pose the question of the number of superpowers in the contemporary world, and in its future. In fact, the question is "To which superpowers will the future belong?" Some think that the United States will stand alone as the sole superpower, while others, pointing to the rise of China (and sometimes India) consider the future to be multipolar. Moravcsik supports this idea of multipolarity, but stresses Europe's role in the geopolitical balance. He earnestly argues that

> The world today has two global superpowers. One is the United States—the other is Europe. Europe is the only region in the world, besides the United States, able to exert global influence across the full spectrum of power, from "hard" to "soft." And European countries possess a range of effective civilian instruments for projecting international influence that

is unmatched by any country, even the United States. These tools include European Union enlargement, neighborhood policy, trade, foreign aid, support for multilateral institutions and international law, and European values.

(Moravcsik, 2010, p.91)

And further: "The EU has emerged as the most ambitious and successful international organization of all time, pioneering institutional practices far in advance of anything seen elsewhere" (Moravcsik, 2010, p.92). The list of the EU's instruments (and these are authority instruments) shows that the EU is very distinct from the other superpower, the US. There is indeed little likelihood that such a distinctive power could be replicated elsewhere in the world any time soon (Moravcsik, 2009, p.413). What could be replicated, however, is the type of power relations that the EU establishes externally. Therefore, for me the crucial question is not about the number and the names of current and future superpowers, but about *the type of power relations* that will structure the system of international relations in the future.

In recent years the EU has been much concerned with the development of its Global Strategy. The term "global" indicates the scale of its operation, so the EU Global Strategy could be defined as the use of power to secure the existence of the Union, and the ways of projecting EU influence globally. Interestingly, not all major powers have global strategies; as Ian Bremmer argues, the only country in the world with a global strategy right now is China (Business Insider, 2015). Whether the EU, being not a state but a union, needs a Global Strategy is an open question. Certainly, the European Commission thinks it does: in her foreword to the document "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy," Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, states that

> the idea that Europe is an exclusively "civilian power" does not do justice to an evolving reality. For instance, the European Union currently deploys seventeen military and civilian operations, with thousands of men and women serving under the European flag for peace and security—our own security, and our partners'. For Europe, soft and hard power go hand in hand.
>
> (The European Commission, 2016, p.4)

It follows from this statement that the key priorities of the EU are maintaining security and peace, and indeed, the EU has been eminently successful in this regard, as since the late '90s it has contributed to the political and economic stabilization of over a dozen of its neighbors. However, the tone of the statement and of the whole document creates the impression that the Commission, at least by implication, is copying the rhetoric and the language of state. Moreover, at the expert level it has often called for "a more realistic

approach to reconciling values and interests in order for Europe to be able to shape the future global order" and argued that "a 'global reflex' across all EU institutions is needed to strengthen the Union as a 'comprehensive power'" (Raik, Helwig and Iso-Markku, 2015, p.3). In my mind, the EU is not and will not be able in the future to keep pace with other major powers (states) in using coercive instruments in external relations. Its Global Strategy should reflect its global mission, and that is not to give up, and to step up efforts in developing innovative forms of authority relations—for the sake of its own self-preservation and for the sake of the whole world.

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