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Norms and Interests in the EU's 'Strategic Partnership' with Russia

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Abstract

This thesis examines the tension between norms and interests in the European policy on Russia, looking specifically at how this tension manifests itself in the EU's relation to Russia. This is being analysed with the help of two theoretical approaches; the norm-driven and the interest-driven approach. The empirical examination indicates that while the interest-driven approach is explaining the realities of the problems existing in the relationship of today, the norm-driven approach provides a good help in understanding the logic behind the EU policies and rhetoric on Russia. Empirical evidence has shown a preference for bilateral relations between Russia and separate members states in the areas of 'high politics', which could be explained partly as a result of the slow decision making process within the EU, and partly because the member states want to act independently towards Russia, forging a 'special relationship'. This suggests that the relationship to Russia is negotiated on different levels where 'soft' interests appear on the multilateral arena in the EU format while the 'hard' interests still are pursued on the national level between the different member state and Russia bilaterally.

Key words: EU, Russia, CFSP, ethics, norms, values, interests, constructivism, neorealism, interdependence.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	5
1 INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM	7
1.2 THEORY	8
1.3 METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL.....	8
1.4 DISPOSITION.....	9
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS.....	10
2.1 OPERATIONALISATION OF KEY TERMS.....	10
2.2 THE INTEREST-DRIVEN APPROACH	12
2.3 THE NORM-DRIVEN APPROACH.....	15
3 EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION.....	18
3.1 THE EU-RUSSIAN DIALOGUE.....	18
3.2 MULTILATERAL POLICIES AND BILATERAL RELATIONS.....	21
4 DISCUSSION	23
4.1 THE INTEREST-DRIVEN APPROACH	23
4.2 THE NORM-DRIVEN APPROACH.....	26
5 SUMMARISING CONCLUSIONS.....	29
5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS	30
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY	33
6.1 DOCUMENTS	35

List of Abbreviations

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CS	Common Strategy
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ND	Northern Dimension
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PPC	Permanent Partnership Council
TEU	Treaty of European Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1 Introduction

How much is a foreign policy formed by ethical principles and considerations? This puzzle has been discussed for centuries among our big thinkers and philosophers. Since the end of the Cold War and the development of an international legislation promoting democracy and human rights this remains a complex issue. To a larger extent than earlier a policy of defending strangers on the other side of the globe, outside the national geopolitical interest, is getting more and more apparent. The development of the European Union, nowadays identifying itself as a “*force for good*” with moral arguments stating their interventions, has even further intensified the academic and political debate about the relation between moral and strategic interests in the foreign policy.

Many, or even most, of the academic dissertations concerning the topic have given the EU a distinct role on the international arena because of its fundamental values with obvious ethical elements. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU has the ambition to harmonise the bilateral relations and policies of the separate member states with the common strategies of the Union. From this viewpoint, the EU’s external relations can be characterised as normative and value oriented, as opposed to than the traditional form of foreign policy pursued by nation states, based on rational negotiations between different strategic considerations and selfish interests. On the other hand, however, there are situations where the EU as a normative power can be questioned, and where the commonly agreed statements have been abandoned in favour of the national interests of the separate member states. In this context, I find the relation to Russia particularly interesting, which could be seen as the test case for the EU as a “*force for good*”. In Russia, given the empirical examination discussed in this thesis, it could be argued that disrespect for human rights and democracy co-exists with strong economic incentives for business relations.

The main thought behind the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU is that democracy builds peace and stability and through the pursuit of a policy guarding the democratic principles in the surrounding world, stability along its borders will be the result. With its attractive common market as carrot, the EU enlargement has been an effective tool for democratic transition in Eastern Europe. After the 2004 enlargement, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus became the new eastward neighbourhood of the EU. Even though these countries are not candidates to the European family in the nearest future, the EU clearly expresses the importance of good relations with these countries (Comission, 2004: 3). Stability along the borders is of high importance to the EU policy makers. The development

of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has the intention to develop democratic values, respect for human rights, market economy and stable development in the EU neighbourhood. With Russia, the EU has developed a so-called 'strategic partnership' and during the last decade there has been a great deal of activity of consolidating this relationship.

1.1 Research Problem

My intention in this thesis is to *examine the tension between norms and interests of the European policy towards Russia looking specifically at how it manifests itself in the EU's relation with Russia.*

Russia and the EU share a range of interests, which could give a great deal of prospects for their relationship. Both sides have underlined common interests within a broad range of foreign and security issues like in the Middle East, the Balkans, North Korea and Iran. They share the will to strengthen international institutions, particularly the UN, while promoting multilateralism thus balancing US dominance in world affairs. They also share a number of threat perceptions like terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) proliferations as well as existing and potential regional and local conflicts in their shared neighbourhood. Both of them also need to combat soft security threats across the borders such as organised crime, drug trafficking and illegal immigration, the spread of diseases and environmental pollution. At the same time, the interdependence is growing between the EU and Russia. For example, the EU relies to a large extent on the fuel reserves from Russia, while EU is offering an important market of trade and development aid to Russia (Wagnsson, 2005: 50).

The relation to Russia is interesting since the commonly used carrot of potential EU membership is not in question. This fact becomes a problem for the EU because while democratic consolidation is the underlying desire of the EU's policy towards Russia; Russia itself, on the other hand, wants to develop relations with the EU on the basis on the two parts' equal status as two independent actors. This is to a large extent contrasting with the EU's various projects of projecting norms, values and stability across its borders. Russia does not want to be treated as a target of EU policy. If the EU remains true to its ideals and gets tougher in trying to promote an export of values eastwards, there is potential for deep conflict in EU-Russian relations. With, for instance, its huge dependency on Russian fuel reserves, a conflict is something most of the key European leaders are trying to avoid. In that respect, maintaining good relations with Russia while keeping its external identity as a force for the good becomes a troublesome puzzle for EU policy makers to solve.

There is another troubling factor in the relationship between Russia and the EU. The two are very different with regards to actorness. While the EU could be seen as

a post-modern actor where its members have given up on their sovereignty in favour of common policies, Russia could be described as a traditional actor with great emphasis on territorial integrity. It finds the bureaucracy of the EU rather vague and turns to key European leaders in the separate countries in order to get some business done. This strategy is also used by these member states as an argument of pursuing a good and “special” relation to Russia and it has sometimes has led to departures from the common statements of the EU. Despite the post-sovereign nature of the arrangements, it is important to remember that the EU as a whole is guarding its sovereignty and autonomy very carefully. The requirements for accession, which is also often the basis of the cooperation and partnership agreements is non-negotiable, and it is to a large extent the Union that unilaterally sets the parameters for interaction and integration.

1.2 Theory

My starting point will be to discuss the EU-Russian relation out of two different theoretical perspectives – the norm-driven approach and the interest-driven approach. The interest driven approach is focusing on the national interests of the member states as well as the strategic reasons for policy formulation on Russia. The norm-driven approach is on the other hand looking at the power of institutions, of how an interest is formulated through interaction with other actors as well as the power of ideas. On the basis of these theories I have developed two viewpoints of how one could view the EU’s policy on Russia:

- 1) The EU has the capacity¹ to build a common and coherent Russia policy based on norms and values, stressing human rights, democracy and respect for the rule of law. It has also the normative power needed to achieve a harmonisation of values between the EU and Russia.
- 2) Strategic interests are always behind any foreign policy, even if it is being brought forward in a normative framework. The EU has no power to maintain a common policy on Russia based on norms and values since its member states has distinct and strategic national interests that always comes first.

¹ I stress *capacity* because of the fact of incoherence today – this is hardly a debated issue.

1.3 Methodology and Material

In this thesis I will make a theoretical-qualitative analysis of the foreign policy of the EU with the single case-study of Russia. I have analysed this phenomenon using a hypothetic-deductive method (Holme & Solvang, 1997: 51). In other words, I will analyse the empirical reality of the EU-Russian relation using the two hypotheses developed above together with their theoretical frameworks. Due to the limited amount of time and the format of this thesis, the empirical section will to a large extent be a text analysis of earlier research on the topic. In order to underline a certain theme and to get a more thorough understanding of the field of research, however, I have also used official documents as well as speeches in my research. I want to stress the fact that I analyse this out of the perspective of the EU, not paying much effort to explain the relationship from the Russian viewpoint.

One of the puzzles of pursuing a foreign policy of the EU is the fact that it consists of sovereign states, which pursue foreign policies of their own, next to the one of the EU. Therefore, in examining the tension between norms and interest in the European policy towards Russia, it is not only the interest of the EU as a whole that is interesting in this respect. Because of its multilateral character being composed of sovereign states, the interests that need to be taken into account here are also those of the separate member states. The analysis then becomes multilayered; first, to explain the tension between national interests of the separate member states and a common policy within the framework of the EU; second, to examine the tension between the interests of the EU as a whole and its normative aspirations in the political dialogue towards Russia. The two different theoretical schools of thought presented have different views on how this tension is manifested.

1.4 Disposition

This thesis is divided into five parts. First I intend to develop a theoretical explanation for the situation within the context of the EU-Russian relationship and after that, I will give a brief empirical examination of how the relationship looks like today. The following chapter will explain the empirical realities out of the different theoretical perspectives and the last chapter provides a summarising conclusion, ending with a few recommendations.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Operationalisation of Key Terms

The discussion on the tension between norms and interests in foreign policy is very apparent in the academic writings within the context of the European Union. That the EU is a special kind of international actor is hardly a debated issue. It is an international entity consisting of nation states which on the basis of common values and norms have given up on some of their sovereignty in favour of commonly agreed policies. The discussion on the tension between separate national interests and following the EU line in the CFSP is therefore often at the same time referring to the tension between a normatively driven policy versus an interest driven one. A coherent EU policy is in other words often presupposed following a normative foreign policy in the academic literature. This leads us to the question: In what respect could we call the EU foreign policy normative? Is it so because it involves certain elements of a higher moral than other countries as a result of its multilateral form, or is this normative rhetoric basically a result of the fact that these issues are the easiest to agree upon?

The often quoted neo-realist statement from Kagan (2003), that the EU comes from Venus while the US comes from Mars illustrates that the EU is a power relying on ‘civilian’ power, using ‘soft’ instruments such as diplomacy and economic sanctions and focusing on soft policy issues such as democracy and human rights. The ‘Martians’ on the other hand are pushing ‘hard’ policy issues like national strategic selfish interests and is much more concerned with guarding their territorial integrity, the maximising of power and relies to a large extent upon military instruments. Although neo-realists in general reject this theoretical simplification of the reality (see among others Hyde-Price 2006), I still find it fruitful to address this statement for my coming discussion. In a Kantian manner, Kagan argues that the EU acts in a civilian manner only because it lacks the possibilities to act the way the US does; if that were the case, the EU would act in its own selfish interests just like the US, and thereby loose the ‘normative’ status it has today.

With this statement in mind, I find it important to make an essential distinction between two terms frequently used in this discussion, namely the notions of ‘civilian’ and ‘normative’ measures of policy. Civilian measures refer to the absence of using military means of coercion while pursuing a foreign policy. Many scholars often talk about ‘normative’ and ‘civilian’ policy in the same breath, as if

the fact that an actor is pursuing policy in the absence of military instruments automatically makes it an 'ethical' actor. As Sjørnsen states, 'civilian' actions like economic sanctions can very well have as devastating consequences as military actions and most of the times they affect the civilian population very hard. In some respects one can even claim that military measures as means to protect a vulnerable group would even be desirable (Sjørnsen 2006:239). Smith (2003) on the other hand goes as far as claiming that a foreign policy is not to be recognised as ethical if it is pursued with the help of military means (Smith 2003: 15). In this thesis, I will argue in the line of Manners (2002), who argues that the discussion of an 'ethical' or norm driven foreign policy does not need to include the issue of using civilian measures or not. He prefers to keep these notions separated. What is interesting is rather *the EU's ability to influence what is "normal" in international policy* (Manners 2002:239).

Another operationalisation worth making in this respect is the use of the terms 'values' and 'interests'. In this thesis, a policy driven by 'values', refers to a policy guided by universal and ethical values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law i.e. the 'common values' that are the very foundation of the EU's legal framework. The term 'interests' will refer to interests accumulated from rational reasoning originating from the actor's selfish interests and not utilitarian interests serving a universal good.

Arguing that the EU is a unique international actor is, as stated above hardly a controversial issue. The question rather is if this kind of actor differentiates itself from other actors on the international arena *because of* its normatively driven actions. In fact, all sorts of foreign policy pursued by nation states are a combination of promoting normative values and interests – so what is it that makes the EU unique in this respect?

First, in order to be normative, these policies are very much dependent on if its partners perceive their actions as legitimate or not – which is true for all international actors using soft power (Haukkala 2006:6). In order to examine the tension between norms and interests within a common foreign policy of the EU, there are two dominating perspectives which both are giving a fruitful ground of discussion in the EU-Russian perspective.

The first perspective is what Wong (2005) calls the "Europe-idealistic" perspective, which look at CFSP as a policy which is present with a common goal that has a significant influence on the world policy. This perspective rejects the states-centred position and argues rather that European institutions create a European identity in the world, with a moral presence in world policy. This Europe-idealistic perspective identifies the EU as an organisation built upon the values of democracy, human rights and security cooperation, which makes the foreign policy of the EU specific and unique in the international arena (Wong 2005:143).

The second perspective has a traditional states-centred view, which regards states as utility maximising, selfish and purposive actors. As positive or negative the picture of the EU's role for states to attain these goals may be, this perspective does not acknowledge any significant role of the EU but rather looks at it primarily as a forum for intergovernmental discussion and negotiation and emphasises materialism and rationalistic calculations of utility maximising options.

In the next couple of sections, I will describe the theoreticak framework of the study even further. I will divide each theoretical section into three parts: first, I will discuss the main features of the theory; second, I will put into the context of the EU. I will also argue for where these theoretical tendencies could be found empirically. Finally, I will translate the theory to fit into my field of research.

2.2 The Interest-Driven Approach

The interest-driven approach, referred to as neo-realism, recognises the nation states as the main actors in international politics. The main driving force for states is to survive within an international system of anarchy. Therefore, sovereignty and territorial integrity is the main source of concern for states according to this perspective. Since the international system is anarchic, ethical principles will always be regarded as secondary issues, and national safety will always come first. This leads to the conclusion that “universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states” (Morgenthau 1954, cited in Donnelly 2002:85). States focuses according to this theory on ‘relative gains’, which limits the possibilities of cooperation with other states. In other words, states are always concerned over its position within the international society in relation to their enemies, i.e. other states. That means they will only initiate cooperation with other states as long as they gain at least as much or more on the cooperation (Smith 2003:4).

Medrano (1999) is of the opinion that cooperation between states is dependent on whether or not there are common interests to achieve a certain common good. In his opinion, it is most unlikely that common goods that are legitimate for a close cooperation exist between the member states of the EU next to security and trade. The prospects for a solid foundation within the field of foreign policy are low since the countries along the borders would be the winners and get relative gains over the others, which would imply a less developed form of cooperation (Medrano, 1999:172).

Even if neo-realism has been the most influential theory in the field of international relations, there are not many neo-realists that have tried to apply it to the context of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), since the very existence of a multilaterally cooperative organisations like CFSP in a way questions the theory's main assumption, that states have problems cooperating in an anarchistic world order. Moreover, the realist approach is said to be too state-centric and to have too

much focus on 'hard power' and 'high politics'. An international actor such as the EU, which is not a nation state, with a limited possession of hard power and which is mostly pursuing what usually is called 'low politics' is therefore said to be a hard case to solve for neo-realists (Hyde-Price 2006:218).

Neorealist emphasises the importance of structures of the international system as determining the actor's behaviour (Donnelly, 2002:88). States have an interest in creating stability in its external surroundings. The existence of EU could, according to this perspective, serve as an instrument in achieving that. The strongest states are the ones expected to take the leading role regionally, since they have the most to gain from a stable region, moreover they have the best capacity to take that responsibility. In other words, the neo-realist perspective looks at the external policies of the EU as a "collective attempt to create stability in its surrounding environment, mainly driven by the biggest powers of the union "(Hyde-Price 2006:222). As argued by Donnelly, moral values could be used to facilitate the attainment of power (Donnelly, 2002:94).

The discussion if a policy is driven by norms or not is centred on the question of *which interest are behind its actions*. The neo-realists argue that since the CFSP, because of its intergovernmental character, is still run in the line of the strongest member states' interests, the question of an 'ethically' driven policy should be rejected.

Hyde-Price is of the opinion that the EU, instead of being seen as a normative power should be seen as an instrument of collective hegemony in which the member states forms its surrounding environment by using power in different manners. It uses policy measures like political partnership or isolation; economic carrots and sticks; promises of membership or the threat of expulsion. According to Hyde-Price, the EU is acting as a civilising power only in the way it is used by its strongest member states to influence their common values and norms in the former communist East (ibid:227). The interest-driven approach underlines the fact that most national governments of the EU member states do not want to abandon their own foreign policy. Therefore they rather pursue it separately, next to the one of the EU, or at least always make sure that the policy of the union does not lead to a situation where their own national interests are threatened (Smith 2003:3). In correlation to that, due to the slow decision making process and the institutional character of consensus in decision making within the second pillar of the EU, it is easier for other actors to engage with the different member states separately. Since the member states not always share vital interests there is a "logic of diversity" blocking the prospects of a supra national and foreign policy (Smith 2004:4).

Youngs (2004) presents empirical evidence for elements of strategic interests behind the normative foreign policy in the context of the EU after an investigation of its work for human rights issues. A normative foreign policy is by Youngs seen as a strategy for the EU to control Russia and the East. He questions the 'deliberative approach' which states that EU's work on human rights is a policy

area where you can clearly see that the EU has developed a policy outside of the power balance dynamics (Youngs 2004:419). His position does not doubt the genuine commitment to normative values within the EU, but he believes that the way in which certain norms have been put into practice in its foreign policy “reveals a certain security-predicated rationalism” (Youngs 2004:421). Through financing the non-governmental organisations that has a clear westward orientation in favour of others, and by imposing sanctions on states which violates human rights at specific points in time and not others, Youngs argues that there are clear strategic motives behind EU interventions as a means to support the accession of certain leaders to power or as a way to get influence in a country’s development to democracy.

Stating that there is always a strategic interest behind an intervention one might wonder why western governments in some occasions formulate policies in areas where they do not have any geopolitical interest. Chandler (2003) explains, according to Youngs, that other reasons than the normative can be the ground for this kind of a policy. The reason of this could be connected to internal sphere of policy making. Through the pursuit of an ‘ethical’ foreign policy, governments are able to create an identity giving them a moral basis which is not possible to achieve in the internal political process. This tactic has three great advantages: it is a foreign government that is the object of critique, there is no risk of being held responsible for merging the political rhetoric with international actions and, possible negative effects of the policy pursued could be blamed on the government of the country targeted (Chandler 2003:309).

Applying this reasoning to the research question, the neo-realist approach would say, that in foreign policy, strategic interests will always be the base of a policy on Russia. The different member states of the EU will follow the common line as long as it does not conflict with its own national interest. When there are economic gains from dealing with Russia in a bilateral way it will lead to a diversion of a common policy. This perspective would suggest the biggest EU member states to be the ones formulating the policies towards Russia. As soon as they find the bilateral relation more favourable, however, they are also the ones most likely to be diverting from them. The smaller member states have more to gain from a common position and will thereby argue for that. The neo-realist perspective would argue that this lack of coordination will not only lead to a loss of legitimacy of the EU in the eyes of Russia but also serve as a way for Russia to ‘divide and rule’ within Europe. In order to avoid such a thing, neo-realists would recommend that the EU leaves the values out of the Russian dialogue and instead focus on what is necessary for European survival; namely trade, energy and cooperation within the field of the common interests stated both by Russia and the EU.

In order to reveal evidence supporting this view, cases where separate single states have diverted from the common EU line would be examined. This could be done through examining official statements and actions in world policy, and also by

looking at consequences of the commonly agreed policies and furthermore how Russia has responded to these policies.

2.3 The Norm-Driven Approach

Constructivists search for the contents and sources of national interests and argue that the structures of the international society are not only built on the material interests of national states, but also on ideas. They examine the role of identity and see norms as the social base for a global policy. National interests depend on which identity and social role a state or organisation adapts. These interests are shaped and reshaped through social interaction.

Even though a state retain its sovereignty and in theory controls its policy, in practice it has to follow the institutional rules it has committed itself to. This way of behaving is called '*the logic of appropriateness*' through which states follow institutional rules even if they sometimes interfere with any of its vital interests. States are acting in this way since they do not want to be regarded as non-reliable (March and Olsen 1998, in Andreatta 2005:32). In this way institutions can affect a single state's foreign policy and its decisions through creating common platforms which, could be followed up by national policies in the absence of a suitable option. In the case of Europe, a process of Europeanisation is followed, which, like a coordinated reflex, can bring national viewpoints closer together (Andreatta 2005:32). Coordination of policies is according to this view a reflex through a habit and not only an action based on rational calculations about the maximisation of utility (Sjursen 2003:12).

In the social constructivist literature, the social dimension of the world community is seen as a transforming power of the Westphalian principles of sovereignty and non-interventions. Globalisation does, according to this perspective, not only lead to economic and technological changes, but also leads to a globalisation of international norms for just actions. In order to explain which mechanisms are behind the development of norms and why these norms are accepted and complied with, Sjursen is using the '*deliberative approach*'. This perspective says that preferences are developed through communication where the different actors are coordinating its plans through negotiations (Sjursen 2003:12-14). Actors are, according to this approach, only recognised as rational when they have the ability to legitimise and explain its actions. An action could be governed both by material interests, but also be based on those norms defining the actors social identity.

The constructivist approach, together with the '*deliberative approach*', adduces the multilateral emphasis within the EU as a start of a development of universal norms. Through argumentation and open discussion within the EU about what is ethically right and wrong, values are spread not only from the inside of the EU and out, but

also through outside influence from the international society on the EU. In the long run universal norms will thereby evolve.

Sjursen argues that there are several empirical surveys stating that there is something else going on within the second pillar of the EU leading the member states into a tendency of interest coordination even in the area of 'high politics'. (Sjursen 2003:4). There are some evidence of a coordination-reflex among the policy makers of the member states, indicating of a habit where they automatically consult their colleagues in other countries before defining their national positions (ibid:5). There are also signs of Brusselisation of the European foreign policy. This means that even though the foreign and security policy still is in the hands of the single member states, it has in practice become more difficult for the individual member states to control the process of European foreign policy. This is so because of the logic of appropriateness. This tendency indicates that there are some strong central forces within the EU and that foreign policy of the individual member states are going through important changes as a result of the EU membership and the participation of the CFSP (Ibid:6).

European states has become weaker during the 21st century with the empowerment of the US, Japan and China. Smaller states like the Netherlands, Ireland, Portugal and Sweden has learned to ally themselves to adapt to the changed international arena. In the context of the EU, smaller states have gotten the possibility to interfere in other regions than before while projecting its interests as 'European' (Wong 2005:147). The larger states, especially those with a colonial history, gets the opportunity to re-engage in areas which earlier was under the influence of the colonial states. The EU membership offers the possibility to pursue a policy of politics of scale. National interest still plays a role within the foreign policy, but even though the political elite in a state opposes the institutionalisation of EU praxis, changes in the international context has affected the definition of what is European and what is national interests.

It is said that the EU's normative difference comes from its historical context, and its hybrid polity and political-legal constitution. This has evolved the EU into a mixture of supranational and international form of governance which exceeds the norms from the Westphalian peace. This new form of hybridity has emphasised certain values and principles common from its member states. In the post-cold war period this particular combination and historical experiences has led to a commitment of placing principles and universal norms as the basis of its relations between the member states internally and with its external relations with the surrounding environment. As stated by Manners (2002) , the large reliance of norms informing and conditioning its external relations, has made the EU come closer to the universal declaration of human rights than most other actors in the international arena. (Manners, 2002:241).

Given the observation that the EU is built on a normative basis, this will predispose it to act in a normatively way. The most important factor shaping the international

role of the EU is not the way it operates, but rather what it is (ibid:252). The normative character of the EU is illustrated in its willingness to impinge on sovereignty, for example by making interventions in support for individuals rather than the state. Further, since these interventions often are made in the absence of obvious material gains, there are additional normative features of the EU's identity. Last but not least, Manners argues that since the EU's external interventions have such a value-driven ground, they are performed despite the fact that they risk facing opposition from its strongest partners.

With this observation in mind, Manners dismisses the accusations from the neorealists that the EU 'norms' really is a form of cultural imperialism in disguise:

“The idea of pooling of sovereignty, the importance of a transnational European Parliament, the requirements of a democratic conditionality and the pursuit of human rights [...] are not just ‘interesting’ features – they are constitutive norms of a polity which is different to existing states and international relations. Thus the different existence, the different norms and the different policies which the EU pursues are really part of redefining what can be ‘normal’ in international relations” (Manners 2002:253).

Turning back to my research question and looking at the realities of the EU policy on Russia and all of its problems it faces today, it is a challenge to explain it from the norm-driven approach. I would rather say that constructivism looks at the situation of today as a *process* eventually evolving to its ideal – a harmonisation of values. It recognises that there is a tension between norms and interests within the foreign policy of the EU, but through dialogue between the member states, these interests have a *potential* to be reshaped.

Instead of thinking nationally, the member states will think ‘European’, leading to an eventual convergence on their foreign policy. Explaining how this will affect the EU relations with Russia, a coordinated policy, based on ideas and values, will, also affect Russia like a spill over effect. Deeper integration leads to a harmonisation on values between the EU and Russia in the long run.

Empirical evidence of supporting this view would be found in the common documents of the EU on Russia as well as in speeches, both from the leaders of separate European member states from the EU officials. By analysing the rhetoric in these documents, and by comparing them with how each of the member states have actually acted towards Russia, the reliability of this approach could be examined. As stated in the introduction, the reality of today has shown signs of the fact that individual European leaders have diverted from the EU line in favour of their own policies, which in a way questions this theoretical approach. By arguing that this is a *long term process*, however, there would still be potential for an adaptation to a common line. Therefore, this theoretical approach could still be applicable to this case.

3 Empirical Examination

In 2006, the EU-Russia centre made expert opinion survey aiming to give perspectives on the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia. It contains respondents from five different spheres within the European machinery; members of national parliaments as well as from the European Parliament, NGOs, academics and from the media. Nearly 70% of the respondents were of the opinion that EU member states put their own national interests first in their dealings with Russia, rather than supporting a consistent EU position. These figures point in the direction that the EU institutions have made little progress in their efforts to achieve a common position towards Russia. 39% of the respondents felt that the EU-Russian relationship has done little to promote democracy and civil liberties. 83% think that Russia is a less democratic country than it was 5-10 years ago and 86% think that this should be a cause of concern for EU citizens (EU-Russia Centre 2006).

With these figures in mind, I intend to give a review of the policies directed towards Russia, and how Russia has responded to this. I will account for what the policies consist of as well as their respective consequences. In the discussion section that follows I intend to put the theories into the picture.

3.1 The EU-Russian Dialogue

With the development of the CFSP, the stated aim has been to harmonise the different policies pursued by its member states. Russia and the EU member states are all members of the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe in which its members are presupposed to uphold and respect the fundamental values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and market economy. These values are declared to be the very core of the EU-Russian relationship. The EU has over the years developed a range of policies directed to regulate the relationship between Russia and itself. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is the legal framework signed in 1994. It did not come into action until 1997 due to some member states' concerns over Russia's operations in Chechnya. This agreement expires this year (2007) and will after this automatically be extended on an annual basis unless either side withdraws from it (Commission, 2007:3). Next to this there are biannual summits with the heads of states aiming to define the strategic direction for the development of the relationship. At the ministerial level, there is the Permanent Partnership Council (PPC), aimed at discussing the specific issues arising on the agenda between the

two. At the St Petersburg Summit in May 2003, the two parties agreed to enhance their cooperation by creating Four Common Spaces² in the framework of the PCA. These 'Spaces' were negotiated and agreed upon bilaterally and are thus 'common' to the EU and Russia. An additional policy worth mentioning is the Northern Dimension, a Finnish initiative, which seeks to promote the regional cooperation between the northern parts of Europe and Russia (ibid:4). Political dialogue also takes place at Foreign Ministers meetings of the EU with their Russian counterparts and since 2005 there are regular consultations on human rights matters (ibid:7).

The PCA focuses on trade and economic issues while including a prerequisite for political dialogue. It argues that the two parties are convinced of the importance of respect for human rights and the rule of law, democracy and economic liberalization. The PCA has the objective to "strengthen political and economic freedoms" and to "support Russian efforts to consolidate its democracy and to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy" (PCA, Title I, article 1). The PCA aims at developing a regular political dialogue that could lead to the rapprochement between the EU and Russia and to "support the political and economic changes underway in Russia" (PCA, Title II, Article 6). Another interesting point made in this document is that "Russia shall endeavour to ensure that its legislation will be gradually made compatible with that of the Community" (PCA, Title VI, Article 55.1.).

The Common Strategy (CS) was developed in 1999. It expired in 2004 but was intended to improve the coherence of different policies within the European Union. It was unilateral which meant that no enforcement prevailed on the Russian side, but was persistently underlining the 'common values' of the EU and Russia. It is said that the CS included all kinds of goals without clear definitions and without any practical plan of how to fulfil them. The same could be said to the most recent tool Four Common Spaces.

As a response to the CS, Russia developed a 'Medium-Term Strategy' (MTS) for its policy towards the EU. Interestingly to note, this document does not at all mention the 'common values' that the EU declares is underpinning their partnership. As discovered by Schuette, the MTS promise to "maintain the socially oriented reforms in Russia" but it does not refer to democracy, the rule of law and human rights at all. It rather stresses itself as a 'world power' which is interested in developing relations with the EU on *equal* terms. In the MTS Russia is instead focusing on its national interests and strategic goals such as counter-balancing 'NATO centrism', the discrimination against Russian minorities in the Baltic states and Russia's special interest in the CIS, as well as outlining different areas for cooperation between Russia and the EU (Hughes 2006: 7).

In all of the documents between the EU and Russia, both of the parties refer to the term 'strategic partnership', without giving a clear definition of what such

² The Common Economic Space, the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Common Space of External Security and the Common Space on Research, Education

partnership should entail – all they talk about is either common interests or also common values (Schuette: 2004:17f).

Schuette (2004) has examined the different documents in the EU-Russian relationship and has found some interesting themes there. The European Security Strategy (ESS)³ has a more traditional threat-driven approach and places Russia on par with US and NATO as a ‘major factor in our security and prosperity’ and an articulated partner in world affairs. Comparing it to the other documents produced and conducted in the dialogue on Russia, you will find a different approach rather looking at Russia as a target of EU policies stressing the aim of a developed Russia with respect of the rule of law, human rights and democracy. All of the documents, even if different in size and contents, directed towards Russia share one thing: one part identifies fields where Russia and the EU have common interests. The second parts of these documents, especially the ones that are adopted by the EU unilaterally, have the objective of developing Russia into a ‘European’ or western model (in Schuette, 2004: 17). This strategy is not appreciated by Russia which wants to be treated as an equal partner and the focus on ‘values’ has been interpreted as a way for the EU to control the development in Russia as well as in their shared neighbourhood.

It could be argued that even if the EU is leading to a abandonment of state sovereignty, it still guards its own borders carefully. For example Russia has demanded a position within the EU’s internal decision making, meeting all of the member states at once in a so called 27+1 format. This request is neglected by the EU which is only offering meetings in a troika format.

To examine the documents in a more pragmatic manner, this whole range of dialogues, policies and committees are said to be slow and to a certain extent have hindered the possibility of making any real decisions. This is due to the complex bureaucracy within the EU. As David Gowan, former deputy ambassador to Moscow, has argued: “Problems are often passed up and down the chain of this structure without being resolved” (Ref in Barysch 2004: 51). It is also said that the summit meetings are too tightly scripted to allow for real discussions. As stated by Barysch (2004):

“Russian officials tend to have limited negotiating mandates, which means that they have to consult their minister (or even the Kremlin) before they can agree on even a minor compromise. The hands of EU representatives are similarly tied because their mandates rest on complicated compromises between the EU member states” (Barysch 2004: 52).

Another factor that is restraining the EU from speaking with one voice is the fact that the different policies are aiming for incoherent goals. One of the examiners of EU policies towards Russia is arguing that the ND initiative has reflected problems of synchronising the aid programmes with Common Strategy goals as well as the

³ European Security Strategy is one of the key CFSP documents and came about partly as a result from Europe’s failure to present a united front in the Iraq crisis, but also because there were a need to articulate a coherent strategy for the CFSP in the light of the global security challenges.

presidency work plans. Hughes argues that “In fact as is clear from the priorities of the Irish, Dutch, Luxembourg and UK presidencies since enlargement in early 2004, the ND has slipped into the policy netherworld” (Hughes 2006:6). It could be said that the ND has become a source of competition between the different member states. While the ND is a Finnish initiative, Poland is arguing for an Eastern Dimension (ibid).

3.2 Multilateral Policies and Bilateral Relations

It is often said that the common positions on Russia only describe the smallest common denominator while the big member states (Germany, France, Italy and UK in particular) develop their own positions, next to the ones of the EU. These countries actively engage in the EU formulation of policies on Russia. The Commission must however also take all of the different national interests of the 27 member states into account. Those member states that have a specific interest in Russia often tend to discuss with Russia bilaterally what the union as a whole is supposed to negotiate upon. It is also said that Russian officials find the multilayered bureaucracy of the EU too complex, and also too slow to deal with, and therefore prefer the bilateral relationships with separate member states as an easier way to deal with Europe. As stated by Alexei Meskov, Russian Dep. Foreign Minister 2002:

“Russia’s relations with many European countries are several centuries old while the European institutes are comparatively young. It is important, therefore, to complement the multi-component and multi-level system of security and cooperation that is being formed with bilateral relations. They play the role of ‘safety net’ when the situation grows too complicated” (Ref in Wagnsson 2005: 52).

There are a few cases often referred to in the literature as an example for this. For instance, while the EU-Russia security cooperation had a slow progress, Russia sought to strengthen its military ties with France and the UK in 2003. The same happened when the Commissions made wide ranging demands in the energy sphere – as a result Russia strengthened its energy relations with individual EU countries instead. The UK and Russia, for instance, agreed on a bilateral energy dialogue next to the EU-Russia dialogue. On trade issues, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder made a promise to speed up the Russia’s entry into the World Trade Organisation - even though it should be the Commission that takes up the responsibility for external trade negotiations. There is one ‘classic’ example, often referred to in the literature on the topic, in 2003 when the then Italian Prime Minister and EU president at the time, Silvio Berlusconi, declared himself to be President Putin’s ‘defence lawyer’ saying to the press that “the truth is that there are often distortions in the press, in Italy as abroad. It’s the same thing as far as Chechnya and the Yokos story are concerned” (Ref in Barysch 2004: 54). This was said at the very same time as the EU had made statements concerning the human rights violations in Chechnya.

Generally, the individual EU governments have been more understanding to the Russian requests than the European Commission. They rarely criticise its violations of human rights, the rule of law and poor records on democratic procedures as the EU does. Chechnya has to a large extent been abandoned within the bilateral agendas with Russia (ibid:54), which suggests that most of the member states have a general preference for bilateralism. Thus, they also have their own institutional capacity for pursuing their national interests irrespective of the EU. For example, Britain has an embassy in Moscow that with an office of 250 staff is a considerably bigger than that of the delegation of the EU (Hughes 2006:6). As argued by Siegert, European, and especially German, officials may point to the problems of human rights violations within Russia, but they are not willing to link these concerns with conditionality in economic or military policy areas (Siegert 2004: 24).

The matter of incoherence among member states is argued by leading officials within the EU, even though the declared picture may be seen as rather blurred. For instance Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson declared in a speech this year that:

“The incoherence of European policy towards Russia over much of the past decade has been frankly alarming. No other country reveals our differences as does Russia. This is a failure of Europe as a whole, not any member state in particular. A strong partnership between Russia and Europe can only be based on a strong Russia – and a strong EU” (Mandelson 20 April, 2007).

This was said only a few months after the High Commissioner on Common Foreign and Security Policy himself, Javier Solana in an interview argued that

“Every member state has of course bilateral relations with Russia, which are marked by individual interests and an individual history. It would however be wrong to assume that the Eastern European countries look differently towards Russia than the ‘old’ Member States, which, experience has shown is certainly not the case. It would be even more wrong to assume that one block of countries put pressure on another block to make them adopt ‘their’ view on the relationship with Russia. In the context of the EU’s CFSP, we always act with the consent of every single member state. This is in an inherent part of what the EU is about in the area of foreign relations” (Solana, 2007, interview 5 february).

The different citations suggest that the picture of the EU-Russian relations, at least given in the official rhetoric, is incoherent even among the EU officials in the Commission. After the ‘gas war’ in 2005, when Russia switched off the delivery of gas to several of EU member states, much of the dialogue between the EU and Russia has been centred on the energy issue. While the EU is anxious to become too dependent on Russian energy, Russia on the other hand is worried that the EU might diversify its energy imports to other suppliers than Russia. Paradoxically, negotiations on a new energy infrastructural project, which will further lock the EU to Russian gas supply took place between Germany and Russia. This has led to an agreement to starting the construction of a 1200 km long North European gas pipeline linking Russia with Germany. This pipeline will to a large extent strengthen Russia-German bilateral economic and political ties, while also significantly reducing Russia’s dependency for gas transit on Poland and Ukraine (Hughes 2006: 10).

4 Discussion

In this section, I intend to discuss the empirical reality from the eyes of the different theoretical approaches respectively. How do they explain the empirical occurrences, or more concretely, referring to my research question – what do the theoretical perspectives say about *how the tension between norms and interests manifests itself in the EU's relation to Russia?*

4.1 The Interest-Driven Approach

Starting with the interest-driven approach and the theories of neo-realism it could be argued that first of all, Russia's behaviour as an international actor, especially after the Putin administration's accession to power in 2000, is the school book example of how an actor behaves according to this view. It is an actor that is still pursuing the old cold war kind of thinking that gave the realist approach such popularity among scholars back in the days. Its way of acting in the international system, shows that territorial integrity, sovereignty and rational calculations of how to gain the most out of international cooperation are Russia's main concerns.

As stated in the introduction, analysing the tension between norms and interests within the EU Foreign Policy becomes multilayered, since the Union consists of sovereign states, with a foreign agenda of their own. Analysing interests has to be done from the perspectives both from the separate member states and of the EU as a whole. Since neo-realism argues that nation states are the main actors within the international system however, the main focus will in this realist analysis be on them.

As the neo-realist approach suggests, the largest member states are the ones expected to take the leading role regionally within an organisation such as the EU, since they are the ones that have the most at stake in an instable external environment. The same goes for the countries along the Union's borders which have the most to gain from a common foreign policy. Looking specifically at the case of EU-Russian relations this is exactly so. Germany has, especially during the Schröder era, been the promoter and mediator of Russian interests within the Union and it is clearly articulated, both on the Russian and German side, that the two are having a 'special relation'. Finland, Poland and the Baltic states along the borders are also active in the policy formation towards Russia, which the Northern Dimension, being a Finnish initiative, suggests.

Other main actors, France, Italy and the UK have also been keen on formulating the Russia policy within the EU. However, they are also the ones that most often are diverging from the common position. As the examples have indicated, there are times when Germany has diverted from the EU line in favour of making its own policy statements on Russia. This could be explained from the interest-driven point of view as due to the fact that it has 'hard' material issues at stake with Russia. Good relations with the country are by far something to promote, especially with the establishment of the gas pipeline between Germany and Russia. Germany has, however, at times voiced its concerns over humanitarian and democratic matters in relation to Russia, but it has only been seen by scholars as rhetoric, not leading to any concessions or conditionality at all. Partially responsible for this were the changes in international politics after the terror attacks on New York and Washington in 2001. This led to an abandonment of the common EU statement of freezing its relations with Russia and to a new divergence towards stronger bilateral approaches with Germany, France, Italy and the UK, which were openly accepting Putin's way of defining the Chechnya conflict as a problem of 'terrorism'. This divergence could also be explained as a result of a long-lasting diplomatic strategy by president Putin himself to rupture the common EU position by targeting these leaders (Hughes 2006:11). This is the typical kind of zero-sum game with which the neo-realist approaches choose to characterise international policy making. While German officials assured that they were continuing to demand changes in the Russian human rights standards in confidential meetings, not many of such words were spoken in public. As argued by Siegert, German policy has since then been focused upon three issue areas: stability, the war on terrorism and the economy, while ethical statements have been hidden in the footnotes (Siegert 2004:24). As is clear from Article 13 of the TEU, there are no sanctions for non-compliance by member states and consequently it could be argued that foreign policy coordination and convergence at the level of the EU becomes subordinated to the national interests of member states (Hughes 2006:5).

Discussing counterproductive and sometimes competitive policies towards Russia they are explained by the neo-realist perspective as a result of national interests among member states. The ND is seen as a way of promoting Finnish interests within the EU, while Poland, on the other hand, is arguing for an Eastern Dimension. Poland as well as other of the 'newer' states within the European Union has a rather sceptical approach towards Russia despite of its economic interdependence to the country. It is often loudly criticising Russia's poor record on democratic standards at times when the EU has a more soft tone. How could this be explained from the realist point of view? Mark Entin (2005) gives a pretty harsh analysis of these countries' means for doing this:

In the mid 1990s the future 'new Europe' discovered that using the ghost of the Russian threat – an imperial policy, the expansion of the Russian sphere of interests and the image of an overall degeneration of the situation in Russia – was the most efficient way for obtaining benefits on the international scene. It was applied as a universal instrument for getting compassion and understanding from the EU and its member states, for talking them into making decision in the New Europe they was aspiring to and for making them speed up the accession process [...] The Russian

threat tool is used to exert more influence on EU affairs to obtain more funding, special treatment, exemptions from established legal regimes etc. (Entin 2005:124)

Poland is on the other hand perceived by the Russian political elite as an opponent who would like to pull such countries as Ukraine and Belarus out of the Russian zone of influence. This could be seen as is a typical example of the neo-realist zero-sum game kind of thinking, where countries between the enlarged EU and Russia are perceived by Moscow as a battlefield between Russia and the West. According to Gromadski (2005) this is one of the most important causes of tension between Russia and Poland. (Gromadski 2005:68)

Over to the analysis of the tension between the interests and norms of the policies driven by the EU *as a whole*. Several analysts have described the most recent tool, the Four Common Spaces as high on visions, but low in its practical descriptions on how to actually achieve them in other words, a ‘Christmas tree’ with many different decorations stemming from all of the different member states national interests (Hughes 2006). Michel Emerson (2005) for example has called it “the proliferation of the fuzzy” while Makarychev has described the language of the Common Spaces as “the EU discursive strategy of uncertainty” leaving a lot of room for how those ‘fundamental values’, that is supposed to be the ground for EU-Russian relations, could be interpreted (Ref in Medvedev 2006:11).

In EU-Russia Summit in the Hague 2004 a mutual agreement was made to effectively marginalise the issues of human rights violations to a new and separate round of EU-Russia ‘consultations’ on human rights, and in this way prevent them from spoiling the summit forum. Looking back at this kind of history and the earlier withdrawal of sanctions during the Chechen war, this could by the interest-driven approach be explained by the fact that the EU basically lacked the coercive instruments to effect change on Russia. The insistence of values could in this context disturb an already infected relationship to an actor on whom one is largely dependent upon. Thus, the EU softened its criticism and instead focused on the common interests. Remembering the points made by Youngs, there are always strategic interests behind even the most sincere normative concern. In this case the EU did not have enough economic leverage over Russia since it was still very dependent on Moscow’s exports (Haukkala 2005:12).

This could in a way make us re-formulate Kagan’s well known statement cited in the beginning of this thesis; that the EU is seen as a civilian power only because it lacks the possibilities of becoming a ‘Martian’ and that if only it had the military and economic means (i.e. coercive power), it would leave its soft policy agenda and rather focus on the hard issues of material interests like the US does. In this scenario however, one could argue that because of its lack of coercive power, the EU does not have the possibility to pursue the kind of normative policies it intends. Stress the difference from the norm-driven approach here. All ways of pursuing a policy towards another actor needs to be driven with the help of coercive instruments, that is, power. The norm-driven approach rather stresses the power of ideas, and that being a normative power an actor possesses the ability to affect what

is supposed to be 'normal' in international policy making. The inability to promote change in Russia could therefore work as an argument for rejecting the constructivist approach in this context.

The material interests, and also the interests of the separate member states, could therefore be seen as something that always comes first, above the ethical concerns that still are part of the European identity. But how would the realist approach explain the fact of frequent appearance of norms within the EU rhetoric – when it is so obvious that it is not appreciated by Russia and thereby challenging the relationship to an important partner? Chandler's theory is in good use here – by connecting the internal sphere into the analysis, ethically grounded statements voicing concerns over human rights violations, could give the internal legitimacy and a moral identity not possible to achieve in the internal political process. At the same time it could be seen as something that easy can slip outside any practical action. In other words, as stated in the theoretical section, because it is easy not to take the responsibilities and instead blame the targeted government if the desired goals are not achieved. At the same time, as interpreted by neo-realists such as Hyde-Price (2006), Youngs (2004) as well as the Russian Federation itself, it can be seen as a way of controlling the development and projecting its values on the post communist East. To recall the perspective of Youngs, strategic calculations are always behind even sincere normative concerns directed towards other actors within the international system. The talk of human rights in Ukraine at the time when president Kuchma started looking eastwards towards Russia and not earlier, is according to Youngs one of those examples. In that case, human rights were used as a mean for the EU to keep Ukraine in the European sphere of influence:

In Central and Eastern Europe, these approaches have been enshrined in a strategy of 'controlled incorporation'. Incrementally accumulating peer pressure has been designed to provide for rights enhancement in a way that reduces the risk of Central European states slipping back into Russia's sphere of influence. The notion of extending European values has been explicitly linked to and presented as a strategy for dealing with Russia, coexisting with the notion of post-modern ideational expansion. This has both informed the use of political conditionality and ensured the deployment of rights-based policies as a means of enhancing assimilation to EU standards. (Youngs, 2004: 423).

4.2 The Norm-driven Approach

Given the rather critical review of the European policies towards Russia presented above it can be a challenge to analyse this relationship out of the constructivist school of thought. It is a story indicating a strong preference among the European states for bilateral relations to Russia at times where their national interests are at stake; competition within the Union between different policy agendas, as well as a clash between different member states' perceptions of how to deal with Russia. But I still think that the logic behind the legal framework within the PCA as well as the

most recent 'Common Spaces', could to a certain extent be explained by the norm driven approach. Or, it could at least be legitimised with the help of this theoretical approach. The EU's persistent attachment to values within its external relations especially with countries in transition could be explained by the belief that values and ideas matter, and given time for negotiations and argumentations between Russian and European officials, values, as well as technology and economic changes will spread as a result of globalisation thereby leading to peace and stability around EU borders.

Through the 'politics of scale' that the EU can offer, the member states of the Union have a better potential to make its voice heard than when they stand alone. At the same time, the EU voice – the voice of the *force for good* – might be seen as more legitimate than a voice stemming from a separate nation state of its own, because of the unique character of the EU. At the same time, this also gives the smaller states within the Union a possibility to influence policy areas they would otherwise not have been able to, due to their small size. As the deliberative approach suggests, the negotiation processes within the forum of CFSP, all member states, no matter how small or large they are, have the possibility to influence a policy as long as they possess the ability to argue in favour of their cause (Sjursen 2003:16). This can explain the postponement of the PCA, which was signed in 1994, but did not come into action until 1997 due to protests of how the way Russia was acting in the first Chechen war. Here it were the smaller member states, such as Sweden and Finland, who were arguing in favour of values and had the possibility of influencing decisions in spite of their modest size. The same goes for the EU-Russian regional cooperation within the ND, also a Finnish initiative, supported heavily by Sweden. However the '*the logic of appropriateness*' - meaning that the existence of institutions would affect the way member states act suggesting that they sometimes adapt to policies even though it is not in their national interest - is not yet reality in the EU Russian relation.

The strong emphasis on the exporting of norms and values and the political conditionality implies that the EU-Russian relationship – as it is defined by the EU that is – could be seen, instead of the neo-realist, traditional form of international institution based on inter-state bargaining, rather as an post-sovereign international institution that promotes one-sided transformation, harmonisation and gradual integration with the EU's norms and values (Haukkala 2005: 9).

The logics behind the very existence of all of the forums for negotiation and cooperation between the EU and Russia, could be explained by the norm driven perspective. There is a belief that through interaction interests could be shaped and reshaped, finally leading to a harmonisation of values. Haukkala argues that the EU in a way can be seen as a regional normative hegemon. Normative because its foreign policy agenda is based on norms and values, and a hegemon, because it tries and seems to gain a monopoly on defining what those norms are and entail and thereby, using the above mentioned notion of Manners, defining what is *normal* and '*European*' within international policy making (Haukkala 2006:11).

The experience tells us, referring to Schuette's observation above, that the EU prefers the kinds of relationships that enable it to pursue a kind of *asymmetric leverage* on its external partners. By that Schuette means a policy by which the EU unilaterally decides reforms that need to be implemented in the target state in order to enhance the relationship. As stated by Schuette this dualism between interests and values is also reflected at the very core of the EU itself. The EU regards itself both as a community of interests between its member states and as a community of shared values (Schuette 2004:13). The EU has been able to achieve this asymmetric leverage on its external partners both because of its economic strength and normative power. But, again, the Union's influence is depending on whether its actions could be seen as *legitimate* or not. Until now the only way in which the Union has been able to project these normative policies legitimately has been by offering its parties a place within the European family. When membership is not an option, as the history of EU-Russian relations has shown us, conditionality has been a weak and inefficient policy tool. I find the constructivist approach lacking seriously in explanations for this. My interpretation of this policy's applicability to the EU-Russian case however, would be to see it as a *process* rather than as an explanation of the empirical reality of today.

Sergei Medvedev (2006) has forecasted three different scenarios of the future EU-Russian relationship depending on in which direction each of the actors will develop. Medvedev's best-case scenario, I think, would be the result if the assumptions of the Constructivist approach really hold. It is a relationship he calls "Partnership", which will be the result of a development in the direction beyond the current rhetorical level, which are, according to Medvedev, no more than a watered-down derivate of the ENP. Prospects for Russian membership within the EU will come back on the agenda, and Russia will be accorded a higher status than today leading to more of a say in the internal decision making within the EU: either an Association Agreement (of the kind EU made with Turkey in 1963) or through some new formula, like the 27+1 character highly desired by Russia today (Medvedev 2006:39f). However due to what the recent history has shown this is not a likely the outcome.

5 Summarising Conclusions

This thesis had the aim of examining the tension between norms and interests in Europe's policy on Russia, looking specifically at how it manifests itself in the EU's relation to Russia. I did this with the help of two theoretical perspectives; the interest-driven approach and the norm-driven approach, out of which I have developed two different viewpoints:

- 1) The EU has the capacity to build a common and coherent Russia policy based on norms and values, stressing human rights, democracy and respect for the rule of law. It has also the normative power needed to achieve a harmonisation of values between the EU and Russia.
- 2) Strategic interests are always behind any foreign policy, even if it is being brought forward in a normative framework. The EU has no power to maintain a common policy on Russia based on norms and values since its member states has distinct and strategic national interests that always comes first.

Examining the tension between interests and values in the foreign policy of the EU means that a multilayered analysis needs to be done: First, by discussing if there is a possibility of a coherent policy among the EU member states; second, to decide if the policy has the possibilities to affect a third part, in this case Russia. Given the discussion presented in the previous chapter, there is more empirical evidence for the second hypothesis in the EU-Russian relation. However, that is not the whole truth. The empirical examination has led me to the conclusion that while the interest driven approach is explaining the realities of the problems existing in the relationship of today, the norm-driven approach provides a good help in understanding the logic behind the EU policies and rhetoric towards Russia. As argued in the theoretical section, constructivism could be 'defended' by arguing that it looks at the situation of today as a *process* eventually evolving to its ideal – a coherent policy and a harmonisation of values. It recognises that there is a tension between norms and interests within the foreign policy of the EU, but through dialogue between the member states, and between the EU and Russia, these interests have a *potential* to be reshaped.

However, evidence point to a tendency of favouring bilateral relations when choosing between material and normative issues. The Europeanisation effect has not yet reached the EU-Russian relationship. Meanwhile hard focus on norm driven policy and conditionality could be threatening the relationship with Russia that

could argue that the EU is having double standards. In an examination of how the EU has tried to develop a single voice on human rights matters in the UN, Karen Smith (2006) has come to a similar conclusion. She argues that intergovernmentalism limits the possibilities of the EU's unity which is posed mainly by conflicting national interests and a persistent desire of member states to act independently in the UN. Further she argues that the energy required to reach internal agreement restricts the EU's influence within the UN system. The EU enlargement has brought more potential vetoes, more split votes and more national 'pets', in the policy making of the EU (Smith 2006:134). This goes hand in hand with the reasoning of Sjurgen, arguing that multilateralism is not enough to ensure a normative policy. Because of the intergovernmental character of the EU there is a risk of stronger member states formulating the policy pursued (Sjurgen 2006:245). Since human rights (rights defending the individual over the state) is challenging the core of multilateralism, namely state sovereignty, multilateralism itself cannot ensure a norm driven foreign policy (ibid: 246). What is necessary is a step away from the principle of sovereignty towards a cosmopolitan legislation acknowledging the rights of the individual over the rights of the state (ibid).

This observation could also be applied to the EU-Russian dialogue where conflicting views on how to deal with its Eastern partner among its member states coexists with blurred and conflicting policies within the institutional body between EU and Russia. This has led to a preference on the Russian part to deal with key European states bilaterally on business matters which further diminishes the EU's potential to speak with one voice. It seems to me that the member states are hiding behind the shield of the EU when it comes on normative matters so that it can deal with straight business in the bilateral forum. This leads me to the conclusion that the relation to Russia is negotiated on different levels where 'soft' interests appear on the multilateral arena in the European forum while the 'hard' interests still are pursued on national level between the different member states and Russia bilaterally.

5.1 Recommendations

Traditionally a strong emphasis on norms and values have always been a successful way for the EU in dealing with its partners in its near abroad and as a way of producing stability along its borders. The enlargement process has achieved a lot of democratic transitions for states aspiring to become part of the European family. Today, when the 'enlargement inflation' has started to come to an end, a new challenge is awaiting the EU. It is a puzzle for the EU to build a strong and stable partnership with countries outside the Union, creating peace and stability without having the material benefits of membership to use as 'bait'. The dualism in the EU treatment of Russia both as a partner to meet common challenges in the world, *and* as a target of policies to develop it into a form of a western democracy becomes hard for the EU to handle since it is not very welcomed by Russia itself. Above all

Russia wants to develop a partnership on equal terms and in the rhetoric from Russian officials the European insistence on values could be seen as a way of trying to control Russia. For the EU, its ability to apply its norms and values in the case of Russia could be seen as downfall of its credibility of its approach on international relations. As shown, sometimes the EU has softened its criticisms in order not to destroy a summit. This has effects beyond the Union's Russia policy, especially in the so called new neighbourhood. How can the Union promote a value driven policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood, if Russia is exempted from these principles and the conditionality they imply? (Haukkala 2006:17)

“The current state of affairs implies that the enlargement of the EU deals not only with the material side of European integration but also with more profound questions of belonging and identity. As a consequence in Europe the Union has great difficulties in unbundling its normative power from Europeanness and consequently questions of (full) membership. This is why it is facing such a hard time when hoping to relinquish enlargement without inflicting serious damage to its (self) image as “the European Project” (Haukkala 2006:11).

At the same time, Averre (2004) argues that, a genuine and equal partnership is impossible to achieve without solving the internal problems of Russia. If Russia is not moving normatively closer to Europe there is still potential for problems, especially in their common neighbourhood. The fact that the ‘value gap’ between European and Russian elites may narrow as part of the process of political and economic adjustment which partnership implies, should not be neglected (ibid: 195).

Due to the fact that the EU as a whole still guards its own sovereignty carefully not letting any other external actor within its highly desired common market, as well as in its internal decision making process, the EU lacks the real incentives and legitimacy for demanding such transformations from its outside partners. Especially since these demands are completely unilateral and non-negotiable. At the same time, the EU has no institutional machinery punishing member states which break the commonly agreed policies. This will always pose the risk of incoherence among its member states. To an outsider such as the Russian federation, this might look as a sign of weakness, leading to a preference for dealing with the member states bilaterally instead. Thus, the normatively stated foundation for partnership could be seen as rather silly. Because of its huge dependency on Russian exports, the EU lacks the ability to follow up ‘insubordination’ with concessions and sanctions on its ‘targeted’ government. This story goes in line with the realist approach saying that without the power or material incentives for cooperation, there is not much chance to fulfil its policies. Therefore, Trenin (2004) argues, the West should deal with Russia on its own terms, reaching for an acceptable balance of reciprocity, and not on the basis of normative principles such as democratic reform. Ideology is not a good guide in a valueless yet vibrant Russian environment. This kind of ‘preaching’ only reveals the powerlessness of EU to change realities within Russia and thereby gives the Russian officials a chance to portray these protests, even meaningful ones, as means for Western political consumption. (Trenin 2004:105).

As stated by one high ranking official at the European Commission however: “If we take values out of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, there is nothing left”, (ref in Barysh 2004: 13). Katinka Barysh’s advice is that rather than pretending that Russia shares the values and aspirations of the EU, it should openly acknowledge that there are profound differences and focus on interests within its political dialogue instead. This would lighten up the relation to the country, making ground for more progress within the relationship (ibid: 65).

I agree with the fact that by coming closer together on cooperation in the areas where the parties actually share interests, there will eventually be potential for the spread of values that the constructivist school of thought predicts.

To end with an optimistic note, Haukkala is of the opinion that it is increasingly likely that in Europe it is the EU’s and not Russian agenda that will prevail, with the developments of the ‘colour revolutions’ in its shared neighbourhood. He argues that this might speed up Russia on its road to European integration. This is a process that not only eats away Russia’s traditional sphere of influence but it is also slowly disturbing Russia’s ability to ignoring the pressure of normative entanglement. (Haukkala 2006: 18)

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