

UKRAINE AND NATO: THE FAILURE OF RHETORICAL ACTION

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Abstract

Just before the Soviet Union collapsed, the newly-independent Ukraine had adopted the “Declaration of State Sovereignty,” the first official document containing the principles of Ukraine’s foreign policy. Article IX of this document, dealing with the “External and Internal Security,” explicitly stated the Ukrainian Soviet Republic’s intention to become a permanently neutral state without engaging in military blocs. Today, however, Ukraine’s security priorities have changed. The country has acquired a strong “pro-Western” orientation after the “Orange Revolution” which has been above all displayed in the aspirations towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Still, the April 2008 Bucharest summit did not fulfill the expectations of the Ukrainian government to gain access to MAP, a preliminary step towards full NATO membership. The thesis proposed thus aims to formulate a viable explanation of the MAP delay in the case of Ukraine.

The discourse will be incorporated into Frank Schimmelfennig’s “rhetorical action” framework. While rhetorical action had been used successfully by the Central and Eastern European states to bring about two rounds of NATO enlargement, it is puzzling why this strategy did not work in Ukraine’s case. The ultimate argument developed in the thesis will be that the country *has not fulfilled* the requirements necessary for rhetorical action to work. This has happened because Ukraine’s arguments for expanding NATO have lacked consistency, constituency, legitimacy and resonance. As a result, the country has failed to use its arguments strategically in order to obtain access to MAP and accelerate its integration into the North Atlantic Alliance.

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Introduction

Within the international relations discourse, much has been said on the issue of NATO enlargement. More specifically, the phenomenon of North Alliance's eastward expansion has been widely discussed among policy-makers due to important security implications that the process entails. The idea of NATO going East, supported by some and opposed by others, has reached its climax at the April 2008 Bucharest summit of the North Atlantic Council. With many questions set on the agenda, the most controversial issue at this meeting has been the aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine to join the Membership Action Plan, a practical step towards a full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. While Georgia and Ukraine did not see their hopes realize immediately at the meeting, the leaders of the summit pledged to grant these countries full membership in the long run.

It has been claimed that Ukraine is of great strategic and security importance for NATO. Being situated on the geographical, economic, and geopolitical crossways between Europe and Asia, Ukraine "remains a reliable contributor to collective security."¹ In this regard, the Bucharest summit offers a puzzle for theories of NATO enlargement. While Ukraine has committed itself to aspiring for NATO membership, it is not clear why the country's access to MAP has been delayed. Through a comparative study including the cases of previous NATO applicant members, the present thesis aims to formulate a viable explanation of the April 2008 summit results.

In this work, the issue of Ukraine's bid for NATO will be incorporated into the rationalism-constructivism debate. This will help understand what has driven Ukraine to seek NATO membership, on the one hand, and why the country's aspirations have not been yet realized, on the other hand. Thus, the rationalist approach to NATO Eastern enlargement can

¹ Nienke de Deugd, *Ukraine and NATO: The Policy and Practice of Cooperating with the Euro-Atlantic Security Community*, Harmonie Paper 20, The Centre of European Security Studies (CESS)

generally explain Ukraine's ambitions in joining the Alliance. Constructivism, in turn, best accounts for NATO's interests in the process. Thus, while the security approach explains the "demand" side of the enlargement process, the sociological approach accounts for the "supply" side of it. However, neither rationalism nor constructivism taken alone can provide a comprehensive account of the Eastern enlargement process in general and the case of Ukraine in particular. The alternative solution can therefore come through combining the two distinct approaches into one model and testing it with empirical data.

In this connection, the concept of "rhetorical action" provides a link between the egoistic preferences of NATO candidate members and the rule-based outcome of the Alliance's Eastern enlargement. Rhetorical action, which is a strategic use of arguments based on community values, norms and identity, was successfully used by the previous aspiring members to induce NATO towards further enlargement. By appealing to NATO constitutive values and norms, past commitments and treaty obligations, the applicant states had gained membership in the Alliance.

Research question

While the model of rhetorical action was used successfully by the Central and Eastern European states to bring about two rounds of enlargement, it is puzzling why Ukraine's accession to MAP as a step towards NATO was postponed during the latest round. The ultimate argument developed in the thesis will be that Ukraine has failed to use its arguments strategically in order to obtain access to MAP. This has happened because the country *has not fulfilled* the requirements necessary for rhetorical action to work. Ukraine's arguments for expanding NATO have lacked consistency, constituency, legitimacy and resonance.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 1 will introduce theoretical grounding for the formation of alliances in general and provide theoretical tools for solving the empirical puzzle of delaying Ukraine's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization. Chapters 2 and 3 will bring in empirical data to support the hypothesis of the thesis. Chapter 2 will present two case studies to be compared with Ukraine. In particular, the cases of Poland and the Baltic States will be discussed to demonstrate the use of rhetorical action according to the conditions outlined in Chapter 1. Chapter 3 will in contrast establish that Ukraine has failed to fully commit itself to the conditions of consistency, constituency, legitimacy and resonance. As a result, the country has been denied access to MAP at the April 2008 Bucharest Summit.

For the purpose of the thesis a comparative methodology will be used, namely the controlled comparison method. The cases chosen for comparison are relevant for two reasons. Firstly, the countries share general characteristics with Ukraine – Ukraine and Poland are located in the same geopolitical area with a common border, while Ukraine and the Baltic States are all ex-Soviet countries. Secondly, choosing cases from different enlargement rounds will strengthen the rhetorical action hypothesis.

Conclusions and importance

The process of NATO Eastern enlargement can be analyzed through the model of rhetorical action. In the enlargement process, the applicant states expected to gain certain benefits from joining NATO. However, Eastern enlargement was not beneficial for the Alliance itself. In order to overcome its resistance, the applicant states and their supporters turned to rhetorical action.

While Ukraine in its bid for NATO had similarly faced the opposition of member states, up to now the country had been unable to overcome this resistance through rhetorical action. Having failed to fulfill the requirements of consistency, constituency, legitimacy and resonance, Ukraine's rhetorical action has not been strong enough to induce the reluctant NATO members towards enlargement. Thus, having been successfully used in the first two rounds of NATO enlargement, rhetorical action has been mismanaged by the Ukrainian government.

The discourse provided in the thesis contributes to theoretical debates on the use of rhetorical action by political actors. While it has been claimed that the effectiveness of rhetorical action has its limits and characteristics of successful argumentation have been distinguished,² no studies have been undertaken to analyze cases in which one or more of the conditions of strong rhetorical argumentation are relaxed or absent. The analysis of Ukraine's bid for NATO in this regard fills the gap outlined. It is hoped that further empirical studies will be conducted on the matter to strengthen the arguments developed in this work.

² For a comprehensive account of the use of rhetorical action see Frank Schimmelfennig's *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Chapter 1 – Ukraine’s bid for NATO: a theoretical perspective

The following chapter seeks to introduce theoretical grounding for the formation of alliances. More importantly, it aims to provide theoretical tools for solving the empirical puzzle of postponing Ukraine’s membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Placing the discourse among the rationalism-constructivism debate will help understand what has driven Ukraine to seek NATO membership, on the one hand, and why the country’s aspirations have not been yet realized, on the other hand. Based on Frank Schimmelfennig’s model of “rhetorical action,” it will be argued that Ukraine has failed to use its arguments strategically in order to persuade NATO to enlist the country on the Membership Action Plan, a preliminary procedure leading to full membership.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. Firstly, I will analyze the rationalist approach to NATO Eastern enlargement. It will be argued that this framework can generally explain, albeit not without its flaws, Ukraine’s ambitions in joining the Alliance. In order to support the hypothesis, different variations of realism will be discussed and compared.

Secondly, I will argue that constructivism, not rationalism, best accounts for NATO’s interests in Eastern enlargement. Thus, while the security approach explains the “demand” side of the enlargement process, the sociological approach accounts for the “supply” side of it. The ultimate argument will therefore be that neither rationalism nor constructivism taken alone can provide us with understanding of the Eastern enlargement process. The alternative solution can therefore come through combining the two distinct approaches into one model and testing it with empirical data.

In this connection, the concept of “rhetorical action” will be introduced to provide a link between the egoistic preferences of NATO candidate members and the rule-based outcome of the Alliance’s Eastern enlargement. It will be demonstrated that rhetorical action was successfully used by the aspiring members to induce NATO towards further

enlargement. At this point, the rhetorical action model will be presented in detail in order to reveal how enlargement ultimately came about.

Finally, it will be claimed that Ukraine has failed to fulfill some of the conditions necessary for rhetorical action to work. These conditions will be outlined in the concluding section of the chapter. Due to the improper use of rhetorical action strategy, Ukraine was denied access to the Membership Action Plan at the Bucharest summit.

1.1 Ukraine's bid for NATO – a realist's perspective

Since the end of the Cold War and with the rising attention to international institutions as a means to promote peace, the realist thinking in terms of power balancing has been often classified as “old thinking.” Thus, U.S. President Clinton declared during his 1992 election campaign that, “in a world, where freedom, not tyranny, is on the march, the cynical calculus of pure power politics simply does not compute.”³ It has been claimed, however, that realist calculations still matter a lot in the post-Cold War world. In this regards, John Mearsheimer has explicitly stated that “every state would like to be the most formidable military power in the system because this is the best way to guarantee survival in a world that can be very dangerous.”⁴ What follows is the analysis of Ukraine's bid for NATO from a realist perspective.

1.1.1 Ukraine's security dilemma

The concept of a “security dilemma” can help us understand the behavior of ex-Soviet states in the anarchical international environment. Ukraine is not an exception in this regard. A realist approach to international relations defines “security dilemma” as a situation in which “states' actions taken to ensure their own security...tend to threaten the security of other states. The responses of these other states...in turn threaten the security of the first

³ John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95): 5.

⁴ Ibid., 11-12.

state, creating dangerous arms races.”⁵ In this regard, “Ukraine’s foreign policy since independence provides a good example of this situation.”⁶

It has been claimed that “no country in East-Central Europe has been affected by security uncertainties as Ukraine.”⁷ According to Margarita M. Balmaceda, Ukraine has been primarily perceived as under Russia’s sphere influence and outside the area of NATO enlargement, which is quite a contrast with Poland and Hungary, for example. Ukraine’s security dilemma can be analyzed on three distinct levels – domestic, regional, and international.⁸ At the domestic level, the lack of experience of statehood has made the country’s political elites “feel more vulnerable and exacerbated their fears while making it difficult to build a national consensus about foreign policy.” At the regional level, there is a fear of a new Russia’s expansionism hidden in the country’s policy of “near abroad.” Finally, at the international level, the U.S. over-concentration on Ukraine’s nuclear disarmament, along with recognition of the CIS as a Russian sphere of influence, “exacerbated Ukraine’s security dilemma and its real or perceived insecurity.”⁹

As it has been mentioned, the distinctive feature of international relations during the Cold War period was concentration on the military aspect of security: “For most countries in both Western and Eastern Europe, this meant participation in military alliances – NATO or, as communist states, the Warsaw Pact.”¹⁰ While the nature of security has changed today, Ukraine continues to strive for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In order to understand the phenomenon, I will analyze different theories of international relations on alliance formation and enlargement. Since realism has dominated

⁵ Joshua S. Goldstein, *International Relations* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1994), 71.

⁶ Margarita M. Balmaceda, “Ukraine, Central Europe and Russia in a New International Environment,” in *On The Edge: Ukrainian – Central European – Russian Security Triangle*, ed. Margarita M. Balmaceda (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 18.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰ James Gow, “Independent Ukraine: The Politics of Security,” *International Relations* 9, No. 4 (December 1992): 254.

the discourse of International Relations for years now, the analysis suggested will start with this theoretical framework. In this regard the concepts of balancing and bandwagoning provide us with an initial insight on the matter. Basic assumptions of different balancing theories will be outlined and further tested on the case of Ukraine's bid for NATO. The conclusion will be that although rationalism explains the interests of states in joining NATO, it does not account for NATO's ultimate decision to embark on enlargement.

1.1.2 The balancing and bandwagoning worlds

1.1.2.1 Balance of power

In his *Theory of International Politics* Kenneth Waltz presented the basics of neorealist thinking in International Relations. According to Frank Schimmelfennig, this work “remains the basic text of defensive realism and the security approach to enlargement.”¹¹ One of the core assumptions formulated by Waltz is that “in anarchy, security is the highest end.”¹² As mentioned earlier, a state's security is threatened if other states possess or superior or try to gain superior power. According to Waltz, in this situation states will engage in balancing.

“Balancing” refers to a situation and a type of alliance-formation when states seek allies in order to create a balance against a prevailing threat.¹³ According to Waltz, states generally prefer to balance superior powers by their own efforts. This is due to the fact that such internal balancing does not undermine a state's independence and sovereignty. Moreover, when balancing in this way, “states are less likely to misjudge their relative strengths than they are to misjudge the strength and reliability of opposing coalitions.”¹⁴

In practice, however, states perform external balancing. When an alliance-formation situation arises, the balance-of-power theory predict states to align with the weaker side:

¹¹ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 28.

¹² Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 2003), 126.

¹³ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), 17.

¹⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 168.

If states wished to maximize power, they would not join the stronger side, and we would see not balances, but a world hegemony forged. This does not happen because balancing, not bandwagoning, is the behavior induced by the system.¹⁵

While the balance of power predicts that states, especially secondary powers, would choose the weaker side for balancing purposes, this does not seem to be the case with Ukraine. Suffice it to say that the “Declaration of State Sovereignty” of Ukraine, the first official document containing the principles of Ukraine’s foreign policy, explicitly stated the Ukrainian Soviet Republic’s intention “to become in future a permanently neutral state, taking no part in military blocs...”¹⁶ Furthermore, even today, when Ukraine’s security priorities have changed, the country has acquired a strong “pro-Western” position instead of “flocking to the weaker side”. Such pro-Western orientation has above all taken the form of the country’s aspirations towards NATO. In this regard, the traditional balance of power theory fails to explain why Ukraine has been actively seeking membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Therefore, other views on balancing behavior have to be analyzed.

1.1.2.2 Balance of threats

While Waltz’s balance-of-power theory is based on the distribution of capabilities, Stephen Walt has argued that states seek allies to balance against threats, not power. Although power is an important ingredient in the balancing and bandwagoning behavior, other factors affecting the level of threat have to be considered as well. These include aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions.¹⁷ In general, balancing behavior is expected to be “much more common than bandwagoning.” Still, there are some conditions under which bandwagoning is possible.

¹⁵ Ibid., 126.

¹⁶ ‘Declaraciya pro derzhavnyi suverenitet Ukrayiny’ (Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine), approved by the Ukrainian Parliament on 16 July 1990.

¹⁷ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 21-22.

“Bandwagoning” refers to a situation when states seek to align themselves with the source of danger. According to Walt, the first condition for such behavior is weakness: “In general, the weaker the state, the more likely it is to bandwagon rather than balance.”¹⁸ The second condition is the availability of allies. In Walt’s words, if states do not envisage any outside assistance, “they may be forced to accommodate the most imminent threat.”¹⁹ When taken together, these two conditions explain why states may choose bandwagoning rather than balancing as a form of behavior:

Although strong neighbors of strong states are likely to balance, small and weak neighbors of the great powers may be more inclined to bandwagon. Because they will be the first victims of expansion, because they lack the capabilities to stand alone, and because a defensive alliance may operate too slowly to do them much good, accommodating a threatening great power may be tempting.²⁰

To sum up, the security approach predicts enlargement if it is necessary for both the member and non-member states to balance the power or threat of other states. At first sight, the balance-of-threat theory provides a more plausible explanation for Ukraine’s bid towards NATO than the balance-of-power theory does. According to Walt’s approach, by seeking NATO membership Ukraine is seeking security guarantees against Russia. By moving towards the Alliance community the country is trying to balance against its “big brother” neighbor.

However, balance-of-threat theory does not provide a full explanation of Ukraine’s NATO bid either. Thus, it cannot explain why the country adopted the multi-vector policy under President Kuchma. While the Baltic States, for example, clearly opted for integration with the West after the Soviet Union collapsed, Ukraine pursued a middle course of cooperation with both the “Eastern” and the “Western” vector. In this regard, balance-of-interests theory might provide an additional insight on the issue.

¹⁸ Ibid., 29.

¹⁹ Ibid., 30.

²⁰ Ibid., 31.

1.1.2.3 Balance of interests

Within realism, two distinct approaches to international relations can be pointed out – “defensive” and “offensive”. The alleged defensive nature of states underpins realists’ balancing theories, including the ones discussed above. These theories claim that states are concerned with their own security and survival and therefore seek to balance against relative capabilities of other states. “Offensive” realists do not share this assumption and argue that bandwagoning is more common among states.

In this connection, Randall Schweller brings the “balance-of-interests” theory in the realist discourse. A state’s balance of interests “refers to the costs it is willing to pay to defend its values relative to the costs it is willing to pay to extend its values.”²¹ Comparing the balancing and bandwagoning behavior of states, Schweller argues that “the aim of balancing is self-preservation of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted.”²² The author’s main conclusion is that “alliances are responses not only to threats but also to opportunities.”²³

Thus, by seeking involvement with the various European and transatlantic organizations, Ukraine could benefit from the opportunities that they had to offer. For example, participation with NATO would grant it the financial and technical assistance needed to modernize its armed forces.²⁴ Still, the balance-of-interests approach underestimates security guarantees deriving from NATO membership. These have been paid special attention to by the current Ukrainian government.

The three approaches to balancing and bandwagoning discussed above are summarized in Table 1.1.

²¹ Randall L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit. Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,” *International Security* 19 (1994): 99.

²² *Ibid.*, 74.

²³ Randall L. Schweller, “New Realist Research on Alliances,” *American Political Science Review* 91/4 (December 1997): 927-928.

²⁴ Nienke de Deugd, *Ukraine and NATO*, 83.

Table 1.1 Approaches to balancing/bandwagoning

	Balance of power	Balance of threat	Balance of interests
Proponent	Waltz	Walt	Schweller
Reaction to	State capabilities	Threats	Opportunities
Bandwagoning	Very rare	Rare	More common

1.1.3 Security approach: conclusions

On the one hand, the security approach, and the balance-of-threat theory in particular, generally accounts for Ukraine's bid towards NATO. By seeking membership in the Alliance, Ukraine has tried to play a balancing role in the region due to the alleged Russian threat. In its strive towards NATO Ukraine is looking for the same kind of security guarantees it sought to obtain during the post-Soviet nuclear disarmament campaign.

On the other hand, although Ukraine has sought to balance against Russia, it has simultaneously endeavored to maintain good relationships with the Eastern neighbor. In other words, Ukraine has displayed *both* balancing and bandwagoning behavior until recently, which is a puzzle for Walt's balance-of-threat theory. Obviously, the rationalist approach alone fails to provide a clear account of Ukraine-NATO relationship.

Furthermore, although Ukraine's leaders see their interest in joining NATO in the security guarantees against a potential Russian threat, such argument for accession can hardly be accepted by the Alliance. Similarly, while the rationalist approach accounts for the interests of candidate members in NATO, it cannot explain the NATO's decision to enlarge as the enlargement itself did not contribute to the security or welfare of the old members.

In this regard, the "rhetorical action" model offers a plausible solution to the puzzle. By outlining the conditions for successful strategic argumentation over enlargement preferences, the model will help to analyze impediments for Ukraine towards the Alliance.

1.2 Rhetorical action and NATO enlargement

The preceding sections have provided the theoretical grounding for the formation of alliances in order to understand the driving forces behind Ukraine's bid for NATO. It has been concluded that the rationalist approach can generally explain Ukraine's pro-NATO position. It remains unclear, however, why the country's aspirations have not been realized at the recent Bucharest summit. The remaining sections of the chapter seek to address the question. Based on Frank Schimmelfennig's model of "rhetorical action," it will be argued that Ukraine has failed to use its arguments strategically for the Membership Action Plan to be granted. It will be demonstrated that while rhetorical action had been used successfully by previous NATO candidate members, Ukraine failed to fulfill some of the conditions necessary for rhetorical action to work. The issue will be approached from a theoretical perspective at this point. The empirical data to support the arguments will be provided in the next chapter.

1.2.1 Explaining the outcomes of enlargement

In his book *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe* Frank Schimmelfennig analyzes the process of Eastern enlargement, namely the enlargement of the EU and NATO, and provides his own theoretical explanation of the phenomenon. The author seeks to answer three main research questions: why did the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) want to become NATO and EU members? Why did both NATO and the EU decide to incorporate the CEECs? And how the enlargement decisions were arrived at? Answering these questions, the author ends up with what he calls the "double puzzle" of Eastern enlargement. Following is the author's account of NATO's Eastern enlargement and its relevance for the present discourse.

1.2.1.1 The rationalist puzzle of the enlargement

Answering the three questions mentioned above, Frank Schimmelfennig makes three basic arguments in his book. Firstly, the initial preferences and interests of the CEECs in joining NATO were material-based. Secondly, liberal norms and values of the Western

community, rather than material preferences, account for the expansion of the Alliance. Thirdly, these rules have had an impact on enlargement through the process of rhetorical action, which is defined as “the strategic use and exchange of arguments to persuade other actors to act according to one’s preferences.”²⁵

The author begins by demonstrating that rationalism can well account for the interests of the CEECs in joining the Western organizations. However, according to Schimmelfennig, the same security approach can not account for NATO’s enlargement decisions. The author further supports his argument by a substantive bulk of empirical evidence. For one thing, NATO was not threatened by an external power but rather enjoyed a high level of security. For another thing, analyzing the first round of enlargement, the actual need for incorporating new members was low. Thirdly, the country that might have an interest in enlargement did not have sufficient bargaining power to support it, while the country that had such power – the United States – did not advocate for the benefits of NATO expansion.

The same analysis applies to the second round of enlargement. Moreover, the countries invited were even poorer than the first round candidates, which increased NATO management costs. All in all, “neither in quality nor in quantity [did] the MAP states...make a substantive difference in NATO’s military potential.”²⁶ Thus, rationalist approach can only partially explain the process of NATO Eastern enlargement.

1.2.1.2 The sociological solution to the puzzle

While the rationalist approach accounts for the “demand” side of NATO enlargement, it fails to explain the “supply” side of it. Frank Schimmelfennig solves the rationalist puzzle through a sociological perspective. The author applies a community approach which is based

²⁵ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 49-51.

on the assumption that states are admitted to organizations if they “share the identity, values and norms of the international community these organizations represent.”²⁷

Schimmelfennig maintains that the Euro-Atlantic community of NATO member-states defines its collective identity “not merely by geographical location in a certain region of the international system...but mainly by *liberal values and norms*.” What is fundamental in this regard is the idea of liberal human rights that is realized both domestically and on the international level. At the domestic level, these liberal rights are represented in the so-called principles of social and political order – social pluralism, the rule of law, democratic political participation and representation and market economy. At the international level, the liberal values being cherished are democratic peace and multilateralism.²⁸ According to the author, NATO has been developing its policies towards non-member states based exactly on these values. As a result:

If European non-member states are successfully socialized, that is, they adopt the collective identity of the liberal international community, share its values, and follow its norms, they are both willing and entitled to join the international organizations of the community as full members.²⁹

Thus, NATO enlargement can be explained as the admission of ex-communist states that have successfully democratized and adopted the corresponding constitutive norms.

1.2.2 Explaining the process of enlargement

1.2.2.1 The double puzzle of Eastern enlargement

Not only does Schimmelfennig explain the outcomes of NATO eastern enlargement, he analyzes the process as well. In view of the rationalist-constructivist account provided, the author points to the “double puzzle” of enlargement. On the one hand, rationalist approach accounts for the enlargement preferences of the aspiring states and the initial outcomes of negotiating. However, this approach cannot explain why the CEECs were invited to accession negotiations only four years after they expressed their membership intentions.

²⁷ Ibid., 152.

²⁸ Ibid., 4.

²⁹ Ibid.

On the other hand, the sociological approach can account for NATO's decision to accept new members. However, it fails to explain how this decision was reached at, as "both the actor preferences and their initial behavior contradict the logics of script-following and appropriateness." According to the author, if the community rules indeed influenced the enlargement process, then "it was not through rule-based cognitions and preferences."³⁰ Therefore, the two approaches taken separately do not explain the process of enlargement.

The author solves this double puzzle of Eastern enlargement through the model of "rhetorical action," which is "the strategic use of rule-based arguments." This model links together the rational membership preferences of candidate states and the rule-based outcome of the NATO enlargement. In this way, "the actors interested in enlargement used the liberal identity, values, and norms...to put moral and social pressure on the reluctant member states and shamed them into acquiescing to the admission of CEECs."³¹

1.2.2.2 Rhetorical action

Rhetorical action is "the strategic use of arguments based on ideas shared in the environment of the proponents and intended to persuade the audience and the opponents to accept the proponents' claims and act accordingly."³² In the enlargement process, the applicant states expected to gain certain benefits from joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. However, Eastern enlargement was not beneficial for the Western organizations. In order to overcome their resistance, the CEECs and their supporters turned to rhetorical action.

According to Schimmelfennig's analysis, the governments of these states justified their interest in enlargement on the basis of "collective identity and the constitutive liberal values and norms of the community..." Thus, the countries "exposed the inconsistency between the organizations' reluctance to enlarge, on the one hand, and their membership

³⁰ Ibid., 191-192.

³¹ Ibid., 193.

³² Ibid., 199.

rules, past rhetorical commitments to a pan-European democratic community and past treatment of outsider states, on the other.”³³ The CEECs sought to shame the member states into “complying with the community rules and honoring past commitments.” As a result, the member states opposing Eastern enlargement found themselves *rhetorically entrapped*, the term introduced by Schimmelfennig. In the author’s words: “They [CEECs] could neither openly oppose nor threaten to veto enlargement without publicly reneging on prior commitments and damaging their credibility as community members in good standing.”³⁴ Thus, basing their claims on the issues of identity, norms and values CEE governments managed to induce NATO member states to enlargement. Rhetorical action has served as a tool for advocating the egoistic preferences of NATO candidate states in the community of liberal norms and values.

The effectiveness of rhetorical action and shaming, however, has its limits. For one thing, a strong international community with “common ethos” must be present. For another thing, the issues raised have to be constitutive, legitimate, and salient. The conditions for successful rhetorical action will be discussed below.

1.2.2.3 Conditions for rhetorical action

Analyzing the use of rhetorical action by the CEE states, several characteristics of successful argumentation can be distinguished. These are the conditions of community strength, constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. While the Western community is indeed characterized by “common ethos,” the other three criteria have to be scrutinized.

Firstly, the more *constitutive* an issue is and the more fundamental questions it involves, the easier it is for actors to present it as “an issue of community identity that cannot be left to the interplay of self-interest and bargaining power, and to shame other actors into compliance.”³⁵

³³ Ibid., 5.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 7.

Secondly, rhetorical action must have a *legitimate* grounding for the influence to succeed. As Frank Schimmelfennig argues: “The more clearly a rule is formulated, the more consistently it is interpreted, the more coherently it is practiced, and the more firmly it is integrated into the community’s rule hierarchy, the more legitimate the rule is and the more difficult it becomes for a shamed member of the community rhetorically to...evade its practical implications.”³⁶

Finally, rhetorical action than has *resonance* within the state, that is meets the domestic values and norms, will be more effective than advocating for policies that are in tension at the domestic level. In this case, “social rewards [will be] most rewarding and social punishments [will be] most embarrassing and painful.”³⁷

Therefore, given the same degree of community, the effectiveness of rhetorical action can vary depending on the conditions of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. In this regard, the Eastern enlargement of NATO had finally taken place because the aspiring candidate states adhered to the outlined rules and pursued the strategies prescribed by rhetorical action.

In this regard, during the enlargement rounds the CEE states appealed to the constitutive values of NATO in order to acquire membership in the Alliance. Presenting themselves as European states, the countries referred to the Western democratic values and norms shared by these countries, and put forward the argument of “returning to Europe.” Secondly, postulating themselves as part of the Euro-Atlantic liberal community, the CEEs described their return to democracy as unstable and endangered. By doing so, the country sought exert moral pressure on the Western governments in order to induce NATO to enlarge. Thus, not only did the CEEs appeal to the constitutive liberal values and norms of NATO, they also acquired legitimacy in their arguments referring to the Alliance’s principles

³⁶ Ibid., 8.

³⁷ Ibid., 219.

of equality and indivisibility as well as the NATO's historical mission of promoting and protecting democracy. As a result, NATO members found themselves rhetorically entrapped, as rejecting enlargement to the East would contradict the Alliance' values, norms, and promises. Finally, the countries' aspirations for NATO were backed up with a strong domestic support.

To sum up, by appealing to NATO as a democratic community rather than a military alliance, and by referring to the Alliance's liberal values as well as treaty obligations, the CEEs managed to induce NATO into committing itself to enlargement.

The three conditions for successful rhetorical action, in fact, cannot be separated from each other in rhetorical action. Rather, these criteria are interrelated and mutually supportive. In the case of NATO's enlargement, membership has always been a constitutive issue like in any other organization. Furthermore, in the case of NATO it was directly linked "to the principles of human rights and democracy which fulfill the criteria of legitimacy to a high degree and are generally shared by the member states and their representatives."³⁸ Finally, the issue was evolving in a public process where domestic opinion was taken into account.

Based on the case of CEE states, it can be generalized that the conditions for rhetorical action are cross-influential and equally important; a fulfillment of one condition is preceded by fulfillment of another one. For one thing, constituency gives rise to legitimacy, while legitimacy makes resonance more likely. For one thing, constituency cannot be maintained without legitimacy, while legitimacy in turn will be more effective if supported by resonance.

1.2.3 Revisiting the puzzle of the thesis

Summing up the preceding discourse, both rationalism and constructivism help to explain the Eastern enlargement of NATO. However, neither of the theoretical perspectives can provide a comprehensive picture when isolated from each other. It has to be pointed out,

³⁸ Ibid., 286.

however, that the present chapter did not aim to solve the rationalist-constructivist debate in principle. However, the theoretical framework provided is useful for analysing the case of Ukraine's bid towards NATO. Moving from discussion of capabilities – through threats – and to norms has sought to retrieve analytical tools for further empirical analysis.

To sum up, the previous enlargement rounds took place because the candidate members' claims were constituent, legitimate, and salient. While the model has been successful for the aspiring CEE states for two rounds, it is puzzling why Ukraine's accession to MAP as a step towards NATO has been postponed during the latest round of enlargement. The argument here is that Ukraine has failed to use its arguments strategically in order to obtain access to MAP. This has happened because the country *has not fulfilled* the requirements necessary for rhetorical action to work – Ukraine's arguments for NATO have lacked constituency, legitimacy, and resonance.

In order to support the hypothesis formulated, two case studies will be presented and contrasted with Ukraine. In particular, the cases of Poland and the Baltic States will be discussed to demonstrate the use of rhetorical action according to the conditions outlined. The cases chosen for comparison are relevant for two reasons. Firstly, these countries share general characteristics with Ukraine – Ukraine and Poland are located in the same geopolitical area with a common border, while Ukraine and the Baltic States are all ex-Soviet countries. Secondly, choosing cases from different enlargement rounds will strengthen the rhetorical action hypothesis.

The following chapters will thus present empirical data to support the hypothesis presented. Chapter 2 will demonstrate the compliance of Poland and the Baltic States with the three conditions for rhetorical action. Chapter 3 will reveal Ukraine's failure to do so.

Chapter 2 – Rhetorical action and accession to NATO: the cases of Poland and the Baltic States

The present chapter seeks to provide empirical data in order to support the rhetorical action hypothesis. With the two rounds of NATO enlargement having a similar pattern, the use of rhetorical argumentation in Poland and the Baltic States will be discussed. It will be claimed that in both cases, arguments for enlargement were used strategically according to the rules of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. This accounts for NATO's final decision to grant membership to the aspiring European states.

In contrast, in the chapter that follows it will be argued that Ukraine has not used its arguments strategically in the course of Ukraine-NATO relationship. Having failed to follow the conditions of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance, the country was denied access to the Membership Action Plan at the April 2008 Bucharest Summit.

2.1 The first round: Poland

2.1.1 Poland in the new security environment

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved as the danger of nuclear or conventional war in Europe decreased immediately. At the same time, however, new kinds of risks and threats emerged on the European continent. While the bipolar world order had disappeared, a new order came into place consisting of areas with different degrees of security. According to the Minister of Defense of Poland, the result was that "Poland and other Central European countries [found] themselves in a kind of security vacuum between the Western zone, which possesses an effective defense system, and the unstable former Soviet republics, with Russia attempting to create a new security structure around itself."³⁹ Poland, like other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was left with no security guarantees in case of threat or potential aggression against them. As a consequence, Poland

³⁹ Piotr Kolodziejczyk, "Poland – A Future NATO Ally," *NATO Review* 42, No. 5 (October 1994), pp. 7-10. Web edition. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review>.

chose to solve its security dilemma through close cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance, hoping for a full membership in the organization in the near future.

The efforts of Poland to achieve NATO membership can be characterized as rhetorical action. The country used value and norm-based arguments to exert moral and social pressure on NATO members and “to expose the inconsistency between declared values, organizational norms, and past practice, on the one hand, and current behavior towards [Poland] on the other.”⁴⁰ By invoking the enlargement issue as one of “democracy promotion and protection rather than one of military deterrence and defense”, and by using its arguments in a constituent, legitimate, and resonating way, the country managed to shame NATO into acquiescing itself to enlargement.

2.1.2 Constituency: invoking Western values and norms

Frank Schimmelfennig identifies constituency as the first condition affecting the use of rhetorical action. According to the author, “the more closely an issue is related to the constitutive values and norms of the community, the stringer the community affects policy outcomes.”⁴¹ Claiming its European identity, democratic values and norms, Poland appealed to the constitutive values of NATO in order to acquire membership in the Alliance. The country invoked several strategies for this purpose.

Firstly, Poland sought to define itself as a European democratic country and break away with the communist “Eastern” history in order to present them as a part the Euro-Atlantic liberal community. The political changes after the Cold War were named as “return to Europe”, that is a return to a “civilizational community to which they had traditionally belonged and from which they had been artificially cut off during communist rule.”⁴² In this regard, Polish President Walesa referred to the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty when he reaffirmed that “we are determined to safeguard the freedom, the common heritage and

⁴⁰ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 230.

⁴¹ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 285.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 231.

civilization, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.” He added that the Polish people had always aspired for these values and reaffirmed this strive during the Second World War and in the struggle against the communist rule.⁴³

Secondly, Poland described its return to democracy as unstable and endangered. By doing so, the country sought “to put moral pressure on the Western governments and to create a sense of urgency for NATO action.”⁴⁴ As argued by Hanna Suchocka: “The lack of a vision of a new European order is a barrier to the development of Europe as well as a source of danger since, for the first time in the history of our continent, so many nations are committed to the ideas of freedom and democracy...Divided, we will never solve the problems. It is dangerously naive to expect that Western Europe can isolate itself by a cordon sanitaire from the problems that have arisen since the fall of Communism.”⁴⁵

Thirdly, Poland appealed to the constitutive multilateralist norms of NATO, namely to the principles of equality and indivisibility of security, in order to support its admission to the Alliance. Thus, the Polish Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka emphasize the “new post-Cold War isolationism” that had to be dealt with. In Suchocka’s words, “The sooner this new post-Cold War isolationism disappears, the better for all of us, the better for Europe and for the world. The scope of the challenges we face requires common action. Circumstances are forcing Western, Central and Eastern Europe to integrate their actions before the formal integration of political and economic structures is completed.”⁴⁶

To sum up, Poland successfully appealed to the constitutive norms and values of NATO in order to gain membership in the Alliance. As it was argued by Polish ex-President Aleksander Kwasniewski, “Poland shares all the values which underpin the Alliance – its commitment to democracy, human rights, the free market economy and its conviction that the

⁴³ *NATO Review* 39, No. 4 (Jul.-Aug. 1994). Web edition. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review>.

⁴⁴ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 232.

⁴⁵ Hanna Suchocka, “Poland’s European Perspective,” *NATO Review* 41, No. 3 (June 1993), pp. 3-6. Web edition. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review>.

⁴⁶ Hanna Suchocka, “Poland’s European Perspective.”

regulation of international relations is most effective by peaceful means.”⁴⁷ By appealing to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a democratic community rather than a military alliance, and by referring to the Alliance’s liberal values as well as treaty obligations, Poland sought to induce NATO into committing itself to enlargement.

2.1.3 Legitimacy: the strategy of shaming

The second condition for successful rhetorical action is legitimacy, which “defines who belongs to the community and what rights and duties its members have.”⁴⁸ As Frank Schimmelfennig argues, politics itself is a struggle over legitimacy, and this struggle is pursued with rhetorical arguments: “political actors use arguments strategically in order to present themselves as legitimate and to persuade the audience of the legitimacy of their claims in order to elicit political support and induce political cooperation.”⁴⁹ In the case of Poland, invoking the collective identity and the constitutive values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic community strengthened the country’s position in bargaining for NATO membership. Poland used the strategy of shaming in order to expose the legitimacy of its aspirations towards the Alliance.

Firstly, in its stance for NATO membership the Polish government appealed to Western community identity as “liberal and democratic”. By framing NATO as a democratic community rather than a military alliance, Poland started advocating for the issue of enlargement as “an issue of democracy promotion and protection rather than an issue of military deterrence and defense.”⁵⁰ Secondly, NATO’S past commitments and practices consistent with the community culture were positively invoked. In particular, the assistance of the West in the struggle against Communism was repeatedly mentioned. From this, a further responsibility for the West was assumed by Poland:

⁴⁷ Aleksander Kwasniewski, “Poland in NATO – Opportunities and Challenges,” *NATO Review* 45, No. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1997), pp. 4-7. Web edition. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review>.

⁴⁸ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 207.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 233.

It must be understood that all democratic nations have a stake in the freedom, stability, and prosperity of countries that, for so many years, underwent the experiment of Communism...If we do not want to waste the euphoria born with the fall of Communism, we must move forward...The changes and dangers are common to all Europeans; thus we can make the best use of the opportunities only when we act and plan together.⁵¹

A similar argument was put forward by the Czech President Havel in its address to the NATO Council:

It [West] cannot be indifferent to what is happening in the countries which – constantly encouraged by the Western democracies – have finally shaken off the totalitarian system. It cannot look on passively at how laboriously these countries are striving to find their new place in the present world. The West, whose civilization is founded on universal values, cannot be indifferent to the fate of the East.⁵²

Poland also reinforced its shaming strategy by referring to the West's historical failures. The country repeatedly invoked the "Yalta" metaphor in order to remind the Western countries that they "abandoned their allies after the Second World War and tolerated their Soviet domination and communist transformation."⁵³ Such invocation of the past sought to create feelings of historical guilt and in this way exert moral pressure on NATO members. For instance, Poland's President Walesa referred to the Partnership for Peace program that did not meet the country's expectations as "Yalta II".⁵⁴

Finally, the Polish government used the concept of historical precedent as another way to bring about NATO enlargement. By claiming that "NATO has a chance to do in Europe's East what it did fifty years ago for the Western half of the continent," Poland added more legitimacy to its bargaining position.⁵⁵

To make a conclusion, not only did Poland appeal to the constitutive liberal values and norms of NATO, it also acquired legitimacy in its arguments referring to the NATO's historical mission of promoting and protecting democracy. As a result, NATO members

⁵¹ Hanna Suchocka, "Poland's European Perspective."

⁵² "President Havel's Address to the NATO Council, 21 March, 1991," NATO Headquarters, Brussels, http://www.hrad.cz/president/Havel/speeches/1991/2103_uk.html

⁵³ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 233.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Clay Clemens, *NATO and the Quest for Post-Cold War Security* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 111.

found themselves rhetorically entrapped, as rejecting enlargement to the East would contradict the Alliance' values, norms, and promises.

2.1.4 Resonance: Popular support for NATO

Finally, the condition of resonance was also present in the Polish discourse during negotiations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, Poland's population started advocating for developing links with the Western community. According to Gale A. Mattox, "those segments of the population who saw their future economic and political success in free markets and democratic institutions were clearly supportive of either European Union...or NATO membership."

There was a strong sense that Poland belonged to the Western community, and the Polish government's aspirations for NATO were indeed backed up with a strong domestic support in the country. As the negotiations between Poland and NATO were taking place, the popular support for NATO membership became to grow steadily from about thirty percent to almost seventy percent, according to the Public Opinion Study Center.⁵⁶ In the long, run, eighty-five percent of the Polish population claimed that "membership in NATO would be a historical turning point for Poland."⁵⁷

Such degree of salience allowed for a smooth integration of the country into the Euro-Atlantic community. In the words of Aleksander Kwasniewski, "By supporting accession to NATO, the majority of Poles are agreed in their perception of the Alliance as an organization which was not only powerful in its effectiveness during the Cold War but is also able to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow."⁵⁸ With such strong support in society, Poland increased its chances to induce member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to comply with the enlargement request.

⁵⁶ Marcin Andrzej Piotrowski and Arthur R. Rachwald, "Poland: Returning to Europe," in *Enlarging NATO: The National Debates*, ed. by Gale A. Mattox and Arthur R. Rachwald (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 120.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

2.2 The second round: the Baltic States

2.2.1 Envisaging the second round of enlargement

The second round of NATO enlargement was initiated at the Prague summit of November 2008 and resulted in acquiring seven new members into the Alliance, including the Baltic States. Regarding the initial preferences of both the Baltic States and NATO members, and the strategies used by the candidate countries to bring about enlargement, the 2002 round was similar to the previous one held in 1997.

First, security remained the major driving force behind the aspirations of the new candidate states. After years of the communist rule, the peoples of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania wanted to do their utmost to preserve their country's independence and safeguard their democratic institutions. They believed that the best way to achieve this was reinforcing relations with the Western through the EU and NATO. For instance, the 1995 Security Concept of the Republic of Latvia reaffirmed that the country's external security can be guaranteed "through its integration into the European and transatlantic political, economic, security and defense structures – most notably the EU and NATO, the most reliable security and defense organization in Europe."⁵⁹

In fact, each Baltic State had its own specific security concerns. Estonia had certain territorial claims towards an adjacent area of the Russian Federation and problems with national minorities. Latvia faced serious problems over the question of granting full citizenship rights to non-Latvians. Lithuania's particular concern was with Russian military transit to and from the Kaliningrad region.⁶⁰

Second, the initial opposition of NATO members towards the next round of enlargement was quite high as during the previous round. Thus, the German government strongly supported the accession of the Baltic States into the EU but did not commit

⁵⁹ Dzintra Bungs, *Latvia's Security Goals and Possibilities*, 14.

⁶⁰ Česlovas V. Stankevicius, "NATO Enlargement and the Indivisibility of Security in Europe: A view from Lithuania," *NATO Review* 44, No. 5 (September 1996), pp. 21-25. Web edition. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review>.

themselves to their admission to NATO. France was also opposed to NATO's further enlargement, expressing its support for Russia. Walter Kolbow, Estonian state secretary in the Federal Ministry of Defense, stated that "Russian consent was needed before NATO could expand further."⁶¹

Finally, in terms of initial disagreement, rhetorical argumentation by the candidate members and compliance of the opponents the second round of enlargement had also been similar to the previous one. The proper application of rhetorical action by the candidate states explains why further enlargement took place despite "a strategic constellation in which the member states generally held egoistic strategic preferences," and the fact that the aspiring states did not have "the material bargaining power to induce NATO to embark on enlargement."⁶²

2.2.2 *Constituency and aspirations of the Baltic States*

The political requirement of adhering to the constitutive domestic and international liberal norms was the major criterion for membership, while the military and financial contributions of candidate states remained important but secondary. In this regard, the chairman of the Military Committee of NATO Klaus Naumann stated that "Enlargement remains...by and large a political process and I do not anticipate that military factors will weigh as the decisive factors in the Summit decision..."⁶³

In this situation, the Baltic States pursued the rhetorical strategies similar to the ones used during the previous round of enlargement. Thus, Estonian President Lennart Meri denounced "the prevailing tendency to view NATO expansion in terms of the 'Cold War' rather than the new spirit of freedom,"⁶⁴ while the Minister of Defense Juri Luik argued along

⁶¹ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 255.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 261.

⁶³ Klaus Naumann, "The Reshaping of NATO from a Military Perspective," *RUSI Journal* 142, No. 3 (1997): 9-10.

⁶⁴ *RFE/RL Newslines*, 16 March 1999.

the line that “countries committed to defend common values should join together.”⁶⁵ Lithuanian ambassador Stankevicius affirmed that the “integration of Lithuania and the other two Baltic states into the community of Western nations means a return to their natural places in the international community” and that “despite 50 years of suppression, the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian nations have managed to preserve their affinity to Western European civilization.”⁶⁶

In this connection, Czech President Havel emphasized that “the European post-communist countries truly belong to the West” as “they were torn out of the Western community by force,” and “their natural place is within that community.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, the President denounced the Russian factor to shame NATO into admitting the Baltic States:

I fail to understand why these three free countries should not be offered membership as soon as possible...Yielding to some geopolitical or geostrategic interests of Russia...would...amount to returning to the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact...in short, to rededicating ourselves to the old principle of dividing the world and nations irregardless of their will.

To sum up, the Baltic strategies initiated rhetorical action by appealing to NATO’s constitutive values and norms. According to Frank Schimmelfennig,

“The Alliance could not legitimately refuse to admit a state...as long as that state adhered to NATO’s constitutive rules and was prepared to contribute to alliance activities...”⁶⁸

2.2.3 *Acquiring legitimacy in the bid for NATO*

Coming back to the statement mentioned above, NATO members “could not legitimately refuse to admit a state...as long as that state adhered to NATO’s constitutive rules”. Thus, being constitutive in their appeal towards NATO, the Baltic States automatically acquired legitimacy in their aspirations, which was further reinforced by the domestic support.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 24 June 1999.

⁶⁶ Česlovas V. Stankevicius, “NATO Enlargement and the Indivisibility of Security in Europe: A view from Lithuania.”

⁶⁷ “President Havel’s Address to the NATO Council.”

⁶⁸ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 248.

Firstly, NATO member states pledged “to keep the door open” at the Madrid Summit with reference to this region. More specifically, the “Enhanced Partnership for Peace” was launched at the Madrid Summit, and the Membership Action Plan was established. Finally, the year 2002 was set as a target date for reviewing the enlargement decisions. Thus, on the one hand, there was a view that NATO should not expand to the Baltic States having no strategic interests in the region. On the other hand, “enlargement to only a handful of states would be politically impossible to justify, could destabilize rejected countries, and in moral terms would amount to a ‘new Yalta’...Moreover, it would run counter to the rhetoric the alliance has employed up to now...”⁶⁹

Secondly, during his visit to Washington in 2000 President Clinton appealed to historical commitments by saying that “the United States had formally refused to recognize Moscow’s sovereignty over the three countries.”⁷⁰ In the President’s view, “This [gives] Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians the moral support to maintain their identities throughout Soviet domination and eventually to regain their independence.”⁷¹ Moreover, the Baltic States further appealed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to grant membership as a form of honoring their support in the Kosovo crisis.⁷²

Finally, treaty obligations were invoked to make the appeal for NATO membership even more legitimate. Thus, Article 10 of the Washington Treaty was referred to according to which “any European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area”⁷³ may accede. As a consequence, rhetorical entrapment had worked in the case of the Baltic States like it had worked in the previous round of enlargement.

⁶⁹ Ronald D. Asmus and Stephen F. Larrabee, “NATO and the Have-nots. Reassurance after Enlargement,” *Foreign Affairs* 75 (1998): 15.

⁷⁰ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 258.

⁷¹ Andrew F. Tully, “Estonia’s President Presses for ‘Big Bang’ NATO Expansion,” *RFE/RL Newswire*, 30 March 1999.

⁷² Michael Shafir, “The Kosovo Crisis and the NATO Hopefuls,” *RFE/RL Newswire* 3, No. 30, 19 June 2000.

⁷³ Quoted from NATO official website, <http://www.nato.int/issues/enlargement/index.html>.

2.3 Conclusions

In the two rounds of NATO enlargement, rhetorical action was successfully used by the aspiring states to acquire the Alliance's membership. In both cases, arguments for Eastward expansion were used strategically according to the rules of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. Firstly, the governments of both Poland and the Baltic States appealed to the constitutive values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic liberal community to overcome NATO's opposition. Secondly, their appeals were legitimized by referring to past commitments, historical precedents, and treaty obligations. Finally, the claims presented by the governments of the acceding states were reinforced by domestic support.

The rhetorical behavior of Poland and the Baltic States can be summarized in the following way. Firstly, value- and norm-based arguments were used for egoistic security goals. Lacking the sufficient bargaining power to make NATO accept their membership, it was strategically rational for the countries to use social pressure instead.

Secondly, the aspiring states advocates did not limit themselves to using norm-based arguments. As Frank Schimmelfennig observes in this regard, "It is a characteristic of rhetorical action that proponents of a claim pursue a variety of argumentative strategies, in particular if the audience is perceived to be diffuse or pluralistic and different parts of the audience are assumed to be persuaded by different kinds of arguments."⁷⁴

Finally, the candidate states "adapted their argumentative strategies to the audiences they addressed and to the arguments they thought would be most persuasive with, and asked of them in, a particular audience."⁷⁵

While rhetorical action is presented in its successful use here, this has not been always the case. The chapter that follows will address the issue in greater detail.

⁷⁴ Frank Schimmelfennig, *NATO's Enlargement to the East: An Analysis of Collective Decision-Making*, EAPC-NATO Individual Fellowship Report 1998-2000, 30-31.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 31.

Chapter 3 – Ukraine and NATO: the failure of rhetorical action

In the previous sections, the concept of “rhetorical action” has been introduced to provide a link between the egoistic preferences of NATO candidate members and the rule-based outcome of the Alliance’s Eastern enlargement. It has been demonstrated that rhetorical action was successfully used by the aspiring members to induce NATO towards further enlargement. Furthermore, the empirical cases of Poland and the Baltic States have witnessed that arguments for enlargement were used strategically according to the rules of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. This accounts for NATO’s final decision to grant membership to the aspiring European states.

In contrast, the present chapter will establish that Ukraine has not used its arguments strategically in the course of Ukraine-NATO relationship. Having failed to fully commit itself to the conditions of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance, the country has been denied access to the Membership Action Plan at the April 2008 Bucharest summit.

The current chapter will be structured as follows. Firstly, the similarity of the agenda at the Bucharest summit as compared to the previous summits will be demonstrated. It will be demonstrated that the enlargement preferences have not changed after the first two rounds. For one thing, the aspiring state – Ukraine in our case – has been driven by rational security interests similar to the already accepted Central and Eastern European states. For another thing, opposition to further enlargement has been as high. Moreover, the same states have been reluctant to accommodating Ukraine into NATO as it was the case with the CEEs.

Secondly, Ukraine’s use of arguments in favor of accession to the Alliance will be analyzed in detail. Several arguments will be developed regarding Ukraine’s bid for NATO. Firstly, it will be claimed that although Ukraine has appealed to the Euro-Atlantic community’s values and norms at different times, this has been done with a great degree of inconsistency. There has been both inconsistency between arguments used at different times

and, more importantly, between arguments and actions. Secondly, not being fully constituent, Ukraine's has lacked legitimacy in its rhetorical argumentation. Thirdly, rhetorical arguments have not been resonant with the country itself.

Finally, conclusions will be drawn regarding the case of Ukraine's bid for NATO. The ultimate argument will be that having failed to fulfill the requirements of consistency, constituency, legitimacy and resonance, Ukraine's rhetorical action has not been strong enough to induce the reluctant NATO members towards enlargement. Thus, having been successfully used in the first two rounds of NATO enlargement, rhetorical action was mismanaged by the Ukrainian government.

While Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko perceives the outcomes of the Bucharest summit as a complete victory for the country, the discourse will proceed from the assumption this summit has been a failure for Ukraine concerning its bid for NATO. The term "failure" here does not stand for the country's losing its credibility in advocating for MAP and NATO membership. On the contrary, members of the summit have pledged to grant Ukraine full membership in the long run. As implied in the present work, "failure" will mean the inability to induce NATO members towards further enlargement by means of rhetorical action – a strategic use of arguments in the community environment.

2.1 The Bucharest summit and enlargement preferences

2.1.1 Ukraine in its bid for NATO

The idea of enlarging NATO further eastwards, anticipated by some and opposed by others, reached its climax at the 2008 April summit of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest. With many questions set on the agenda, the most controversial issue at this meeting has been the aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine to join MAP, a practical step towards a full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. While Ukraine's expectations were not realized at the meeting, the leaders of the summit agreed to grant the

country full membership in the long run. As stated in the Bucharest Summit Declaration: “NATO welcomes Ukraine’s...Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. MAP is the next step for Ukraine...on [its] direct way to membership.”⁷⁶

Prior to the Bucharest event, Ukraine’s President Viktor Yushchenko reaffirmed the country’s NATO aspirations stating that “Ukraine is considering the upcoming Bucharest Alliance Summit in the April of 2008 as a key step in this regard.”⁷⁷ In this connection, what are the current motives for the declared pro-NATO position?

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter on NATO enlargement, the security approach accounts for Ukraine’s bid towards the Alliance. By seeking NATO membership, Ukraine has tried to play a balancing role in the region due to Russia’s attempts to infringe upon the country’s independence. In its strive towards NATO Ukraine is looking for the same kind of security guarantees it sought to obtain during the nuclear disarmament campaign following the breakup of the Soviet Union.

In this regard, President Viktor Yushchenko has claimed that joining NATO is necessary for ensuring the country’s sovereignty: “Ukraine has proclaimed its independence five times for the last eighty years. Four times we lost it. Why did we surrender our sovereignty? Because there were no international security guarantees. In other words, the question of Ukraine joining NATO has to be interpreted as whether Ukraine will maintain its independence.”⁷⁸ By stating that Ukraine’s political sovereignty equals NATO membership, the President maintains the view that the Membership Action Plan and full membership in the Alliance are consistent with the national interests of Ukraine.

Furthemore, it has been emphasized repeatedly that a collective security system is best equipped for the country’s strategic security in the present-day world. Thus, President

⁷⁶ *Bucharest Summit Declaration*, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008>.

⁷⁷ NATO-Ukraine official website, <http://www.ukraine-nato.gov.ua/nato>.

⁷⁸ Abridged from *Financial Times*, April 2, 2008.

Yushchenko has stated that “a collective security system is a long-established and effective mechanism for detaining any external aggressors as well as for quick conflict resolution within the system itself.”⁷⁹

To sum up, similar to the previous rounds of enlargement, Ukraine has sought to join NATO due to rationally-constructed security considerations.

2.1.2 Reactions from NATO member states

As the recent Bucharest summit has demonstrated, there has not been profound change in the enlargement preferences. Ukraine encountered the same struggle over NATO membership as the Central and Eastern European states several years ago.

Thus, similar to the previous enlargement rounds, several NATO members have opposed seeing Ukraine in the Euro-Atlantic community due to Russia's objections. During the meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on 8 March, German Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly announced Germany's resistance on offering MAP to Ukraine. A week later France's Foreign Minister stated that NATO must “take into account Russia's sensitivity and the important role it plays.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, France's Prime Minister Francois Fillon referred to the disturbance of the power balance emphasizing that “it is not the correct response to the balance of power in Europe, and between Europe and Russia.”⁸¹ Hungary, which signed a draft agreement to join Gazprom's South Stream project, similarly expressed its opposition.

In this regard, Russia also referred explicitly to the balance of power. Russia's President Vladimir Putin has claimed that the efforts of bringing Ukraine into NATO aims at undermining Russia's status in the region. This, according to Putin, can be regarded as a logical continuation of the U.S. policy of deploying missiles in Poland and radars in the Czech Republic. Prior to the Bucharest summit, Putin denounced the U.S. attempts to expand

⁷⁹ Ukraine's President official website, <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/9369.html>

⁸⁰ ISN Security Watch, *Ukraine's NATO Dilemma*, Commentary by Adrian J Erlinger (02/04/08), <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=18810>

⁸¹ “Ukraine's Hopes to Join NATO Soured by Fierce Opposition from Russia,” *Kyiv Post*, March 31, 2008.

NATO claiming that "...NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernization of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe."⁸²

At the same time, the new Central and Eastern European members fully support the integration of Ukraine into NATO. Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the Baltic States argued that "a negative response to Ukraine's ambitions would reverse NATO's 'open door' policy for new members."⁸³ One month before the Bucharest Summit, CEE countries lobbied strongly for Ukraine. Moreover, nine CEE countries sent a letter to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer seeking to influence NATO's decision to extend a MAP to Ukraine at the Bucharest summit.⁸⁴ Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk expressed the following view during his visit to Kiev: "Poland has, is and will fully support giving Ukraine MAP at the Bucharest summit...Our meeting today confirmed that...friendship between Poland and Ukraine is not just a motto, but it is a fact."⁸⁵

The United States and Poland have been the most passionate advocates for Ukraine's accession to the MAP. During his stay in Kiev on the eve of the Bucharest Summit, President Bush declared to Viktor Yushchenko: "Your nation has made a bold decision, and the United States strongly supports your request." After negotiations with Ukraine's President, Mr. Bush concluded: "We support MAP for Ukraine...It's in our interest for Ukraine to join."⁸⁶

To sum up, the debate on further NATO enlargement has followed a similar pattern as in the previous rounds. Under these circumstances, Ukraine would undertake rhetorical strategies, as predicted by the rhetorical model hypothesis, in order to achieve general consensus on the matter. This issue is the one that is addressed below.

⁸² Speech at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy, 02/10/2007, <http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede>.

⁸³ ISN Security Watch, *Ukraine's NATO Dilemma*.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ "Poland Backs Ukraine's NATO Bid; Russia Lobbies Alliance Against Embracing Ex-Soviet Neighbors," *Kyiv Post*, March 28, 2008.

⁸⁶ "Bush Vows Support for Ukraine, Georgia NATO hopes over Russian objections," *Kyiv Post*, April 1, 2008.

2.2 Rhetorical action and the case of Ukraine – pitfalls and misuses

In the first two rounds of NATO enlargement, rhetorical action was successfully used by the aspiring states to acquire the Alliance's membership. In both cases, arguments for Eastward expansion were used strategically according to the rules of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance in order to exert moral pressure on reluctant NATO member states. Firstly, the governments of the aspiring states appealed to the constitutive values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic liberal community to overcome NATO's opposition. Secondly, these appeals were legitimized by referring to past commitments, historical precedents, and treaty obligations. Finally, the claims presented by the governments of the acceding states were reinforced by domestic support.

The recent Bucharest summit, however, has demonstrated that Ukraine has failed to follow the similar pattern in its bid for NATO. While the country similarly lacked sufficient bargaining power to make NATO accept its membership, social pressure was not used successfully instead. Although Ukraine tried using value- and norm-based arguments for egoistic security goals, the overall rhetorical strategy was not constituent, legitimate, and salient enough to achieve the positive result by the time of Bucharest summit.

It must be pointed out that Ukraine has appealed to the values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic community at different times. However, this has been done with a great degree of *inconsistency*. There has been both inconsistency between arguments used at different times and, more importantly, between arguments and actions. In this regard, inconsistency can be viewed as an antecedent variable affecting, in turn, the requirements of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. The discussion will therefore proceed from analyzing this feature in Ukraine's bid for NATO membership.

2.2.1 Inconsistency between arguments

One of the reasons why Ukraine has not been using rhetorical action successfully is that there is inconsistency between the arguments used at different times. In this regard,

Frank Schimmelfennig predicted that “rhetorical actors that do not honor their argumentative commitments in deed, reject warrants and grounds they accepted in earlier stages of the debate, are caught making contrary arguments...or are perceived to appeal to contradictory ideas...will lose credibility.”⁸⁷

According to the “Basic principles of Ukraine’s foreign policy,” Ukraine hoped to achieve “full-scale participation in the all-European security structure” after the proclamation of independence in 1991.⁸⁸ As Gennadiy Udovenko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, explained in an address to the Belgian Royal Institute for International Relations, “This new security system should be based upon the principle of the indivisibility of security, as well as on that of mutual complementarity.”⁸⁹ In this regard, the signing of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between Ukraine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1997 reaffirmed a strong Western political commitment to ensure the indivisibility of European security. The commitment of NATO to support Ukraine’s “sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, democratic development economic prosperity,” as well as the recognition of Ukraine as an inseparable part of Europe, was of tremendous importance to Ukraine.⁹⁰

Ukraine’s President Kuchma reaffirmed the country’s aspirations towards the Euro-Atlantic community using a rhetorical “return to Europe” argument. In one of his speeches, Kuchma claimed that “Ukraine is committed to follow the European reformatory path...This policy of the Ukrainian state meets the deepest expectations of the Ukrainian people, who have always realized their historical belonging to the family of the European nations. Ukraine cannot image itself being beyond Europe. It has remained and will always be a...full and inseparable member of the European family.”⁹¹

⁸⁷ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 222.

⁸⁸ Ihor Karchenko, “A view from Ukraine,” in *NATO Enlargement: Opinions and Options*, ed. Jeffrey Simon (Washington, 1995), 144.

⁸⁹ Gennadiy Udovenko, “Ukraine’s Foreign Policy: A Way to the European Integration,” *Studia Diplomatica* 50, no. 2 (1997): 31-41.

⁹⁰ *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine*, Madrid, 9 July 1997, NATO on-line library, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/ukrchrt.htm>.

⁹¹ *President Kuchma’s address to Ukrainian people on the Day of Europe*, 8 September

In addition, a similar comment was made by Boris Tarasyuk, the Ukrainian minister of Foreign Affairs:

Integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures and strengthening of our country's position within the family of European nations, with whom we share common historical and cultural traditions, as well as values and view on the future of the continent, remain the consistent orientation of Ukraine.⁹²

Thus, similar to the two previous sets of debates on NATO enlargement, Ukraine's leaders used tried to resolve the country's security concerns by using some of the rhetorical strategies. These included identifying the country as belonging to the Euro-Atlantic community, and appealing to NATO multilateralist norms, namely to the idea of indivisibility of security. In contrast, while the current President Yushchenko has reinforced the country's bid for NATO, his argumentative strategy has been completely different. Thus, Yushchenko has referred to the country's national interests and security as the primary issues at stake.

In this regard, Viktor Yushchenko has claimed it is within the country's national interests to collaborate with NATO member-states "on fighting international terrorism, dissemination of weapons of mass destruction, illegal drug and human trafficking..."⁹³ Furthermore, the President has emphasized repeatedly that a collective security system is best equipped for the country's strategic security in the present-day world. Moreover, by claiming that joining NATO is necessary for ensuring the country's sovereignty, Yushchenko publicly announced security guarantees to be the major driving force behind Ukraine's NATO bid.

To sum up, while Ukraine under Viktor Yushchenko has acquired a strong pro-Western position unlike the ambivalent two-vector policy of the preceding years, the arguments for enlarging NATO have not been used strategically in order to accelerate Ukraine's acceptance into the Alliance.

2004, <http://www.president.gov.ua/eng/activity/zayavinterv/speackto/253826322.html>.

⁹² Boris Tarasyuk, "Forework" in *Between Russia and the West: Foreign and Security Policy of Independent Ukraine*, eds. Spillmann, Wenger and Müller (Bern, 1999), 9-11.

⁹³ Ukraine-NATO official website

2.2.2 *Inconsistency between arguments and actions*

2.2.2.1 The community-building approach

Not only has Ukraine displayed inconsistency between arguments for enlargement, more importantly, it has demonstrated inconsistency between arguments and actions. Although aspiring for NATO, Ukraine has not been able to fully acquire the community's liberal values and norms so far.

It was concluded in the theoretical chapter that NATO enlargement can be explained as the admission of former communist countries that have successfully democratized and adopted the corresponding constitutive norms. In other words, a security community is open to any state that has adopted the relevant norms and ideas and uses them as guide for behaving on the international arena. As Frank Schimmelfennig maintains, "By admitting CEECs to accession negotiations, the Western community formally recognizes that they have internalized its liberal identity, values and norms and that they are legitimate community members."⁹⁴

While the Euro-Atlantic community of NATO member-states defines its collective identity not merely by geographical location but mainly by liberal values and norms, it is fundamental that this set of common ideas is translated into behaviour both on the international and on the domestic level.⁹⁵ At the international level, the liberal values to be acquired are democratic peace and multilateralism. At the domestic level, social pluralism, the rule of law, democratic political participation and representation, and market economy are to be established.

While Ukraine has achieved positive developments in adopting NATO's liberal values at the international level, namely through participation in the Partnership for Peace program and NATO peace-keeping operations, the constitutive liberal norms and values have

⁹⁴ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 108.

⁹⁵ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, "A Framework for the Study of Security Communities", in *Security Communities*, edited by Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30.

not been translated onto the domestic level yet. With the country not meeting this fundamental condition, its rhetorical argumentation for NATO enlargement has been perceived as lacking constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. It is this problem of inconsistency between words and actions that is to be looked into in the section below.

2.2.2.2 Analysis of arguments vs. actions

To draw a conclusion from the discourse above, despite the fact that Ukraine sees itself as belonging to the Euro-Atlantic community, NATO has been reluctant to admit the country because it has not fully internalized the liberal community norms. The country has not yet become a participant with NATO community because it has not yet adopted the set of common ideas on which this community is based. More specifically, the unresolved issues of democratic governance, civil society, judicial framework and independence, corruption, media freedom and civilian control over the defense force impede Ukraine from acquiring NATO membership.

Democratic governance. Since the Orange Revolution, Ukraine reconfirmed its trend toward pluralistic democracy, human rights, and media freedom. However, as Freedom House reports, “the transition process remains incomplete, and the efficiency of Ukraine’s democratic governance is still doubtful.”⁹⁶

On the national level, Ukraine has been seeking to break away with the Soviet presidential-governance heritage and to introduce a governance model similar to other Central and Eastern European countries. In this regard, the new regime led by President Yushchenko has proved to be “substantially more transparent and democratic than the previous one.” However, stable institutions ensuring the rule of law and consolidation of democratic changes have not yet been built. On the local level, a number of administration and territorial reforms were initiated, including local government reforms. A political consensus has been achieved on the need to decentralize government by providing more

⁹⁶ *Nations in Transit 2007 Country Reports*, Report on Ukraine, 2, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.

power to local and regional authorities. However, most of the initiatives suggested have not yet resulted in real improvements in this sphere and theoretical policy debate prevails over practical actions.⁹⁷

Civil society. Civil society in Ukraine played a crucial role in the Orange Revolution and continues to strengthen. Unlike the Kuchma government, current authorities do not interfere in this sector by “levying permanent taxes, accusing NGOs of serving foreign powers, or creating additional barriers and obstacles to NGO activity.” At the same time, little effective policy has been implemented to support civil society and encourage NGO activity in Ukraine.⁹⁸

Thus, the sector continues to be dependent on imperfect legislation and foreign funds. NGOs are still not authorized to sell services in order to support their activities, and grants and membership fees are their only legitimate sources of income. The current authorities have not created barriers to NGO activity; at the same time, however, Ukrainian NGOs lack sustainable funding, which makes them dependent on grants from foreign foundations.⁹⁹

Judicial framework and independence. In 2005, the new leadership under Viktor Yushchenko declared important improvements in the judiciary and began creating preconditions for their implementation, though most steps were not implemented. At the same time, the judicial system gained more independence from the executive branch. The principle of equality before the law, however, is still disregarded. Violations by the highest officials involved in the 2004 elections have not been prosecuted. Despite discussions about a comprehensive reform of the judiciary, criminal law, human rights protections, and related spheres, such reforms have not been fully and systematically introduced yet.¹⁰⁰

Corruption. The fight against corruption and the establishment of new government power was one of the primary tasks of the new authorities in 2005. Former high-ranking

⁹⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 5.

officials accused of corruption were removed from power; however, none of these corruption cases passed through the courts. There were also corruption scandals within the new team of high-ranking officials. Corruption issue has had an ambiguous impact on Ukraine's political environment. On the one hand, the scandals have demonstrated significant improvements in state transparency in Ukraine. This could not have existed under the former President Kuchma's rule. On the other hand, the scandals have ultimately unbalanced Ukraine's political system. Finally, "the various existing anticorruption regulations and initiatives do not take a systematic approach or articulate an overall long-term strategy but are chaotic and face strong internal resistance, thus undermining their intended effect on society."¹⁰¹ All in all, despite the increased publicity of corruption scandals, Ukraine's anticorruption initiatives have not yet produced systematic improvements.

Media freedom. Media freedom proves to be sufficient for the time being. For one thing, citizens currently enjoy wide-ranging pluralism in both electronic and print media. For another thing, no wide-scale censorship or government pressure on the media has been detected so far. However, according to some reports local authorities had attempted to censor media. Furthermore, the Ukrainian media sector still needs strengthening, restructuring, and systemic reforms. The influence of political and economic groups in the media sphere remains strong.¹⁰²

Civilian control over defense. As stated in article 72 of the "Study on NATO Enlargement", one of the political predictions for acquiring the Alliance's membership is establishing "appropriate democratic and civilian control of their [applicants] defense force."¹⁰³ While the Ukrainian elites declaring their intention to develop a system of democratic and civilian oversight over the armed forces following the proclamation of independence, this goal has not been achieved even today. Thus, "although the respective

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰² Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁰³ *Study on NATO Enlargement*, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/enl-9501.htm>.

powers and responsibilities of the various bodies of government concerned were defined and delineated in a legal framework, this was not done very clearly.”¹⁰⁴

Summary. According to Freedom House predictions made in the 2007 report on Ukraine, “permanent disputes between the camps of the president and the prime minister, attempts to extend the ruling coalition in the Parliament, and difficult consolidation and restructuring processes within the opposition will hamper further democratic reforms as the major efforts of political players will be concentrated on the fight for power.”¹⁰⁵ With all of these problems existing today, it is unlikely that there will be any deep and systemic reforms at national and local levels in the areas of rule of law, democratic governance, and justice.

2.2.2.3 Conclusions

According to Frank Schimmelfennig, NATO has been developing its policies towards non-member states based exactly on liberal values and norms. As a result, “if European non-member states are successfully socialized...they are both willing and entitled to join the international organizations of the community as full members.”¹⁰⁶

While states aspiring for NATO membership must behave according to liberal norms of both international and domestic conduct, Ukraine has not fully met the second part of the condition. As Nienke de Deugd has rightly pointed out, “the country did not move from the phase of policy-on-paper into that of policy-in-practice with regard to the actual implementation of the reforms necessary to establish the set of common ideas on which the western zone of peace is founded.”¹⁰⁷ This, in turn, has undermined Ukraine’s constituency in its bid for NATO membership.

¹⁰⁴ Nienke de Deugd, *Ukraine and NATO*, 128.

¹⁰⁵ *Nations in Transit 2007 Country Reports*, 6.

¹⁰⁶ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Nienke de Deugd, *Ukraine and NATO*, 136.

2.2.3 *Semi-constituency*

As the rhetorical action model predicts, “To be recognized as ‘one of us’ by the community, a state must make the community’s constitutive values and norms and integral part of its identity and act upon them independently of external stimuli.”¹⁰⁸ While Ukraine has appealed to the values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic community at different times, it has not yet fully translated these exact norms into the domestic realm. As a result of such inconsistency between its pro-NATO intentions and the actual state of affairs, Ukraine has not been able to be fully constitutive in its enlargement arguments. Still, the political requirement of adhering to the constitutive domestic and international liberal norms has the major criterion for membership in all enlargement rounds.

In the case of previous rounds, the CEECs used the liberal identity, values, and norms of the Western international community to put moral and social pressure on the reluctant member states and shame them into acquiescing to enlargement. As a result, the member states opposing Eastern enlargement found themselves rhetorically entrapped. In the case of the April 2008 summit, however, it was Ukraine that found itself rhetorically entrapped by its use of arguments. As a result, the country’s credibility was questioned and the NATO member states did not comply with the membership request.

Moreover, Ukraine’s constituency in rhetorical action, however weak it would be, decreased even further due to the use of mixed argumentative strategies. By appealing to the shared European identity, on the one hand, and asking explicitly for security guarantees, on the other hand, Ukraine’s government displayed a great measure of ambivalence in its bid for NATO. This, in turn, undermined its bargaining power in the dialogue with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

¹⁰⁸ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, 73.

2.2.4 Lack of sufficient legitimacy

It has been noted in the previous sections that the three conditions for successful rhetorical action, namely constituency, legitimacy and resonance, are interrelated and mutually supportive. In the case of NATO enlargement, the constitutive principles of human rights and democracy fulfill the criteria of legitimacy and are generally shared by the member states and their representatives.

In a community environment, legitimacy strengthens the actors' bargaining positions. As maintained by Shimmelfennig, "political actors use arguments strategically in order to present themselves as legitimate and to persuade the audience of the legitimacy of their claims in order to elicit political support and induce political cooperation."¹⁰⁹ In the case of Ukraine, however, there has been a lack of legitimacy in aspiring for the Alliance's membership. With regard to the Eastern enlargement policy, NATO members declared they could not legitimately refuse to admit a state as long as that state adhered to NATO's constitutive rules. Thus, being constitutive in their appeals towards NATO, Poland and the Baltic States, for instance, automatically acquired legitimacy in their aspirations, which was further reinforced by the domestic support.

In contrast, not being fully constitutive, as concluded in the section above, Ukraine was unable to acquire enough legitimacy in order to support its bargaining legitimacy. As a result, the country did not and would have been unable to use successfully the strategy of shaming towards the Alliance members. Nor could it assume responsibility for the West or refer to its historical failures in order to exert moral pressure on NATO members. Instructive enough, President Yushchenko's appeal to recognize the 1932-1933 *holodomor* in Ukraine as the national genocide was left null and void.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 208.

2.2.5 Struggle over domestic support

Finally, the last precondition for effective rhetorical action – resonance – has been most vulnerable in Ukraine’s case. According to the surveys conducted, sixty-one percent of Ukrainians are strongly opposed to NATO membership. Such low degree of salience has certainly impeded the country’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. Unless the domestic support for joining the Alliance arises, Ukraine will not increase its chances to induce NATO member states to comply with the enlargement request.

It has been claimed that in Ukraine, low public support for NATO is a result of an intense domestic propaganda campaign waged by Viktor Yanukovych's Party of Regions during the political crisis of 2006. According to ISN Security Watch, “anti-NATO rhetoric has captured wide support among the electorate who believe that Russia, not NATO, best provides a security umbrella for Ukraine.”¹¹⁰

Another explanation, however, can be provided with regard to the preceding discourse. Low salience in Ukraine on the issue of NATO membership results from lack of constituency in the pro-Alliance arguments. Thus, in public discourse President Yushchenko has repeatedly defined the quest for NATO as a geopolitical choice rather than presenting the commitments to liberal values and norms involved with membership. As a result, the majority of the population continues to perceive NATO as traditionally a military and aggressive institution trying to infringe upon Ukraine’s independence.

The lack of a united policy on NATO integration among Ukraine’s population is in turn exploited easily by Russia. Citing low public support for NATO in the country, Russia’s leadership maintains that membership in the Alliance would ultimately split the country and undermine its political sovereignty.

¹¹⁰ ISN Security Watch, *Ukraine’s NATO Dilemma*.

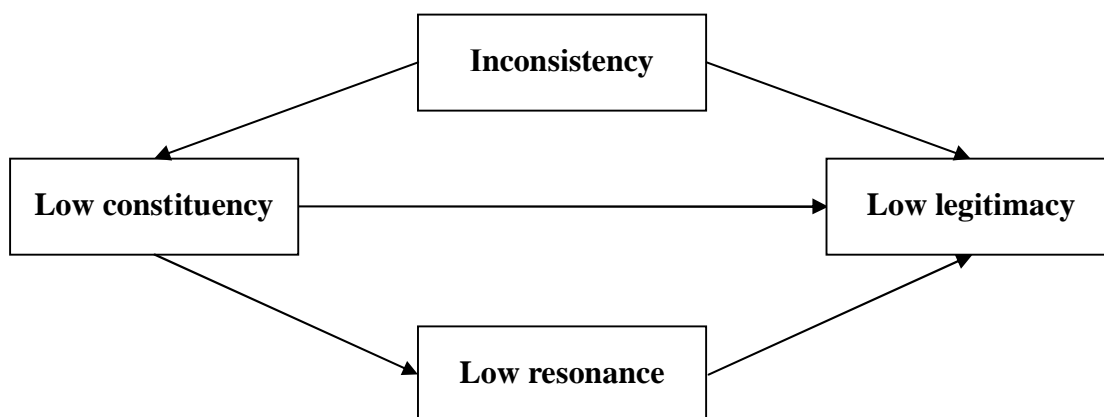
2.3 Conclusions

The present chapter has sought to support empirically the hypothesis that Ukraine's delay of the access to Membership Action Plan is explained by inappropriate use of rhetorical argumentation. Having failed to fully commit itself to the conditions of consistency, constituency, legitimacy and resonance, the country was unable to induce NATO member states to launch MAP at the Bucharest summit.

The conclusions of the discourse provided in the chapter are as follows. First, although Ukraine has appealed to the Euro-Atlantic community values and norms at different times, this has been done with a great degree of inconsistency both between arguments and, more importantly, between arguments and actions. Second, not being fully consistent, Ukraine's has as a consequence lacked constituency, legitimacy and resonance in its rhetorical argumentation. Finally, due to the reasons mentioned, Ukraine's rhetorical argumentation has not been strong enough to induce NATO members towards enlargement. Thus, having been successfully used in the first two rounds of NATO enlargement, rhetorical action was mismanaged by the Ukrainian government.

The interplay between the analyzed conditions is presented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Ukraine and rhetorical action: conditions affecting the bid for NATO



Conclusion

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine was faced with the necessity to determine its foreign policy strategy. While the country had initially taken a multi-vector path, balancing between the West (Europe) and the East (Russia), a shift towards the Western Euro-Atlantic community has been evidenced lately. Most notably, Ukraine has manifested its shift towards the West in its bid for NATO's membership. The question of Ukraine's future membership in the Alliance is crucial both for the country itself and the current NATO member-states. As noted by Boris Tarasyuk, the former Foreign Minister of Ukraine, "...the stability and security of our region, and of Europe as a whole, to a large extent depends upon the political and economic stability of Ukraine. By supporting and assisting Ukraine, the Western countries...ensure a more stable and prosperous Europe. By helping Ukraine, they invest in the peaceful future of the world."¹¹¹

The recent April 2008 summit in Bucharest has demonstrated, however, that Ukraine is still a way off the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The "rhetorical action" model in this regard provides an insight on the question of what accounts for the delay in granting Ukraine the Membership Action Plan. It has been demonstrated that rhetorical action as strategic use of rule-based arguments provides a link between the egoistic preferences of NATO candidate members and the rule-based outcome of the Alliance's Eastern enlargement. Rhetorical action was successfully used by the aspiring members to induce NATO towards further enlargement. The empirical cases of Poland and the Baltic States have witnessed that arguments for enlargement were used strategically according to the rules of constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. This accounts for NATO's final decision to grant membership to the aspiring European states.

¹¹¹ Boris Tarasyuk, "Ukraine in the World", in *Ukraine in the World: Studies in the International Relations and Security Structure of a Newly Independent State*, ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 15.

While successfully used by other Central and Eastern European states, it is puzzling why rhetorical action did not work in Ukraine's bid towards NATO. This is all the more interesting as the debate over further enlargement had followed a similar pattern as in the first two rounds of debates. The ultimate argument developed in the thesis is that Ukraine has not fulfilled the set of requirements necessary for rhetorical action to work. Ukraine's arguments for expanding NATO have lacked consistency, constituency, legitimacy, and resonance. As a result, the country has failed to use its arguments strategically in order to obtain access to MAP.

With regard to the hypothesis supported in the thesis, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the enlargement preferences in Ukraine's case have not changed after the first two rounds. For one thing, the aspiring state – Ukraine in our case – is driven by rational security interests similar to the already accepted Central and Eastern European states. By seeking NATO membership, Ukraine has tried to play a balancing role in the region due to Russia's attempts to infringe upon the country's independence. In its strive towards NATO Ukraine is looking for the same kind of security guarantees it sought to obtain during the post-Soviet nuclear disarmament campaign. For another thing, opposition to further enlargement has been as high. Moreover, the same states have been reluctant to accommodating Ukraine into NATO as it was the case with the CEE countries. The similarity of the agenda at the Bucharest Summit as compared to the previous summits has been therefore obvious.

Secondly, although Ukraine has appealed to the Euro-Atlantic community values and norms at different times, this has been done with a great degree of inconsistency. There has been both inconsistency between arguments used at different times and, more importantly, between arguments and actions. With regard to the former, Ukraine's leaders in fact tried using rhetorical strategies to resolve the country's security concerns. These included

identifying the country as belonging to the Euro-Atlantic community and appealing to NATO multilateralist norms. However, the current President Yushchenko's argumentative strategy has been completely different. Thus, the President has openly referred to the country's national interests and security as the primary issues at stake.

With regard to the latter, although Ukraine has achieved positive developments in adopting NATO's liberal values at the international level, the constitutive liberal norms and values have not been translated onto the domestic level yet. Thus, NATO has been reluctant to admit the country because it has not fully internalized the liberal community norms. The unresolved issues of democratic governance, civil society, judicial framework and independence, corruption, media freedom and civilian control over the defense force impede Ukraine from fulfilling the domestic requirement for NATO membership.

The final set of conclusions flows logically from the previous one. As a result of inconsistency between its pro-NATO intentions and the actual state of affairs, Ukraine has not been fully constitutive in its rhetorical argumentation. Furthermore, not being fully constitutive, the country has been unable to acquire enough legitimacy in order to support its bargaining positions. Finally, lack of constituency has affected salience within the state itself.

It is hoped that this work contributes to theoretical debates on the use of rhetorical action by political actors. It has been argued here that not meeting the requirements of consistency, constituency, legitimacy and resonance, Ukraine's rhetorical action has not been strong enough to induce the reluctant NATO members towards enlargement. In this manner, at least one study has been conducted on the case in which the conditions of strong rhetorical argumentation are relaxed or absent.

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