

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

ANALYZING THE WAR IN CAUCAUS IN THE NEW LIGHT:
FACTORS EXPLAINING RUSSIAN MILITARY CAMPAING IN GEORGIA
IN 2008?

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Abstract

My work deals with the Russian intervention in Georgia last summer as I found that researches have not undertaken sufficient effort to properly analyze the factors that were driving this conflict or try to conceptualize them with the theoretical framework.

I have applied document analysis method in the analysis of the primary sources such are strategic documents of the Russian federation from the 2000's and the documents of the Russian Ministry of Defense and Russian Ministry of the Foreign Affairs. Other elements of the primary literature were discourse analysis of the leading politicians during the war in Georgia and aftermath and journalists articles and reports in the international and Russian press about the war. Secondary literature was consisted of the academic articles, policy papers and books in order to get broader picture of the Russian foreign policy and develop a theoretical framework.

Main findings is that the Russian sense of greatness and the impact of the Russian strategic culture were driving forces that caused disproportionate use of Russian military in „coercing Georgia to peace”. That also imply fundamental shift from the centrist policy of Putin before the war to a more radical confrontational attitude with the West.

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Introduction

Russo-Georgian war in the summer of 2008 is considered to be one of the major political events in the post-Soviet space because for the first time Russia used its military power in a full scale manner and intervened into the sovereign space of the other state. Russian campaign in Georgia sparked fears about the new era of the Russian foreign policy that is now so confident it can bomb the capital of the state that is the NATO applicant country and close US ally. Thus, the whole topic became field of scholar researches.

In the analysis of the war, Allison has focused on the rationale and the objectives of the Russian military campaign claiming that Russia used the same preventive strategy as the US after the 9/11.¹ In addition, King claimed that Russian intervention presents the new era of the Russian military unilateralism that tends to disrupt the international law and establish new regime.² Müllerson focuses on the legal status of the two regions and the Russian claims that Russia had the right to protect its citizens drawing a comparison with the case of Kosovo.³ Furthermore, Sestanovich argues that Kremlin confirmed its position as the revisionist power⁴ that supports McElhatton's view that Russia wants to establish regional hegemony.⁵

However, this topic remains covered mainly by the policy papers or even where it is covered by the academic articles, those are mainly articles that adopt firm neorealist position, that opens a gap further research. Thus, my work is already a contribution since it adopts academic approach with the application of the two rival theories. My main intention is to show that the Russian sense of greatness and the impact of the Russian strategic culture were driving forces that caused disproportionate use of the Russian military force in „coercing Georgia to peace”. That also imply fundamental shift from the centrist policy of Putin before the war to a more radical confrontational attitude with the West. This analysis necessary leads to the close links with the constructivism in the IR and with the question of the Russian foreign policy because my main aim is to show that the ideational factors, namely issues of

¹ Roy Allison, "Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to Coerce Georgia to Peace," *International Affairs* 84, no. 6, (2008): 1147.

² Charles King, "The Five-Day War," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (2008): 4.

³ Rein Müllerson, "Precedents in the Mountains: On the Parallels and Uniqueness of the Cases of Kosovo, South Ossetia and Abkhazia" *Chinese Journal of International Law* 8, no. 1 (2008): 2-25.

⁴ Stephen Sestanovich, "What Has Moscow Done?" *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (2008): 12-28.

⁵ Emmet McElhatton, "Georgia: a bridge too far?" *New Zealand International Review* 34, no.1 (2009): 2-7

Russian identity and dignity in the international scene were main forces behind Russian intervention in Georgia.

In my methodology part I have used primary sources such as strategic documents of the Russian Federation from the 2000's. Those were Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation from 2008 and National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020. I have applied document analysis on the other documents of the Russian Ministry of Defense and Russian Ministry of the Foreign Affairs. In addition, I have analyzed speeches of the leading politicians during the war in Georgia and its aftermath in order to see the which reasons were used in the justification of the Russian military campaign. I have also used process tracking method in the analysis of the decision making process on the Russian side after the beginning of the conflict and what was the reaction of the Moscow on the chain of event that followed. Others primary sources were consisted of articles and reports in the international and Russian press while secondary resources were consisted of the academic articles and policy papers that were dealing with the Russian action in Georgia. Regarding the broader picture of the Russian foreign policy and theoretical framework, I have used books and articles that were covering these issues.

In order to prove my hypothesis, my work is consisted from the three chapters. First chapter deals with the theoretical framework where I have confronted two theoretical approaches. First part analyses the blended approach of the Rationalist Union that is consisted of neoliberal institutionalism and the rational choice realism. Second part of the theoretical chapter deals with the constructivism and the difference between them is cross-listed with the difference between the logics of appropriateness and logics of consequentialism. Second chapter deals with the internal political development of the Georgia since the end of the Cold War until the war last summer. Third part of the work deals with the elaboration of the hypothesis where I confront two different approaches in the analysis in order to prove which factors are more reliable in the explanation of the Russian military campaign.

Chapter 1: Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will evaluate two theoretical complexes that I find necessary for the further evaluation of my thesis. Firstly, I will start with the Rationalist Union that is a blended term that comprises Rational Choice realism and Neoliberal Institutionalism that is linked closely with the rational choice approach to the International Political Economy. Main aim of this part is to support the statement that the foreign policy behavior of the states is driven by the cost-benefit analysis and the strategic calculus. Second part of the theoretical chapter is consisted from Constructivism that is connected with the elements of the sociological institutionalism and the security studies.

Main point is to emphasize the difference between the Rationalist and the Constructivist approach to the international relations that is well evaluated on the difference between the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences. This difference stated here is part of the post-positivist turn in the IR and the example of the Russian foreign policy and the campaign in Georgia provides the opportunity to further develop its research potential.

1.1 Rationalist Union

I found common grounds among the Rational Choice realism and Neoliberalism as they both share the assumptions that the states are unitary and rationalist actors that behave as the utility-maximizers. Arthur Stein claims that the usage of the game theory and the importance of the power and interests for the states is the common ground that joins realism and neoliberalism⁶. Indeed, this is the important point because it shows that the often seen differences between the realism and neoliberalism about the nature of the cooperation could be overshadowed by their common epistemological and ontological grounds. Both theories emphasize difference between the facts and the values; they do not take into consideration ideational aspects and consider social world to be endogenously determined. Ontologically, they agree that the world system is anarchical system where states adopt instrumentalist behavior based on the rational choice. Thus, although realism focuses more on the security

⁶ Artur A. Stein. 'Neoliberal Institutionalism.' in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* ed. Christian Reus-Smith and Duncan Snidal, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). p.205

aspect and the neoliberalism on the issues of the economic cooperation and international political economy⁷, their common points and focus on the enhancement of the state power can overreach that gap. In the next part I evaluate Rationalist Choice realism, one particular part of the realist domain.

1.1.1 Rational Choice realism

This school of Realism is an answer to the domination of the neorealism in the realist domain. It inherits the core of the realism but it differs from neorealism on the perspectives of international cooperation that puts it close to the neoliberalism. Neorealism emphasizes the structural dimension of the politics that is deprived from the human psychology or domestic political development as the distribution of the capabilities is the crucial factor that determines the political outcome⁸. Distribution of the capabilities is part of the wider realist debate about the real purpose of the states: either this is power or security maximization⁹ that has started with the Morgenthau's claim that the realist's "main signpost...is the concept of interests defined in the terms of power"¹⁰.

However, although the "states seek to enhance their power [and] in this...statement are implicit the major assumptions of the realist thought"¹¹, it was rational realism that contributed to the realism with the added value of the importance of the cooperation for the state. Indeed, "anarchy does not prevent patterns of the cooperation"¹², that means that the state can pursue its power and fulfill its own interests with the cooperation as well, that is quite different from other types of the realism that claim the impossibility of the cooperation due to the difference in relative gains among the different states. Joseph Grieco, the most prominent scholar of this type of realism argues that state rationality means the adoption of

⁷ Steven Lamy, Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism. in *Globalization of the World Politics*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 205-224.

⁸ Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, Realism in *Globalization of the World Politics*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 169.

⁹ Joseph M. Grieco, 'Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics,' in Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry eds. *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997), 87

¹⁰ J. Hans Morgenthau, (revised by Kenneth W. Thompson) *Politics among nations : the struggle for power and peace* (New York : McGraw-Hill,1985), 5.

¹¹ Arnold Wolfers, 'The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference,' in *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* Arnold Wolfers (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1962), 82.

¹² Dunne and Schmidt, Realism, 171.

the devise strategies by states to realize their calculated goals¹³ and that has to include cooperation because states are mutually interdependent on the achievement of the economic goals. This possibility of the cooperation is the link that joins the realist agenda with the neoliberal approach and one of the pivotal roles is played by the game theory that explains the various combinations and the outcomes of the interests calculations.

Thus, since the behavior of the states explained by this kind of realism follows the Robert Keohane's logic of rationality where states "have consistent, ordered preferences and ... they calculate costs and benefits of alternative courses of action in order to maximize their utility in the view of preferences"¹⁴, that leads us to the neoliberalism that further enlarges the possibility of the international cooperation and the importance of the economic benefits for the states.

1.1.2 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism focuses on the structural dimension of politics and importance of the institutions and regimes. As Steven Lamy claims, neoliberalism originated from the functional integration theory and complex interdependence and transnational studies.¹⁵ The interdependence theory is labeled with the pluralistic view that acknowledges new emerging actors and their interdependence driven by the growth of the international trade and economic cooperation and this view of the world politics is particularly relevant in the era of globalization. The second neo-liberal contribution is its view of the regimes. They define them as the "social institutions based on rules, norms, principles and decision-making procedures".¹⁶ Both environmental, trade and social fields are led by the framework of interests, treaties and protocols. These two terms; institutions and regimes, are crucial because they pose an alternative to the self-fulfilling prophecy of neorealism. States are not determined to conflicts to obtain their national interests because they can do the same by relying on the cooperation and multilateralism.

¹³ Joseph M. Grieco, 'Anarchy and the limits of cooperation: a realist critique of the newest liberal institutionalism,' *International Organization* 42, no. 3, (1988): 165.

¹⁴ Robert O. Keohane, *After hegemony : cooperation and discord in the world political economy* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1984), 27.

¹⁵ Steven Lamy, 'Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism,' in *Globalization of the World Politics*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 213.

¹⁶ Lamy, 'Contemporary mainstream approaches ', 214.

Keohane stresses the importance of the rational choice analysis that denies the inevitability of the conflict and the realist “state of the nature” perspective.¹⁷ Realist assumptions about the world still remain but they are not in the collision with the enhancement of the institutionalized cooperation and its benefits for the state interests. Neoliberals see states as rational egoists concerned with the gains and losses¹⁸, that means that they are involved in the cooperation in order to secure benefits and material interests. Thus, neoliberalism shares this economic type of behavior with the realism where the state politics is driven by the cost-benefit analysis. Main difference between them is in the fact that the liberals are concerned more with the economic benefits and the growth of the welfare while realists are still focused on the security.

Furthermore, this position is closely related with the rational choice or neo-utilitarian approach to the International Political Economy that sees the states as the rational actors that foster cooperation driven by the gains from the cooperation.¹⁹ This shows that the nature of the nowadays politics is marked lesser with the role of the military tools and hard power and more with the terms such as international trade, FDI, economic transactions and soft power with the particular important position of the regimes such as WTO for the prosperity and the power of the states. Structure of the world seen throughout the decentralization of the power and the complex transnational interpenetration²⁰ explains well the existence of the global economy and the world market after the end of the Cold war.

1.1.3 Conclusion

My main aim in this section was to give a deeper theoretical background of the Morgenthau's thought that the “good foreign policy is a rational foreign policy that minimizes risks and maximizes benefits”²¹. Indeed, rationalism sees the action of the states driven by the cost-benefit analysis where their actions are led by the economic logic with the main motivation of securing more gains and power in the processes of transaction with the other entities.

¹⁷ Keohane, *After hegemony*, 83-84.

¹⁸ Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 26.

¹⁹ Ngaire Woods, 'International political economy in the age of globalization,' in *Globalization of the World Politics*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith, 325-347. (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 337.

²⁰ P.G Cerny, 'Plurilateralism: Structural Differentiation and Functional Conflict in the Post-Cold War World Order'. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22, no. 1 (1993): 28.

²¹ Morgenthau, *Politics among nations*, 10.

However, both branches of the rationalist thought neglect the role of the ideational elements such as identities, values and culture that leads us to the second part of the theoretical framework, to the constructivism.

1.2 Constructivism

There is no unique consensus about the nature of the constructivism in the IR as opinions range from seeing constructivism as one of the approaches in the IR until the views of constructivism as a meta-theory. For example, Adler argues that constructivism is a part of the metaphysics, social and IR theory and at the same time research strategy of social science²². However, what is indisputable is that constructivism sees the world as the social construction with the pivotal positions of the interaction and subjective interpretation. Interaction ensures mutual constitutiveness of the identity and the interests of the actors and the intersubjectivity gives the real meaning to the world through cognitive process because the material world does not have its full meaning before the ideational input from the actors.

Indeed, constructivism is a success story²³ that has been developed largely as the opposition towards the mainstream neo-neo synthesis and its materialism. Basic tenets of the constructivism are parts of the sociological turn in the IR as they emphasize the importance of the norms, values and identities in the construction of the social world. Constructivism challenges all the basic foundations of the neorealism on the whole range of issues as it questions its positivism, fixity of the states identities and interests. In order to see the added values of the constructivism I will elaborate the main elements of the constructivism to develop the conceptual network for the analysis of the Russian foreign policy and its military intervention in Georgia. In addition, one part within the analysis of the constructivism will be linked to the security studies as some of their concepts will be used in the following part of the thesis.

²² Emanuel Adler, 'Constructivism and International Relations,' in *Handbook of international relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 96.

²³ Stefano Guzzini, 'A reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations,' *European Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 2 (2000): 147.

1.2.1 Basic tenets of constructivism. Role of the ideas and intersubjectivity

Adler claims that the “international reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world”²⁴ that confirms Checkel's opinion that “material structures are given meaning only by the social context throughout which they are interpreted”²⁵. Thus, the normative and epistemic structures are the cornerstones of the theory as they analyze how the world is constructed and where the foundations of the world interpretations and collective meanings are rooted.

Contrarily to this point the rationalist view neglects the values of the ideas as they see them in an instrumentalist sense that justifies the prevailing material order. In this sense, ideas do not have autonomy as they are seen merely as the derivative concepts of the exogenously given reality and identity. Constructivism does not deny the importance of the objective world, the existence of the power and material interests but it emphasizes that the real perspective of the world is possible only when these elements are blended with the ideational aspects and reflexivity of the cognitive structures. Furthermore, ideas have far reaching impact on the entire structure of the social life because they “are not so much mental as symbolic and organizational; they are embedded not only in human brains but also in the collective memories, government procedures, educational system and the rhetoric of statecraft”²⁶.

However, the constitutive impacts of the ideas imply the active role of the actors that contribute to the construction of the order with their intersubjective understandings of the ideas, values and meanings. The actors do not exist independently from their cultural *milieu* from which they inherit particular normative and ideological heritage that enables their active transformation from “individuals into agents”²⁷, that constructs new social reality and stresses the values of the endogenously defined concepts. For instance, even the military strategy cannot be acknowledged only on the basis of the material objectivity, that Adler points well by saying that the intersubjective understandings based on the experience, expectations and epistemic criteria also have to be taken into consideration²⁸. This clearly shows the

²⁴ Emmanuel Adler, ‘Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics,’ *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 319.

²⁵ Jeffrey T. Checkel, ‘The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory,’ *World Politics* 50, no. 2, (1998): 326.

²⁶ Legro J, *Rethinking the World: Great Power strategies and International Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 310.

²⁷ Adler, ‘Constructivism and International Relations’, 100.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 346.

fundamental values of the endogenous perceptions and processes even in the case of the IR concepts that have used to be seen as part of the pure neorealist domain.

In addition, one of the important terms closely related with the intersubjectivity is the theory of the cognitive learning. It implies the creation of the new political reality by the policy makers and its implementation in the political system²⁹, that stresses the impact of the ideas on the material reality that can fundamentally change the material structure and world politics such as Gorbachov's "New Thinking" that has led to the end of the Cold War. This debate leads us to the second important element of the constructivism in the IR that deals with the relations between the agency and structure.

1.2.2 Agent-structure debate and the nature of the international system

Wendt's point that: „500 British Nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are friends”³⁰, describes well the nature of the international system that Wendt famously conceptualized arguing that anarchy is what state make of it. Indeed, contrarily to the neorealist assumptions, constructivism claims that the agencies and the states mutually constitute each other where the structure has impacts on the interests and the identities of the agencies or states while *vice-versa* states also shape the nature and the content of the structure. The crucial thing that enables this is the nature of their relations that is seen as changeable due to the interpretations. Furthermore, even more important thing is that the mere interaction, according to Hurd can change the whole epistemic and social network and give the new meanings to the norms of sovereignty, threat and interests that have feed-backs on defining and socializing states³¹.

Furthermore, since material capabilities “as such explain nothing”³², the whole realist paradigm has been deeply flawed because material capabilities are not a guarantee of the political decisions and the development in the foreign affairs. Rather, social meanings, values and ideational concepts attached to the “objective world” define the real outcome of the decision-making. This is where constructivism with its emphasis on the change that is brought by the interaction opens the new scope of analysis over the dominant rational-choice view that favors fixed interests and identities.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 339.

³⁰ Alexander Wendt, 'Constructing International Politics,' *International Security* 20, (1995): 71-81.

³¹ Ian Hurd, 'Constructivism,' in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smith and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 303-304.

³² Wendt, 'Constructing International Politics', 73.

After the second theoretical element, next pillar of the constructivism theory deals with the norms, identity and the importance of the language in constructivism. This has implication by linking the constructivism with the sociological institutionalism and the security studies.

1.2.3 Importance of norms, identity and the language and their linkage with the security studies

Katzenstein defines norm as the “collective expectations for the behavior...of actors with a given identity [and he defines] identity as the shorthand label for varying constructions of nation and statehood”³³. He defines the function of the norms similar as Kratochwil defines the functions of the rules, because Katzenstein claims that norms both define the identity of the actors and regulate their behavior¹³ that is similar to Kratochwil's arguing that regulative rules regulate already given actions but at the same time they can also play the constitutive role by enabling the mere possibility for these actions³⁴. For instance, rules that intend to prevent the spreading of the WMD disable proliferation activities but at the same they define the concept and the meaning of the WMD also. Thus, it is important to realize the cultural and the social origins of the concepts, norms and rules and deny their perception as the naturally given or determined entities. Contrarily, is it important to see the constructed meanings of the practices and objects and their linkages with the cognitive structures with whom they are being conceptualized.

This approach has far reaching effects on the wide area of the concepts and terms such are sovereignty, institutions and power. For instance, according to Adler constructivism questions the key elements of the state sovereignty such are territory and national identity by claiming that their meanings are not permanent due to the different practices³⁵, and the similar argument can be used in the consideration of the institutions as well. They can be understood as the networks of the constitutive and regulative norms such are the beliefs about the moral purpose of the state that help constituting some societies³⁶, as institutions clearly include shared meanings and not only physical objects. This line of the argumentation is similar to the

³³ Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security : Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1996), 5-6.

¹³ Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 5.

³⁴ Micheal Barnett, *Constructivism in Globalization of the World Politics*, ed., John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 255.

³⁵ Adler, 'Constructivism and International Relations', 104.

³⁶ Ibid.

position of the sociological institutionalism that defines institutions by including symbolic systems, cognitive and moral templates that together guide human action³⁷. In other words, sociological turn in the IR stresses the importance of the identity and cognitive structures on the outcomes, restates the importance of the interpretation and invokes cultural aspects into the analysis. Thus, institutions are not only lead by the criteria of efficiency and strategic calculus of the actors as elements from the cultural *milieu* fundamentally constitute their contents. Process of the construction of the norms is according to Katzenstein essentially communicative process and can take the form of the social practice or political strategy³⁸. This emphasizes the fundamental position of the language in the construction of the interests and the security agenda that leads us to the security studies terms: speech-act and securitization.

Mentioned terms are part of the Copenhagen School³⁹ that is constructivist in approach as defines the security agenda and the security threats to be subjectively constructed terms. The pivotal role is played by the securitizing actors that manage to convince a public with the usage of the language of security or “speech act” on the presence of the existential threat. Copenhagen School holds the survival logic and analyzes how particular issues become transferred from the political into the security agenda. Indeed, that seems to confirm the crucial position of the language that is described by Adler “as vehicle for the diffusion and institutionalization of the ideas...and a mechanism for the construction of the social reality.”⁴⁰ The essential role of the language is seen on the example of the discursive practices and the analysis of the normative interpretations as well. In addition, language and identity it helps to define is connected with the definition of the national interests as often, the formation of the identity and the construction of the “we” feeling precedes the formation of the state interests and the national security policies. Interests are intersubjectively and culturally constructed on the basis of the collective understanding and the shared meanings that Katzenstein stresses by saying that “cultural-institutional context of policy...and the constructed identity of the states”⁴¹ determine the national security policy.

The importance of the cultural context leads us to the another term derived from the security studies, the concept of the strategic culture. Allison defines “strategic culture...[as] an ideational milieu [and] and integrated system of symbols which acts to establish

³⁷ Political Science and the Three New Institutionalism p. 947

³⁸ Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 16.

³⁹ Ralf Emmers, ‘Securitization’ in *Contemporary security studies*, ed. Collins and Alan (Oxford University Press, 2006), 109-125.

⁴⁰ Adler, ‘Constructivism and International Relations’, 103.

⁴¹ Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 4.

pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.”⁴² Thus, this concept links the role and the position of the military and security *nomenklatura* with the particular historical roots and the cultural practices stressing the relation between the security and the culture. One of the most prominent scholars on these issues is Michael Williams whose aim to put the relation between the security and the identity in the center of the security analysis is part of the wider approach to restore the relevance of the concept of power and strategy in the constructivism.⁴³ Indeed, he claims the “remarkable prominence of culture in theory and practice of security”⁴⁴, that has effects the construction of the security practices.

1.2.4 Conclusion

Thus, I have elaborated the tenets of the constructivism as its key concept will be later used in the analysis of the Russian intervention in Georgia. However, before starting with the empirical events of the conflict in the August 2008 in the second chapter, I move now to the last part of the theoretical framework that crosscuts the difference between realism and constructivism. The logic of consequentialism and the logic of appropriateness make the link between the wider theoretical positions and the intervention in Georgia, therefore their elaboration is fundamental as their existence is related with the two hypotheses that I will test in the future part of my thesis.

1.3 Logics of appropriateness and consequentialism and the hypotheses

The difference between two logics is in the hearth of the debate between the constructivism and the rational choice theories. Rational choice theories claim that the states interests and the identities are fixed while constructivism stresses the importance of the interpretative and cognitive practices between the material incentives and the outcomes.

⁴² Alistair I. Johnson, ‘Thinking About Strategic Culture,’ *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 46.

⁴³ Michael C. Williams and Michael Charles, *Culture and Security : Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security* (England: Routledge, 2007) , 2-3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

Indeed, constructivism stresses the “social and relational construction of what states are and what they want”.⁴⁵ Thus, constructivism opposes the materialist and the instrumentalist nature of the state that sees state activities as the utility maximizing behavior. This kind of *homo economicus* behavior, driven by the strategic calculus of the interests is embodied by the “logic of consequentialism” that is “realm of rational choice approaches that treat the interests and preferences of actors as mostly fixed during the process of interaction [and] where...agents... try to realize their preferences through strategic behavior”⁴⁶

Opposite to this kind of the behavior that follows the logic of efficiency, the “logic of appropriateness” stresses the importance of the internalization of the norms and the constitutive role of the action for their identities. In other words, actors “seek to define and express their identity”⁴⁷ with their involvement in the particular activities whose importance for them is vast bigger than the pure rational calculus. Risse claims this “rule-guided behavior differs from instrumentally rational behavior [as] actors try to “do the right thing” rather than...optimize their given preferences.”⁴⁸

This difference in the two logics brings me to the elaboration of my two hypotheses that deal with the motivations behind the Russian intervention in Georgia that will be elaborated more precisely in the 3rd chapter of the thesis. The hypotheses are following:

Rationalist hypothesis: *Rational approach would predict that Russia would have limited foreign policy goals in Georgia because of the weak capabilities and the necessity to maintain good relations with the West and the CIS states. It would have been expected that Russia would not bully its neighbor and not react with the disproportionate use of force. Rational school would predict that Russia would be more cautious about maintaining its soft power in the region and try to avoid the major confrontation with the West due to importance of the economic cooperation with the West for its own domestic development.*

Thus, main idea is that the Russia would not intervene in such a manner and it would not recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia if its behavior was driven only by the pure cost-benefit analysis. My position is that the short-term satisfaction and political success are overestimated over the long term negative implications for the Russian power. Negative implications for

⁴⁵ Ian Hurd, 'Constructivism,' in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smith and Duncan Snidal, (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 299.

⁴⁶ Thomas Risse, 'Lets Argue!' Communicative Action in World Politics, *International Organization* 54, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 3.

⁴⁷ Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor 'Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,' *Political Studies* 44, no. 4 (1996): 949.

⁴⁸ Risse, 'Lets Argue!', 4.

Russia are seen in its negative foreign policy image, harmed soft power, possible challenge to the Russian territorial integrity and deteriorated economic relations with the West. Thus, rational approach claims that the Russian disproportional use of force and international recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia challenges the view that the action was driven by the logic of consequentialism that leads us to the second hypothesis.

Constructivist hypothesis: *Russian image of the big power is supported by the logic of appropriateness where despite some obvious long-term damages, Russia acted in a way it did because it was driven by its image of the big power with the exclusive rights in the CIS that overreached the pure cost-benefit analysis.*

To sum up, Russian action was driven by the question of the identity, of the desire to be perceived as the big power and to retain its prestige on the international scene after years of humiliations and the foreign policy failures. Therefore, the Russian reaction was driven not with the question about the consequence of the action for the Russian power but it was driven by the importance of the action for the Russian image in the international relations, it was driven with the meaning Russia attached to that event and the importance for the Russian identity. Thus, the logic of appropriateness or point “how does the policy affect identity” was the driving force behind the action.

In conclusion, above mentioned hypotheses are connected with the Russian foreign policy in general therefore there will be linked with the overall developments of the Russian foreign policy in the Putin era and with the issues of the Russian sense of greatness and its strategic culture that will be elaborated in the 3rd chapter. After evaluation of the theoretical chapter, I move now to the description of the conflict in Georgia, its origins that lead to the Russian intervention in August 2008 and the *post-festum* of the whole event with its implications.

Chapter 2: Political situation in Georgia from the end of the Cold war until the war in 2008 and its aftermath

In this chapter I will elaborate the historical development of the relations between the central government in Tbilisi and the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. This historical overview is necessary as it leads to the better understanding of the war in August 2008 that is closely related with the political change in Georgia as Micheal Saakashvilli became Georgian president. His main political agenda was restoring the constitutional order in the rebellious regions that set path to change the structural nature of the frozen conflict with the usage of the military solution. Fourth part of the chapter deals with the aftermath of the war that is marked by the international recognition of the regions from Moscow. This labels the change of the paradigm in the post-Soviet space as for the first time the sovereignty of one internationally recognized state has been violently harmed causing the change of the status-quo and the establishment of the precedent that can have serious implication in the CIS region.

2.1 Heritage of the Soviet Union and the Wars during the 1990's

Georgia enjoyed brief period of independence between the May 1918 and the 1921 before the Bolsheviks came and occupied the Caucasus region. During the Soviet period Georgia enjoyed the status of the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic⁴⁹ that was a political and legal basis for the declaration of the independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, conflict in August 2008 is closely related with the late period of the Soviet Union, when Autonomous Districts in Georgia; South Ossetia and Abkhazia expressed their wishes for the self-determination of their own nations and independence from the central government in Tbilisi.

The Ossetians are descendants of the Iranian-speaking people that were forced to move from their original homeland in the river of Don in Russia after the Mongol invasion to the Caucasus.⁵⁰ Their territorial unity was divided as the Northern part became the component

⁴⁹ Arthur Bonner, "Georgian Losses and Russia's Gain," *Middle East Policy* 15, no. 4 (2008): 82, available on *Academic Search Complete* (accessed May, 2009).

⁵⁰ Alec Rasizade, "Russian Irredentism after the Georgian Blitzkrieg," *Contemporary Review* 291, no. 1692 (2009): 12, available on *Academic Search Complete* (accessed May 2009).

of the Russian Federation and the Southern became part of Georgia, the process being followed with the mutual hostility and ethnic tensions during the Civil war between the 1917 and the 1920's. However, once the Soviet Union established its power, the ethnic tensions and the national questions remained low profiled until the deterioration of its strength and cohesiveness in the late 1980's that opened the Pandora's box of identity politics and national-ethnics affiliations across the former Soviet Union.

The tensions in started in the 1989. Communist authorities were concerned about the rising nationalist tensions in the Georgia and in order to reduce the possibility of Georgian independence they used the position of the South Ossetia. The authorities wanted to upgrade the Ossetian status from the autonomous region to autonomous republic in 1989 and a year later South Ossetia boycotted the first independent Georgian elections and organized its own separate bailout.⁵¹ These secessionist moves from the Ossetian side were followed by the nationalist respond from the Georgian side. Ossetian decision to declare its status as the republic in 1989 was followed by the march of thousands of Georgians into Tschinvali causing the first casualties.⁵² The election of the Georgian nationalist Zviad Gamsakhurdia as Georgia's first independent leader in 1990 caused further deterioration of the ethnic relations because he adopted nationalist policy seeking the ethnic exclusiveness of the Georgian nation⁵³ that has sparked additional mistrust and raised tensions. South Ossetia declared its independence in December 1990⁵⁴ that was immediately denied by the Georgian Supreme Court⁵⁵, which further opened the space for the upcoming intervention of the central government. Government imposed a blockade of the region that was soon transferred into the full scale war that lasted between the January 1991 and June 1992. Six thousand Georgian troops entered Tschinvali in January 1991 causing the destruction and the killings⁵⁶ as by some estimations Georgian troops killed 2,000 civilians.⁵⁷ However, Georgian army was soon defeated by the local fighters, irregulars from the Russian Federation and the ex-Soviet

⁵¹ Krzysztof Strachota and Bartuzi Wojciech, "Reintegration or Reconquest? Georgia's policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the Context of the Internal and International Situation," *Reintegracja czy rekonkwista?* Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, (2008): 50.

⁵² Sergei Markedonov, "Regional Conflicts Reloaded. The Five-Day War Through the Prism of Post-Soviet Politics," in *Russia in Global Affairs* 6, no. 4 (October-December, 2008) Moscow: Foreign Policy Research Foundation (2008): 163.

⁵³ Rasizade, "Russian Irredentism", 12.

⁵⁴ Strachota and Wojciech, "Reintegration or Reconquest?", 49.

⁵⁵ Markedonov, "Regional Conflicts Reloaded", 163.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ Rasizade, "Russian Irredentism", 12.

soldiers who were stuck in the middle of the conflict.⁵⁸ The consequences of the war were thousands of refugees that fled from the South into the Northern Ossetia, internal displacement of many Georgians from the South Ossetia to the regions under government controlled areas and the self-proclaimed independence of the South Ossetia on 29 May 1992.⁵⁹

The end of the war was secured by the peace process and the signature of the Dagomys (Sochi) accords on 25 June 1992 that set up Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPF) composed of Georgian, Ossetian and Russian elements and the quadrilateral Joint Control Commission (JCC) consisted beside Russian and Georgian troops with the representatives of the both parts of Ossetia.⁶⁰

These peacekeeping operations started to cooperate closely with the OSCE mission in the prevention of the conflict and despite the fact that the official negotiations to solve the conflict were opened in 1997, that desirable outcome has never been accomplished.⁶¹

The military failure of government in Tbilisi was repeated a year later in 1993 when they unsuccessfully wanted to prevent the Abkhazia repeating the scenario of South Ossetia. Georgian-Abkhaz war between 1992 and 1993 is closely related with the first Georgian president Zviad Gamsakhurdia and its political downfall that was one of the major reasons of the emerging conflict between the central government and the other region. Tensions between the central government and the Abkhaz minority developed in a similar manner as in the case of South Ossetia. Already in 1988 Abkhazia declared its wish to become the autonomous republic within the Soviet Union that was officially followed with the declaration in 1990.⁶² However, in the meantime there were ethnic tensions and casualties between the Abkhaz minority and the Georgian majority but because of the wise politics of the Gamsakhurdia and the unofficial negotiations between the two sides⁶³, the deterioration of the ethnic relations and the starting the full scale war was escaped.

However, military coup in the January 1992 changed the political leadership in Georgia as Shevardnadze took the office. At that time the Ossetian-Georgian war was still going on, so now after the change of the political leadership, Abkhazia decided to cut all the ties with the Georgia. Abkhazia rejected the Georgian constitution in favor of the pre-1931

⁵⁸ Charles King, "The Five-Day War," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (2008): 4.

⁵⁹ Strachota and Wojciech, "Reintegration or Reconquest?", 49.

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

⁶¹ Ibidem.

⁶² Ibid., 50.

⁶³ Ibidem.

constitution of the Abkhaz republic⁶⁴ that immediately caused the Georgian military intervention that was on the beginning very successful for central government in Tbilisi. However, this was just the beginning of the war that lasted the whole year, until the September of 1993 where the Georgian army was defeated and the Georgians almost totally ethnically cleansed. In both cases, Tbilisi lost control over the two regions that have started to function as the quasi-states with their own government and administrative facilities, economic and educational systems. The role of the Russia in these developments was crucial as Russian military supported the secessionist movements and enabled them diplomatic and political support that confirmed *de facto* independence of two regions with at the same time granting Russian citizenship to many of their inhabitants.⁶⁵ After period of escalation of the violence, state entered the relative peace period until the Rose Revolution and the change of the political leadership in Tbilisi.

2.2 Importance of the Rose Revolution on the development of the conflict

Change of the political leadership in Tbilisi marked the beginning of the new era in the Georgian internal political development. Mikhail Saakashvili became a president promising to restore full Georgian territorial integrity and to include Georgia into the Western political associations. The proactive activities of the Georgian government included internalization of the frozen conflicts, constructive policies towards the regions in order to show that government in Tbilisi is reliable partner and development of the parallel political structures as tools of undermining the monopoly of the temporary separatist political powers.⁶⁶ One of the important Georgian incentives was building a strong military on the basis of the cooperation with the United States as Georgia was part of the US Train and Equip programme.⁶⁷ The outcome of this programme was considerably upgrading of the Georgian military capabilities seen in the expenditures for the modern equipment and the building of the modern military facilities.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁵ King, "The Five-Day War", 5.

⁶⁶ Strachota and Wojciech, "Reintegration or Reconquest?", 59-60.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 80.

During that period Russia forced close cooperation with the both regions that was seen in the Georgian eyes as nothing more than the activity to absorb the two regions into the Russian territory.⁶⁹ According to Roy Allison, Russia was giving citizenships to the large numbers of the South Ossetians with the active incorporation of the Russian military services into the structures of the Ossetian authorities,⁷⁰ which means that Russia was behaving with the intention to subjugate two regions. In the other words, Russia was strongly against more independent and stronger role of Georgia in the peace process and it was against any Georgian military solution to the frozen conflict. The clash of the two political powers and the options was inevitable. Deterioration of the relations started with the stronger Georgian emphasis for the full NATO membership that was constantly opposed from the Russian side as the “red line” Russia will not allow to be crossed after series of foreign policy failures such were enlargement of the NATO, US intervention in Iraq and international recognition of the Kosovo.

On the other side, Saakashvilli's success in the spring 2004 when he managed to restore the constitutional order in Adjara, another region where Georgia lacked territorial control, empowered him with the political capital and assertiveness to restore the constitutional order in entire Georgia. This has led to the deterioration of the relations between the central government and Russia. The first crisis emerged during the 2006 when Tbilisi arrested four Russian military officers for the espionage after which Russia blocked all communication links with Georgia and put its military on the highest level of readiness to start the war.⁷¹ As the consequence of the deterioration of the relations, Putin has changed the policy towards the regions and started supporting them more openly.⁷² Moscow saw the Georgian attitude too aggressive as Tbilisi started to pursue military assertiveness towards the regions. Therefore, Moscow decided to strengthen ties with South Ossetia and Abkhazia. For example, Russian presidential decree in April 2008 established direct official relations between the Moscow and the authorities of the two regions⁷³, while still keeping the visa regime on the border with Georgia all the time.

The security situation along the border has never been pacified totally with sporadic fighting and casualties on the both sides, but situation deteriorated significantly in the summer

⁶⁹ Roy Allison, “Russia Resurgent? Moscow’s Campaign to Coerce Georgia to Peace,” *International Affairs* 84, no. 6, (2008): 1147.

⁷⁰ Allison, “Russia Resurgent?”, 1147.

⁷¹ Ibidem.

⁷² Tsygankov P. Andrei P, “If Not by Tanks, then by Banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin’s Foreign Policy,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 7 (November, 2006): 1094, available on *Academic Search Complete* (accessed May, 2009).

⁷³ Allison, “Russia Resurgent?”, 1147.

of 2008. July and August witnessed intensification of the shelling of the Georgian positions from the Ossetian militias and the strengthening of the military forces on the both sides⁷⁴ that was a prelude of the war that emerged in the same month.

2.3 War in August 2008

War in Ossetia started August 7 with the Georgian artillery attacks on the town Tskhinvali. According to Ivan Kotlyarov, Saakashvili launched this operation because his popularity started to decline and because of the successful solution of the crisis in Adjara in 2004.⁷⁵ This success in cracking down the separatist forces with the threat of using the military convinced Saakashvili in the necessity of using the force to solve the political standstill. Saakashvili's political decision was to eliminate the government in Tskhinvali and to restore the constitutional order. Georgian military strategy combined heavy artillery with the enhancement of the ground troops whose initial task was to eliminate the security and military apparatus of the South Ossetia after which central government should establish full control of the region.⁷⁶ Indeed, Saakashvili could expect easy victory due to the difference in the military capabilities between South Ossetia and the Georgian army and because of the configuration of the military theater with Tskhinvali being surrounded by the Georgian forces.⁷⁷ Georgian army made a successful first part of the campaign by capturing the Tskhinvali on August 8. However, as a part of this action Georgian army used heavy artillery in attacking civilian objects in Tbilisi with the unselective use of force that caused death of the civilians and Russian peacekeepers. According to the sources "Georgian artillery rounds and rockets were falling throughout the city at intervals of 15 to 20 seconds between explosions, and within the first hour of the bombardment at least 48 rounds landed in a civilian area."⁷⁸ Mr. Ryan Gist was a OSCE senior representative then in Georgia and he said that „the attack was completely indiscriminate and disproportionate to any, if indeed there had been any, provocation...it was clearly, in my mind, an indiscriminate attack on the town, as a

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

⁷⁵ Ivan Kotlyarov, "The Logic of South Ossetia. The Russian Peacekeeping Operation: Interim Results," in *Russia in Global Affairs* vol, no. (2008): 132.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 133.

⁷⁷ Ibidem.

⁷⁸ Chivers, C. J ed. al., "Accounts Undercut Claims by Georgia on Russia War," *New York Times* vol, no. (2008): 1, available at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9805E5DF1130F934A35752C1A96E9C8B63>

town.”⁷⁹ In addition, Russian Ministry of Defense reported that ten peacekeepers were killed and thirty more injured in the heavy shelling of the camp and the headquarters of peacekeeping forces.⁸⁰

The beginning of the war is a question of controversies because although it was obvious that Georgian side struck first, others claim Georgian reaction was natural after days of Ossetian provocations and that basically Georgia felt into the Russian trap. According to some analysis, Putin’s April 16 decree that closely tied regions with Moscow, military upgrading of the troops in Abkhazia before the start of the war and the rebuilding of the railway by the Russian forces to Ochamchire, town in Abkhazia that later facilitated deployment of troops from Russia into Georgia,⁸¹ are all reasons to believe that Russia planned its action in advance. According to Georgian sources, Tbilisi was forced to undertake the military operation because Ossetian side has rejected all the peace offers from the Georgian side and continued with the shelling of Georgian villages in the conflict zone.⁸² Soon after the start of the Georgian military campaign, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev held an emergency meeting with permanent members of the Security Council on the situation in South Ossetia proclaiming:

„In accordance with the Constitution and the federal laws, as President of the Russian Federation it is my duty to protect the lives and dignity of Russian citizens wherever they may be. It is these circumstances that dictate the steps we will take now. We will not allow the deaths of our fellow citizens to go unpunished. The perpetrators will receive the punishment they deserve.”⁸³

Thus, reasons for the Russian intervention were twofold: to defend its citizens in Ossetia as lots of the Ossetians have Russian citizenship and to defend the security of its peacekeepers who have been settled there since the end of the conflict in 1992. Russia reacted in a full scale manner with the combination of the both ground, air and the naval troops. Columns of tanks and vehicles passed from Russia into Georgia throughout the Roki tunnel that is the vital link between the South Ossetia and Russia. Russian troops soon recaptured Tskhinvali and

⁷⁹ Chivers, C. J ed. al., “Accounts Undercut Claims”, page.

⁸⁰ “Russian Defense Ministry Said on Shooting Russian Peacekeepers.” 8.08.2008, available at: <http://lenta.ru/news/2008/08/08/peacekeepers/> (accessed May 2009).

⁸¹ Svante E.Cornell, Johanna Popjanevski, and Niklas Nilsson, “Russia’s War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and the World,” Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program – A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center, Johns Hopkins University (August 2008): 23.

⁸² “Georgia decided to restore constitutional order in S.Ossetia’ – MoD official”, *Civil Georgia*, August 8, 2008, available at: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18941> (accessed May 2009).

⁸³ According to <http://www.mil.ru/eng/1866/12078/details/index.shtml?id=49382> (accessed May, 2009).

defeated Georgian troops but what was particularly astonishing was the scope of the Russian response, the level of deployment of its forces and the efficiency that Russian army showed. Russia engaged 300 combat aircraft, its Black Sea fleet blocked Georgian coast and at the same time Russian troops were rapidly moving across the Georgia outside of the areas previously patrolled by the Russian peacekeeping units.⁸⁴ Russian army captured towns Gori, Zugdidi and Georgian military base at Senaki, seized port Poti⁸⁵ while at the same time attacking military and infrastructural targets in entire Georgia. Activation of the Abkhazian front was part of the strategy that enabled the Abkhazian forces to seize the Kodori valley, the only remaining part of the Abkhazia until then controlled by the governmental forces. This kind of rapid and coordinated deployment shortly after the start of the Georgian intervention would not be possible „without meticulous and long planning [process], especially the landing of several thousand troops and armor by sea in Abkhazia”,⁸⁶ that proves opinions that the action was planned long before. Commentators praised the Russian military effectiveness. Felix Chang claims that the airlifting of the airborne divisions from Russia to Tschinvali, that later helped recapturing the town, was a demonstration of the long-range airlift capability and the quality of the Russian military command and staff that is considerably different from the 1990s.⁸⁷ Moreover, the action demonstrated Russian renewed military ability to prosecute a relatively complex, high-intensity combined arms operation.⁸⁸ What is here problematic is the nature of the Russian military answer that was seen by many as the pure vendetta for the overall Georgian foreign policy orientation since the Rose Revolution. Capturing nearly all major towns, bombarding civilian objects, destroying defense and military potential and coming with the tanks just couple of miles from the capital of one internationally recognized state is seen by many as a punishment, not only as an action of coercing to peace. When we add that this state is the close partner of the United States and the NATO applicant, then the picture becomes even gloomier about the nature of the intervention and why it provoked such a kind of reaction.

War ended on the August 12 with the ceasefire and later signature of the six-points plan whose aim was to cease hostilities, provide humanitarian help and secure the retreat of the both Russian and Georgian forces on the positions before the start of the war with opening

⁸⁴ Allison, “Russia Resurgent?”, 1157.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1158.

⁸⁶ Cornell, Popjanevski, and Nilsson, “Russia’s War in Georgia”, 24.

⁸⁷ Felix Chong, “Russia Resurgent: An Initial Look at Russian Military Performance in Georgia,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, E-notes (August, 2008) available at:

<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200808.chang.russiaresurgentgeorgia.html>.

⁸⁸ Ibidem.

the international discussion about the stabilization of the regions.⁸⁹ This leads us to the last part of the chapter that deals with the conflict's aftermath and its implications.

2.4 *Post-festum of the war*

If the Russian military campaign was unsurprisingly act, then Russian international recognition of the two regions on August 26 was followed by the deep sense of bitterness and disappointment both from the West and from the government in Tbilisi. Moscow recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as the internationally independent states claiming that unjustifiable cruelty of the central government towards the regions made the further existence of the territories under the rule of Tbilisi impossible.⁹⁰ Russia drew a parallel interpretation of the international law with Kosovo precedent because if Kosovo deserves independence because its citizens were victims of the Serbian politics, then the same has to be valid the two Georgian regions. Furthermore, that move together with the military action that preceded the recognition has much wider implications.

For the first time after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow acted military in one foreign state and changed the international political and legal order that was heavily criticized from some authors as the act equal to the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1938.⁹¹ Thus, the significance of Russian military operation in Georgia “first instance since the breakup of the Soviet Union where Russia used force at its own initiative to defend its rights outside its territory”⁹² is different from the military intervention of the 14th Army under General Lebed in Moldova and the march of its forces into Pristina airport in 1999.⁹³ The usage of the military was here much more than just a part of the image as in the case of Russian capture of the Pristina airport. Of course, the image was important part but the hard force was used for the particularly political goals in a sophisticated and well organized manner. In addition, comparing with some similar cases where Russian military capabilities were used, this action was not developed from the bottom-up point with the active role of the military

⁸⁹ “Russia vs Georgia: the Fallout,” International Crisis Group, Europe Report no. 195, (August, 2008): 4.

⁹⁰ Kotlyarov, Ivan. 2008, p. 140.

⁹¹ Kagan, Robert. “Putin Makes His Move.” *Washington Post*, August 11, 2008, available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/10/AR2008081001871.html>

⁹² Kotlyarov, “The Logic of South Ossetia,” 131.

⁹³ Ibidem.

commanders on the field. The usage of the force was clearly led from the top of the political hierarchy during the whole time of the crisis

Further implications of that tectonic shift in the post-Soviet era is that Russia proclaimed a precedent for the possible similar move in the future, taking into consideration large number of the Russian minorities in the region. Special issue is the question of Ukraine, and the future of the Russian Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol, the basis which Russia can use until the 2017. If we analyze Russian move in the context of the Bucharest summit in April 2008 when Russia prevented the Georgian and Ukrainian accession to the NATO's Membership Action Plan, then we may assume that Russia will do everything it can do prevent their accession into the Western political associations and it is ready to use the hard power to prevent this development. Furthermore, Russian accession of the regions could have negative implications for the regional stability and security as it is clearly that Russia interpreted international law in its own particular way.

2.5 Conclusion

However, the question remains, what exactly lies behind the Russian intervention and was the action really a pure political and military victory for Russia or has it had some negative consequences as well? It is obvious that Moscow crossed the Rubicon with the usage of the military force. However, question remains why Russia did this because with this move Moscow showed inconsistency in the overall foreign policy behavior during the Putin's era. His era was marked with the strengthening of the cooperation and regional ties with the primary role reserved for the soft power and economic cooperation. This kind of foreign policy behavior should have excluded any kind of the military confrontation and the disproportional use of force, both elements that were used in the Russian intervention in Georgia. Thus, in the next chapter I will elaborate my two hypotheses about the motives that lie behind the action driven by the two separate logics, by the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequentialism. Indeed, my main point is to analyze the reasons why Russia reacted in a way it did risking wider regional instability and insecurity with the dangerous precedent it has introduced and jeopardizing its ties with the West that is so necessary for the Russian economic development.

Chapter 3: Elaboration of the hypothesis: Constructivism and Rational Union

Russian action in Georgia represents the most important event in the space of the former Soviet Union as Moscow „sent a signal that it [does] not find [its] post-Soviet foreign policy paradigm acceptable any longer.”⁹⁴ This event will be analyzed from the position of the two hypothesis that offer two different conceptualizations and accounts of the event.

3.1 Hypotheses of the Rationalist Union

If Russian action was driven by the pure cost-benefit analysis, then Russia would not risk its international status, relations in the region and its own internal integrity. The action in Georgia, even if Moscow decided to use the force again, could also be done without disproportional usage of force that Russia used in “coercing Georgia to peace” and definitely without the international recognition of the two regions. Rational approach argues that Russian long term interests must have priority over the short time warfare games. Rational Union approach suggests that securing Russian national interests and gaining power is much more efficient by using the economic instruments than by relying on the hard power that is counterproductive on the long run.

3.1.1 Economic and Political consequences of the campaign for the Russia

Financial consequences of Russian action in Georgia were very negative. Action was followed by the 6.5 % fall in the Russian stock market, with the crash of the currency and outflow of foreign capital that dropped country's foreign currency reserves by \$16.4 billion.⁹⁵ Andreas Aslund heavily criticized Russian president Putin claiming that with the war he made the greatest strategic blunder as he isolated Russia from the outside world and caused a

⁹⁴ Lukin, Alexander. *From a Post-Soviet to a Russian Foreign Policy. Lessons from the Conflict with Georgia*, p. 58.

⁹⁵ “Russia’s Stock Market Fall: It’s All About Oil,” September 16, 2008.

disappearance of half a trillion dollars of stock market value.⁹⁶ Indeed, Russian economic plans of becoming the fifth world economy until the 2020 imply close cooperation with the West that is seen fundamental in securing the needed foreign investment and the transfer of technology. However, desirable economic growth also understands minimum political risks, stable and business friendly environment in order to secure predictability and favorable conditions for the economic rise. Other comments share the opinions about the devastating impacts of the war on the economic situation. Lars Christensen, chief analyst at Danske Bank said that the flight of the investors money, which is estimated \$21 billion according to Goldman Sachs report in the aftermath of the campaign,⁹⁷ and the depreciation of the ruble „is almost entirely driven by rising geopolitical tensions and investors taking off the bet on the Russian economy”⁹⁸. It is obvious that the confrontational attitude has had negative impacts on the entire economic situation especially if the take into consideration the importance of the FDI for the Russian economic development. In the 2007 Russia attracted \$52.5 billion that puts her on the peak of the BRIC countries measured on a per capital basis due to the larger population in India and China.⁹⁹

„Russia needs smooth working relations with the West that would facilitate its economic progress and attaining a prominent place in world politics”,¹⁰⁰ and this has been one of the major hallmarks of the Putin's foreign policy as the adopted pragmatist foreign policy. He intelligently seized the middle ground between the interests of the business elite and security services balancing between the two different foreign policy *Weltanschauungen*. However, it seems that with this kind of reaction, Putin moved towards the interests of the *siloviki* without thinking about the wider reaction and consequences. Not only the financial interests of the Russia were threatened but the political image of the Russia has been deeply damaged. Many saw the action similar to the Soviet intervention in Hungary 1956 and in Prague in 1968. Indeed, for the first time after the invasion of the Afghanistan in 1979, Moscow used the hard power outside its own borders. West reacted with harsh measures

⁹⁶ Aslund, Anders. “10 Reasons Why the Russian Economy Will Falter”, *Moscow Times*, September 3, 2008, available at: <http://www.iie.com/publications/opeds/oped.cfm?ResearchID=997> (accessed May 2009).

⁹⁷ Ignatius, David. “Caution Over Confrontation.” *Washington Post*, September 10, 2008, p. A15, available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/08/AR2008090802294.html?nav=emailpage> (accessed May 2009).

⁹⁸ Lesova, Polya, *MarketWatch*, available at: <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/russia-sees-massive-capital-outflow-on-war-with-georgia> (accessed May 2009).

⁹⁹ Gumbel, Peter. “Risky Business in Russia.” *New York Times*, August 21, 2008, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/13/opinion/13iht-edcharap.1.16905462.html?_r=1 (accessed May 2009).

¹⁰⁰ Lukin, Alexander. p. 63.

towards Russia. The action was followed with the suspension of the talks between Russia and the EU about the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that expired 2007. Furthermore, the possibility of the Russian entrance to the WTO has been further postponed, because even before in order to become a full member, Moscow needed Georgian approval that was missing due to the deteriorated political ties between them. In addition, there was an initiative to kick Russia out from the G8 while presidential candidate John McCain mentioned the establishing of the alternative to the UN or the League of Democracies where Russia would not have its place. All these measures can be seen as the reaction to the Russia that has lost its image as the reliable and the peaceful member of the international community.¹⁰¹ Sergei Dubinin confirmed that the Russian military campaign reaction worsened the economic situation making it now even more uncertain and risky.¹⁰² He pledges for the greater investment in Russian economy in order to secure its economic competitiveness on the international markets. For example, he is more concerned about the scientific competition with the Chinese companies that have started to be serious rivals in the field of the arms industry or about the insufficient quality of the Russian planes that had to be returned from Algeria¹⁰³ than about the demonstration of the political power. Thus, this kind of economic or pragmatist thinking sees the Russian action as not driven by the logic of consequentialism based on the cost-benefit analysis because it is obvious, that in long term thinking, Russian position in the international community has been deeply damaged. According to this kind of thinking, Russian integration in the world economy as the reliable partner and competitiveness of its industry are more important than the adventures in the foreign policy. Thus, all this variables are dependent on the stable and predictable political environment. The same kind of reluctance towards the confrontational attitude with the West was stressed well in the Kozyrev's words about Russia in the early 1990's because: "to be a great power is not only unrealistic but dangerous, since it fuels aggressive nationalism and confrontational feelings in the world".¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Nichol, Jim. "CRS Report for Congress: Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for US Interests," p. 14.

¹⁰² Dubinin, Sergei. "A New Entente. From 'Guaranteed Destruction to a Full-Fledged Union.'" *Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 4, October-December 2008, p. 25, available at: <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/25/1235.html> (accessed May 2009).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁴ Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europea. Study in Identity and International Relations*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 184.

When took the office Medvede promised that one of his priorities would be respect for the rule of law and international norms,¹⁰⁵ but with this kind of behavior, Russia has showed the opposite type of behavior and risked ostracism in the international affairs. In addition, beside political and economic relations with the West that were harmed as the outcome of the crisis, Russian recognition of North Ossetia and Abkhazia deteriorated Russian position in the CIS region as Moscow did not find support from the regional actors and it has harmed its soft power potential. States in the region have their own problems with secessionism and are reluctant to the stronger Russian position, so they have not supported the action. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan remained silent despite the Russian assistance to the Karimov during the Andijan events in the May 2005 and despite Russian help to secure territorial integrity of the Tajikistan between 1992 and 1997.¹⁰⁶ Some other regional players such are Turkey, Iran and China also have problems with secessionism; therefore they have also refused to support Russian action. Ukrainian president Yushenko strongly criticized the Russian action and the appeared on the summit of support for the Georgia where the leaders of the East European states were represented. They have all expressed the strong opposition towards the Russian action which they have seen it as the emanation of the new Russian imperialism. Furthermore, on 14 August, Poland and the U.S. signed a deal on the establishment of an anti-missile base in Poland that was justified from the Polish side as the consequence of the new international situation and Ukraine offered to make its missile early warning systems available to European nations following Russia's conflict with Georgia.¹⁰⁷ So, not only Russia deteriorated relations with the CIS states, but is also boosted negative image and perception about itself in the „old” Europe that was not even before so bright. On the other hand, although Russian action did make considerable damage to the Georgian military potential, government in Tbilisi has received full political support from the West that has been followed by the financial assistance from the international organizations. In addition, NATO established NATO-Georgia Commission and in the May 2009 NATO organized the military exercises in Georgia, so not only Russia did not disable Georgian cooperation with the NATO but it has fostered an even stronger tie that was not something Russia expected.

Finally, the Russian act of the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia was deeply inconsistent with the previous Russian policy, especially if we take into consideration Russian military action in Chechnya where Russia twice eliminated desire for the self determination in

¹⁰⁵ Horsley, William. “Russia’s Propaganda Warfare,” August 29, 2008, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7586662.stm> (accessed May 2009).

¹⁰⁶ Markedonov, Sergei. 2008, p. 173.

¹⁰⁷ “Russia vs Georgia: the Fallout.” International Crisis Group, Europe Report No. 195, August 22, 2008, p. 18.

order to keep its territorial integrity. However, now it has adopted totally different type of behavior that can have far negative consequences for the Russian territorial integrity itself because there are regions in Russia such is Tatarstan for example that might have big rebellious potential and that might question Russian sovereignty on the basis of the principle of self-determination, the principle that Russia supported in the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

3.1.2 Hypotheses of the Rationalist Union: Conclusion

Thus, contrary from Keohane's logic that: "to pursue self-interest does not require maximizing freedom of action"¹⁰⁸ and Grieco's remarks that state can foster cooperation and still secure national interests, it seems that the Russia with its action in Georgia seriously jeopardized its national interests and the long-term projection of power. This leads us to the fact that Russian reputation as the reliable partner and desire to maintain cooperation was overshadowed by the desire to secure other type of the reputation, reputation of itself as a Great Power. This logic, logic of appropriateness, the need to secure its reputations after series of the foreign policy humiliations was stronger than the pure cost-benefit analysis and the rational calculus. Indeed, as Max Weber said, "nation forgives injury to its interests, but not injury to its honor",¹⁰⁹ the importance of the positional goods leads us to the second hypothesis, the hypothesis of constructivism.

3.2 Hypothesis of Constructivism

The Russian action in Georgia, despite negative consequences and despite the insufficient conditions of the Russian army proves the flaws of the realism because material capabilities "as such explain nothing"¹¹⁰, as they are not a guarantee of the political decisions and the development in the foreign affairs. Rather, social meanings, values and ideational concepts attached to the "objective world" define the real outcome of the decision-making that leads us to the constructivist argumentation. This implies that one state will act in

¹⁰⁸ Keohane, after the hegemony p. 259

¹⁰⁹ Weber, Max in Donelan, Michael, *Honor in Foreign Policy: A History and Discussion*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 117.

¹¹⁰ Wendt. 1995, p. 73.

particular moment even stronger than it would be predicted because it was driven by the logic of appropriateness or rule-guided behavior and a question how “my identity [is] supposed to act in this circumstance?”¹¹¹. This implies that the Russia reacted in that particular case more decisive than it would be expected. This kind of reaction proves the relevance of the claim that „prestige, rather than power, is the everyday currency in the international relations”¹¹² as for Gilpin prestige has the functional equivalent to the concept of the authority in domestic politics and has functional and moral grounding.¹¹³

3.2.1 Russian sense of Greatness and the importance of the Putin's second presidential term

Indeed, although Putin seized the centrist position or Kremlin discourse¹¹⁴ between the more cooperative approach with the West and stronger confrontational attitude, Putin's second presidential term has witnessed the reassertion of the old paradigms. This paradigm is seen in the” reassertion of the Russian zone of influence in the post-Soviet space that goes at the expense of the pragmatic spirit of the benefit/cost calculations.”¹¹⁵ This means „placing the ‘near abroad’ states under Russia's leadership and, by all means, not giving them away to the West,”¹¹⁶ that clear has the similarities with the neo-imperialist policy that tries to secure political and military domination over one particular space.

However, what was crucial difference with the war in Georgia is the fact that until then, Russia did not express its desire for reestablishing its Great Power status in such a blatant way. Jackson claims that until then no real actions were taken to protect Russian diaspora in the post-Soviet space,¹¹⁷ so for the first time Russian identity of itself as a Great Power was supported by the state policy. This is closely related with the nature of the Putin's regime. According to Angela Stent, Putin has been strongly influenced by the philosopher Ivan Ilyin who proposed the united vision of the new post-communist Russia that should be

¹¹¹ Fearon and Wendt. p. 60.

¹¹² Gilpin, Robert, *War and Change in World Politics*, New York: CUP, 1981, p. 30.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14, 28, 30.

¹¹⁴ Tsygankov, Andrei P. “Russia's International Assertiveness: What Does It Mean for the West?” *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 55, no. 2, March-April 2008, p. 49.

¹¹⁵ Malfliet, Katlijn, Verpoest, Lien and Vinokurov, Evgeny (eds.). *The CIS, the EU and Russia: Challenges of Integration*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 23.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹¹⁷ Jackson, p. 180.

based on the spirituality and refuse Western political models.¹¹⁸ During Putin's era, the role of the Orthodox Church became stronger again. The Tsarist values of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality were often repeated and the Tsarist double-headed eagle was adopted as the state emblem again¹¹⁹. This kind of behavior stated again the Russian uniqueness and the difference between the Russian and the Western political culture and the importance of the Russian identity that wanted to secure its positional goods this time and to react as the Great Power. Independence of the Kosovo came after the US intervention in Iraq and failure of the Russian politics in the Balkans, therefore after period of humiliations, Russian action in Georgia was driven by the question of the its international prestige and its status as the Great Power. Thus, questions of the dignity and the non-material factors were here crucial factors that were behind the Russian military campaign in Georgia. Putin's restoration of the Russian identity with the adoption of the Tsarist and Soviet-era symbols¹²⁰ had the mission to unite the nation and to give her the sense of historical continuity. Particular place was given to the military. Either this was the case with the full-scale military parades in Red Square or with the flights of the strategic bomber flights and tests of the new missiles, restoring the Great Power status was on of the major missions of new Russian tsar and Russian military proved to be more than appropriate instrument. Regarding the war in Georgia, Samantha Power claims that the war was driven much more with the Russian wounded pride and the questions of honor and humiliation than with the pure security and material interests.¹²¹ The same kind of messages were repeated on the May 6 2009, the biggest military parade of the Russian army after the end of the Cold War when Medvedev claimed that "our victory over fascism is a great example and a great lesson to all nations, a lesson which is still topical today, when again and again people appear who indulge in military adventurism. "The military was watched by delighted masses and words „We are showing the world our masculinity, our strength. We will never ever weaken.“¹²² Thus, the question of the Russian identity and how it crucially shaped the action in Georgia is closely related with the nature of the Russian strategic culture that I evaluate in the following chapter.

¹¹⁸ Stent, Angela E. "Restoration and Revolution in Putin's Foreign Policy." *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 6, August 2008, p. 1091.

¹¹⁹ Stent, Angela E. 2008, p. 1091.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Power, Samantha, "A Question of Honor. War in Georgia." Available at: <http://www.welt.de/english-news/article3707327/Moscow-rolls-out-new-weaponry-at-military-parade.html> (accessed May 2009).

¹²² <http://www.welt.de/english-news/article3707327/Moscow-rolls-out-new-weaponry-at-military-parade.html> (accessed May 2009).

3.2.2 Russian strategic culture

Fritz Ermarth evaluated Russian strategic culture, one of the most militarized and martial cultures in history, which he perceives as the convergence of political culture, foreign policy and economic culture.¹²³ Impact of the political culture is expressed in the term *kto-kovo* (literally “who-whom”) that argues vertical domination, struggle and coercive power opposed to the democratic political principles. These political elements are all seen in the Putin's era marked with the centralization of the political power. What makes Russian strategic culture even more powerful is the impact of the foreign policy culture. Its added value is seen in the messianic element that is inherited from the Imperial period when the Moscow was seen as Third Rome driven with particular historic mission and national superiority.¹²⁴ In addition, Russian strategic culture is closely connected with the variety of Russian national identities, which all contribute to the Russian sense of distinctiveness because Russia sees itself as a power that can intervene in entire world. This kind of mindset is linked with expansionism and zero-sum calculation, all elements that were seen in the intervention in Georgia and its aftermath. The reason why Russian reaction in Georgia was so brutal can be found in the paradox that Russia is at the same time divided between the superiority and inferiority complex, between paranoia and sense of and greatness.¹²⁵ Moscow saw Georgian shift in the foreign policy since the Rose Revolution as the act of betrayal, so its retaliation was partially influenced by the Georgian campaign in Ossetia and partially because of the Russian fear that possible Georgian entrance to the NATO would represent a mortal blow to its ambitions about regional domination.

¹²³ Ermarth, Fritz W. “Russia’s Strategic Culture: Past, Present and... in Transition?” prepared for: defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office 2006, p. 3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Question of the Russian identity as the Great Power that has re-emerged in the Putin's second term and the restoration of its image on the international scene were dominant reasons of the intervention in Georgia. Russian desire to escape the humiliation after series of the foreign policy failures and the impact of the strategic culture represented powerful blend that led to the Russian military campaign in Georgia.

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