# Security Dynamics within the Black Sea Region

## A Study on the Amity-Enmity Specificity

## Of the Inter-State Interaction

by

Maria Sabina Lazar

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# Abstract

The current Ukrainian crisis which was followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea has attracted special attention of the international community but it has also revealed the lack of effective structured approach by the West in handling security dynamics within the Black Sea Region. Why have the Trans-Atlantic community's efforts not met the expected results? The present thesis seeks to show that a possible reason is that the Black Sea Region has been perceived through inappropriate theoretical frameworks which have overlooked important features of inter-state relations showing a process of regionness based on security issues. In order to show this, the thesis will analyze the behavior of states based on the "weak"/"strong" typology of states, and will look into long-lasting security issues that have reverberated across the whole region enabling security dynamics, such as the frozen conflicts and the anti-ballistic missile shield. The methodology which is employed is mainly based on case study, testing the applicability of the Regional Security Complex Theory on the Black Sea Region, and discourse analysis. The findings of the thesis show that inter-state relational dynamics based on security issues, power relations and patterns of amity-enmity downplay the identity factor of region-making, making the state prone to act according to socially historically constructed images, vulnerabilities, and security concerns.

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AEI | Alliance for European Integration |
| BMD | Ballistic Missile Defense |
| BSF | Black Sea Fleet |
| BSR | Black Sea Region |
| CIS | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| EaP | Eastern Partnership |
| ENP | European Neighborhood Policy |
| EU | European Union |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| MAP | Membership Action Plan |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PfP | Partnership for Peace |
| RSCT | Regional Security Complex Theory |
| WBSA | Wider Black Sea Area |

# Introduction

The wider Black Sea Region[1] is now more than ever before a core spot for interest and engagement, and a playground for regional and non-regional actors alike. Against the backdrop of the current Ukrainian crisis and the subsequent absorption of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, the security developments in the region are increasingly being perceived by the Trans-Atlantic community as challenges to its own security[2]. Russia has once again demonstrated that it is not a trustworthy partner for either the EU or the US by making clear its intention and at the same time ability to promote its interests in its so called "near abroad"[3], by any means necessary. For this reason, Russia is now regarded as an unpredictable actor who might potentially pursue territorial expansion towards other neighboring countries as well. Its recent military incursions have shown the interest of the Trans-Atlantic community in upholding security within the Black Sea region, but they have more importantly also shown its limitations. The efforts pursued by the EU and the US to put an end to Russia's intervention have been very limited and therefore could not influence the outcome of the crisis. Their action is being perceived by the regional small and medium powers as turning a blind eye to Russia's aggression. This situation raises an important question mark regarding the security of the region and the ability of the great powers to ensure its stability.

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[1] The region is composed of the following states: Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

[2] When annexing Crimea, Russia broke the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, signed by the US, UK and Russia, in which it promised to guarantee Ukraine's security in exchange for its dismantling of its nuclear arsenal.

[3] The term "near abroad" was firstly conceptualized by the Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozrev (1990-1996) at the beginning of the 1990s to denote special rights held by Russia in the states pertaining to the former territory of the USSR (See Kaare Dahl Martinsen, "The Russian Belarusian Union and the Near Abroad." *Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies*, June 2002, pp. 38)

The outcome of the present instable situation is specifically of concern for the West since the region has geopolitical and geostrategic importance, being at the crossroads between Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. It has long been a buffer zone for empires and great powers, and now is the EU and NATO Eastern border neighboring region. Moreover, the area as a whole has always been marked by insecurity and migration. Due to the frozen conflicts, illegal arms trafficking and transnational crime, it has been regarded by the North-Atlantic community as a security problem. But even against the backdrop of several ongoing security problems laying at the intersection of divergent interests between the West and Russia, ever since the end of the Cold War there have not been any issues with such vexing power on the Russia-West relations as the 2008 Georgia war and the current Ukraine crisis. Especially since the Georgia-Russia war, the Trans-Atlantic community has directed particular attention towards the Black Sea Region (BSR). Since then, it became clear that being the border of both the EU and NATO, the security issues occurring in the region may have a spill-over effect to neighboring actors as well. As such, addressing them is important in order to create and maintain stability. But what is more important is addressing them with the right approach.

The efforts of maintaining security in the BRS pursued so far by the Trans-Atlantic community have either been directed at region-building through a multi-lateral cooperative approach, or by bilateral cooperation. But bilateral approaches cannot solve security issues affecting more than one country in the region, especially since their interests differ. As regards the region-building initiatives, the most important are the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) which was put forward by Turkey, the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership (BSF), a Romanian initiative, the Black Sea Trust for Regional

Cooperation which is part of the German Marshal Fund of the US, and the EU Black Sea Synergy. But for all of them the results have not been met with expectations.

The region-building initiative of the EU was launched in April 2007. With this program it sought to develop cooperation focusing on several sectors of common priorities[4]. The Black Sea Synergy brings the EU's experience of cooperation, while providing a regionalization led by the countries in the region, namely Romania, Bulgaria, Greece (three EU member countries), Turkey (a membership candidate state), Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia[5] and Azerbaijan[6]. This initiative was conceptualized so as to leave regional cooperation to be managed by the regional states, but its efficiency was deeply troubled by the bilateral disputes and the lack of a strong institutional framework.

The Trans-Atlantic community sought to promote cooperation and predictable relationships, but inter-state relational dynamics have rather been self-generated, mainly determined by internal security factors. The most important issues of debate have been: the transit of energy, the sea-based missile defense system in the Black Sea, and the unsolved conflicts. In addition to these, the region is also particularized by power relations (between regional great powers, such as Russia and Turkey, and the other middle or small regional powers, and simultaneously in relation with the interplay of international great powers, such as the US, the EU and Russia), and patterns of amity - enmity, which are either historically or contextually driven. These issues may be dividing lines between states, but seen from an internationally

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[4] *Communication From the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Black Sea Synergy- A new Regional Cooperation Initiative*, May 11, 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf (03.09.2010)

[5] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Greece may not be littoral states, but due to common history, proximity and close ties, they are natural regional actors

[6] "Communication From the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Report on the First Year of Implementation of the Black Sea Synergy. COM(2008) 391 final ." Commission of the European Communities. June 19, 2008. http://eeas.europa.eu/blacksea/doc/com08_391_en.pdf (accessed May 1, 2014).

broader level, they may also be regional coagulants. From this standpoint, the approach of the Trans-Atlantic community towards the region failed to notice the BRS's regionness particularity, namely deeply intertwined security interdependent relations.

BSR's status of regionness has actually frequently been overlooked in the academic literature, and the study of bilateral relations has been the main focus point when analyzing the region. This approach however, misses important inter-state interdependencies which have strong influences over the security dynamics in the Black Sea area. The few studies conducted for establishing if we can speak about a concrete degree of regionness or not, lack a common understanding or definition of the region. The research conducted on this region by scholars such as Pavliuk and Klympush-Tsintsadze, Aydin, King, Hajizadaa and Marciacq, Weaver, Lake, Morgan and Ciută, to only name a few, has claimed that the wider Black Sea area's status of region is questionable. The main variables that have been taken into account when testifying if it was a region or not have in broad terms been identity, or a common cultural pattern of a socially constructed region, and clear geographic delineations. As such, it is frequently argued that the wider Black Sea area cannot be labeled as a region, taking into account its character as a space of transition between other more saliently conceived regions, such as the Baltic, Danube or the Balkans. In addition, there are undisputable cultural and linguistic distinguishable societies and populations. Taking only these variables as analytical points of reference, surely, when compared to the aforementioned regions, the Black Sea area may not be considered a region at all.

But is this comparison even appropriate when the concept of region has been narrowly defined in terms of identity and geography, leaving aside other important factors which can be agents of region-making, such as power relations and security? Defining the region in an

inconsistent manner may have a negative effect on how the region is approached by interested international actors, such as the EU and the US.

## Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to fill the gap in the literature related to the understanding of the BSR. More specifically, the aim is to identify which are the patterns and driving agents of interaction between the regional states, and which are the regional specificities. Answering this question will make it possible to explain why the region-building initiatives have not registered the expected results. As such, in the present thesis I seek to provide a more effective interpretation of the region, and answer the question of: what actually defines the Black Sea area as a region?

As such, the assumption of this thesis is that the Black Sea Region (BSR) is a macroregion in its own right, an area including several different states or geographically distinct regions manifesting a process of regionalization determined by means of interest-led articulation of power, and nurtured by the existence of common challenges or by a set of practices and patterns of interaction.

I will show how the constructed approach of the previous research has overlooked important features of inter-state relations which show a process of regionness based on security issues. If analyzed from the conceptual framework of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), as defined by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, inter-state relational dynamics based on security issues, power relations and patterns of amity-enmity may downplay the identity factor of region-making. As such, the theoretical underpinning of the macroregion will derive from the

conceptual, geographical and historical scope provided by the concept of "regional security complex".

As required by RSCT, the region must be analyzed by looking into important events, benchmarks in defining inter-state relationship dynamics. Thus both ante-1991 and post-cold-war periods ought to be analyzed. However, the period before the Cold War and until 2003 was researched and described in detail by Buzan and Waever in their book,[7] where they identify the formation of three security complexes in the region, namely the EU Europe and its abroad, the Balkans and Turkey, and the post-Soviet states. The aim of this thesis is not to provide overlapping information, but a more up-to-date understanding of the process of region making in the BSR, and the way it was changed due to security dynamics in the region since 2003. As such, the 2003-2014 timeframe will be the focus of analysis.

The process of defining the BSR region will take into account the colliding influences of great powers within the region (Russia is a dominant power at the center of the BSR, whose interests collide with the ongoing influence projected by the Transatlantic community), the historical allegiances or rivalries between regional states, and the geographic proximity of the countries under analysis. This theory helps us understand why the region-building approach of the Trans-Atlantic community failed to generate a secure environment in the region. The theory shows that security complexes are constituted in deeply intertwined security interdependent relations and patterns of amity-enmity. As such this theory shows us that solving security issues in the region cannot be conducted without involving all the regional actors and without regard to deeply rooted relations of enmity and clash of divergent interests from both regional and non-regional actors who influence the security outcome in the region.

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[7] See Chapter V in Buzan andWaever, *Regions and Powers, 2003*

RSCT, as envisioned by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever[8], offers an appropriate theoretical tool to understanding the subject of this study. In their book, "*Regions and Powers - The Structure of International Security",* the two authors have already categorized the post-Soviet space as a regional security complex (RSC), providing a brief analysis of the inter-state relationships until 2003. The present uses, and further develops Barry Buzan's theory in terms of territorially identified RSC. It seeks to provide a more actual interpretation, and thus more accurate, in line with the current international and regional context. The analytical added value of the present thesis is the redefinition of territorial scope, to that of the wider Black Sea Region which is defined as the "*land and seascape from the Balkans to the Caucasus and from the Ukrainian and Russian steppe to Anatolia*"[9]. Restructuring the boundaries of the researched territorial scope provides a more accurate explanation on the regional dynamics, which have influenced and have been influenced also by other actors, such as Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece, and by other issues such as the ballistic missile shield[10]. Redefining the RSC's boundaries is considered appropriate giving the scope of this theory, for "*strong instances of interregional dynamics may be indicators of an external transformation (merger) of RSCs*"[11]. Another important added feature of this thesis is that the analysis will build on previous knowledge, and comprise the period between 2003 and 2014, thus providing a more up-to-date description and explanation on regional dynamics.

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[8] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003

[9] Hamilton , Daniel, and Gerhard Mangott. *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives.* Washington D.C: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, pp. 1

[10] The transit of gas issue is also of importance, however due to the limited scope of this thesis it will not be covered. More in depth analysis is needed for further research.

[11] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp 49

The importance of this research lies in the fact that this theory helps us understand which are the patterns and driving agents of interaction between the Black Sea Synergy regional states. From the standpoint of the Trans-Atlantic community, it helps answer questions such as "what problems do we then have to solve on the way, which of these are instructive, and which are just artificially self-imposed?"[12]. Answering these questions may help the Trans-Atlantic community reform their regional programs according to more appropriate frameworks, institutionalization and operational methodologies which would determine more effective synergic processes between the regional states.

Furthermore, the benefit of looking at the region through the lenses of RSCT is that this theoretical framework provides room and a potential ground for making predictions regarding possible developments and outcomes in the dynamics between the states. This is accomplishable because the RSCT may generate predictive scenarios by listing a complete range of possible conditions under specific contexts for security regions. As such, by establishing which outcomes are possible under which possible conditions, the theory may prove to be a useful toolkit for understanding the dynamics in the region.

## Research Design

The methodological approach consists mainly of empirical analysis of variable based case study. I am studying the phenomenon of regional security complex, and as such cases of macro-regions generated by security interdependencies between states. I seek to provide understanding on the Black Sea region, by employing RSCT. This will also provide a proper

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[12] Ibidem

framework for testing the validity and scope conditions of the theory. Verifying the applicability of the theory is important because the already conducted research on the region has overlooked important characteristics of regionness which may help understand the security dynamics between states. The former soviet states have already been defined by Buzan as forming a security complex in 2003, as such this is a concrete case of this phenomenon. However, this thesis will test the validity of the theory on the current regional situation, and it will verify if extending the geographical scope of the already identified theory is feasible. By verifying RSCT, this thesis will make a significant contribution to the field, as it will provide a more effective interpretation of the foreign policies pursued by states in security complexes, and it will suggest what are the most appropriate approached towards them. Looking at this particular regional security complex, opens the door for more general theory to be developed regarding similar other regions on the international arena.

This method will be complemented by discourse analysis on the following types of texts: speeches of heads of states, declarations, reports. The two methods will be combined in order to better depict the patterns of inter-state interaction based on concrete actions and situations, and the extent to which the dynamics of interaction have been caused by socially constructed images of the "self" and the "other". As such, the analysis will be constructed from both deductive and inductive approaches. The epistemological approach will be positivist, allowing for both methodologies to be applied, as this approach may also engage with understanding the role of ideas.

In order to analyze whether socially constructed images have linked perceptions and expectations to prescribed policy, the analysis will be employed following an inductive process, analyzing the frames of reference or orientation through which the elites and decision makers

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have interpreted events and the actions pursued by the neighboring states. The types of texts that will be analyzed for their potential access to empirical information about elites' interpretation of events are speeches and declarations specifically portraying own beliefs and conceptions.

Discourse analysis methodology might prove to have limitations in the sense that the public discourses of decision-makers might not represent their actual belief, but it can be a product of propaganda or speech of public mobilization, shaped so as to support the foreign policy ambitions of the states under analysis. This limitation can be overcome by extracting information from reliable and a wider range of sources, and by contextualizing the discourses. A prior analysis of the foreign policy of the state and of the context/situation would support the proper usability of the research method.

## Roots of Misperception of the Black Sea Region

The Black Sea region has been researched by many scholars. Yet most studies looked at it as being composed of individual states, not as a distinguishable region in itself. Those who have analyzed its regionness claim that it cannot be defined as a region due to either lack of common identity, tradition of cooperation or simply self-denomination under this label. Moreover, other scholars, such as Hajizadaa and Marciacq[13], Waver[14], Lake and Morgan[15], suggest that the region is either politically constructed or it is shaped by different boundaries than those identified in this thesis.

[13] Mukhtar Hajizada,, and Florent Marciacq. "New regionalism in Europe's Black Sea Region: the EU, BSEC and changing practices of regionalism." *East European Politics* (Routledge) 29, no. 3 (2013): 305-306
[14] Carol Weaver. "Black Sea regional security: present." *European Security* (Routledge) 20, no. 1 (March 2011): 1-19
[15] David A. Lake, and Patrick M. Morgan. *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World.* Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, pp. 1-68, 221-245

Scholars such as Pavliuk and Klympush-Tsintsadze,[16] and Aydin[17] support the claim that we cannot talk about a Black Sea region. They draw attention to the fact that it is not even perceived as a region neither by any of its constitutive actors, nor by the international community at large. According to Pavliuk and Klympush-Tsintsadze, even the boundaries of the area are questionable, since it is either regarded as being composed of the six littoral states, or by also including the neighboring countries[18].

King suggests that the Black Sea area may or may not been considered a region depending on the historical context which is being analyzed. Throughout time, the region has transposed from a framework of inter-state cooperation (specifically through trade) to a highly instable one dominated by ongoing conflicts. He has actually defended the claim that the wider Black Sea area may in broad terms be a region in itself, providing empirical evidence attesting that it is a distinct geographical zone historically linked by trade, cultural commonalities and migration. The subsistence of this region has, he argues, due to the main obstacles to cooperation which the states have been facing with, not been met with a solid form of regionalism[19]. For this reason, in the contemporary context it is very hard to claim that there is a Black Sea identity, because the regional states are more individualistic, or rather outwards oriented (e.g. towards the EU or NATO)[20]. The claim of this thesis however, is that there is a form of regionalism in the region, however not driven by identity, but by interdependent security issues.

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[16] Pavliuk, Oleksandr, and Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze. *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building.* New York: EastWest Institute, 2004, pp. 7

[17] Aydin, Mustafa. "Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the Role of Institutions." *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* (Perceptions), Autumn 2005, pp. 59

[18] Pavliuk and Klympush-Tsintsadze, 2004, pp. 7

[19] Charles King. "The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century" in "*The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives" edited by* Daniel Hamilton, and Margaret Gerhard, Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008, pp. 1-19

[20] Charles King, The Black Sea: A History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 7-8

Identity has been an analytic reference point for other scholars as well. Mukhtar Hajizadaa and Florent Marciacq claim that the Wider Black Sea Area (WBSA) has not been a self-inductive region, but it is rather a product of region making practices undertaken by the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). They argue that prior to BSEC's region-making attempt, the region has consecutively failed to materialize due to the fact that "*culture, language, religion, foreign allegiances and ideological divides drove apart the WBSA's societies*"[21]. In the same line of reasoning rests the research conducted by Ciută[22]. In his attempt to identify the boudaries between theoretical and political praxis in the region, he concludes that the BSR is a political construct established by the EU and which may only be understood as a tool for ensuring European integration in the region[23]. The present thesis however claims that the region-making process at the BSR is not conducted for political purposes, but as consequence of shared security concerns.

Closer to the assumptions of this thesis and in the same line of reasoning as Barry Buzan, also Carol Weaver presented the Black Sea region as a regional security complex in a publication published in 2011, titled "*Black Sea regional security: present multipolarity and future possibilities*". She provides concrete proof revealing that the region has the features characteristic to RSCs. However, she identifies the Black Sea and the South Caucasus regions as two separate entities[24]. Similarly, David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan seek to deepen the understanding of regional security complexes, however with a particular focus on regional orders, and on which type is more dominant in each security complex. They also do not identify

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[21] Mukhtar Hajizada,, and Florent Marciacq. "New regionalism in Europe's Black Sea Region: the EU, BSEC and changing practices of regionalism." *East European Politics* (Routledge) 29, no. 3 (2013): 305-306

[22] Felix Ciută. "Region? Why Region? Security, Hermeneutics, and the Making of the Black Sea Region." *Geopolitics* (School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London), January 2008

[23] Ciută, 2008, 4-8

[24] Carol Weaver. "Black Sea regional security: present." *European Security* (Routledge) 20, no. 1 (March 2011): 1-19

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the BSR as a security complex, but rather the post-Soviet area as a whole[25]. Another attempt at identifying the region's boundaries was made by Tsardanidis who claimed that there is a regional security complex which is composed of the member states of the Organization of the BSEC, namely including Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine[26]. As such, the author identifies a security complex formed by the Balkan, the Black Sea, and the South Caucasus countries. However, the present thesis seeks to show that The South Caucasus and the BRS have merged into a macro-region, due to shared and mutually enforced threats and security concerns of the constitutive states, and they are linked by strong interdependence, which may not be found to the same degree in relation with the Balkan region.

By contrast with the existent literature, the present thesis argues that currently we can speak about a wider Black Sea region formed not due to common identity or practice of cooperation, but by means of security matters which have bound the states together in an interdependent relationship. I argue that security developments which have taken place since the end of the Cold War in the region, have led the BSR and the South Caucasus regions to merge. The security interdependencies created in more than two decades time have extended beyond the initial regional borderlines, establishing security links through the wider Black Sea area.

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[25] David A. Lake, and Patrick M. Morgan. *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World.* Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, pp. 1-68, 221-245

[26] Charalambos Tsardanidis. "The BSEC: From New Regionalism to Inter-regionalism?" *Agora Without Frontiers* 10, no. 4 (2005): 372-374

# CHAPTER 1 - Theoretical Approach

The relationship between the states in the wider Black Sea Region has had a dynamic generated mainly by security issues. As such, taking a look at bilateral relations, their evolution may be most appropriately explained through the theoretical lenses of neorealism. According to this theory, the national state is the most important actor. Moreover, the international arena is the ground for the politics of power, an endless struggle for power and for maintaining security. Thus, states live in an anarchic international system where the dynamic in relations between states, and the overall structure of the international system portraits the distribution of national capabilities.[27] In their attempt, they tend to ally with other states against the rising threats through balancing of power. This behaviour is conducted with the mere purpose of preventing the formation or maintenance of a hegemonic power.[28] In order to ensure their security, states adopt various strategies, and balancing is one of them. In a self-help system, a great power which possesses most but not all of the capabilities required by this status is vulnerable to others who do not lack them.[29] As such, the lesser states may resort to balancing of power, either by allying with other states, or by boosting own capabilities.

This theoretical framework may describe well the Cold War period, when two blocs of power were formed as consequence of balancing, such as the Eastern block and the West. But because the states in the wider Black Sea area have always been at the crossroad of clashes between great powers' interests, balancing with regional actors was not a viable option. For

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[27] Kenneth N Watz. - "Structural Realism after the Cold War." *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (Summer, 2000), pp.27

[28] Jack S. Levy, "What Do Great Powers Balance Against and When*?*" In T.V. Paul, James J Wirtz, Michael Fortman, ed. *Balance of Power Revisited: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century.* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 29-32

[29] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Structural Realism*, pp25-29

states with enough resources this strategy may prove to be optimal, however for weaker states with few capabilities and not enough room for maneuver, it is not a viable option. A clear weakness of the neorealist theory is the lack of a conceptual framework for analyzing the process of regionalization and the specificity of the region itself. Neorealism does not take into consideration regional components, and consequently misses important regional dynamics that may be connected to the social construction of regions and security[30].

For the purpose of this thesis, the "*Regional Security Complex Theory*" (RSCT) [31] was chosen because it provides more insights on understanding the mechanism which enables the establishment of security dynamic patterns, and the main driving force which keeps the region together. This theory is mainly based on the neorealist conceptualization, but which departs from it specifically in order to provide a regional level explanation of states' behavior.

RSCT is a symbiosis of neorealist and constructivist elements, combined for the mere purpose of providing a framework for analyzing, explaining and anticipating developments within a region while including both the system and the subsystem levels in the body of analysis. As neorealism only focuses on the former, the RSCT includes the distribution of capabilities, but at the same time it analyses the subsystem political processes and examines the patterns of amity and enmity as independent variables.

The added value of the RSCT is that it allows for the differentiation and identification of inter-relation between international system and subsystem levels of analysis to be made. It is important to make this distinction, as the dynamics in the region are not exclusively outside-

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[30] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 481-482
[31] Ibidem

driven by global powers, nor merely a regional factor, but rather a consequence of security interdependencies. As stated in their book: "*Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security*", security interdependencies are created by threats which due to the fact that they are more likely to travel over short distances than over long ones, they become regional coagulants and give rise to regionally based security complexes. The common or mutually established threats enable processes of securitization and thus of interdependency between states guided by security concerns or interests. As such, these processes and interdependencies are stronger within the regional clusters than between internal and external actors. "*A security complex is defined as a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another*".[32] The region as a whole is defined solely through the lens of security, which means that they may not be regions if analyzed from a purely cultural, geographic or historical perspective[33].

The security interdependence between the states of RSC is determined by several factors which are merely path-dependent: geographical, political, strategic, historical, economic and cultural; and by internal and external actors. Global players usually play an important role in the regional security dynamics. However, there is a clear degree of autonomy of security developments within a RSC, and patterns constructed at regional level[34]. RSCs are created by juxtaposition of global (they are at the crossroad of balance of power developments between great powers) and system level powers, regional security interdependencies, and the symbiosis of

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[32] Buzan, Barry. *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem of International Relations.* Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983, pp. 105
[33] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 42-43
[34] Ibidem, pp. 3-4

differently constructed security fears and objectives. Security features are durable, forming patterns of occurrence and states' behavior.

The main analytical points of reference are the durable patterns of amity and enmity at a subsystem level, creating inter-dependencies between states, and as such constituting a strong regional coagulant. They may be constructed by historical factors which have created long-established and maintained enmities (such as Greece and Turkey), or by cultural association with a certain civilization area (such as the European culture and EU values, commonly shared by the member states). The geographical proximity is also an important factor, since "*threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones*" [35]. Another key factor is the interplay between great and small powers in the region, the former group transgressing the regional imperative, while the latter reconsolidating it. Great powers penetrate the RSC by establishing security alignments with individual states within the security complex, which is made possible by taking advantage of the existence of regional rivalries.

In order to accurately identify regions forming security complexes, this theory analyses the security discourses and practices of actors through an all-encompassing approach, not only regionally focused[36]. RSCT comprises four levels of analysis: domestic vulnerabilities of states (identifies the weak and strong states), security concerns, inter-state relations, and the role global powers play in the region[37].

Moreover, in order to facilitate an all-encompassing analysis, RSCT enables one to analyze current regional security developments by associating them with patterns in the interstate

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[35] Ibidem, pp. 45
[36] Ibidem, pp. 49
[37] Ibidem, pp 51

dynamics constructed in the pre-Cold War, Cold War and post-Cold-War periods. According to RSCT, the regional security complexes have been constructed during these three stages, all highly relevant for understanding the dynamics in the security complexes.[38] However, due to the limited scope of this thesis and to the already existent literature for the period before 2003, only the 2013-2014 timeframe will be analyzed. The analysis must focus on both units pertaining to macro-system structures, and units pertaining to subsystem levels. As such, this thesis will analyze both the interplay between interests and actions of great powers in the region and the roles played by regional actors within the given timeline.

Differences between foreign policy strategies of regional actors may also be explained by reference to variables existent at state level. Taking this into account, RSCT makes the distinction between weak and strong states, by focusing not on the status of power, but on the cohesiveness between state institutions and the civil society. In other words, it regards the degree of statenness. The principal distinguishable feature between week and strong states is the fact that the former is mainly preoccupied with internal security threatened from within the boundaries of the state. Weak states do not possess sufficient consensus between the governmental institutions and the civil society to ensure the lack of an ongoing occurrence of large-scale use of force perturbing the political life of the country[39]. Strong states usually have to deal with external threats, while weak states are confronted with an ongoing clash of divergent interests and of actors seeking to capture the state and/or ensure their own security. The weak states are as such internally fragmented, which makes them more vulnerable to external threats.[40]

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[38] Ibidem, pp. 14
[39] Buzan, Barry. *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem of International Relations.* Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983, pp. 65-67
[40] Buzan, *People States and Fear*, 67-68

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Another relevant classification for understanding regional dynamics incorporates states into three main categories: pre-modern, modern and post-modern. The preponderance of a type of states within a region, even if it does not generate security dynamics, it does however create susceptibility to a certain type of behavior, and tendency to give certain labels to other states.

In 2003, Barry Buzan categorized the Central and Eastern European states as modern, however the subsequent European integration efforts and membership of Romania and Bulgaria, and further economic, social and political development in accordance with the EU standards and in relation and inter-dependence with the other EU countries, have pushed them up the latter from modern to post-modern, in line with the other EU member states. However, the same development did not also occur in the non-EU Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus states, which have maintained strong modern state type characteristics. The main characteristics of the post-modern states are pluralism and democracy, more open and tolerant approaches towards inter-relations between economic, cultural and political spheres; more open economies; security agenda focused merely on issues related to identity and migration; more freedom provided for civil society actors to operate within and outside the national borders. The modern states fit the classical Westphalia type. They are characterized by a strong central authority and lack of openness. Their border lines, apart from being territorial delineations, also have a strong symbolic effect of closure and isolation from economic, political and cultural influences. In addition, these states perceive themselves to have distinctive national cultures, to be entirely independent and sovereign[41].

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[41] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 22-24

This mixture of both types of states, however with a preponderance of modern states, creates a symbiosis of contradictory threats, between exclusion and inclusion. Particularly the states at the border between the two types (such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia), have to deal with this dilemma. For them exclusion means not benefitting from certain advantages that being strongly engaged in the region would provide. But inclusion also comes at a risk, for cultural and development domestic projects become at variance with external influences from outsider actors. For these states, strong relations with the post-modern states means having to get in line with higher standards of democratic institutions and practices. This may be easily acknowledged if taking into account the status of these countries, which is at the crossroads between the Western type of society and culture and the national one[42].

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[42] Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe. A study in Identity and International Relation.* London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 28-40

# CHAPTER 2 - Domestic Vulnerabilities and Security Concerns

In order to understand the regional inner driving force for security dynamics, there are several key variables that should be taken into account. These are mainly foreign policy focused, such as relations between states, the involvement of global actors in the region, the interactions with other neighboring regions. In addition, also what happens within a state may determine or change the course of foreign policy, and as such of inter-state relations. According to Buzan and Waever, the domestic vulnerabilities may influence the position of the states in the region.[43] Identifying them actually provides the informative grounds for understanding the foreign policy concerns of states, reason for which this will be the analytical starting point of this thesis.

This chapter seeks to provide an overview over the domestic vulnerabilities of the regional states and over their security concerns, in order to finally identify which are the weak and strong regional powers. As such, the research will focus on the degree of cohesiveness between state institutions and the civil society, and on the security threats of the states, either domestic or external.

## 2.1. Russia

### 2.1.1. Managing Democracy for Reduced Vulnerabilities

According to the Freedom House's most recent report in 2009, Russia's transition after the collapse of the USSR did not follow a path towards a democratic society, but it was rather "*a shift from the failing yet still functional bureaucratic authoritarianism of the late-Soviet period*

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[43] Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem of International Relations.* Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983, pp. 65-67

*to a flashier, more footloose authoritarianism that rests on selectively capitalist kleptocracy[44],
the dominance of informal influence groups, a decorative democracy that is often described as
managed*".[45] As such, Russia's current political system is stated as "not free" and in practical
terms it is a "managed democracy", [46] for the state has a strong hold on power and control over
the state institutions.[47] Russia's Constitution (1993), assigns strong powers for the executive and
very limited for the legislative. In addition, under Putin's rule in 2005, Russia initiated a reform
package which suppressed the ability to form and join interest groups, suppressed civil liberties,
and freedom of the media.[48] Since then, the democratic practices in Russia have not been
improved.  Moreover, practices of controlling the media continued, and culminated in murdering
the more active journalists, such as Anna Politkovskaya.[49]

Currently, Russia has all the institutions characteristic to representative democracy, but in
practical terms they lack individual mechanisms of self-regulation and complete independence
from the core administration. In addition, also the results of the elections and the changes in the
structure of the political party system are mainly pre-determined by decisions made within the
president. The political composition practically forms a one party system with all the power
condensing around Putin. This position gives him the possibility to reform the state according to
own ruling, especially since it has not been counteracted by any significant social protests
throughout time. As such, there is no fragmentation in the political sphere, nor in the state-

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[44] The term "kleptocracy" refers to a feature of political corruption usually characteristic to authoritarian regimes, namely the perpetual practice of the government to ensure person wealth to its officials from state budget

[45] Daniel Kimmage, "Russia: Selective Capitalism and Kleptocracy." *Freedom House*, June 2009: 49

[46] This term denotes a method used by the post-Soviet leadership to control the political sphere and the influence of the state institutions over the executive.

[47] Ilya Budraitskis, "The Weakest Link of Managed Democracy: How the Parliament Gave Birth to Nonparliamentary Politics." The South Atlantic Quarterly, Winter 2014: 171

[48] Kozina, Alena. "Why is Russia not a Democracy? The Putin era." *Social and Political Review*, 2010: 81

[49] Dmitri Furman,  "Imitations Democracies. The post-Soviet penumbra." *New Left Review 54*, November-December 2008: 39-42

citizenry relation. Moreover, according to a survey conducted by the Research Centre for East European Studies, there is a popular support for Autocracy in Russia, and little willingness for citizens to get involved in political action[50]. Thus in Russia there is no domestic political struggle or significant state-citizenry lack of consensus threatening the security of the state, reason for which Russia is more likely to fall under "strong state" denomination.

### 2.1.2. Security Threats Come from the West

Russia security concerns are rather directed at outside than inside threats. The only ongoing issue of concern regarding domestic security has been the fight against terrorism and separatist claims which led to years of war between Russian forces and Chechen secessionists. This threat still exists today, however at only a small scale, as Moscow official announced in 2009 stating that the military operation against the rebels has come to an end. In addition, the 2010 Military Doctrine of Russia barely lists any domestic threats (the change of constitutional structure by force, the act of undermining the sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the state, and the disruption of state power organs' operational activity), as opposed to external military dangers[51].

Russia's external threats, as outlined in the 2010 Military Doctrine, start with its main opponent, NATO, in relation to its near abroad. As stated, a potential deployment of NATO's military infrastructure to "*member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc*"[52] constitutes a threat to the national security. In addition, it also stipulates that "*the deployment (buildup) of troop contingents of foreign states (groups of states)*

[50] Carnaghan, Ellen. "Popular Support for Democracy and Autocracy in Russia" Russian Analytical Digest, September 19, 2012: 1-14.

[51] "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation." *Cargenie Endowment.* 2010, Chapter II, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf (accessed May 2, 2014)

[52] Ibidem, II, 8 a)

*on the territories of states contiguous with the Russian Federation and its allies and also in adjacent waters*[53], and "*the creation and deployment of strategic missile defense systems*"[54] in its neighborhood pose security threats to Russia. Similarly, in the "Strategy for Russia's National Security to 2020" states that "*the anti-ballistic missile defense system development and installation undermines the global stability and disrupts the strategic power equilibrium*", and that any attempt to bring this infrastructure closer to its borders poses direct threat to its security[55].

The 2010 Military Doctrine also refers to the neighboring frozen conflicts, stipulating that the presence or emergence of armed conflict in neighboring states constitutes a threat to its security. In line with Russia's interests in the region, this document clearly reveals the importance Moscow pays on its near abroad and its aim to overcome Western influence, by stating that "*territorial claims against the Russian Federation and its allies and interference in their internal affairs*"[56], and "*the emergence of seats of interethnic (interfaith) tension, the activity of international armed radical groupings in areas adjacent to the state border of the Russian Federation and the borders of its allies*"[57] directly threaten its security.

To conclude, the domestic vulnerabilities and security concerns of Russia show clear features of "strong state" typology. The overall consensus between the state and the society, and the lack of concrete political fragmentation, correlated with a security policy mainly only directed at external threats, provide Russia with enough domestic strength to ensure its regional ambitious interests, and a strong regional power.

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[53] Ibidem, II, 8 c)
[54] Ibidem, II, 8 d)
[55] Vaduva, Gheorghe. "Un scut pentru un nou echilibru." *Impact Strategic*, 2010, pp.25
[56] The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, Chapter II, 8 e)
[57] Ibidem, II, 8 k)

## 2.2. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus

### 2.2.1. Strong Executives Ensure Lack of Fragmentation

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus have had a similar transitional trajectory to each other, and they currently have a comparable status of statenness. For this reason, they are introduced here as one cluster of states. Firstly, in the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR, they have all established allegedly imitational democratic regimes confronted by elite fragmentation between different elite groups, with an authoritarian rule in practice. Secondly, a rigid political system ruled by authoritarian leadership is the main issue all three states are confronting. Lastly, they also face challenges such as poor governance, unstable political climate, refugees and internally displaced persons and very poor economic development[58].

According to a report elaborated by Freedom House in 2013, Armenia is ranked as partly free, while Azerbaijan and Belarus as not free. They are all stated to have very restricted political rights, and elections being broadly characterized as undemocratic, with serious irregularities. Civil liberties are however better respected in Armenia than in Azerbaijan and Belarus, where the legislations provide states with a monopoly over the media and over any information about political, social, and economic affairs, and where the property rights are strongly violated by the states[59].

Armenia has the highest degree of political polarity among citizens. The opposition is increasing its power, but it is not strong enough to influence governmental change (it only has 7% of the total number of seats). The current political climate is relatively stable, as compared to

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[58] Jeffrey Mankoff, *The Big Caucasus: between fragmentation and integration.* Report, Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012, pp. 1-5
[59] Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests.* Report, Washington: Congressional Research Service, 2014, pp. 33; and "Freedom in the World 2014 - Belarus." *Freedom House.* 2011. http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/belarus#.U4TddNKSyk8 (accessed May 20, 2014)

previous years, with regular occurrence of soft political demonstrations. But deep flaws in the political system, correlated with weak rule of law, and ineffective parliament with lack of cooperation between the ruling party and the opposition, make the political system prone to instability[60].

In Belarus there is no representation in the National Assembly for political parties, and the constitution grants almost absolute power to the president, who has control over government courts, legislative process and media. Civil society is almost non-existent, since over 100 nongovernmental organizations were shut down by the state between 2003 and 2005, and there have been no independent trade unions registered since 1999[61].

Azerbaijan, on the other hand has a very fragmented party system, with around 40 political parties out of which only four constitute the opposition. But even so, the Constitution provides little or no independence to the National Assembly from the executive branch, who since a 2009 referendum, does not have any more presidential term limits (as opposed to the members of the parliament who may only serve five-year terms). [62]

In conclusion, the strong executive branches of the three states, with little power left for the parliament, which has a weak to non-existent opposition coalition, and very restricted civil liberties gives strong hold on power to the state, and impedes the formation of significant clash of divergent interests and of actors seeking to capture the state and/or ensure their own security. Taking this into account, the three states are not strong candidates for the "weak state" typology, but they are also not on equal footing with Russia, being more prone to instability than Moscow.

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[60] BTI 2012 — Armenia Country Report. Country Report, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012., pp. 2-11
[61] "Freedom in the World 2014 - Belarus." *Freedom House.* 2011. http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/belarus#.U4TddNKSyk8 (accessed May 20, 2014)
[62] *BTI 2014 — Azerbaijan Country Report.* Country Report, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014

**2.1.2. Security Concerns Outwards Oriented or Mutually Enforcing**

Like Russia, Belarus puts more emphasis on external security threats. The internal climate is quite stable and there are no strong opposing forces or civil society fighting against the state. The only potential threat identified in the Military Doctrine of the Republic of Belarus, is possible extremist organizations which may strive to overthrow the existing government[63]. However, this is a rather new threat, and not a serious one, because Belarus does not have a history or tradition of political radicalism. For this reason, the 2012 bombing came as a surprise for Minsk and the Belarusian population. This was preceded by similar events, one in 2008 and two in 2005. But for each case there could not be identified the exact perpetrators. The authorities and the media suggested several suspects, such as the "White Legion", a Belarusian extremist organization which is allegedly a rather fabricated threat than an actually existing one, the opposition which is very passive with no power to destabilize the regime, or the West. The latter is often declared as a potential threat, both in declarations, and in official documents. As Lukashenka, Belarus's president, declared regarding the 2012 bombing attack, "*I do not rule out that this was a gift from abroad*".[64]

With regards to external threats, Belarus has similar convictions to Russia. It also identifies as main security concerns the NATO expansion towards its borders and the regional frozen conflicts, by stating "*expansion of military blocks and alliances", "already existing and potential seats of local wars and other armed conflicts*", and "*creation (build-up) of military potential of highly offensive in its origin by some states*". In a regional perspective, the latter

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[63] "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation." Cargenie Endowment. 2010.
http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf (accessed May 2, 2014).
[64] "Terrorism Comes to Minsk." The Economist. April 12, 2011.
http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2011/04/belarus_bomb (accessed May 15, 2014).

threat regards the military arsenal build-up of regional NATO member states[65], and the deployment of ballistic missile shield elements in Romania and Turkey.[66]

The two South Caucasus states have a mutually enforcing threatening behavior, due to their conflicting interests in the status of the secessionist region in Azerbaijan. The state consolidation of the two has been highly affected by the contested state territory, the break-away region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, which is 95% being populated by Armenian people and which belonged to Armenia until the early 18th century. This secessionist region has been the main reason for long-lasting enmity between them, which originates from after the end of the World War 1 when the region was temporarily annexed to Azerbaijan by British troops, a status which was further reinforced by the USSR.[67] Proof of their strain relations are the still ongoing disputes over the region, the impossibility to reach a consensus on conflict management approach, and the closed borders between the two states since during the Soviet era. The state unification efforts employed by Azerbaijan and the ongoing territorial conflict between the two states have created a highly insecure environment for both.[68] For this reason, what should be solely an external threat for Armenia, is actually considered as internal threat for both states. As stipulated in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is mentioned as the main internal and external threat. In addition, other stated threats are other unresolved ethnic and armed conflicts in neighboring states, and Turkey which is a

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[65] Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria

[66] The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation." Cargenie Endowment. 2010. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf (accessed May 2, 2014).

[67] Cornell, Svante E. The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. Report no. 46, Upsala: Department of East European Studies, Upsala University, 1999, pp. 1-8

[68] Nicole Gallina, "Puzzles of State Transformation: the Cases of Armenia and Georgia." *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Winter 2010: 20-24; and Jeffrey Mankoff, *The Big Caucasus: between fragmentation and integration.* Report, Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012, pp. 1-5

strategic partner of Azerbaijan, and which in proof of solidary for the latter it also closed its

borders with Armenia in the aftermath of the Nagorno-Karabakh war[69].

Taking into account the domestic vulnerabilities and security concerns of this group of

states, it can be stated that they are more prone to being affected by domestic instability, being

thus more vulnerable to external conditions than Russia. The three states have very weak

opposition and a quite passive or marginal civil society manifestation, reason for which there are

no significant domestic threats to the current government structures. The security threats as

outlined in their national strategies are more outwards oriented, but strongly connected to the

domestic climate, as it is particularly the case of the South Caucasus States. As such, one may

conclude that these states are vulnerable to external threats, but they do not perfectly fit the

typology of "weak states".

## 2.3 Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova

### 2.3.1. Complex Mixture of Domestic Vulnerabilities

Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova will also be analyzed as a group because they present a

wide range of common security concerns, and features which posits them on corresponding

levels of statenness. Firstly, they have all had a common chosen EU path and as such a

seemingly Western orientation. This is important because they have been pursuing European

integration, even if on different degrees of commitment, which means that they have made

several reforms in order to get in line with the EU acquis communautaire and as such to fulfill

democratic transition. For this reason they are better ranked in the Freedom House Report of

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[69] "National Security Strategy of Republic of Armenia." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia. January 26, 2007. http://www.mfa.am/u_files/file/doctrine/Doctrineeng.pdf (accessed May 15, 2014).

2013, also stated as "partly free" like Armenia, but the score is considerably in favor of the three.[70] Other similar features include a political system characterized by instability, a strong opposition, a very active and strong civil society, significant economic problems, secessionist autonomous regions within their countries, economic or gas related dependencies by Russia, and Russian military troops within their territory. All of these issues create significant domestic vulnerabilities for them, which make them vulnerable also on regional scale.

What concerns the political sphere, the states have been marked by insecurity ever since they gained independence. Ukraine has been in a constant battle between the ruling parties and the opposition, which correlated with a high degree of corruption, a strongly polarized society (mainly between the West and the East) and a high degree of social discontent, have led to the 2004 Orange Revolution, and to the current political and social deadlock. The current instable situation has emerged in November 2013 when Viktor Yanukovich officially declared to freeze plans of signing Association Agreement with the EU and to accept Russia's offer to join the EURASIA Union. These decisions, taken without public consultation and against the will of the Western oriented majority population, gave rise to a revolution that lasted for 6 months[71], and created a strong division in the country correlated with Russia's annexation of Crimea.[72]

In terms of economic stability, Ukraine is in a vulnerable position to Russia. According to IMF estimates, Ukraine's economy is heavily indebted. Out of the $35bn debt that the country

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[70] On a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 is the best raking and 7 is the worst, Armenia has 4 points, Ukraine has 3,5, and Georgia and Moldova have 3 points

[71] "Ukraine protests after Yanukovych EU deal rejection." *BBC.* November 30, 2013. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25162563 (accessed May 17, 2014)

[72] "A New Iron Curtain Falls Across Ukraine?" *ESAI Energy Security Analysis.* April 14, 2014. http://www.esai.com/petroleum/14/pdf/Intelligence%20Briefing%2004.14.14.pdf (accessed May 17, 2014); and Ben Smith, and Daniel Harari. *Ukraine, Crimea and Russia.* Research Paper 14/16, House of Commons of the United Kingdom, 2014, pp. 18

ought to pay in the next two years, $1.9bn must go to Gazprom's pockets[73]. Like Putin, Yanukovich adopted a series of reforms and measures to strengthen his power, like undemocratic laws, political imprisonments (the most outrageous for the international communities was the imprisonment of Timosenko, the opposition's leading figure and former prime minister), and ran undemocratic parliamentary elections[74].

In this group, Moldova is next in line with regards to the degree of political instability, having ended in 2012 a political deadlock which lasted for three years and which has left vacant the post of president for the whole period. The political division between the ruling coalition and the opposition is, as in Ukraine, between West and East. The ruling coalition, the Alliance for European Integration (AEI), has sought to adopt the necessary reforms to get in line with the EU acquis communautaire in order to sign the association agreement, and to facilitate visa liberalization, while the Communist party has always been in favor of strengthening ties with Russia. This division led to political deadlock and a very slow pace of reform process. This shows a concrete weakness of the political life of Moldova. However, the relationship between civil society and governmental institutions is currently good.[75] Taking this into account, Moldova's domestic weakness may not, in the current context, be attributed to cumbersome state-citizenry relationship, but rather to political division, to vulnerability to Russia, and to the Transnistrian conflict. The break-away region is a magnet for organized crime, human and drug trafficking, manufacturing and illicit in-country and cross-border trade of weapons, and has been

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[73] "Freedom in the World - 2014 - Ukraine." Freedom House. 2014. http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/ukraine-0#.U4ZVSNKSyk8 (accessed May 20, 2014).
[74] *BTI 2014 — Ukraine Country Report.* Country Report, . Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014, pp. 2-3
[75] BTI 2014 — Moldova Country Report. Country Report, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014. 2-13

the most important impediment in Moldova's process of state edification, economic development, and political consolidation.[76]

Georgia's political climate is currently better situated, having gone through the first peaceful handover of power since it gained independence.[77] This outcome is seen in positive light by the civil society, and considering the fact that it has a tradition of being active on the political scene (e.g. the Rose Revolution of 2003 when the civil society revolted against corruption and kleptocratic government), shows that the current state-citizenry relationship is good, and that there is a wide consensus between the governmental institutions and the civil society. As such, within the current context Georgia's vulnerability may not be attributed to the political spectrum, but rather to a lack of control to the country's entire territory, feature which is present also in Ukraine and Moldova. After the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, the country could not reestablish control over the break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and there are no positive prescriptions to achieve this any time soon[78]. The complete lack of cooperation between the central administration and the de facto states[79] has created ongoing insecure domestic environment, and has undermined Georgia's efforts of integrating into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

### 2.3.2. Security Concerns Inwards Oriented

In the official documents of Ukraine, such as the Military Doctrine and National Security Strategy which were adopted in June 2012, the most important reference is made to the Russian

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[76] Popescu, Nicu. "Noile oportunităţi de soluţionare a problemei transnistrene prin mecanismele Europei modern." *Institutul de Politici Publice*, September 26, 2003: 12

[77] "Freedom in the World 2013 - Moldova." Freedom House. 2013. http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/moldova#.U4ZVpdKSyk8 (accessed May 17, 2014).

[78] BTI 2014 — Georgia Country Report. Country Report, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014.

[79] In the aftermath of the 2008 war, the two regions declared their independence which until the current time, were recognized by only 6 states worldwide: Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Vanuatu

Black Sea Fleet (BSF)[80]. As stated, the maintenance of BSF in inadequate legal framework regulating its presence in Ukraine, the redeployment of Russian troops within Ukraine's territory without prior approval, and using them against third parties as it did in the case of the 2008 war with Georgia, constitutes a direct threat to Kyiv's security (this threat was further reinforced by the current crisis when Russia mobilized troops in order to take over Crimea). In addition, also the Transnistrian unresolved conflict is regarded as a threat.[81]

Corresponding reference may be found in Moldova's official documents. In the National Security Concept of the Republic of Moldova the top-listed threats are "*the Transnistrian conflict and foreign military presence on the territory of the Republic of Moldova*" (the document states that Russian military troops are clear violation of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the state)*, "Threat of Foreign Coercion*, and "*External Negative Developments and International Crises*"(specific reference made to the unsolved conflicts in the post-soviet space)[82].

Georgia also has similar the declared security threats. In the National Security Concept of Georgia, the most important threats are stated to be "*occupation of Georgian territories by the Russian Federation and terrorist acts organized by the Russian Federation from the occupied territories*"(when describing Russia's military occupation, the document stipulates that Moscow has infringed upon its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and has undermined its political,

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[80] The Russian Black Sea Fleet is located in Crimea, the break-away region of Ukraine which was recently illegally annexed by Russia
[81] "Ukraine Defense Doctrine." Global Security. April 2014.
http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/doctrine.htm (accessed May 20, 2014)
[82] "National Security Concept of the Republic of Moldova." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. n.d.
http://goo.gl/9JvYS1 (accessed May 20, 2014)

economic and social development, and statehood)[83], "*the risk of renewed military aggression from Russia*", and "*conflicts in the Caucasus*".[84]

A brief overview of the domestic vulnerabilities and security concerns of these states, reveals that they significantly match with each-other. The main perceived threats are both the in-country and regional frozen conflicts, and the existence of Russian military forces within their borders. In addition, they are mainly preoccupied with domestic threats and the vulnerabilities which these give rise to. As such, even if they are ahead of the previously analyzed states in terms of democratic transformation, the challenges they have to deal with at home make them very prone to instability and good candidates to fit the "weak states" typology. In addition, they also reveal clear signs of vulnerability to Russia, and a pattern of enmity with Moscow (particularly for Moldova and Georgia), constructed due to Moscow's perpetual threat for their security.

## 2.4. Turkey[85]

### 2.4.1. Domestic Vulnerabilities Dominated by Social Divisions

In the 2014 Freedom House Report, Turkey is stated to be partly free, however with a downgrading rating since last year. The most recent shortcomings in Turkey's statenness are harsh government crackdown on protesters nation-wide[86] and political pressure on private

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[83] "National Security Concept of Georgia." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. n.d.
http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=12 (accessed May 20, 2014), pp. 7-8
[84] Ibidem pp. 8-9
[85] Turkey is a complex case concerning security concerns, vulnerabilities, foreign policy in the region and in the world regarding which more extensive information may be provided, but due to scope limitation of this thesis, such an endeavor cannot be pursued
[86] The protests which emerged in the Gezi Park were initially framed as environmental, however they soon took an anti-governmental agenda, against the authoritarian policies of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

companies and on the media in order to support the ruling party's agenda. Freedom of expression is guaranteed by the law, but it is not fully respected in practice[87]. Cases of attempts to influence the press made by the government, politicians and other high-level authorities are quite frequent, culminating often in incarcerations,[88] and sanctions on the televised media. Similar pressure is also on the civil society. Notwithstanding the fact that the large majority of the civil society organizations do not fully function apart from the state, those that accept funding from abroad are labeled as foreign agents. The under-development of the civil society helps the state have a strong hold on power, and avoid the development of a cumbersome relationship with the citizenry.

Turkey's most pressing long-standing domestic vulnerability is the deep division of the society on the lines between religion and secularism, between old and new political orders, and between Turkish and Kurdish populations. The ethnic division has historically been the driving force for conflict between people pertaining to the two ethnic groups. [89] Throughout time, the state has made efforts so as to repress this clash, but the division is still an ongoing threat to the statenness of the country.

### 2.4.2. Balance Between Internal and External Perceived Threats

Turkey's security concerns are both inwards and outwards oriented. As stipulated in the Defense Policy and Military Strategy, Turkey is particularly affected by threats and risks associated with "*regional and ethnic conflicts, political and economic instabilities and uncertainties in the countries, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and long-range*

[87] "Freedom in the World 2014 - Turkey." *Freedom House.* 2014. http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/turkey-0#.U4m4I3KSyk8 (accessed May 21, 2014)

[88] In 2013 there were 73 imprisonments of journalists, with 13 more than the previous year. Most of them were made on accusations of belonging to terrorist organizations.

[89] BTI 2014 — Turkey Country Report. Country Report, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014, pp. 1-25

*missiles, religious fundamentalism, smuggling of drugs and all kinds of weapons and international terrorism*".[90]In addition, the document also states that due to its geopolitical location, the country is more prone to high risks and threats. The country is at the crossroads of the Balkan, Caucasus and Middle East regions, and as such, at the intersection of global powers' interests.

Turkey's foreign policy positions the country between the two state denominations, having no concrete correspondence with either "weak" or "strong". In addition, seeing them in the light of its domestic vulnerabilities, further strengthens this statement. However, as compared to the Caucasus or the other EU candidate countries in the region, Turkey's domestic vulnerabilities are not as deep.

## 2.5. States Members of the EU

### 2.5.1. Membership in the EU Reduces Domestic Vulnerabilities

Joining the European Union has brought about significant progress in terms of democratic development, open market, and stability on the political and social levels in Romania, Bulgaria and Greece. But not the same can be said about the economic situation of the countries since the 2008 global crisis. In the current context, the states are still striving to overcome the crisis and intensive economic slowdown. In addition to this, the political and social landscape is characterized by ongoing, yet steadily improving, efforts to fight corruption and organized crime.

According to the 2013 Corruption Percentage Index, the three states are among the most affected EU member states by corruption (Greece being the most affected with a score of 80

point, followed by Bulgaria with a score of 77, and Romania with 69 points).[91] But the biggest concern regarding the domestic climate is created by the economic situation. In Romania, harsh fiscal austerity measures gave rise to popular non-satisfaction and criticism from the civil society and the opposition. These further created the grounds for nation-wide protests, to the Romanian government to fall in no-confidence vote, and to the opposition's efforts to permanently oust out the president.[92] The economic crisis hit Greece to a similar degree. The rough austerity measures adopted by the government were met with nation-wide long-lasting protests and demonstrations (they have recurred for a three years period), which strained the state-citizenry relation. The developments in these countries show a degree of vulnerability with regards to their EU interdependent economies, however in all-encompassing terms, they do not fit the "weak states" typology. They have an overall good relationship between the state institutions and the civil society, and good economic and democratic performances.

### 2.5.2. Security Concerns Come from Abroad

Their security concerns are mainly directed at outside threats, which differ from country to country. Greece still regards Turkey as main security concern, in spite of its recent support for Turkey's EU accession.[93] Even if the country struggled hard to ensure the recovery of the economy, the defense budget was still kept at high EU comparable levels, the main reason being the ongoing perceived threat from Turkey. This was fueled by the 1974 Cyprus crisis[94] and the 2011 tensions over Turkey's offensive statements aimed at stopping Cyprus from pursuing

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[91] "Corruption Percentage Index." Transparency International. 2013. http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/ (accessed May 20, 2014)

[92] "Freedom in the World 2013 - Romania." Freedom House. 2013. http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/romania#.U4j3m3KSyk8 (accessed May 20, 2014)

[93] Liaropoulos, Andrew N. "The Institutional Dimension of Greek Security Policy: Is there a Need for a National Security Council?" *National Security and The Future* 3, no. 9 (2008): 26-38

[94] In 1974 was the Turkish invasion and occupation of the northern part of Cyprus

offshore oil drilling,[95] and Turkey's behavior of challenging Greece's sovereignty over the Aegean islands in 1996.[96] In recent years, however, the relationship between them has improved significantly, as such the Turkish threat is not as strong as before 2011. In today's context, other threats receive increasingly more importance, such as a potential nuclear attack coming from Iran, and international terrorism.

Bulgaria as well puts emphasis on international terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in addition to trans-border organized crime, regional conflicts, energy security concerns and Middle East developments. In terms of domestic threats, the 2011 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria lists corruption, and organized trans-border crime. In addition, it also stipulates that strong dependence on foreign energy resources leads to economic and political vulnerabilities.[97] In the same line of reasoning, in the 2007 National Security Strategy of Romania, the same threats are listed. In addition, it is stipulated that Romania seeks to ensure energy security for its citizens.[98] Both Romania and Bulgaria give high importance to ensuring their energy security, because they are dependent on gas transit from Russia (for Bulgaria 13% of energy needs is gas, and 100% is imported from Russia; Romania only imports 17% of its gas needs, having Russia as sole provider) [99]. This is of key interest for them particularly since the 2006 and 2008 gas crises, when Russia cut the gas supply to the pipeline transiting Ukraine, affecting their energy security. This dependency creates an important vulnerability for the two states.

[95] The Turkish government threatened to use its navy against Cyprus if did not stop, because the drilling was considered by the former to be illegitimate

[96] Greece Defense and Security Report. Defense and Security Report, Bussiness Monitor, 2013, pp. 43-50

[97] National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria. Security Strategy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, 2011, pp. 7

[98] Strategia de Securitate Nationala a Romaniei. Strategie de Securitate, Bucuresti: Romania Presedintele, 2007, pp. 12-46

[99] Member States' Energy Dependence: An Indicator-Based Assessment. Occasional Papers 145, Brussels: European Commission, 2013, pp. 83-93; 225-235

To conclude, the EU member states are better positioned than the Eastern non-EU member countries or those from the South Caucasus. Their domestic vulnerabilities are not strong enough to create serious in-country security concerns, especially since they are members of the EU, and as such of a cooperative framework based on mutual support. Also, considering the fact that their perceived threats are particularly outwards oriented, their domestic vulnerabilities are not as strong so as to monopolize their security maintenance efforts. As such, they cannot be labeled as "weak states", but they do have important vulnerabilities, such as the economic and gas related dependencies.

This two-level analysis provides a basis for understanding on one hand the vulnerabilities of states, and on the other hand their shared, inter-related or mutually enforced threats. With regards to vulnerabilities, the states on top of the list are Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and the least vulnerable state is Russia. This is specifically important since their perceived threats are related to Russia, this showing that there is a dominant - dominated relationship between them, and a security dynamic of the three states being mainly initiated by Russia's foreign policy. In addition, we may also perceive a pattern of clear enmity between Greece and Turkey, and between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Armenia and Turkey, as stated within the former's National Security Strategy. In addition, the vulnerabilities of the states provide proof that they belong to the "postmodern"(the EU member states) and "modern"(the other regional countries) typology of states. Other noteworthy findings are the shared regional security concerns, such as the frozen conflicts (shared by all the regional states), energy security related (for Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Romania, and Bulgaria), the anti-ballistic missile shield (for Russia and Bulgaria), and Russia's military troops (for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia). Commonly shared or mutually ensured security threats give proof in support for the assumption that all of these

states form a macro-region, one that is based on security concerns, e.g. regional security complex.

# Chapter 3 – International Levels of Analysis

This chapter will focus on international levels of analysis, depicting inter-state relations, and the roles global powers play in the region. The relations between states will be analyzed by following the dynamics created by the most important and long-lasting regional security issues commonly shared by the states, with catalyst power for region making. These issues are identified by means of common threats perceived by the regional actors (identified in the previous chapter) and lengthy manifestation, such as the frozen conflicts, and the anti-ballistic missile shield. In addition, following the western-eastern foreign policy polarization of the regional states, and the interplay of great powers in the region (Russia and the North-Atlantic community), the conflicts will be analyzed based on the Western-Eastern divide. This analysis will focus on the external actors with influence on the regional security dynamic, such as the EU and the US. The aim is to identify the processes that created and sustained the RSC as a process formation and the patterns of amity-enmity, by taking into account global and regional dynamics.

## 3.1. Frozen Conflicts

### 3.1.1. Regional Dynamics

In the BSR there are three unsolved conflicts which have been threatening the security and statenness of the states ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, namely Transnistria (in Moldova), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (in Georgia), and Nagorno-Karabakh (in Azerbaijan). The still unsettled conflicts are important security concerns for the regional states (ever since 1991), and for the North-Atlantic community.

All three conflicts were triggered when the former Soviet states declared their independence from the USSR, and have not been settled until the present day. In order to gain independence, the break-away regions ignited wars against the states of origin which lasted for years, because the balance of forces between the belligerent parties was ensured by Russia with military support for the secessionists. Allegedly for the purpose of enforcing peace in the region, Russia pushed through cease-fire agreements to be signed, however on its own terms, namely by establishing Russian-led peace keeping forces on the territory of the three fragmented states (this endeavor was however not successful in Nagorno-Karabakh which even today lacks the presence of any regional or international peacekeeping forces). In addition, to the process of negotiating resolutions for the frozen conflicts, the cease-fire agreements assigned the roles of mediators particularly to Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (in which Russia's influence nevertheless looms large), but in Georgia it was replaced in 2008 with the Geneva Talks international mediation forum. This key role helped Moscow benefit from the USSR legacy, which by means of "divide et impera" policy, it established divided states for the purpose of maintaining control over their external and internal affairs.[100] This has actually been Russia's main national interests, particularly since Putin came to power. In this regard, it has sought to maintain the status quo of the conflicts and close connections with the leadership of the de facto states. To accomplish this, it has had an active role in mediating the negotiations or settling the status of the break-away regions, and it has given incentives to the secessionist

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[100] Marcel de Haas, ed. "Geo-strategy in the South Caucasus: Power Play and Energy Security of States and Organisations." *Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael*, November 2006: 1-33

regions, such as providing cost-free gas supply or at minimum costs, granting Russian citizenships and making massive investments[101].

Russia's meddling in the Georgian conflicts started in 1992, when a significantly large number of Chechen, Russian and Ossetian troops fought alongside the Abkhazian forces against Georgia, eventually cutting off any access to supplies by land[102]. In the autumn of 2008 the frozen conflicts broke out again and finally led to the war between Russia and Georgia. Georgia commenced a military offensive on 7 August in order to regain its authority in South Ossetia. As counteracting measure, Russia reacted by military offensive actions in a disproportionate manner using troops, naval force, military aircraft and tanks.[103] After the war, Georgia's economy was in collapse, with thousands of refugees.[104] This shows Georgia's clear vulnerability to Russia, and the fact that any change in the status of the break-away regions may lead to security dynamics in the region.

In the aftermath of the conflict, Russia closed its borders towards Georgia, which affected Armenia as well, as its trade from Russia is transited through Georgia[105]. The rail links between Abkhazia and Georgia proper towards Russia have been out of service ever since 1992. Since then, the tensions between the belligerent parties, has steadily been reduced, giving way for the new Georgian government to be willing to consider restoring the rail link. This proposal

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[101] Jakob Hendenskog, and Robert L. Larsson. Russian Leverage on the CIS and Baltic States. Report FOI- R - 2280 SE, Stockholm: Swedish Defense Research Agency, 2007, pp. 8

[102] Adrian Cioroianu, Geopolitica Matrioscai - Rusia post-sovietica in noua ordine mondiala. Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2009, 242.

[103] Charles King, "Clarity in the Caucasus? The Facts and Future of the 2008 Russian-Georgian War." Council of Foreign Affairs. October 11, 2009. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65469/charles-king/clarity-in-the-caucasus (accessed May 20, 2014).

[104] Lionel Beehner, "Letter From Tbilisi: Georgia's Confidence Game. A Change of Fortune for Saakashvili's Regime." Council on Foreign Relations. August 11, 2009. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-tbilisi-georgias-confidence-game (accessed May 20, 2014).

[105] Jakob Hendenskog, and Robert L. Larsson. Russian Leverage on the CIS and Baltic States. Report FOI- R - 2280 SE, Stockholm: Swedish Defense Research Agency, 2007, pp. 65

was strongly supported by Russia and Turkey, but it was vehemently opposed by Azerbaijan, because by doing this also the Russian-Armenian military land links could be resumed. In order to avoid this outcome, Azerbaijan has put pressure on Georgia by threatening to cut the natural gas supply to it.[106] An Azerbaijani ruling party legislator stated that "*if Ivanishvili continues his attempts to restore railway links with Armenia, then Azerbaijan might put its economic projects with Georgia on hold and support the separatist regimes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia*".[107] As such, the conflict itself, weather in active or frozen state creates a sense of insecurity for the regional states, and any change towards either settlement or breakout of conflict determines security dynamics at regional scale.

Among the regional states, Abkhazia is of specific interest particularly for Turkey, because they share historical and cultural ties (Abkhazia is partly Muslim and it was part of the Ottoman Empire between 1578 and 1804), reason for which since 2008 it increased diplomatic relations with Abkhazia, and it launched the proposal to establish direct trade relations. This attempt was criticized by Georgia, because it was seen as a breech to its sovereignty.[108] Nevertheless, Turkey has always supported Georgia in this regards, rather than Abkhazia, and clear proof of its solidarity is that it chose to cut rail links and trade relations with Abkhazia in the aftermath of the war. But this also gives proof of the fact that any changes in the status of the secessionist regions which creates security interdependencies, enables security dynamics and affects the relations between states.

Nagorno-Karabakh is the conflict which has received the most attention from the international community, particularly due to the rich oil resources and geopolitical importance of

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[106] *Abkhazia: The Long Road to Reconciliation.* Europe Report N°224, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2013, pp. 24

[107] *Ibidem, pp. 23*

[108] Eissler, Eric R. "Can Turkey De-Isolate Abkhazia?" *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 129-132

Azerbaijan (at the crossroads between Russia, Central Asia and the Middle East). The interested actors, namely the EU, NATO, the US (all three supporting Azerbaijan due to its pro-western orientation and rich oil resources – the Baku-Tbilisi Ceyhan pipeline hub to Europe, which are needed for insuring energy security for Europe and for putting an end to the dependency on Russian gas), Russia, France (supporting Armenia due to the large Armenian diaspora on its territory), Iran (supporting Armenia) Britain and OCSE, formed the Minsk-group (co-chaired by Russia, France and the US) which is the official mediator of the conflict. Among the other regional countries, Turkey has had a clear position of supporting Azerbaijan, while Georgia has had a neutral approach, though due to its proximity it has strong interests in a peaceful resolution of the conflict[109]. This distinction of approach between the two regional states shows a behavioral pattern related to the weak/strong states typology, according to which weak states (in this case Georgia) are rather focused on domestic threats rather than at what happens outside their borders.

However active the mediators have been during the negotiations so far, the results are far from promising. Since 2011, the negotiations reached stalemate, and the conflicting area spread to other places away from the Nagorno-Karabakh region. In addition, the belligerent states started an arms race, increasing their defense budget by impressive amounts (Azerbaijan having had $3.7 billion for 2013, and Armenia $450 million, with 25% more than last year), and adopting offensive discourse. Azerbaijan publicly states that the conflict will be resolved by military means, while Armenia declares to be ready for preventive strike.

This situation creates further instability in the region, and the current Russian occupation of Crimea is seen by Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova as a precedent for the secessionist

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[109] Gamaghelyan, Philip. "Intractability of the Nagorno-Karabach Conflict: A Myth or Reality?" *Peace and Conflict Monitor*, July 2005: 1-11

regions on their territories. Putin's recent declaration stating that only people residing in the region have the right to determine their future, has had regional repercussions. Transnistria and Gagauzia (another autonomous region in Moldova which is mainly occupied by ethnic Turks) have already made official requests from Russia to be also annexed by it,[110] and political unrest emerged in Abkhazia where the opposition took over the presidential administration.[111]  This creates serious instability, lack of settlement prospective, and increased sense of insecurity (not only for the states directly involved, but also for Romania, and the EU) caused by a rising perceived threat from Russia. Because the frozen conflicts create security interdependencies between states, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova are worried that Russia will have the same tactic within their own territories, and the last two states have strong reasons to do so since South Ossetia and Transnistria have declared long ago their desire to become part of Russia (South Ossetia in 2008, and Transnistria in 2006)

Also other regional states share their fears, as Romania's president, Traian Basescu, declared that "*Kyiv and Chişinău are a priority for Vladimir Putin who wants to rebuild the Soviet Union*".[112] The status of Transnistria is what is of most concern for Bucharest due to its close proximity, and close historical ties between Moldova and Romania.[113] Basescu has been known for its strong position of reunification between Romania and Moldova, and did not miss the opportunity to reiterate it against the backdrop of EU's recent change of policy of providing membership perspectives for the former Soviet states. EU's position was expressed by EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle in an interview saying that "*if we are serious about*

[110] "Anxiety grows in Europe as Transnistria asks for Russian annexation." EurActiv. March 19, 2014. http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/romanian-president-fears-moldova-news-534219 (accessed May 21, 2014).

[111] Waal, Thomas de. "Abkhazia: All Politics is Local." Carnegie Moscow Centre. May 30, 2014. http://carnegie.ru/eurasiaoutlook/?fa=55749 (accessed May 31, 2014).

[112] "Anxiety grows in Europe", 2014

[113] Moldova and Romania constituted a unified state between 1918 and 1940, when it was annexed by the USSR

*transforming post-Soviet societies, we should be serious about using the most powerful tools we have at our disposal – the enlargement policy.*"[114] In support for EU's objective, but correlated with own regional aspirations, Basescu declared that "*The European Union will not accept a troubled country with territorial problems or occupation troops on its territory*", and a solution would be unification with Romania[115]. But in spite of Romania's regional aspirations, Bucharest also sees Russia as a threat for its own security, and has done so ever since the collapse of the USSR. In the public statements of Romanian heads of states and overall citizenry perception, there has been the most noteworthy Russophobe attitude from the region, and the relationship with Moscow has been strain ever since[116]. In this line of reasoning, Romania made strong official statements on Russia's aggression and also initiated a draft statement condemning it, to which South Eastern European countries were also parties. But finally it not materialized due to Greece's rejection[117]. Russia is an ally of Greece because of strong energy, economic cooperation, arms supply for Greece, and most importantly because Russia supports the Greek position in the Cyprus issue, against Turkey.

This shows that the regional conflicts have a strong power to divide countries, even if pertaining to the same North-Atlantic structures, and to increase serious tensions between regional states. In addition, Romania's stance against a strong power as Russia shows that its position in at the Black Sea is not weak, specifically since it is being backed by NATO. Moreover, it also shows that Romania is still dominated by socially constructed images of Russia

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[114] Štefan Füle in "Anxiety grows in Europe"

[115] Basescu, Traian, interview by Institutia Publica Nationala a Audiovizualului. Basescu: Situation in Crimea could affect Moldova's European integration (March 17, 2014).

[116] According to Matei Udrea, a Romanian historian, these attitudes emerged in 1877, when Romania was occupied by Russian forces during the Russia-Turkey war

[117] "Serbia and Greece against the statement of condemnation of Russia." InSerbia Independent News. May 10, 2014. http://inserbia.info/today/2014/05/serbia-and-greece-against-the-statement-of-condemnation-of-russia/ (accessed May 31, 2014).

and these usually link its perceptions and expectations to public statements and prescribed policy, e.g. to make strong statements, and to initiate a regional condemning position. Moreover, an overall overview over the situation of frozen conflicts along time provides evidence of the fact that any change in their status easily creates security dynamics in the region as a whole, and by taking into account the patterns of amity-enmity identified in the previous chapter, the regional states did not diverge from their historical bonds or animosities.

### 3.1.2. West-East Division and Clash of Great Powers' Interests

The frozen conflicts attract significant interest from the international community due to their strategic geopolitical location, at the crossroads between the Middle East, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe. The North-Atlantic community has particularly started to be interested in their settlement after the last enlargement rounds in the region (NATO's enlargement in 2004, and the EU's in 2007 covering Romania and Bulgaria). Also before that, for NATO the region became important right after 9/11 for its transit route towards Iraq and Afghanistan. Since then there has been a collision of great powers' and of regional inter-state and intra-state interests, creating a strong west-east division. Belarus and Armenia are strong allies of Moscow, pertaining to the Russian led EURASIA Union. Romania, Greece and Bulgaria are western oriented, being members of the EU and NATO. Azerbaijan and Turkey have a more individualistic policy in the region following rather their own regional aspirations (though Turkey is a traditional Western ally and NATO member state, at the same time it has crucial trade and energy ties with Moscow and strong regional aspirations). Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine have had a more balancing approach between the poles, partly due to strong east-west divisions within their territories (over 17% of Ukrainian population is Russian, with a large majority in the eastern part of the country,

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particularly in Crimea; over 9% in Moldova, and particularly 95% in Transnistria; in Georgia, South Ossetia wants to be united with North Ossetia which is part of Russia).

In order to stabilize the region, the EU launched the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2006 and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2008, and sought to be included in the negotiation process of Transnistria along with the US (at this stage however only as observers), and of Nagorno-Karabakh. NATO's approach was to put Ukraine's and Georgia's potential membership on the agenda. But all of the West's actions of rapprochement have been counteracted by Russia, thus enabling security dynamics in the region. When the 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict emerged, the former was already collaborating with NATO in its Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) and with the EU through the ENP, and was aspiring to become member of the Trans-Atlantic community. The question of offering a Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Georgia and Ukraine was given an important place on NATO's agenda, but during the Bucharest summit in 2008 the decision was made to postpone it without providing any time frame for eventual membership. The main reasons were Russia's strong objection, the frozen conflicts in Georgia, and public opposition in Ukraine[118]. But the strongest factor was Moscow, which ahead of the summit made a number of public statements, warning Ukraine that Russia might be forced to take countermeasures, which may take the form of missiles being directed at it, if it hosted NATO troops on its territory, or joined the missile shield[119]. This type of statements show that even if the relations between regional states and Russia are good, a prospective rapprochement

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[118] Enlargement Issues at NATO's Bucharest Summit. CRS Report for Congress, Washington: Congressional Research Service, 2008, pp. 24-25

[119] Finn, Peter. "Putin Threatens Ukraine On NATO." Washington Post. February 13, 2008. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/12/AR2008021201658.html (accessed May 21, 2014).

towards the West will determine the international great powers' collision to affect the regional relations, make Russia turn to hard politics and as such give rise to regional security dynamics.

In broad terms, the action of getting closer to the West pursued by regional states has always been a problem for Moscow. In order to avoid this, it promoted their participation in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (in which Russia has hegemony) or resorted to hard politics. Refusing to join, showed a degrading pattern in Russia's relationship with its neighboring states[120]. For Moldova for instance, the choreography of joining in 1991, leaving in 1993 and joining again in 1994 was always matched by positive (releasing the tension between the belligerent parties, and launching negotiations) or negative dynamic in its relationship with Russia and with the break-away regions (the CIS forces always sided the secessionist parties during the conflicts)[121].

When the regional states sought to strengthen ties with the West, they have been constrained on several occasions to allow Russia to pursue its dominion, through economic (blocking the access to supply through railway for Georgia, and economic bans), military (Russian troops that supported the secessionist regions in their fight against Georgia, the Russian peacekeeping forces which Moscow refuses to withdraw, the war on Georgia, and the occupation of Crimea), and political pressure (introducing visa regime with Georgia and Moldova).[122] Russia's economic pressure always occurred when its interests were at stake. As such, in 2003 Russia made embargos for Moldovan wines when the latter refused Moscow's Kozak

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[120] Georgia was a member of CIS, but it withdrew after the 2008, and Ukraine which was mainly de facto participating also withdrew in 2014 after Crimea was occupied by Russia
[121] Cioroianu, Adrian. Geopolitica Matrioscai - Rusia post-sovietica in noua ordine mondiala. Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2009, pp. 273
[122] Kelkitli, Fatma Asli. "Russian Foreign Policy in South Caucasus Under Putin." *Perceptions*, Winter 2008: 78

Memorandum,[123] proposal for settling the conflict.[124] The 2006 Russian bans on Moldovan and Georgian wine imports were made at the break of signing the ENP with the EU, and they were meant to stop this imminent outcome[125]. The same pattern may be observed in the 2013 context, ahead of the Eastern Partnership Vilnius summit where Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia were about to initiate the process of signing Association Agreements with the EU. As such, Russia banned once again Moldovan, Georgian and Ukrainian products. But this tactic was not usually met with Russia's expected results, since even if the states have had an economy highly dependent on exports to Russia, they still pursued with their westernizing policy in spite of the rough effects the Russian ban had on their economies, and they were even more motivated to do so[126]. The exception was Ukraine's decision to halt negotiations with the EU ahead of the summit, and to join the EURASIA Union. However, as previously mentioned, Ukraine's current status is unclear and the population is divided between the east and west.

To conclude, the power play between the great powers in the region, have led to security dynamics to be constructed between the states, following a pattern of action-counteraction. Considering the typology of weak-strong state, one may see that always the weakest states in the region (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) have been more prone to be the chess pawns between the great powers' power play. The same may not be stated about stronger states, such as Azerbaijan (also member of the ENP and PfP) and Turkey, and about Russia's regional long-term allies (Armenia, Belarus and Greece). In addition, one may observe that Romania's approach towards

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[123] According to the memorandum, Moldova would have transformed into a federal state with equal powers for Transnistria and Moldova proper, and as with such veto power for Transnistria regarding foreign policy matters
[124] Hendenskog, Jakob, and Robert L. Larsson. *Russian Leverage on the CIS and Baltic States.* Report FOI- R - 2280 SE, Stockholm: Swedish Defense Research Agency, 2007, pp. 78
[125] Kaljurand, Riina. Russian influence on Moldovan politics during the Putin era (2000-2008). Report, Talinn: International Centre for Defence Studies, November 2008
[126] T.J. "Why has Russia banned Moldovan wine?" The Economist. November 25, 2013. http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2013/11/economist-explains-18 (accessed May 22, 2014).

Russia follows a pattern of historically constructed images which guide its foreign policy in spite of gas interests.

## 3. 2 Anti-Ballistic Missile Shield

The Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) is a concept which appeared during the Cold War, and was further pursued by the Bush and Obama administration in Europe, for the purpose of protecting the allied states from the nuclear threats posed by Iran and North Korea. In 2010, along with initiating the New Strategic Concept, NATO took the BMD project under its jurisdiction. Currently, in the BMD project also BSR states are involved, such as Romania and Turkey. But even if Obama made structural changes to this project so as to avoid creating a sense of insecurity for Russia, the BMD was still seen through the lenses of the Cold War logic by Moscow.

As such, Russia always vehemently opposed the project by means of rough rhetoric directed not only at the US, but also at the regional states parties to the project. In 2010, Medvedev indicated that any missile shield which does not also include Russia as main security provider would be ineffective and a threat to the international stability as it has the potential to compromise Russia's nuclear forces. Consecutively, Putin announced in an interview that "*Russia will have to protect itself using various means, including the deployment of new missile systems to counter the new threats to our borders*"[127]. Furthermore, in a speech held in November 2010, Medvedev argued that unless a partnership will be created between Russia and

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[127] *Europe and Eurasia: The Obama Administration's Efforts To Implement the European Phased Adaptive Approach*, Testimony before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank A. Rose, December 2, 2010, Transcript of TV Interview Vladimir Putin to CNN's Larry King. RIA-Oreanda News. December 2, 2010.

the U.S., the current situation will lead to an arms-build-up in which Moscow is willing to plunge by any means if its security is threatened by the BMD[128].

Against the backdrop of steps pursued by Russia to counteract the threat posed by the missile shield, in 2011 the former Russian president, Medvedev, declared: "*I hope that our Western partners will view this step as a signal of Russia's readiness to give an adequate response to the threat posed by the missile defense system to Russia's strategic nuclear forces*".[129] As stated by Medvedev, the measures taken by Russia include putting the missile attack early warning radar station in Kaliningrad on combat alert, to develop a missile defense penetration system, and to deploy Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad. Rogozin, the current Deputy Prime Minister in charge of defense and space industry and Special Representative on anti-missile defense and negotiations with NATO, also made a declaration stating that "*the radius of use of these weapons makes them a real threat to us (...) if new threats to Russia's strategic potential appear, Russia will simply have to think about threats of militarization of Europe*".[130] Moscow gives a great deal of importance to this issue since part of the shield will be constructed in the Black Sea region, making it as such a regional threat. But Russia also sees it through the lenses of the Cold War logic, which means that it is still bound to historically socially constructed images about NATO's intentions.

But also Russia poses a threat for the BMD regional states. On February 2010 Romania made an official announcement declaring that it will host components of the BMD on its territory

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[128] Kathy Lally, "Russian President Warns of New Arms Race," *Washington Post*, December 1, 2010, Accessed on June 19, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/30/AR2010113004144.html

[129] "Dmitry Medvedev speech in meeting with the leadership of the Armed Forces." President of Russia. November 29, 2011. http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/3141 (accessed May 2, 2014).

[130] "Rogozin: NATO missile defense jeopardizes Russia." Russia Beyond the Headlines. October 18, 2012. http://rbth.com/articles/2012/10/18/rogozin_nato_missile_defense_jeopardizes_russia_19240.html (accessed May 2, 2014)

and it will be party to the program. The day, Russia made its new military doctrine official, where it stipulated that the BMD is a threat to Russia and it threatens the status quo of the balance of nuclear forces. In order to add fuel to the fire, during the presidential elections in 2012, Putin declared that "*A global balance of forces can be guaranteed either by building our own missile defense shield (...) or by developing the ability to overcome any missile defense system and protect Russia's retaliation potential, which is far more effective*"[131]. In addition to this, Medvedev put out into the open Russia's plans to counteract the BMD by developing its own defensive aero-space system[132], to deploy Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad and to withdraw from the new SALT Treaty[133]. In order to prevent a change in the current distribution of capabilities benefiting the U.S., Russia not only that it declared to take counteractive actions, but it has already pursued with them. In November 2011 it started the operation of a newly constructed radar with the capacity to monitor missiles launched either from the North Atlantic region or from the European states. As such, Russia acted in accordance with its perceptions, and not the reality of an imminent threat, being thus bond to socially constructed images.

`A security dynamic may be seen with regards to states in the region. Moldova criticized Romania's decision, stating that it will trigger countermeasures taken by Russia in Transnistria[134]. Ukraine was invited to join the BMD plan in 2009, by proving two Ukrainian radar stations at the disposal of the Alliance for the BMD project, one of which is located in Crimea. After Russia annexed Crimea on the 1st of March, Ukraine reiterated in an official

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[131] Vladimir V. Putin, *Being Strong*, Foreign Policy, February 21, 2012, Accessed on May 26, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/21/being_strong

[132] Sergei Guneev, *Medvedev: Russia Will Counter U.S. Missile Defense,* RIA NOVOSTI, February 21, 2012, Accessed on June 18, 2012,  http://en.rian.ru/mlitary_news/20120221/171439239.html

[133] Marc Bennetts, *NATO Tells Russia Not to 'Waste Money' on Anti-Shield Deployment*, RIA NOVOSTI, March 26, 2012, Accessed on June 20, 2012 http://en.rian.ru/world/20120326/172402648.html

[134] Ionescu, Mihail. "Ballistic Missile Defense System in Europe –The Romanian component." *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*, March 5, 2010: 4

statement its firm decision to join the BMD project[135], but this was met by counteractions from Russia, by seizing two Ukrainian missile defense battalions in Crimea.[136] Regarding Russia's allies, their position is best described by Putin's declaration that Russia will establish a missile shield in collaboration with Armenia, and it will strengthen the already existing anti-ballistic missile system that it has jointly created with Belarus.[137]

The BMD is a regional issue, with serious effects on the stability of the region and on the security dynamics. It may be seen that any developments of the BMD in the region attracts either supporters or foes, and the reaction patterns of the regional states shows the actual patterns of amity enmity, along with the distribution of "weak" or "strong" states within the region. In the former category is best suited Moldova, while Ukraine seems to be confined that a rapprochement towards the North-Atlantic community may help her increase its status and security at the BSR.

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[135] "Mykhailo Yezhel: U.S. missile defense in Ukraine in exchange for financial aid is on negotiating table." Kyiv Post. March 5, 2014. http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/mykhailo-yezhel-us-missile-defense-in-ukraine-in-exchange-for-financial-aid-is-on-negotiating-table-338419.html (accessed May 31, 2014).

[136] "Ukrainian Missile Defense Battalions Seized: Report." NBC News. March 5, 2014. http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/ukraine-crisis/ukrainian-missile-defense-battalions-seized-report-n44686 (accessed May 31, 2014).

[137] "Russia to establish joint missile defense shield with Armenia and Kazakhstan, Putin says." Vestik Kavkaza. November 19, 2013. http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/politics/47745.html (accessed May 31, 2014).

# Conclusion

Taking into account security dynamics in the region, the Regional Security Complex has provided an understanding of why the region-building approach of the Trans-Atlantic community failed to generate a secure environment in the Black Sea region. The analysis of security issues posed by frozen conflicts and ballistic missile shield has revealed that these issues, due to geographical proximity, and perseverance have created strong security interdependencies between countries. This was evident from the fact that every small change in the status of these security issues has been met with strong reactions and security concerns. The dynamics thus enabled are rooted in deeply intertwined security interdependent relations and patterns of amity-enmity. In this regard, one may observe that the historical relations of enmity were respected when making foreign policy decisions with regard to these issues. Romania has been the most virulent critic of Russia in the region concerning the Crimean conflict, while Turkey has always supported Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh due to its historical enmity relationship with Armenia.

Furthermore, the findings have revealed that the typology of weak/strong states may accurately provide an understanding of the behavioral patterns of states. As such, the weaker states, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, have always had a less focused policy, balancing between East and West. Due to their great vulnerabilities, they always had to deal with the dilemma of being either regional inwards or outwards oriented, trying to integrate into the Trans-Atlantic structures or face the regional dominator.

Taking the above findings into account, it is clear that the patterns and driving agents of interaction between the regional states are predominantly determined by regional security issues. The regional specificity, as such, is that the process if region-making is generated by security interdependencies, and thus the region is a security complex.

This applied theory shows that the security issues in the region or means of approaching the regional states cannot be conducted without involving all regional actors and without regard for deeply rooted relations of enmity and clash of divergent interests from both regional and non-regional actors who influence the security outcome in the region. As such, regional projects such as the Eastern Partnership and the ballistic missile shield will always be counteracted by Russia if it is excluded. As has been shown, any attempt to get closer to the West made by the weaker states has met with Russia's economic, political or military counteraction. To avoid further escalation of security dynamics, regional approaches which include all the constitutive states, in a confidence building process meant to dissipate the socially constructed images of enmity between states are essential.

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