

Ukraine’s Foreign Policy

- between Russia and the EU

A Theoretical Examination of the Factors Determining Ukraine’s Foreign Policy

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# 1. Abstract

This thesis aims to determine which factors drive Ukraine’s foreign policy in the direction it has taken since independence. Ukraine’s history since independence in 1991 is taken into account, and, thus, presented in the background chapter, but the framework of analyses is foreign policy since the Orange Revolution in 2004. The thesis is going to use a theoretical approach, via four different theories, in order to determine the factors which can explain and determine Ukraine’s foreign policy choices, which either pulls the country towards the EU and West or towards – and back – to Russia.

The aim of the four theories is to explain in which direction Ukraine’s foreign policy has taken Ukraine since independence as it is vivid from the background presented that Ukraine is a country of division. The president of Ukraine is a representative of the country, and as presidents are replaced so is Ukraine’s foreign policy. Ukraine has clearly had a fluctuating interest in cooperation and partnership with the EU and Russia respectively and, thus, this leads to questioning why that is.

Interdependence theory aims at explaining the power balance and interdependence between Ukraine and respectively the EU and Russia. Here it is found that asymmetrical interdependence plays the biggest role in terms of Ukraine’s relationship with Russia, and, consequently, that the bargaining relationship, which is in Russia’s favor, is a determining factor in explaining Ukraine’s foreign policy. Within liberal theory, modernization is also used. However, contrary to interdependence, modernization does not help describe Ukraine’s development within foreign relations. Instead modernization indicates that Ukraine’s culture and economy have not followed the same path, and thus social transformation has been unstable because the political system and economic institutions are not ‘healthy’. Additionally, realism highlights the aspect of Ukraine acting on own best interest, but as it is concluded that the best interest must be to side with Russia in many cases, the issue of complete sovereignty falls short. Furthermore, realism lacks the issue of identity, culture and history which is then found in social constructivism. Thus, constructivism is found to be a solid basis for understanding choices made by Ukrainian presidents, and understanding how decisive Ukraine's divided identity is when looking at the relationship with respectively Russia and the EU.

None of the theories alone can describe Ukraine’s foreign policy, and, thus, it is concluded that the important factors of describing the path of Ukraine’s foreign policy can be found in interdependence theory, but with the role of identity and acting in own best interest. The identity division in Ukraine is a determining factor which ensures that Ukraine continues being Russia’s little sister instead of moving towards the EU.

**Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, EU, Interdependence Theory, Modernization Theory, Realism, Social Constructivism, Power, Sovereignty, Identity.**

# 2. Introduction

Ukraine is geographically strategically placed between Russia and the European Union (EU). Ukraine’s foreign policy since its independence in 1991 is striking and at times inconceivable to people from western democracies. It seems that the foreign policy approach of the governments and presidents shifts rapidly without taking into consideration the step-backs that continuously follows when governments or the presidents choose to alternate new policies initiated by previous decision-makers. It has been argued that the foreign and domestic policy of the three first presidents[[1]](#footnote-1) did not differ that much. This thesis does take into account the presidents and politics of the 1990’s, but the analyses have a focus on the time around and after the Orange Revolution in 2004. Amidst the inconsistency within each presidential rule, academic and specialist in Ukraine, Taras Kuzio (2012) has found consistency throughout Ukraine’s independence since 1991. What seems to be a consistent approach with regards to Ukraine’s foreign policy with the West and the EU are three stages which governments alter between; disinterest, partnership and disillusionment. The question is whether this is still true, and if there is still an interest in the EU, does that mean that Ukraine goes through the same three stages with Russia, i.e. what is Ukraine’s status with Russia under the current government, and which determining factors have influenced this? At first glance and fast approached from the outside, the presidents’ approach to the institution of democracy and democratic methods shifted from Leonid Kravchuk and Viktor Yushchenko with voter bases in western Ukraine supporting the democratization of Ukraine, while Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yanukovych were threats to Ukraine’s democracy (Kuzio 2012: 1). The reasoning behind the choices in foreign relations is worth noticing and this thesis is going to use a theoretical approach, via four different theories, in order to look closely at Ukraine’s foreign policy choices, which either pulls the country towards the EU and West or towards – and back – to Russia.

The shifts in Ukraine’s foreign policy and recent trends where the world have seen Ukraine democratically regressing, causes the western world, i.e. countries and institutions which interact with Ukraine, to condemn recent events under the presidency of Viktor Yanukovych. Whether the foreign policy of Ukraine is the result of one man’s opinion or the Ukrainian population is debatable and causes the question this thesis will seeks to answer. Taras Kuzio explains that “Ukraine’s democratic regression and stagnation under Yanukovych point to Ukraine’s future as a permanently open question that invites contradictory and challenging answers and two decades into Ukrainian independence the country’s trajectory still remains and open question” (Kuzio, 2012: 2).

## 2.1 Problem Formulation

Ukraine’s foreign policy approach since its independence has been a process of turmoil and continues to be disorganized in terms of the attitude of the different sitting governments and in particular the President. As Ukraine is strategically situated between Russia and the EU, the shifts are seen in the relations to these two respectively. This thesis will seek to explain on which theoretical background the shifts are taken in terms of foreign policy by looking at the factorial situations in the country. The thesis seeks to examine the problematic shifts in Ukraine’s foreign policy and the effects it have had on the democratization process of the country by asking:

*Looking at Ukraine since independence, which factors can explain and determine Ukrainian foreign policy?*

To answer this somewhat open question, it is necessary to understand the choices made by the different sitting governments and focus will mainly be on the presidents since the Orange Revolution, and in particular on the sitting President, and how acts and choices of these have turned Ukraine either towards the EU or Russia. With that in mind it is important to pinpoint, that for this reason exactly, four different theories will be considered in order to explain domestic, but mostly international relations in order to find the factors which seem to be the deciding when it comes to Ukrainian foreign policy. The theoretical background will all be recognized theories within 20th Century international relations. They will each seek and help to analyze the shifts, choices and consequences of policies which affect foreign affairs and, thereby, Ukraine’s international relations.

# 3. Methodology

In this section, I will explain how and why I have selected the topic of this thesis and on which grounds the particular data has been selected. Furthermore, it will be outlined how the four different theories were chosen and how they can help reach a conclusion. All the choices made in the process of making this project have been subject to my subjective opinions and these choices can therefore always be questioned and critiqued.

## 3.1. Choosing a Topic

Having done my internship in the Slovak Republic, I gained an insight and knowledge of the EU’s relations with its neighbors to the East. The Slovak Republic is one of Ukraine’s neighbors and one of the countries which have been affected by the gas crises. I have always seen Ukraine as somewhat of a mystery when it comes to foreign relations – or at times just an extension of Russia. It was, therefore, in my interest to look at which forces actually drive Ukraine’s foreign relations in the direction it is going. Taking the amount of problems in Ukraine into account, the western media does not pay much attention to the country. Only when a politician was treated wrongfully and ended up in prison by the doings of forces in the political life, did the western media pay more attention. But from my point of view, it was mostly because western institutions was forced to form an opinion and take a stand in regards to the prisoning of Tymoshenko because Ukraine was hosting the2012 UEFA European Football Championship in June 2012. When the EU asserts that security, peace and democracy are their main objectives for the EU countries and their neighbors[[2]](#footnote-2), Ukraine to me seemed to be a neglected country taking into consideration the power they hold – or so it seemed to me, and that is why I chose to look at the subject of Ukraine’s foreign policy.

## 3.2. Choice of theory and hypothesis

In order to structure my analysis, I chose four theories which could be argued to be able to explain the foreign policy of Ukraine. All of them might be right, one might be the theory which best explain foreign policy decisions in Ukraine or all of them could fail to explain my research question. Ukraine’s foreign policy choices, as well as domestic, can seem questionable to a European, and, consequently, it is interesting to look at theories of international relations to explain and help understand the stance and choices in Ukrainian foreign politics. The point of departure in terms of choosing theories was to find a very contemporary and respected theory which offhand came to be a good explanation without having actually done the work of analyzing yet. This to me was interdependence theory. Researching interdependence theory was also my way of discovering which other three theories I though could be helpful in explaining the foreign policy of Ukraine. Thus, I chose modernization theory which seemingly is close with interdependence theory. Additionally, I wanted to use a classic international relations theory, which would have some counterpoints to the two before-chosen, and I thus arrived at realism. Feeling the need for a more humanistic viewpoint I wanted to conclude with constructivism.

## 3.3. Reasoning behind the background chapter

A large part of the thesis is also the historical background of Ukraine. The background chapter is the primary data collection, as it serves as a knowledgebase for the analytical section. Ukraine’s history is of course endless, but in order to understand the theory and analyses the necessary political history is written and chosen by me. I believed it to be necessary to have thorough background on the country in question because despite the short time of independence, Ukraine has a rich and really complicated history, which is like none other. The background serves the purpose of describing the complicated relationship Ukraine have had, and still has, with its closest neighbors – both geographically speaking and in terms of international relations. To understand the political motives, I find it to be immensely important to understand the complexity, because from a Dane, Nordic and EU’s perspective it is on the surface hard to see the reasoning behind the political decisions and the life of Ukrainian leadership and the impact it has on its people. Even though the analyses put most emphasis on the political situations after the Orange Revolution, the time before is important to have included because it serves as a rationalization of why Ukraine is in the state it is in.

## 3.4. Parliamentary election, October 28, 2012.

As this thesis was begun in August 2012, it has been written while a parliamentary election has taken place in Ukraine. I have made the choice, of not taking this into consideration, as there was no presidential change, and the repercussions of the seats changed in parliament are yet to be seen in terms of the choices and changes the President take part in. When referring to the current or sitting government it is the one before parliamentary elections on October 28, 2012.

# 4. Theories

As a basis, this thesis has chosen to look at the world as one of a global village or a world without borders. Because of this, it is natural to limit the theory section to a handful of selected theories which seem to fit the question at hand. Consequently, in the theory section, a variety of theories which could be argued to fit the research question of the foreign policy of Ukraine will seek to help explain four different situations - choices, changes and relationships – which have taken place since Ukraine’s independence from the Soviet Union, and particularly after the Orange Revolution. Thus, several different theories, with different world outlooks will be explained, thereby being able to clarify the reasoning behind certain situations. The theories of interdependence, modernization, realism and social constructivism, which will be thoroughly explained as they are seen fit to the research question, are the theories this thesis will use. Additionally, it is important to understand that it is reasonably to believe that one theory is not enough to cover the subject at hand, and that is why four hypotheses will be set up as to explain a specific situation in Ukraine, which in turn might explain the foreign policy of Ukraine. The four hypotheses will cover very different aspect of Ukrainian policy as they will be paired with a theory seen to fit and explain said situation.

## 4.1. Interdependence Theory

*Hypothesis: An important aspect of interdependence theory is asymmetrical interdependence. Theoretically, countries are mutually interdependent, but additionally that the balance is often uneven. This means that some countries are more dependent on others than vice versa. Is Ukraine more dependent on Russia than the other way around? Ukraine is dependent on Russian gas and oil, but also on the Russian market in general. What does this mean for Ukraine and what other forms of dependence do they encounter. Is Ukrainian policies influenced by Russian foreign policy and potentially political extortion? On the same note; does Ukraine also have an asymmetrical interdependent relationship with the EU?*

The changing nature of the international system over the past decades has brought in the need for a theory which seeks to explain and understand a system which is constantly changing. Today it is widely recognized that the world is one of global interdependence, in which regional cooperation serves to establish alliances with other groups, states or institutions sharing similar economic and trade interests (Hill and Smith, 2005: 319). Herein interdependence theory will be explained largely by use of Joseph S. Nye Jr. and Robert O. Keohane’s renowned book *Power and Interdependence* (2012) published first in 1977 - a book well-known author and journalist Fareed Zakaria classifies as a “[…] classic work of international theory” (Keohane and Nye, 2012: xiv). Interdependence is classified as a liberal way of thinking, and in Keohane and Nye’s book ‘interdependence’ is conceptualized as mutual dependence and ‘power’ is conceptualized as asymmetrical interdependence. Henry Kissinger stated that “[…] the traditional agenda of international affairs […] no longer defines our perils and possibilities […] The world has become interdependent in economics, in communications, in human aspirations” (ibid: 3). Fareed Zakaria argues in the foreword to *Power and Interdependence* that since the end of the Cold War, states have sought stability and security without the restraints and protection the alliances of the Cold War provided (ibid: xiii), i.e. the mutual interdependence across many boundaries have in many ways intensified since the Cold War as there are no apparent relations in the sense that the Cold War provided, and this easily makes states insecure and alone if relations with others are not nurtured.

Interdependence can be traced back to when modern trade started in the 18th and 19th centuries, and likewise then did scholars claim that the interdependence that trade inflicted on countries would make war impracticable as well as unprofitable. A large part of interdependence theory is the argument that war is impracticable and does not serve the good of any country. Furthermore, since the Cold War it is argued that powerful countries, with few exceptions, have done much to avoid being involved in wars (ibid: xiii). In 2012, Keohane and Nye seek to elucidate that globalization is what they in 1977 explained as interdependence, albeit intensified interdependence (ibid: xxiii). Interdependence theory can be seen as a liberal alternative to realism, but the intention of interdependence theory from the perspective of the two authors was the wish to construct a new way to look at world politics which in turn guides us to understand the relationship between economics and politics and the patterns of institutionalized international cooperation. The two authors saw the need to fit transnational relations into a larger context, one in which they did not believe realist theory to fit completely (ibid: xvi). Conversely, Keohane and Nye believed that the theory of interdependence was acquired from both realism and liberalism in order to explain the changes which they observed in the 1970s and, thus, being able to explain how asymmetrical interdependence can be a source of power with the liberal stressing the interdependence and the realist focus on power (ibid: xxi).

The first rule of interdependence seem to be the awareness of the fact that world politics is a moving target, and, therefore, it is not possible to develop complementary models within interdependence theory. When breaking down the concept of interdependence, the word is very telling. Dependence is a state of determination or a state where one is significantly affected by external factors and, consequently, interdependence is a mutual form of dependence. More specifically, interdependence in a political world context refers to a situation where the actions of countries or actors in different countries have reciprocally effects. These effects can be the results of different international transactions, e.g. flows of money, goods or messages from one international actor to another. Since the Second World War, it has been argued that every ten years the general tendency is that human interconnectedness across national boundaries are doubling (ibid: 8). Albeit, one should be careful with mistaking interconnectedness with interdependence, as there are clear methods of differentiating the level of interdependence. A country importing massive amounts of oil must be said to be decisively more dependent on the country exporting said oil than a country importing luxury goods, i.e. when countries are dependent on essential goods, reciprocal costly effects on transactions, one can talk about interdependence and when the transactions do not have a significant costly effect it is characterized as interconnectedness (ibid: 8).

### 4.1.1. Asymmetrical interdependence and power

Interdependence is not evenly balanced mutual dependence, but on the contrary it is the asymmetries which are most likely to provide sources of influence for actors in their dealings with one another. By asymmetrical, Keohane and Nye mean that military interests dominate economic interests. Economic interests are often made to be definitive whereas military power is the final straw in the sense that economic means alone are most likely to be ineffective against serious military force. An example is 9/11, where the reaction to the attack was one of military reason rather than economic (ibid: xxxii).

Asymmetrical interdependence is a source of trade of power which is characterized as the political bargaining process of interdependence (ibid: 9). Power in the form of military power used to be the dominant form of power, but nowadays the resources which produce power capabilities are much more complex, i.e. military power is influences by other processes, but is still described by Keohane and Nye as being the power which triumphs all other forms of power (ibid: 15, table 1.1.). Power as control over resources or the potential to affect outcomes, is also still triumphant. A less dependent actor most often has a significant amount of a certain resource, which is also of value to the partner in the relationship. Consequently, it is more costly to the partner with fewer resources to do anything to threaten said relationship. However, one is rarely talking about a one-on-one relationship.

The idea behind interdependence is also the idea that the power of individual nations is becoming elusive. The behavior of states is vital as its chosen behavior is dependent on, as well as is influenced by, other actors and as such affects world politics and influences patterns of interdependence. By regulating, creating or accepting rules and procedures, governments to a certain degree control transnational and interstate relations. It can, therefore, be argued that interstate relations and decisions have a huge effect on international relations, and is a decisive measure in the changes that are seen in the world order and international relations. Interdependence can also be used as an ‘excuse’ to meddle in other’s affairs as well as against both national economic nationalism and assertive challenges abroad. Keohane and Nye argue that political leaders often use the rhetoric of interdependence in order to portray interdependence as a natural necessity which policy and domestic interest groups must adjust to, rather than something that is created by politics (ibid: 6). Regarding the concept of power, this is relevant to the extent that it still remains fundamental to world politics, and as such power is a means to explain interdependence and the different major types of interdependence (ibid: 5).

During the Cold War, national security became a slogan which was used by internationalists who were in favor of increased American involvement in international affairs. With the entrance of détente in world affairs, national security symbolism had to share its place with interdependence. However, in the new millennium is has been hard to balance the rhetoric of national security versus that of interdependence. Those two exist side by side, as especially American presidents have used both in order to assert American involvement in international affair. Yet it is argued by Keohane and Nye that it is an uneasy co-existence (ibid: 7). The conflict lies in the fact that interdependence suggests that international conflict of interests are irrelevant and passé while national security argues that international conflicts are at the center of international affairs and potentially violent and damaging to states as well as to international relations. This is the cause of much confusion, but by Keohane and Nye both were deemed relevant in their first publication of *Power and Interdependence* in 1977. The advocates of interdependence argued that the survival of the human race was threatened by military conflict, environmental dangers and other conflicts of interest, which in turn - since everyone is interested in survival - should mean that these would cease to exist. However, they are still alive and kicking. Keohane and Nye argued that international conflict would not disappear even though the concept of interdependence would prevail. On the other hand, they believed that international conflicts would take on new forms and possibly increase in the future (ibid: 7).

### 4.1.2. Complex Interdependence Theory

Complex Interdependence theory was pioneered and systematically explored by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in the before-mentioned book *Power and Interdependence*. The complex interdependence framework was viewed as an attempt to combine elements of liberal and realist thought. Keohane and Nye found realism to be an inadequate and incomplete theory. They especially highlighted three characteristics of complex interdependence, which are paramount to international relations. These are: multiple channels of contact among society, lack of clear hierarchies of issue and irrelevance of military force (ibid: xxiii). Through these, they found the concept of complex interdependence to be the ideal type of international relations. Conversely, these three assumptions are reversed in realism, where states are the only significant actors, security is the dominant goal and lastly force is the dominant instrument (ibid: xxvii). Realism will be looked at as a theory in a later chapter, as it is important to highlight again that Keohane and Nye also found realism to be complementary and useful for interdependence theory although they do critique it. The critique is more or less aimed at the assertion that realism is ideal and can stand alone as an explanation of international relations.

Power and interdependence is conditional and a moving target and it is under these conditions that the term complex interdependence was used, i.e. that one have to understand the particular political, domestic and international situation applicable to a particular country at a certain time in history (ibid: xxiii). Foreign and domestic policy, as it is repeatedly emphasized by Keohane and Nye is becoming increasingly difficult to separate (Ibid: xvii). The term complex interdependence refers to a number of different transnational connections – or interdependencies – between states, societies or institutions. Theorists within Interdependence theory argue that relations across (state) lines, especially within economy, were increasing while, still being important, military force and power balance were decreasing. This because military force was not such a powerful a political tool when it comes to increasing the probability of cooperation between states as e.g. economic reforms (IR Theory).

The before-mentioned characteristics for complex interdependence theory will be thoroughly explained hereunder, as a very clear understanding of these are necessary in order to be able to explain and analyses the research question at hand. Multiple channels are what connect countries across state lines. These can be informal ties between elites as well as formal official arrangements. They can take place face-to-face, through different mass communications tools or via multinational organizations such as banks and international corporations. The multiple channels consist of interstate relations, transgovernmental and transnational relations. A large part of these channels affect international relations as well as domestic relations. It is found that large dynamic organizations, which are not controlled entirely by governments, have become a normal participant in both international and domestic affairs. The actors which are acting as channels across state lines have become important as they through their actions, not only pursue their own interests, but also act as “ […]transmission belts, making government policies in various countries more sensitive to one another (Keohane and Nye, 2012: 21). The scope of governments’ actions has broadened across domestic boundaries, while corporations, banks, trade unions etc. are making decisions on an international level. This naturally has the effect that domestic policies of different countries have an impact on one another to a smaller or greater extent. It is expected that these institutions affect each other and when a country has certain rules and procedures which apply to an international or even multinational corporation it is inevitable that this will have an impact on the way said corporation does business in other countries or corporations. Thus, foreign economic policies also have a greater impact on domestic policies and economies than in the past, which, consequently, blurs the lines between that of domestic and foreign policy. The current topic of environmental issues is also a clear advocate of how domestic affairs have an impact on other countries.

Keohane and Nye argue that the past provided the idea that foreign affairs was equal to military security, and that this idea was prevailing. This issue has become far more large and diverse and an issue relevant to foreign policy which extends far further than to military issues. Kissinger said in 1975, that the traditional agenda was not enough, and that other problems had begun to arise. The mentioned problems still corresponds to the problems of the 21st Century. Energy resources, environment, the use of space and sea as well as population was issues that Kissinger ranked at the same level of military security and territorial rivalry (ibid: 22). These were issues previously considered purely domestic, but now has crossed over to being international problems. Consequently, these issues not only concern domestic policies but also concern international institutions such as the IMF, the EU and the UN.

The third criteria correspond closely with the second, as it has to do with the diminishing role of military force. Beforehand, it was argued that military issues were not dominant on the foreign policy agenda anymore. This because other issues rose as important, but as is going to be explained, also because the interdependence among countries required reduced military activity. The hypothetical situation, only being realized in world wars, is that the country with the superior military instruments would always prevail. As survival at all times is the primary goal of any country, force is the last resort and, thereby, a necessity should a country ultimately feel life threatened. Consequently, military force has always been a central part of national power. Now industrialized and pluralistic countries have a perceived margin of safety that is very wide and fears of attack from one anther – other industrialized and pluralistic countries – is virtually nonexistent. This in part because the goals that countries want to achieve are not reachable or appropriate with military force. Often these goals are economic and ecological welfare and these are best archived otherwise. During the Cold War, military force and tools were seen as bargaining tools and as a way to threaten the other superpower, but not used. Its deterrence ability, thereby, indirectly served as a protective shield. Even though there are still a significant number of examples where military force is dominantly important, it is diminishing among ‘equal’ countries, and all in all it is most often used as a threat. However, when talking about the use of threat with military instruments one must also assume that under the right – or wrong so to say – circumstances, use of military force could again become vital in the quest for power. Keohane and Nye have two scenarios where this is plausible: First; that force could again become an important direct instrument should drastic social and political change take place. The second concerning elites; even when elites’ interests are complementary, it must be the case that if one uses military force to protect the other, the country being the protector must have a significant political influence over the country it has protected (Ibid: 23).

It is also very risky to employ military force against a country with which one has a variety of relationships. If one country uses military force because the two are in disagreement over one issue, the countries are putting all their mutually beneficial relationships on the line. The effects would thus be too costly for the country employing military power. Additionally, there are also statistics that say that western democracies have very strong oppositions to prolonged military conflict (Ibid: 24).

The main point of these three characteristics of complex interdependence is that, contrary to realism, there is no clear hierarchy among the issues which are important to a certain country. The issues and problems are all, to a certain degree and at different levels, linked so closely that one changes significantly should another be removed or left unsolved. This also means that a country can be powerful and excel in one area and be weaker in another, where another country has it reversed, thereby, making it harder to distinguish the weak country from the powerful.

Besides the main characteristics of interdependence, Keohane and Nye also set forth a set of assumptions. The first concerning ‘linkage’ where they argue that “[t]he differentiation among issue areas in complex interdependence means that linkage among issues will become more problematic and will tend to reduce rather than reinforce international hierarchy” (Ibid: 26). The fact that issues are connected, furthermore, puts countries in a difficult dilemma when making strategic choices for the country. It is a balancing act when trying to measure how far one can push a linkage before it becomes counterproductive (Ibid: 26). It is a matter of compromises to not let one issue overshadow another to a degree where it is harmful to the power balance in the country. Keohane and Nye also expect that political formation and agenda setting will become increasingly important the more interdependent a society is. The shifts of distribution of power resources within sets of issues will arguably affect agendas. Marginalized groups have the opportunity to bring forth their discontent and politicize it as a domestic problem (Ibid: 27). Groups who have power within one issue can put another agenda on the map by linking it with an already politicized issue, and thereby shift focus onto something they find important.

Another significant condition of interdependence is the relations of transnational and transgovernmental relations. This brings us back to the before-mentioned multiple channels. Transnational relations to a very large degree have an effect on political bargaining. This because e.g. multinational corporations play a large role both as an independent actor but certainly also as an actor which is influence and/or manipulated by governments. Furthermore, the political stands of domestic groups are likely to be affected by these international actors through means of communications between them and their counterparts from other countries. Particular policy questions also require governmental bureaucracies to seek contact and influence with counterparts and, consequently, alter their stands in order to be stronger and form a possible coalition. For every actor – governmental of non-governmental, domestic or international - it has with interdependence become about having the best possible allies. However, in the name of national interest a lot can be disguised. The ambiguity of national interest can raise serious problems for top political leaders when bureaucracies contact each other directly across country lines, as national interest then become blurred and less assuring (ibid: 29).

Lastly, there is the condition of the role of the international organizations in world politics. Naturally, and very much in line with the earlier mentioned conditions, these play a vital role within interdependence. With uneven balance of power and coalitions forming across country lines, the potential role of the international organizations has increased significantly. They play the part as “[…] catalyst for coalition-formation and as arenas for political initiatives and linkage by weak states” (ibid: 29). International organizations bring people together regardless of affiliation, the obvious example being the United Nations.

Regardless, or maybe exactly because of the interdependence between countries, it is important to remember that every country is still seeking one thing – power. Vulnerable states will consequently try to use asymmetrical interdependence within particular issues as a source of power, as well as using international organization and transnational actors as a spokesperson of power in order to maximize power potential.

### 4.1.3. Revisiting Interdependence Theory

As the original interdependence theory set forth by Keohane and Nye is from 1977, it is natural that the subject has been revisited several times by different scholars since then. Keohane and Nye themselves have published a number of papers on the subject, as well as updating the original book with new relevant chapters and forewords.

Keohane and Nye explain that one should be careful in distinguishing between interdependence and complex interdependence as there is a marginal difference. Interdependence is a broad term used to describe situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or actors, whereas complex interdependence is an ideal type of interdependence. The last is made to contrast the realist ideal. They viewed the basic foundation of interdependence to be compatible with realism, but explicate that complex interdependence is clearly liberal rather than realist (Keohane and Nye, 1987: 737). Complex interdependence describes a situation where a number of countries use multiple channels of contact to connect societies (ibid: 731). The authors, furthermore, respond to criticism of complex interdependence by explaining that critics had forgotten that they did explicate from the beginning that the discussion of complex interdependence was a construction of a hypothetical world rather than a real one. Responding further to critics they argue that complex interdependence is rather a thought experiment than a theory, and that to fully develop the theory they should have drawn upon liberal theory to a larger extent (ibid: 737). Lastly, Keohane and Nye concludes that in explaining complex interdependence they paid too little attention to how the combination of domestic and international processes shape preferences in international affairs (ibid: 753).

In the 1970s when Keohane and Nye wrote *Power and Interdependence*, modernists started and have continuously proclaimed that technology, in the beginning telecommunication and jet travel in particular, has changed the world and made it into a global village. It is argued that the information age is leading to overlapping communities which makes international corporations and organizations leading world actors rather than the territorial state (Keohane and Nye, 1998: 81).

## 4.2. Modernization Theory

*Hypothesis: Ukraine have since its independence been going through a modernization process towards democratization. Can the striving towards democratization and western values be explained by modernization theory and can the theory explain choices made in Ukrainian foreign policy? According to the theory, modernization leads to a strengthening of pro-democratic values, which might lead to a closer bond to e.g. the EU.*

By interdependence theorists it is argued that neither traditionalists nor modernists have a satisfactory framework for understanding the politics of interdependence (Keohane and Nye, 2012: 4). However, for this thesis it is valued to have different theories as a perspective for analyses. Modernization theory shares some foundational theoretical background with interdependency theory as a liberal theory. However, modernization theory in this thesis stands alone and will be accounted for and valued in the analysis because Ukraine has gone through what undoubtedly can be described as industrialization, and it is, therefore, important to have a basic understanding of the classic modernization theory.

From Karl Marx, over Max Weber to Daniel Bell, modernization theory have sought to explain that everyone is capable of transforming, changing and developing themselves and their society, believing in the constant improvement in human affairs. Although modernization theory is controversial and has faced amounts of both criticism and praise over the years, this has been the claim since it the idea was first proposed by Age of Enlightenment philosopher Marquis de Condercet. The central claim in modernization theory is that economic development, cultural change and political change go hand in hand. Some trajectories of change are far more likely than others, because of certain configurations of values and beliefs, as well as political and economic institutions, which are mutually supportive while others are not (ibid: 7). This means that certain changes are foreseeable and once a country embark on the path of industrialization, related changes are destined to follow, e.g. mass mobilization and diminishing gender roles (Inglehart, 1997: 5). Above all, modernization can be described as a process wherein economic and political capabilities in a society are increasing. Modernization is seen as an attraction as it is also viewed as a way of a society to move from poor to rich. Being rich is the dominant goal of modernization, and industrialization is the core process in order to achieve this goal. Modernizations gained popularity because it promised predictive power. If a country embarked towards modernizations it could count on cultural and political change incl. lower birth rates, higher life expectancy, increased mass political participation and in the long run, maybe even democracy as the ultimate goal (9).

Following Ronald Inglehart (1997), modernization theory is exciting because it not only helps explain economic, political and societal change, but because it also brings with it a certain level of predictability, albeit human behavior is complex and influenced by many external as well as internal factors. Thus, it has been argued that one cannot argue for predictability, and yet modernization theory has proven that certain syndromes of economic, political and societal change go together on coherent trajectories with some naturally being more probable than others (Inglehart, 1997: 7). Long term, certain trajectories have been laid out for those who have followed the path of modernization. Countries that undergo industrialization tend to experience urbanization, growing occupational specialization and higher level of education. A less palpable consequence, but equally important, is e.g. a rise in political participation. That is, the more industrialized the country the more likely it is the mass political participation and input will have an effect on the actions of whatever political leader in charge. Cultural changes play a vital role in modernization and certain cultural values contribute to economic investment and accumulation which can make industrialization possible. However, social and cultural change is not “linear” (ibid: 8). This means that although the transformation from agrarian society to industrialized society is predictable in many ways, it does not continue to be predictable. Thus, there is a point of diminishing return. This is described as post-modernization. Post-modernizing reflects a shift in what the people in a modernized society want out of life. In this stage, the effect is on governing politics, religion, work and family life. This is a later stage of development as it is characterized by very different beliefs than that of modernization. The concept of post-modernization is important because industrialization plays such a major role in the explanation of modernization, but does not take into account that industrial civilization is not the final stage of human development. Because of this, and because arguably classical modernization have a hard time describing the progress of developed countries since the 1970s, modernization, like other theories, seek reevaluation and new ways of thinking.

The concept of modernization was attractive in the social sciences in the 1950s and early 60s. However, it took a blow to the head as it in the 1970s faced severe criticism. This led to reexaminations of modernization and, consequently, a modified view of how modernization works (ibid: 8). As previously mentioned in this chapter, modernization promised prosperity in the form of good governance or democracy – or at least this is what critics have argued. The implication that economic development naturally and easily produced liberal democracies was arguably forged; however some counter-argued that this was the ‘easy’ way to understand modernization instead of the underlying and far more comprehensible and qualified prognoses which modernization theorists claimed (ibid).

A very interesting debate within Modernization theory is the causal linkage. Is it really economic development which causes change in political and cultural patterns or is it culture and politics which cause economic development? Classic theories such as Lenin and Marx have debated over this issue. Marx believed that economic determinism, and, thereby, society’s technological level was what shaped its economic system and, consequently, determined said society’s cultural and political characteristics. Somewhere in the middle, Weber believed that culture could shape economic behavior as well as being shaped by it. Lenin on the other hand, argued that the working class on its own would never achieve the necessary class consciousness in order to be revolutionary, thus, arguing that they needed to be led by ideological aware professional revolutionaries (ibid: 9). More recently, Bell (1973) argued that changes in the workforce would be the reason for cultural change. This change would occur when the majority of the workforce in the dominant economic sector produced services instead of raw materials or other forms of manufactured goods (ibid).

Another distinguished scholar also argued that modernization was not linear. Samuel P. Huntington undertook the issue of modernization theory’s unproblematic picture of social change in *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968) and argued that although correct in the assumption that economic development leads to profound social changes, it is wrong to assume that those changes are necessarily benign or progressive. Societies in the process of dramatic social transformation are often unstable an even violent. The positive outcomes are likely to be seen where healthy economic institutions are able to channel and respond to the transformation in the same pace as said transformation. According to Huntington this has proven to be the most difficult task (Foreign Affairs: What to Read on Modernization Theory).

Agreeing on the most central points of modernization, described throughout this chapter, Ronald Inglehart proposed a revised view of modernization theory. These are points, which are important to remember when using modernization theory in the new 21st Century. Firstly, Inglehart agrees with Huntington in the fact that change is not linear and does not move continuously until the end of history. It must reach a point of diminishing return, and has since the 1970 begun to move in a new direction. Secondly, Inglehart chooses to believe that the relationship between economics, culture and politics is mutually supportive, and thus it is not possible – or necessary – to say ‘who came first’. Incompatible economics, culture and politics are not likely. Thirdly, modernization is not equal to westernization. At one point in time, modernization was concentrated in the West, but now the term is global. Lastly, it is imperative to remember that democracy is not inherent in the process of modernization. Fascism and Communism are the most dominating alternative outcomes according to Barrington Moore Jr. (Inglehart, 1997: 10-11). Concurrently, Inglehart emphasizes that democracy does become more likely as a country moves from the modernization phase to post-modernization.

## 4.3. Realism

*Hypothesis: Realism highlights states as selfish only in pursuit of own national interests. Ukraine is a country balancing between the EU and Russia. It is asserted that the positions that Ukraine choose to take in terms of their relations with the EU and Russia is taken to be able to preserve their own independence, and in order to so, Ukraine attempts to make arrangements only which are only in their own best interest. Furthermore, realism postulates that sovereignty is of the highest value for foreign policy. Is this also true of Ukraine, or is the current government better served by subjecting to Russia in order to gain political and economic support, i.e. does realism’s hypothesis that sovereignty is a country’s highest value also hold up in the case of Ukraine?*

Realism or political realism is a branch within international relations theory that emphasizes international politics’ competitive and conflictual sides (SEP: Political Realism). Often contrasted to liberalism, looking into realism will provide this thesis with a constructive variance to interdependence, and it is imperative not to eliminate the very real possibility that one – or two – theories within the same branch of international relations are not able to cover the research question at hand.

Realists consider the principal actors in the international arena to be states, which are concerned with their own security, act in pursuit of their own national interests, and struggle for power. […]National politics is the realm of authority and law, whereas international politics […] is a sphere without justice, characterized by active or potential conflict among states. (SEP: Political Realism).

This basic view of realism leaves very little room for morality as it considers the human being to be egoistic and driven by self-interest in nature. This together with constraints put on politics by people and a lack of international government, makes power and security the main issues for the individual states. The fact that there is no decisive power in international politics makes anarchy the main power, thereby, enabling states to act in own self-interest and treat the international arena as a self-help system where everyone define their own interest as well as act in order to pursue power (SEP: General Features of Realism in International Relations). These characteristics of realism were also some of the characteristics Thomas Hobbes believed. A well-known Hobbesian concept was that of an anarchic state of nature where a constant war of power is every man against every man (SEP: Hobbes’s Anarchic State of Nature), thus fighting force with force. However, this notion does not mean that states are in constant battle with one another, it merely means that states have a disposition to fight, thereby, looming under the surface at all times, and consequently, making domestic security a dominant factor in states’ international relations as it naturally requires most attention.

Taking this very basic understanding of what realism is it is clear that it stands in contrast to what was emphasized by Keohane and Nye and interdependence theory. Realism have many prominent theorists and, consequently, too many to cover in this chapter. Hence, emphasis will be put on 20th Century classical realism with Hans A. Morgenthau’s realist principles. This in part, because Keohane and Nye use examples from Morgenthau when referring to realism. For Morgenthau the main cause of conflict is the desire to dominate, which lies within every human being. This derives from the thoughts of, among others, Hobbes, as Morgenthau also puts self-interest at the core of human existence. Morgenthau asserts that all political figures act in the interest of power, and this assumption allows for analysis of international politics regardless of the individual politicians’ motives, preferences or morals. This is counted for as an objective law according to Morgenthau who, intentionally developed realism into a theory and a useful instrument in foreign policy (ibid). He thus asserts that realism helps to construct politics as it is a way of thinking about international relations.

Whereas the earliest knowledge of realism asserts the absence of morality, Morgenthau consider the relationship between ethics and realism to be relevant, as he acknowledge that morality is significant, but underlines that the relationship between morality and successful political actions is tense and unbalanced. Especially, he emphasizes that universal moral principles cannot be applied to international politics, but needs to be altered and filtered to match time and place. Good sense is to be applied to political actions as they influence the political aftermath. Thus, prudence is a guide for political actions, as power and morality are two vital forces that must be joined in order to master politics. He says that if morality was to be completely removed people would descend to sub-humans or beasts. In the national interest or self-interest it is also natural to want to avoid conflicts if possible, and here it is claimed that countries should avoid moral crusades and ideological confrontations and instead look for compromise, as this is the basis for their own satisfactions, consequently, acting in theory own best interest with no considerations paid to others, but the sole mutual interest.

### 4.3.1. Critiquing Realism

Critics of realism question how realism can be considered a law, or a way of thinking unconditionally about international relations, as the premise that human beings lust for power is a premise that cannot be proved by empirical research, but can only be looked at as a belief (ibid). Critic Raymond Aron notices that at best Morgenthau’s realism is still ambiguous as it can either be understood to be a means or an end in politics. However, if it is a means for gaining something, it does not construe the nature of international politics nor does it provide an understanding of the actions of states as independent from the states’ leader’s preferences or ideology (ibid). Aron argues this because he believes that using the principles of Morgenthau’s realism; all states should have the same foreign policy whatever regime type they might have. Thus making power, security and national interest inadequate in describing state politics and international affairs, because “ [i]nternational politics cannot be studied independently of the wider historical and cultural context” (ibid).

After the Second World War and during the Cold War, the label of political realism became widely accepted by practitioners of international relations. This because idealism had had an upspring just after The Great War, but with the coming of the Second World War, idealism seemed to falter. The fact that political realism argued the potential state of war, because states’ behavior was constantly dominated by military conflict suddenly seemed more accurate (Keohane and Nye, 2012: 4). Interdependence advocates Keohane and Nye count realism as inadequate, as they find that complex interdependence at times comes closer to reality than that of realism (ibid: 19). However they also argue that rather than seeing realism as an alternative to liberal Interdependence theory, the two are instead necessarily complementary to one another (Keohane and Nye, 1987: 728). Realist assumptions allow for an ideal type of world politics, where there is a continuous active or potentially active conflict among states where the use of force also constantly is potential or active (Keohane and Nye, 2012: 19). This describes states as entities relentlessly on guard and ready to defend its territories from real or perceived threats. Realism as well as liberalism has roots in a utilitarian world view where individuals pursue own interests by responding to incentives – this is a process of political and economic exchange which is characterized by bargaining (Keohane and Nye, 1987: 728). This corresponds nicely with the theory of interdependence.

In realist theory demand for power and security and the danger to a country’s survival is emphasized, and, consequently, military force is at the realm of realism and the most important source of power (Keohane and Nye, 1987: 729). Neoclassical realism, in many ways has taken classical realism which is very rationalistic and added trends from constructivist new points. In this way realism is still a rational cost-benefit calculation, but has to take into consideration national identity as well as other factors such as internal political struggles and impacts from external conditions. This is taken from the constructivist approach, which will be looked at in the next and last theoretical section.

## 4.4. Social Constructivism

*Hypothesis: Social Constructivism is about a country’s identity. Consequently, it is proclaimed that Ukraine base domestic political decisions on affiliations, culture and historical ties. It can also be claimed that the president in the country is a reflection of the identity the Ukrainian people either believe they have or strive to achieve. In this case, the current government, president and political situation will be analyzed.*

Social constructivism, referred to as constructivism, is a theoretical tool within international relations theory. While many international relations theories focus on matters of materialistic form, the focus in constructivism is on the human awareness and consciousness and its place in international affairs. Instead of focusing on power balance and economic capabilities, constructivism focuses on social matters instead of material matters. A very important feature is that the social reality is subjective and internal to whoever observes international affairs (Jackson and Sørensen, 2007: 162). This means that there is a more dire need to put emphasis on ideas and beliefs as the theory stresses that it is human beings who, individually, create and constitute the world they are living in. Consequently, international (and domestic) relations change according to the ideas and beliefs of the people living it, because ideas and beliefs are the system in itself. Thus, every individual perceive relations differently. For this reason, it also becomes possible for people and states to rethink old ways and structures more easily.

Constructivism became popular in the 1980s, especially in North America during the Cold War. The two blocks lead by the USA and the Soviet Union lead a power-balancing act and constructivism helped understand new ways of thinking and opened up for new strategies and angles. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the international power balance were thrown and turned much more open (ibid: 162-163). This was a new situation, which neorealism could not explain in ways that it could during the Cold War. It was a new situation with no clear future developments. Following realism, other countries would not let the USA have the power alone but would attempt to ensure a balance of power because it is a security hazards when one entity have the majority power. It is in this context, that constructivists believe that realism is missing the aspect of thoughts and ideas, instead of only focusing on materialist, as this leads to a better theory about anarchy and power balancing (ibid: 163). This also means that constructivists have more in common with liberalists than realist. Inspiration for constructivism was found in, among others, sociology and philosophy. Anthony Giddens was a rather big influence, as his structuration concept found its way into constructivism. Giddens did not think that rules and conditions, i.e. structures, were any hindrance for new ways of thinking among different actors. He believed that the relationship between structures and actors involved inter-subjective understanding as it today also does in constructivism. This does not mean that constructivists believe that structures do not put restraint on people – they still believe that, but contrary to other international relations theories constructivists believe that people can think and reason these structures, and consequently, put them into other contexts and believe them to fulfill new frames, which make the actors use the structures in new ways. This makes the relationship between actors and structures much more dynamic and flexible.

In summation, constructivism asserts that actors create history and it is only through the actions and beliefs of these actors that the international system comes to be what it is today, and what it changes into tomorrow. Additionally, knowledge about the world is obtained individually, and, consequently, is construed subjectively as it is “[…] filtered through human consciousness” (ibid: 164).

### 4.4.1. Social Constructivism in Social Theory

In this thesis, constructivism is used as an international relations theory, but it is just as much a social theory. As constructivism here is used as an IR theory, less time will be spent on explaining the social aspect. However, it will not be disregarded as it is believed to be able to contribute valuably to the analysis. It argues that the political and social world is not part of a natural world. It is something that is created through ideas and beliefs and essentially not material conditions or forces. The world is not a given, and it does not have an independent existence. There are no laws or scientific discoveries which can explain an external reality. Laws of nature – or economics and politics for that matter – do not exist. For this reason, history is not something that can be an objective science, as it is a moving target dependent on human thought (ibid: 165). Everything in the social world is made by people and through their actions which develop from their ideas and beliefs – a world of human consciousness. Discourse, language, signals and social identities are also a big part of social constructivism. Groups of people can develop a social understanding together, e.g. in a nation or a sub-region in a nation. They have constructed their lives according to their beliefs and understandings. This e.g. covers religion, discourse and history. Physical elements are present, but are secondary, as it is the understanding and use of these that is elementary. It is then ideas that define the meaning of material power (ibid: 166).

Social structures are defined by Alexander Wendt who argues for three basic elements: Shared knowledge, material resource and practice. The social structures are defined by shared understanding, knowledge and expectations, and these are used in a situation and in the nature of the relationship. The relationship can be conflictual or cooperative. Jackson and Sørensen display an example of a conflictual relationship:

A security dilemma, for example, is a social structure composed of intersubjective understandings in which states are so distrustful that they make worst-case assumptions about each other’s intentions, and as a result define their interests in self-help terms (ibid: box 6.1).

In this way, it can be seen how the constructed world view by e.g. a nation can have abundant effects on others, who quite possibly construe the world entirely differently. To maximize influence, ideas should be shared by large groups of people such as nations, policy or interest groups, organizations or the like. Nina Tannenwald has identified four types of ideas: ideology or shared belief system, normative beliefs, cause-effect beliefs and policy prescriptions. These are mental constructs held by individuals and provide the individual with principles and attitudes which provide comprehensive orientations for behavior and policy (ibid: 166). While constructivism argues that there is no absolute truth, it is also a fact that each individual with its own objective set of ideas and beliefs believes that their ‘truth’ claim should be extended beyond their own circle.

### 4.4.2. Social Constructivism in International Relations

Constructivism within international relations was introduced later than in social theory, when Nicholas Onuf coined the term in 1989. Alexander Wendt, whom was mentioned when explaining constructivism in social theory, furthermore, published several articles concerning constructivism in international relations. Wendt argues against the neorealist assumption that anarchy leads to self-help, and asserts that it is not definite. Instead it depends on the interactions between states. Following neorealists, states already know their identities before interacting with other states, but according to constructivism, these identities are not final before said interaction occurs. It is the process of interacting with others that change or create identities. Like realists, constructivists agree that as a basis, states want to survive and have security, but contradictory, constructivists do not necessarily believe that all states have a desire to be the most powerful – they can also be content with the position they have. It is by studying their identities that their wants and wishes can be identified. An example can be the creation of a European identity. Even though the Cold War ended, no states needed to power balance against each other, because the creation of a European identity had at this time already been built over several decades. The fact that the European identity is based on friendship and cooperation is a result of what is described as Kantian culture (ibid: 168). Kantian culture is a culture where states view each other as friends. They encounter disputes, but solve them peacefully, and finally; they support each other in case of a threat from the outside of their culture. Kantian culture is a part of consolidated liberal democracies.

Another scholar who has looked at constructivism in international relations is Martha Finnmore. She looks at the way international society affects state identities and interests. Thereby she has a starting point in state’s identities and interest, which she believes shapes a state’s behavior. Thereafter, she looks at the changes international society can cause, thereby looking at the norms existing and not state-on-state interaction specifically (ibid: 169). The norms of the international society cannot be prevented, and they are transmitted to states through international organizations. This is where Finnmore’s outlook on constructivism looks at domestic policies, where Wendt to a large extend disregards these. Finnmore’s first case study showed that international organizations such as the UN are so influential that when they recommend or do some kind of marketing on something they would like states to implement, many countries follow the instructions because they believe e.g. the UN to be a valid source of information and an organization which are acting on behalf of the states. Another study done by Finnmore shows that rule-governed warfare is largely accepted by states. Again, an international organization, in this case the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), promoted humanitarian norms in warfare. They prescribed “[…] what was ‘appropriate behavior’ for ‘civilized’ states involved in war” (ibid: 170). It is here also a case of rhetorical means, the way that the ICRC plays on the identity that most states would like to possess – such as being civilized. The third case which Finnmore uses to argue that international organizations influence domestic policies is the fact that the World Bank pushed for a central norm in economic policies to economic redistribution, in order to actively promote poverty alleviation in developing countries as the World Bank President at the time, Robert McNamara convincingly stated (ibid). Finnmore does not believe that states adopt these norms from international organizations in order to maximize their power, but because constructivist analysis emphasize the central role of norms – identification and belonging - in international society.

Wendt and Finnmore both put the international society as a frontrunner who shapes domestic policies. However, there are also constructivists who put emphasis on domestic environments. One way to look at it is to factor in the fact that although international organizations are influential, the approaches still have different effect in different states. Arguably, this is an effect of the domestic situation in each state. In the area of national security many constructivists emphasize domestic norms. The domestic environment can be set in stone to such a degree that it is hard to change the domestic norms which could have survived either several regime changes or have not changed in known history (ibid: 171). Ted Hopf made a study of Soviet and Russian foreign policy in Moscow 1955 and 1999. He seeks to understand the domestic interests and their definition, and consequently, the foreign policies they led to (ibid: 172). The state identity is expressed through key decision makers, and Hopf came to the conclusion that reconstructed domestic identities went a long way in explaining Soviet/Russian foreign policy.

Even though there are different starting points in analyzing states – the importance of international vs. domestic policies – constructivists are in agreement that it is culture and identity, expressed in social norms, understanding and rules, which are at the forefront and of utmost importance.

# 5. Background

## 5.1. The contemporary history of Ukraine

Ukraine is the second biggest European country situated strategically at the crossroads between Russia and Europe. Ukraine is ethnically very diverse as approx. 25 percent of the almost 45M large population is of other nationality than Ukrainian – Russians being by far the second largest group with approx. 17 percent of the population (CIA WFB: Ukraine).

### 5.1.1. Independence

Ukraine comes from the Russian word *ukraina* which means outskirts or borderland. This has been the truth of the territory of Ukraine for all its known history. Ukraine has through centuries been occupied or invaded, thereby, being dominated by foreign rulers for the majority of known time. Only in a short period in the 17th Century and when Ukraine declared its independence in 1918 as Ukrainian People’s Republic following the collapse of the Russian Empire, was the country independent. Historically the country was part of Poland and Russia/USSR. In 1921 two-thirds of Ukraine was under control of the Russian Red Army as Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), and the remaining third of the country became part of Poland. During Stalin’s Soviet Empire, Ukraine faced famine, mass executions and deportations (BBC). Ukraine was occupied by Nazi Germany from 1941-1944 during which more than 5M Ukrainians died, including the vast majority of Ukraine’s 1.5M large Jewish population. Many Ukrainians fought side by side with the Red Army and Soviet Resistance, but in 1942 armed resistance to the Soviet rule rose. The armed resistance to the Soviet rule ended when the Ukrainian Insurgent Army was defeated in 1954. Vitaliy Masol was Head of the Council of Ministers of Ukrainian SSR from 1987-October 17th 1990, when hunger strikes and student protests forced his government to step down.

An attempted coup in Moscow led Ukraine to declare its independence on the 1st of December 1991 following a nationwide referendum in which over 90 percent of the population voted for the independence of Ukraine. Simultaneously, the former Communist official Leonid Kravchuk was elected President. Shortly hereafter the Soviet Union ceased to exist, as Kravchuk, Russian President Yeltsin and Belarusian President Shushkevich announced that with the dissolution of the Soviet Union a new association was created; the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Lewis, 2002: 17). The shaping of countries in Central and Eastern Europe after the Cold War was influenced by “[…] dramatic reshaping of their political and national identity” (Schmidtke and Yekelchyk, 2008: 1). This meant the building of a sovereign state and institutional changes. Not forgetting that Ukraine has a long history, but that the country lacked a continuous state tradition as the Soviet identity shaped the country’s ideology within economic, political and international institutions for more than 70 years (ibid: 9+31). The transition from Soviet Union into an independent state can be argued to have contributed to a cultural recession. One cannot simply identify and create Ukrainian culture from one day to another, so naturally Russia, Ukraine and other Soviet states more or less have a shared cultural and historical background, and where other states have went on to join the EU, Ukraine together with e.g. Moldova is still very close to the Russian heritage. Ukraine is in many ways seen as a divided country, as the Western part of Ukraine identifies and looks towards Western Europe while the Eastern part, also containing the far poorer part of Ukraine, tends to identify eastwards towards Russia (ibid: 17-18). Since independence in 1991, several Ukrainian governments created the notion of a Ukrainian identity which should be found in Europe, i.e. that the fulfillment of Ukraine’s aspiration; “[…] a strong market economy, domestic stability, regional peace and security, democratic values, social progress, and high standards of living” (ibid: 31) could be found looking towards the EU. Thus, Ukraine’s policies were formed in cooperation with Europe’s primary institutions, OSCE, NATO and not the least the EU.

### 5.1.2. The Presidency of Leonid Kuchma

The second President of independent Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, in office 1994-2005, was elected on a pro-Russian platform, but Kuchma’s foreign policy shifted towards a pro-Western attitude when he assumed power. Kuchma was re-elected in 1999 and this time on a pro-Western platform. The second term of Kuchma was scandalous. One year into his second term he oriented Ukraine towards Russia and the other CIS countries. Kuchma was involved in high-end scandals including the release of audio tapes, one which implicated Kuchma in the kidnapping and murder of Gongadze, co-editor of *Ukraiinska Pravda*, another which authorized the sale of military radars to Iraq – clearly in defiance of UN sanctions (Kuzio 2006, 91-92). Following, Ukraine relations with the EU, NATO[[3]](#footnote-3) and the USA deteriorated dramatically, and as it led to democratic regression, it became harder to build towards a future in the EU. It was also problematic that both the EU and Ukraine expected the other to be the one to take initiatives towards a more integrated Europe. The EU advised Ukraine to improve its records on reform before being able to be considered for EU membership, and when no one took initiatives, it was circumstantial that Ukraine would be more isolated from the West. The serious slowdown in EU-Ukraine relations under Kuchma was every so often blamed on the lack of signal from the EU, but Kuchma’s oligarchic allies were actively opposing reform (ibid: 89). Kuchma’s pro-western rhetoric continuously was at odds with domestic policy and consequently his reputation did nothing but falter. Taras Kuzio, professor at John Hopkins University, described EU-Ukraine relations as “[t]he EU had developed Ukraine fatigue” (ibid: 92) because Brussels continuously waited for Ukraine to take initiative, thereby making it the responsibility of Ukraine to initiate reforms which would guide Ukraine toward European values. Additionally, the EU was not threatened by geopolitics and security at the same level as NATO and the USA, which meant that the pressure was on NATO and the USA as Ukraine’s orientation towards Russia did not make the EU insecure on a high enough level. In 2003, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia formed the CIS Single Economic Space (CIS SES) which was an obvious signal to the West that Ukraine was still leaning towards integration with the CIS. Kuchma’s chosen successor for the Presidential post was Viktor Yanukovych, who was in favor of deeper integration into CIS SES. In addition to that, Yanukovych was also against joining NATO and saw the EU as something very distant. Russia’s Vladimir Putin also backed Yanukovych. The Kuchma era became identical to slow economic growth transition, long recession, an intransparent system, authoritarian oligarch and ethnic division. Many features which are still trademarks of Ukraine today.

The same year that Kuchma’s was elected for a second term as President, democratic reformist and previously chairman of the National Bank, Viktor Yushchenko became Prime Minister, in office 1999-2001, with Yulia Tymoshenko as Deputy Prime Minister. During Kuchma’s second term, the Yushchenko government and other reformists allied with centrist parties, which were largely controlled by oligarchs, in order to overcome the main opposition party, the Communist Party. The reformists also attempted to stand up to the fact that Russia was reluctant to recognize Ukraine’s sovereignty. However, the Yushchenko government was removed in April 2001 following conflict involving Tymoshenko and a confrontation with influential people in the coal, mining and gas industry lead to a vote of no confidence, which prevailed and led to the fall of the Yushchenko government and, consequently, demolished the centrist-national democratic alliance (Kuzio, 2006: 92). Viktor Yanukovych, leader of the Party of Regions followed as Prime Minister (in office 2002-2004 and 2006-2007).

### 5.1.3. The Orange Revolution

Up until the Orange Revolution in 2004, Ukraine had fallen into an increasingly corrupt and authoritarian form of government, and scholars being able to witness this asked themselves “[…] why don’t people protest” (D`Anieri, 2010: 1). Both inside and outside Ukraine, it was believed that Ukraine had a weak civil society which was unable and ultimately unwilling to utilize their power in order to control the government (ibid). However, as it turned out the Ukrainian people did have the will to stand up and organize protests following the second round of the Presidential election on November 21 2004. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE) described the protests as peaceful and popular as people became more confident in asserting their rights as election fraud broke out and as the election progressed. OSCE also praised the stand taken by journalists who did their part in battling censorship and constraints on freedom of expression. Also, the protests remained peaceful as the Ukrainian authorities acted appropriate and did not use force against the protesters (OSCE, 2005:2).

In Ukraine, a candidate must have over 50 percent to be declared the winner. In the first round neither Party of Regions’ Viktor Yanukovych nor Independent Viktor Yushchenko achieved this. Consequently the two candidates went on to the second round. It was very much a case of pro-Russia versus pro-Western hemispher. Yanukovych had the support of Putin and the Eastern, Southern regions of Ukraine as well as Crimea. Yushchenko had the support of the EU, USA and the Western and some Northern regions of Ukraine (OSCE, 2005: 1). However, both the first and second rounds of voting offered unequal opportunities as reports showed that Yanukovych’s campaign abused state resources and intimidated state employees, students and others groups dependent on government assistance, into casting their vote on Yanukovych. This lead the OSCE, who were invited by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry to oversee the election, to say that “[f]undamental freedoms necessary for a meaningful election process were at times restricted” (ibid). So while the two first rounds of votes did not meet a considerable number of commitments set forth by a number of international standards for democratic elections, the repeat of the second round held on December 26 “brought Ukraine substantially closer to meeting them” (ibid).

While the original second round of votes had Yanukovych as the winner, the approved repeat of the second round had Yushchenko as the winner of the Ukrainian Presidential elections of 2004. The EU could not let the events of the fall of 2004 in Ukraine go by unnoticed, and the international community had to recognize that Ukraine and its people had aspirations for a better Ukraine.

### 5.1.4. Ukraine after the Orange Revolution

The Orange revolution brought with it a ray of light in terms of the democratization process of Ukraine and integration in Europe. Besides the Orange Revolution, 2004 also brought 10 new member states of the EU, which meant that Ukraine now shared borders with EU countries Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. One of the major driving forces behind the Orange Revolution had been the wish to break away from Russia and open the doors to the EU (Kuzio, 2006: 93). It was believed that new reforms would finally put pressure on the EU to open their doors to a Ukrainian enlargement. Yushchenko said in February 2005 that “[…] we along with the people of Europe, belong to one civilization […] the realization of the strategy of our foreign policy is membership in the European Union” (Kuzio, 2006: 94).

Newly elected President Yushchenko had Yulia Tymoshenko as Prime Minister candidate, which was overwhelmingly approved by the Parliament. Albeit, the sitting government was pro-EU, the EU still feared that Ukraine would “[…] become a second Turkey and seek membership” (Kuzio, 2006: 95). Since the Orange Revolution where hope spiked that Ukraine was on a reformist path towards democratization and integration in the EU, events have transpired which points in other directions.

Less than two years later, in September 2005, President Yushchenko dismissed the government of Tymoshenko because of resignations and corruption claims and the Parliament approved Yuri Yekhanurov as her successor (BBC). The Yekhanurov government only stayed in power until a new parliamentary election in March the following year, as the government lost a vote of confidence already after four months in power. In the beginning 2006, Russia and Ukraine also faced a spat over gas prices, which lead to Russia briefly cutting the supply of gas to Ukraine, this spat is said to be more political than purely economic (ibid).

Following the Orange Revolution, changes in the Ukrainian constitution were made. This meant a shift in power from the presidency to the Parliament. Under the 1996 Constitution, the President was elected for a five-year period, nominated candidates for the post of Prime Minister (ratified by Parliament) and appointed cabinet ministers. The President also had the right to dismiss the government without parliamentary approval and could cancel government resolutions (Kyiv Post). The constitutional changes came into effect in 2006, - the year when Yanukovych’s Party of Regions had won the Parliamentary election by creating a coalition government with the Socialists under the Prime Ministry of Yanukovych. This meant that President Yushchenko had to collaborate with a powerful Prime Minister who had much more control than seen before. Yushchenko accepted that his rival became Prime Minister as he faced a deadline to accept the nomination or call for new elections. In 2007, Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk, closely allied with the President and advocate of a close relationship with NATO and the EU, resigned after a protracted row with the Parliament. Yushchenko HowejjjjjHHattempted and succeeded in ending the premiership of Yanukovych in 2007, albeit leaving Party of Regions as the largest party. The new government was, again, the Government of Yulia Tymoshenko, the second largest party, forming a narrow majority with the Orange parties.

The Presidency of Yushchenko ended in disillusionment and disappointment. With the West backing neither the Presidency of Tymoshenko nor Yanukovych in 2010, the EU again prepared for yet another attempt at a partnership with Ukraine, because it was still believed to be in both parties best interest. This was despite of Yanukovych’ past association with mass election fraud. Yanukovych won the election in 2010, but in reality received half a million fewer votes than he did in 2004 where he lost, and in 2010 he also achieved being the first President elected with less than 50 percent of the vote and only 10 out of 27 administrative districts (Kuzio, 2011: 88).

In the 2010, Presidential election had Yanukovych as the winner, while his opponent Yulia Tymoshenko was defeated. Tymoshenko, in her reign as Prime Minister, then lost a vote of no confidence and President Yanukovych instated his ally Mykola Azarov. The government in 2010 was now nothing like what emerged after the Orange Revolution, and the Parliament in June 2010 voted to abandon NATO membership aspirations.

On October 1, 2010 the Constitutional Court in Ukraine overturned the before-mentioned 2006 amendments by considering them unconstitutional. As a consequence, this meant reinstatement of a semi-presidential system of government which strengthens the President’s powers vis-à-vis Parliament. The opinion of the opposition was that this was “[…] dictatorship being installed” and Tymoshenko called the move a "[…] usurpation of state power" and said that October 1 would go down in Ukrainian history as the day democracy was murdered and a dictatorship installed (Kyiv Post). In 2010 former Prime Minister Tymoshenko and Interior Minister Yuriy Lutsenko were charged with abuse of state funds, which they both denied and said was politically motivated. Then in 2011, Tymoshenko was jailed after a court found her guilty of abuse of power to do with a gas deal with Russia in 2009. At that time the EU warned Ukraine of “[…] profound implications” (BCC). The imprisonment of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko caused Ukraine and its government to be scolded by the international community who dissociated themselves from the decision to imprison the former Prime Minister. In May 2012 Ukraine postponed the summit of Central- and East European leaders to be held in Yalta after several head of states, including Germany, boycotted the Summit because of the treatment of Tymoshenko. Also the football tournament EURO 2012 was considered to be boycotted. The imprisonment of the ex-premier and the treatment of her was, for the EU community, a big reason for not seeing Ukraine to fit into the EU, as it heavily conflicted with and was a large setback from the democratization process towards the EU which the EU was able to praise and acknowledge after the Orange Revolution (BBC News).

Tymoshenko went on hunger strike in the summer of 2012, and was considered badly treated while being very ill in prison. She is still in prison while this thesis in being written. The current Ukrainian government did not have the same positive outlook towards the EU, as the government following the Orange Revolution. In May 2012, German chancellor, Angela Merkel was the first European leader who referred to Ukraine as a dictatorship, and this prompted President Yanukovych to suggest that it was “[…] time for a “pause” in relations with the European Union” (Financial Times: Yanukovich talks of ‘pause’ in EU ties). The President said this amid signs that Ukraine’s deteriorating ties with the EU drives them back towards Russia. All this because what is described as Ukraine’s broader rollback of democracy because of the imprisonment of Tymoshenko (ibid). Yanukovych also said that the pause was just as much initiated by the EU and that he believed that both could use a break from each other. A lawmaker from Party of Regions was also quoted as saying “[m]aybe it’s best for us to return to considering post-Soviet regional integration projects” (ibid) thereby keeping the EU at arm’s length.

## 5.2. The Shifting Foreign Policy of Ukraine

As the previous sub-chapters have described the shifts in power have induced foreign policy as one of the key challenges for the Ukrainian governments since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The challenge has always been the hard job of balancing the foreign policy between the West and Russia. Cultural links and economic ties between Russia and Ukraine should not be underestimated as they continuously are in Ukraine’s natural interest to seek a stable constructive relationship with Russia (Brookings Institute). Ukraine’s intention to develop relations with Europe, the US and international institutions such as NATO and the EU were present from the beginning of independence as many Ukrainians found the economic prosperity and democratic values found in the EU appealing and sitting governments have in particular paid notice to the benefits Ukraine could reap by having stronger relations to the West; environmental factors incl. market maneuverability. However, Ukraine developed very slowly and compared to e.g. Poland, remained in the socialist stage. As mentioned earlier in the history of Ukraine, Kuchma, during his two terms, did not put Ukraine on a path towards consolidated democracy. Ukraine remained an unstable authoritarian regime which somehow was a “’hybrid’ fusion of the former Soviet system and the emerging reformed economy and polity” (Kuzio, 2005: 167). Professor Kuzio argued that by the end of Kuchma two terms Ukraine had regressed further from the declared goals of transferring to democracy and could only be identified as competitive authoritarian regime (ibid: 168). Conversely, Kuchma pursued partnership with NATO, partly out of concern for Russian policy towards Ukraine. By developing relations with the West, Kuchma also put pressure on Russia, and in 1997 Ukraine and Russia were able to conclude a treaty, sought after by Ukraine, which comprised unambiguous recognition of Ukraine as a sovereign state, as well as remaining issues concerning basing the Russian Black Sea Fleet on Crimea (Brookings Institute).

A reason why Russia is opposed to Ukraine entering into NATO is the Russian Black Sea Fleet which has a base on Crimea. When Yushchenko was president it was decided that the lease of the naval bases on Crimea was not to be extended after 2017. The bases are of high importance to Russia, and the issue of the bases on Crimea was an instrument where Ukraine and Russia could make other business deals. The Black Sea Fleet on Crimea has been cause of a worsening relationship between Russia and Ukraine under Yushchenko. However, when Yanukovych became president, Yanukovych and his counterpart Medvedev was able to reach a new agreement ensuring Russia the bases on Crimea beyond 2017. 25 five years beyond 2017 and additionally, the possibilities to extend five more years beyond 2042 (The Guardian). This is again one of the examples of the counter-productiveness of the shifting presidencies of Ukraine. Worth mentioning is of course also what Ukraine got in return; a discount contract on gas. Of other conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, it is worth mentioning the Russo-Georgian War in 2008. The fact that President Yushchenko supported the Georgian president during Russia and Georgia’s war over South Ossetia was viewed as strategically taking sides, and as Ukraine never denied selling weapons to Georgia (NY Times), it was interpreted by President Medvedev as if “Ukrainian weapons killed peaceful citizens and Russian peacekeepers” (NY Times). Arguably, President Medvedev was disappointed by the lack of support from Ukraine and the fact that the bond that Ukraine supposedly share with Russia was not strong enough to endure and take sides with Russia on all issues. Conversely, Yushchenko long complained that Russia keep seeking to limit Ukraine’s sovereignty by imposing economic blockades whenever feeling offended. Additionally, Russia has placed embargoes on Ukrainian products such as milk and meat.

Up until the Orange Revolution in 2004, 13-year old independent Ukraine had had two Presidents and ten governments who all continuously claimed that Ukraine was transforming into a liberal democracy and market economy.

Ukraine’ Deputy Foreign Minister Andrii V. Olefirov described the current foreign policy of Ukraine as dedicated to the goal of an eventual EU membership and he stressed the fact that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kostyantyn Gryshchenko in July 2012 signed amendments to the Agreement on Visa Facilitations between the EU and Ukraine which simplifies the visa process for many Ukrainians, consequently, integrating more with the EU, as “visa-free agreements with the EU are extremely important to civil society in Ukraine, supporting people-to-people relationships, and basics freedoms of movement” (Carnegie Endowment). Olefirov also explained that Ukraine is closer to the EU than to Russia, but as a close neighbor, Russia continues being an important partner. However, Ukraine does not wish to be a full member of the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and consequently proposes cooperation in what is called 3+1 format which means that the highest priorities in bilateral negotiations with said countries include energy and border issues and ongoing Custom Union discussions (ibid). Surely, Ukraine is not giving up upholding good relations with neither the EU nor Russia, and it must consequently be said that Ukraine continues to seek a course between full integration with both the West and the East.

Internal squabbles in government, i.e. four different governments under Yushchenko made it impossible to improve relations with neither the EU nor NATO for that matter. Ukraine looked to be on the right track towards NATO membership, but Yushchenko, via internal political choices, repeatedly signaled to the West that NATO membership was not a priority. There were multiple reasons for this, but failing to re-appoint Defense Minister Grytsenko, respected in Brussels, in the 2007 pre-term elections was one of them. Another was Ukrainian relations with Russia. The internal division in the country was threatening, and Russian President Putin in 2009 called Ukraine artificial and said it would fall apart if joining NATO. By that, he set fire to the fear that the internal division would lead to direct separatism on Crimea and Russophone Eastern Ukraine. Wilson describes Ukraine as a “slow moving, immobile state that never quite adapts enough” (Kuzio, 2011: 89). Furthermore, the Economist described Ukraine as a country which time and time again misses the chance to reform itself and the Yushchenko era seriously failed in leading to major breakthroughs in corruption reduction and reforms, even though they had the chance (ibid).

### 5.2.1. Ukraine and Russia’s gas clashes

The two countries have been in gas disputes in 1993, 2005-2006, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 (Rianovosti). What is worth noticing is that the majority of the disputes have taken place after the Orange Revolution. Consequently, emphasis will be put on the reasoning behind the crises since the Orange Revolution. Noticeably, the disputes happen during wintertime when gas is the most vital – especially to countries in Eastern Europe where winters can be notoriously brutal and life threatening, even fatal. The Economist also noticed that the disputes have flared up every winter since 2005/2006, but says in 2009 it “[…] has since grown into the biggest energy emergency the European Union has seen in years” (The Economist). The gas lines run from Russia through Ukraine and, consequently, provide as much as a quarter of Europe with energy; in 2009 it drove up UK gas prices with up to 15 percent, and in Slovakia the government had to consider re-opening nuclear reactors which they shut down when joining the EU in 2004. The subject is delicate and harmful to the EU (Bloomberg). Nevertheless, the EU has publicly chosen to let it be a dispute between Ukraine and Russia, but urges the two countries to make sure that their internal dispute does not affect citizens receiving the gas. As Russia has plenty of gas in reserves, it is not a question of whether or not they are able to provide gas, but it has become a political argument concerning the deal, that Ukraine and Russia made in the 1990s. First of all, money is involved and both actors want the best deal. Ukraine paid well under market value for the gas provided by Russian Gazprom, and Gazprom wanted Ukraine to pay market value. At this point the market price was more than twice as high as what Ukraine paid per cubic meter. At first glance, it seems that Gazprom is in their full right to demand that Ukraine pays what other countries pay for their gas. However, a big difference is that Ukraine charges Gazprom for channeling the gas through Ukraine to many other countries. This price has been remarkably low as well. The economic dispute was settled by a deal where Russia and Ukraine gradually transition into market prices and long-term contracts (The Economist).

## 5.3. European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was first outlined in the Commission Communication on Wider Europe in March 2003, and was followed by a Strategy Paper on the European Neighbourhood Policy in May 2004. It was developed in the context of the EU enlargement of ten new countries consisting of eight Central and Eastern European countries as well as two Mediterranean countries. The enlargement came into effect in 2004, thereby making the EU constitute of 25 member states, and consequently, the majority of all European countries. The ENP was a strategic approach to the anticipated post-enlargement situation in the EU, and consequently, the ENP is an offer of a deeper political and economic relationship between the EU and its neighbors, yet without the offer of accession into the EU (Whitman and Wolff, 2012: 3). The objective was to transform neighbouring countries into reliable and stable partners and, consequently, avoid emerging dividing lines between the enlarged EU and the new neighboring countries, but instead to strengthen prosperity, stability and security of the EU and the EU neighborhood. According to Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, the “Neighbourhood Policy provides us with a coherent approach that ensures that the whole of the EU is committed to deeper relations with all our neighbors. At the same time, it allows us to develop tailor-made relations with each country" (European Commission, ENP: Front page). The ENP was offered to the 16 countries[[4]](#footnote-4) which were considered to be the EU’s closest neighbors.

Important to the ENP is the bilateral Action Plans between the EU and each ENP country (12 agreed). Each agenda puts forth an agenda of political and economic reforms wished by the EU. These are short and medium termed (3-5 years). In addition to the main Policy, which is considered being a bilateral policy between the EU and each of the partner countries, the ENP is enhanced with regional cooperation initiatives. The ENP aims to develop and promote sub-regional contract with the partner countries, and the notion of joint ownership is underlined as based on shared values and principles and it is also clear that the EU “[…] does not seek to impose priorities or conditions on its partners” (Commission of the European Communities: 8).

A regional initiative in the case of Ukraine was the Eastern Partnership[[5]](#footnote-5) (European Commission, ENP: The Policy). The ENP, thereby, builds on Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) and Association Agreements (AA). The implementations of these are monitored and promoted through committees and subcommittees established for this purpose. Each year the European Commission publishes the ENP Progress Report (ibid).

The EU considers the ENP as an offer of “[…] privileged relationship, building upon mutual commitment to common values”[[6]](#footnote-6) (European Commission, ENP: The Policy – How does it work). As mentioned in short in the beginning of this chapter, the ENP offer political and economic integration, but also increasing mobility. However, the level of this relationship depends on the level and whether the previously mentioned values are shared, i.e. the common values set forth by the EU are to be upheld at EU standard for the relationship incentives to come into existence.

### 5.3.1. Ukraine, Europe and the ENP

Ukraine was the first CIS state to join NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994, and Ukraine relations with NATO developed quite dynamically in the 1990s (Kuzio, 2006: 91). During the second half of the 1990s, Ukraine also became the third largest receiver of U.S. aid.

Ukraine was one of the first CIS to sign the PCA with the EU in 1994, thereby establishing the aim to join the EU. EU-Ukraine relations are based on the 1998 PCA. In 1998, Kuchma openly outlined Ukraine’s aspiration for joining the EU, thereby, standing apart from e.g. Russia and Belarus, who did not seek membership. The trajectory Kuchma had put Ukraine on put the country on the same path as other post-Communist states outside of the CIS (Kuzio, 2006: 91).

Ukraine’s Orange Revolution of late 2004 and the election of a pro-EU reform minded government intended to speed up the progress in terms of EU integration, and the EU also considered the March 2006 Parliamentary election as “[…] largely free and fair” (EC ENP, 2007: 53), which confirmed the changed attitude of Ukraine. From the side of the EU, cooperation between the EU and Ukraine began long before the Orange Revolution as the enlarged EU, referencing EU25, was Ukraine’s largest trading partner, but the Orange Revolution gave a new dynamic to the relationship. Since then the EU and Ukraine agreed on a comprehensive and ambitious framework which reflected a wide range of agreed policy priorities (ibid). The Orange revolution did not only change the image of Ukraine seen by the EU, but on an international stage as well. While President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yanukovych created a somewhat tense situation amidst themselves and the government, they both emphasized, in 2006, that Ukraine’s foreign policy was still focused on the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan (ENPI CSP, 2006: 6). EU accession, while not in the ENP plans, still continued to have broad support among the Ukrainian population.

### 5.3.2. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013

The ENP in its nature consists of stages of existence. The first stage of the policy was the concept itself, while the second stage was the widening of the ENP (Varwick and Lang, 2007: 19). The third stage was the stage of implementation which is ongoing and this is the carrying out of the Action Plans, which includes the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Ukraine currently has one for 2007-2013. Assistance to Ukraine in the mentioned period is provided through the ENPI in order to promote development in “[…] an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness between the European Union and the partner countries” (ENPI CSP, 2006: 2) covered by the ENPI. The Country Strategy Paper (CSP) outlines these objectives.

The ENPI states that Ukraine since the Orange Revolution has pursued an ambitious agenda in order to bring Ukraine closer to the EU, and because of this, the increasingly close relationship can be developed even further – beyond the level of economic integration and political cooperation seen up until then. The EC still bases its assistance on the policy objectives found in the PCA from 1998 and the EU-Ukraine Action Plan from 2005. The National Indicative Programme (NIP) focuses the support on three priority areas:

1. *Democratic development and good governance;*
2. *Regulatory reform and administrative capacity building;*
3. *Infrastructure development, in particular in the transport, energy and environment sectors, in close collaboration with the EIB, EBRD and other IFIs[[7]](#footnote-7). (ENPI CSP, 2006: 2)*

The EU asserts that it is promoting its values and interests by operating as a global player, and, thereby, strives to promote “prosperity, solidarity, security and sustainable development worldwide” (ibid). Consequently, it is known that it is EU –based values which Ukraine is expected to achieve and not the two entities that are expected to meet halfway. In the case of Ukraine, the PCA from 1998 committed both the EU and Ukraine to establish a partnership where Ukraine, through different measures, would strive to transition into a full-fledged democracy as well as market economy.

When the ENPI was created, President Yushchenko was simultaneously leading Ukraine towards ambitious reforms at EU-level, which lead the EU to have high ambitions on behalf of Ukraine. The Ukrainian leadership clearly stated its ambition to using the EU-Ukraine Action Plan endorsed by Ukraine in February 2005 (ibid: 4). The policy objectives within internal policy are summarized as; consolidating democracy, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, consolidating the judiciary, effective fight against crime and corruption, public sector reform, improving the investment climate and provision of social services (ibid: 4-5). The first points argue that Ukraine must guarantee democracy and fundamental freedoms, and generally consolidating the rule of law, and within this emphasis on the legality of the judiciary and the independence of this, as well as the fight against corruption[[8]](#footnote-8). The external policy includes; EU integration, NATO accession, cooperation with Russia, regional role and promoting trade. Worth noticing is that it is believed that Ukraine still can and needs to maintain a relationship with Russia as especially the earlier gas crises has proven that the two countries are interdependent and their relationship has an impact on the EU.

# 6. Analyses

## 6.1. Ukrainian Interdependence

Ukraine arguably is dependent on very different actors, which strives to pull Ukraine in very different directions. In this analytical chapter the interdependence of Ukraine in relation to respectively the EU and Russia, will be analyzed. The different areas where Ukraine is dependent on the EU and on Russia, and the reasons thereof, will be looked at, as well as possible areas where Ukraine has something to offer the other way around. This constitutes the interdependence between the actors, but the degree of the asymmetrical interdependence is vital for the policy that Ukraine chooses to have and is able to carry out. These interdependencies could be explanations for Ukrainian foreign policy, and a very real possibility is that Ukraine might want to move closer to the EU, but is restrained from this, because of the asymmetrical interdependence with Russia.

### 6.1.1. Ukraine and Russia

Before becoming an independent nation in 1991, Ukraine had only been independent for short periods of time and, consequently, have only the last 21 years had an independent government and a people of its own. This means that many Ukrainians feel attached to ‘Mother Russia’ culture-wise more than any other country. But as this chapter will examine, it is not only a sense of identity that connects Ukraine to Russia. When Russia and Ukraine both became independent nations in 1991, the two countries immediately sought to establish a relationship, thereby acknowledging that both countries have shared interests and benefit from each other. Even though Ukraine is not officially a CIS member, a at the time great regret to Russia, the founding of the CIS, which Ukraine was a founding member of, still led to a status and sense of community, which is important in establishing interdependence. Additionally, the CIS can be seen as a large business partnership amongst most of the post-Soviet countries, and in the 1990’s this can be argued to have created and established a sense of belonging between Russia and Ukraine, which then in turn is one of the founding factors of why Russia and Ukraine is still independent of each other today.

Interdependencies are to a large degree a matter of what one actor has on the other. What seem like an everlasting dispute between Ukraine and Russia are disputes over gas. However, these disputes certainly are also what ties Russia and Ukraine together. These gas-clashes have taken place on numerous occasions and often winter after winter. The gas disputes tie Ukraine and Russia together and consequently makes it more reasonable for Ukraine to make other business arrangements with Russia, because the gas transits from Russia to Europe through Ukraine forces cooperation. Because Ukraine gets their gas from Russia, Ukraine is dependent on Ukraine, but Russia is also dependent on Ukraine to provide the transit in order for Russia to make the money they need, seeing that Europe is the biggest recipient of gas from Russia. As interdependence theory suggest these deals made between states can have a huge influence on the international system, and even though it is deals made one-on-one it is seldom strictly a two-country case. This is obvious in this case, where the gas disputes have an effect on much of Europe. Consequently, the countries receiving the gas, would naturally also voice their dissatisfaction when there are problems between Russia and Ukraine in terms of their gas deal because it affects them negatively. Even though, the EU has said that they will not get involved in the dispute, when lives are at stake they would indirectly put a pressure on the countries to solve their disagreement by asking for guarantees (Euro-Asia Energy Observer). Additionally, Russia was also putting pressure on Ukraine, by urging the EU to put pressure on Ukraine by blaming Ukraine for the dispute. Thus, Russia also exploits the interdependence between Ukraine and the EU, knowing that Ukraine needed to be in good standing with the EU under the leadership these years[[9]](#footnote-9).

The mutual dependence between Russia and Ukraine is highly visible and working with each other and reaching compromises seems to be in both countries’ best interest and, consequently, classifies their relationship as interdependent. Despite rows and disputes over many different issues, none of them have come to direct warfare, which is in accordance with interdependence theory, and additionally, the situations discussed in this chapter are definitely situations of reciprocally effects. As described in the theory, the effects are the results of international transactions – such as gas trade. As asymmetrical interdependence argues for, this is a source of trade of power.

The gas dispute was long-lasting – if not ever-lasting - and should it have been purely about economics to fix the problem, it would arguably have happened visibly faster. The fact that the Orange Revolution brought with it a government leaning more towards the EU than Russia did not go well with Putin or Medvedev. In 2009, it was Yulia Tymoshenko who was Prime Minister in Ukraine and Tymoshenko’s relationship with neither Putin nor Medvedev was specifically good, and neither was the relationship between Ukrainian President Yushchenko and the Kremlin. Medvedev openly announced, on the Kremlin Web, that he thought that Ukraine’s “[…] anti-Russian policies […] had brought relations between the countries to “unprecedented lows”” and he did not acknowledge the “anti-Russian course of the Ukrainian leadership” (NY Times). The coarse language from the Russian side, evidently being very dissatisfied with the Ukrainian leadership, suggests that the Russian leadership believed that the relationship is asymmetrical and that Ukraine is not behaving accordingly. According to interdependence theory, asymmetrical interdependence occurs when one party has a more vital good to offer the other party that in return. This should give Russia the upper hand when they are the supplier of gas. When the Russian leadership finds that the Ukrainian leadership is turning their back on them, and might be finding support elsewhere, it seems as though Ukraine is challenging their relationship, in which Russia believes they should have the upper hand. Medvedev, furthermore, criticized everything from Ukraine’s treatment of Russian speakers[[10]](#footnote-10) to the resistance that Ukraine according to him is putting up towards Russian business to its gas dealings with the EU. It was definitely in Medvedev’s interest to try and undermine Tymoshenko and Yushchenko. Both being pro-European rather than Russian, it was in the best interest to the Russian relationship with Ukraine to have a sitting government and President who are pro-Russian. It can, therefore, be argued that at this point Medvedev and/or Putin would try and undermine the Ukrainian leaders because a Presidential election was coming up in and it would be in the best interest of Russian-Ukrainian relationship to have pro-Russian and previous Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovych as President. The importance of a pro-Russian government is alpha-omega for the interdependence between the two countries – at least seen from the side of the Russian leadership. The more that Ukraine chooses to connect, trade and do business with the EU, the less dependent they are on Russia. And the more support Ukraine have from the EU, the less asymmetrical the relationship with Russia will be. Conversely, it will be the EU that Ukraine has a relationship, characterized by asymmetrical interdependence with on the majority of issues rather than with Russia. One way Medvedev chose to show his dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian leadership was by withholding to send the at-the-time new Russian Ambassador to Kiev. This was a clear-cut message, as countries clearly have most embassies/consulates in the countries of their interest, thereby signaling that if Russia felt that Ukraine was not playing by the rules set forth by Russia, they would begin to disregard Kiev completely.

But as Ukraine is also getting their gas from Russia, and by being a country of transit they also play a role, that they are glad to have, as it is definitely a role of power. Additionally, it is a good play for Ukraine to be such a big source of energy to Europe, which both Russia and Ukraine knows the countries in Europe rely on. Russia and Ukraine’s almost eternal scrabble over energy sources is most definitely a struggle for power. As described in the theoretical chapter on asymmetrical interdependence, it is a process of bargaining for power – which is exactly what is happening when the two countries cannot agree on the terms to trade gas. As the theory on asymmetrical interdependence also suggest, political bargaining is a main source of gaining power, but military power is still of importance. This can also be seen in the struggles between Russia and Ukraine. Many different tools are used when trying to win a power struggle when wanting to tip the asymmetrical interdependence in ones favor.

As mentioned in the background, Russia and Ukraine continuously make deals in order to satisfy each other. It was done when Russia wanted to keep their naval bases on Crimea, and when Ukraine supported Georgia; Russia was able to put an economic blockade on Ukraine. Both counties are very much alike, and none of them are shy of taking matters into own hands, and playing by own rules when wanting to achieve something. Most often, however, it is Russia, as the most resource strong country, who has the upper hand. So as interdependence theory suggest, Russia as the country is the less dependent actor because they can get their supply elsewhere, but Ukraine is dependent on Russia to buy their products. This and the cut of gas flows, restricting energy supplies to much of Europe is a play on power on Russia’s part. Complex interdependence influences the international system greatly, and because of the power that Russia is believed to have and because of the interstate relations which can have an effect on international relations, it seems to be the right of Russia to meddle in Ukrainian affairs.

It is clear that the two countries are not at all in agreement on the power balance that should be between them. Especially during events which played out sig under the Yushchenko government. Even though Ukraine knows that Russia is a far more powerful international player, Ukraine does not undermine its own influence, and with the sitting government from 2009, it was most definite that Ukraine sought to change the power structure by allying with countries which were not in the hands of Russia. Undermined or vulnerable countries will use asymmetrical interdependence to their advantage by using particular issues as a source of power. This was the ‘final’ straw for Medvedev who would no longer work with Yushchenko, and openly waited and supported new political leadership. It is very true of the relationship between Russia and Ukraine that asymmetrical interdependence is the source of power and that it is the asymmetries which provide the sources of influence. The relationship is a moving target, which is in constant change. The constant change was especially vivid when Yanukovych took over after Yushchenko. Yanukovych more willingly acknowledged the asymmetrical relationship, and chose to work Ukraine’s advantages from this strategically point – as Russia as a friend rather than foe.

Ukraine is still trying to be its own master and step out from the shadow that Russia has cast over it for decades. Or at least that was what the government sitting in 2009 was attempting. A whole other issue that has tremendous influence over the Ukrainian-Russian relationship is the leadership in the two countries. This will be under continuous examination in the following analyses.

Besides the gas crises which have been a huge blow to the relationship between Ukraine and Russia, other choices of the Ukrainian government have lead the Russian government to believe that Ukraine was pulling away and leaning towards the EU and NATO.

### 6.1.2. Ukraine and the European Union

One of the major reasons why Ukraine and Russia have had problems coming to terms on the agreement on a range of international issues since Ukraine’s independence is the role of the EU, and Ukraine’s long-lasting wish to join the EU. The EU and Ukraine as well as with before-mentioned Ukraine and Russia, have an asymmetrical bargaining relationship, where the EU holds the power, because Ukraine, on-and-off, have had a strong desire to be a member, and to have a good relationship with the EU building towards inclusion. In 2012, this relationship have had a set-back, which is a large effect of the sitting Ukrainian government, who is more pro-Russian than pro-EU.

The EU is in a position where they can demand aspects to be fulfilled before they even consider involving themselves with Ukraine on a variety of issues. As can be read in the background chapter on Ukraine and the EU, Ukraine has in the past moved closer to the EU. Moving closer to the EU, have also made Ukraine more vulnerable because the EU naturally have more power when they are the supplier of something that Ukraine desires, and cannot get elsewhere. The EU can actually be viewed as a good that Ukraine desire and the fact that it cannot be acquired anywhere else makes the relationship asymmetrical to the highest degree, because in turn the goods that the EU wants from Ukraine are few. Gas is one of them, and most of all the EU wants security because it borders Ukraine. However, Ukraine have recently, because of the Tymoshenko -case and other violations of human rights – seen through eyes of the EU - made the EU turn their back on Ukraine. In turn, Ukraine has chosen to do the same. With the Presidency of Yanukovych, Ukraine’s relationship with the EU has deteriorated greatly. There are several reasons for this, one being democratic regression in Ukraine and another, the fact that the Ukrainian government believed Russia would pursue a more charitable approach towards Ukraine (Brookings Institute). The last-mentioned made Ukraine look more towards Russia, Connected to the democratic regression is the fact, following the importance of understanding interdependence, that the government in Ukraine underestimated the importance the EU attached to democratic values, compared to geopolitical values (ibid). In many ways, Ukraine pulling away from the EU makes the interdependent relationship more symmetrical, because the EU does not have the carrot of a membership to offer, because Ukraine is not showing the interest.

Following the Orange Revolution, the relationship between the EU and Ukraine flourished, and the EU, therefore, became much more open towards Ukrainian involvement in EU trade and economic development. Since the Orange Revolution in particular, it has become evident that for most of the time it seems that both the EU and Ukraine know of their strengths and weaknesses. That is, Ukraine knew that the majority of the power was in the hands of the EU, and that it was Ukraine who was subject to the demands of the EU should Ukraine wish to be considered a valuable partner. Thus, Ukraine was granted the status of priority partner through the European Neighbourhood Policy, and the EU continuously keep Ukraine close as it develops Action Plans and monitors Ukraine’s development towards European values. The fact that the EU continuously have demands for Ukraine, clearly demonstrate the power balance is in the EU’s favor.

It can be concluded that because of trade, Russia and the EU are all tremendously interdependent. As complex interdependence explains, relations between two international actors very seldom only affect the two actors making changes. Mostly, any change made by one of the actors, not only affects the two implicated in the decisions, but also affects third actors. Thus, in the EU-Ukraine-Russia triangle, the deciding important international relation might not be Ukraine for either Russia or the EU, but Ukraine has become a country in the middle which is affected because it depends so greatly on both the EU and Russia. But exactly because of this, also Ukraine possesses tremendous power. Ukraine’s shifting foreign policy between the EU and Russia arguably could be the reason why the country has kept a balancing position between its two great neighbors. The changing of governments from pro-Russia to pro-EU, albeit questionable democratic elections should be representative of where the people of Ukraine want to be situated on a global scale – and it seems the people are not in agreement. Some scholars argue (ibid) that the absent of a 100 percent commitment to either, is what have ensured that Ukraine still have some power and what ensure that Russia and the EU to a certain degree still are dependent on Ukraine, which in turn ensures the interdependent relationships.

Multiple channels, as mentioned in complex interdependence also have a large effect on Ukrainian politics. Multiple channels connect countries across state lines. The communication with Russia is happening through several channels. Most of them because of common interest and trade, but also because of a variety of issues culturally and historically binding the two countries. An example being the conflicts of the Black Sea Fleet and Crimea. Russia and Ukraine also have shared interests which are expressed in organizations concerning the Black Sea and Black Sea Naval. The EU is a classic example of a multinational institutions not controlled by one government which are involved in domestic affairs. Because of Ukraine’s and the EU’s mutual interest in each other, the EU is present e.g. when Ukraine is holding elections.

Following interdependence theory, it is also true that military is not the dominant tool when it comes to increasing the probability of cooperation between these countries and international institutions. Albeit, when pushed to the limit, neither Russia nor Ukraine seemed to be likely to want compromise. However, for all three actors mentioned in this chapter, the issue at the forefront was trade and economic means. Exactly because of international relations and the importance of a globalized world, military conflict would be the last option and all involved actors have this as a last resort. However, security is still an issue. Putting trade and economic incentives aside, Russia and the EU do not want a bad relationship with Ukraine. Not because they fear of Ukraine alone, but more likely because they do not want to risk Ukraine being more involved with the other, i.e. Russia do not want Ukraine to have a closer relationship with the EU and vice versa.

Of not much use in interdependence is that international conflicts are passé, as it does not quite hold up in the case of Ukraine and international relations. Ukraine has relations with Russia where conflicts are constantly lurking beneath the surface, e.g. the problematic of the Black Sea Fleet. National Security is of such importance to Russia that it has to be for Ukraine as well. Nye and Keohane argued that international conflicts would not disappear even if the concept of interdependence should prevail, but that the conflicts would take on new forms. It is quite possible that the relationship between Russia and Ukraine is an example of this. Even though military issues are present, military activity directly between Russia, Ukraine and the EU is not. It is too risky to use military force because as complex interdependence argues, two countries have a variety of relationships, and employing military force because one is breaking down, would be putting the rest at risk, i.e. it is simply not worth it to jeopardize otherwise good relations.

## 6.2. Modernizing into Democracy

As explained in the theory section on modernization, the ultimate goal for a society is seen as the move from poor to rich. This is done through industrialization. The ultimate end goal of modernization is being a democratic state. This is also what Ukraine has been steadily moving towards since independence in 1991. In this analytical section it is presumed that Ukraine has turned to the EU and the West as a possible partner to reach the ultimate goal of a fully democratic state.

Modernization is not equal to Westernization, but the two arguably share many values and goals in terms of what an optimal society entails. Thus, to Ukraine modernization would mean a move towards western values and optimal for Ukraine would be a move towards the EU and, consequently, democratization. The first phase being industrialization was for Ukraine happening under the rule of the Soviet Union in the 1930s (The Library of Congress). Consequently, Ukraine, albeit seen as a country which can still develop massively, has already come far in the modernization process. In this section, the relationship between the EU and Ukraine will be looked at in terms of the foreign policy choices Ukraine have made towards or away from the EU, and they will e.g. be compared to the democratic values that Ukraine exhibits to the world.

As explained in more detail in the background chapter, Ukraine is in a lot of ways a country of division. The western part identifies with their European neighbors while the Eastern part, and Crimea in particular, is still attached to Russia. The governmental elite have had a big effect on Ukrainian development and exactly because of this it is questionable how far along the democratization process is today. The switching of leaders from pro-Russian to pro-EU and vice versa does not provide Ukraine with a stable outlook, and as explained in the historical background, leaders almost seem to be taking pride in reversing political decisions made in the term before their inauguration. This could e.g. be seen with the passing and reversing of the constitutional changes made in 2004. Changes like this provide Ukraine with a very unstable nature, and hinder further modernization and, consequently, also democratization as the political culture in Ukraine is not up to par and in need of more observation which can also help implement democratic values and norms. The governance institutions are weak and Ukraine lack strong institutions, which could help modernization along. Ukraine’s outcome has not followed a typical growth model and in many ways modernization failed Ukraine, because Ukraine in theory stood the same change as other post-Soviet countries with lots of human capital and heavy industry, which should have enabled Ukraine to develop in a pace similar to other Eastern European countries. The correlation between the economic potential and political culture has been was lacking.

The election of Yanukovych in 2010 have had a significant, albeit alarming, effect on Ukrainian democratization. The democratic framework is deteriorating and this can be seen in the very fundamentals of what a democratic society should be like. Freedom of expression, assembly and press are increasingly under pressure. The culmination came in 2011 with the arrest of former Prime Minister Tymoshenko. Ukraine seems to arrive at a crossroads with new leaders. The crossroads is pointed either towards democracy or autocracy. The safe way to democracy is the path towards membership of the EU, and the road to autocracy is more uncertain. Millions of Ukrainian citizens favor the path towards EU membership, but the trust in this path is clouded by the absence of a clear EU policy towards Ukrainian membership (Project Syndicate: Ukraine Loses its Way). Again it is the uncertainty and ineffectiveness which harm Ukraine the most. As mentioned in the background, President Yanukovych stated early on that Ukraine still had intentions to join and work together with the EU, but the actions of his presidency have been inconsistent with this claim. Thus, a membership is not in the horizon for Ukraine.

### 6.2.1. Ukraine foreign relations – the EU

It is in the interest of the EU to have Ukraine strive for policies within the EU framework, and the Orange Revolution brought the hopes that this was the path which Ukraine embarked on. Within the ENP, Ukraine is said to be a priority partner and, consequently, the EU believe that Ukraine is an asset and a partner within economics and trade. To uphold this, it is best to strive for gradual economic integration and political cooperation. That is, the EU needs Ukraine to have the same set of ideals and beliefs that the EU countries claim to have. Modernization promises cultural and political change, wherein mass political participation is one of the changes that looked promising coming with the upsurge of the Orange Revolution. Up until then it had been questioned whether Ukraine had the culture that could account for a strong civil society, i.e. a culture which would embark on the path towards ‘true’ modernization – the modernization which corresponds 100 percent with westernization. The Orange Revolution showed that the people of Ukraine wanted change, and that they strove towards the qualities of modernization. When describing modernization as willingness and a wish to be political active, the Orange Revolution was a massive step towards modernizations and one of the most visible steps taken towards democratization since Ukraine’s independence. Both inside and outside Ukraine, it was believed that Ukraine had a weak civil society which was unable and ultimately unwilling to utilize their power in order to control the government (ibid). Thus, the EU has on numerous occasions sent the signal to Ukraine that they did not believe that Ukraine would reach democratization and, consequently, the membership of the EU. However, as it turned out the Ukrainian people did have the will to stand up and organize protests following the second round of the Presidential election on November 21 2004. The OSCE described the protests as peaceful and popular as people became more confident in asserting their rights as election fraud broke out and as the election progressed.

But when talking about the choices that have been made since then, when the country is still so highly corrupt – so much that the political participation from the population is not enough to account for the election fraud - it must be said that although Ukraine is industrialized, the choices that the leaders of Ukraine have made since 2010 have not pointed in a direction of a country striving towards democracy or modernization, but very much the opposite. The government and President are at this point pushing the EU away, as Yanukovych have set the relationship between the EU and Ukraine on ‘pause’. It is not a lack of government policies in areas such as “rule of law, constitutional reforms, reducing corruption and Euro-Atlantic integration” (Kuzio, 2012: 395) which is the problem. The problem is that the majority of these policies are virtual ones. Virtual in the sense that they are written on paper, but nor carried out. Ukrainian leaders time and time again ignore decrees, legislations, official statements etc. This way of doing politics could mistakenly be those carried out under Soviet rule. As Kuzio states in one of his many journals on Ukrainian politics, democratization in Ukraine has been in jeopardy more than once since Ukraine’s independence. Democratization was threatened under Kuchma’s term just before the Orange Revolution and again with Yanukovych’s election in 2010. Hence, it is an exaggeration to say that Ukraine has gone through the process of modernization.

This makes it increasingly hard for EU and other Western institutions, such as NATO, to cooperate with Ukraine on foreign policy objectives, as Ukrainian leaders do not pursue declared policies with regards to foreign relations. As described in the background chapter, Ukraine has led a very shifting foreign policy ever since independence. The shifting in attitude when it comes to Ukraine’s relations with the EU is explained perfectly by example of the two most recent presidents, Yushchenko and Yanukovych. Immediately after the Orange Revolution, a partnership spiked between the EU and Ukraine, this however, only lasted the first two years of Yushchenko term, and the last three years were of disillusionment. The partnership seemed to be flourishing when Yushchenko said he would have deepened ties with the EU and even described a four year plan; to have the EU acknowledge Ukraine as a market economy and association membership in the EU ending up in full membership of the EU. It was a plan of modernization, but it failed as the four year plan did not succeed, and Ukraine did not come any closer to being a fully democratic state as the necessary developments have not been carried through. Yushchenko believed that the level of relationship between the EU and Ukraine were at standard with Ukraine before the Orange Revolution and his four year plan should reflect the new and improved relationship. One way he would let the EU know that he was serious about closer ties with the EU was by declaring that Ukraine would closely inspect the current relationship with the CIS in order to endure that EU integration would be possible. The reaction from the EU was pleasant, and the European Parliament passed a motion wanting to establish closer ties with Ukraine with the acknowledgement that Ukraine had the possibility to gain full membership. In the following years, however, it was Baltic countries, firstly Croatia, that moved closer to EU membership, and as a consequent Ukraine’s prospects diminished. Internal disputes and firing of own governments after allegations of corruptions made Ukraine turbulent. Additionally, the EU did not move towards Ukraine in the speed wanted by Yushchenko. Consequently, Ukraine stepped into the era of disillusionment. The partnership between Ukraine and the EU made it to the negotiations of the Association Agreement following Ukraine’s entry into the WTO in 2008 (ibid: 396). When considering the predetermined path that modernization should follow, Ukraine is out of category. At this point, it does not seem like modernization theory can help determine Ukraine’s place in international politics. There are too many other unknown factors that play a part in Ukraine’s foreign policy decisions – many of which suffer from the domestic political environment.

Internal governmental squabbles during Yushchenko’s reign made it impossible to improve relations with neither the EU nor NATO. Not being able to reform because of internal divisions and decisions taken away from the EU led Ukraine astray – at least from democratization. Actions described in the background chapter conclusively drew Ukraine further away from the EU and NATO. Subsequently, Ukraine floated further away from democratization because the country time and time again, because of leadership, failed to modernize properly. The EU and NATO is an incentive for Ukraine to clean up in internal squabbles in order to appear as an honorable partner for the EU. Not joining NATO and letting internal disagreements take over, is a clear sign that Ukraine was not ready to be a part of the EU.

### 6.2.2. Yanukovych’ path away from democracy

Yanukovych’s presidency unmistakably is unpopular in western media. The corruption among Ukraine’s elite is unmistakably still present, and has turned out to be hard to kill. This leads to a cynicism among voters who do not **believe** that their vote will change anything and, consequently, there is a big number who either do not care to vote or even sell their votes. It would be gullible to believe that new voters feel any different about the system, as they have grown up in a corrupt system that their parents have not succeeded in changing. Thus, the respect for the political system is very low, and this can no longer be imputed on the fact that it is only a soviet generation voting.

There are several reasons why Yanukovych’ government is not one of reform. Yanukovych preached reform and promised to have an administration of technocrats and reformists. Contradictory, he filled it with officials from the period of Kuchma. While some expressed Soviet leanings, half was from the same region of Donetsk[[11]](#footnote-11) and many, including Prime Minister Azarov, closing in on retirement age. Noteworthy is also the fact that for the first time since independence not a single woman appeared as cabinet minister in the government. Now, this is in direct opposition with the consequences modernization should have. It is in clear opposition to modernization to have such a unilateral government with a lack of women and younger people. Additionally, Yanukovych has made no effort to hide his prejudice for women in power, as he rejected to debate Tymoshenko in a TV debate in 2010 because “[…] she, like all women […] should “be in the kitchen”” (Kuzio, 2010: 208) With the entry of the Neo-soviet 1970s generation, Kuzio argues that this reverses the shift that Yushchenko had introduced, and the ideological shift is now one of an authoritarian power where stability and Russian nostalgia is preferred, thus taking another step away from democratization. However, Yanukovych has no better chance than anyone else to implement stability in Ukraine. Stability is too distant a word, when violent events such as the one at the Ukrainian parliament during the ratification of the Black Sea Fleet took place (ibid). Regionalism is too big a factor, and the regional divisions will continue to prevent any monopoly of power. Party of Regions is still unpopular in Kiev, central and especially in Western Ukraine. Historical and cultural preferences and legacies are too important and will prevent Yanukovych and Azarov from achieving a unified Ukraine. Unification also seems to be a key word in order for Ukraine to develop and democratize. The core problem is in fact that the country is divided. Thus it again looks like modernization theory falls short as there are bound to be other theories which better explain how history and culture affects the political life and international relations in Ukraine and the path Ukraine is on – which is not the democratic path. The foreign policy decisions seem to be influence heavily by historical bonds, which Ukraine has not been able to move away from as other post-Soviet countries have. Countries such as Poland and the Baltics have had the same starting point, but have actively chosen other paths, which in turn have led them to the EU. It is natural to assume that one of the reasons is that those countries have been able to cut ties with Russia.

Even though, the West seemed to believe that Ukraine ad chosen the lesser of two evils in the 2010 election, and by backing Yanukovych were hoping to have an influence in Ukraine becoming more Western, the EU and West again had to retract and distance themselves from Ukrainian political decisions. The imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko in 2011 being the hitherto biggest setback in Yanukovych’ relations with the West and the EU. Leaders from all over the world condemned the actions taken by Ukrainian authorities.

An undeniable point which is crucial for Ukraine’s situation is in part Huntington’s point and in part Inglehart’s. This is the most important point to take away from the modernization theory as it best explain the situation of Ukraine and the choices Ukraine have made foreign policy wise. The course from agrarian society into industrialized society can be very predictable, but from thereon it’s about cultural and societal change which is not at all linear. The predictability diminishes as a society develops. This also because the wants and wishes from a society is not as predictable anymore. Especially Ukraine has shown to be very diverse and divided culturally and politically. The history of a society in many ways has a lot to do with what a modernized society want out of life, and in the case of Ukraine, this wish is not unified. This has to do with family, religion, governing politics etc. Inglehart description of diminishing returns very much describes the situation in Ukraine.

Huntington’s counter argument to modernization fits Ukraine. Development leads to change, but not always progressive change. Dramatic social transformation can be unstable when the political system and economic institutions are not ‘healthy’. As part of modernizations is the move from poor to rich, economic development is a part of that move. However, as seems very fitting to Ukraine, economic development is not only benign and progressive. In the case of Ukraine, economic development has flourished while the country has continued being highly corrupt. With quick social and economic transformation, Ukraine has experienced the unstableness – often bordering and sometime even violent – that only a society which have transformed where culture and economy could not keep up with each other, could experience. Thereby meaning that when Ukraine tried to lean on the EU very quick after independence, without having the culture of most European countries the country was suddenly asking a lot of itself and it could not fathom to live up to the economic or the culture of the countries being in the EU. With the enlargement of 2007, it seemed that Ukraine had more countries that were culturally alike within EU walls, and, therefore, a more likely chance of being part of the community, however again the leaders of Ukraine could not live up to the standards of the EU. The problems of human rights and transparency being two of the issues always leaving Ukraine on the outside. The wrongful treatment of many people, Tymoshenko only being the example in that she is a public figure, is one of the signs that institutions within Ukraine have not been able to respond to the economic transformation. Consequently, Ukraine have modernized in some areas, while others are still significantly behind and could never uphold to the standards of the EU or other democratic institutions. As Inglehart argues, history also tells us that democracy is not the only possible outcome of modernization. Communism and Fascism are the next likely outcomes. Consequently, it must be concluded that since Ukraine have followed the steps of modernization, they have not ended up with a fully democratic state yet, but still possess many traits of Communism. Another important concluding factor is that Ukraine has not come to a conclusion themselves. Domestically, the country continuously collides with stagnations because neither the trend towards democratization nor authoritarianism has been decisive yet (D’Anieri, 2012: 447).

## 6.3. Realizing Ukrainian lack of Strength

As we have established in the previous analyses, Ukraine is a country balancing between Russia and the EU. However, we have also established that since the 2010 election of Viktor Yanukovych as president, relations with the EU have faltered. This analysis, using realism as a theoretical background, will look at the present President and government, and consequently, look at the relationship Ukraine have with Russia since the EU and Western world have taken a big step back from deepening relations with Ukraine. Realism asserts that countries act in their own best interest, and it also asserts that sovereignty is one of the biggest powers that a country can possess. It will be looked at on what terms, if at all, this is consistent with the relations between Russia and Ukraine, when we have previously established that Russia has the upper hand in the asymmetrical interdependence between the two countries.

The argument, which has also been presented in earlier analyses, is that every time it looks like Ukraine is about to make a decisive move away from a stagnated foreign policy, the opposite somehow occurs (ibid: 447). Even the Orange Revolution proved to be much less effective and left a much smaller impact than first assumed. The election of Yanukovych was widely seen as the final defeat of the Orange Revolution and Russia taking back control over Ukraine. However, instead of seeing it as Russia taking control over Ukraine, it must be the governmental elite making a cost-benefit analysis and conclusively deciding that relations with Russia was the best for Ukraine. This would be in accordance with realism which would argue that the official foreign policy of Ukraine would depend on the political elite and their connections to different oligarchs in Ukraine – most whom have strong connections with Russian counterparts. Nonetheless, Yanukovych immediately after winning the election traveled to Moscow to meet with his counterpart.

After being elected President in 2010, Yanukovych made choices which immediately sent the message that Ukraine were leaning more towards Russia and Russian style politics. Yanukovych signed an extended lease on the Sevastopol naval base on Crimea which was analyzed to be a clear indication of Ukraine’s willingness to satisfy Russia on a range of issues of high importance to Russian elites. It is most likely that this is linked to the neoclassical realism point that argues that the political elites are an important foreign policy determinant and they do not “[…] want to relinquish their only opportunity to acquire and keep wealth and influence” (Kropatcheva, 2011: 523). Neoclassical realism would also take into consideration, as does constructivism, that the oligarch culturally and historically carry weight in political contexts and that Ukraine does not have a culture which is prone to seeking compromise.

Politics in Ukraine are personalized, as the political elite uses realist thought, i.e. cost-benefit analysis to their own advantage instead of the country’s advantage. Factual is that Russia is working the same way, and the EU’s institutions are not. Thus, it is beneficial to ally with Russia. According to D’Anieri Yanukovych’ policies were clearly the most pro-Russian seen since Ukraine’s independence (D’Anieri, 2012: 450). Under Yanukovych leadership Ukraine can again be known as Russia’s little sister. This is even though relations have not changed visibly. Russia is still limiting Ukraine’s autonomy by using institutions that are led by Russia and, thereby, cooperating with Ukraine on their terms – and at the same time limiting Ukraine’s relations with the West. Following realism, it is assumed that every individual is egoistic and driven by self-interest and the fact that states put their own pursuit of power and interests as well as national security over everything else it must be argued that Yanukovych must consider Russia to be a safer and more useful partner than the West. It seems, even though it really is in contradiction to realism, that Yanukovych, considering that Ukraine being under the wings of Russia, he does not consider Ukraine to be powerful enough or able to gain power on its own. But that Ukraine can rise with the support of Russia and not with the West. The fact that Ukraine is not able to stand alone can either be seen as a sign of weakness, or a sign that Yanukovych follows realism and want to avoid conflicts at all costs and look for compromise as this is for own satisfaction and, thereby, own best interest. Following this line of thinking, Yanukovych must have felt that Russia have posed a bigger threat to Ukraine than the West, and ultimately felt it better to join Russian political lines.

It can however be questioned whether or not Yanukovych turn to Russia because Ukraine, and possibly Yanukovych himself, share more with Russia than with the West. By share, it is here meant in a historical and cultural context. However, that is inconsistent with realism, as realism, according to critic Raymond Aron, assumes that all countries, no matter what regime type, history or culture said country has, will look at international relations from the same angle: power, security and national interest first.

Another very plausible explanation for why Yanukovych chose to cooperate more closely with Russia, and, thereby, leave the West and the EU dissatisfied with Ukrainian political decisions is the mere fact of incentives. Incentives play a big role in realism, because it again comes down to what is in Ukraine’s own best interest. Yanukovych and the Ukrainian leadership, making decisions on behalf of the Ukrainian people, must believe and calculate that siding with Russia on a variety of important political decisions is better for Ukraine. The very real possibility is that Russia has laid down incentives which were too important for Yanukovych to pass up. It could also be negative incentives as e.g. described with the gas crises. Russia has through continued subsidies and sudden embargoes (ibid: 453) had the power to keep Ukraine close and, thereby, been able to constrain Ukraine’s foreign policy. This being one of the clearer signs, that Ukraine has very limited sovereignty. Ukraine has since its independence had trouble living up to terms from both Russia and the West. On one side, Russia has continuously limited Ukraine’s autonomy by only cooperating through institutions led by Russia and at the same time wanting Ukraine to limit their cooperation with the West. One the other side, the West and the EU has insisted on Ukraine making domestic economic and political reforms, which the sitting governments have either not been able to implement or not willing to implement (ibid: 451). This has left Ukraine with none of the potential partners willing to cooperate with Ukraine on terms which Ukraine could at any time accept fully. This fits realism, which would want Ukraine to settle for nothing but the power to fulfill own goals and wants. However, when we now see Yanukovych have chosen the side of Russia, something has changed.

It must be that in the case of Ukraine, classical realism does not fit completely. For this theory to describe the situation in Ukraine, the concept of cooperation is undermined. But yet again, the fact that Ukraine has chosen to subject themselves to Russia might in fact prove that Ukraine is in all actuality the best for national security and in own self-interest. At least in the short run. The Ukrainian leadership might have chosen the side of Russia, because the EU and the West demanded too much. Too much in the sense that the road to full democracy does not pay off immediately. It is a long process in which a series of compromises, changes and reforms much me made which demand a full reconstruct of Ukraine’s culture which still encompass oligarchs, embezzlement, nepotism, corruption etc. What Yanukovych has done is to choose a side where Ukraine is offered more incentives and can gain the most right now. Unfortunately, this comes with the cost of Ukraine not developing values such as fairness, transparency, fair elections etc.

Russia, following realism thought, also has national security as its top priority. Consequently, a main concern is having Ukraine as an adversary. It is especially important because of Ukraine’s large borders to Russia. Russia would rather have Ukraine as a friend than see their neighbor joining NATO and thereby risk having NATO troops so close. So far, Russia has succeeded in keeping Ukraine from NATO membership (ibid: 451). All in all, it is in the best interest of Russia to have Ukraine share as many values as possible with Russia. Connecting the Ukrainian people to Russian people is done through historical and cultural connection which rightfully will be presented in constructivism and it is more neoclassical realism than classical realism. Cultural connections are one of the tools used to have Ukraine’s political system be like Russia’s. Russia would like Ukraine to be the bridge to the economies in the EU, i.e. have Ukraine be a trade partner and to invest in the country. Thus being the bridge to Western Europe, it is important that the ties are closer to Russia than EU. This is done by supporting authoritarian leaders of Ukraine, and the reason is two-fold. First of all, the leaders who are prone to authoritarianism are also more pro-Russian and, secondly, it keeps successful democracy at arm’s length (ibid: 451). This is certainly because democracy in Ukraine would undermine the legitimacy of the system in Russia. The counter-pressure Ukraine would get from Russia, should Ukraine leadership make foreign policy going directly against Russia, is enormous and the consequences unforeseeable. Consequently, the cost-benefit analysis is clear to Ukraine as the EU and West does not operate in the same manner as Russia. Besides putting pressure on Ukraine, Russia is also powerful enough to put pressure on other states, thus, making e.g. existing NATO or EU members fear the repercussions of an alliance with Ukraine (ibid). Russia is admittedly not as opposed to the EU as to NATO. That is very much in line with the security issue, as the EU is political and economic organization rather than a sole security organization such as NATO. The EU does not have a history of opposing the Soviet Union, and most importantly, the EU does not contain the USA. The reason why Russia would still oppose of Ukrainian membership in the EU, is because Ukraine cannot have agreements of this size with both Russia and the EU, thus making Ukrainian integration in the EU impracticable for Russia. It must be said that the power structure, i.e. asymmetrical interdependence, between Ukraine and Russia is strongly set in stone, and consequently, it is possible that Yanukovych is making an easier choice by submitting to Russian decisions. The political elite is guided by short term personal gains, which is what Russia can offer. Again it is stressed, that the Ukrainian elite act on behalf of themselves and the elite groups they belong to instead of thinking in the long run on behalf of the country. A very real possibility for the foreign policy choices as well as domestic is that incentives are presented to Yanukovych himself. The personal gains for Yanukovych and other leaders’ play a decisive factor, but how big is not known. However, it is big financial incentives for many oligarchs and political leaders to see trade with Russia unchanged. Billionaires are created through this, but it also gives Russia the ability to extort Ukrainian leadership. Another possible argument is the culture and history of Yanukovych himself, but that will be dealt with in the next and last analytical section.

It is asserted that Ukraine is bouncing back and forth between the EU and Russia, because it is the only way they can display power and preserve independence and, consequently, their sovereignty. It could show that Ukrainians share realisms thought which states that power, sovereignty and national security are cornerstones in foreign policy. Thus, the country is afraid of committing to either the EU or Russia, because they are well aware that it means submitting themselves to others’ goals and commitments, thus being unable and not willing to make any commitment. Thereby, Ukraine also continues being a weak player unable to make decisive foreign policy decisions. Consequently, when comparing them to those countries they cooperate with, willingly and/or out of necessity, they lack power and thus the sovereignty of Ukraine is intact on paper but not powerful nor much respected.

## 6.4. Constructing an Identity

In this analytical section the identity of Ukraine will be looked at. Historical and cultural ties should be what have shaped Ukrainian politics, but it should also be hypothetically easy to change a situation because the main argument for change is ideas and beliefs and not materialistic issues. The President is a representation of Ukrainian beliefs and ideas, and it will be looked at whether this actually is a determining factor in Ukrainian foreign policy. Furthermore, the division of the Ukrainian people to the East and West will be looked at as they to a great extent are guilty of giving Ukraine an identity problem.

### 6.4.1. The President’s Identity

The President is able to construct his own reality in which he will naturally try and include the rest of the Ukrainian population. Including the people in his reality is mainly done through media, and very much relies on rhetoric abilities and the interpretations of the mass media.

It is true that international and domestic relations change according to the government, because it is no less visible than in the example of Ukraine and Ukraine’s President, that international relations change according to the President’s ideas and beliefs – his beliefs and ideas to a large extend becomes the system. However, constructivism also asserts that this means that it is easier for people and states to rethink old ways and structures. This seems to have been one of the hardest tasks for Ukraine since independence. Giddens asserted that structures were still a hindrance, but people should still be able to transform their ideas and beliefs by putting them into new contexts and let them fulfill new frames. In the case of Ukrainian foreign policies the ideas and beliefs by politicians have been plentiful, but no one has succeeded in carrying out transformative reforms. Thus, it seems that Ukraine as much as anyone is stuck in old structures and ways of thinking. Especially, Yanukovych does not pave ways for new thinking or ways for Ukraine. One thing that really seems to lack in Ukraine and in Ukrainian politics is flexibility. The vision Yanukovych and the government has for Ukraine, is more one that is about money and staying friends with those who have power and the most influence in Ukrainian matters, i.e. Russia, and not so much about recreating an identity.

The 2010 election and the battle for the presidential post between Yanukovych and Tymoshenko is a perfect example of the division of East and West, and the presidential elections and choice of political figures time and time again substantiate this division. In Ukraine there seems to be no in-between and the population is forced to choose between Yanukovych with the East and Tymoshenko and the West if they wanted to have a chance in making their votes count. Much has to do with history and cultural ties. When looking at constructivism it is necessary to put people into boxes in order to analyze and make people fit certain criteria that allows for concluding on ideas and beliefs, but of course reality is always more complex. In the West, a city such as Lviv used to be Polish and that is what the population predominately identifies with. They identify with being European and long for what Tymoshenko promised – democracy and engaging with the EU and Europe. In the Eastern Donetsk Region, people long for the Soviet era. The fact that Yanukovych is not a man of reform, but a man of stability is what ensures him votes in the East. Some people fear being worse off than they already are (Reuters, US Edition). They feared the change that Tymoshenko was promising would not benefit them, and they believed they were neglected in the Yushchenko era. Supporters of Yanukovych have constructed an identity which Yanukovych addresses through his politics and statements, and, thus, people identify their Ukraine with his Ukraine, - i.e. their definition of the Ukrainian state is in the same box. The fact that some Ukrainians feel more comfortable with stability, which in this case also seem to mean stagnation, is a clear indication of how leaders want to direct Ukraine’s foreign policy. Yanukovych’s reliable voters want stability and Russia-era conditions, which is very telling in terms of the pro-Russia, leaning on stagnation, foreign policy that Ukraine’s been having under Yanukovych. Wanting stability, the safest road seems to be the foreign policies leaning on Russia.

Social constructivism in international relations believes that Ukraine does not have a definite identity - or constructed reality - before it interacts with others, and thus changes identity according to the other country or institution Ukraine is interacting with. Thus Ukraine should be different to Russia than it is to the EU. Consequently, Yanukovych should also change accordingly. Unmistakable, that is also the case to a certain degree, as Yanukovych and policies would use different tactics and play on different relations according to said interaction and end goal of said interaction. However, the fact that Yanukovych seems to have given up on relations with the EU – put them on pause even - suggests that he is not able to or interested in creating an identity that fits EU mentality. His Russia-mentality is simply too strong. Yanukovych has not been able to adapt to EU demands and, thus, have not acted according to constructivism, because it turns out that Yanukovych was not satisfied with the role that EU was able to offer. The EU has been slow and reluctant to react to Ukraine's wishes in terms of EU integration in the past, and the consequence has been dissatisfaction from the side of Ukraine. Constructivism does highlight security and survival, but not the need to be the most powerful one can be. That does not seem fitting to Ukraine and Yanukovych who has chosen a path where there is most room to maneuver, and for Ukraine to reach the highest and most powerful potential - at least following Yanukovych, this is side by side with Russia. EU has not responded to Ukraine in a way that would grant Ukraine power or maneuverability.

Constructivism in international relations asserts that identities can be studied and, consequently, wants and wishes can be identified as well. Yanukovych is not an ambiguous political figure to analyze. His wants and wishes lie with the CIS countries and Russia in particular, and, thus, he has during the last two years in the form of his Presidency, formed Ukraine's foreign policy accordingly. Yanukovych does not strike anyone - and most importantly not the EU - as someone who wants to identify with the European identity. Nonetheless, Yanukovych follows constructivists in international relations insofar that he sees that Ukraine needs to be part of a culture and identity reaching outside of own borders. Additionally, this is not hard to achieve with Russia and the remaining CIS countries, because that identity is historically not that far behind.

### 6.4.2. The heterogeneous Identity of Ukraine

The Ukrainian identity is very heterogeneous, which is one of the many reasons that Ukraine display a range of foreign policy intentions, but a small percentage is actually carried out. The role of the Russian language is also a substantial factor and a quite good example of the identity crisis in Ukraine. The western part of Ukraine being predominately Ukraine-speaking and the eastern part predominately Russian-speaking, the language can be said to be an indication of the constructed identity a person ascribes to. When Yanukovych in the summer of 2012 took up the issue of language and updated the Russian language (Financial Times: Ukraine’s Identity Crisis). This was a way for Yanukovych to appeal to his core voter base in eastern Ukraine, after having failed to deliver on anything substantial in the two first years of his Presidency. Language shows to be important, because even though the economy at this time was rated as being the most important for the Ukrainian people, taking up the issue of the Russian language was a hit among Russian-speakers and, thus, served as a sure voter hit. This assures that identity is of utmost importance to the people and targeting the core of the voters’ identity ensures votes and popularity. Naturally, opponents of Yushchenko, e.g. Tymoshenko’s Fatherland party, find that giving Russia a regional status erodes Ukraine’s sovereignty and nationhood (ibid).

Giving Russian language a new status will hardly be what makes Ukraine more Russian than European, but it certainly is a symbol of Ukraine’s identity crisis. Social constructivism very well explains the identities of Ukraine, as it proclaims that discourse, language and signals are important elements of creating an identity. Ukraine surely does have an identity as a collective, but is also have regions that have formed a shared identity. In Ukraine the smaller groups of regional identity is more important to the individual than the national identity. I.e. feeling a sense of belonging must be pivotal for many Ukrainians and this sense is more easily found in the nearer community than national. In the eastern parts of Ukraine, sub-regions have formed a common understanding, where language plays a big part in identifying with one another. Should two Eastern Ukrainians with the same Russian dialect accidently meet in a predominantly Ukraine-speaking part of the country, they would be able to form a bond on the grounds of their common language. The language might cause them to interact, and they more they had in common in terms of history and culture the more they would identify with each other and create a common understanding. This is the essence of identity, and because Ukraine has such a diverse people in terms of identity and a large country in size, a large amount of such groups of people exists, creating clashes of identity.

It is also understandable that regions tend to vote the same. According to social constructivism and Alexander Wendt, social structures are defined by shared understanding, knowledge, material resource and practices. These are the elements that make the relationships among the same voter base cooperative and make the relationship with other voters conflictual. They in terms define their interest in self-help terms, and only believe their peers and distrust others' intentions. This would mean that the East-voters supporting the Party of Regions hold in their identity a distrustfulness towards supporters of e.g. the Fatherland Party and vice versa.

Following Finnmore's constructivism in international relations, Ukraine ought to pay more attention and act more accordingly to respected international organization such as the UN and NATO. This is undoubtedly also why Ukraine has long sought to be a part of these recommended 'clubs' such as NATO and the EU. However, with Yanukovych steering the country, these aims seem to be shelved. The problem for Ukraine is the fact that the different institutions they are drawn to are not compatible. The CIS with Russia in control is not compatible with NATO. Ukraine does pay attention to the international societies, but the problem again comes down to the identity crises internally in Ukraine.

The election of Yanukovych suggests that the majority of the population is pro-Russia and not pro-EU. That is not necessarily true according to polls, which suggest that the country often is evenly divided in elections. This however, does not mean that constructivism cannot explain Ukraine’s foreign policy, but on the contrary. It again comes down to the leader of Ukraine and corruption. Not yet have Ukraine had an election which could brag of being 100 percent fraud-free. Constructivism explains a lot about individual identity and a national identity, and additionally it also explains that the history of the country is belonging to an identity where corruption is high and few people are able to run the country because there is a need of money and network, i.e. corruption in the case of Ukraine. It is far from democratic, and from this angle constructivism actually does explain the foreign policy actions taken In terms of Ukraine being friendly with Russia instead of the EU. It means that the identity including corruption and oligarchs with too much power to endure on a real democratic road is accepted among the majority of the population. The population of Ukraine is divided, but because of the historical ties to the Soviet Union, Ukraine is still relying on Russia as a ‘big brother’ who is looked up to.

Constructivists do not necessarily agree on whether countries are most influenced by the international community or whether counties' domestic political situation is what influences international relations. Because of the disagreement among scholars within the field of constructivism, it is the most fitting to see that Ukraine is a case where the internal domestic situation and historical ties cannot be dominated or motived to a large enough extend by the international community to change ways. The leaders of Ukraine have always had the ultimate power, and until the Ukrainian people have a whole new type of politician to choose at election time, this is unlikely to change. Ukraine's domestic environment, exactly as constructivism also predicts, is set in stone to such a degree that it is hard to change domestic norms. Domestic norms are influential, especially emphasizing the political forums and the behavior of politicians and the political game in Ukraine in general. Exactly as Hopf discovered when studying the Soviet Union and Russia, the same is applicable to Ukraine. National identity is expressed through key decision makers, and thus the Ukrainian identity reconstructs together with the leaders, and this, consequently, goes a long way in explaining Ukraine's foreign policy today and in the past.

Constructivism, however, still is not enough in order to explain Ukraine’s foreign policy. Constructivism is a solid basis for explaining the choices of a person or a country for that matter, but there needs to be more layers in order to thoroughly being able to explain why Ukraine is on the path that Ukraine is on. Conclusively, constructivism does not put the same emphasis on national security as e.g. realism. Constructivist saw realism and the idea that national security is at the forefront falter, when the world let USA have unipolar power after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Consequently, beliefs and ideas should be more present as an influence to foreign policy. However, from the background that Ukraine has, it does not seem that one excludes the other. The two theories have very different starting points – as constructivism is also aware of. Constructivism offers a completely different point of view, but as far as Ukraine is, it cannot be used alone.

# 7. Conclusion

In the time after the Orange Revolution, Ukraine has had two very different presidents, and the 2010 election of Yanukovych certainly reversed the political situation in Ukraine in terms of foreign policy objectives and the political road the governmental elite intent to take Ukraine. Through the four analyses of Ukraine in different situations, the choices of the President and government have been rationalized. The theories highlighted different aspects of what is important in terms of foreign policy objectives and the road that Ukraine is one. Special attention has been paid to which direction Ukraine has moved - towards Russia or towards the EU – and Ukraine has made an attempt at both. The theories have served as backdrop in determining the reasons why Ukraine again and again has shifted between East and West – Russia and the EU. Through the analyses, it has been clear that each of the theories have displayed strengths and weaknesses. The weakest theory in terms of explaining Ukrainian foreign policy decisions have been modernization theory, while the remaining three have been good supplements to each other. In this conclusive chapter, the four theories’ strengths and weaknesses will be highlighted in an attempt to find a reasonably theoretical framework which can explain Ukraine’s foreign policy and the choices behind these.

Interdependence did rightfully so help explain a vast amount of the speculation concerning choices in Ukrainian foreign policy. A clear factor in explaining Ukraine’s foreign policy, and most useful, was asymmetrical interdependence as it highlighted the epicenter of Ukraine’s relations with the EU and Russia. Initially, the EU offered a large incentive for Ukraine in the form of possible membership into the EU – or so Ukraine thought. As it became clear that it was a very long term plan, including countless other steps to be taken and conditions to live up to, Ukraine backed away. The EU and Ukraine did not have enough to bargain with, and, thus, Ukraine returned to Russia, with whom Ukraine has much in common with. Because of the asymmetrical relationship where Russia has the upper hand and Ukraine has to prove itself time and time again, it seemed that the reason to have a tighter relationship with Russia must have been two-sided. Thus, it came to be that constructivism served as the perfect ‘background’ theory to explain that identity and cultural ties are an unavoidable factor in explaining Ukrainian foreign policy.

Interdependence explains how Ukraine is significantly affected by external factors, where constructivism help explains how personal choices within international relations are also defining. Yanukovych was used as an example as he is the man of highest power, and his personal identification with Russia and the Soviet era helps to understand that the reality one constructs for oneself truly is the most important reality. Thus, through the election in 2010, Ukraine has nationally chosen to live in a reality of Yanukovych and his party while they on sublevels have their own realities. Historical and cultural ties showed to be immensely important, especially to a country like Ukraine who has had very little time to create an identity of its own. As constructivism serves interdependence well, they can both work together when also taking into account aspects from realism, or more specifically neorealism. Classic realism’s aspect of wanting power holds up, but it seems that culture and historical ties to some extent can make up for not having absolute sovereignty and still being Russia’s little sister.

Realism highlights the power-aspect, which is a factor that acknowledges that a Ukraine will strive to find a position in foreign affairs where they can hold as much power as possible. For the current state of Ukraine, this is only possible by having good relations with Russia. Holding power within the EU would not lead to immediate power, and the identity of the current government is to achieve goals fast. Thus realism is usable to the extent that the power aspect is used together with the interdependent relationship. Consequently, realism fits in so far that Ukraine has chosen to partner up with the country they see can make Ukraine the most powerful. The Ukrainian political elite and oligarchs in particular can continue being powerful and control the country. The point of democracy would also be that the Ukrainian society became more equal, which is not in the interest of the elite who has the power. - At least not when following a realist mind which asserts that everyone wants to achieve the position where they are the most powerful. This can be why Ukraine is not modernizing into a democracy. The realist way of thinking is too strong with the governmental and business elite.

Modernization theory does not add much in explaining Ukraine’s foreign policy. The most valuable thing to take from modernization which can help explain Ukraine’s situation and place in the world spectrum, is the fact that once Ukraine reach ‘modernization’, the country cannot evolve past that, and the end goal of modernization is most often democracy However, Ukraine steps outside of the lines and as of right now, is not any closer to being a democratic state than it was before 2004. Ukraine is as much a democracy as Russia. To take away from modernization is the fact that change is not linear. In terms of resources, Ukraine should have been able to evolve as other post-Soviet states. However, identity, history and culture proved to be too big of a hindrance, thus making modernization almost redundant.

What drives politics in Ukraine, which certainly includes foreign policy, is a drive of the personal. With an offset in how important culture and history, Ukraine is like a magnet to Russia. Own agendas are advantageous to a substantial part of the population, who put themselves above the society. The over-aged Ukrainian elite have so much power that they indirectly have chosen their government. - A government with personal advisers all with the same culture and history, which they value, and, thus, have as their chosen reality. The majority of the Ukrainian population have constructed this world and accepted this as their reality. The Orange Revolution did not change much, but a brief attempt from Yushchenko so get closer to the EU, who did not open their arms in the speed wanted or within a presidential period, and so he was replaced. The ENP has been all that the EU has been able to offer to Ukraine, and a country like Ukraine does not handle change which is in such a distant future very well. The demands of the ENP for Ukraine to achieve democratic development and good governance, if Ukraine wants have a deeper relationship with the EU countries, are reforms which Ukraine cannot instate now.

None of the theories alone can describe Ukraine’s foreign policy, and, thus, it is concluded that the important factors of describing the path of Ukraine’s foreign policy can be found in interdependence theory, but with the role of identity, culture and acting in own best interest as equal and important supplements. The identity division in Ukraine is a determining factor which ensures that Ukraine continues being Russia’s little sister instead of moving towards the EU.

Lastly, this thesis has briefly in the theoretical section touched upon points of Samuel Huntington. Huntington and Inglehart had the only point that was reasonable useful in terms of identifying the choices of Ukrainian foreign policy within modernization. Now, that it has been established which theoretical backgrounds and which mixture best explained the research question, it seems fitting to mention another point of Samuel Huntington’s – one that have been used uncountable times. When looking at the clash of civilizations, and the civilizations which Huntington nicely identified in his article in Foreign Affairs (Huntington, 1993), and the conclusion which have been reached in this theses, one thing stands clear. Namely, that culture and history should always be accounted for and is the ground pillars when analyzing affairs of states. Ukraine was classified in the orthodox civilization – together with Russia, while the majority of the EU is in the western civilization.

# 8. Abbreviation List

AA: Association Agreements

EBRD: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

EIB: European Investment Bank

ENP: European Neighbourhood Policy

ENPI: European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument

EU: European Union

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

CIS SES: CIS Single Economic Space

CSP: Country Strategy Paper

ICRC: International Committee for the Red Cross

IFI: International Financial Institution

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IR: International Relations

NIP: National Indicative Programme

OCSE: Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

PCA: Partnership and Cooperation Agreements

PfP: Partnership for Peace

SEP: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

SSR: Soviet Socialist Republic

UN: United Nations

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EC ENP. Working Together. *The European Neighbourhood Policy*. Brussels, 2007

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1. The three presidents mentioned are Kravchuk, Kuchma and Yushchenko. Yanukovych, the incumbent president is not included. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Said by Danish Minister for European Affairs, Nicolai Wammen, when he commented on the EU winning the Nobel Peace Prize (Go’ Morgen Danmark, December 10, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It was advised that Kuchma should not attend the November 2002 NATO summit, but Kuchma ignored this. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The 16 countries were Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine, all of whom are participating. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Besides the Eastern Partnership regional initiative, also the Union for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea Synergy was developed. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See abbreviation list. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. In 2004, Transparency International ranked Ukraine as number 122 with 2.2. on their Corruption Perception Index. In 2012 Ukraine is number 144 with 2.6 on the scale (Transparency International). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Counting up until the 2009 gas crisis [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Referencing to the Ukrainian government’s (re)establish Ukrainian as the dominant language of Ukraine [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Large city in Eastern Ukraine where the majority is either Russian-speaking Ukrainians or ethnic Russians [↑](#footnote-ref-11)