Evaluating EU-Russian relations:  
The Intersection of Variable Geometry and Power Pragmatism

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Beginning in 1992, foreign policy mechanisms and attitudes began to change in both the European Union and the Russian Federation. The EU, having just emerged out of the new institutional frameworks of the Treaty on European Union, would have one of three policy pillars devoted to foreign and security policy. The mechanisms would require testing and community experience to realize their full effect, and the EU wasted no time in creating a range of declarations and agreements in order to capitalize on their new external relations abilities. Russia, on the other hand, would emerge from the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union with little changed in its foreign policy institutions. While the loss of its western satellite states would dramatically impact how leadership in Moscow approached European affairs, strong economic and trade dependencies on its western neighbors ensured a Russian approach committed to engaging Europe, at least for its own benefit. The EU has grown to realize the important stake that Russia has in regional economics and security and has attempted to form common positions toward their neighbor in order to secure organizational cohesion as well as national and continental interests.

This thesis will be divided into three sections. First, a literature review will take stock of existing research concerning EU, Russian and joint foreign policy actions. Second, an analysis of the relationship will be conducted based on field research, which will explain how the EU follows a difficult path of variable geometry to foreign policy decisions while Russia has embraced a new brand of power pragmatism. The third and final section will bring these different types of foreign policy formations together and present conclusions about the characteristics of the relationship and what future direction we can expect.
EVALUATING EU-RUSSIAN RELATIONS: 
THE INTERSECTION OF VARIABLE GEOMETRY AND POWER PRAGMATISM

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Terms

CEES = Central and Eastern European States
CFSP = Common Foreign and Security Policy
EBRD = European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
EIB = European Investment Bank
ENP = European Neighborhood Policy
ESDP = European Security and Defense Policy
EU = European Union
EU3 = The “Big 3” in Europe, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom
NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRC = NATO-Russia Council
PCA = Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
TACIS = Technical Assistance for Commonwealth of Independent States
TEU = Treaty on European Union, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty
Both European Union and Russian foreign policy have evolved dramatically since their “births” between 1991 and 1992. From the early 1990s until the present, both entities have been increasing their wealth, regional influence and international image, albeit at a much different pace. This period of development has pitted Europe and Russia against each other numerous times in diplomatic and economic showdowns, such as in the former Yugoslav areas during times of ethnic conflict (1994-95 and again in 1998), as well as in the Ukraine over a disputed election (2005) and oil and natural gas deliveries (2006 and 2008-09). And yet, despite these disputes there has been relative stability on the continent.

While international movements such as détente and ost-politik sought to preserve the peace during the Cold War, it was always the threat of military deterrence that dominated decision calculus. Today, even as nuclear arsenals continue to exist and NATO is still an active defense alliance, a new decision calculus – the impetus for a stable and peaceful relationship between Europe and Russia – seems to have emerged. If the looming threat of NATO no longer brings Russia to the negotiating table with EU representatives; what influences have emerged to change the relationship between Russia and the EU in ways that promote lasting peace and a desire to cooperate?

A review of literature will begin by taking stock of current theories and explanations attributed to the EU-Russian relationship. The second section will be split into two parts. First, a review of EU foreign policy will demonstrate how the community adapts to organizational and international situations with approaches rooted in variable geometry. Those member states with relatively greater political will and capabilities will lead the pack and entice other member states to either follow their action or acquiesce.
Then our attention will switch to Russia where foreign policy has experienced immense change in the direction of power pragmatism – a willingness to cooperate with the West in order to ensure Russian prosperity.

The differences in structure of the EU and Russian sections reflect the inherent differences in their foreign policies. The EU, which faces unprecedented challenges to its efforts to create a common foreign policy, is based around internal solidarity and institutional learning; it is a process that produces numerous, sometimes conflicting, policy declarations and initiates a number of policies with its neighbor states in order to promote core values beyond its borders. The Russian section, on the other hand, reflects a state that realizes its future is in partnership with the West and has been reactive to European policies in the past. This thesis will explore the differences in their foreign policies and the final section will bring variable geometry and power pragmatism together as a way of understanding how two very different entities interact. While the EU may use external relations as a way to build internal confidence and organizational credibility, Russia has a much more fluid ability to use its foreign policy to secure its global standing and the future of its economy.
Institutional History

European Union

While the EU had previously experimented with intergovernmental collaboration on foreign policy initiatives (such as with the organization of European Political Cooperation in the 1970s), The 1992 Treaty on European Union (TEU) was the first time that the European community had forged a treaty-backed institutional framework for foreign policy cooperation. TEU created a three-pillar structure, with the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) gaining a type of equality with the dominant pillar, the European (economic) Community, and the third pillar, Justice and Home Affairs.

Those initial foreign policy structures were then modified in 1997 with the Treaty of Amsterdam. This treaty expanded CFSP by creating the position of the High Representative (a type of EU ambassador at-large), “common actions” and adopted the Western European Union’s defense mandates as a means strengthening EU foreign policy not only through security guarantees, but through the institutionalization of collaboration on international affairs. In 2001, the Treaty of Nice was signed, preparing the EU for 2004’s “big bang” expansion in which 10 new member states from the former Soviet sphere were brought into the organization. Since these new member states had been closely connected to the Soviet Union under a quasi-imperial system, their membership in the EU would fundamentally affect the way the EU as an institution would form their foreign policy toward Russia.

At the time of this writing in 2009, the formation of a common foreign policy still proves elusive for European policymakers. The high variability of national government
policies and interests, combined with an overlapping, multi-level foreign policy
governance that includes the EU Parliament, the Commission, the Council of Ministers
and numerous subdivisions under those headings has driven the EU toward adopting
vaguer common stances, if a position is produced at all.

Russia

Russian foreign policy evolved in a narrower institutional manner than that of the
EU, however retained the same growing pains as foreign policy was continually
redefined throughout the 1990s. A Russian diplomatic service distinct from the Soviet
Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established in October of 1990, with Andrei Kozyrev
appointed the first foreign minister. There existed a direct supervision of the Russian
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RMFA) by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and Kozyrev
was able to establish “a more ordered” system of individuals and policy sections within
the institution after inheriting the Soviet system of administrators.1 Most notable within
the initial re-organization, an office specifically for Europe was created alongside the
strengthening of information and media departments.

In February of 1992, Yeltsin formalized stricter hierarchies of control within his
government by bringing the RMFA more directly under his office and using president-
appointed groups to “supervise” the foreign policy institutions.2 While Russia in the
early 1990s was characterized by executive-legislative struggles, executive control of
foreign policy would solidify by the second-half of the 1990s. When President Vladimir

2 Sakwa (2002), 357.
Putin would come to power, he would put his own stamp on Russia’s foreign policy institutions by prioritizing the Security Council above that of the MFA. The strict top-down approach to foreign policy within Russia was codified by the 1993 Constitution, which placed virtually no limits on the president’s ability to conduct foreign policy, while containing only vague references to the rest of government’s role in the process of policy implementation. The State Duma has the power, similar to other democratic governments, to approve or reject international treaties, and the Federation Council has the final vote on the use of military troops abroad. While many Duma and FC committees exist to oversee foreign policy, functionally there is largely an acceptance of the executive’s stance on foreign policy issues due not the least bit to the political party affiliations of both the executive and legislative branches.

Since 1992, however, there has been enormous variance within this very vertical arrangement of foreign policy institutions. Not only is there a consistently cited divide between military and civilian planners, but the fluidity of power that prioritizes one policymaking institution or agency over another has meant lack of real stability in the face of bureaucratic and political turnover. In the end, it is safe to assume that these structures make the entire Russian foreign policy establishment more susceptible to individual interests.³

³ Sakwa (2002), 359.
Literature Review

Introduction

Sources that detail the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the interaction between them run into the hundreds if not thousands of published works. It is hard for the volume of work not to exist in such numbers – the EU has existed since 1992 and has revolutionized scholarly concepts of interstate relations, intergovernmental collaboration, and the formation of supranational entities that regulate these behaviors. Additionally, many of the working agencies and organizations within the EU were born out of experimental ventures both within and outside of the Treaty of Rome since its signing in 1957. Overall, academic literature describing the development of EU internal practices and their influence upon external relations relies heavily upon this historical development of collaborative work between the member states and the ability of EU practices and policies to be shaped by a spirit of adaptation. Within these academic discussions, there are consistent references to major policy initiatives that, in the realm of the foreign policy, fall under and complement the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Literature focusing on Russia paints a much different picture of how government operates in forming external relations. Steeped heavily in discussions of the cultural legacy in the post-communist period, most discussions of Russia’s foreign policy attempt to describe how the state’s policies are an extension of its own internal perceptions of its position in the world. Discussions of Russia defining itself against Europe as an “other” are not uncommon, which lends itself to more philosophical basis for determining
Russian self-perception. Periods of transformation in Russia’s foreign policy are fairly
easily broken into different periods (specifically, Andrei Tsygankov breaks it into four
periods, three post-communist) based on the individual presidents and foreign ministers
present at any given time. Overall, what emerges from this literature is a consistent focus
on Russia’s economic situation, which has a natural tendency to lead into deep analyses
of Russia’s relationship with the EU.

Finally, discussions of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement itself are
important because it is seen by many scholars, and is legally established, as the dominant
structure that provides for EU and Russian interaction. There are avenues, policies, and
documents that both Russia and the EU pursue unilaterally, but the PCA shows what
form joint dialogue and policymaking take the shape of. Evaluations of the PCA are
varied, as some see the agreement as a beneficial step toward EU-Russian rapprochement
and others criticize it for being an overly complex and difficult framework of
engagement. While most PCA literature seems focused on describing the various levels
of joint-committees and institutionalized dialogue more than on analyzing its current and
future functioning, its presence in numerous texts can at least be said to demonstrate a
type of de facto importance regardless of whether the agreement is seen as flawed or
inadequate. What follows are the major reoccurring trends in academic literature as it
applies to the EU, Russia and the PCA.
Mark Webber’s *Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation?* systematically describes the development of EU policies toward Russia, starting of course with the EU’s proposal of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). While the PCA was not the only one of its kind, Webber explains its importance as laying a foundation for CFSP and of establishing government-to-government committees that institutionalized contact between the Europeans and the Russians. As we see as a main theme in PCA discussions, this type of association agreement is explained as a means of differentiating states that are not on the docket to join the EU with those that are potential members; states in the latter category receive more in-depth and engaging association agreements. Webber’s research continues on to describe the 1996 Action Plan for Russia, which was meant as an EU initiative to engage Russia through methods outside of legally binding treaties. This and the 1997 “Agenda 2000” document were needed in order to keep up the cooperative momentum with Russia as PCA ratification stalled and EU expansion became a major priority. Webber goes on to describe the creation of the 1999 “Common Strategy on Russia” as a way for EU member states to use new mandates in the Treaty of Amsterdam to again reach out to Russia through the community’s newly established foreign policy tools. Throughout all of this, his purpose is to demonstrate the type of treaty and declaratory policy positions that the EU as a whole adopts in order to create binding external relations with a neighboring state. Since Russia is extremely important to the EU due to economic, security, and political reasons, the Commission and Council
of Ministers reach out with every avenue they have in order to support and encourage Russian political engagement. This approach is also self-beneficial for the EU because, as Webber explains, it allows different actors within the union to test the new foreign policy mechanisms that new treaties grant them.4

Description and analysis of these actions initiated by the EU follow in Richard Sakwa’s Russian Politics and Society, Stephan Keukeleire’s The Foreign Policy of the European Union, John Pinder’s The EU and Russia: The Promise of Partnership, Desmond Dinan’s Ever Closer Union, and James Hughes’ EU Relations with Russia: Partnership or Asymmetric Interdependency. While all these authors argue to various degrees the importance of the growth and expansion of EU policy surrounding Russia, it is the 1999 “Common Strategy of the EU on Russia” that emerges as the most important document in between the PCA and the 2005 ratification of the Common Spaces agreement. Illustrating the contrasting debate over the 1999 declaration is, on one hand, Sakwa and on the other hand, Hughes. Sakwa’s study is more in line with other authors in describing the Common Strategy as an understandable and beneficial development of the EU’s converging principles toward Russia.5 Hughes, however, argues that the Common Strategy would have an overall negative effect on EU foreign policy development, since it represented a declaration that lacked credibility, direction, and which was useless under the shadow of the PCA.6 It is also important to note that the literature describes other less directly relevant policy documents that were formed by the EU, best represented by Dinan’s description of a 1995 Commission report which

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4 Mark Webber, Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation? (London: St. Martin’s Press, LLC., 2000), 67-91.
5 Sakwa (2002), 368.
6 James Hughes, EU Relations with Russia: partnership or asymmetric interdependency? (LSE Research Online, 2006).
estimated whether Central and Eastern European States (hereafter referred to as “CEES”) would lean more toward Western Europe or Russia for direction. It should be no surprise, then, that almost any policy directed at the former Warsaw Pact states would include discussions of Russia.

Projects

While the literature points to agreements such as the PCA as the most important building blocks of the relationship, EU projects toward Russia are also seen as extremely important – mainly because these projects are focused around the same economic, security, and political concerns that are the basis for the EU-Russian relationship. Chief among these projects is the Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States initiative (TACIS), which amounts to monetary assistance for implementing EU-supported reforms. TACIS is important because it is an independent EU program, separate from European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), World Bank, International Monetary Fund or US operations, and is instead operated by the Commission. Webber and Hughes go to great lengths to describe the TACIS project, with regular mentions of how it is EU-run, and then decry the relatively low amounts of funds actually committed directly to Russian reform – arguing instead that most funds are allocated to EU workers and EU-directed projects in Russia. Contained within Webber’s description is an understanding that TACIS is used to promote “know-how” over that of directly funding capital projects, which is a way to describe how the EU uses projects in

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8 Webber (2000), 81-84.
order to project their values and mold neighboring states in their image. Pinder’s analysis goes further to explain the TACIS reform in 2000, which opened up the program to more Russian input, thus demonstrating how Commission-led projects are sometimes flexible and reactive to concerns that are voiced from outside the EU.

**Presidential Initiatives**

Since CFSP is firmly rooted in Council of Ministers unanimity (qualified majority voting has only been added on low-level, procedural foreign policy decisions), the initiative and leadership of the individual member states as they relate to the EU are the most important aspect of EU foreign policy formation. Sakwa, Webber, Paolo Foradori’s *Managing a Multilevel Foreign Policy*, Keukeleire, Pinder, David Wood’s *The Emerging European Union*, Dinan, and Hughes all go to great lengths to describe the individual acts by member states either when in normal Council of Ministers roles or when they hold the presidency of the Council. These have included Finland’s collaborative policy work with Russia (both in normal times to alleviate concerns of NATO expansion and during its presidency when creating the EU’s Northern Dimension policy in 1999), French and German promotion of cooperation with Russia

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10 Webber (2000), 81.
12 Webber (2000), 91.
17 Dinan (2005), 534-536.
over energy trade and counter-terrorism partnerships, the EU3 (a term that will be used throughout this thesis to identify the French-German-British partnership) taking the lead on alleviating Russian credit concerns throughout the 1990s as well as calling on Russia to cooperate in pressuring Iran to prevent nuclear proliferation, and the United Kingdom’s prioritization of energy trade with Russia during its presidency in 2005. Through this we get a strong, but general, idea about how engagement with Russia is promoted – and that is through the initiative of the most interested member states.

Of course, the literature details both positive and negative aspects of CFSP’s reliance on member state leadership, as for every example of promoting the relationship with Russia, there now seems to be the same number of member states who want to disengage due to lingering concerns (e.g., post-communist states who worry about Russian security threats) or focus on Russian human rights abuses in Chechnya or Georgia. These states, though, are almost entirely those member states that joined the EU in 2004 and after. The EU3, on the other hand, have been fairly consistent supports of promoting the Russian relationship – this is the “old” versus “new” member state divide. The literature also agrees that there are not formal actions taken within the Council that promote disengagement; instead, those member states that are more hesitant on engaging Russia tend to react to pro-Russian initiatives rather than sponsor their own initiatives. Most initiatives are, also, centered around the EU-Russian economic relationship and, in particular, the energy trade.

It is important to note, however, that these instances are not unique to the relationship with Russia. EU member states have, especially since 2004, taken the lead on regional stabilization within their respective spheres of influence. Examples include
Germany’s approach to Eastern European states, CEES reaching out to aid in stabilizing the Balkans, and France reaching out to states in North Africa. The leading problem with this system of initiative-taking, as Hughes describes, is that the rotating EU presidency means that there is no guarantee that a project spearheaded by one member state will continue in the future because the next presidency’s agenda might focus on entirely different matters.¹⁹

**Attitudinal and Ideological Beliefs Promoting Engagement**

Beyond policy declarations and initiatives, scholarly description and analysis of the EU’s attitudinal and principled beliefs is important to understand the context in which new policies are proposed or reformed. Sakwa best describes the EU’s approach in his statement, “Integration is preferable to isolation” meant as a way to describe Europe’s constant attempt to engage its eastern neighbor.²⁰ In addition to this, Sakwa,²¹ as well as Webber,²² Pinder,²³ and Hughes²⁴ are the most vocal about how the EU attempts to engage Russia by encouraging neighboring leadership to model European values and norms. These sources provide greater depth concerning the core belief of integrating Russia economically and politically as a means of stabilizing the region. For European leadership, that means stabilizing the Russian domestic situation, in similar fashion to policies that were pursued to stabilize other neighboring regions by promoting EU

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²¹ Sakwa (2002), 368.
²² Webber (2000), 88.
principles and providing financial and economic incentives for democratization and economic liberalization.

Apart from the promotion of values, both Smith\textsuperscript{25} and Foradori\textsuperscript{26} describe the process of variable geometry in formation of EU foreign policy, where more willing and capable member states will have to act in response to various external factors. While many other research points to the general idea of smaller groups taking a lead on collective external relations, these sources demonstrate the formation of theory surrounding a pattern of initiative-building within the community. While Mason and Penksa have applied the theory to products with more tangible outcomes (in their case, variable geometry and the evolution of European Security and Defense Policy, or ESDP), a full marriage of the theory to CFSP seems unexplored.\textsuperscript{27}

In terms of the trade relationship, scholarly sources spend enormous amounts of time describing the importance of the energy trade for the EU and the repercussions that it holds for the community. Hughes, Pinder and Webber are most vocal about the economic situation being a driving force for EU-Russian convergence, as each source mentions how different member states (namely, the EU3) slowly begin to realize how community action is needed in order to normalize trade with Russia. The expanse of these economic relationships, though, are seemingly held in check by political disagreements, especially as Europeans see examples of Russian policy – such as Russia’s wars in Chechnya – where there are disparities between core European values.

\textsuperscript{25} Karen Smith, \textit{The Making of EU Foreign Policy} (London: St. Martin’s Press, INC., 1999), 15.
\textsuperscript{26} Foradori (2007), xiv.
\textsuperscript{27} Warren Mason and Susan Penksa, \textit{The Variable Geometry of Security Cooperation: A Policy Framework for European Integration} (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Quebec, Canada, March 17, 2004).
and Russian action. Tsygankov,\textsuperscript{28} Webber,\textsuperscript{29} and Keukeleire,\textsuperscript{30} are most vocal on this matter; Webber’s statement that, “The future of Russian-EU relations is undoubtedly dependent on the domestic political situation in Russia remaining stable” encapsulates these community hesitations, which have only grown stronger with the addition of CEE states into the EU, states that have memories of Russia’s ability to act out physically and violate the rights of its own citizens and the sovereignty of neighboring states.

However, it is important to note that despite these hesitations surrounding engaging Russia, there are many areas where non-economic collaboration is seen as necessary and encouraged by the EU. A few examples of these areas include counterterrorism as described by Keukeleire,\textsuperscript{31} and preventing Iranian proliferation as mentioned in Wood.\textsuperscript{32} Also, it is interesting that the literature goes to lengths to explain how a state’s decision to prioritize community engagement with Russia is based primarily on whether they are an older or newer member state.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} Webber (2000), 74.
\textsuperscript{30} Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008), 317-318.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Wood (2007), 216-224.
\textsuperscript{33} Foradi (2007), x and the increased number of interests that CEES bring with them when they become members; Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008), 317 on CEES bringing existing bilateral tensions into the EU, such as Polish beef concerns and by conditioning approval on respect for human rights; Wood (2007), 121-122 on new members and border disputes with Russia; Dinan (2005), 534-536 on CEES not truly understanding the new situation that they are in and the sacrifices that older member states had made for them; Hughes (2006), 4.
**Russia’s Approach to the EU**

**Historical Perception**

Every academic discussion of Russian foreign policy formation is cast in terms of how those within Russia view their historical and current place on the world stage. Even though the end of the Soviet Union meant a rebirth of “true” Russian foreign policy, the state’s legacy is seen as more continuous than that of the EU. Leading the academic discussion of Russian perceptions is Sakwa, as the bulk of his analysis focuses on explaining how Russia’s foreign policy depends on the state’s definition of itself and the way that it defines the international order. This includes discussions of Russia’s historical relationship with its near-abroad, and is best described by Sakwa’s comments that, “Russian foreign policy developed against the backdrop of a debate over the structure of international relations in the late twentieth century,” and that, “Russian foreign policy is determined by the tension between its ambition to remain a major regional and world power and its economic weakness.”

Melville and Shakleina’s *Russian Foreign Policy in Transition* and Lo’s *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy* both provide concurrent descriptions of the way historical elements and identity contribute to Russia’s foreign policy. Melville and Shakleina broadly focus on the question of identity and how the creation of a multi-ethnic state affects policy in Moscow, including discussion on what types of domestic values political leaders are able to successfully rely upon to sell messages to the public.

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Lo’s analysis on the Putin era demonstrates the alignment among scholars on the importance of history in explaining current Russian foreign policy, and analyzing in detail the reasons that the US is the top priority on Putin’s agenda.\textsuperscript{37} To Lo, that leaves open the question of where the EU will fit in to the larger “foreign policy panorama” of Russia’s external relations.

**Economics**

As the Russian historical context demonstrates, the state’s foreign relations are driven by the need to promote its place in the global order. As Sakwa describes, economics rest at the center of Russia’s goal to return to power and the heart of Russian economics is its energy trade with Europe.\textsuperscript{38} If current proposals for three oil and gas pipelines to connect Russian resources with European consumer markets are not enough to convince an outside observer of the necessity of this continental relationship, then Pinder’s analysis of EU-Russian trade provides thirty pages of in-depth discussion on the subject.\textsuperscript{39} While it is somewhat dated, more recent studies, such as Hirdman\textsuperscript{40} and Hughes,\textsuperscript{41} point to a continuation pattern of trade dominated by natural resources. Academic research seems aligned on the argument that for Russians, trade with Europe matters more than the European’s trade to Russia simply because the Russian economy is less diversified and, as a legacy of Soviet control of Eastern Europe, has traditionally

\textsuperscript{37} Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003), 11-18, 102-104.
\textsuperscript{38} Sakwa (2002), 366-371.
\textsuperscript{39} Pinder (2002), 57-84.
\textsuperscript{40} Sven Hirdman, *Russia’s Role in Europe* (Carnegie Moscow Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Moscow, 2006).
\textsuperscript{41} Hughes (2006), 3-9.
been more physically linked in its trade relationship with the West than Central Asia or the Far East. Melville and Shakleina describe specific issues that Russia regularly prompts the EU to act on, including the lifting of trade restrictions on various goods and the easing of the visa regime – an area that was once dominated by the Russian concern of transit to and from its Kaliningrad enclave, but which is now a much broader issue concerning the movement of goods and people between states.\(^{42}\) Lo, in a slightly different manner, does of course touch on Russia’s economic relationship with Europe, but frames it as a below-the-radar relationship that consistently performs and is overshadowed by much larger foreign policy issues for Russia. However, both Melville and Lo refer to the continuing “economization” of the Russian state as rivaling politics as the chief concern of Russian policymakers as they look to the West; that is, the modernization of Russia’s economic relationship with the outside world is perceived by scholars as a major Russian foreign policy objective.\(^{43}\)

**Political Trends**

“Russia’s aim is to help promote strategic partnership with the EU in order to build a stable and balanced security architecture in Europe, for peace and openness on the continent,” wrote Pinder of Russia’s long-term strategic goals.\(^{44}\) While academic literature focuses heavily on the economic aspect of the Russian relationship with Europe, it is only important when positioned as part of a larger acknowledgement of Russia’s regional goals. Tsygankov’s overview of Russia’s foreign policy gives one of

\(^{42}\) Melville and Shakleina (2005), 458-9.
\(^{43}\) Lo (2003), 25, 69-71.
\(^{44}\) Pinder (2002), 103.
the best explanations of the different periods and factors that prompted Moscow to change policies. After analyzing the end of Soviet foreign policy, Tsygankov moves on to describe a development from integration with the West, to great power balancing, to great power pragmatism. According to this perspective, these different phases were based more on individual personalities (the president and foreign minister being the most important actors) than on structural issues. Maybe the most important aspect of this analysis is that it describes how every action Russia takes in its external relations is based on its relationship with the West.\textsuperscript{45} Even as great power balancing sought to rekindle Russia’s relationship with Central Asia, the Middle East and the Far East, it was still formed in response to Western inputs. Tsygankov’s research may best demonstrate how academic literature on Russia’s foreign policy intently focuses on how the government perceives itself vis-à-vis Europe, and illustrates how those individuals at the top level of Russian foreign policy have an enormous ability to direct and prioritize the state’s external goals. However, other academics such as Webber portray the Russian stance toward the EU as one filled with much more ambivalence and low priority, although Webber’s writing at the turn of the 21st century is not able to take Tsygankov’s concept of power pragmatism into account.\textsuperscript{46}

Beyond the characterization of the Russian government’s priorities and choices, what is incredibly important is the institutional environment in which external relations are constructed. This means, in cases such as those articulated by Melville and Shakleina and Lo, that there is an academic focus on the importance of individuals within Russian foreign policymaking. As Melville and Shakleina remind us, Russia’s foreign policy is

\textsuperscript{45} Tsygankov (2006), 1-17.
\textsuperscript{46} Webber (2000), 15-17, 66-68.
connected to its domestic politics in a way that is almost unique in comparison with other states. Sometimes described as “schizophrenia,” the domestic situation plays directly into the state's construction of its own identity, which means the institutions formed to create and manage foreign policy must respond to the state’s global position and self-image.47 While Putin is sometimes described as being detached from the rest of the government and population in a way that grants him a free hand in foreign policy, Lo explains how the bureaucratic situation that he relies upon for policy implementation is not reliable. Putin is said to have instilled more discipline within institutions that handle foreign policy, he operates in a non-transparent environment with a relatively weak and fragmented foreign ministry that acts as a hurdle to implementation; however, what matters most historically is the individual in Russian foreign policy. It is true that Putin not only sets a lot of agenda items but closely watches their implementation, but the problem is when he has to delegate authority – and then orders go to individuals and not to the institutions.48 Melville and Shakleina’s research indicates the problem with this approach: the structure and entrenched bureaucracies within the foreign ministry and the defense ministry are impenetrable to the point where Putin-appointees who lead the ministries have made little to no headway on changing the structure or initiative-taking of the departments.49 The intersection of changing foreign policy philosophies with a difficult executive-bureaucratic relationship seems to – outside of the economic factors of Russia’s external relations – put doubt into the minds of academics over what direction policy will take: the route of the top-level individuals or of the conservative bureaucracy.

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47 Melville and Shakleina (2005), 440-442
48 Lo (2003), 31-50.
49 Melville and Shakleina (2005), 446.
As indicated in the literature review introduction, no discussion of the EU-Russian relationship would be adequate without mentioning the PCA. It is comprehensively perceived as the partnership agreement for the EU and a non-potential member regional actor. Academic discussions of the PCA fall thematically into descriptions of its structure and explorations of how it functions in practice. Webber, Pinder, and Hughes are the best examples of those who have researched the institutional structures of the PCA. Their focus is on explaining things such as the Russia-EU Cooperation Council and the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, as well as lower level government contacts between the two sides. What this has meant is a general understanding of the increased level of EU-Russian dialogue as a direct effect of the PCA. However, analysis does not solely center on the increased contact and sources such as Pinder take the time to explain how many view the agreement as, “Disappointingly complex and bureaucratic.”

Pinder’s quote illustrates how even though many scholars agree on the importance of the PCA, there is a clear understanding within existing research about how the agreement has not been as beneficial as some might have originally hoped. Edited by Michael Emerson, The Elephant and the Bear Try Again is a collection of essay by both Russian and European scholars over the future of the PCA and the incorporation of the Common Spaces agreement. The general theme of these analyses is that the PCA is

51 Pinder (2002), 17, 72-4, 102-3.
52 Hughes (2006), 14.
outdated and inherently flawed due to the agreement’s language. These scholars see the future of the EU-Russian relationship being in more informal, but long-term, agreements. Specifically, Andrey Makarychev frames the EU-Russian relationship as one founded on rhetorical differences, with discourse being the underlying principles for the current political situation. Nadezhda Arbatova describes those in Russia who are eager to modernize the PCA – those in power, who want a new agreement to tout Russia’s economic strength, and pro-Western elites, who want to further integrate their society with that of Europe’s. Tomofei Bordachev discusses the hierarchical elements of the PCA and the need for more informal agreements to avoid EU member states from being able to hold up the ratification phase of a new association agreement. Emerson, Fabrizio Tassinari, and Marius Vahl all agree that the PCA faces inherent structural problems because it is not a real association agreement, and concurs with Bordachev’s arguments that lengthy ratification processes are not in either party’s interests. The literature’s focus on the PCA seems to cement it as the cornerstone in EU-Russian policy and demonstrates how important the next step in the relationship is.

**Conclusion**

While this review of literature demonstrates that a plethora of deep analyses of individual areas of the EU-Russian relationship exist, there seems to be no good exploration of the internal workings of EU and Russian foreign policies as they relate to

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57 Ibid, 62-86.
each other. Either the sources focus much of their analysis on explanatory variables in the relationship, such as Pinder’s work, or are simply too short to focus on detailed explanations or they fall back on explaining basic principles of the relationship, as in Hirdman. There are obviously extremely detailed and good sources of research on EU and Russian foreign policy, such as books by Keukeleire and Tsygankov, however these sources only discuss the relationship with Russia and the EU, respectively, in short sections – they are not the focus simply because there are a lot of other areas that need to be discussed when attempting to understand each of these entity’s external relations.

While current literature surrounding Russian foreign policy is able to give scholars a reasonably agreed upon foundation from which to advance research (in its current state, there is alignment surrounding *power pragmatism*), the EU presents an interesting problem because of the experimental nature of collective foreign policy. As we have seen, there are clearly attempts to explain the current form of EU foreign policy, which even go so far as to mention *variable geometry* in academic papers and books, such as Foradori’s, however there is no deep discussion of these possible explanations for member state and community actions. It is within this research gap that my thesis attempts to integrate not only existing literature on the topic of EU and Russian foreign policy, but also current information obtained through field research in Europe and Russia.
Methods of Research

The following analysis is supported by existing European and Russian foreign policy literature, as well as two years of research based on Summer 2007 and Summer 2008 field studies in cities of the European Union and the Russian Federation. The analysis heavily favors a qualitative over quantitative approach and relies on a breadth of informational interviews. In conjunction with the existing academic literature on EU-Russian relations, these interviews in Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States provide the necessary background information to support the conclusions presented. While these interviews should be considered informal, off-the-record sessions, they are still critical to exploring the inner workings of modern international relations and provide more pointed, specific and current analysis than pre-existing political research. Validity of these sessions is reinforced by the sheer number of interviews conducted over the two year period, with the 2008 interviews functioning as follow-up confirmations of previous discoveries, allowing the establishment of patterns in this specific decision-making process.
Relationship Analysis

European Union

Comprehensive foreign policies for the European Union have emerged as part of the search for a balance between national interests and community capabilities. As early experiments such as European Political Cooperation (during the 1970s and onward) began the notion that a “club” of European states could act cohesively in the context of external relations, it was not until the 1992 Treaty on European Union (TEU) that a more functional model of modern community methods for foreign policy was created. Within the text of the TEU, the concept of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) emerged as one of the three pillars of the new European system. While the 2003 schism in transatlantic relations (caused by the Iraq War) prompted EU policymakers to rebuild their relationship with the US with a new understanding of how the community’s external relations functioned, it was the failure of the 2005 Constitution Treaty that led European leaders to reflect internally toward a fundamental re-evaluation of community cohesion. As the growth of a new managed relationship with the US continues to underscore a conceptual change in international cooperation for the EU, the union continues to search for a successful and inclusive foreign policy toward its neighbor, Russia. Russia represents the largest external challenge to the stability of the EU, and yet most existing foreign policy analysis in this area focuses only on either the competitive nature of the relationship or on the failure of EU-Russian partnership. Rarely is there an examination

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of the constructive engagement that has begun to transform the relationship. Politicians and analysts agree, however, that there has been a change in attitudes toward Russia; the question remaining to be asked is how actors within the EU create and apply existing mechanisms, informal agreements, and initiative-building toward achieving community foreign policy goals. How effectively is foreign policy on the EU level building upon existing agreements and institutionalizing methods of cooperation?

This analysis will attempt to explain the current state of EU foreign policy formation toward Russia in terms of the concept of variable geometry. Since 2004, the addition of twelve new member states to the organization has made common decision-making a more difficult enterprise. However, this new policymaking complexity does not erase the presence of foreign policy instruments included in the TEU, or the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice. Thus, while common positions may be harder to obtain due to an increasing number of internal voices and interests, experimental forms of intergovernmental policymaking continue to exist as institutionalized elements of the EU that are waiting to be built upon or simply applied to new situations. Since TEU, new treaties and intergovernmental agreements have anticipated a more challenging policymaking climate comprised of additional member states and have responded by including provisions that make future cooperation easier. For example, the Treaty of Nice included provisions for enhanced cooperation, which was meant for EU missions under the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and created a system whereby a handful of member states could propose a project that they would undertake, and then the

\[^{59}\text{The European Weekly (May 12, 2008) comments on how the EU continually punches below its weight on foreign policy attempts with Russia.}\]
entire Council of Ministers would vote to allow the EU name and resources to be used in pursuit of a goal that could possibly only involve a handful of member states.60

Structural treaty provisions such as enhanced cooperation are examples of the variable geometry concept. Broadly defined, it means a fluid group of participants moving toward a goal; it is a situation whereby states can pick and choose what projects they contribute to and participate in. Fixed geometry, on the other hand, characterizes projects where every member state would have to participate. Variable geometry in the European context tends to lead to the description of a Europe of “two speeds” with one group of states who are willing and able to move ahead in intergovernmental cooperation, and another group of states who for numerous reasons may not be ready or willing to cooperate on new projects. Examples of projects where not all EU members are active participants include the European Space Agency, the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), ESDP missions, as well as technically specific projects such as the Concorde or Airbus. What is more important is that these examples pre-date the EU’s 2004 expansion, demonstrating the need for variable participation on projects even before twelve new states joined the community; now the reliance on variable geometry is even more important in order to push the EU’s policymaking ability forward because the opportunity for more internal obstacles has subsequently increased.

Those examples, though, are all based around projects that produce a physical result, be it an airplane or a new currency. How can variable geometry apply to a concept such as foreign policy that is not only more abstract than a project like Airbus, but which can end up affecting the entire European community depending on what types of agreements are eventually signed with foreign entities? The answer rests with the

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60 Wood (2007), 208.
fundamental definition of variable geometry, which is simply a concept that describes how some member states use institutional mechanisms of the EU in order to pursue their specific interests, so long as other member states do not object to their actions.

Essentially, variable geometry in EU foreign policy is a state and institutionally based behavioral response to recent internal divisions and changing external influences. When member states that have the ability and initiative to act in response to stimulus want to act, yet feel constrained by their organizational partners, then they will find ways to circumvent those obstacles. While this may seem like an obvious concept, it is the extent to which member states maintain organizational solidarity and respect for EU cohesion that demonstrates the maturity of EU actors, adherence to larger community values and the Europeanization of national interests and policy implementation.

Even if member states only invoke the EU in foreign policy for purely selfish reasons of furthering national interests, one can observe that the end result is still an empowerment of EU mechanisms and external perceptions of the organization as an international presence. Over time, it is certainly possible that the preference to use the EU banner rather than individual state actions in response to external issues will not only secure international credibility for the EU (as more foreign entities would interact with the organization), but further encourage collaborative work between member states within the community’s framework as contact and cooperation between national policymakers would become more frequent. In this way, variable geometry is not only beneficial for member states in the short-term because they will have the chance to collectively promote their interests, but will reinforce EU policymaking over the long-run
as cooperative mechanisms are better tested and trusted in handling complex external relations.

What eventually spawns from variable projects are new sets of protocols (both formal and informal) that govern day-to-day community interaction as member states who participated in the projects apply successful elements of the collaboration to other areas of EU policy and internal dialogues. This could lead to internal rewards or punishments emerging if the “two speeds” of Europe grow too far apart; however, it is also important to note that any change to the internal dynamics of the community would inherently affect how external actors approach the EU. Regardless of outcomes, the underlying assumption of variable geometry holds true for the following discussion on EU-Russian relations: states support policy positions that it makes sense for them to support and for which they are capable of backing up. In this context, variable geometry makes sense because not all member states are as interested as others in engaging Russia and forging a new rapprochement, while interested member states already possess the necessary diplomatic staffs and historical relationships that build the foundation of engagement. In order for those willing member states to gain complete EU approval for re-engaging Russia (that is, for participating member states to negotiate with the support of the community) then they must find a way to close the gap in member state interests. In foreign policy, we see that this is accomplished by promoting organizational solidarity through the use of tangible guarantees. Things such as the EU3 promising hesitant member states agenda items or security support in order to build up internal support for projects.
EU external relations exist on a day-to-day basis within multiple overlapping and competing frameworks that involve many national and supranational actors, along with interaction across the three pillars of the TEU. The Lisbon Treaty, still only partly ratified, is set to reform these mechanisms. In addition to reinforcing and expanding the strength of the office of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy with (amongst other things) the creation of an External Action Service, the treaty would create a mechanism for structured cooperation that would build on previous treaty principles of enhanced cooperation and constructive abstention in order to further the possibility of flexible responses to external situations. However, the future of the Lisbon Treaty continues to depend on the process of ratification across the 27 member states. This is an uncertain process since the Czech Republic has yet to ratify to treaty and Ireland has voted “no”.61

It is generally accepted that there exists a period of “deepening” in the integration process prior to the widening, or expansion, of the union.62 This occurs due to the desire of existing member states to further integrate under a set of rules and protocols that they are familiar with, so as to pre-empt the ability of future or other member states to complicate integration attempts through the results of either a re-organization of the weighting in the qualified majority voting (QMV) system or by simply voting “no” (vetoing) proposals that are not decided by QMV. Despite changes made prior to and in anticipation of the Constitution Treaty, its failure to ratify in 2005 left further integration

61 Europa.eu contains the Treaty of Lisbon passage indicator.
in a state of limbo as member state governments and EU officials were forced to work against the perception of a credibility gap in which European populations were questioning Europeanization and sending a message of general disproval to their governments. While *Financial Times* polls leading up to the 50-year anniversary of the Treaty of Rome had shown that there were generally positive approval ratings for European integration and community projects, those opinions have not necessarily translated into “yes” votes on new structural treaties in every area of the community.\(^{63}\)

In the time after the attempted Constitution Treaty, there exists the current question of “when and how” with respect to the Lisbon Treaty: when will it be fully ratified, and how (in terms of both time needed and policies adjusted) will reform of TEU occur in order to balance competing elements and institutions within the union. This uncertainty further propels the most adventurous member states to search for other means of European-level cooperation as deeper political integration is paused in favor of increasing coordination across the much larger post-2004 organization.\(^{64}\)

Currently, inaction on Lisbon has overlapped with critical non-EU issues, compounding disunity in European-level foreign policy as the largely intergovernmental arrangement is unable to proceed with community responses to international issues. However, this was not the sole cause of 21\(^{st}\) century community divergence; it was the 2003 transatlantic schism that presented an opportunity for the leadership of some member states to prioritize bilateral gains with non-EU actors over further community

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63 George Parker, “Poll finds 44% think life worse in EU” (Financial Times, March 19, 2007) reports on the FT/Harris poll conducted in the approach to the Treaty of Rome’s 50\(^{th}\) anniversary, reports that while only 56% of EU citizens actively believe that life is better under the EU, only 22% said that their state would be better without EU membership.

64 Office of the European Commission in Berlin (Interview, 2008) observes that member states push for deeper integration prior to new treaties in order to further community policy before coordination becomes harder across a greater number of members.
cohesion, setting the foundation for further fragmentation when the Constitution Treaty failed ratification. It may have been the Nord Stream Pipeline – designed for natural gas shipments between Russia and Germany – that, between 2005 and 2006, was the most damaging to internal EU relations in the wake of twelve state expansion and the failure of structural reform. Unlike the implications of the 2007 missile shield crisis, the pipeline represented a break in organizational trust between EU member states as German Chancellor Gerhardt Schroeder pursued a plan that, as was widely recognized, would circumvent the inherent security guarantees that Poland and other CEE states held as transit points for Russian oil and gas. This German-Polish dispute seemed to not only perfectly encapsulate the tension between pre- and post-2004 expansion states within the union, but also signaled a return to foreign policies that were driven by national interests over community values, and (at best) demonstrated the pitfalls of prematurely forcing an un-“Europeanized” former-Warsaw Pact member state into an exercise of trust with a former adversary.

Then, in 2007, it was the US proposal for missile shield that proved to be the most recent example of this pattern of European divergence that had existed since 2003. Not only did these defense negotiations illustrate the lack of internal EU consultation, upsetting the European allies of the Czech Republic and Poland who saw those states

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65 Interview: Professor, Humboldt University (May 2008) discussed the independence that accompanied Chancellor Schroeder’s second term and the independent goals that he pursued.

66 Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) discuss “Europeanization.” Interview: Diplomatic Official, Office of the Governing Mayor of Berlin (May 2008) explained the dangerous precedent that Nord Stream had set and the enormous damage to German-Polish relations that followed the initial German-Russian negotiations; interview: Former Editor, Radio Free Europe (June 2008) explained that following the Nord Stream negotiations, a domino-effect occurred where energy-dependent EU member states began to quickly shore up individual energy policies in order to guarantee supplies.

67 In this case, the newly admitted member states of Poland and the Czech Republic sought bilateral agreements with the US where in return for hosting US anti-missile interceptors and a radar installation, respectively; these states would gain military upgrades, security guarantees, and other bilateral benefits that broke with cohesive EU planning, such as US-Czech dialogues over easing visa restrictions.
ignoring European partnership in favor of direct bilateral gains with the US, but also brought unneeded attention to the lack of EU cohesion in the wake of the Constitution Treaty failure. To many, the way Russia reacted against the proposal (by threatening European security through deployment of their own missile systems) seemed to re-affirm a lack of European partnership as Russia attempted to fragment community solidarity. A similar example occurred in the wake of European criticism of Russia’s conduct in the second Chechen War. When Russian President Putin faced opposition from the EU and the threat of suspended partnership, he began targeting and leveraging his personal relationships with the leaders of individual member states in order to fragment community cohesion.\textsuperscript{68}

In this case, as well, misalignment was not limited to new members, as disagreements within the EU3 partners had manifested itself during the summer of 2007 when, during a crisis where Iran had taken British sailors captive, the French actively blocked an attempt by the EU (and the German presidency at the time) to issue a common position condemning the hostage-taking, illustrating major cooperative problems between the traditional initiators of EU policy.\textsuperscript{69} The inability of EU leadership in Brussels or between the member states to reconcile these internal EU disputes and handle international pressure, coupled with the inherent difficulty associated with EU expansion, had led member states to favor independent foreign policy positions instead of pursuing community approaches.

\textsuperscript{68} Hughes (2006), 13 explains how Putin called on France, Germany, and Italy for support, which he obtained most vocally from Italian leader Silvio Burlesconi.

\textsuperscript{69} Interview: Diplomatic Official, French Foreign Ministry (May 2007) gave this example of internal misalignment between the EU3 leading to an impasse on a crisis situation of foreign policy.
As community approaches have weakened, more difficult foreign policy objectives have been put on hold while the already existing networks of external relations have continued. The EU’s relationship with Russia is a prime example of this stagnation, as recent state-specific disputes such as Polish beef, the UK’s handling of Boris Berezovskii and Alexander Litvinenko (in addition to the BP-TNK joint venture problems), and a multitude of Baltic state issues (including a Russian cyber-attack against Estonia) have proven to be major obstacles in replacing the 1997 EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the 2005 Common Spaces agreement.

**Importance of the 2008 NATO Summit**

Despite these setbacks to community policies, the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania seemed to succeed in resurrecting the future of EU external action with one of Jean Monnet’s original strategies for European integration: issue avoidance.\(^7^0\) With Russia having applied economic, diplomatic, and threats of military pressure on European states during the missile shield crisis, in addition to the added problems of a US-proposal for Membership Action Plans to fast-track potential Ukrainian and Georgian membership into NATO, Bucharest represented not only a chance for close communication between transatlantic allies, but also a forum to host a NATO-Russia Council (NRC) meeting. This NRC meeting was seen as a way to open a direct dialogue with Russian leadership over concerns of continental stability and to increase the

communication between EU governments and Moscow.\textsuperscript{71} One of the major outcomes of the summit was NATO adopting the missile shield as a community action instead of allowing it to remain as bilateral agreements between the US and the Czech Republic and Poland. This reframing of the missile shield debate within a NATO framework fundamentally shifted the issue away from a question of European political cohesion and onto one of NATO action,\textsuperscript{72} easing Russian pressure on EU activity by deflecting criticisms onto the community’s established security alliance. As issues surrounding the Nord Stream pipeline faded with the strengthening of Angela Merkel’s chancellery in Germany, Bucharest presented the Franco-German partnership the greatest opportunity to not only begin re-emerging as leaders of the European community by demonstrating their influence on the NATO agenda, but also in reeling in wayward member states.\textsuperscript{73} The summit also saw the US voice support for ESDP, demonstrating the further combination of factors that have laid the foundation for the EU to recover from the setbacks to integration encountered between 2003 and the beginning of the relationship’s recovery in 2007.\textsuperscript{74} Following Bucharest, the Baltic States removed the last of their objections to re-

\textsuperscript{71} Interview: Diplomatic Official, French Ministry of Defense (May 2008) discussed his contacts in Moscow; Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) spoke on France trying to educate other countries about the transforming relationship with Russia. The NRC format was also important because the EU could not officially hold talks with Russia since the Baltic States and Poland were vetoing their approval.

\textsuperscript{72} This was reaffirmed by a NATO declaration adopting the missile shield as a multilateral action, rather than as the previously bilateral agreements.

\textsuperscript{73} Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) represented a 180 degree change in attitude over Czech initiative on missile shield when compared with Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, June 2007), while Franco-German attitudes of collaboration stayed constant between their 2007 interviews and the most recent ones with French Defense Ministry (Interview, 2008) and German Foreign Office (Interview, 2008).

\textsuperscript{74} US Embassy to France (Interview, 2008) described the US reversal on its ESDP stance to one of full endorsement at Bucharest, and how it adds to EU external credibility.
negotiation of a comprehensive treaty with Russia, allowing Commission and Council officials to meet formally with Russian leadership at Khanty-Mansiysk in 2008.\textsuperscript{75}

The advancing of EU-Russian relations in the wake of Bucharest cannot be considered an accident. While it would have conceivably been very easy to abort Russian re-negotiation attempts in the face of Council disunity, the process continued. As the NATO summit began to repair European unity, it demonstrated the persistent existence of variable geometry in the form of small, policy-driven groups of member states who continued to move forward with their external relations goals at a time when many newer member states were still hesitant because of their disputes with Russia over trade issues and the missile shield proposal. Even though the summit contained debates over both missile shield and NATO expansion, elements such as the Franco-German relationship ensured that those discussions would not fundamentally harm the underlying goal of repairing European cohesion. As both EU and NATO members, these states used the NATO summit as another step in repairing internal community relations mainly because Bucharest represented a chance for top-level political dialogue to focus on security matters and coordinate with the US over transatlantic security policy. In the case of Bucharest, the ability of France and Germany to steer the community direction represents a prelude to their ability to move toward Russian re-negotiation. In this way, variable geometry could be applied to comprehensive foreign policy issues, recasting the approach as an analysis of an initiative-building model. Under this model, the most willing and capable states would be able to lead community action by alleviating the problems or concerns of other member states. This type of organizational solidarity was

\textsuperscript{75} Khanty-Mansiysk, Siberia was the site chosen for the 2008 EU-Russia summit. Andrew Bounds, “EU backs mandates for talks” (Financial Times, May 27, 2008) indicates that Lithuania was the last hold-out on preventing EU-Russia negotiations.
demonstrated at Bucharest when community members understood that the Czech Republic and Poland had become increasingly isolated due to their partnerships with the US, and moved for incorporating missile shield into NATO to, in a way, protect the individual states. These acts and other promises of solidarity reinforce the EU’s international cohesion and external credibility; this allows ambitious member states to pursue their own projects in a type of quid-pro-quo since opposition to using community mechanisms for strengthening long-term foreign policy goals would come from member states worried that their interests would be ignored.76

This also demonstrates the role of multilevel governance in EU foreign policy. In much the same way that the EU’s principle of subsidiarity holds that domestic European issues are to be handled at the lowest possible level of government that is also the most efficient, the 2008 NATO summit demonstrated a European belief in managing security matters at the political level most relative to their implications. In this way, national governments are allowed to handle security negotiations (e.g., as the Czech Republic and Poland did with regards to bilateral missile shield negotiations) until the point that their individual actions can have major implications for their community. At that point, the existence of multilevel governance across European security affairs allowed more difficult matters, such as the debate over missile shield, to be “bumped” up to a policymaking level that holds more international resiliency and credibility than an individual member state. As this practice of handling security issues on a European-level becomes more common, and as EU actors such as the Commission begin to take a more active role in external relations, then common positions between member states could

76 Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) explain the difference between simple external relations and a structured foreign policy.
become more prevalent – at the very least because of convergence over basic security concerns.\textsuperscript{77} This process of empowering the EU and NATO to minimize national credibility gaps helps to place those organizations on more equal terms when directly engaging states such as Russia because continued European convergence will eventually lead to more common positions and would grant the EU a type of collective bargaining credibility. This is especially important in the relationship with Russia – a state that prefers to rely on bilateral relations with individual member states in order to avoid facing negotiations with the entire European community.\textsuperscript{78}

\textbf{Variable Geometry in EU Foreign Policy}

\textbf{Existing Framework of EU-Russia Relations}

The existing EU-Russian relationship is governed by a combination of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (signed in 1994 but ratified in 1997), the Common Spaces agreement (activated in 2005 and focusing on economic, commercial, security, and cultural issues), and other patchwork agreements between Russia and both Brussels and the individual member states. The PCA, legally existing only ten years, expired in December of 2007 but automatically renews until there is a written notice of termination from one of the two parties. Despite the apparent importance of an international agreement that not only tapped EU competencies in each of the three pillars and established a framework over such things as most favored nation trading status and visa regime reconciliation, the inherently hierarchical nature of the PCA itself damaged

\textsuperscript{77} Foradori (2007), x-xii.
\textsuperscript{78} Hughes (2006), 13.
the usefulness of the agreement as Russia’s national strength grew and European external priorities changed.

As a product of the 1990s, the PCA began as the EU was emerging as a major international force and Russia was coping with the legacies of Soviet dissolution, a constitutional crisis in 1993, and an uncertain economic situation that saw high inflation followed by a full collapse of the ruble in 1998. Using its new international powers, multiple association agreements were signed with various non-EU states in the former Soviet space in order to transmit EU values and economic principles onto perceived unstable states in close proximity to the union.\textsuperscript{79} However, despite the success of these other regional agreements, the resurgent Russian economy – coupled with the state’s international military and political influence – has effectively made the existing association agreement unable to cope with the modern EU-Russian relationship. While the Common Spaces agreement was designed as an upgrade to the PCA, both agreements were created before (and thus, did not formally take into account) the 12 member state expansion of the EU and the constantly changing global energy environment. Additionally, the previously mentioned disputes between new member states and Russia have not only prevented re-negotiation, but have also disallowed EU diplomats to exercise agreement provisions for annual formal dialogues with their Russian counterparts.

\textsuperscript{79} Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) describe other association agreements that would later grow outside of the regional sphere and continue to this day, including the Cotonou Agreement and Stabilization and Association Agreements.
While many EU states have policy objectives to pursue with Russia, enthusiasm for a complete restructuring of the relationship appears to have waned. Instead, the proliferation of specific regional agreements (such as the Barcelona Process and CEES outreach to potential member states in the Balkans) seems to highlight an excitement of prioritizing and advancing the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) – an arrangement in which Russia is not a participant. Promotion of the ENP has demonstrated a continuation of EU trends in which specific member states seek to partner with non-EU states in their respective regions and spheres of influence. However, if European priorities have shifted away from Russia toward other projects and partners, or Russia’s perceived aggression is holding up cooperative dialogues, then why are new negotiations continuing to move forward?

**Explanatory Variables Promoting EU-Russia Re-negotiation**

Before the transformation of variable geometry can be analyzed, it is first important to understand what factors may be influencing this new flexible foreign policy, as well as what issues are driving interests in EU-Russia re-negotiation. As we can see, there are two elements we must address in the approach to variable geometry. The first, discussed in the previous section, is the status quo and how that sets up variable responses; this, the second section, focuses on understanding EU-Russian convergence.

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80 Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) explained that if presented with a new association agreement, the Czechs would want Russia to be made to comply with greater international codes on energy trade.

81 Office of the Governing Mayor of Berlin (Interview, 2008) highlighted Franco-German divergence over areas of which to focus the future of ENP; and interview: Researcher, SWP (Interview, May 2008) explained the preference for an ENP tailored to member states’ regional interests.
The development of the EU-Russian relationship owes itself to historical trade development, the current importance of the international energy and technology trade, questions of regional stability (although direct security concerns are handled through NATO\textsuperscript{82}) and internal EU concerns over organizational legitimacy. While some Russian academics argue against the need for a formal partnership agreement – citing the lack of a comprehensive treaty governing the EU-US relationship\textsuperscript{83} – elements within the EU see the process of re-negotiation as essential for further progress. \textsuperscript{84} The EU3, whose leadership is openly ambitious about its desire for a more robust re-negotiation and has experience in creating association agreements, takes into account the specific goals of newer member states when forming a European stance on rapprochement with Russia.

By incorporating the concerns and interests of newer member states, these older (and more experienced) member states hope to be able to launch a comprehensive restructuring of the EU-Russian relationship on the basis of community interests. For example, one of the Czech Republic’s main interests is to encourage Russia to follow more international standards when trading energy resources. By understanding this goal, older member states who have had decades of trade experience with Russia understand that binding, comprehensive treaties are needed in order to promote these principles, and are thus these older states are more effective at accomplishing the goals of newer member states based on their experience. Promotion of more robust agreements, such as a complete restructuring of the PCA, would go beyond specific issues in order to lay a

\textsuperscript{82} Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) connected the current EU disunity, principles of deflection and issue avoidance, and predominance of NATO as reasons why the union is ill-equipped to capitalize on major security threats at the present time.
\textsuperscript{83} Emerson (2006).
\textsuperscript{84} Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) represents one of the Euro-centric views that argue against Russian support of a reworked framework on the level of the PCA; interview: Former Luxembourg Ambassador (June 2008), however, believes that Russia does want a structured relationship with the EU.
foundation for EU-Russian cooperation and to better promote EU values. As the EU3 attempts to take the lead on engaging Russia, their historical knowledge of what types of community actions are or are not successful functions in conjunction with their current knowledge of ally interests in order to build organizational unity. To contrast current initiatives with those in the late 1990s, a similar type of interest-gathering approach was used under the German presidency in 1999 when the “Common Strategy toward Russia” was being written. Not only was no funding attached to the declaration, but it was formed without Commission consultation and used the “Christmas tree” method of policymaking where any state could attach any interest to the final document.85 The difference now is that any new initiative toward Russia will look to keep a narrow focus, exercise discretion in goals and would collaborate closely with the Commission.

While the competitive relationship between the EU and the US has developed over many decades of close economic interaction and assistance,86 the very different development of trade between Russia and Europe – and the legacy of Russian-CEES trade under communism – means that rapprochement between the Europeans and Russians would touch on several key markets of complementary trade rather than what we can call confrontational trade.87 This is in large part because Russia exports natural resources in its energy trade, while importing technology, machinery and manufacturing goods from Europe – basically, EU and Russian products do not compete because they do not export the same items. Furthermore, trade with Europe accounts for roughly one-

86 This historical connection can be seen to go back at least as far as the Marshall Plan.
87 Interview: Economist, Citibank (June 2008) spoke of a growing Russian consumer class and a diversity of raw materials for export versus Russian interest in Europe’s technology developments. For this reason, EU-Russian trade must be viewed as complementary and not competitive because of the differences in demand and in production.
third of Russia’s foreign trade, while Russia accounts for a much smaller percentage of
the EU’s overall foreign transactions. Russia, with standing invitations to join the
WTO and OECD, has been pegged by many as ripe for European economic engagement.
These possible memberships are important because when considering re-negotiation,
member state governments must take into account private sector activity and the
economic gains that the reform of trade with Russia would bring to European business.
Most important in this relationship is the development of energy trade between dependent
EU member states and Russia. As transcontinental infrastructure (e.g., pipeline)
development continues to bind Russian supplies to European demand, the numerous
issues at play (profits, stability and longevity of supply, and market ownership – to name
a few) are all reasons for convergence. As the private sector promotes the unbundling
of national market controls, new EU internal energy pacts and Commission action are
guaranteed to keep EU institutions focused on the expansion of trade with Russia.
Moreover, the demand for up-to-date association agreements to be in place before
institutions such as the European Investment Bank or EBRD pursue Russian energy field

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88 Pinder (2002), 17-9 uses 2002 data, EU imports from Russia are $34.1 billion while EU exports to Russia
is only $11.4 billion. Hughes (2006) uses updated trade data, but the disparity in the relationship is
consistent throughout the decade.
89 Interview: Marketing Official, EADS-Paris (May 2008) explains how Airbus is overly cautious when
attempting to invest in Russia because of the unsure political situation; interview: Adviser, US Mission to
the OECD (May 2008) explains the existence of open and binding economic contact between Europe and
Russia in the year since an OECD invitation has been extended to Russia. Also, Humboldt University
(Interview, 2008) described the growing German investment in the development of the Russian energy
sector, as interview: Economist, Komercni Banka (June 2008) and interview: Manager, Deutsche Bank
(June 2008) spoke not only of the growing banking reach from Europe into Russia, but also the maturing of
their economy despite concerns of stability.
90 Office of the Governing Mayor of Berlin (Interview, 2008) explains the concern over EU energy sector
unity.
91 Interview: Economist, Ceska Sporitelna (June 2008) describes the concerns over unbundling these
national industries and fears that Russian energy giants would quickly purchase European infrastructure.
and infrastructure development also provide an impetus for re-negotiation.  In addition, the legacy of the Warsaw Pact has left multiple situations that encourage the Russian government to continue historical trade relationships with EU member states, such as Russia’s use of Czech-manufactured public transportation equipment. The importance of Russia’s trade relationship with CEES is statistically represented by the sudden increase in overall EU trade with Russia after 2004 when those former communist states were admitted into the union.

Security and stability are also important explanatory variables for renewed EU-Russian convergence. The PCA and Common Spaces agreement represent the type of institutionalized collaboration that European policymakers prefer, rather than that of less binding cooperative declarations. This is because only through formal agreements can there be an assured mandate of annual government-to-government consultation that (barring member state vetoes) brings Russia to the table to discuss economic and security matters that exist outside of the NRC dialogue. However, while the major international security matters that precipitated the creation of the NRC still exist and that body is generally favored by the Russians as a means of formal communication with the US and

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92 Interview: Lawyer, *German Ministry of Economy and Technology* (May 2008) and interview: Official, *EIB* (June 2008) discussed the necessary EU structural policies that are closely following the concerns of energy security and supply. Interview: Official, *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development* (June 2008) describes how current levels of investment in Russia by the EBRD are at roughly 40% of the bank’s portfolio and are set to increase. However, as states formerly accepting EBRD assistance (e.g., the Czech Republic) graduate from that position and become investing members of the bank, the debate over investment policy toward Russia grows more intense.

93 Interview: Economist, *Komercni Banka* (June 2008) discussing the outdated Russian tram system and Russian desire to use Czech manufacturers.

94 French Defense Ministry (Interview, 2008) and US Mission to the OECD (Interview, 2008) discuss existing policy networks between Western partners and their counterparts in Moscow; and Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) discussed the weak link between NATO and energy concerns, thus solvency is left to either the EU or individual state actors.
allied states,95 the Russian government has been quietly promoting the idea of a parallel EU-Russia Council for negotiations over the use of ESDP.96 Moreover, following the 2008 G-8 Summit, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev spoke repeatedly about the willingness of Russia to negotiate with Europe on issues ranging from missile shield to regional security cooperation.97 Furthermore, quiet talks about EU-Russian logistical cooperation in support of the ESDP deployment in Chad and known government-to-government contact between (at least) the French and Russian defense ministries illustrate an emerging transcontinental dialogue that can be seen to touch upon multiple EU and Russian issues. During the timeframe of many of these proposals and contacts, however, the Baltic States and Poland were vetoing a formal EU-Russia summit. In the face of these formal obstacles to communication, the persistence of EU-Russia contacts demonstrates that in the absence of formal dialogues, informal communication has emerged as a way to discuss security arrangements and practices.

Also critical to re-negotiation is the understanding of the historical development of the EU-Russian relationship since 1992. The legal framework of the current PCA established a hierarchical system whereby the EU is inherently put in a position of power over Russia because of the agreement’s terms and conditions. As an EU initiative, the PCA codifies Western, liberal political principles, societal values and trade principles rather than those of value in Russia. In this way, the fundamental notion of the PCA is that Russia must conform to EU values in order to gain access to the community’s

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95 Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) explains how Russia continues to view the NRC as beneficial because of the forced interaction that it embodies.
96 French Defense Ministry (Interview, 2008) and German Foreign Office (Interview, 2008) both explained more about the EU-Russia Council discussion over ESDP and the push for such a dialogue from both sides. Melville and Shakleina (2005), 458-9 describes how Russia has become a more active participant in the NRC, but Russian questions about NATO’s future effectiveness have led them to find alternative in-roads into Western policymaking.
97 Media: Russia Today, Moscow (July 13, 2008).
economic markets and other benefits. The 2005 Common Spaces agreement was intended as a stop-gap negotiation to update the conditions of the relationship since Russia had become richer due to petrodollars and the PCA (ratified one year before the 1998 Russian economic collapse) was not built to take those new economic conditions into account. Updating elements of association agreements is nothing new to this relationship, as the initial provisions for TACIS were, in a similar way, reformed under an agreement that spanned from 2000 until 2006 and transformed what was originally an EU-centric external program toward one that acted more cooperatively with Russia. However, unlike the technical reform of TACIS, the Common Spaces agreement did not establish a new overall structural framework with Russia. Throughout the negotiating process, this new agreement never sought to re-assert EU influence in the same way that had been achieved with pre-expansion CEES, or even as had been established in the PCA. This signaled an end to the thinking that the EU would act as Russia’s “anchor,” and introduced an increasingly competitive game of influence over ENP states. It is in these situations of regional influence where EU policymakers see the need for cooperation between the EU and Russia, even positioning themselves as honest brokers in Russian near-abroad disputes instead of demanding Russian alignment with Western norms, as was the case throughout the 1990s.

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98 Emerson (2006) explores the discursive interaction of Europe and Russia, concluding that the key to successful cooperation is through accurate definition and engagement between one another.


100 Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) on transformative power of association agreements when implemented with CEES, but its failure with Russia. Common Spaces, however, continues to show an EU desire to introduce technocratic responses in its external relations, projecting internal trends onto its partner states through structure foreign policy.

101 Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) highlighted the rapprochement in EU-Russian relations. Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) describe EU-Russian competition over ENP areas, while also explaining the shift in EU policy from attempting to influence Russia toward one of partnership. Nikolaus Von Twickel, “Steinmeier promotes plan for Abkhazia” (St. Petersburg Times, July 22, 2008) and
Organizational legitimacy has been slowly growing in importance for EU policymakers as national governments seek to explain to their public the process of integration and what they see as the benefits of a close knit European community. These benefits are presented in the hopes that the main reasons for the failure of the Constitution Treaty (e.g., public ignorance) are alleviated. This apparent disconnect between governing institutions and the European public is not a new phenomenon, but a consistent gap in understanding that grows as the relationship between EU citizens and the governing national and supranational institutions becomes more complex. This government-public relationship has not been solely a case of consternation for the EU, as it is has also provided opportunities for a new public understanding of how the behavior of European governments has changed due to the transformations of Europeanization (where issues that were once seen in national terms are now seen as shared experiences) and communitization (where more cooperative projects are perceived by the public as a normal occurrence).

As increasingly Europeanized member state populations become more comfortable with communitization, they begin to prefer community-driven approaches that share the overall responsibility for new projects, while simultaneously placing any

Catherine Belton, “Moscow agrees to outline for Georgia peace plan” (Financial Times, August 13, 2008) offers two examples of France and Germany attempting to be an honest broker for Russia and Georgia, before and after the conflict.

Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008), 134-149 explains that while member states have not always worked together, reliance on the EU as a basis for projects is directly connected to domestic political situations and national foreign policy positions.

Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008), 142-147 describes the process of Europeanization as having four components: 1) national adaptation to the EU level, 2) national projection of domestic foreign policy issues onto the EU level, 3) increasingly pursuing foreign policy on the EU level, and 4) EU export of its structures and values beyond its borders and embedding third countries within these
possible blame or international repercussions on a level of government above that of their national governments. Most recently, this type of transformed mindset contributed to the domestic upheaval in the Czech Republic over the possibility of a missile shield. The public reaction was so strong that it should be considered as a supplemental impetus for necessitating a shift in governing framework from what began as bilateral arrangements between the United States and the Czech Republic to the current NATO format. This is in part exemplified by the negative reaction. With this movement from a bilateral to a multilateral approach affected by popular opinion, it is safe to extrapolate this pattern of behavior when explaining current EU policy formation due to the similarly controversial nature re-engaging Russia.

However, comfort with Europeanization and communitization does not exist as a sudden psychological event, but instead is the result of a lengthy and slow process of socialization and trust-building within the European system. Not only do the populations of newer member states have to adjust to different concepts of the European community, but so too does CEES leadership. While new regiments of socialization were quickly employed by NATO officers and planners when attempting to integrate CEES into the security alliance, the EU is slower at similar practices and has an inherently broader job of re-training government officials than did the security-focused NATO.

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104 Office of the European Commission in Berlin (Interview, 2008) described post-2005 Commission methods to expand and better explain its reach throughout the member states, as well as Parker’s (2007) reporting of the FT/Harris Poll on public perception of the EU and their member state’s interaction with the organization.

105 US Embassy to France (Interview, 2008) and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) explain the difficulties, differences, and importance of heedng public opinion with regard to US-European security projects.

106 Alexandra Gheciu, *NATO in the “New Europe”* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 77-102 describes socialization in CEE states, specifically in the Czech Republic and Poland. Specifically, she describes the practices of “teaching, persuasion, and role-playing” as means of transmitting Western principles onto CEE states.
With newer member states lacking the benefit of a lengthy cooperative relationship with other community members, there is the possibility of domestic concern emerging in those states over true EU3 intentions. It is in these cases that the further embracement of community action toward re-negotiation would provide for more popular legitimacy than national action alone.\textsuperscript{107} Since the twelve new member states have not had the benefit of decades of close communication or the experience of creating and implementing major structural revisions within the community, it may appear more difficult for them to fully understand informal community practices and protocols. In contrast to CEES inexperience, the turnover of political leadership in the EU3 demonstrates the commonality and resiliency of their relationships as based on decades of cooperation; that is, the cooperation between them were not solely the result of personal relationships. EU3 partnership, which promoted a variable arrangement in the first place, emerged with the replacement of Gerhard Schroeder in Germany and Jacques Chirac in France with Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy, and – to a lesser extent – Gordon Brown’s promotion in the UK. While individual personalities and personal goals are a large part of contemporary diplomacy, it seems more likely in the case of EU3 cohesion that the rigidity of existing institutions combined with the legacy of partnership have allowed

\textsuperscript{107} Not only do opinions of Russia obviously vary from state to state as explained by Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) and Komercni Banka (Interview, 2008), but so too does domestic pressure on national governments. Germany and the Czech Republic feel their foreign policies defined by domestic influence as explained by Humboldt University (Interview, 2008) and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008), while French foreign action is largely divorced from popular influence (at least over NATO) as explained by Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008). Newer states also realize that they are less able than original member states to use the EU system to their advantage, Komercni Banka (Interview, 2008), which could lead to suspicion of Franco-German action. Community action, thus, seems to be the only way to erase these internal suspicions of Russian rapprochement, German Foreign Office (Interview, 2008).
these states to cooperate on a project such as re-engaging Russia with minimal obstacles between them.108

Formation and Implementation of Variable Geometry in EU-Russian Relations

The existence of a variable geometry toward promoting a new overall foreign policy toward Russia (a more abstract concept than a peacekeeping deployment or a new technology) is based around several key assumptions. First, we have discussed how variable geometry is inherently a less participatory form of European intergovernmentalism; in this regard it can be considered only as a means to an end when normal policymaking avenues are unavailable. What is meant by this is that EU3 states – especially France – possess the individual national strengths to pursue a rapprochement with Russia without community support. However, instead of pursuing national interests independently, the most vocal member states are adhering to variable geometry principles because they are slowly realizing that breaking organizational cohesion is not the way to approach Russian re-negotiation.109 In order to ensure community cohesion while moving forward with upgrading the partnership, willing member states are narrowly focusing their objectives; by focusing only on what these states view as the most “important” issues in the relationship with Russia (e.g., trade and security matters), they are able leave other side projects off the negotiating table for the time being. Since side

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108 Re-alignment is almost certainly attributable to the three new leaders. Even if Brown is politically weaker than Sarkozy or Merkel, the UK will not impede Franco-German, especially when Merkel is able to take strong positions against Russia. Humboldt University (Interview, 2008); interview: Diplomatic Official, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (June 2008) also mentioned the workings of the bureaucracy, especially Franco-UK interaction, to restore relations.

109 Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) explains that no state will begin to act alone in a future rapprochement with Russia – community action is the only way to advance.
projects, such as negotiating logistical cooperation in ESDP missions, formally acting as
an honest broker in the Russia-Georgia dispute, or joint diplomacy in Iranian non-
proliferation efforts do not require a restructuring of the PCA due to their informal and
limited nature, there is a risk that promoting these projects as full community actions will
provide unwilling member states an easier avenue of blocking EU-Russian cooperation.
Therefore, it is more advantageous for groups of member states to build upon recent
improvements in organizational cohesion for a much more structured re-negotiation
instead of relying on the promotion of smaller, informal initiatives that may have the
ability to alleviate short-term gaps in cooperation, but which are derailed more easily.110
While it might be easier for individual member states to pursue side projects, it makes
more sense for them to use their initiative building to harness the current internal
situation of the EU and spur a full community action to reform the overarching structure
of EU-Russian relationship rather than complete specific projects. Re-conceptualizing
the end-game product of variable geometry is important in this case because if the theory
is focused too heavily on concrete results, then it is all too easy to ignore important
internal EU partnerships that not only shore up the community’s international ability, but
also reinforce the same type of flexible progress that is seen in other areas of European
cooporation.111

Second, it is assumed that when the EU acts externally, it promotes the same
values that have been essential to the European project since the days of the European

110 While more complex, comprehensive initiatives can be stopped by a single state (e.g., Poland and the
Baltic States vetoing Russian re-negotiation), after a time those states find it harder to impede larger EU
initiatives that carry with them more political momentum. Wood (2007), 88-92 explains the intra-Council
dynamics of contested votes and consensus-building.
111 Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) explain how ECAP in 2003 recognizes the helicopter problem,
thus any plan to use Russian helicopters should be seen as member states is good relationship positions
with Russia using that niche to provide for community objectives.
Coal and Steel Community; a variable project cannot stray from these fundamentals of integration.\footnote{Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) discuss that when interacting with non-EU states in close proximity to Europe, such as states in the European Neighborhood Policy, the EU promotes values of peaceful existence and economic and social stability. Secondly, integrative functions that occur externally mimic the same integrative tendencies that were at the core of the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, which sought to link important economic elements of partner economies in sectors that were related to militaristic functioning.} In terms of EU-Russian relations, that means if the EU3 states want to promote the EU as a whole in Russian rapprochement, they must not only formulate the approach, but also frame it in terms of common community values and principles. For example, if energy trade is one of the most important issues needing re-negotiation, then the EU3 cannot as a group or individually argue for community backing while pursuing policies that would only affect themselves. The UK presidency in 2005 demonstrated how this principle is applied: while the UK does not receive energy from Russia, it realized that its own North Sea supplies of natural gas were being depleted. In response, it proposed new EU-Russian energy agreements not only to protect its long-term national interests, but because British leaders understood that they could draw on ally concerns surrounding energy security and could prevent member states (such as Germany) from moving too far ahead with bilateral energy agreements.\footnote{Hughes (2006), 12.} Thus, even if national interests spur a member state proposal, the history of organizational cooperation and solidarity is able to be incorporated into those proposals in a way that will earn necessary internal community support by benefiting a spectrum of member state interests.

Third, variable geometry must emerge from either existing legal frameworks or community precedent; if not, the risk of other member states perceiving an ambitious action as too self-serving could be too great. The EU3 ambition for EU-Russian re-negotiation uses the existing PCA and Common Spaces as a foundation for further
cooperation in foreign policy, in much the same way that projects under ESDP or the EMU evolved from policies of political and economic cooperation in the 1970s and 1980s. Just as a small group of member states would use enhanced cooperation to create projects based on variable participation under ESDP, willing member states would be able to use existing foreign policy structures with Russia to justify greater collective action.

Previous academic studies of variable geometry have set up a baseline for what must be considered when analyzing the EU with this approach, and these studies have emphasized the necessity of a previously established “community method” based on trust that promotes flexible responses as part of larger toolbox of mechanisms for solving problems.\textsuperscript{114} While EU3 negotiation with Russia does seem to conform with the kind of variable geometry identified by previous studies (e.g., the ability of capable member states to move forward with projects, the inherent structural and value based binding of overall action, etc.), this analysis has gone to considerable lengths to explain how European integration has been transformed in the post-2007, post-Bucharest era where internal trust and cooperation is either fragile or underdeveloped. Whereas variable geometry is usually considered as a way to advance a specific project with the eventual goal of returning back in line with the rest of the community, the actions of the EU3 can be understood as using flexible arrangements in order to bring the rest of the community in line with those lead states. This adaptation of variable geometry for use in re-negotiation means that advancing states must be proactive in their internal policies in order to convince other member states that their ability to lead re-negotiations with, in

\textsuperscript{114} Mason and Penksa (2004) argue that variable geometric patterns have crystallized, but in the wake of community divergence this practice has turned to more informal means of pushing the union forward.
this case, Russia will benefit the community and that their capabilities can be trusted.\textsuperscript{115}

Post-Bucharest and pre-Lisbon, this means that member states exercising variable geometry must provide extra incentives to other member states in order to diminish concerns of exclusion.\textsuperscript{116}

As the explanatory variables indicate, there is a division between states that were and were not former Warsaw Pact members. The recent history of overt Russian political interference in CEES, coupled with fears of Russia utilizing its energy supplies as a weapon and newer member states hesitations toward headlong community convergence, means that any new re-negotiation with Russia would require a convergence of strategic interests between the member states and, most importantly, assurances of support in case any worst case scenario with Russia would come to pass.\textsuperscript{117} Aside from NATO, the EU is the only other specific organization that CEES would be able to turn to for security guarantees; in order for a community foreign policy toward Russia to move forward, eager member states would thus have to design methods for easing newer member state concerns.\textsuperscript{118}

For example, energy security is the most pressing concern for new member states such as Poland or the Baltic States, especially when Russian responses to Ukrainian and Georgian disputes are fresh in recent memory.\textsuperscript{119} As has been explained, newer member

\textsuperscript{115} Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) mentions that when smaller states are in control of the EU presidency, they seek out multiple sources of information when dealing with foreign issues instead of relying on only one other member state with an international reach that their small state does not possess.

\textsuperscript{116} Especially important since unlike EMU, this variable approach would affect all 27 member states.

\textsuperscript{117} Office of the Governing Mayor of Berlin (Interview, 2008) described local actors in newly admitted CEES as looking to Berlin and other German cities for partnerships; this is sub-national networking that will be critical to bridging the pre-/post-2004 member state divide and build up CEES confidence in original member states.

\textsuperscript{118} Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) and supported by interview: Diplomatic Official, Foreign Ministry of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (June 2008).

\textsuperscript{119} Russian-supplied oil and gas lines were closed during international disputes.
states have relied upon the existing energy infrastructure as a guarantee that if resources are cut off to them, then other European states will react in solidarity when their supplies are, in turn, threatened. However, with the prospect of new pipelines that would directly connect Russian supplies to Western Europe and a NATO that is largely removed from questions of energy security, these CEE member states could potentially be left fendng for themselves against a much stronger Russia.

Currently, the foundation for promotion of Russian re-negotiation has been laid out through internal EU dialogues that have led to guarantees of support from more powerful member states, like France and Germany, to newer member states. While this matter of trust cannot be quantified, the accomplishments of more than 50 years of trust between original community members indicate that there are tangible, peaceful benefits to internal guarantees. Community solidarity is essential to a rapprochement with Russia simply because without such guarantees, states such as Poland, Latvia, or Lithuania would continue to veto a re-opening of formal EU-Russian relations as they have done for over a year’s time. For the EU3, the community’s lack of functional development on major foreign policy action, the EU3’s own fully developed and extensively deep foreign ministries, and the mandates of the TEU makes this variable intergovernmental approach appear to be the only feasible attempt to bring convergence to the interests of 27 member states while seeking a successful outcome. The EU3, with their depth of existing national foreign policy tools and history of internal EU

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120 Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) explained that Germany’s assurances are to send surplus energy to the east.

121 German Foreign Office (Interview, 2008) supports the idea that Lithuania was the last holdout state to re-negotiation, and that the Baltic States are much more concerned with blocking than any other member state.

122 Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) supports the idea that many member states feel there is no common ground to proceed, yet the promotion of re-negotiation continues with minimal compromises.
communication, are able to “Europeanize” their foreign policy objectives by using community frameworks to legally promote more robust relations with Russia. This happens by using informal community networks to promote cohesion through reinforced solidarity. Even if re-negotiation does not occur or is not completed, the importance of this process is the ability of dedicated member states to form an in-group of collaboration that uses foreign policy as an object from which to artificially build internal guarantees. In turn, these guarantees promote community cohesion in the absence of institutional and treaty mobility. Therefore, in the most abstract of ways, the re-negotiation with Russia can be seen as just one of many possible actions the EU could take. This is because in some ways the external relation is less important than the EU3 seeking an opportunity to embolden community methods as a way to promote their own European interests.\(^{123}\)

However, the EU3 see Russia as more than just an expendable opportunity; it is uniquely important because no other external force poses an immediate threat to the EU and causes such a polarizing reaction.\(^{124}\) This enables the EU3 to justify the use of community mechanisms to handle what some member states view as a real threat, while simultaneously promoting internal solidarity to demonstrate to new member states the informal norms of the community.

There is the risk, however, that utilizing variable geometry toward the broader goal of relationship re-negotiation could, in this case, unfairly and unequally advance the benefits of the EU3 at the expense of other member states, especially in the current period prior to Lisbon implementation. While this is a valid concern given a possible

\(^{123}\) Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008), 135 explains that more willing member states “sometimes need wider label of EU foreign policy and the partnership of other EU countries to make external actions acceptable domestically and internationally.”

\(^{124}\) Sakwa (2002), 350 describes how the EU’s relationship with Russia is driven by the concept that “integration is preferable to isolation” because of common regional concerns.
combination of national opportunities that could occur in the wake of community stagnation and unreformed EU coordinating mechanisms, parallel models of community involvement help to explain how compromise between project driven states and other community members resolve concerns of exclusionary action. Even as multiple European institutions sometimes view variable geometry as exclusionary and detrimental to the project of integration, there are two examples from the area of ESDP that demonstrate how exclusionary concerns acted as a catalyst to prompt further community involvement.125 First, a new military component of ESDP was proposed by the EU3 in the late 1990s and was met with a Swedish-Finnish counterproposal that promoted their interests, which was a civilian dimension to ESDP;126 second, the Bucharest Summit gave France an opportunity to promote an increased EU dimension in Afghanistan, however Poland was able to use that opportunity to rally support for its own regional ESDP prospects.127 Both examples illustrate that when in an intergovernmental arrangement, variable geometry and national projects can spur other groups of states to engage proposals by bringing their own national interests into the negotiations – this actually encourages cross-community integration and drives member states to be included.

125 Mason and Penksa (2004) explain concerns over variable geometry; Office of the Governing Mayor of Berlin (Interview, 2008) further explains concerns over the erosion of harmony with the usage of variable geometry, but Radio Free Europe (Interview, 2008) illustrates the existence of niche foreign policies already existing from those that complain about variable geometry – in this case, the Czechs are trying to specialize in human rights foreign policy, which could help the Franco-German push. Also, Humboldt University (Interview, 2008) explains how Merkel is able to be more frank with Russia, which could mean that different member states with different abilities to combine for more policy influence.
126 Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008).
in the overall process of creating comprehensive policies by adding their own specific interests to an existing proposal.  

**Functionalism and the Commission-Council Relationship**

In variable intergovernmentalism, EU actors (those who operate above, but with consent of, the member states) would function as a mediator and facilitator in order to filter and balance policies between the member states and allow a workable solution to emerge. The Lisbon Treaty’s expansion of the High Representative’s office would allow the EU to better coordinate with member states on their interests; however, even in the absence of this treaty, the community nature of the organization still functions as a facilitator of regular intergovernmental meetings in the Council and as a means of policy network construction. The expansion of EU foreign policy capabilities in the Lisbon Treaty illustrates a member state willingness to bolster the effectiveness of EU foreign policy and grant the organization independent tools necessary to foster more convergence – this is important in mending the growing divide between member state capabilities and desires.

If this variable geometry succeeds and community capabilities for promoting cohesive foreign policy advances, then the Commission would be able to use its existing

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128 German Foreign Office (Interview, 2008) also supports the notion that pre-2004 member states are learning more about how to build an effective relationship with Russia from the CEES states, increasing communication and shared decision-making abilities.

129 US Mission to the OECD (Interview, 2008) explains about the animosity between the Commission and some member states in some instances.

130 Luxembourg Foreign Ministry (Interview, 2008) emphasized the essential nature of interlinking foreign policy decisions within the EU by facilitating the existence of further internal dialogue. Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Interview, 2008) highlighted the continued intergovernmental arrangement of foreign policy, but with more supranational linkages to be built up.
economic and bureaucratic role to compensate for any lack of intergovernmental initiative, as has already been seen at Khanty-Mansiysk and the 2008 G-8 Summit and in the creation of the PCA.\textsuperscript{131} The problem, however, is that the Commission fears national actors “pushing back” against its encroachment in foreign policy matters;\textsuperscript{132} though Commission leadership is important for long-term integration of newer member states through things such as promoting the locating of new EU institutions in CEES or by bringing more CEES individuals onto the staffs of supranational EU institutions.\textsuperscript{133} As energy security has already begun to revive the Commission’s role in utilizing top-down approaches to negate intergovernmental differences, so too can functional action occur if variable foreign policy creates opportunities for the Commission to assist.\textsuperscript{134}

**Separating Variable Geometry from Normal EU Policy Formation**

Variable geometry increasingly seems to be the norm for community projects, however in the realm of foreign policy its usage undergoes a fundamentally different

\textsuperscript{131} US Embassy to France (Interview, 2008) explains the necessity of a supranational success in furthering the EU’s role; German Foreign Office (Interview, 2008) highlighted the Lisbon Treaty’s ambition to link the High Rep with the Commission to combine foreign policy abilities, because as SWP (Interview, 2008) explained, the Commission’s power of the purse on ENP and other foreign policy aspects is necessary – they need to be brought into the decision making circle. Media: Russia Today (July 13, 2008) also explains the Commission’s optimism over working with Medvedev. Webber (2000), 73 describes the Commission’s role in writing and coordinating the PCA after initial Council approval.

\textsuperscript{132} Radio Free Europe (Interview, 2008); However, Webber (2000), 75 describes a situation in the late 1990s when the Commission attempted to prompt the rest of the EU into upgrading Russia’s economic classification to market economy status, but was prevented from doing so due to Belgium’s veto in the Council of Ministers. This demonstrates that while the Commission is an initiating force, TEU structure and Council action has blocked its attempt to change areas of the EU-Russian relationship.

\textsuperscript{133} Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) demonstrates that even though CEES want to protect their foreign policies from EU encroachment, Ceska Sporitelna (Interview, 2008) explains the overriding importance and desire to further integrate the personnel of new member states.

\textsuperscript{134} Office of the Governing Mayor of Berlin (Interview, 2008) and German Ministry of Economy and Technology (Interview, 2008) described the increasing Commission efforts and the importance of an EU Energy Agency.
implementation. It is necessary to make this delineation because the community-involving process of this variable approach blurs the line between normal and special policy formation for the EU. Most importantly, this attempt with Russia fits into either one of two pre-existing motives for variable geometry projects. Variable geometry is used to either, (a) enhance the capabilities of states that lack individual abilities (e.g., partners states in the Galileo project), or (b) enhance existing state capabilities or desires by making them more acceptable or efficient under the EU banner (e.g., Airbus and aircraft market consolidation or German ESDP involvement in Africa). While the former is a core explanation for binding community action, EU-Russian re-negotiation parallels the goals of the latter approach and distinguishes itself from normal EU policy creation because of the inequality of member state approaches toward Russia and the motivations behind its usage.

Historically, community divergence has resulted in major policy obstacles, such as the initial impasse over the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) or ratification of the Constitution Treaty. However, national initiatives between the now re-aligned EU3 indicate the ability of general European-Russian relations to be repaired without total community action. Instead, EU foreign policy retooling demonstrates itself as a positive-sum game that is being driven by a small group of capable member states. Therefore, further drive toward union occurs not only on the basis of internal consensus built by a variable project, but because the EU superstructure itself must react by evolving to keep states like the EU3 bound to community goals, even as other member states might be less willing to move forward. Since the power of institutions such as the Commission rests on collective support and burden sharing, it has a vetted interest in maintaining balance
between the member states or else it would risk a complete hijacking of EU priorities by the most powerful member states. Understanding the limits of variable geometry, the enormity of the re-negotiation project, and the top-down community pressures of EU institutions lead the advancing member states to offer – in this case – solidarity guarantees to other member states in order to further their specific objectives. Furthermore, variable geometry can be said to exist when a minority of member states are promoting a project that is not fully supported by all community member. It should be noted that the growing discussion and use of variable approaches comes at a time when there are a larger number of member states and new treaty agreements; this seems understandable as a more difficult policymaking environment coincides with international situations that require quicker and more flexible responses.\textsuperscript{135} In the most extreme sense, the solidarity guarantees implemented to further this case of variable foreign policy is similar to the mechanism of constructive abstention that rules Council decisions on ESDP, allowing progress on policies even if other member states are not fully onboard with a specific proposal.

\textsuperscript{135} Examples include both situations where diplomatic and military responses are necessary, such as the capturing of British sailors by Iranian vessels in 2007 or the breadth of ESDP deployments, including the most recent observation mission in Georgia.
Russia

Russia, since the dismantling of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, has ridden out multiple economic shocks and a sense of international ambiguities to a wealthy and emboldened global position in 2008. The petrodollar-backed economy is supplemented by billions of dollars earned through arms manufacturing with the vast majority of these profits sitting silently in sovereign wealth funds – unable to be used for fear of catastrophic inflation – while the state’s citizens slowly amass their own wealth. The state that once prided itself on artists like Dostoevsky and Pasternak now heralds a new tenor of economic accomplishment, even with the current economic situation. Russia hosts more billionaires than any other state and boasts a profitable and largely untapped commercial market – profitable, that is, if one complies with the government’s informal rules and norms for operating harassment-free. Despite uncertainties concerning long-term economic stability and the rule of law, Russia’s external actions are still bound by governing international principles and affected by internal demands.

The current state of Russian foreign policy has been forged through nearly two decades of four distinctively different patterns of international approach. The current (post-2005) system, described by many as fully then-President Vladimir Putin’s creation, continues to embrace a sense of ambiguity between neighboring and partner states. Ever protective of these states in the near-abroad area, Russia must not only concern itself with the growth of NATO, but also a strengthened China, a possibly nuclear Iran, and a soft-

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136 Tsygankov (2006) and Sakwa (2002) concur on the evolution of Russian foreign policy though the Kozyrev and Primakov periods, while Dmitry Trenin, “Waiting for a democratic godot in the Kremlin” (St. Petersburg Times, July 22, 2008) describes the difference between pre-2005 and post-2005 policy approaches. Post-2005, Putin is seen as more in control of state objectives based on a better economic base from which to work.
power and economically rich European Union. The relationship with the EU bears special examination and this analysis will demonstrate a Russian tendency to engage the West; most prominent when involving economic matters, the relationship remains vulnerable to security concerns that tend to overpowe what has been a close cultural relationship with Europe.\textsuperscript{137}

**The EU is Russia’s Most Important Relationship**

Examining Russia in relation to the EU is important for several reasons. First, this analysis examines not only how Russia interacts bilaterally with individual states, but also how Russia approaches a multilateral international organization comprised of competing viewpoints and which wields significant diplomatic clout and economic power. Unlike NATO or the United States, Europe itself (specifically, the EU) poses no military threat to Russia and represents an advanced economic relationship that has been directly affected by Russian/Soviet control of Central and Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{138} This region and its set of actors are familiar for Russia, both for their many past interactions and for the legally binding agreements they have signed in order to codify portions of their vast relationship (the 1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and the 2005 Common Spaces agreement). Russia cannot claim this type of relationship with any other state, and an analysis of Russia’s interaction with China, Middle Eastern, or Central Asian

\textsuperscript{137} It should be noted that the phrase “Western progression” does not mean pro-Western, but simply the act of sharing more values and common positions with the West than with other international areas.

\textsuperscript{138} Jonathan Gair, “European Integration and the Politics of Missile Defense” (Las Vegas: Presented at the Southwest Social Science Association Annual Meeting, 2008) describes the importance of the April NATO Summit at Bucharest, demonstrating that missile shield is either an individual state issue, a US issue, or a NATO issue – not an EU issue. Sakwa (2002), 368 echoes this Russian perception that there is a decoupling of EU activity from that of US-influenced European policy.
states would be unduly influenced by security concerns. Europe’s developed and diverse characteristics illustrate a broad and developed foreign policy relationship for Russia. As we will see, regardless of EU external action, the Union’s fundamental role as an economic organization complements the driving Russian national interest of seeking out economic opportunities, allowing the two entities to move closer together even as NATO-Russia partnership or bilateral relations stall.\textsuperscript{139}

Within this section, it is also important to outline the major reoccurring goals of 21st century Russian foreign policy, especially since they apply more to Russia-EU relations than to any other area of Russian foreign policy. These policy goals, which have existed in one shape or another since 1991, are:

1) \textit{Ensure a credible Russian image abroad, including a respect for Russia’s power}. Inclusive of this is the need for issues on the Russian agenda to be respected without isolating Russia from international partnerships in the process (e.g., action taken over Kosovo).\textsuperscript{140}

2) \textit{Secure economic interests}. While this may seem fairly obvious, in the post-Soviet, globalized world, Russia is still learning. The 1998 monetary crisis was a wake-up call to reform and modernize the economy, participate more with international organizations, and strengthen specific bilateral ties (most notably with Italy, Germany, and Finland).\textsuperscript{141}

3) \textit{Mitigate non-Russian influence in near-abroad states}. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has left Russia in a constant state of attempting to normalize relations with former subordinate republics while ensuring that these states are not overly courted by possible international competitors (not just Europe and the US, but China as well).

\textsuperscript{139} Sakwa (2002) and Dmitry Trenin, “Where US and Russian interests overlap.” (Carnegie Moscow Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2008) are only two of many sources that highlight the importance of economics in every pattern of Russian policy development since 1991. Melville and Shakleina (2005), 448 discusses how Russia uses its relationship with the EU to “supplement” its relationship with NATO.

\textsuperscript{140} Hirdman (2006) explains how important Russian image abroad is for Moscow’s ability to promote its international agenda. Kosovo not only showed Russian weakness, but the region’s circumvention of UN mandates demonstrated a lack of respect for a Russia policy based on international law and UN agreements.

\textsuperscript{141} Sakwa (2002), 369 describes the Russian-Finnish economic relationship, while German Foreign Office (Interview, 2007 and 2008) explained the continental friendships that Russia maintains.
While sometimes downplayed or obscured, these three principles have existed in one form or another since the earliest days of Boris Yeltsin’s presidency, regardless of debate over Russia as a revisionist or status quo power. In the current environment, these objectives are managed by the foreign policy philosophy of *power pragmatism*, which seeks a more balanced approach to external relations. Instead of being too pro-Western or too anti-Western, this approach mixes political and economic objectives in order to secure the best possible benefit for Russia while deemphasizing the type of cultural values that have led to those previous, ultimately unsustainable, Russian positions.¹⁴²

**Contextualizing the Relationship from the Russian Perspective**

The relationship between Russia and Europe has seemingly always been characterized by military entanglements and cultural exchanges resulting from the close proximity of societies and geopolitical interests. Although forceful interventions have disappeared with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its control of European satellite states, uncertainty in the relationship continues to exist due to energy policy, trade and visa laws, and competition over influence in the near-abroad. Even with the evaporation of security treaties such as Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), there is no question that diplomacy (not economics or military force) is the only weapon used between the two camps. Russia has found itself oriented toward the West for some time, if for nothing else than for Europe’s advanced economic markets and trade opportunities. The state has evolved from a Soviet fiscal insolvency to being in a position where major

banks, such as Citibank, are situating their offices in Central and Eastern Europe to better reach the growing Russian market.\textsuperscript{143}

Thus, with economics driving the Russian-European relationship, Russia agreed to and ratified the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. This loosely binding ten-year agreement was one of several other PCAs signed between the EU and post-communist states, and included various provisions for yearly meetings between EU and Russian officials, as well as promising Russia Most Favored Nation trading status with EU member states.\textsuperscript{144} In 2005, the Putin government agreed to the Common Spaces agreement with the EU that sought to enhance the PCA-outlined cooperative areas of economics, commerce, regional security, and culture through more specificity and continued dialogues between the closely interacting states. Each of these three stages of comprehensive partnership occurred during distinct periods in Russia’s foreign policy, as the “idealism” of Kozyrev-inspired Westernism spurred the creation of an agreement that would become underutilized during Yevgeny Primakov’s backlash against Western influence. It was not until 2005 that the emergence of Putin’s new pragmatic thinking would stabilize the relationship long enough for Common Spaces to emerge. In December of 2007, the ten-year PCA expired, requiring a renegotiation of the existing relationship framework. The summer 2008 summit of EU and Russian officials at Khanty-Mansiysk in Siberia represented the first step toward rapprochement in EU-

\textsuperscript{143} Archie Brown, \textit{Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 140-147 describes the amount of hard currency debt that Warsaw Pact states had accumulated. Citibank (Interview, 2008) spoke of the new approaches to Russia from Western financial institutions, which follows a guarded, but optimism, view of investment in Russia.

\textsuperscript{144} Europa.eu contains the full text of the PCA, describing MFN conditions and other protocols.
Russian relations after several disputes that had seriously jeopardized the future of the relationship.¹⁴⁵

As this analysis will explore, Russian foreign policy formation toward the EU and its member states is the combined product of a shared common history with the Europeans, a tightly bound economic relationship, and a strengthening international situation for Russia where the state’s stability is no longer dependent on Western policymakers – as it seemed to be during many periods of the 1990s.¹⁴⁶ The commonality that exists in the relationship is enough to lay the groundwork for increased cooperation in a wide variety of mutually beneficial areas. It is in this context that Russia attempts to further its strategic objectives not only by formulating policy toward the individual states of Europe, but also recognizes and is able to cooperate with the Brussels-level leadership of the EU.

**Competing frameworks for Analyzing Russian Foreign Policy Formation**

In order to make sense of the multiple agreements and dialogues that occur between Russia and the EU, there are three frameworks of analysis that can be applied and then evaluated to determine what factors have the most impact on the calculation and implementation of Russian foreign policy. The first framework, *identity politics*, seeks to use Russian historical identity construction as a means of explaining how current foreign policy decisions are made. According to this view, things such as classic Russian

¹⁴⁵ The Baltic States and Poland had been vetoing a formal Russia-EU meeting after Russia had blocked Polish beef imports and launched a major cyber-attack on Estonia.
literature or cinema could still have an enormous impact on contemporary situations and individual decision-making. The second framework, *international relations theory*, is the most traditional of the three analyses and assumes the formative power of upper-level government decisions and individual actors as the most important factors behind foreign policy development. Thirdly, the *domestic pressures* framework examines the implications of non-governmental, popular attitudes and pressures on foreign policy. Borrowing from the two-level, nested-game theory, this approach assumes that the population of Russia has an ability to influence government decisions and that the government must react to domestic pressures instead of acting independently of them.

After an initial analysis of the effectiveness of these three approaches to policy formation, they will be evaluated in terms of each other and assessed. The validity of this evaluation will be back-checked by the application of the approaches to each of the four areas of Common Spaces – the test case for the Russian analysis. This differs with the approach for analyzing EU foreign policy for several reasons. First, EU foreign policy is as much an internal process as it is an external one; Russia’s foreign policy establishment works in a much more direct way as a result of strict presidential control over state priorities. Second, the EU seeks broad goals when approaching international relations, where as Russia has specific objectives that it wishes to complete; this mainly includes re-establishing foreign respect, which is something the EU does not have to place the same expediency upon. Third, within the EU-Russian relationship, the EU has traditionally been more prone to initiating policies and Russia to responding; therefore an examination in-depth of the EU and the Common Spaces is not as effective because its production is covered by examinations of the community’s internal practices, while the
Russian reaction is important because it helps to determine how a single state interacts with a multilateral organization. Finally, Russian foreign policy can be said to interact on a much more individualistic level, while EU foreign policy produces interactions with legal frameworks and numerous overlapping jurisdictions. Because of these reasons it is important to analyze each foreign policy with a tailored and context specific approach.

**Identity Politics**

Former Luxembourgish Ambassador to the Soviet Union Guy de Muyser once remarked that, “Before you talk about the relationships between countries, you have to understand who the people are.”\(^{147}\) Culturally European, Russia’s history has found the state both embracing and downplaying that characteristic depending on international and domestic circumstances.\(^ {148}\) As described in the literature review, it seems as if no discussion of Russia’s foreign policy could proceed without a discussion of how cultural values and perceptions play into the formulation of external policy. This is because not only does Russia’s foreign policy depend on self-perception, but on how the Russian government views itself in relation to the international order.\(^ {149}\) Not only has Russia been a home to famous and prolific authors and artists, but its Slavic roots and Orthodox religion have fostered a belief in the state’s leadership (and into the population, as well) that Russia should be a leader of those that share its cultural values – most notably, those such as Belarus, the Ukraine and those in the Balkans (Serbia). In a state searching for

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\(^ {147}\) Interview: Guy de Muyser, former Luxembourg ambassador to the Soviet Union (2008).

\(^ {148}\) Hirdman (2006) describes this dichotomy in Russian history, comparing Russia against his home state of Sweden and argues that Russian values are at times completely opposite from those of most Europeans.

\(^ {149}\) Sakwa (2002), 350.
self-confidence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, leadership in religious and cultural matters is an important self-identifying trait. In a way, it is safe to say that Russia defines Europe as the “other,” whereby Russian leaders and individuals in construct their own identities in relation to the “other.” This means, in the most general way, that Russian reacts and mentally constructs itself in a particular way based on their perception of Europe holding certain values or acting in a certain way. While Russia is a global actor and manages relations with all of its neighbors, this type of cultural perception and reaction does not occur with any other entity except for Europe. Even though it has tried, Russia has so far been unable to fully construct an identity that is not firmly rooted in European tradition. While there is obviously no consensus within Russia concerning the validity of this claim, the question then becomes how Russian leadership handles the sometimes simultaneous desire to have both a distinct and inclusive identity with Europe.

This national debate over how Russians define themselves and their state is intimately linked to politics, affecting which individuals are voted into power and what policies spark support or opposition from the public or other individuals in government. In the 21st century, Putin has supported the idea of a shared Russian and European cultural identity. Examples of this include direct comparisons he has made between Russia and EU member states and framing St. Petersburg as Russia’s link to the West during the 2006 G-8 summit. This desire to build a common cultural bridge with Europe can explain the frequency and willingness to initiative EU-Russian dialogue, as

150 Emerson (2006), 15-41 explains further how Russia defines itself with and against Europe, and how Russia makes specific distinctions in its relations between “old” Europe and “new” Europe. Tsygankov (2006), 17 also explains the formation of Russian national identity as a reflection of self-definition against Western cultures.
151 Lo (2003), 11-18.
well as private sector interaction between Russia and Europe. However, Russia must also construct its identity in the wake of the 2004 EU expansion, which resulted in former Soviet controlled states (that is, states that Russia had imposed a common heritage upon) redefining their own identities away from the Russian state and toward their idea of the ideal European heritage. This has made the idea of culturally accepting Europe more difficult for Russia, especially after the attempt to entirely accept Western values were rebuffed throughout the 1990s. Recently, the 2008 EU-Russian summit is an example of how this identity is not static: whereas the 2006 G-8 summit was in St. Petersburg, this summit was hosted in the much more eastern city of Khanty-Mansiysk. The decision to host a summit in a town built around energy exports and in the Russian heartland provided Russia with the ability to promote an alternative state identity. If for nothing else, this is a small demonstration of how a single identity has not yet been embraced.

*International Relations Theory*

Explained as the most straightforward and traditional approach to Russian foreign policy formation, this framework draws upon several theories under the premise that government and upper-echelon decision-making trumps all avenues of influencing how specific foreign policy approaches are decided upon. From the realist perspective, the only actor is the state (at least, the executive of the state), which competes with other states for security and stability. From international liberalism, we can enter into the assumption that individuals in the government do matter and that personalized and constantly utilized government-to-government cooperation is a tool that governments
implement. There are three variables within this approach: the emerging role of President Dmitry Medvedev, the legacy of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy, and the question of bureaucratic direction.

The constant centralization of government powers supports this government-centric approach over others, as aspects of managed democracy maintain the system of executive branch independence. This grouping of influential individuals, especially members of the military and political class, has been traditionally insulated from public opinion and is seen to make decisions based on their own interpretations of international events. Furthermore, domestic opposition to top-level priorities is at best unable to transfer dissent into effective political action and at worst is virtually non-existent. This is attributable to, amongst many other factors, the known government manipulation of internal actors and organizations has been deemed more effective than their outright banning. However, while it is with relative ease that government officials are able to prevent alternative agendas from publicly emerging, that does not necessarily ensure that their own priorities will come to fruition.

**Importance of Individuals: President Dmitry Medvedev**

Having assumed the presidency in mid-2008, Medvedev is still largely in the shadow of Putin, a result of his successful eight years in office. However, the advantage

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153 Interview: Researcher, *Carnegie Foundation* (July 2008) describes the influence of elite classes in the decision to invade Georgia, constantly centralizing political power, and the observation that Russian democracy may be reaching a point of being “over-managed.” Melville and Shakleina (2005), 440-442 describes Putin as having been largely insulated from popular opinion.

154 Interview: Researcher, *SOVA Center* (July 2008) spoke of government preference to manipulate internal groups (rather than disband them) due to the ease of monitoring established organizations.
in foreign policy that Medvedev possesses is his legal, non-KGB, background. The importance of his legalistic-oriented psychology cannot be understated, even in a state such as Russia where pledges to reinforce the rule of law have not come to pass. The difference is the power of Medvedev’s rhetoric and the intensity of his speeches on rule of law in which he showcases his expertise of domestic and international legal issues.\textsuperscript{155} If he is able to solidify enough power and trust in his system, Medvedev may prove to be a potent policymaker as his legalism matches up well with the highly technocratic EU, especially since the latter errs toward numerous legally binding frameworks when negotiating cooperation, such as with the PCA.\textsuperscript{156} Even if Medvedev is not able to change domestic issues to a greater extent, his individualism directly affects Russia’s approach to international gatherings, the agreements that stem from them, and the global perception of his government.\textsuperscript{157} However, while Medvedev’s rhetoric and presidential decrees may gain influence over public opinion,\textsuperscript{158} there has been little divergence from Putin’s legacy beyond a new legal focus. Thus, one must look to the solidification of Russian international goals during the Putin presidential tenure for the basis of current policy.

\textsuperscript{155} Interview: Professors, *European University in St. Petersburg* (July 2008).
\textsuperscript{156} Emerson (2006), 62-86 describes specific legal issues within Common Spaces and the PCA.
\textsuperscript{157} Lo (2003), 42 points to the uniquely important nature of the individual in Russian foreign policy.
\textsuperscript{158} European University in St. Petersburg (Interview, 2008) explains that if Medvedev continues with rhetoric about the possibilities of rule of law, he may uniquely influence the public and build a power base that would allow him to implement reforms.
The Legacy of Vladimir Putin

An Op-Ed in the July 22, 2008 St. Petersburg Times written by Dmitry Trenin (a member of the Carnegie Foundation’s Moscow Center) sought to explain the current state of Russian foreign policy as being the latest extension of Putin policy created in 2005, made possible with the support of new petrodollars. While the question of petrodollars as a uniquely dangerous development should be qualified (based on the long history of Russia’s use of energy resources for extra state revenue, the current unusable sovereign wealth fund, and domestic re-investment possibilities), Putin’s personal role in the current state of Russian foreign policy toward Europe and the EU is undeniably enormous. This foreign policy, formed on the basis of “correcting” Soviet and Yeltsin mistakes, sees itself as an evolved policy that is able to use Russia’s resurgent strength to its advantage while setting itself up as an independent, yet possibly cooperative, force to be reckoned with.159 Even as the August 12 Moscow Times Op-Ed by Russian newspaper editor Alexander Golts compared the state of war between Russia and Georgia to 19th century imperialism, Putin’s foreign policy cannot be described so narrowly based on one state action.160

Regardless of the Georgian conflict, Putin has updated the Russian foreign policy position toward Europe to be one that has evolved beyond Soviet isolation and confrontation, that is stronger that Kozyrev-inspired subordination, and that is smarter than Primakov-backed alliance realignment.161 In 2005, as the emergence of Common

159 Tsygankov (2006)’s concept of power pragmatism.
161 Tsygankov (2006) and Sakwa (2002) both explain Kozyrev’s failed idealism of a pro-West foreign policy, and also Primakov’s failures to ensure a robust multi-polar policy.
Spaces with the EU coincided with the formation of Putin’s own foreign policy, the agreement emphasized the stronger international role that Russia had found itself in and promoted the political, economic, commercial, and cultural relation that exists between the two camps. The Common Spaces, while not intended as an in-depth policy manual, does add emphasis to the relationship and underscores the continued importance of trade and overall exchange between the two entities. This appears to be true even as Putin sought to ignore Europe as a community in order to pursue bilateral goals, such as attempting to extradite Boris Berezovsky from the UK. As the last year of Putin’s presidential tenure was marred by rhetorical battles with the West over controversial proposals (most markedly for Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO and for missile shield deployment), his appearance at the NATO Bucharest summit and subsequent meeting with Bush at Sochi seemed to clear the air over security concerns, decoupling EU policy from that of NATO’s. This allowed Russian policymakers to re-focus on economic issues in the relationship and areas of potential peacekeeping cooperation with Europe, such as in Chad. Putin’s personal relationship with several EU leaders (including former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Burlesconi) allowed the formation of stronger economic ties to emerge via bilateral agreements.\(^\text{162}\)

Simultaneously, Putin’s new pragmatism allowed an expansion of the office of the Russian representative to the EU in Brussels, re-emphasizing European partnership as long as it did not interfere with Russian security. Putin would form his foreign policy toward the EU on the basis of his real economic strength – allowing the Baltic States to drift away during the early years of his presidency when the Russian economy was still recovering, but enforcing more control over the near-abroad as Russian wealth grew.

\(^{162}\) Hughes (2006), 13.
As the role of the individual in Russian foreign policy has been explored, it is important to note Putin’s personal interventions into EU-Russian relations created precedents for presidential action. As the literature review noted, there is a consensus that Putin uses personal influence, direction, and appointments to ensure the survivability of his agenda.\textsuperscript{163} Putin personally involved himself in not only the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute (pushing forward a top-level agreement that alleviated the immediate crisis), but also used his personal relationships with EU leaders (mainly those in Germany, France, and Italy) to fragment EU opposition to the second war in Chechnya and to build up support with European states in opposition to the American war in Iraq in 2003.\textsuperscript{164} Thus, not only has power pragmatism been used to form an overall philosophy on external relations, but the term seems to capture the renewed ability of Russia’s president to promote policy objectives through personal attention. It also demonstrates the Russian preference to gain support or fracture European opposition on the basis of bilateral relations with EU member states; while Russia is generally supportive of EU growth and long-term cooperation over trade and security, Putin’s power pragmatism seems to favor bilateral action instead of multilateral problem solving when short-term, immediate situations arise.

The Bureaucracy

It is a consistent observation that there is a preference within Russian foreign policy to handle EU relations on the highest political level (the “summit” level) in order

\textsuperscript{163} Lo (2006).
\textsuperscript{164} Hughes (2006), 12-13.
to capitalize on the decision-making and agenda-setting power of the Russian president; however, it is the existing bureaucracy that implements or hinders executive proposals. While Duma-alignment with the president’s office seems like a foregone conclusion (especially with Putin taking up residence as prime minister), comments by an official in United Russia Party’s International Relations Department about cooperation with Europe indicate the obfuscating power of the bureaucracy and its ability to thwart cooperative foreign policy toward Europe. The prime example is one attempt at cooperation over a possible EU-led peacekeeping mission in Chad: multiple EU sources have confirmed that there were preliminary discussions between France and Russia, where the latter would supply a handful of military-grade transport helicopters to the mission just as the EU had asked to use Ukrainian-based heavy lift fixed-wing aircraft. Based on this interview, it seems as if Putin – who was already embattled with his defense ministry over the plan – simply failed to get the wheels turning. Judging by Medvedev’s more recent comments on Russia Today, which promoted cooperation over other issues such as missile defense, it may appear the bureaucracy is still in a position to snub executive proposals that are not formally and vocally made apparent by the president’s office.

This is not an uncommon phenomenon in Russia’s foreign policy, demonstrating the

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165 Hirdman (2006), 14 states that “There is no lack of attention devoted to Russia in Brussels. One difference, though, is that the EU thrives on ‘low politics,’ with issues being brought up from below, while EU-Russia relations in Moscow are regarded as ‘high politics’ to be solved by summits.” Lo (2003), 1-8, 36, 42 and Melville and Shakleina (2005), 446 both describe the importance of the individual in Russian foreign policy, but also its weakness in moving the bureaucracy to action. Lo labels it as a “historic divide” between policy-setting and implementation within the Russian government.

166 Interview: Military Advisor, US Mission to the European Union (June 2008), French Defense Ministry (2008), Interview: Official from the Defense Policy and Capabilities Unit, EU Council of Ministers (June 2008) and German Foreign Office (Interview, 2008) explain the existence of serious talks with Putin for cooperation over Chad.

167 Interview: Official, MGIMO and United Russia (July 2008) downplayed the peacekeeping mission’s importance, saying that “it wasn’t being discussed at all” and eventually retracted his statements by saying that he had no comment.

168 (Russia Today 2008) played video clips of Medvedev’s speeches that seemed on the point of begging the West for security cooperation, especially for transparency and openness on missile shield.
immobility of the bureaucracy when top-level, individual attention is not constantly
directed at specific projects.\(^{169}\)

Also shaping foreign policy are the factors surrounding intergovernmental
contact. The strengthening of the EU has forced a Russian bureaucracy familiar with
handling relations bilaterally with individual European states to now work with a more
powerful organization in Brussels. Seemingly unprepared for this transformation,
adaptation is taking time.\(^{170}\) In fact, authors such as Melville and Shakleina point
specifically to three reasons for the historic divide between Russia’s ability to set foreign
policy goals and the bureaucracy’s inability to follow through on them. First, Russian
diplomats in Europe have traditionally lacked initiative; second, Russian bureaucracy in
general becomes a hindrance to open relations; and third, there are a lack of dedicated
institutions for cooperation.\(^{171}\) The make up of the EU-Russian relationship has given
top-level actors in Russia ability (or at least an impetus) to move forward with their
agendas and begin reversing these trends. Not only are more Russian diplomats being
assigned to Brussels to interface with the EU actors,\(^{172}\) but the PCA creates those
cooperative institutions needed to get the bureaucracy more involved in international
policymaking.\(^{173}\) Also, in much the same way that Russian institutions and individuals
have had to re-orient their trade relationship with European states due to EU trade and
economic law, so too has political dialogue followed the same path toward an approach

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\(^{169}\) Lo (2003), 34 explains the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a “breaking mechanism” which is best able
to slow down policy when the president does not make a project his absolute top priority.

\(^{170}\) Interview: Former Russian Prime Minister (July 2008) states that while there are problems on both
sides, Russia lacks a greater understanding of Europe, but that the Russians are learning from their previous
mistakes. Chief among them, they are focusing more on Brussels and the EU’s decision-making
institutions.


\(^{172}\) Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008).

\(^{173}\) Webber (2000), 76-77, this includes the Cooperation Council (for meetings between senior ministers),
and the Cooperation Committee (frequent meetings between sub-ministerial individuals).
that reflects a stronger collective European position. This change of operating norms between Russia and the collection of EU actors has been reinforced by the increasingly informal government-to-government contacts that have emerged. For example, regular communication between Russian and defense ministry officials in Europe can influence individual attitudes within the Russian foreign policy establishment by challenging preconceived notions of their European counterparts.\textsuperscript{174} Moreover, this regular contact between bureaucracies allows for more policy discussion to occur beyond top-level dialogues. Many officials on both sides – but especially in Russia, where there are shortages of EU-knowledgeable bureaucrats – complain about the bureaucracy inherent in the relationship, thus seeking out informal contact as a way to access objectives.\textsuperscript{175}

The bureaucratic question is important for Medvedev, who must gain internal support if he is to diverge from Putin’s foreign policy legacy. While many in the government are firmly entrenched in Putin’s new pragmatism, Russian bureaucracy also has a long tradition of ignoring executive leadership and plotting its own path.\textsuperscript{176} In the current situation, the Putin-Medvedev combination is, however, continuing to prioritize

\textsuperscript{174} Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) and French Defense Ministry (Interview, 2008) demonstrate the existence of sub-presidential government-to-government contacts: the former prime minister is allowed to have full technical knowledge of the missile shield since he is an information courier between governments, and individuals within the French Defense Ministry explained that the frequency of phone conversations with counterparts in Moscow has increased.

\textsuperscript{175} Interview: Researcher, \textit{Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations} (July 2008) demonstrates a dislike of the EU bureaucracy; Hirdman (2006) about officials disliking the cumbersome protocols of the PCA’s consultation mechanism; Emerson (2006) explains that there is a shortage of Russian diplomats who are knowledgeable of specific EU law.

\textsuperscript{176} Sakwa (2002,) 355, 357-8 describes several instances where not only is the president disconnected from the rest of the government during most policy development, but that there are cases where portions of the bureaucracy will act in their own self-interest. Nikolaus Von Twickel, “Medvedev admits posts for sale.” (St. Petersburg Times, July 25, 2008)’s article echoes this problem, because if there are bureaucratic posts for sale then there is more a possibility of an independent, unaccountable bureaucracy going against presidential initiative.
an economic relationship with the EU, despite internal hesitation to proceed further. It seems as though through this approach that the executive must work within the governing structure, as executives in other states do, but with more of an emphasis on taking presidential initiatives and making them visible in order to harness political support before internal obstacles hinder progress. The verticality (stove-piping) of bureaucratic agencies and the increasing power of non-presidential individuals (such as the Russian representative to the EU in Brussels) indicates a powerful sub-presidential organization. When Putin’s new pragmatism emerged at the beginning of the 21st Century, the lack of diplomatic experts and economic strength meant that Russian foreign policy reverted more toward inflating capabilities as a stop-gap maneuver. However, the longevity of interaction with EU counterparts and Russia’s strengthening international capability has allowed Russia to be more adventurous in its partnership with the EU (e.g., new pipelines and trade agreements). Public opinion seems moot in these situations.

**Domestic Pressures**

The emergence of national foreign policies in democratic states is sometimes heavily affected by a documented pattern of what is called the 2-level, nested game. This approach, seeking to explain how the pressures of domestic politics and interests affect what are normally insulated policy formation processes, can be seen to evolve from a free

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177 Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) and Interview: Researcher, Carnegie Foundation (July 2008) both spoke of how the bureaucracy does not respect currently respect Medvedev over Putin; especially as European University in St. Petersburg (Interview, 2008) explain how the bureaucracy lacks accountability and the need to appease officials outside of itself.

178 Hirdman (2006) describes not only the increasing verticality of the bureaucracy, but also the increasing role of the Russian representative to the EU in Brussels.
press and open society. In post-communist societies, the emergence of these factors has been observable in Czech and Polish domestic upheaval over the issue of missile defense. Since this overall analysis is geared toward Russia’s European foreign policy, these examples can provide a unique comparison: while there are some foreign policy issues that are politically risk-free for European governments (such as French NATO re-integration), popular outcry is often perceived as a European cultural value and can heavily influence the external relations.

Russia, on the other hand, has not had the same longstanding historical development of public input toward government policies. Regardless, there are examples in Russian history of popular movements being able to directly affect the governing structures above them. However, while public demonstrations and protests during the Gorbachev years demonstrated a Russian public willing to promote domestic issues, open opinion of Russian foreign policy objectives are left largely to only a small fraction of the population. Even as popular expression continued in the post-Soviet system and exists today, issues of contention are almost always centered on domestic political concerns, Russian involvement in near-abroad states, or concerns over Central Asia and China – European affairs are less visible unless they have contain a matter of regional security.

While problems of EU visibility are not unique to the relationship with Russia, the state of Russian media does not aid the situation. The vast majority of Russians get their news

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179 (Russia Today 2008) and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview, 2008) both commented on public demonstrations and general public outcry concerning the missile shield.

180 Such as during the 1989 soap-based coal miner strikes, the attempted 1991 August coup, and the 1993 constitutional crisis.

181 Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) spoke of the negative public perception of NATO/EU expansion; Carnegie Foundation (Interview, 2008), however, described domestic opposition to Putin’s attempt at internal reform (such as policies designed to reconcile regional divergence) while explaining that there is significantly less of an impact on foreign policy. European University in St. Petersburg (Interview, 2008)’s description of “opposition substitution” is still only based on domestic issues, not foreign ones.
from state-subsidized TV, while only a fraction rely on the internet or print publications.\textsuperscript{182} The latter of these, of course, face problems beyond simply readership as journalists are subdued and government media and publishing control ensures an uphill battle for the independent press.\textsuperscript{183}

The emergence of a more stable middle class, however, is beginning to have an impact on the worldliness of Russian citizens as the increase in family wealth and ease of travel has meant much more European exposure.\textsuperscript{184} Coupled with what could be the pitfalls of “over-managed” democracy, this may allow public opinion to directly influence foreign policy development. What matters is how much exposure individuals have to EU action and their relevance to Russia. The problem may be, though, that even if there are constant references to Russian leadership or Europe, most are not tuned into it. The rise of stability and wealth in Russia seems to have spurred the previously mentioned “freedom to be numb,” which could be seen to nullify the media’s influence; then again, there is no reason to assume a mutually exclusive relationship when making a decision between literature and news.\textsuperscript{185} It is an interesting coincidence that during the Yeltsin years, a time that many described as a golden era for journalism in Russia, popular influence on the government seemed to be at its height – especially over foreign

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{182}] European University in St. Petersburg (Interview, 2008) explained that the internet was a key element for Russians who want to find out more about certain events, even through unofficially sourced news; but once again this is focused almost entirely around concerns for domestic issues and events.
\item[\textsuperscript{183}] Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations (Interview, 2008)’s content analysis illustrates government domination of the media, and Interview: Official, Glasnost Defense Foundation (July 2008) discussed the government’s control of publishing houses.
\item[\textsuperscript{184}] Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) explains that the emergence of the middle class is crucial to their international perceptions; Carnegie Moscow Center (Interview, 2008) describes the trend of increased Russian travel and the lack of desire to emigrate.
\item[\textsuperscript{185}] Interview: Russian Author (July 2008) connected the rise of mediocre literature to this concept of “the freedom to be numb” that she sees many Russians enjoying. Interview: Manager, Mosfilm (July 2008) also argues against the true implications of movies on society and emphasized the inability of cinema to change the law. Of course, this manager does believe that books are still more important than movies because “at least politicians read.” This was connected to a statement concerning his thoughts that movies are being perceived more than ever for fun and not to instruct an audience on how to live.
\end{itemize}
policy issues. In these instances when domestic pressure did influence foreign policy, popular opinion largely gravitated toward ensuring Russian security, territorial integrity and access to world markets rather than for binding international policy.

Public Paralysis

Since the re-election of Putin, there has been a perceived disconnect between the public and government-controlled foreign policy decisions. Prior to Putin’s presidency, the issue of Western involvement in the former-Yugoslav areas was a major public focus and cause for domestic concern, as the internal perception of Russia’s diminishing international position evolved into political pressure on Yeltsin. With the growth of domestic wealth and stability, however, concern about external events appears to have dwindled, giving the government more free rein in making decisions. In recent times, such as the conflict in Georgia or further NATO expansion, popular opinion has seemingly converged with government positions to reduce internal pressure on external issues. Although it might be said that with economic concern marginalized, the legacy of public opinion supporting Russian security has survived, which could explain how security is still allowed to trump economic convergence between Russia and the EU even as the threat of actual military contact diminishes.

It seems more and more that the question of public motivation is based around the issues of post-Soviet socialization. While exposure to global (European) issues is important for individual Russians, an examination of institutional educational practices

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186 Sakwa (2002), 359, 363, 372 states that during the Yeltsin presidency, everything from Kosovo to the Kuril Islands spurred heavy public pressure on the government and influenced foreign policy.
should help more in examining the background and perspectives future Russian policymakers are exposed to. On the surface, higher education institutions like MGIMO are pro-Kremlin in policy decisions. This idea is furthered by the appointment of this official to a position at a major state university – that is, placing an important United Russia Party member into a major position of power at one of Russia’s most influential and prestigious foreign policy institutions.

Additionally, it is clear via interaction with students that Russian foreign policy classes do focus on a wide variety of areas. A professor and students at the Asia and Africa Institute of Moscow State University spoke of their areas of study in traditional Soviet states of influence – such as Turkey, the Caucasus, and Central Asian republics. At St. Petersburg State University, students are not only taught about the history of the Leningrad siege by Dr. Nikita Lomagin, but also about Russian foreign policy with a heavy tilt toward examining energy issues and spheres of regional influence.187

Socialization, of course, occurs earlier than these graduate schools but is more focused on instilling the nation’s youth with cultural iconography.188 These graduate students, however, articulated four important beliefs that seem to sum up the influence of popular opinion on Russian foreign policy: (1), they assumed political parties would control news sources, (2) believed in deference to national leaders to solve national problems, (3) a perception of “Moscow” making policy, not Russia as a whole, and (4) that there exist enormous barriers to entry for upper-level educational institutions. While aspects of this, such as deference to national leaders, are not unique to Russia’s situation, the belief in a

187 Interview: Professor, St. Petersburg State University (July 2008) described the courses that he was currently teaching, including a course of foreign policy that focuses on CIS countries and energy resource trade.

188 Russian Author (Interview, 2008) hinted at “cult of culture” references and how classical Russian works firmly reinforces concepts of historical greatness and has a direct impact on future generations.
disempowered public explains the perceived apathy in this first generation of post-Soviet youth.\textsuperscript{189}

Therefore, it may be initially assessed that a lack of plurality in media coverage and socialization means a less informed public. Government control of curricular planning and diminished opposing views of international issues allows an already insulated government apparatus even more disconnection from popular opinion. In combination with a sense of greater stability within Russia, apathy toward international events or pro-Kremlin fervor seems to be the norm for the majority of the population.\textsuperscript{190}

\textit{Case Study – The Four Common Spaces}

When examining the formation of Russian foreign policy toward the EU, it is important to use the existing relationship framework as outlined by both parties in the Common Spaces agreement. Regardless of the future of a reformed Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, an analysis of Russian approaches to each of these four areas demonstrates dominant Russian policy in areas that the government deems important to international relations. In each of these areas we will be able to examine which of the three approaches to foreign policy best describes the overall direction of Russian policy and attempt to explain how Russia forms its positions in order to present itself to Europe and achieve national goals (economic, security, etc.). The use of Common Spaces as a framework for testing policy formation is also important because it shows that while Russian officials prefer to be able to work independently with European states, the

\textsuperscript{189} Interview: Professor and Students, \textit{Moscow State University} (July 2008).
\textsuperscript{190} Carnegie Moscow Center (Interview, 2008) echoes the sentiments that state power has grown as civil society and public relevance has diminished.
Russian government has and continues to adapt to the emergence of an EU-level foreign policy that supersedes existing state-to-state relations on a number of issues. Existing cultural factors are important to this interaction because there is no historical equivalent to the current European project, leaving Russia with either two choices: assume the EU is an attempt to block Russian resurgence in a similar way to NATO, or that it is a completely different organization conceptually and one that can be cooperated with.

This possible enhanced relationship with Europe, however, comes at a price for Russia because many EU provisions and partnership requirements are perceived by officials as a possible restriction on state freedom in international events and causes internal hesitation despite desires to close multiple gaps with Europe. While the cultural and public approaches are dominated by connections to Europe, the power of individuals and the bureaucracy to influence government decisions mean that the direction of foreign policy formation is at the whim of government interests. This disrupts what seems to be an inherent and natural progression of convergence with Europe over a plethora of issues.

However, despite the apparent insulation of the government-centered approach in policy formation, none of the three approaches are isolated from the others. Instead, what exists is a type of continuum that intimately connects and reinforces the ability for further foreign policy insulation on the governmental level. The continuum is: cultural factors build and define government, which dominates and controls the public, a public which reinforces and creates culture – over time building a cultural history that accepts government detachment while retaining the historical connects between (in this case)

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191 MGIMO, United Russia Official (Interview, 2008) and Sakwa (2002), 365-70 explains that Russia has been learning since the late 1990s to take the EU seriously and has not only issued its own policy papers and recommendations in reaction to EU statements, but Moscow has also allowed the power of the Representative to the EU in Brussels to grow.
Europe. Because of this continuum, Russian foreign policy is not necessarily based upon internal perceptions of state strength\textsuperscript{192} (since popular opinion is diminished) but instead on a special linkage between economics and security as perceived by policymakers when referring specifically to Europe. In contrast with earlier discussions of the 2-level, nested game that can affect foreign policy formation, the effect is lessened in non-Western democracies where there is less tradition of public pressure on governing structures on everyday matters and more of a tradition of top-down policymaking.

While the relationship between security and economics may seem fairly obvious in discussions of international relations, what warrants closer inspection is the unique way in which this relationship affects Russian decision-making. There may be no better time to invoke the image of the double-headed eagle as not only a symbol of the Russian state, but of the relationship between it and Europe. With any real threat of physical conflict with Europe eliminated, the EU-Russian relationship has become not only dominated by economic issues, but by regional/periphery security questions – such as joint concern over Iranian or Balkans instability.\textsuperscript{193} While Russia has tended to undermine EU cohesion by targeting CEES security concerns, such as by implying nuclear weapon deployment or the possible cessation of oil and gas flows, EU member states have not been met with the same Russian action as has transpired in the Balkans and toward near-abroad states such as the Ukraine. Instead, situations of agitation

\textsuperscript{192} Tsygankov (2006) and Sakwa (2002), 355 illustrate that by the second-half of Yeltsin’s presidency, even as Primakov had sought to re-align international priorities, the weak state of the Russian economy diminished the ability to promote credible Russian interests abroad.

\textsuperscript{193} Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) spoke briefly of the dangers that Iran faces if it is nuclear and hinted at Western cooperation with Russia in order to solve common regional threats to stability.
between Russia and EU member states (in Poland, the Czech Republic or the Baltic States) have centered on rhetoric and trade issues.

Security, of course, does trump economics in some extremely important state issues, as was seen with the decision to invade Georgia. Based on history with the EU, Russia would have almost certainly been aware of the implications such an act carried, as EU response to both Russian wars in Chechnya demonstrated that European actors would use such military actions to justify suspending trade or partnership agreements. These instances where there is a clear shift from an economics-driven foreign policy to a security-driven one, however, should be seen as a last resort for Russian policymakers, who seek to handle non-European issues separately from their European affairs. Just as Russian policy assumes a decoupling between EU motives/policy and NATO action, Russia may expect the same type of perceived decoupling from the Europeans. In this case, there is the possibility that Russian officials believe that a reliable energy trade and maturing commercial relationship with Europe will allow the EU to decouple from their relationship the Russian need to stay strong in near-abroad issues. There is, though, an understanding of the negative impact that such non-European actions have on their European foreign policy. If, for example, Russian officials had been planning an invasion of Georgia for some time, or knew that such an action would bring with it harsh retribution from the EU, then why would they continue forward with not only the Khanty-Mansiysk Summit, but continue to promote the reform of the PCA, offer ESDP
cooperation with the EU on Chad, or suggest an EU-Russia Council if partnership would inherently evaporate?\textsuperscript{194}

The simple answer to this is Russian oil and European dependence, but this theory has problems. First, why initiate and continue to not only promote ESDP cooperation (which is de-linked from energy security) but also comprehensive cooperation talks when the Russians knew that specific EU member states would demand more regulations of their energy trade?\textsuperscript{195} Second, even if Russia is making more attempts to connect its energy markets to China in order to pave the way for an alternative customer, there are still hundreds of millions of dollars being poured into new pipelines to connect Russia with European customers (Nord and South Stream pipelines, primarily) and any new pipelines to China would take years to complete.\textsuperscript{196} Also, it is well understood within the energy and economic community that Russia is as dependent on Europe for its business as Europe is on Russia for raw energy. While current Russian attempts to reinforce past relationships, such as with Venezuela and Turkey, do illustrate a Kremlin focused on presenting itself as an economy – rather than security – partner, these agreements will also take more time to be executed.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{194} Tanya Mosolova and Dmitry Zhdannikov, “China link guarantees Russia oil exports” (Reuters, September 10, 2008) Russian policymakers know that EU responses can be harsh, Moscow do not know when to anticipate a full European backlash against their actions in Georgia.
\textsuperscript{195} Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008) explained that – when asked what the Czech Republic would want from a reform of the PCA – stated that they would want Russia to agree to follow more international energy norms and trade protocols.
\textsuperscript{196} Former Russian Prime Minister (2008) and Sakwa (2002), 366-8 explains that most trade is guided by geography and history, which reinforces the concept that Europe is not only Russia’s largest training partner, but an inherent economic partner for the future.
\textsuperscript{197} Ann Smolchenko, “Energy partnerships focus for Venezuelan president” (St Petersburg Times, July 25, 2008) and No author, “Turkey warms to Russia” (Reuters, St. Petersburg Times, July 22, 2008) both describe not only how Russia is seeking to renew international partnerships and bolster its energy trade, but that Moscow is actively downplaying any references to past problems or arms exportation to its trade partners.
Thus, the only conceivable answer to this seemingly schizophrenic foreign policy approach is that the relationship between Russia and the EU is maturing. When one looks beyond the problems of the Russia-NATO relationship, it is apparent that economics and security bind these two camps in ways unseen in the US-Russian relationship, and the continued intergovernmental interaction between Russian and EU policymakers has changed the tone in European capitals as well. Thus, just as the double-headed eagle, Russia looks toward the aspirations that Europe offers with one head, and acts in a completely different manner toward a non-European state with the other head. This dichotomy is seemingly embodied in the difference between legalistic Medvedev and ex-KGB Putin; Russia is at a crossroads where has most likely suspected that it could keep action in Georgia separate from its dealings with the EU, and has pursued a foreign policy to meet that goal.\textsuperscript{198} Even if this split approach fails for Russia in the long-run, the following explanatory areas of specific Russian-EU cooperation illustrate how different aspects of the continuum impact the approach used toward the EU and how shifting government tendencies equate to a dynamic overall foreign policy, with the three overarching goal Russian policy goals being sustained.

\textsuperscript{198} Carnegie Moscow Center (Interview, 2008) discusses how the military and political class saw Georgia as a red-line for action and a necessity for acting regardless of international response. This ties into the question of Ukraine, which would also represent a red-line due to its large number of ethnic Russians and essentiality to Russian arms manufacturing; Yulia Latynina, “South Ossetia crisis could be Russia’s chance to defeat siloviki” (Radio Free Europe, August 8, 2008) describes how factors like siloviki control dragged Russia into the conflict in Georgia.
Common Economic Space

Opting out of the EU’s European Neighborhood Policy, the subsequent Common Spaces roadmap between Russia and Europe was focused most heavily around the existing relationship tenants, and sought to increase the area of economic interaction and build a more open trade relationship. In recent times, this common economic space has been the most important facet of the formal relationship and, on the Russian side, is primarily driven by the current European demand for oil and gas. The economic relationship has, though, always been characterized by large amounts of trade (the EU is Russia’s largest trading partner), although the diversification of goods and services crossing borders sharply declined in the early 1990s. In terms of policy formation specific to a proposal for a renewed partnership agreement, Russian officials are quick to point out that they prefer a general agreement and are working with both Brussels and the individual EU member states in order to ensure Russia continues to be a primary energy supplier to Europe and is able to penetrate foreign national markets.

It is here that we first start to see an advancement of the government-centric theory of policy formation as a departure from popular opinion or overriding cultural factors. While Moscow prefers to work with individual European states, Russian leadership understands the cultural factors and history that influences European perception of its neighbor. Specifically citing the bad relationship with former-Warsaw Pact states, the United Russia official described the desire for government policy to

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199 Sakwa (2002), 367-71, Pinder (2002), and (EU2007.de) all confirm that the EU has both historically and currently been Russia’s largest trading partner.

200 MGIMO, United Russia Official (Interview, 2008) cited the Russia-UK relationship as evidence of consistent government-to-government contact and a relationship that extends from Moscow both to the EU level and to the EU member state level.
overcome these cultural differences. Moscow is aware that the continuing existence of a negative perception of Russia will only be a catalyst for European leadership to combine efforts on things like energy policy, making it harder to continue with a “divide and conquer” strategy. Even as a stronger Russia enjoys European actors that “play to them,” Russian leadership is aware of the problems of national exports in areas other than the energy sector and thus continues to work to keep European energy markets fragmented and susceptible to Russian bilateral agreements. As the Russian relationship with China demonstrates, only after interstate security is secured will Russia make these large moves into foreign markets. With the threat of real conflict with EU member states all but eliminated, Russia’s goal continues to be economic modernization; the new Russian economic thinking that emerged after the 1998 ruble crisis leads this trend.

The energy trade demonstrates the ability of economic issues to bring convergence to the relationship. However, there are also other instances of economic uncertainty that drive Russia toward using government-to-government contact in order to further diversify their trade. One is demonstrated by the promotion of joint venture explorations centered on Russian oil supplies. Given the current impediments to energy

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201 MGIMO, United Russia Official (Interview, 2008) cited “Russian history” as causing the majority of problems with EU member states who were once Warsaw Pact members.

202 German Ministry of Economy and Technology (Interview, 2008) and European Investment Bank (Interview, 2008) all argued for a coming unified energy policy in Europe so as to end the ability of Russia to manipulate the trade relationship with individual member states; (Reuters, St. Petersburg Times 2008) discusses Russia’s preference for bilateral energy agreements where Russia has more power to negotiate and set prices.

203 Sakwa (2002), 371 illustrates Russia’s seemingly constant concern with the Chinese border; however (Agence France Presse, St. Petersburg Times 2008) explains how Russia is using legal agreements to diminish security concerns and lay the foundation for further economic cooperation.

204 Carnegie Moscow Center (Interview, 2008) links the diminishment of conflict and the rise of peace to the ability of Russia to begin a major economic maturation; Hirdman (2006) also explains that 1998 “fixed” Russian economic thinking and has been the shock that the economy needed in order to repair itself.
exploration and development, projects like those undertaken by TNK-BP were necessary to reverse the trend of stagnation within Russian internal energy development.\textsuperscript{205} Despite the presence of disagreements in these operations, demonstrated in the TNK-BP case by in-fighting between British and Russian board members, these business matters are eventually resolved through “memorandums of understanding” and technical restructuring of the business associations.\textsuperscript{206} Even though the debate continues over whether the dispute was caused more by technical differences or by personal interest, the outcome demonstrates the extent to which European and Russian businesses view the prospect of continuous business relations and the difficulty involved of decoupling European influence from Russia.

Also, with banking and market uncertainty, Russia is facing an uncertain economic future as uncoordinated internal development is masked by petrodollar income.\textsuperscript{207} As state control of the economy reaches into the range of 30-40%, cultural factors and popular demands are secondary to government-action that will support this large slice of state revenue.\textsuperscript{208} However, security issues tend to reverse this convergence not on cultural or popular opinion pressures, but based on the decision making of current Kremlin leadership.

\textsuperscript{205} No author, “Trouble in the pipeline” (The Economist, May 8, 2008) goes to great lengths to explain the overbearing Russian tax system in place that discourages new oil and gas fields from being explored.\textsuperscript{206} Katya Golubkova and Michael Stott, “Russia: no visa for CEO without contract” (St. Petersburg Times, July 22, 2008) outlines the conflict, while The Scotsman, Martin Flanagan from Sept. 5, 2008 explains the resolution.\textsuperscript{207} Moscow State University (Interview, 2008) showed concern over stability in the banks, while Catherine Belton and Charles Clover, “Moscow shuts down main stock exchange as turmoil sparks steepest fall for a decade” (Financial Times, September 18, 2008) demonstrates Russian market instability, and Carnegie Foundation (Interview, 2008) expressed concern over uncoordinated internal development. It is apparent that concerns over the economy are perceived not only by international news organizations, but also by students within Russia.\textsuperscript{208} European University in St. Petersburg (Interview, 2008) estimated this number based on their own research.
Common Spaces of Freedom, Security, and Justice

Policy formation in this area is based around the Russian desire to ease visa restrictions with EU member states. While from the European perspective, Brussels is supposed to have the lead on visa regime negotiations due to the European Commission’s control of labor market regulations, the recent Czech Republic-United States negotiations over a decrease in visa requirements highlights the willingness of member states to take independent approaches to visa regimes. The official’s colleague, a professor at MGIMO, seemed to indicate a similar approach by Moscow when approaching visa negotiations with the EU over attempts to ensure the free movement of individuals into Schengen Zone states through bilateral agreements. Once again, though, there was a reference to the historical relationship between Russia and its former satellite states, as the United Russia official mentioned that the difficulty of negotiations with the Czech Republic and Bulgaria would impede overall visa regime reform.

The pressure for visa regime reconciliation comes from two of the three perspectives. First, with a growing internal wealth base and a burgeoning middle class, the desire for individual travel abroad has increased. This creates an upward pressure on the Russian government to act to appease this new, more mobile generation of citizens. Second, the Russian government understands that only through successful visa regulation can economic diversification occur. While EU labor would not move east and into Russia, reconciling the visa regime with Europe would create a situation whereby Russia could take the next step and move to re-negotiate and reform its visa regimes with

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209 MGIMO, United Russia Official (Interview, 2008) and Hirdman (2006) echo Russian desires not necessarily to emigrate, but simply to have freedom of travel.
Central Asian states. Access to those Central Asian labor markets are essential to maintaining the Russian economy by providing immigrants who could fill jobs not covered by Russian workers.\textsuperscript{210} Visa reform with the EU is a critical pre-condition to Russian visa reform with other states because Russian economic strategy has continually prioritized securing long-term openness with European markets. Before opening its labor markets to Central Asian immigrants, Russia would want to ensure a stable visa partnership with the West so as to prevent a situation where its labor markets would only be open to smaller economies.\textsuperscript{211}

This aspect of the common spaces emphasizes the importance that commerce has on Russian policy formation, especially since historical failures of Russian economic markets have corresponded with reductions in living standards and political turmoil. However, since EU labor would not travel eastward and into Russian markets, the EU-Russian visa question is less important than Russia focus on ensuring stable visa regimes with other labor markets. The contrast is important because it highlights the difference in Russian approaches between Europe and other neighboring states, and government control and management in order to facilitate both public desires and economic necessities. Because the current political and economic situation in Russia prevent labor being pulled in from Far Eastern states (namely, China), normalizing the visa regime with the EU is a first step in the Russian government feeling comfortable with reforming visa regulations with Central Asian states.\textsuperscript{212} Maybe most important, though, is that this highlights a continued prioritization of European commercial relations over those of ties.

\textsuperscript{210} Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) spoke of the importance of Medvedev placing immigration at the top of his priorities.

\textsuperscript{211} Hirdman (2006)

\textsuperscript{212} Carnegie Moscow Center (Interview, 2008) explains that due to continuing fears of Chinese encroachment in eastern Russia, it is too politically risky to use Chinese immigrants to fill labor demands.
with Asia, as has been seen since the 1990s.\textsuperscript{213} The growing segment of the Russian population holding disapproval of individuals of non-Slavic origin also make it easier to deal with Europeans and focus migration to the West, where there are no apparent ethnic disagreements.\textsuperscript{214} Therefore, this common space is not simply about visa regulation, but about a Russian willingness to set economic priorities with the West rather than the East and ensure the freedom of movement for labor, good and services as a top priority. Once Russia has accomplished this goal, then it may be more secure in opening its markets to more competitive markets in its south and east.

To the United Russia official, immigration does not currently pose a threat to the Russian state. Instead, the main desire is to update, modernize, and mature the economic Russian-EU economic relationship, and thus there has been an importance placed on joining international economic organizations in order to participate on parity with Western economies. While Russia has recently joined other partnership organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Agreement, Russian leadership looks toward more internationally credible groups like the OECD or the WTO for validation of their growing economy.\textsuperscript{215}

\textsuperscript{213} Sakwa (2002), 371-2 explains how Russia has never felt completely comfortable with Eastern partnerships, and has shown a preference for using Russia-China partnerships as leverage against the West.
\textsuperscript{214} SOVA Center (Interview, 2008).
\textsuperscript{215} There are two reasons for this: first, Russia needs acceptance to these organizations to open up market access and prove to the world that it’s capable of handling globalization; second, because Russia has tended to follow Europe’s lead as an indicator of which international memberships are needed to increase state credibility.
Common Space on External Security

This common space called for not only regular meetings with Europe in the framework of established government-to-government mechanisms, but for cooperation to focus on counter-terrorism efforts and joint peacekeeping considerations. This last aspect—peacekeeping cooperation—would seem to be the most visible aspect of the Russian-EU security relationship, especially based on the strengthening of European civilian-military capabilities and Russia’s near-abroad peacekeeping deployments. However, larger security issues—such as the missile defense shield or NATO expansion and Georgian military capabilities—seem to relegate lower level cooperative discussions to the wayside. With a cultural background only really attaching itself to issues of security in the Russian psyche (and not to long-term economic connections), Russian policymakers seem to default to protecting their state rather than promoting economic ties as a first priority when dealing with international relations.

Two specific examples further this illustration of how Russian foreign policy formation in the area of security policy is ambiguous and underdeveloped. The recent Georgia conflict has shed light on the willingness, and Russian acceptance, of the EU as an “honest broker” when attempting to ensure peace in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.216 In conjunction with a Russian acceptance of European partners, the Georgian conflict seems to reinforce the difference in Russian approach to the U.S. and Europe as French President (and holding the current EU presidency) Nicolas Sarkozy’s cease-fire plan was

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216 Nikolaus Von Twickel, “Steinmeier promotes plan for Abkhazia” (St. Petersburg Times, July 22, 2008) describes German proposals to stabilize Abkhazia, along with reaching out for dialogues with Russia, Georgia, and South Ossetia. Other EU action surrounding the Georgian conflict—such as Russia’s willingness to allow EU peacekeepers to join their own forces, and acceptance of Sarkozy’s cease-fire agreement—demonstrate the mediating power that the EU enjoys with Russia.
accepted by both Tbilisi and Moscow, whereas there was less cooperation with U.S. policymakers.\textsuperscript{217}

The previously mentioned example of EU peacekeeping cooperation in Chad demonstrates the successes and failures of presidential-driven policy. While bureaucratic problems would eventually create obstacles to cooperation, the initial agreements demonstrated a Russian willingness to cooperate with the West in a non-near-abroad security question.\textsuperscript{218} The case of Chad, of course, invokes the much larger discussion of Russian cooperation with the EU’s ESDP, and Russia’s objective of securing credibility and respect for their international agenda. The existence of the NATO-Russia Council, and hushed Russia-EU discussions surrounding the formalization for an EU-Russia Council for security cooperation, illustrates a strong Russian desire to keep their European neighbors at the table for a formalized dialogue.\textsuperscript{219} Moscow has continually shown a willingness to keep this type of intergovernmental dialogue open even if their complaints about Western decision making go unanswered; the alternative, a lack of formal dialogue, would collapse Russian objectives of maintaining awareness of their international agenda.

Dr. Nikita Lomagin spoke on a “hierarchy of values” that is exposed within the Russian state during crisis situations; we can see how Moscow uses its control over

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{217} Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) argued that the Georgia conflict was not directly about the West, but about bilateral security issues and personal disputes in policy between Russian and Georgia leaders.
\item \textsuperscript{218} Hirdman (2006) demonstrates that in issues that do not affect the near-abroad, Russia has been more likely to cooperate.
\item \textsuperscript{219} Carnegie Moscow Center (2008) heavily emphasizes the desire by Russia to be consulted and to have Moscow’s agenda and opinion realistically considered by Western partners. Melville and Shakleina (2005), 448, 458-9 explains how Russia uses the NRC and seeks other formal partnerships based on the NRC model of dialogue.
\end{itemize}
foreign policy to pursue several other aspects of external security issues.\textsuperscript{220} Despite an economic relationship with Iran and North Korea, Moscow has shown a willingness to cooperate with the West in a diplomatic approach to preventing nuclear proliferation.\textsuperscript{221} Additionally, Medvedev has vocally reached out for cooperation on the U.S.-proposed/European-based missile shield plan (on the back of Putin’s Azeri counterproposal earlier in 2007), and Moscow has been trading local autonomy for stability – especially in the caucus region – in advance of future events of major international focus, like the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.\textsuperscript{222} With these examples, it is easy to see that when Russia encounters Western security questions, there is a move to cooperate, whereas there is a military response to non-European concerns. In fact, the apparent focusing of Russian security issue to the Caucus removes Russian military engagement from non-near-abroad conflict zones.

\textbf{Common Space on Research, Education, and Culture}

While this common space represents the least visible of the four cooperative areas, the importance comes in a codification of the Russian-European cultural relationship that does not exist between Russia and the Central Asian Republics or China. From the physical representations of the relationship between Europe and Russia to the

\textsuperscript{220} St. Petersburg State University (Interview, 2008).
\textsuperscript{221} Former Russian Prime Minister (Interview, 2008) spoke on the problems and Russian convergence with the West over Iran; and Carnegie Moscow Center (2008) echoed not only the cooperation on Iran, but also the possible essentiality of Russia as a willing partner to stabilize North Korea.\textsuperscript{222} (Russia Today 2008) describes the missile shield question; European University in St. Petersburg (Interview, 2008) touched on the expansion of local autonomy, and Jonathan Gair, “MU faculty offers new perspectives on Russia-Georgia conflict at forum” (The Miami Student, September 9, 2008) reports that Dr. Karen Dawisha spoke on the need for Russia to stabilize the southern region of Russia, especially prior to the Sochi Olympics.
history of art dealers and the collection of European art in the Hermitage and Russian art in the galleries of European cities, to the rhetoric from a Russian official who cannot name the leading author in contemporary Russian history but can describe the historic Western relationship with ease, each instance represents an important guiding facet of Russian foreign policy. The fundamental disconnect, however, is that there is a difference of cultural perception between Europeans and Russians, whereas Russians almost seem content to use new cultural artifacts like movies or mass-produced literature to bask in the numbness of a quasi-open society.\textsuperscript{223} Additionally, perceived differences in demographic subsections, like Russian and European women, mean cultural divisions, while convergence occurs in more discouraged areas, as Russian extremist groups have been seen to model similar European groups.\textsuperscript{224} There is, however, hope as some hope that it is through the common European and Russian bond of technological innovation that a renewed cooperative atmosphere can be fostered.\textsuperscript{225}

\textit{Summarizing Russian Foreign Policy}

It seems fairly obvious that Russia foreign policy continues to be heavily dominated by individuals at the top of government, but who draw heavily upon (and also influence) cultural and public values. The legacy of Putin foreign policy, the policy of pragmatic approaches to all Russia’s neighbors instead of favoring West over East or vice

\textsuperscript{223} Russian Author (Interview, 2008) and Mosfilm (Interview, 2008) discussed the type of people that read or watch movies in Russia.

\textsuperscript{224} Russian Author (Interview, 2008) spoke on the differences between European and Russian women (mainly their reading habits and the great tenacity of Russian women); while SOVA Center (Interview, 2008) explained how Russian hate groups are attempting to model European hate groups in order to boost their own internal power.

\textsuperscript{225} Individuals, such as Roald Sagdeev, see the ability for technology cooperation to lead the way for convergence between the West and Russia.
versa, is continuing under the tenure of Medvedev. This policy, which seeks to equate economic strength with agenda setting power, has used historical connections with the EU to strengthen an existing economic relationship and reduce the threat of military contact. Issues, such as Georgia or arms exports, are downplayed in favor of economic partnerships – this is a coordinated campaign intended to change perception of Russia from one of regional bully toward one of a reliable business partner. While growing wealth has made it easier for Russia to downplay Western influence in its near-abroad, international credibility is still the top priority for those in the Kremlin.

The question remains: does Russia know what to do with these goals once they have achieved them? Just as the problems with the TNK-BP project illustrate, Russian policymakers seem to want their cake and to eat it, too. This foreign policy seeks a redefinition of the state’s perception of itself – a change that is not out of the question for policymaking individuals who have enormous control over media and their own governing hierarchies. In this attempt to be more pragmatic and flexible, Russia relies on international law, formalized dialogues, and their energy strengths to attempt to even the playing field with other international actors. By decoupling security concerns from their relations with the EU, Russia is able to proceed with an economic relationship while downplaying the damage that the conflict with Georgia is beginning to leave not only on the Russian economy, but also on the international psyche. With billions of dollars of trade invested in the relationship with the EU, as well as shared industrial, commercial, and cultural values, this progression Westward seems to be the only viable path for the future of the Russian state – even if that does not coincide with mimicking pro-Western policies.
Conclusions

By now, it is clear that even as the EU and Russia form their foreign policy decisions in much different ways, there is enormous overlap and convergence between the two sides, even though there are still very visible problems that impede their progress. Governed by the PCA, both sides have formed and reformed their policies based on reactions to external and internal variables, as well as the joint economic, security, and political concerns that have caused a centuries old relationship to become one now governed by diplomacy and institutionalized intergovernmental contact. In the end, however, how do we evaluate the intersection of the EU’s variable geometry with Russia’s power pragmatism? On the surface, the comparison of a multinational, multilevel governing structure such as the EU with a single state seems almost like comparing apples and oranges. However, based entirely on organizational priorities we see that both the EU and Russian leaders have forged a strong foundation of cooperation and dialogue as both entities begin to fully grasp their weight and relative positions as international actors in the post-Cold War era.

In general, the normal functioning of the relationship exists through the initiative of the EU – this is easy to see since the governing framework of cooperation, the PCA, is without a doubt an EU-born agreement. Russia, a state which has had to battle economic instability and search for a new national identity after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has largely played a reactive role with regard to EU policy. As a state that promotes multi-polarity, Russian leadership has been keen to encourage EU growth as preferential to the further dominance of NATO and US hegemony. As the EU promotes its values to Russia through public policy declarations and conditional agreements within partnership
treaties, Russia has in turn been eager to use those instances of institutional cooperation and engagement to bargain for increased opportunities with Europe, such as promoting better standards of trade.

As the EU continues to gain experience and credibility as a foreign policy actor, Russia has sat ready to best promote its own interests and opportunities in Europe through its new brand of pragmatism. Whereas sometimes Russia prefers to exploit its relationship with individual member states, when its leadership begins to see closer European foreign policy cohesion then the state has proven adaptable in order to engage the EU directly at Brussels. Obviously, the unitary nature of Russian foreign policy enables it to be quicker in response to Europe than Europe is to Russian action. While the old and new member state divide continues to affect the EU’s relationship with Russia, those states with the most initiative and interest in promoting deep engagement and partnership are finding ways to appease more hesitant states and use internal guarantees to ease concerns by promoting organizational solidarity.

Complicating the EU approach is not just internal divisions, but the growing pluralism of state and international actors that all have their own relations and competing interests with Russia. Even if the most persistent EU member states convince their allies to sign new agreements with Russia, the EU as a whole must then compete with such entities as the US, the UN, the EBRD, and NATO (to name a few) to ensure that their priorities are not only heard above the rest of the crowd, but that those other entities do not promote actions or initiatives that could harm EU-Russian relations.\footnote{US mission to the EBRD (Interview, 2008) explained competition between the European Investment Bank and the EBRD and difficulty of coordination between EU and non-EU entities, further describing the “tensions and frustrations” that exist between Western financial institutions. Melville and Shakliena (2005), 460 echo this: “Europe has a range of other organizations contributing to the general European}
other hand, is in a more reactive position simply because it must first filter through these competing interests and objectives, constantly having to determine which Western objectives may be the most damaging not only in the short-term, but also as a prelude to possible future action.\textsuperscript{227} In this way, Russia has a freer hand to set priorities – picking and choosing what actions it responds to in order to promote its national interests and identity. Since 1992, this choice has largely fallen to security concerns and a real focus on NATO expansion, regional instability and violence, and on responding quickly to initiatives that could upset the regional power balance, such as the US missile shield.

What do we see as the future prospects for this relationship? The entirety of the EU seems to slowly be gaining an understanding of the importance of a stable, non-antagonistic relationship with Russia. Even as the September 2008 Russian-Georgian War seemed to severely upset normal European-Russian diplomatic contact, relations proved to be resilient and regular diplomatic contact was resumed. This is in no small part was fueled by the need to maintain access to Russia’s energy resources, which has slowly begun to bring EU member states together toward a common energy policy in order to prevent bilateral European-Russian dialogues upsetting overall EU cohesion. In terms of security, newer EU member states are also beginning to realize the importance of consulting with their organizational allies before promoting policies that bring undue scrutiny and pressure upon them, such as was seen when the Czech Republic and Poland initially agreed to host components of the US missile shield. Led by the EU3 toward a process. Eventually, the Europeans will have to revise the inventory…with regard to meeting current and future challenges.”

\textsuperscript{227} MGIMO, United Russia Official (Interview, 2008) described that in response to missile shield, the proposal itself was not what caused uproar from the Russians, but that they felt a need to respond to prevent it from being the first of possibly many other Western initiatives that would, in the future, be collectively large enough to restrain the freedom of Russia’s actions.
rapprochement with Russia, the entire organization seems to slowly be learning which methods best promote their values and ensure stability in the region. Russia, on the other hand, is in a less complicated situation. Resolution of the TNK-BP dispute, unprecedented dialogue over logistical cooperation in EU ESDP missions, and the physical relocation of more of its diplomatic staff to Brussels all indicate a continuing desire to engage the EU, not in the least because Russian leadership feels that the EU is the best partner for which to achieve their foreign policy objectives of stabilizing the Russian economy and ensuring a respectable perception of the state in global affairs.

While Russia is quicker to adapt to the EU than the EU is to Russia, helped in no small part by the benefit of summit-level negotiations and the traditional top-down control of the Russian government, there are still many obstacles to be overcome in a state where the general public and government bureaucracy are slowly learning the difference between the EU and other Western entities, such as NATO, who have had rougher histories with Russia. Fueled by common concerns and historical connections, the EU-Russian relationship is steadily growing and will be a major international factor as it continues to mature.
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