

The State as Purpose, the State as Property –

National and Private Interests in the Foreign Policies of Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan

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1. INTRODUCTION

This doctoral dissertation discusses the willingness of political leaders in illiberal democracies to put national interests before private and factional interests in their foreign policy.¹ Thus, the dissertation examines one variety of a fundamental question underlying much of political science: What do politicians want? Are they in office to pursue private and/or factional interests, or are they in office to enhance national interests?

It seems fair to argue that it is a widespread international norm that politicians should use their office to pursue national interests, and not private or factional interest. Further, it also does not seem controversial to claim that this to a considerable extent is actually taking place. In fact, as far as the international behaviour of states is concerned, most of the current theoretical literature in the discipline of International Relations is based upon this assumption. At the same time, it is also known that private and factional interests might at times motivate politicians more powerfully than national interests.

For these reasons, it is an intriguing question what factors make politicians be more motivated by private or national interests. Two alternative answers seem to suggest themselves. Firstly, politicians might pursue national interests because they think that this is what they should do. Thus, they are acting in accordance with the historically developed norm that politicians occupy their positions in order to promote the national interest. Secondly, politicians might pursue the national interest, not because they think they should do this, but because they think that this in the long run also is to the most benefit for themselves or their factions (rational choice). According to some theorists, whose work will be discussed in more detail below, this latter interpretation presupposes an institutional setting that “forces” the politician to pursue national interests – a democracy. A further assumption of these theorists is that most leaders want to stay in power, either because they like power, or because they can exploit their position to promote private or factional interests, or both. For this latter reason

¹ The term “illiberal democracies” is borrowed from Fareed Zakaria. Zakaria defines liberal democracy as a political system characterised not only by free and fair elections, but “also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and also the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion and property”. An illiberal democracy, on the other hand, often has a system in which many of the elements not directly connected with the elections are missing or seriously encroached upon, and where also the elections themselves might not be entirely free and fair, but where they still are regularly held and represent a real possibility for the incumbent not to remain in power. See Fareed Zakaria, “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy”, *Foreign Affairs* (Nov/Dec. 1997), pp. 22-43, and Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom – Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), chapter three, pp.89-118. The types of regimes that Zakaria calls illiberal democracies also go under a lot of other names in the theoretical literature. David Collier and Steven Levitsky claim that there are hundreds of these terms, essentially describing the same phenomenon. For more on this, see David Collier and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation and in Comparative Research”, *World Politics*, Vol.49, No.3 (1997); Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged – The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003).

their first inclination would be to let narrow private and factional interests rather than national interests guide their foreign policy. However, if they do that to a degree that the populations in democracies find unacceptable they will lose the next election. They therefore have an incentive to pursue national interest to a degree that makes them seem patriotic and helps them secure re-election, since that is the only way they can retain the office they need in order to pursue their private and factional interests.

One way to test a hypothesis about politicians pursuing national interests also because of normative pressure would be to look for national interest motivated behaviour in institutional settings that do not force politicians to pursue these interests in order to stay in power. That is what this doctoral project sets out to do. It will look for national interest motivated behaviour in the institutional setting of illiberal democracy, since it is a relatively common assumption that the leaders of such regimes tend to cater to the factional interests of powerful domestic lobbies rather than pursue national interests in order to stay in power. Thus, provided that staying in power is what they want, one should expect their policies, and in this case foreign policies, to reflect factional rather than national interests. If it is possible to point to examples where these politicians pursued policies that were potentially undermining or at least did not contribute to their ambition of continuing to stay in power, that would lend support to the normative thesis.

The next chapter will discuss the history of the norm of pursuing national interests, or as it will be called in that chapter “reason of state”. The term “reason of state” is the precursor to the term “national interest”, and it gradually gave way to the latter term during the second half of the twentieth century.² Emphasis will be given both to how the early spokesmen for the norm saw its relation to specific institutions, and to how this norm came to arrive in Russia. The latter point seems particularly relevant, since all the case studies in this dissertation come from Russia or from areas that have been under Russian control for considerable time (Kazakhstan was gradually put under Russian rule from the 1730s, a process that was completed in the middle of the nineteenth century, and most of Ukraine was under Russian control since the late eighteenth century).

The third chapter will proceed by placing the research question within its current theoretical context. That is, it will explain how the research question is dealt with in various relevant branches of political science theory, and what answers the different theories suggest to this question.

² According to Ole Wæver “It is not a very powerful move for any statesman today to stand up and try to justify an action by “necessity” or ‘reason of state’; they have lost their political standing. That speech act is likely to misfire. Increasingly, as the other terms faded, the burden came on the term ‘interest’ or ‘national interest’ – maybe because of the terminological slide from *raison d’etat* over interests of state to national interests”, see Ole Wæver, “Security: A Conceptual History for International Relations”, paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, 24-27 March 2002, p.41.

The fourth chapter, which precedes the case studies, will discuss the research design and methods employed in the dissertation. After the five case studies, a final chapter will make some general observations on the role of private and factional vs. national interests in the foreign policy of the three countries in question, and also discuss what theoretical inferences can be drawn from the case studies.

2. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE “REASON OF STATE”

”Even tyrannical regimes that rarely or never consult the People attempt to justify their rule by populist claims. The view that the interests of all should determine the ends of the state is commonplace today. We forget that it was once a radical and controversial idea”.

*Christopher W. Morris, 2000*³

One of the assumptions upon which this project rests, is that there exists a historically developed norm that state leaders should put national interests before private and factional interests in their foreign policy. However, before I start to discuss how this norm as a type of motivation for political action relates to other types of motivation, I will briefly elaborate on what is known about the historical development of the norm. This is important, among other reasons, because the question of whether the norm is dependent on certain regime types (democracies) or not in order to be honoured, has been intimately discussed alongside the historical development of the norm. Discussions on the connections between the norm and regime types can be traced back to the first political theorists that argued for the norm.

This chapter will proceed by first describing the origins of the ideas of “the common good” and “reason of state” in Italy, and by depicting the spread of these ideas to other countries. Then, it will discuss the potential discrepancy between the spread of the ideas and the extent to which they were lived up to in practice. Further, the spread of the ideas to Russia will be examined in some detail. And finally, the chapter includes an account of how the ideologues of the ideas of “the common good” and “the reason of state” saw particular institutional settings or types of regimes as necessary for these ideas to be honoured.

³ Christopher W. Morris, “The very idea of popular sovereignty: ‘We the People’ reconsidered”, *Social Philosophy & Policy Foundation*, Vol. 17, No.1 (Winter 2000), p.12.

2.1 Ideological origins

The independent Italian city-states, prior to the Renaissance, were the modern interpretation of both the idea of “the common good” and the idea of “reason of state” originated. In defiance of the papal authority, these city-states had started to set themselves up as independent polities in the eleventh century. The so-called *advice books* for city magistrates are the first evidence in print of the idea that the leader should put the interests of the city as a whole before any private or factional interests. The first known such advice book was the *Oculus Pastoralis*, that was published by an anonymous author c. 1220.⁴

Later, mostly in the thirteenth century, these city-states changed their form of government from elected leadership to hereditary princely rule. However, the idea of the common good survived. The advice books were replaced by the so-called *mirror-for-princes* books, of which Macchiavelli’s *The Prince* is probably the most famous.

It should be noted that the idea of the common good was not an original idea of the authors of the advice books and the mirror-for-princes books. These authors relied heavily on the classics of Greek and Roman philosophy and political thought, and the idea of the common good can be found in the works of both Aristotle and Cicero. Cicero writes that “anyone who looks after the interests of only one part of a citizen body, while neglecting the rest, introduces into the government of a city the most pernicious element of all, namely sedition and discord”.⁵

The Renaissance idea of the common good developed earlier than the idea of the reason of state, and they were connected to different historical developments. Before the advice books, the dominant idea of political legitimacy was the so-called Augustinian assumption that government was God-given.⁶ It was further assumed that the only form this God-given rule could take was hereditary monarchy. The idea of God-given government also naturally gave the papal authority a strong say in the development of the secular polities. Thus, when the Italian city-states tried to rid themselves of both papal authority in secular affairs and of hereditary monarchy at the same time, they were in need of a legitimating concept other than God-given rule. The idea of the common good became that concept.

The reason of state, however, was developed as an idea at the time when these city states largely abandoned elective government in favour of princely rule.⁷ One of the pioneers

⁴ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.11, and Craig Calhoun, “Nationalism and the Public Sphere”, in Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar, eds., *Public and Private in Thought and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p.78.

⁷ The development of the doctrine of “reason of state” was heavily dependent on a change from moral concerns and passions to interests as sources of political legitimacy, for a thorough elaboration of this

of the reason of state idea was Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), who was one of the very first to explicitly use the term.⁸ In Italy there was at that time a widespread feeling that elective government led to too much chaos, and that there was a need for stronger and more permanent government. At the same time, there was little willingness to go back to the idea of God-given government, which could lead to re-subordination to the papal authority. The new princely polities therefore needed an ideology that legitimated their rule without making them servants neither to the wishes and desires of the people nor to Rome.⁹ The “reason of state” idea was useful here.

In these early days, however, the revolutionary idea of the impersonal state had not yet been developed. Macchiavelli at the time came closest to promoting such an idea. He made a clear distinction between *il stato* and those who were in charge of it, but he did not take the next step of seeing the state as an actor in its own right, with interests that cannot be reduced to the interests of the leader. Macchiavelli’s *il stato* is primarily to be understood as the prince’s apparatus of power.¹⁰

The idea of the impersonal state, which implies a clear distinction between the leader and the realm or *stato* that he ruled, became the central topic of the next phase in the development of the “reason of state” ideology. According to Skinner, this development should be attributed to

“those theorists whose aspirations included a desire to legitimise the more absolutist forms of government that began to prevail in Western Europe in the early part of the seventeenth century. It was as a by-product of their arguments, and in particular of their efforts to insist that the powers of government must be something other than the powers of the government under another guise, that the concept of the state as a distinct person and as the seat of sovereignty was finally articulated with full self-consciousness”.¹¹

The foremost of these theorists were Henry Hobbes, Jean Bodin, and later also Samuel Pufendorf.¹²

development, see Jens Bartelson, *A genealogy of sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.154-185.

⁸ Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p.158.

⁹ On the point about independence from the Holy Roman Empire and the use for the “reason of state” concept in France, see Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1994), p.58.

¹⁰ Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p.378.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.395.

¹² On Pufendorf on this point, see *Ibid.*, p.395., and David Saunders and Ian Hunter, “Bringing the state to England: Andrew Tooke’s translation of Samuel Pufendorf’s *De Officio Hominis et Civis*”, *History of Political Thought*, Vol.XXIV, No.2 (Summer 2003), p.222.

The separation of the state from the leader made it possible for the “reason of state idea” to bloom, and according to Maurizio Viroli, the transition of politics from “civil philosophy” to “reason of state” was firmly established in Italy by the end of the sixteenth century.¹³ By that time, the idea had also for some time been spreading to other parts of Europe.

2.2 The export of the ideas from Italy

Skinner writes that both the *stato* concept and the “common good” thinking were imported to Northern Europe in the early decades of the sixteenth century by the Erasmian humanists.¹⁴ However, as already mentioned above in 2.1, this was before the idea of the impersonal state. The latter, which was a necessary precondition for the doctrine of “the reason of state”, spread from Italy to the other European powers at an uneven pace. Kenneth Dyson states that a major reason for the spread of this idea was “a practical concern with state-building and an intellectual interest in *raison d’etat* [that] stemmed from a perceived need for a vigorous response to the combination of enemies abroad with factionalism and the threat of disorder at home”.¹⁵

It seems first to have spread to France, where a clear conception of the state as an agent different from both the leader and the people seems to have developed from about the 1570s.¹⁶ The idea also relatively early arrived in England, where for example Thomas Starkey in his early sixteenth century *Dialogue* makes the same distinction.¹⁷ In England, however, the idea never received the same popularity as it did on the continent.¹⁸

In Spain the idea was established from about the 1650s, and in Germany at bit later. Kenneth Dyson claims that in Germany the term *staat* was considered “a cold and exacting abstraction” until late eighteenth century.¹⁹ However, it is worth noticing that there is substantial evidence that Frederick the Great of Prussia, who ruled from 1740 to 1786, saw himself as a servant of the Prussian state.²⁰ Although the Germans were relatively late developers in this respect, the Germany provinces later produced some of the most radical proponents of the “reason of state” idea – the nineteenth century German *Machtstaat* theorists

¹³ Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State – The acquisition and transformation of the language of politics 1250-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 238.

¹⁴ Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p.373.

¹⁵ Kenneth H.F. Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1980), p.41.

¹⁶ William F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p.45.

¹⁷ Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p.385.

¹⁸ On England as an aberrant case in this respect, see Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, pp.36-44.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.28.

(von Moltke, Clausewitz, and Treitschke). One of these, Heinrich von Treitschke, claimed that the state is “a moral force unto itself”.²¹ The spread to Russia seems to have taken place roughly at the same time as the spread to Germany, but that will be dealt with in more detail below. Skinner claims that the idea of the “reason of state” had become widely accepted in continental Europe by the middle of the eighteenth century.²²

For comparison it might also be interesting to note that the first political thinkers in China to have propagated the idea of the impersonal state were Yan Fu and Wang Jingwei around the turn of the twentieth century. Yan Fu pointed to the Westerners’ loyalty to the impersonal state rather than to its leader, and the nationalist Wang argued that the Chinese monarchical traditions with no distinction between leader and state were an impediment to development of a modern state.²³

2.3 *Theory and practice*

So far, this discussion has been about the spread of the ideas of “the common good” and “reason of state” among intellectuals and to some extent also among political and bureaucratic practitioners. However, the acceptance of an idea at the level of rhetoric does not necessarily imply that this idea henceforth becomes the main motive for political action. Richard Tuck has pointed out that “one of the most striking features of late sixteenth-century European intellectual life is the divorce between an academic moral science, the material of university courses, and the ethical and political attitudes of the people actually involved (even if at some remove) in the business of government”.²⁴ If we compare the works of scholars who have studied the development of the idea of “reason of state” with the works of scholars who have studied the actual behaviour of leaders at approximately the same time, two rather different depictions emerge.

Julia Adams has claimed that contemporary *public choice* theory could find plenty of empirical evidence in the politics of the feudal and early modern states, and that for example nepotism was seen as normal in the Netherlands almost down to the end of the early modern era.²⁵

²¹ Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, p.103.

²² Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p.408.

²³ Lawrence R. Sullivan, “Intellectual and Political Controversies over Authority in China: 1898-1922”, paper found on the Internet at http://www2.eastwestcenter.org/education/culauthasia/ok/papers/p_Sullivan.pdf

²⁴ Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.4.

²⁵ Julia Adams, “Culture in Rational-Choice Theories of State-Formation”, in George Steinmetz, ed., *State/Culture – State-Formation after the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp.101-102, and Julia Adams, “The familial state: Elite family practices and state-making in the early modern Netherlands”, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No.4 (August 1994), p.508.

Oleg Kharkhordin, relying heavily of the work of Pierre Bourdieu, sees the concept of the “reason of state” in very instrumental terms. He argues that this idea has historically been a tool for the leader to control the masses rather than an independent motivation for the leader’s political actions, and that this is often the case also today.²⁶

Other scholars admit that many leaders at some point in time indeed started to care more for the “reason of state” than for private or factional interest, but that this happened much later than the spread of the idea itself. Benno Teschke argues that in 17th-century continental Europe

“the centralization of sovereignty did not entail a separation of public and private realms, of politics and economics, since sovereignty was henceforth personalized by the king, regarding the realm as his patrimonial property”, and that “public policy and a fortiori, foreign policy were not conducted in the name of *raison d’etat* or the national interest, but in the name of dynastic interests”.²⁷

Teschke considers the actually “depersonalised state” a phenomenon of the nineteenth century.²⁸

Although the ideas of “the common good” and later the impersonal state spread relatively early to France, this did not for example stop Louis XIV from engaging in exceptional rent-seeking that had nothing to do with the “common good”.²⁹ Similarly, the Dutch pamphleteer Claudius Civilis wrote of the Netherlands in 1747 that “everyone knows that the quickest way to get rich is to get into government and that is the reason that men pay to get in”.³⁰

Thus, there is plenty of historical evidence that the norm was not honoured, even after the middle of the eighteenth century, the time when the idea had become widely accepted in continental Europe according to Skinner. However, there is also reason to expect that “reason of state” gradually became a motivating factor at least for some politicians, and not just a tool with which to control the masses. It just took a long time to move from the acceptance of an idea to its establishment as a functioning norm for political conduct.

²⁶ Oleg Kharkhordin, “What is the state? The Russian concept of *gosudarstvo* in the European context”, *History and Theory*, Vol.40 (May 2001), pp.227-237, see also Pierre Bourdieu, “Is a Disinterested Act Possible?” in his *Practical Reasons* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), pp. 75-91.

²⁷ Benno Teschke, “Theorizing the Westphalian System of States: International Relations from Absolutism to Capitalism”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No.1, 2002, pp. 9 and 13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.22.

²⁹ On Louis XIV and rent-seeking, see Robert E. Ekelund Jr. and Robert D. Tollison, *Mercantilism as a Rent-Seeking Society – Economic Regulation in Historical Perspective* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1981), pp.74-110.

³⁰ Quoted in Adams, “The familial state...”, p.507.

2.4 The case of Russia

The first traces of “impersonal state” and “common good” thinking in Russia can be found in the reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich (reign 1645-1676). For example, one of his most trusted chancellors, Afanasii Ordyn-Nashchokin, claimed in his writings that he was working not only for the tsar but also for the Russian state.³¹ The second half of the seventeenth century also saw its first Russian equivalent of the Italian authors of *mirror-for-princes* books – Simeon Polotskii. Polotskii was in the business of writing panegyrics to the tsars, and he used this opportunity to carefully give them advice. One of his main points was that the tsars should not only be concerned with their own interests, but also with the well being of their people.³² In 1682, in a new law regulating the system of appointment to public office, Tsar Aleksei for the first time made an explicit reference to “the common good”.³³ According to Liudmila Chernaya, the idea of the impersonal state came as a logical consequence of the “common good” idea in Russia.³⁴

However, it was with Aleksei’s son Peter the Great, that the “reason of state” was introduced as an explicit doctrine. Peter’s best known declaration of this doctrine is his speech to his army before the famous battle of Poltava against the Swedes in 1709:

“Warriors! Here is the hour that will decide the fate of the fatherland. You should think that you are fighting not for Peter, but for the state, entrusted to Peter, for your kin, for fatherland...And know of Peter that he does not care about his life but only that Russia lives in bliss and glory for your well-being”.³⁵

This could of course be brushed aside as pure rhetoric, but according to Oleg Kharkhordin, “commentaries now assume that belief in the common good and service to the fatherland was personally important for Peter I”.³⁶

Peter’s chief reform ideologue was Feofan Prokopevich. Prokopevich’s thinking on leader, state and subjects was very close to the thinking of the Western pro-absolutists such as

³¹ Kharkhordin, “What is the state?...”, p.219.

³² Liudmila Chernaya, “Ot idei sluzhenia gosudariu k idée sluzhenia otchestvu v russkoi obshchestvennoi mysli vtoroi poloviny XVII – nachala XVIII v”, (From the Idea of Serving the Czar to the Idea of Serving the Fatherland in Russian Social Thought of the Second Half of the Seventeenth – Beginning of the Eighteenth Centuries), in A.L. Andreev and K. Kh. Delokarov, eds., *Obshchestvennaia mysl: Issledovaniia i publikatsii, vypusk 1* (Social thought: Investigations and Publications, Issue I), (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), pp.32-33.

³³ Ibid., p.34.

³⁴ Ibid., p.34.

³⁵ Kharkhordin, “What is the state?...”, p.220.

³⁶ Ibid, p.221.

Hobbs and Bodin. In the same way as Hobbs and Bodin, Prokopevich did not want the idea that the Tsar should serve the people rather than himself to lead to a development where the tsar became hostage to the desires of the people. According to Prokopevich, the tsar should do what was best for the state also when the people did not like what he was doing.³⁷

After Peter, Catherine the Great continued to promote the new “reason of state” ideology, and among other actions she commissioned a Russian translation of Pufendorf’s *De Officio Hominis et Civis*, which became part of the curriculum for secondary education in Russia until 1819.³⁸ However, the idea seems not to have penetrated the general Russian population until much later. Oleg Kharkhordin claims that in reality it was not until the Communist takeover that the Russian people came to see the political leader and the state as separate. As evidence of this, he points to Russian popular behaviour and perceptions from the Napoleonic invasion and the Crimean war. The peasantry never took up arms against the invader unless the French troops directly harassed the villages, because they saw the conflict as a quarrel among sovereigns rather than between states, and the majority of Russian soldiers in the Crimean war similarly saw the conflict as taking place between leaders rather than between a foreign state and their own state.³⁹

2.5 *Institutional conditions for the common good and the reason of state*

Thus, the idea of “reason of state” came about as a combination of the ideas of “the common good” and “the impersonal state”. The proponents of “common good” thinking were from the start not just interested in selling their idea, they were also interested in identifying the institutional conditions under which it was most likely to be fulfilled.

Since the origin of the idea of “the common good” was historically tightly connected with the establishment of elective systems of government in the Italian city states, it was stated explicitly by the early theorists that only elective governments could be trusted to work for the common rather than personal and factional good. Bruno Latini wrote in his book *Tresor* from 1266 that only elected officials would work for the *bien commun*.⁴⁰ This argument can also be found in Aristoteles’ writings.⁴¹

It is perhaps more surprising that even Machiavelli claimed that elected leaders would be the ones most likely to promote “the common good”. Despite his general position that princes should allow themselves a free reign in terms of what means they used in order to

³⁷ Chernaia, “Ot idei sluzhenia gosudariu...”, p.38.

³⁸ Oleg Kharkhordin, “What is the state? The Russian concept of *gosudarstvo* in the European context”, p.223.

³⁹ Ibid, pp.225-226.

⁴⁰ Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p.382.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.33.

implement their policies, he nevertheless admitted that “most of the time, the things that benefit a prince harm his city, while the things that benefit the city harm the prince”, and thus elected princes would be the best.⁴²

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the emphasis on elected government was taken further within contractarian constitutionalist theory and Italian republican theory. Both strands of theory, according to Skinner, agreed that “all power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Any individual or group, once granted sovereignty over a community, will tend to promote their own interests at the expense of the common good”.⁴³ Thus, the modern rational-choice-based belief that all politicians will exploit the office for personal profit unless there are institutional incentives preventing them from doing so has solid historical roots.

3. THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND CURRENT THEORY

As stated in the introduction, the research question in this dissertation is to what extent political leaders in illiberal democracies are willing to put national interests before private and factional interests in their foreign policy. The present chapter serves a triple purpose with regard to this research question. Firstly, it presents and discusses the theoretical contributions that will be explicitly employed in the analysis of the cases studies. Secondly, it presents and discusses bodies of theory and works of particular scholars that will not be explicitly used in the case studies, but that have helped to shape the research question. And thirdly, it points to where the theoretical inference that is drawn in the conclusion belongs within current theory on foreign policy.

Kenneth Waltz proposed a distinction among first, second, and third image theories for explaining state behaviour.⁴⁴ First image theories explain state action with reference to individuals (for example *political psychology*). Second image theories explain state action with reference to factors at the national and societal level (for example *bureaucratic politics*). Third image theories explain state action by seeing it as determined by international structures (for example *neo-realism*). My main interest here is in first and second image theories, and more specifically, those first and second image theories that deal with the relationship between private and factional versus national interests.

The first part of this theoretical chapter will discuss different positions within the relatively independent body of political science called *state theory* (second image). State theory is chosen because of all the bodies of theory operating on the second image level, state

⁴² Quoted in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p.151.

⁴³ Quoted in *Ibid*, p.379.

⁴⁴ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), pp. 12-15.

theory is the one that most directly examines the question of whether states, in conducting a certain policy, should be seen as pursuing interests that are the state's own (i.e. cannot be reduced to a mix of societal interests), or as nothing more than an arena for competing private and factional interests.

The second part of the chapter will discuss theory concerning one particular aspect of human purpose: the opposition between narrow self-interest and norm-guided behaviour as motivational factors for the individual. Policy is made by politicians, but what they decide to do is dependent both on their relations with other political actors around them (second image – state theory), and on their own judgements of factors such as what course of action would be the most beneficial to them versus what course of action would be the right action to take (first image – rational choice versus norm-guided behaviour).⁴⁵

Finally, I will investigate to what extent current theory on foreign policy reflects and makes use of insights from the theoretical contributions discussed above, and indicate where the present project fits in.

3.1 *State theory*

There are three main schools of thought within state theory—the Weberian school, the pluralist school, and the Marxist school. The *Weberian* school maintains that the state should be seen as “much more than a mere arena in which social groups make demands and engage in political struggles or compromises”.⁴⁶ This school thus ascribes the state considerable will and initiative of its own.

The *pluralist* school conceives of the state as a place for competition among actors and groups, where the policy outcomes reflect the balance of power among these actors and groups over a particular issue at a particular time. The state is for the pluralists first of all an arena where societal competitors can meet, and its main function is to regulate that competition. The pluralist school therefore does not open for autonomous state interests, initiatives and actions.

The *Marxist* school is close to the pluralist school in that it conceives of the state as a place or an arena rather than as an actor. However, it differs from the pluralist school in focusing on the state as a tool for the economically strongest class (the capitalist class), rather than as an arena for regulated competition among several societal sub-groups.

⁴⁵ For a study of the relevance of *state theory* for third image theories, see John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴⁶ Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research”, in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.8.

These schools can be connected to two logics that James G. March and Johan P. Olsen have described as bases for social action: *the logic of anticipated consequences* and *the logic of appropriateness*. The first means that individuals are “driven by a logic of anticipated consequences and prior preferences”, the second means that individuals are “driven by a logic of appropriateness and senses of identity”.⁴⁷ The first then corresponds to the logic of foreign policy as a tool for promoting the economic interests of the dominant economic groups. The second corresponds to the logic of foreign policy as a tool for furthering the national interest.⁴⁸

The *logic of anticipated consequences* seems to correspond to the pluralist and Marxist perspectives. According to March and Olsen, “Within the consequentialist perspective, politics is seen as aggregating individual preferences into collective actions by some procedures of bargaining, negotiation, coalition formation, and exchange”.⁴⁹ On the level of the nation-state, this means that:

“the coherence and significance of the nation-state in international relations is explained as the result of efforts of political actors to find structures favourable to their individual objectives. The major elements of the nation-state are assumed to thrive because they serve the interests of key actors. The interests of the political actors come first; the interests of the nation-states are derived from them”.⁵⁰

Similarly, *the logic of appropriateness* seems to coincide with the Weberian perspective. March and Olson describe the logic of appropriateness in the following way:

“Human actors are imagined to follow rules that associate particular identities to particular situations, approaching individual opportunities for action by assessing similarities between current identities and choice dilemmas and more general concepts of self and situations. Action involves evoking an identity or role and matching the obligations of that identity or role to a specific situation. The pursuit of purpose is associated with identities more than with interests, and with the selection or rules more than with individual expectations”.⁵¹

⁴⁷ James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, “The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders”, in Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane, and Stephen D. Krasner, eds., *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics* (Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 1999), p.309.

⁴⁸ This should be understood both in the rational choice fashion of neo-realism and neo-liberalism, and in the norm and identity fashion of constructivism. They all have national interests as their point of reference.

⁴⁹ James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, “The Institutional Dynamics...”, p.309.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.311.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.311.

Two questions are of particular importance in state theory. First, to what extent do states have interests of their own that cannot be reduced to societal interests, and second, what degree of autonomy from society do these states have to pursue these interests? The second of these questions can further be divided into a question of willingness and a question of capability. Capability, or as John M. Hobson specifies it, *domestic agential state power*, can be defined as “ability of the state to make domestic or foreign policy as well as shape the domestic realm, free of domestic social-structural requirements or the interests of non-state actors”.⁵² Ability, however, is not the focus of this project. In this dissertation ability is assumed to be present, but exercising it might have negative consequences for the politicians who do so, and the question is then to what extent they are willing to use their ability despite these potential negative consequences.

While state theory is on the second image level, there is also a natural connection to first level theory of individual motivation. Christopher Pierson, in his survey of the field of state theory, characterises the rationalist individualist public choice viewpoint as a statist perspective on state theory. However, this conclusion seems largely based on the normative anti-state side of public choice. As Pierson writes, public choice and other neo-liberal theories see the state as “an increasingly domineering and malign influence, imposing itself upon society”.⁵³ When it comes to the individual motivations of political action, on the other hand, public choice seems to have much more in common with the pluralist and Marxist perspectives. Both these perspectives have a bottom-up theory of preference formation and aggregation, similar to public choice. What finally emerges as the preference of the state on any particular issue, is just an aggregate of the preferences of sub-state actors, individual or collective. Two fathers of public choice, James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, characterise the state as “nothing more than the set of processes, the machine, which allows such collective action to take place”. Collective action is here understood as: “the action of individuals when they choose to accomplish purposes collectively rather than individually”.⁵⁴ The notion of self interest as the only motivation for politicians also when they make decisions on behalf of their state is one of the main canons of public choice.

⁵² Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, p.5.

⁵³ Christopher Pierson, *The Modern State* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.80.

⁵⁴ Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory – A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp.16-17.

3.2 *Individual motivation*

This section will discuss the role of self-interest and national interest as motivational factors for politicians when they make political decisions on behalf of their state. The purpose is not to argue in favour of one or the other of these motivational factors as explanations of political behaviour, but to discuss some main positions in the academic literature on this issue. The section is thus limited to political questions where the individual politicians themselves or the sub-sector(s) of society that they represent have a private stake.

I should rush to point out here that one cannot of course take for granted that self-interest is always in opposition to the national interest. It is perfectly possible to imagine that a politician 100% guided by the norm of pursuing the national interest, could still end up recommending a course of action corresponding to his group's or his personal self-interest. In this case the decision would still be a genuine national interest decision, but it would be difficult empirically to distinguish self-interest from national interest as motives.

I start by defining some main concepts. Then I will present a short overview of the role of rational choice theory in political science. After this historical part I will move to the discussion of the problem itself, by further clarifying the different approaches to self-interest and public interest in the literature and by discussing in some detail how one can identify self-interest vs. public interest motivated behaviour. I will also look into what the relationship between these two kinds of behaviour might look like. Some of the points in this section will be illustrated with examples from Russian foreign policy towards Ukraine, but these examples are not part of the dissertation case studies.

3.2.1 *Norm – role – habitus*

A norm is defined in the *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* as “a standard or rule, regulating behaviour in a social setting”.⁵⁵ In this section I shall understand the three terms “norm”, “role” and “habitus” as increasingly more comprehensive expressions of the same phenomenon. A role can be defined as a coherent set of norms.⁵⁶ According to John B. Thompson, Pierre Bourdieu uses the concept habitus to mean “a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways”, and these dispositions generate “practices, perceptions and attitudes which are regular without being consciously co-ordinated or

⁵⁵ David Jary & Julia Jary, *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* (Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), p.453.

⁵⁶ Donald D. Searing, “Roles, Rules, and Rationality in the New Institutionalism”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol.85, No.4 (December 1991), p.1246.

governed by any rule”.⁵⁷ Put more simply, one could say that habitus is a set of perceptions and expectations that constitute the informal rules of the game. Thus, whereas role is about behaviour driven by considerations of appropriateness limited to the self, habitus is about expectations about behaviour driven by considerations of appropriateness in the social interactions with others.

For the sake of simplicity, I will in this dissertation refer collectively to all the three concepts norm, role and habitus as *norm-guided behaviour*. In addition, norms, roles and habitus should be understood here not as moral but as cognitive categories. By that I mean that they *can* have but *do not need* to have a moral or immoral content. Norms of fashion, for example, are norms without a specific moral or immoral content.

3.2.2 *Self-interest versus national interest*

Self-interest will in this dissertation be understood both as the egoistic interest of individuals, and as the egoistic interests of composite actors that the individuals represent. A composite actor can be defined as “constellations in which the ‘intent’ of intentional action refers to the joint effect of coordinated action expected by the participating individuals”.⁵⁸ Thus, for example, a lobby group representing a particular section of society, a ministry, or a humanitarian non-governmental organisation can all be composite actors.

In principle, any kind of desire or want can constitute a self-interest, but since this dissertation is particularly concerned with the import of rational choice theory from economics into political science, there is a need to narrow down the understanding of self-interest. According to Brian Barry and Douglas W. Rae, interest “always appears to have carried an emphasis on material advantage”.⁵⁹ This, on the other hand, seems too narrow, since one might easily imagine both individual and composite actors who have self-interests which do not necessarily result in material advantage. For example, to have authority can be a self-interest in itself, independent of whether it results in material benefit or not. A ministry for example, might want to increase its influence over policy not necessarily because its wants more staff or resources, but because the individuals within it feel outmanoeuvred by the individuals of another ministry. Self-interest should be understood in this dissertation on the

⁵⁷ John B. Thompson, “Editor’s introduction” to Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p.12.

⁵⁸ Fritz W. Scharpf, *Games Real Actors Play – Actor-Centred Institutionalism in Policy Research* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1997), p.54.

⁵⁹ Brian Barry and Douglas W. Rae, “Political Evaluation”, in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol.1 (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), p.382.

individual level as physical well-being and authority, and on the composite level as economic income and organizational survival, autonomy and growth.⁶⁰

Further, the national interest is not something with an independent existence “out there” which just has to be discovered. The national interest is created, and it is the character of the process of creation itself that determines whether the end product may be called an action motivated by the national interest.

3.2.3 *Arguing and bargaining*

Jon Elster defines arguing and bargaining as two different modes of communication. In arguing, it is the power of the better argument which is decisive, and “the parties are not allowed to appeal to their superior material resources”. Bargaining, on the other hand, is intended to force or induce one’s adversary to agree to one’s assertion. In bargaining the parties will use combinations of threats and promises based on their material and other resources.⁶¹ Bargaining situations are characterised by struggles between sets of pre-communication preferences, whereas in arguing there is a possibility of either adjusting the pre-communication preferences or jointly developing new ones. It seems reasonable to argue that policymaking motivated by self-interest will have a tendency to appear as bargaining situations, whereas policymaking motivated by national interest will have a tendency to appear as arguing situations.⁶² If self-interest is the motive there will be less incentive for engaging in arguing. The actors will be motivated by their self-interests, which they already know. The national interest, on the other hand, since it has no existence of its own, needs a process of arguing in order to be established. That arguing has taken place, however, is no certain indication that national interest was the main motivation. It is perfectly possible to imagine that different influential groups in society engage in arguing to reach a solution which leaves all of them better off without taking the national interest into account.

Consider here the case of the former Russian First Deputy Prime Minister, Oleg Soskovets. In February 1995 Soskovets together with Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk initialled the text of the Russian-Ukrainian Friendship and Cooperation Treaty. In Russia this came to be seen as a sell-out to the Ukrainians. Soskovets had to give concessions

⁶⁰ This point is borrowed from Scharpf, *Games Real Actors Play – Actor-Centred Institutionalism in Policy Research*, p.64. In Scharpf, however, “social recognition” is also included under the self-interest heading. I see this differently, and will return in depth to the issue of “social recognition” in the sections dealing with norm-guided behaviour.

⁶¹ Jon Elster, “Arguing and Bargaining in the Federal Convention and the Assemblée Constituante”, in Raino Malnes and Arild Underdal, eds., *Rationality and Institutions – Essays in honour of Knut Midgaard*, (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1992), p.15.

⁶² Jon Elster, “The market and the forum: three varieties of political theory”, in Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland, eds., *Foundations of Social Choice Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.112-120.

by substantially rescheduling the Ukrainian energy debt payments and officially stating that Crimea was exclusively Ukraine's internal affair, in order to secure the Ukrainian signature. In Russia many felt that a better deal for Russia could have been negotiated if Soskovets had not been in such a hurry.

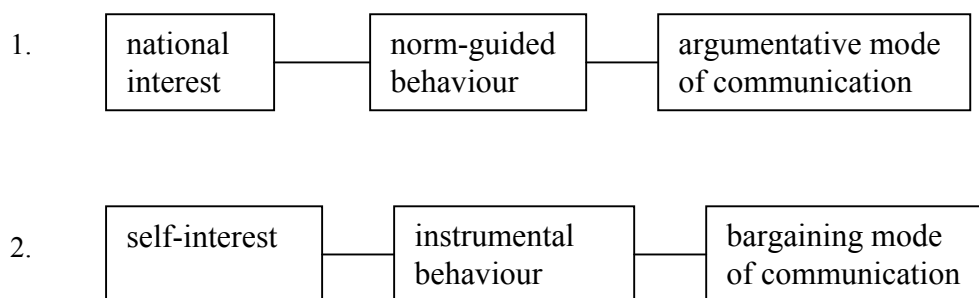
There was in 1995 a permanent struggle for influence over the Russian President Boris Yeltsin between Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin and Soskovets. Chernomyrdin was seen as a representative of the oil and gas lobby, and Soskovets as a representative of the industrial and metallurgical lobbies. This conflict can fairly be characterised as an incessant bargaining situation, where each party continually tried to prevail over the other on a large number of policy issues.

When Soskovets initialled the Russian-Ukrainian treaty, he used the fact that President Yeltsin had entrusted him with the mission to go to Kiev to force his policy through against the will of the oil and gas lobby. His claim was that initialling the deal was worth some delay in the Russian income from oil and gas sale. Soskovets' motives can here be summarized as strengthening his political standing in the Kremlin (individual self-interest); increasing the export potential for the Russian metallurgical industry (group self-interest); and bringing Ukraine and Russia closer together (national interest). Peter Rutland has argued that Soskovets "believed that it was important to preserve Russia's market share in the CIS, even if it meant selling energy to CIS members at less than world prices (and selling to customers who could not pay)".⁶³

Although Soskovets was probably motivated both by self-interest and national interest, it seems fair to say that from a process point of view his decision was not a national interest decision. If Soskovets, Chernomyrdin and other politicians in the leadership with an interest in the topic had gathered and discussed what course of action would lead to the best consequences for Russia, this would have been to act in the national interest. If they had gathered only to discuss how both the metallurgical lobby and the oil and gas lobby could profit the most, this would not have been to act in the national interest even if it was a case of arguing.

⁶³ Peter Rutland, "Oil, Politics, and Foreign policy", in David Stuart Lane, ed., *The Political Economy of Russian Oil* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p.183.

The different concepts discussed so far can be seen to be connected in the following way:



3.2.4 Rational choice in political science

The use of insights from economics in the explanation of political events can be traced back at least to the eighteenth century, but the development of rational choice as a social science program began in the 1950s.⁶⁴ The ideal which motivated the introduction of rational choice theory was to achieve a degree of scientific certainty similar to the one found in the natural sciences. Rational choice theory did not start its rise to prominence until the 1970s. The 1950s and 1960s were dominated by the behavioural revolution, with its inductive approach to science. Theories should be constructed from observing society, and not by deducing logical models in the fashion of rational choice theory. By the end of the 1960s, however, there was a perception within political science that the behavioural revolution had not lived up to the expectations. In addition, there was a feeling that political science lacked the theoretical core which the other social science disciplines had. The ground was therefore prepared for the ascendancy, particularly in the USA, of the rational choice school.

The offensive was led by Professor William Riker from the University of Rochester. In 1990, celebrating the dominance of rational choice in political science, Riker went as far as claiming that rational choice theory in reality represented the only true scientific progress ever made in political science. He wrote that in his opinion the reason why the social sciences had lagged behind the natural sciences in scientific discovery had been that “social science generally – microeconomics excluded – has not been based on rational choice models”.⁶⁵ The primacy of rational choice continued, stronger in the USA than in Europe and other parts of the world, until the mid 1990s.

⁶⁴ Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory– A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p.1.

⁶⁵ William Riker, “Political science and rational choice”, in James E. Alt and Kenneth A. Shepsle, eds., *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.177.

The most serious attack on rational choice theory came in 1994, with the book *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory* by Donald Green and Ian Shapiro. They did not, as other previous opponents, criticise the paradigm for its proclivity towards mathematical models or for the desire to find scientific truth in politics, but basically called attention to what they saw as the rational choice non-confirmation by empirical evidence. Their main argument was that rational choice theorists in general had not been very interested in investigating whether their theories stood the test of empirical verification. Moreover, they concluded that those theories which had been tested had either been disconfirmed or confirmed with ad-hoc additions contradicting the basic premises of rational choice theory.

Today rational choice theory is still a very influential perspective within political science, but it does not enjoy the prominence that it did in the 1980s and early 90s. One non-sympathetic observer of rational choice theory, Jonathan Cohn, argued that

“while the tide may finally be turning against rational choice, it’s hard not to survey the discipline and wonder what damage its proponents have wrought. Graduate students and young professors now assume that fluency in rational choice is a de facto requirement for tenure, and at most schools that may be correct”.⁶⁶

Much of the focus in rational choice has been directed towards why citizens bother about politics at all, such as for example regularly going to the polls to vote. They know that the impact of their single vote is minimal, and there are at least some costs in the process of finding out what the policy of the different parties is and in going to the polling station. This is still a mystery for the rational choice approach. Some attention has also been given to politicians. In particular this rational choice attention has focused on the difference between understanding politicians as *homo economicus* or as *homo sociologicus*.

Public choice and *social choice* are the rational choice schools of theory that have taken the most explicit stance on the self-interest/national interest issue. According to Jon Elster, what characterises both public choice and social choice is that

“they share the conception that the political process is instrumental rather than an end in itself, and the view that the decisive political act is a private rather than a public action, viz. the individual and secret vote. With these usually goes the idea

⁶⁶ Jonathan Cohn, “When did political science forget about politics? Irrational Exuberance”, *The New Republic*, 25 October 1999, p.11, on the Internet at: <http://www.thenewrepublic.com/archive/102599/coverstory102599.html>

that the goal of politics is the optimal compromise between given, and irreducibly opposed, private interests”.⁶⁷

Still, some of the proponents of public choice have come to soften their insistence on politicians as driven only by self-interest. In particular, James Buchanan now admits that “homo economicus does exist in the human psyche along with many other men”.⁶⁸ Still, there seems to have been few attempts by public choice scholars to produce hypotheses about when homo economicus is the decisive man and when not.

The most famous of the theories that have emerged so far of politicians as homo economicus is the theory of business cycles. This theory states that governments will try to expand the economy to create a boom at the end of their term in power, in order to attract votes to win the next elections. However, it has been difficult so far to find conclusive empirical evidence that confirms this theory.⁶⁹

Since rational choice theory started to become popular in political science in the 1970s and 80s, the debate between advocates and opponents has been very much characterised by efforts from both sides to fight for total victory. This does not mean that the two sides have totally denied the existence of respectively norm-guided and instrumental self-interested behaviour. Instead they have tried to solve the theoretical challenge posed by disconfirming behaviour by saying that this in reality is not disconfirming behaviour but just one type of behaviour within their own paradigm. Thus, rational choice scholars have claimed that norms are followed because this is the rational thing to do, and norm theorists have claimed that rational self-interested action is just one among many possible norms.

One example of this latter tendency can be found in the works of Raymond Boudon. He wants to maintain both types of behaviour within a rationality framework by introducing the notions of *cognitive* and *instrumental* rationality.⁷⁰ He describes cognitive rationality as when “an actor does X not because he wants to generate some outcome, but because X is a consequence of the principles he endorses”.⁷¹ It is, nevertheless, difficult to see what this has achieved. Cognitive rationality seems here very similar to the common understanding of a norm, and it seems fair to question what purpose the concept of cognitive rationality can serve that the concept of norm cannot.

⁶⁷ Jon Elster, “The market and the forum...”, p.103.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Lars Udehn, *The Limits of Public Choice – A sociological critique of the economic theory of politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.110.

⁶⁹ Lars Udehn, *The Limits of Public Choice*, pp.65-74, and Leif Helland, “Antony Downs og tilbakekallingsretten”, *Norsk Statsvitenskaplig Tidsskrift*, Vol. 14, No.4, (1998), pp.331-352.

⁷⁰ Raymond Boudon, “The ‘Cognitivist Model’ – A Generalized ‘Rational Choice Model’”, *Rationality and Society*, Vol.8, No.2, (1996), pp.123-150, and Raymond Boudon, “Limitations of Rational Choice Theory”, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.104, No.3, (1998), pp.817-828.

⁷¹ Raymond Boudon, “Limitations of Rational Choice Theory”, p.821.

In spite of this, one could imagine that cognitive rationality refers to a more explicit type of norm-guided behaviour. One could make a distinction between conscious and unconscious norm compliance, where conscious norm compliance would be very close to cognitive rationality.

In practice, however, the attempts to account for all behaviour within one of the theoretical schools have come at the price of destroying some of the attractive parsimony of each paradigm. It might therefore be a better strategy to maintain the paradigms as separate and relatively parsimonious frameworks of explanation, and instead try to identify when and under what circumstances the one or the other has the strongest explanatory power. As Donald Searing puts it: “simply having *homo economicus* do the calculations for *homo sociologicus* will not give us what we need”.⁷² This separation of instrumental self-interest behaviour and norm-guided behaviour is also, according to Robert P. Abelson, supported by findings from experimental research in psychology and social psychology. Abelson writes that “the instrumental orientation [here understood in a purely self-interested sense] can be conceived in part as a mindset that can be explicitly switched on or off”.⁷³

Still, claims that one paradigm is just a particular case of the other are often convincing, because it can be very difficult in practice to establish whether a certain course of action was motivated by a social norm or by rational self-interest. Therefore, before I go on to discuss what the relationship between norm-guided and instrumental self-interested behaviour can look like if they are maintained as separate categories, I will discuss in some more detail the problems of separating the one kind of behaviour from the other.

3.2.5 *The difference between instrumental and norm-guided behaviour*

So far I have argued as if the difference between instrumental and norm-guided behaviour is obvious. This is not necessarily always the case. In relation to the difference between self-interest and national interest motivated behaviour there are at least two types of problems. First, actors might act in accordance with norms, roles or habitus because these are necessary instruments to cope with cognitive overflow. Reality is so complex that the actors may be unable to act unless there is something by which they can structure their understanding of reality. Fritz Sharpf attributes this function to identities. According to him, identities can function for the actors in the way that they “if adhered to will simplify their [the actors’] own choices and which, when communicated and believed, reduce the uncertainty for other

⁷² Donald D. Searing, “Roles, Rules, and Rationality in the New Institutionalism”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 85, No.4 (December 1991), p.1253.

⁷³ Robert P. Abelson, “The Secret Existence of Expressive Behavior“, in Jeffrey Friedman ed., *The Rational Choice Controversy* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1996), p.28.

actors”.⁷⁴ I do not use the concept of identity in this section, but it seems reasonable to argue that it influences behaviour much in the same way as do norms, roles and habitus. This function is not really about self-interest in the way the concept is defined here. Although it is of course in the actor’s self-interest to be capable of social interaction, the enabling function is not directly geared towards material advantage and/or increase in political power.

Second, actors might act in compliance with norms to avoid social disapproval or sanctions from others. Consider again the case of Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets and the mentioned Ukrainian-Russian Friendship Treaty. When Soskovets was reproached for deciding to initial the agreement without following the norm of consulting with other interested actors in the Russian political leadership, he was reproached not only for violating the norm. Those who reproached him saw his act as resulting in material losses for them, and by reproaching him they could at least hope that the reproach would make Soskovets feel uncomfortable with this social disapproval, and that this would make it less likely that he would do something similar again.

It is also likely that actors can act in accordance with norms to avoid self-disapproval. I would like to do A because that will serve my or my groups self-interest, but if I do A instead of B I know I will feel bad about it afterwards. This can also be interpreted in an instrumental way. Norm compliance becomes a function of the size of the gains of doing A versus the expected size of the discomfort inflicted upon oneself by doing A. When acting against norms leads to self-disapproval one can say that the norm has been internalised.⁷⁵

Although both the first and the second points above are different from my definition of behaviour motivated by self-interest, they both seem to have an instrumental side. The first is about the need for norms to enable social interaction, and the second is about the danger of emotional distress as a result of social disapproval. This, according to Cristina Bicchieri, has led some scholars to look upon the functions of norms as a Nash equilibrium,⁷⁶ in which no party has an incentive to defect. In the present context that means that as long as all parties see the norm as efficient in enabling social interaction they will comply with it.

However, for the purpose of this dissertation it does not really matter whether a politician acted in accordance with the national interest norm because of “cognitive overflow”, to avoid social disapproval, or out of genuine concern for the interests of the state. No matter which of these, or what combination of these, was at play, they are all evidence of the causal effect of the norm.

⁷⁴ Fritz W. Scharpf, *Games Real Actors Play*, p.65.

⁷⁵ James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p.243, and Rodney Barker, *Legitimizing Identities – The Self-Preservation of Leaders and Subjects* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷⁶ Cristina Bicchieri, “Learning to cooperate” in Cristina Bicchieri, Richard Jeffrey and Brian Skyrms, eds., *The Dynamics of Norms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.24.

3.2.6 Norm-guided behaviour “look-alikes”

One can also imagine modes of behaviour which look as if they are guided by the national interest norm, but which in reality are not. They are modes of behaviour motivated by self-interest but in the disguise of national interest.

First, politicians might explicitly invoke the norm of national interest to rationalize self-interest. This is the “what is good for General Motors is good for America” effect. Since it is illegitimate to argue for a certain kind of national policy with reference to what is best only for oneself, political actors will have to argue as if they had the national interest in mind even when they did not. This is probably the most common look-alike of norm-guided behaviour. It will often be difficult to distinguish between invocation of the national interest for self-interested action and genuine national interest. One way of doing so could be to look at policymaking over time on the same issue to see if the politician(s) in question maintain(s) coherence in defending the national interest position also when it entails losses for their self-interest.

Consider here the example of the Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov. In 1994 President Yeltsin and his political confidants in the Kremlin started to fear that Luzhkov could really become a dangerous competitor in the 1996 presidential elections. According to the *Financial Times* correspondent Chrystia Freeland, Yuri Luzhkov and his partner, the media magnate Vladimir Gusinsky, had become public enemies number one and two in the inner Kremlin circles.⁷⁷ Luzhkov had acquired an image as a very successful administrator as the Mayor of Moscow, and had access to sympathetic media outlets thanks to his cooperation with Gusinsky. Nonetheless, he also needed a patriotic image in addition to the good administrator image. He therefore wanted to promote himself on an issue where he could appeal to a Russian self-image of pride and glory. He chose the Crimean peninsula. Crimea is part of Ukraine, but was for most of the time from 1783 to 1948 part of first Russia and then later the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic inside the Soviet Union.

Luzhkov started his crusade to “save” Crimea, and especially the city of Sevastopol, from the Ukrainians, in early 1995. At the signing of an agreement on cooperation between Moscow and Sevastopol on 12 January 1995, Luzhkov said that by this agreement Sevastopol was given the status as the 11th prefect district of Moscow. He later used every opportunity to raise the issue of Sevastopol, and even managed to persuade the Russian Federation Council in December 1996 to pass a declaration stating that the city was Russian and not Ukrainian territory. This activity could of course be an expression of a genuine concern for Sevastopol,

⁷⁷ Chrystia Freeland, *Sale of the Century – The Inside Story of the Second Russian Revolution* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), p.152.

Crimea and the identity of the Russian state (national interest), and not just a political card Luzhkov was playing in the Russian domestic power struggle. However, an October 1998 press release from the Sevastopol city administration is indicative of Luzhkov not exactly lying sleepless at night worrying over Sevastopol. The Sevastopol City administration that signed the agreement with Luzhkov in 1995 stated that “the declarations of the Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, on friendship and cooperation are a reality only on paper”.⁷⁸ Whether or not the Sevastopol City administration had good reason to be disappointed is of course difficult to judge, but the example does point to the obvious conclusion that invocation of the national interest is not a sufficient condition for concluding that concern for the national interest is also the real reason for the policy chosen.

Second, the norm of acting in the service of the national interest can be an “ultra-subtle expression of self interest”.⁷⁹ This point is similar to the main argument of structural Marxist theories of the state. The structural Marxists follow the instrumental Marxists in saying that the state is nothing but a tool in the hands of the dominant class, but in contrast to the instrumental Marxists they admit that the state still may sometimes make decisions in defiance of the interests of the dominant class. This happens because the dominant class will have a tendency to be preoccupied with short-term gains, and this may be detrimental to the political system of the state in the longer term. It is therefore in the long-term interest of the dominant class to forfeit some short term gains in order to maintain the political system on which it depends. This idea presupposes that the status quo works to the advantage of the dominant class. Action in the service of the national interest that is motivated by an “ultra-subtle expression of self interest” seems very difficult to distinguish empirically from genuine service of the national interest. Steven Krasner tried to do this in an analysis of the connections between US raw materials investments and foreign policy, but had to admit that this was extremely difficult.⁸⁰ It might, however, be that focus on the process by which the decision came about in addition to a focus on the decision itself, can reveal some of the difference between these two types of motivation.

3.2.7 *Sometimes norm-guided and sometimes instrumentally self-interested*

Those who develop theory along the lines that actions are sometimes norm-guided and sometimes instrumentally self-interested, generally use empirical observations as the basis for

⁷⁸ Mikhail Pirozhuk, “Realnaya ozabochennost moskovskogo mera Sevastopolem” (The real worry of the Moscow mayor of Sevastopol), *Den*, 4 November 1998.

⁷⁹ Jon Elster, “Social Norms and Economic Theory”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol.3, No.4, (1989), p.105.

⁸⁰ Stephen D. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest – Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), p.6.

their rejecting the view that only one of the two types of behaviour is real. That is one way of doing it, but it can also be done theoretically. Jennifer Roback Morse has suggested a distinction between the calculating and the reflective person. According to her, the ability to step back and reflect upon our own actions and values is “the process that makes us most fully human”.⁸¹ If humans have the capacity to step back and analyse their own actions in terms of norms and self-interest, then they should also be able to go back and forth between them. Morse’s point is that rational choice theory tends to view humans as “pure stimulus-response machines”.⁸² Though the article in question is only about rational choice theory, much of the same could probably also be said about much of the literature on norms and roles. In parts of this literature there is little room left for humans to reflect upon the norms they follow and the roles they enact. Thus, the human capacity to reflect can be taken as an argument for finding out in which situations each of the two different types of behaviour have the best explanatory power and how they interact, rather than fight over which type is the best in explaining behaviour.

Those who have tried to carve out separate fields for rational choice and norm-guided behaviour can be divided into two categories. With the terminology of John Ferejohn we can distinguish them as those that are concerned with either “thin” or “thick” rationality. Ferejohn describes the difference between “thin” and “thick” rationality as follows:

“In what I call a ‘thin-rational’ account, the theorist assumes only that agents are (instrumentally) rational, that they efficiently employ the means available to pursue their ends. In a ‘thick-rational’ account, the analyst posits not only rationality but some additional description of agent preferences and beliefs. Thick-rational choice theorists generally assume that agents in a wide variety of situations value the same sorts of things: for example, wealth, income, or the perquisites of office”.⁸³

The case studies in this dissertation are concerned with ‘thick’ rationality.

The efforts by some rational choice theorists to define when rational choice can be expected to have high explanatory power and when not is referred to by Green and Shapiro as *segmented universalism*.⁸⁴ A number of hypotheses have been proposed within this trend. Satz and Ferejohn have postulated that “rational choice explanations are more plausible in settings in which individual action is severely constrained; Shumpeter and Green have

⁸¹ Jennifer Morse, “Who is Rational Economic Man?”, *Social Philosophy & Policy*, Vol.14, No.1, (1997), pp.182-184.

⁸² Ibid. p.182.

⁸³ John Ferejohn, “Rationality in Interpretation: Parliamentary Elections in Early Stuart England” in Kristen Renwick Monroe, ed., *The Economic Approach to Politics* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1991), p.282.

⁸⁴ Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice*, pp.27-28.

postulated that rational choice is likely to be more successful in the domains that are most similar to economics; and Maoz has postulated that rational choice is strongest in situations that do not involve extremely high or extremely low levels of stress.⁸⁵ Stanley Kelley Jr. has further suggested that rational choice is likely to have the strongest explanatory power when goals are uncomplicated for agents; when the knowledge of how to achieve them is widely known; in repeated similar choice situations; when the agent cares a lot about the issue at hand; and in “situations that reward choices of efficient means”.⁸⁶

One way to illustrate the relationship between rational choice and norms in “thick” rationality is to use Jon Elster’s two-filter-model. This is the approach adopted by Adrienne Windhoff-Héritier. In using this model she sees political action as being determined in the first filter by structures and rules (norm-guided), and in the second filter by self-interest and strategic decisions. According to Windhoff-Héritier, “institutional structures and rules are rarely ever deterministic, in the sense that they shape behaviour fully. Instead they convey general orientations for action, they open “Gestaltungskorridore”, leaving room for self-interest and strategic decisions”.⁸⁷ At least three problems can be identified in this approach. First, it seems to exclude that self-interest can ever override structures and rules. This, however, obviously happens. Otherwise we would for example have no political corruption. Second, Windhoff-Héritier seems to agree with public choice in that politicians at heart are always motivated by self-interest. The problem is just that there are so many structures and rules having an impact on them that the final decision ends up different from what self-interest motivates them to do. Third, Windhoff-Héritier seems to exclude the possibility that political behaviour can be both norm-guided and strategic.

Finally, it needs to be pointed out that the norm to put national interests before private and factional interests should not be understood as a moral mechanism. It is a social and not a moral norm. As pointed out by Elizabeth Anderson: “A social norm is a standard of behaviour shared by a social group, commonly understood by its members as authoritative or obligatory for them. Social norms differ from moral norms: they need not have a moral content or be viewed as morally obligatory (consider norms of fashion)”.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice*, p.27.

⁸⁶ Stanley Kelley Jr., “The Promise and Limitations of Rational Choice Theory”, in Jeffrey Friedman, ed., *The Rational Choice Controversy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p.101.

⁸⁷ Adrienne Windhoff-Héritier, “Institutions, Interests and Political Choice”, in Roland D. Czada and Adrienne Windhoff-Héritier, eds., *Political Choice – Institutions, Rules, and the Limits of Rationality* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1991), p.41.

⁸⁸ Elisabeth Anderson, “Beyond Homo Economicus: New Developments in Theories of Social Norms”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol.29, No.2 (2000), p.170.

3.2.8 *Neither norms nor rationality*

So far I have argued as if norms and rational calculations were the only possible causes for action. There are, however, also a large number of causes that can be called idiosyncratic causes, such as for example emotions, misinterpretations, standard operating procedures, or simply bad health.⁸⁹ Many such causes might have had an impact on the outcomes that I discuss in the case studies. Such causes, however, have not been in focus in this project. Thus, the case studies should not be seen as attempts at exhaustive explorations of the various motives of the different leaders in the five cases. More narrowly, they should be seen as explorations of the contradiction between on the one hand self-interested pursuit of private and factional interests and on the other hand normatively inspired defence of national interests in these leaders' foreign policy. It seems, however, reasonable to claim that it will be established through the detailed examination of the empirical material that the contradiction between self-interest and national interests was at the heart of each of these cases and observations.

3.3 *State theory, individual motivation, and theory on foreign policy*

“A significant difference exists between goals meant primarily to serve the nation as a state or territorial entity and goals that are of prime interest to individual citizens or groups of citizens in their private capacity. If the latter benefit the nation as a whole, this can only be in an indirect fashion”

*Arnold Wolfers 1962*⁹⁰

3.3.1 *State theory and foreign policy*

It is fairly uncontroversial that state-society relations have an impact on the state's domestic policy. It has, however, been a fairly widespread conviction among IR and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) scholars that this is the case to a much smaller extent in foreign policy. This view is most pronounced within the neo-realist and neo-liberalist schools, but also prominent

⁸⁹ Dmytro Vydrin for example has pointed out how Leonid Kuchma has tried to rule Ukraine according to the same management principles he used to rule his rocket-building plant before he became President. See Dmytro Vydrin, “Epokha presidenta Kuchmy (I nemogo posle)” (The Kuchma presidential era – and a little bit after that), *Zerkalo Nedely*, No.37, 27 September – 3 October 2003.

⁹⁰ Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), p.77.

scholars of the constructivist school share this conviction.⁹¹ J.P. Nettle, a leading theorist dealing with state theory, and one of the few that have taken an interest in foreign policy, has conceded to the same view.⁹² If this was the case, there would be little reason to consult state theory in order to understand the foreign behaviour of states better. The postulation that state-society relations are of minor importance for foreign policy, however, can be questioned.

A number of scholars have suggested that there are indeed potential benefits for foreign policy analysis in using insights from state theory.⁹³ Brian White points out that there are two related types of work on the state that FPA could benefit from.⁹⁴ One is to typologise states and relate behaviour to the different types. *Democratic peace* theory—that democracies do not go to war against other democracies—is probably the most famous of these. The other type of work takes as its point of departure that the nature of the state as a political entity is poorly understood, and tries to remedy this. This dissertation falls within this second trend.

Although these scholars' concern with *state theory* indicates an unused potential for the improvement of foreign policy analysis, it is important to point out that *state theory* is not a total stranger to foreign policy analysis. Two works stand out as particularly important in this respect: the 1978 book *Defending the National Interest – Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* by Stephen Krasner, and the widely quoted 1997 article *Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics* by Andrew Moravcsik. These works stand out because they take very clear and diametrically opposed stands on the question of where to locate the sources of a state's foreign policy preferences. Krasner defends a Weberian understanding of the state. In the introduction he writes that the whole book is based on one fundamental assumption: "...that it is useful to conceive of a state as a set of roles and institutions having peculiar drives, compulsions, and aims of their own that are separate and distinct from the interests of any particular societal group".⁹⁵ In stark contrast to Krasner, Moravcsik claims that states (or other political institutions) "represent some subset of domestic society, on the basis of whose interests state officials define state

⁹¹ Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics", *International Security*, Vol.20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), p.72.

⁹² J.P. Nettle, "The State as a Conceptual Variable", *World Politics*, Vol.20 (1968), pp.563-564.

⁹³ See Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1994), pp.74-93; Bruce E. Moon, "The State in Foreign and Domestic Policy", in Laura Neack, Jeanne A.K. Hey, and Patric J. Haney, eds., *Foreign Policy Analysis-Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995), pp.187-200; Brian White, "The European Challenge to Foreign Policy Analysis", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 5, No.1 (1999), p.54; and Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 193-245.

⁹⁴ Brian White, "The European Challenge to Foreign Policy Analysis", pp.54-55.

⁹⁵ Stephen D. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest*, p.10.

preferences and act purposively in world politics”.⁹⁶ Moravcsik thus argues for an exclusively society-centred (pluralist and/or Marxist) understanding of the state.

While the two above cited works take state theory as their explicit point of departure, they also represent two distinguishable trends in the theory of foreign policy analysis that argue for positions very close to either the statist or the pluralist/Marxist positions within state theory.

3.3.2 *Theory based on statist foundations*

The most voluminous body of theory about states’ foreign behaviour, the systemic IR theories, fall squarely within the *statist* perspective. This is in particular true for Realism, but also the main theorists within Liberalism and Constructivism mostly operate from *statist* presumptions.⁹⁷ The question of whether state leaders are motivated by the national interest or not, is seldom discussed in the works of theorists within these different schools, but rather comes as a logical consequence of their unitary actor perspective. Thus, national interest motivation is basically taken for granted.

Realism makes assumptions about objective state interests such as power and wealth, and then assumes that state leaders most of the time will pursue these interests for the benefit of their states. Constructivism, on the other hand, sees identities and ideas rather than objective interests as the main motivators of states’ foreign behaviour. Adherents of constructivist theory admit that interests might play a motivating role, but claim that they are logically second to identities. They also locate the sources of state identities’ in their interaction with other states. This latter point has been criticized by Bill McSweeney, who points out that domestic societal interests might equally well be sources of states’ identities in the international system – “we are who we want to be”.⁹⁸ McSweeney thus links constructivist theory to domestic societal factors, and therefore to state theory.

One exception in terms of taking the pursuit of national interests for granted is the constructivist Aleksander Wendt. Wendt devotes an entire chapter in his *Social Theory of International Politics* to the problem of corporate agency, and the problem of national versus

⁹⁶ Andrew Moravcsik, “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol.51, No.4 (Autumn 1997), p.518.

⁹⁷ On Realism and the *statist perspective*, see David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson, “Establishing the Limits of State Autonomy – Contending Approaches to the Study of State-Society Relations and Foreign Policy-Making” in David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson, eds., *The Limits of State Autonomy – Societal Groups and Foreign Policy Formulation*, (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1993), pp.1-22, and Richard Little, “The growing relevance of pluralism?”, in Steve Smith, Ken Booth & Marysia Zalewski, eds., *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.66-86. One major exception within the Liberalist school is the article by Moravcsik discussed above.

⁹⁸ Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.127.

private and factional preferences is explicitly discussed within that chapter. Wendt defends the statist perspective, among other reasons because systemic theories are theories about systemic outcomes and not theories about why one state acted in one particular way in one particular circumstance. However, he specifically mentions the usefulness of pluralism in “exploring the extent to which foreign behaviour is affected by domestic politics”.⁹⁹

In addition to the systemic theories, there are also a number of individual level theories about foreign policy that take the statist perspective for granted, including among others: cognitive and psychological approaches; the non-systemic variety of constructivism; discursive approaches; and group-think.¹⁰⁰

3.3.3 Theory based on pluralist foundations

The theorists discussed in the following section can with a generic term be labelled *pluralist theorists* of foreign policy analysis. In addition to the previously discussed contribution by Moravcsic, which can be characterised as part of a “Structural Liberal” theory of international politics explicitly based on a pluralist understanding of the state, the most voluminous body of theory that depart from the national interests focus is the bureaucratic politics paradigm.¹⁰¹ The most prominent study here is Graham Allison’s *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* from 1971, which Allison relaunched in a new edition together with Philip Zelikow in 1999.¹⁰² Similar to the systemic theories, the *bureaucratic politics* perspective to a very little extent discusses the relationship between national and private and factional interests. While the systemic theories take for granted that politicians are motivated by national interests, most research within *bureaucratic politics* seem to take for granted that politicians are motivated mostly by private and factional interests. So much so, that Eric Stern and Bertjan Verbeek, in an article surveying the development of *bureaucratic politics*, point to the too firm rooting of *bureaucratic politics* in

⁹⁹ Aleksander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p.200.

¹⁰⁰ For an overview, see Walter Carlsnaes, “Foreign Policy” in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2002), pp.331-349. For examples on cognitive and psychological approaches see Donald A. Sylvan and James F. Voss, eds., *Problem Representation in Foreign Policy Decision-making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Yaacov Y.I. Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds – Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); on constructivism in foreign policy analysis see Vendulka Kubalkova ed., *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2001); on discursive approaches, see several contributions to Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman, eds., *Post-Realism – The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996); on group think the most well-known study is Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).

¹⁰¹ The point on a “Structural Liberal” theory is taken from Aleksander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p.200.

¹⁰² Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision – Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, 1999).

public choice and the resulting inability “to move beyond the distributional struggle”.¹⁰³ This criticism, however, is not true for all research within bureaucratic politics.

The “where you stand depends of where you sit” axiom seems to underpin most *bureaucratic politics* research, but this axiom does not necessarily presuppose private or factional interests as motivation. Some *bureaucratic politics* research points to the bargaining among governmental agencies to promote their perception of the national interest, but where this perception comes from the particular perspective on national interests that any one agency develops as a natural result of this particular agency’s functions. The defence ministry might come to see national interests different from the foreign ministry, even if both are motivated by national interests, simply because they have different functions in the state apparatus.¹⁰⁴ Here, the bureaucratic infighting is not the result of clashing parochial interests but of clashing world views.

Skidmore and Hudson have pointed out that what is missing in *bureaucratic politics* is more focus on “how state decision-makers either cooperate with, resist, or compromise with such [interest] groups”.¹⁰⁵ This is where the present project fits in. Thus, what is to be explained is not the activity of domestic governmental and non-governmental actors in trying to put pressure on the decision-makers based on their parochial interests, but instead what the decision-makers themselves do when they are faced with this pressure.

A number of scholars have tried to develop testable hypotheses on this issue. Douglas van Bell, squarely within the *rational choice* school, has proposed a number of hypotheses based on the assumption that decision-makers make foreign policy decisions based on calculations about how different courses of action will affect their standing among powerful domestic groups, and found support for his hypotheses in a number of case studies from US foreign policy (Panama and Grenada invasions).¹⁰⁶

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and James Lee Ray share van Bell’s assumption about decision-makers basically being motivated by the desire to secure their domestic political standing, also in making decisions on foreign policy, but they make a distinction between democratic and non-democratic regimes in this regard. Bueno De Mesquita and Ray argue that leaders in semi-democratic or authoritarian regimes are more likely than leaders in democratic regimes to let their foreign-policy decisions be influenced by groups that are important for their domestic political standing

¹⁰³ Eric Stern and Bertjan Verbeek, “Conclusions: Toward a Neopluralist Approach to Bureau-Governmental Politics”, *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol.42, No.2 (November 1998), p.242.

¹⁰⁴ On this point, see Brian Ripley, “Cognition, Culture, and Bureaucratic Politics”, in Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey and Patrick J. Haney, eds., *Foreign Policy Analysis – Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995), p.88.

¹⁰⁵ David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson, “Establishing the Limits of State Autonomy...”, p.5.

¹⁰⁶ See Douglas van Bell, “Domestic Imperatives and Rational Models of Foreign Policy Decision Making”, in David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson, eds., *The Limits of State Autonomy*, pp. 151-183.

“Democratic leaders tend to be deposed or retained primarily in response to their performance in producing public goods, the type of good on which the absolute size of their winning coalitions, as well as large size of those coalitions relative to the selectorates in such systems, leads them to focus. Autocratic leaders are retained or deposed, in contrast, primarily on the basis of their provision of private goods that are able to purchase the loyalty of their winning coalitions, which are relatively small both in absolute terms and relative to the size of the selectorates.”¹⁰⁷

Steven R. David has developed a slightly different perspective on the relationship between the private interests of leaders and foreign policy. In his theory on alignment patterns in the Third World, similarly to pluralist scholars, he largely discards national interests as main motivators. However, in contrast to most pluralists he focuses not on domestic but on foreign sources of power whose help is needed in order for politicians to stay in power.¹⁰⁸

The present dissertation seeks to investigate the theoretical propositions discussed above, and study whether leaders of illiberal democracies let pressure groups have it their way in foreign policy in order for these politicians to stay in power, or if they are willing to defy the pressure from these groups in order to pursue what they perceive to be the national interest.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 *The relationship between theory and data*

To clarify the relationship between theory and data it is necessary to define what the chosen cases are cases of. Charles C. Ragin argues that this can be done by an operation he calls “casing”. According to Ragin: “In short, the continuous web of human social life must be sliced and diced in a way compatible with the goal of testing the generality of theoretical ideas, and comparable objects of research must be established so that boundaries can be placed around measurement operations”.¹⁰⁹ In practice this can be done through a sequence of

¹⁰⁷ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita & James Lee Ray, “The National Interest Versus Individual Ambition: Two Level Games and International Conflict”, paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 30 August–2 September 2001, p.14.

¹⁰⁸ See Steven R. David, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1991) and Steven R. David, “Explaining Third World Alignment”, *World Politics*, Vol.43, No.2 (1991), pp.233-257.

¹⁰⁹ Charles C. Ragin, “Casing and the process of social inquiry”, in Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds., *What is a Case?- Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.219.

several steps, where the researcher gradually narrows down the scope of the universe for which the theoretical findings are supposed to be valid. For my project the “casing” looks like this:

First casing: Foreign policy questions where the leader faces pressure from domestic collective societal actors who have foreign policy preferences,

Second casing: where disregard of these preferences might lead to defections from the leader’s winning coalition which in turn diminishes his current and future power to rule and/or win the next elections,

Third casing: in countries characterised by illiberal democracy.

A possible fourth casing could have been to narrow down the scope to foreign policy at one particular level. Charles F. Herman has developed a typology of four different levels of foreign policy change: adjustment change; program change; problem/goal change; and international orientation change.¹¹⁰ To choose, for example, instances only at the level of adjustment change would have been a possible fourth casing. However, I have chosen not to do this. This would have put restrictions on my case selection making it hard to find cases with enough available empirical evidence. Besides, selecting cases at different levels of foreign policy decision-making gives an opportunity to study whether the level of foreign policy decisions itself can be a potential posterior variable having an effect on the willingness to defy domestic pressure groups. One major problem in this process-tracing is what philosophers call the “Other mind” problem, which refers to the difficulty of uncovering another person’s true motives for a certain course of action. This is a problem that cannot be fully solved, because one cannot access another person’s mind by anything else than inference. There is, however, reason to believe that one can come some way by inference, and that it therefore is a worthwhile effort.¹¹¹

4.2 *Method of comparison*

This study is comparative. My method of comparison is close to what John Stuart Mill called the method of concomitant variation. According to James Mahoney, this method is

¹¹⁰C.F Herman, “Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (March 1990), p.5.

¹¹¹ For more on this, see Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.171-176.

based on ordinal comparison, and the focus is “*the degree to which a given phenomenon is present*”.¹¹² The phenomenon in question here is *the degree to which* the leaders in the different case studies are willing to disregard pressure from interest groups in order to pursue what they consider to be in the national interest. Mahoney goes on to say that “scholars who use this method assess causality by exploring the co-variation between ordinal scores on an explanatory variable and an outcome variable”.¹¹³ In the present dissertation, the explanatory variable can be defined as *willingness on behalf of the leader to disregard factional pressure even when this can have negative consequences for his ability to rule and to continue to stay in power*, and the outcome variable can be defined as *degree to which the actually implemented foreign policy reflects national interest thinking versus being nothing more than an accumulation of factional and private interests*.

There are three main reasons for this choice of method. First, my variables are at the ordinal level in the sense that I analyse the degree of statist and societal preferences and not the presence or absence of such preferences. Mill’s other two methods often used in comparative studies with small *N*’s are the method of agreement and the method of difference. These, however, operate with variables at the nominal level. Second, the method of concomitant variation opens for causal inference that is probabilistic rather than deterministic. This is not the case with the method of agreement and method of difference. Given my theoretical point of departure and my small *N*, I feel that probabilistic conclusions are more warranted than deterministic ones.¹¹⁴ Third, and directly related to the former point, the method of concomitant variation does not require a pattern of perfect co-variation to infer causality.¹¹⁵

The main problem with using the method of concomitant variation in small *N* analyses is that it does not give a good basis for eliminating alternative explanatory variables, such as for example the above mentioned idiosyncratic variables. This weakness, however, can at least partly be compensated for by within-case analysis. Mahoney mentions three kinds of within-case analysis: process matching, process tracing and causal narrative.¹¹⁶ For this project I feel that process-tracing will be the most appropriate method. Andrew Bennett and Alexander George define process-tracing as: ”to generate and analyse data on the causal mechanisms, or processes, events, actions, expectations and other intervening variables, that

¹¹² James Mahoney, “Nominal, Ordinal and Narrative Appraisal in Macrocausal Analysis”, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 104, No.4 (1999), p.1160.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p.1160.

¹¹⁴ For an elaboration on the particular dangers of operating within a deterministic perspective in small *N* analyses, see Stanley Lieberman, “Small *N*’s and big conclusions: an examination of the reasoning in comparative studies based on a small number of cases”, in Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds., *What is a Case?*, pp. 106-109.

¹¹⁵ James Mahoney, “Nominal, Ordinal and Narrative...”, pp.1160-1161.

¹¹⁶ James Mahoney, “Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-*N* Analysis”, *Sociological Methods & Research*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (May 2000), p.409.

link putative causes to observed effects".¹¹⁷ Mahoney suggests three ways in which process-tracing can enhance the basis of inference: it can help in avoiding mistaking a spurious correlation for a causal association; it can help in rejecting alternative explanatory variables; and it can be used to support the explanations derived from the concomitant variation analysis.¹¹⁸ Thus, the combination of Mill's method of concomitant variation and the within-case method of process-tracing should be a reasonable methodological foundation for drawing conclusions.

The idea of the method of process-tracing is linked to a broader debate in methodology and the philosophy of science about the nature of causality. Some scholars focus only on the correlation between variables as a basis for making causal claims, whereas others focus on the *process* by which the independent variables have an effect on the dependent variable. The former talk about causal effect whereas the latter talk about causal mechanisms. A broader discussion of the relative merits of causal effect and causal mechanisms when it comes to making causal claims is beyond the scope of this project. I here take the position of Bennett and George that both forms of analysis are warranted, and this position is also reflected in my research design. Process-tracing can also have a function in addition to searching for and potentially eliminating alternative explanatory variables, it can be used to identify the values on the ordinal variables for each observation.

4.3 *On the possibility of theoretical inference*

This is a small *N* study. As such, quantitatively oriented scholars will question the possibility of theoretical inference compared with large *N* studies. I have tried to increase this possibility in two ways: by studying several observations of the same phenomena within each case study, and by selecting cases with extreme values on important dimensions.

One can usefully make a distinction between cases and observations.¹¹⁹ If the *N* of this study is based on observations rather than cases, the *N* will be 15 and not 5. (If it had been based on leaders rather than cases it would have been 4 and not 5). I study three observations in the first case study, four observations in the second case study, one observation in the third case study, three observations in the fourth case study, and four observations in the fifth case study. In principle, therefore, one could argue that each case study in this project consists of a

¹¹⁷ Andrew Bennett and Alexander George, "Process Tracing in Case Study Research", Draft, Paper presented at the MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, October 17-19 1997, p.5, on the Internet at <http://www.georgetown.edu/bennett/PROTCG.htm>

¹¹⁸ James Mahoney, "Strategies of Causal Inference...", pp.412-414.

¹¹⁹ Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.117 and pp.208-212.

number of smaller case studies. My cases are what Yin has called embedded case studies, where “within a single case, attention is also given to a subunit or subunits”.¹²⁰

Although I can claim that my *N* is 15, this is a slightly inferior *N* as far as theoretical inference is concerned because of “dependence”. Dependence means that the observations do not represent totally independent tests of the theory because one must suspect that due to their closeness they influenced each other. For instance, in case number two, how Yeltsin disregarded the pressure from the arms producers lobby in connection with the 1995 no-further-sales- to-Iran-agreement with Al Gore, might have influenced how he handled the similar pressure from the military-industrial lobby during the Primakov premiership 1998-1999. Thus, even though my *N* is 15, it is an *N* that gives less reason to be sure about the theoretical inferences than if I for example had studied private and factional interest and their influence on foreign policy in 15 different countries.

An additional problem in terms of theoretical inference is also that all my cases come from the post-Soviet context. Thus, there might be peculiarities of this context that affect the explanatory and dependent variables that are not present, or present to a smaller degree, in other geographical settings. However, here the potential loss in the possibility of theoretical inference has to be weighted against the necessity of conducting good quality process-tracing. This is much easier in an environment that the researcher knows well, and where he is able to evaluate the sources of information better.

My project is further placed within a tradition in comparative research of studying cases with extreme values on important dimensions.¹²¹ By this is meant that both the three countries from where the case studies are taken, and the five cases themselves, have frequently been commented on as countries and cases where private and factional preferences have been assumed to have had particularly strong influence on political decision-making. Philip Roeder has claimed that “post-Soviet politics is dominated by self-interested politicians who seek to maximize their control over the policy process”.¹²² Similarly, Alexandr Mau has argued that “the state foreign policy (*in Russia*) reflects interests of certain influential groups and alliances. Any changes in the foreign policy are in most cases illustrative of the changes in the degree of influence of the lobby groups and deeper processes inside the political and

¹²⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research – Design and Methods* (London: Sage Publications, 1984), p.49.

¹²¹ On this, see Harry Eckstein, “Case Study and Theory in Political Science”, in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science, Vol.7, Strategies of Inquiry* (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975), pp.113-123, and Charles, C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p.11 and p.22.

¹²² Philip H. Roeder, “Varieties of Post-Soviet Authoritarian Regimes”, *Post-Soviet Affair*, Vol.10, No.1 (1994), p.61.

business elite”.¹²³ In the case of Ukraine, Swedish economist and former economic adviser to the Ukrainian president, Anders Åslund, called the Ukrainian state a “closed joint-stock company, led by four clans: the Rabinovich-Volkov clan; the Bakay-Holubchenko clan; the Surkis-Medvedchuk clan; and the successors of Alik the Greek”.¹²⁴ As far as Kazakhstan is concerned, the Kazakh journalists Zhanna Bolatova and Erik Zhunusov assert that “all high politics is a matter of money”.¹²⁵ In addition to these empirical claims, there is also the assertion within the theoretical literature on illiberal democracies, that these regimes are particularly prone to let private and factional interest influence policy.¹²⁶

If a willingness to disregard private and factional interests can be demonstrated also in these cases, that should indicate that they will have even stronger explanatory power in political communities where such interests are assumed to have less influence. That is, they *should be applicable to cases also in the second casing*.

4.4 Methodological summary

The methodology of my research design can be summarised in three main points:

First, I will study instances where a leader faces pressure from domestic interest groups that have certain foreign policy preferences, and where a tendency to give in to such pressure is assumed to be a part of the political culture. As explained earlier, however, my findings in this regard can also have implications for states where that is not the case.

Second, through the technique of process-tracing I will try to establish to what extent these leaders were willing to disregard this pressure and also other self-interest considerations in order to pursue national interests.

Third, I try to enhance the possibility of theoretical inference from these cases by focusing in the conclusion on the 15 observations listed below, rather than the five case studies.

¹²³ Alexandr Mau, “Foreign Interests of Russian Banks”, unpublished manuscript. This manuscript in an edited version later became a part of the report Sergei Medvedev, ed., *Business Elites and Russian Foreign Policy* (Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2000).

¹²⁴ Interview with the Ukrainian parliamentarian Mykhailo Pozhivanov in *Den*, 3 March 1999.

¹²⁵ Zhanna Bolatova and Erik Zhunusov, “Materia I Idealy” (Matter and Ideals), *Delovaia Nedelia*, 13 March 1998.

¹²⁶ This is one of the central points in Bueno de Mesquita & Lee Ray, “The National Interest Versus Individual Ambition...”. Marina Ottaway has made a similar point in her book *Democracy Challenged – The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*, pp.180-186, and Larry Diamond has also pointed out the tendency for what he calls “private-regarding” behaviour to become prevalent in regimes that have moved away from the strictly authoritarian form but not consolidated as democracies. See Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy – Towards Consolidation* (Baltimore; The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p.255.

List of observations:

First case study *“Defining a Ukrainian Foreign Policy Identity: Business Interests and Geopolitics in the Formulation of Ukrainian Foreign Policy 1994-1999”*

1. The change from pro-Western to pro-Russian foreign policy after Kuchma’s election in 1994 as an expression of the preferences of the East-Ukrainian industrial elite.
2. The change back to a more pro-Western foreign policy in 1995 after major elements of the East-Ukrainian industrial elite had changed their foreign policy preferences.
3. No change back to a pro-Russian foreign policy despite the fact that the pro-Russian oil and gas elite replaced the East-Ukrainian industrial elite as the domestic power base of Kuchma.

Second case study *“Arming the Ayatollahs – Economic Lobbies in Russia’s Iran Policy”*

4. 1990 – 1995, heavy conventional arms sales to Iran as an expression of the sectoral dominance of the military-industrial lobby in the government.
5. 1995, signing of the secret Gore-Chernomyrdin no-sales agreement as an expression of the replacement of the military-industrial lobby by the oil and gas and financial lobbies as dominant sectoral lobbies in the government.
6. 1995 – 2000, no reopening of sales despite the re-emergence of an influential military-industrial lobby in the presidential administration 1995-1997, and the strongly pro-VPK Primakov government 1998-1999.
7. Reopening of arms sales in November 2000, after the military-industrial lobby had been instrumental in securing Putin victory in the March 2000 presidential elections.

Third case study *“Putin’s Strategic Partnership with the West: The Domestic Politics of Russian Foreign Policy”*:

8. Putin’s decision to abandon the Primakov doctrine in favour of strategic partnership with the West despite heavy elite opposition

Fourth case study *“Astana’s Privatised Independence – Private and National Interests in the Foreign Policy of Nursultan Nazarbayev”*

9. Early 1990s – Nazarbayev seeking junior partnership with Moscow in order to secure his position
10. Second half of 1990s – Nazarbayev standing up to Moscow and seeking partnership with the USA:
 - a. Less danger of losing position because no longer fear of ethnic uprising + enormous increases in income from oil and gas
 - b. Stood up to domestic lobbies (oil lobby and military-industrial lobby)
11. After 2000 – Nazarbayev’s return to Moscow’s protection largely because his own position again was threatened

Fifth case study *“Private Interests, Public Policy – Ukraine and the Common Economic Space agreement”*

12. Kuchma’s promotion of the CES agreement from February 2003 to September 2003 to attract Moscow’s support
13. Kuchma’s threat to withdraw Ukraine from the CES process in October 2003 despite risk of losing Moscow’s support
14. Yanukovich’s resistance to the CES agreement despite risk of losing Moscow’s support
15. Yanukovich’s abandonment of resistance to the CES agreement to attract Moscow’s support

4.5 *The Sources*

I have been using three types of sources in this project: Russian, Ukrainian and Kazakhstani newspaper and journal articles; Western newspaper and journal articles on Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan; and to some extent interviews with politicians and academics in Russia and Ukraine.

Russian, Ukrainian and Kazakhstani newspaper and journal articles were the most important sources. The main methodological problem with this type of sources is that their reliability can be questioned. Although good independent journalism exists in all three countries, it is probably fair to say that it has so far not been the norm. However, the number of publications in all three countries covering the topics of my case studies is sufficiently large and diverse so that at least it was possible to compare different interpretations of the same events.

Western newspaper and journal articles were an important additional source of information. Western newspapers are arguably on average more reliable than the Russian, Ukrainian and Kazakhstani ones. They are owned by actors of whom most do not have a personal stake in the different political struggles in the countries in question. On the other hand, Western publications do not always have stationed correspondents in these countries, and often lack much of the detailed insight that the Russian, Ukrainian and Kazakhstani journalists have. A particular problem here is that most Western newspapers have a stationed correspondent only in Moscow, who is also responsible for covering the other Post-Soviet countries. This correspondent will occasionally go to these countries to write stories, but it is my impression from reading many such articles that they often have a tendency to see events through Moscow's eyes. Western journal articles and books provide an important correction to such bias. They are often based on thorough studies of primary sources where the author has already made considerable efforts to construct reliable interpretations from the available evidence.

In addition, there are at least three further points worth mentioning that strengthen the reliability of the findings in this dissertation. Firstly, I would like to add that as far as the Russian and Ukrainian newspapers and journals are concerned, the present author has followed their development relatively closely over the last 10 years. It therefore seems fair to say that I have acquired some degree of experience in evaluating the reliability of both the different publications and individual journalists.

Secondly, I have for the last seven years been in regular contact with many members from social science expert milieus on Post-Soviet affairs; Russians, Ukrainians as well as Westerners. Thus, I have been able to discuss and also nuance my interpretations of political

developments in the three countries where the case studies are taken from on a relatively frequent basis.

And thirdly, it is a test of reliability that all the cases studies in this dissertation either have been published or have been accepted for publication in peer reviewed publications. For each case study this means that at least two other experts in the field have found the empirical claims made in the case studies to be reasonable.

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