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Summary

The thesis explores a phenomenon that developed after the Soviet Union dissolved, namely the 'rise' of the EU and NATO as inter-democratic security institutions in Europe. The EU and NATO in the post-Soviet era can be defined as inter-democratic security institutions since membership was 'exclusive' for liberal democracies. Security was argued to be enhanced by developing stable democracies in Europe, thus a persuasive argument was made in favour of delegating more responsibility to the EU and NATO for managing the European security architecture. Consequently, rather than accommodating Russia in a more inclusive European security architecture by strengthening institutions such as the OSCE, the trend became to develop the EU and NATO as the dominant security institutions by expanding their membership and concurrently taking responsibility for security beyond their own borders.

The puzzle that emerged was how this development would affect security relations with Russia, as the two main security institutions responsible for uniting Europe do not include the largest state on the continent. This thesis presents two opposing hypotheses. The first hypothesis based on liberal institutionalism suggests that inter-democratic security institutions promote security primarily through integration and democratisation as a positive-sum game, which also provides stability and security for Russia. The second hypothesis based on neoclassical realism argues that without a balance from the Soviet Union, the EU and NATO developed as expansionist 'collective hegemonies' with reduced rationality. While the systemic incentives for expansionist policies existing when there is a skewed balance of power is central concept in neorealism, the notion of reduced 'rationality' is one that is requires to be explored by neoclassical realism since it entails addressing unit-level variables. Rationality in the realist understanding is the ability to act strategically in accordance with the balance of power logic in order to maximise security. The argument made is that institutions and ideology can have an adverse effect on rationality, when ideology espouses the notion that the actor seeking hegemony can 'transcend realism' (power competition), while institutions create dependency and entanglement where the commitment to 'solidarity' and a 'common voice' causes over- or under-balancing.

The theoretical approach is to explore the security dilemma. The security dilemma addresses the difficulties in determining whether the intentions of the other are defensive or offensive, and

as a result whether one should respond with reassurance or deterrence. Thus, conflicts tend to ensue. In this thesis, it is suggested that exclusive security institutions can either mitigate/transcend or aggravate a security dilemma. In terms of the security dilemma, exclusive integration projects may undermine the security of the state which is excluded and thereby create competing zero-sum initiatives for influence, while the opposing argument is that the inter-democratic characteristics of these institutions externalise in positive-sum policies.

Concerning method, the thesis explores the contributions of the EU and NATO to the possible security dilemma with Russia. This is an unconventional approach given that the nature of the security dilemma stipulates that both sides contribute. However, this is achieved by assessing variables that contribute to the security dilemma rather than the security dilemma as an end result. Four variables that both theories recognise to affect the security dilemma are first conceptualised and then operationalised by establishing objective and measurable indicators. These four variables are: 1) Instruments of power: a reference to the offence/defence debate; 2) Security dilemma sensibility: the ability and intention of an actor to recognise the possibility that oneself may contribute to fears and that the other may be responding to these fears; 3) Institutional inclusion: the extent to which the non-member state is offered a 'voice opportunity' to influence; 4) Threat perception: the degree to which the non-member state is identified as a pre-determined threat due to its power, as opposed to only how this power is utilised. Two case studies are examined in order to address these indicators. The first is NATO's development of missile defence, and the second is the EU's development as a security institution with the CSDP.

Instruments of power

The findings from the first variable, instruments of power, indicate that both NATO and the EU takes an offensive posture towards Russia. NATO's missile defence system demonstrates that there is an opportunity to differentiate between an offensive and defensive posture, however, no efforts have been made to demonstrate that the quality, quantity and location of missile defence components are defensive. Furthermore, NATO rejects any international treaty that would regulate and sets limitations on future missile defence deployments. The development of capabilities that promote security through invulnerability is also reflected in the strategy. The US

indicates an incremental development towards a counterforce strategy (first-strike) for its nuclear weapons, where the destruction of its adversaries' retaliatory capabilities gains priority.

The EU's offensive posture is assessed in different terms as its focus on peacekeeping and low politics makes any direct military confrontation with Russia highly unlikely. Instead, an 'offensive' posture by a peacekeeper has tended to be when coercive power is utilised for power competition. In other words, when the EU does not act as a partner of the UN, but instead pursues its own zero-sum geopolitical interests in defiance of the UN. Such an offensive policies is argued to characterise the CSDP due to what can be referred to as the 'Europeanisation of conflict resolution', which is when the outcome of a conflict is linked directly to integration with the 'European integration'. Because the EU's concept of 'Europe' is exclusive and in competition with corresponding Russian integration efforts towards the same states, 'European integration' becomes a zero-sum geopolitical project. This becomes evident in the European CSDP missions. In Kosovo and Bosnia, the EU relies on UN mandates to pursue policies that contradict the objectives provided by the mandates. In Moldova and Georgia the EU does not rely on a UN mandate. However, in all the disputes the EU becomes a party to the conflict by setting its own conditions and rejecting compromise between the conflicting parties to the extent it undermines its criteria for 'European integration'.

Security dilemma sensibility

The findings from the second variable, security dilemma sensibility, suggest that the EU and NATO are less likely to recognise their contribution to the security dilemma due to 'ideological fundamentalism' and 'institutional solidarity'. Ideological fundamentalism suggests that ideology supports a binary understanding of the world in which competing security interests are seen through the prism of assigned political identities that are moral dichotomous. Meanwhile, the institutional requirement for 'solidarity' and a common voice leads to shaming any attempt to display recognition for Russian security concerns. Consequently, both the EU and NATO have a reduced ability to respond to the security dilemma since this is equated to a betrayal of their virtues and to undermine the institutional cohesion.

Russia's proclaimed security concerns regarding both the EU and NATO can be summarised as deriving from their exclusive structures. Russia fears that both the EU and NATO are unable to move beyond the bloc-politics of the Cold War, resulting in a reliance on unilateral and coercive policies to achieve zero-sum objectives. The CSDP is perceived to divide Europe by using coercive means to support political groups and governments that make a clear pro-EU/anti-Russian choice, while NATO's missile defence is seen to further cement the division of Europe and undermine the Russian deterrent as an equaliser in terms of military capabilities. There is evidence of a reduced ability by the EU and NATO to reason dispassionately about European security and competing security interests, as emotional rhetoric promotes a narrow ideological narrative to which conformity are required to retain political and moral credibility. Due to the rejection of a pluralist conception of 'Europe', key concepts, such as 'multilateralism', 'zero-sum' and 'spheres of influence' are redefined. As a result, the dominant narrative portrays conflicts to derive from 'European integration' and democratisation conflicting with Russian 'spheres of influence'.

Institutional inclusion

There are numerous attempts by both the EU and NATO to institutionalise a partnership with Russia by offering it a voice opportunity in order to improve mutual trust and security. However, an *effective* voice opportunity, the ability to influence, is largely absent. Institutions are often believed to develop trust by functioning as a forum for reducing misunderstanding, by allowing Russia to observe as a spectator in order to reassure it of their benign intentions. However, Russia seeks institutional inclusion for influence to mitigate what are considered to be the zero-sum components resulting from Russia's exclusion.

Rejecting to offer an effective voice opportunity is rooted in the understanding that they are a 'force for good' by promoting positive-sum policies. The inclusion of Russia is therefore frequently conceptualised as a pedagogic teacher-student relationship, where the role of the EU and NATO is to create incentives for one-sided policy adaptations by rewarding or punishing Russia for what they consider to be 'good' or 'bad' behaviour. The traditional understanding of cooperation as compromising over competing interests and coordinate policies for mutual gain

contradicts the understanding the EU and NATO have concerning their role in European security. Both the EU and NATO have established parallel multilateral and bilateral/exclusive arrangements. However, the bilateral institutions invalidate the value of the multilateral initiatives as the former is consistently favoured when there are conflicting interests. Institutions tend to be non-binding and temporary, often serving the purpose of delaying Russian counter-initiatives and gaining support from member states apprehensive about aggravating Russia, before abandoning the multilateral initiatives and presenting Russia with *fait accompli*.

Threat perceptions

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was longer considered simply to be a threat that had to be contained. However, Russia remained an object of security, a problem to be resolved. This assigned role left Russia with two options, to either accept the role as a civilisational object that aspires to join the West or become a counter-civilisational force that must be contained. Both the EU and NATO have thus pursued two contradictory policies in terms of the second level of the security dilemma, by both seeking to reassure Russia that it is not a threat to encourage it to take on the role of a civilisational object, while concurrently developing asymmetrical power leverage to contain Russia if it rejects this role. The problem is that for a large power like Russia which is not represented in the main European security institutions, its role as an object of security is untenable and it is required to reclaim its subjectivity in European security in order to pursue its own integration efforts and preserve its nuclear retaliatory capabilities.

It is therefore argued that threat perceptions of Russia are argued to be pre-determined since the subject-object relationship is unsustainable for such a large power. While arguments suggesting that Russia poses a threat can be valid and justified, it is the absence of a conceptual space for a benign Russia with an independent role in Europe that makes it a pre-determined threat. In other words, the conceptual distinction between a Russian influence and sphere of influence is obscured. Thus, without any format for accommodating legitimate and independent Russia influence, the recovery or 'resurgence' of an 'assertive' Russia becomes a threat.