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The EU's Russian Roulette

An Analysis of Discourses of Council Presidencies on EU-Russia
Relations

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of changing EU Council Presidencies on the representation of EU-Russia relations. Since the member states of the EU are still largely sovereign, they do not only take part in the CFSP of the EU, but they follow their own national or bilateral approaches to third countries. These approaches to Russia within the EU may differ substantially from each other. Therefore the assumption is justified that there are also differences in the approaches of different Council Presidencies. The main research question thus to be answered is 'What kind of social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges from the articulations of changing EU Council Presidencies?'

In order to be able to answer this question, I conduct a discourse analysis based on the works of Laclau & Mouffe (1985) and Thomas Diez (2001). The discourse analysis is applied mainly to speeches and statements of Council Presidencies given at EU-Russia summits or similar events. In particular, this study takes into account all articulations relevant to EU-Russia relations by the German, Portuguese, and Slovenian Presidencies between January 2007 and June 2008. With the help of the main analytical tool of Discursive Nodal Points, the discourses that are hegemonic in the articulations of these three Presidencies are identified. The discourses are in turn subject to the theoretical analysis along the lines of the English School theoretical framework. More precisely, the discourses are assessed along the lines of the three key concepts of the English School: International System, pluralist/solidarist International Society, and World Society.

The result at first constitutes an illustration of the high complexity of the social reality of EU-Russia relations. This study shows that each Council Presidency puts an emphasis and priority on different issues, themes, and ideas. Yet, with the help of the three key concepts of the English School, patterns in the articulations of EU-Russia relations could be identified explaining why and how the EU-Russia regional International Society appears at times more pluralist and at times more solidarist.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Treaties, summits, joint statements, declarations, working lunches and dinners, family photos, handshakes, possibly even a hug – these are the materializations of EU-Russia relations that are mediated to the broader public. Moreover, ‘strategic partnership’ is the key word which is used by both sides, the EU and Russia, to describe and summarize the character of their relations (cf. European Commission, 2004; Kremlin, 2009). EU representatives like to emphasize that Russia is the biggest neighbour of the European Union and a highly important partner, for example, in security and energy questions (European Commission, 2004; 2009a). Furthermore, Russia is not part of the EU’s project of the European Neighbourhood Policy but with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1997 and the four Common Spaces, EU-Russia relations are formalized and institutionalized in an individual and unique manner. This makes Russia stand out from all other European non-member states neighbouring the EU. However, the ‘strategic partnership’ as a framework for EU-Russia relations appears as a satisfactory answer to the question about the character of the relations only as long as one looks at formalities and rituals.

Thinking of the EU and Russia, one cannot overlook issues such as the Russian import-ban on Polish meat in 2007, the unrests caused by the moving of the bronze soldier in Tallinn, the Litvinenko case, Kosovo, and Georgia. Apparently, ‘partnership’ does not necessarily mean smooth operation of affairs. Sergei Prozorov has already pointed out that the ‘strategic partnership’ bears difficulties and conflicts below its surface (Prozorov, 2006, p. 3). Regarding the small list of issues at the beginning of this paragraph, it also becomes clear that a considerable amount of issues concerns bilateral relations between Russia and an EU member state. The member states thus obviously still play a crucial role in shaping the EU’s relations with third countries including Russia, which is also taken into account in Leonard and Popescu’s study and their approach to analysing EU-Russia relations (Leonard & Popescu, 2007). The reality of EU-Russia relations thus does not only depend on formalities and rituals performed by the high representatives of the EU, i.e. the President of the Commission, the High Representative of the CFSP, and the Council Presidency, that biannually meet the President of the Russian Federation for an EU-Russia summit. Rather, given the multitude of actors in EU-Russia relations, one may assume that the reality of EU-Russia relations is a joint construct by these actors.

The representatives of the EU contribute to the social reality of EU-Russia relations just as much as the representatives of the member states. Here a particularly interesting group of actors stands out: the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, i.e. the Council

Presidency, an office which rotates among the governments of the 27 member states in such a way that it is held by another member state every six months. They appear particularly interesting as they may take a somewhat two-edged role: On the one hand, they are at the helm of the highest decision-making body of the European Union, i.e. the Council, and represent the entirety of the European Union with all its member states. This office thus also entails an important function in the EU's foreign policy, as the Council Presidency is one of the most significant bodies to represent the EU in the international arena. On the other hand, the Council Presidency is at the same time also the government of one of the 27 still sovereign member states. Given that the Council Presidency changes every six months, one may assume that each Presidency brings along its individual priorities and approaches to policy-making on the highest level of the EU, be it internal or foreign policy, which may be nuanced by national particularities. Therefore, the interest of this study is to investigate the character of the social reality of EU-Russia relations created by the changing Council Presidencies. Since social relations are widely established by articulations, utterances, and the use of language in general (cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105), the general research question can be formulated as follows: What kind of social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges from the articulations of changing EU Council Presidencies?

1.1 Research Design

In order to assess the character of the social reality of EU-Russia relations this study will make use of the theoretical framework of the English School. The core asset of this framework is its three key concepts of International System, International Society, and World Society as well as its sub-concepts of pluralist and solidarist International Society. Thanks to the wide-range differentiations of these key concepts and a strong relation to constructivist theories and meta-theories, the English School makes possible a profound characterization of complex social and societal problems in international relations. The English School will be elaborated upon in detail in chapter 3.

Due to the constructivist character of the English School and the research question about the social reality, this study requires a method that complies with these theoretical and meta-theoretical considerations. Discourse analysis is a theory on human interaction and the construction of society initially on the basis of language. More specifically, the discourse analysis will aim at identifying the meta-concepts of the articulations taken into account in this study, i.e. the discourses that take a hegemonic position. In order to do so, the discourse analysis will be based on methodological considerations of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) which

are further developed by Thomas Diez (2001). This approach will be further introduced in chapter 4.

1.2 Scope and Sources of the Study

The research question asks for the character of the social reality of EU-Russia relations articulated by the rotating Council Presidencies. For the sake of a profound and thorough analysis, this study will not be able to take into considerations the articulations of all Presidencies concerning Russia since the establishment of the European Economic Community in 1957. This is why I decided to focus on more recent Presidencies in order to show the character of more recent and possibly contemporary EU-Russia relations. The habit of organising the Presidencies in so-called Trio Presidencies facilitated the choice. Trio Presidencies are three subsequent Presidencies which attempt to coordinate their agendas, priorities, policies. In order to provide a certain degree of continuity, the three Presidencies draft a common 18-month program. Currently, the EU is in the middle of a Trio Presidency comprised of France, the Czech Republic, and Sweden (European Council, 2008). Since Sweden is only to take over the Presidency in July 2009, the choice fell on the previous trio Presidency between January 2007 and June 2008 comprised of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia. In their 18-month programme, Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia point out that “strengthening the strategic partnership with Russia will constitute a priority for the three Presidencies” (European Council, 2006, p. 15). Furthermore, Russia is mentioned with regard to several fields of cooperation such as the EU-Russia energy dialogue (*ibid.*, p. 32).

In order to be able to analyze the whole discourses articulated by these three Presidencies individually, all files documenting these articulations on EU-Russia relations by the use of both oral and written language that can be retrieved from the official Presidencies’ websites is taken into account in the discourse analysis. This approach thus treats each Presidency as one entity and, for example, does not take into account how German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s approach towards Russia may differ from Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier’s approach. In other words, this study’s research design is not built upon individualist assumptions just as the theoretical framework of the English School is not an individualist approach either. Consequently, this study does not seek to approach EU-Russia relations from an individualist point of view, but rather treats EU-Russia relations as a social phenomenon.

Since the primary sources and documents are with one exception (Slovenian Presidency, 2008r) all retrieved from the official websites of the respective Presidencies one

may assume a certain coherence in the publications that allows treating a Presidency as an entity. The variety of primary sources ranges from usually rather short CFSP statements by the particular Presidency, over press releases, to the actual spoken word in press conferences. Most of these sources are available in the form of written text either directly on the website in html-format or they are provided as download-file in pdf-format. A considerable amount of sources, however, are only available in audio- and video-formats such as mp3, mp4, and wmv.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This chapter will give an overview of the background of the research question and will shed light on different relevant fields. Firstly, the formal framework of EU-Russia relations as a ‘strategic partnership’ since the 1990s based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) as well as the four Common Spaces will be introduced. Secondly, in order to clarify the particularity of the research problem, this chapter will look at the European Union as an actor in international relations and at the relevant institutional setting of the European Union for the social reality of EU-Russia relations beyond the ‘strategic partnership’, i.e. especially the functioning of the rotating Council Presidencies. Finally, connections to previous research done by other scholars in the field will be made in order to establish this study’s standpoint and perspective on the issues at hand.

2.1 EU-Russia Relations since the 1990s

2.1.1 The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the European Union and the newly established Russian Federation followed a policy of rapprochement and so-called Westernization or Europeanization of Russia which were enthusiastically embraced by both sides (Haukkala, 2003, p. 9; Prozorov, 2007, p. 310). The process led to the consolidation and manifestation of EU-Russia relations in the PCA of 1994 which entered into force 1997. The PCA provides a framework for interaction, cooperation, and “political dialogue” between the EU and Russia (PCA, Art. 6). Westernization and Europeanization may be equalled with liberalisation as the PCA also includes liberal objectives such as the strengthening “of political and economic freedoms”, “support Russian efforts to consolidate its democracy and to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy”, and “gradual integration between Russia and a wider area of cooperation in Europe” (PCA, Art. 2). The attempt of bringing Russia closer to Europe and mediate European values, ideas, and standards into Russia’s society and politics may be viewed as facilitated by the relative political weakness that has portrayed Russia during the 1990s under President Boris Yeltsin (cf. Prozorov, 2007, p. 309).

The PCA expired in 2007 and has not been renewed yet. The reason for that may be seen in Russia’s regained self-confidence, great power identity, and “renewed *reaffirmation of sovereignty*” (Prozorov, 2007, p. 311) which is attributed to the term of office of Vladimir Putin between the years 2000 and 2008 (ibid., p. 309). Instead of accepting anything suggested by the EU as had been the practice during the 1990, during the 2000s Russia has

tended to voice its own, individual interests as a great power. At times these interests contradict the objectives of the PCA, which has been contributing to the delay of re-negotiations (cf. Aalto, 2007, pp. 461-462). In 2008, the Slovenian Presidency announced the start of re-negotiations which were, however, suspended again by the EU as a reaction to the escalation of the Russian-Georgian conflict in summer 2008 (Slovenian Presidency, 2008u; European Commission, 2009a).

Despite the delayed start of re-negotiations and their suspension, some practices called for by the PCA of 1997 are still maintained by the two sides. The formal conduct between the EU and Russia is still followed according to the provisions of the PCA which states that “meetings shall take place in principle twice a year between the President of the Council of the European Union and the President of the Commission of the European Communities on one side and the President of Russia on the other” (PCA, Art. 7 (1)). These meetings are generally known as EU-Russia summits which are alternately hosted either by the President of the Russian Federation or by the Council Presidency of the EU. Other meetings take the form of, for example, the Permanent Partnership Council and Human Rights Consultations (PCA, 1997, Art. 6).

2.1.2 The Four Common Spaces

As a result of the practice of political dialogue and regular EU-Russia meetings provided for in the PCA, the 2003 EU-Russia summit saw the emergence of the four Common Spaces between Russia and the EU as a new basis for cooperation (European Commission, 2008). The four Common Spaces are the Common Economic Space, the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Common Space of External Security, and the Common Space of Research and Education including Cultural Aspects (ibid.). As these four titles indicate, cooperation between the EU and Russia is highly diversified and includes a wide range of different fields, which will also become clear in the empirical analysis in chapter 5. The Common Spaces aim at reinforcing cooperation between the EU and Russia within “the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and on the basis of common values and shared interests” (European Commission, 2009b). The desired effect is supposed to be Russia being “able to enjoy the benefits of the process of European integration without participating in the political institutions of the EU” (Prozorov, 2006, p. 3). The manner of cooperation in each field covered by the Common Spaces was specified in four road maps agreed upon during the EU-Russia summit in Moscow in 2005 (ibid.; European Commission, 2005).

Shortly after the signing of the roadmaps, these documents found themselves under investigation by scholars such as Michael Emerson who criticised them as “the Proliferation of the Fuzzy” (Emerson, 2005, p. 1) and as “the ultimate Euro-Russki diplomatic *borsch*” (ibid.). In 2006, Sergei Prozorov argued that the four Common Spaces remain rather ineffective in materializing true rapprochement and integration of the EU and Russia (Prozorov, 2006, p. 3). It is questionable how much progress is to be expected within one year. One might assume that until today, four years after the agreement on the road maps, more progress has been made. It is nonetheless possible to state that, for example, the Permanent Partnership Council on Freedom, Security, and Justice has had regular meetings at least until 2008 (Slovenian Presidency, 2008j; 2008k). Contrastingly, cooperation within other fields provided for by the PCA and the Common Spaces appears to have commenced rather late: The first meeting of the Permanent Partnership Council on Research only took place in May 2008, five years after the initiation of the Common Spaces and three years after the agreement of the four road maps. This is very much in line with the fuzziness pointed out by Michael Emerson (cf. above). Correspondingly, Sergei Prozorov’s argument of “few of such integrative designs have to date materialised in a mutually satisfying way” (Prozorov, 2006, p. 3) appears to be valid for more than one year after the establishment of the roadmaps. In addition, scepticism about prompt effectiveness of EU-Russia Common Spaces has also been expressed by Michael W. Bauer et al. (2007, p. 418) and again Michael Emerson (2005, p. 3) who argues that “it will doubtless take a generation or two for Russia and the EU to genuinely converge in terms of mindsets and political values perceived across society as a whole”. Despite the apparent divergence “in terms of mindsets and political values” (ibid.), the analysis along lines of the English School in combination with the discourse analysis to be conducted first, potentially shows in how far the EU’s and the Russian mindsets converge already today, which values are shared by which actors involved, and which areas still constitute backlog in that regard. The pessimism articulated by the scholars mentioned above – though to some extent certainly justified – may thus be somewhat relativized.

2.2 Institutional Settings of the EU and CFSP

The European Union defines itself as an area of freedom, democracy and human rights (TEU, Art. 6(1)). In practice, this definition has evolved into the project of the common market, partly a common currency and especially to five decades of peace among its Member States. Representing approximately 450 million citizens it comprises one of the largest markets in the world and is thus one of the leading economies. Politically, the EU does bear some

characteristics of a homogeneous, state-like entity that are embodied by its institutions. Simplifying, one could speak of something that resembles the two-chamber legislative system of a federal state (i.e. Council of Ministers and the European Parliament), a judiciary to review and enforce legislation (i.e. European Court of Justice, Court of First Instance, and the Civil Service Tribunal) and to some extent an executive if one takes into account, for example, the European Commission and its competences in the enforcement of European competition law.

When it comes to foreign affairs, however, the European Union has been struggling since its very beginnings in pursuing and implementing a truly Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) which corresponds to conventional notions of foreign policy with questionable, but at times effective, instruments such as military intervention or at least the option for military intervention. Attempts of the EU to function as a single, homogeneous actor in international relations have often been limited in their effectiveness by national interests and unanimity voting in the Council. This is also reason for the EU continuously not speaking with one voice in foreign affairs. Formulated somewhat more drastically, the effectiveness of the European Union's foreign and security policy remains trapped in the Westphalian international order. If this is also the case with respect to the EU's relations to Russia the lack of a uniform position on certain conflictive issues such as energy security and the promotion of human rights and democracy (all issues that are of high importance to the European Union) might lead to paradox situations in the conduct of foreign policy. The absence of such an option has caused the notion of the European Union as weak and ineffective actor in international relations (Hix, 2005, p. 393).

These observations are further supported if one briefly examines the characteristics of the European Council and its Presidency: The European Council is the highest policy- and decision making organ in the European Union and the main platform for the EU's CFSP. It is comprised of the heads of state and government of the twenty-seven Member States as well as the president of the European Commission. The Council is headed by the Council Presidency held by a different Member State every six months. The different Presidencies are able to influence the agenda of the European Council to a large extent according to their national interests and preferences (Hix, 2005, p. 80). This does not only apply to the European Union's internal affairs, but also to its external relations since one major task of the Council Presidency is to represent the European Union on the international stage, e.g. during General Assembly meetings of the United Nations and during summits with third countries. In other words, the rotation of Council Presidencies, which is often criticized for causing discontinuity

in manifold policy areas of the European Union, might also cause a shift of priorities within the EU's external affairs every six months according to national preferences (ibid.; pp. 393-394). The European Commission and the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy might prevent Presidencies from solo attempts in the CFSP since they provide assistance and continuity in the EU's foreign policy. Yet, individual approaches by Council Presidency towards third countries have the potential to influence the conduct of the CFSP of the European Union and the character of the EU's relations with third countries.

2.3 The Research Problem

Following from the previous considerations, the partly constant but ever changing composition of the EU-Russia summit has the potential to redefine overall EU-Russia relations according to the bilateral relations between Russia and the respective Member State holding the Council Presidency. This would be but one example for the European Union's dateless problem of not speaking with one voice in external affairs. The Common Foreign and Security Policy introduced by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 (Treaty on European Union) has brought important steps towards solving that problem. However, the CFSP has been an almost purely intergovernmental project that has in some cases enabled the different member states of an increasing number to maintain their particularly national interests and foreign policies. This resulted in very different attitudes among the member states towards international occurrences such as the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Hix, 2005, p. 394-395) and possibly – as this study intends to investigate – also towards Russia as the EU's highly important but controversial neighbour and partner in various respects.

Although the PCA expired in 2007 and has not been renewed yet, the EU-Russia summits have obviously become a tradition that both parties wish to uphold. The Council president is the only representative of the EU that is at the same time holding a highest national office and also maintains relations with the Russian Federation on a bilateral level, the Presidency's approach to Russia may differ from the general approach of the EU or other member states. Therefore, the Council Presidency potentially has an impact on overall EU-Russia relations, or at least on the spirit dominating the EU-Russia summits and the entire duration of the Presidency. Generally speaking, differences between the various approaches Russia may be explained by, for example, energy interdependencies, political and cultural cooperation (e.g. Germany) or history in that Soviet Russia is often seen as the anti-democratic occupier and suppressor (e.g. Baltic States and Poland).

Put differently, the Council Presidencies might take a somewhat ambivalent role: Given their double-function as representatives of both the EU and their own member states with potentially an own approach towards Russia, they operate within two discursive structures, which we may call the European structure and the domestic structure. The European discursive structure is mostly characterized by notions such as ‘strategic partnership’ formalized by the PCA and the four Common Spaces. The domestic structure includes the domestic approach to Russia and changes with every Presidency. Therefore, it is justified to assume that each Presidency, even though it might formally stick to the general EU jargon, potentially articulates EU-Russia relations in a different manner. The character of these articulations are supposedly revealing about the true character of EU-Russia relations beyond the ‘strategic partnership’, which some scholars have branded as more a rhetoric façade than a true characterization of EU-Russia relations (e.g. Prozorov, 2006, 2007, 2008; cf. 2.4.2). Additionally, the paragraph dedicated to Russia in the 18-month programme of the trio Presidency of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia does not reveal anything more than the surface of ‘strategic partnership’:

The Council will strengthen the strategic partnership with Russia, based on common values and mutual trust, in view of a genuinely co-operative partnership in foreign policy and security matters as well as in the field of energy. It will concentrate on concluding and implementing a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia, and continue working on the implementation of the road maps of the four Common Spaces (European Council, 2006, p. 65).

From the previous considerations, the research problem of the social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges. Having established that EU-Russia relations are a social phenomenon, the puzzle in the study is how the rotating Council Presidencies contribute to this social reality and how their contribution corresponds to or contradicts the formal and ceremonial procedures of the CFSP and the strategic partnership with its formal frameworks.

2.4 Relation to Previous Research

EU-Russia relations have previously been approached from a variety of perspectives. In this section, a few studies will be introduced that have been relevant to approach the subject of EU-Russian relations in a more general way or which have delivered some inspiration for the design of this study. By introducing these studies, commonalities and contradictions to this study will be pointed out, which will thereby clarify this study’s standpoint and perspective.

2.4.1 Approaches based on Multilateralism

In 2007, the rather young think tank European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) issued a study in which the deviances of policies of EU member states towards Russia are revealed (Leonard & Popescu, 2007). With that study, the ECFR aims at pointing out the EU's internal divisions and disunity as its largest problem in foreign policy and external relations. In order to do so, the authors Mark Leonard and Nico Popescu examine the bilateral relations and policy approaches towards Russia of all 27 member states.

Following from the results of that examination, the 27 member states are divided into five categories representing their approaches towards and relations with Russia and explicitly do not take into account whether a state is an old or new member state: 'Trojan horses', 'Strategic Partners', 'Friendly Pragmatists', 'Frosty Pragmatists', and 'New Cold Warriors' (ibid., p. 2). The three member states considered in this study, Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia, are categorized as follows: Germany is rated as a 'Strategic Partner' "who enjoy[s] a 'special relationship' with Russia which occasionally undermines common EU policies" (ibid.). The authors highlight the historic relations between Germany and Russia, as well as their strong economic ties, especially in the field of energy (ibid., p. 32). Portugal and Slovenia are both categorized as 'Friendly Pragmatists' "who maintain a close relationship with Russia and tend to put their business interests above political goals" (ibid., p. 2). Russia does not take an important rank on Portugal's foreign policy agenda (ibid., p. 36); the aim is mostly "to avoid disputes with Russia" (ibid., p. 41). Slovenia's approach does not become very clear as apparently an editing error has led to the confusion of 'Slovenia' with 'Slovakia' (ibid., p. 38). What can be said with more certainty is that the study attributes a "focus on business relations" (ibid., p. 41) to Slovenia with regards to its policy towards Russia.

Since the ECFR's *Power Audit* takes into account the policies towards Russia of all 27 member states, the study delivers a rather complete picture of the different approaches within the European Union. However, the categorization into the five groupings appears somewhat superficial as it still disregards possible features that may be unique to each member states. With the focus of this study at hand on only three subsequent council Presidencies representing also three different member states, a more in-depth analysis can be conducted which may also reveal possibly unique motives and discourses shaping the different approaches towards Russia, which are disregarded by the rather narrow categorization in the ECFR's *Power Audit*. This is not to say that the findings of the *Power Audit* will necessarily be refuted, but this study will at least offer a more in-depth and more elaborated insight in the approaches of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia while speaking on behalf of the European

Union. What is shared with the ECFR's *Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations* is the motivation to investigate the internal division and heterogeneity of the European Union especially in questions regarding external relations (ibid., pp. 1-2).

Another study taking into account the internal structure of the EU comprised of 27 member states taking part in the CFSP was done by Anke Schmidt-Felzmann (2008). She starts out from almost identical assumptions and observations as this study. Her aim is also to assess how “how member states operate in external relations with third countries, and to what extent the member states can shape EU policy” (ibid., p. 169). More specifically, she investigates “if their bilateral relations with Russia prevent a common policy from developing” (ibid.). In her article, Schmidt-Felzmann illustrates how the priority given to different principles by the member states results in divergent approaches towards Russia. This finding may be supported by the results of this study and possibly put more flesh around the argument as this study sets out to characterize the social reality of EU-Russia relations.

2.4.2 *Approaches based on Discourse Analysis*

EU-Russia relations have previously also been subject to studies that like this study follow a discourse analytical approach. One of the best known contemporary scholars with that approach is Sergei Prozorov. His work also constitutes an example of a discourse analysis for the assessment of EU-Russia relations, yet with a focus on the Russian side. In his book *Understanding Conflict between Russia and the EU: The Limits of Integration* (2006) as well as in a number of articles (2007; 2008), he elaborates on the discourses of Russia's exclusion and self-exclusion as two general patterns in European-Russian relations and conflicts. Briefly, the discourse of exclusion of Russia from Europe becomes visible, for example, in the strict visa and Schengen regime maintained by the EU towards Russia (Prozorov, 2007, p. 310). This rather technical exclusion, according to Prozorov, led to a debate on Russia's Europeanness; the discourse of exclusion resulted in articulations of Russia being a “non-European European country” (ibid., p. 311). The discourse of self-exclusion is related to intentional non-participation in any integrational processes in Europe (ibid., p. 309). These integrational processes are the EU's neighbourhood policies which to some make the EU appear as an empire (cf. Zielonka, 2008). The discourse of self-exclusion has its roots in the “renewed *reaffirmation of sovereignty*” (Prozorov, 2007, p. 311) that was a core characteristic of Putin's reign between 2000 and 2008 (ibid., p. 309). Furthermore, the conceptualization of Russia as a “non-European European country” (ibid., p. 311) plays a role here. This conceptualization denies the necessity of EU-membership or some kind of association and

integration as indispensable criterion for Europeanness. It can additionally be argued that the discourses of exclusion and – more visibly here – self-exclusion together with the reaffirmation of sovereignty remain relevant also in Medvedev’s reign. The Georgian war in 2008 may be seen as a prime example for this line of policy and patterns in EU-Russia relations.

Furthermore, Sergei Prozorov points out that the incantation of a ‘strategic partnership’ between the EU and Russia by both sides is not more than an empty phrase serving as rhetorical adornment. As Prozorov argues, the patterns and processes that lay under the surface of the ‘strategic partnership’ have nothing in common with an actual strategic partnership but are characterized by recurring conflict, disagreement, and incompatibilities (2006, p. 3). The patterns at least on the Russian side can be summarized in the discourses of exclusion and self-exclusion (Prozorov, 2006; 2007; 2008).

This study, in turn, will reveal the discourses under surface of ‘strategic partnership’ on the side of the European Union and the Council Presidencies. It will show how the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia is articulated, characterized, and legitimized by the changing Council Presidencies. This way it will be possible to assess the actual character and nature of EU-Russia relations beyond or under the surface of ‘strategic partnership’ which appears, following Prozorov’s argumentation, rather as a rhetoric façade. The discourses characterizing EU-Russia relations as articulated by the Council Presidencies can again be contemplated with the discourses of exclusion and self-exclusion identified by Prozorov (2006; 2007; 2008).

An approach similar to Prozorov’s is employed by Petr Kratochvil (2008) who examines the discourse upheld by the Russia foreign policy elite with regard to possible Europeanization of Russia promoted by the EU. Kratochvil starts out from the observation that Russia has shown itself largely resistant to processes of Europeanization (Kratochvil, 2008, p. 397). The analysis of discourses mentioned above reveals that the reasons for that resistance are “state-centrism, Russia’s great power status, and the conviction that Russia has frequently been treated unfairly” (ibid., p. 417). These findings appear quite similar to Prozorov’s identification of the discourses of exclusion and self-exclusion (cf. above) and serve, according to Kratochvil, as an explanation for “non-compliance of Russia with EU policies and practices” (Kratochvil, 2008, p. 418).

2.4.3 Approaches based on European Identity Formation

It is almost generally accepted that throughout history, Europeans defined themselves in contrast to non-European counterparts, for example Ottoman Turkey due to its Muslim faith, or the colonized peoples on the African and South-American continents. One prominent scholar to research the processes of European identity formation is Iver B. Neumann (1999). In his work he develops and examines the genealogy of the European attitude and perception of a different other, Russia, and the question whether Russia fits into the notion of Europe predominant in the respective period. He deems this necessary in order to understand debates on EU and NATO enlargement during the late 1990s. According to Neumann, Russia has always been regarded by (Western) Europeans as not being exactly European. A constant throughout the last five centuries was the perception of Russia, as Neumann puts it, “as a pupil and a learner” (Neumann, 1999, p. 110) from Europe as well as Europe’s ‘other’. During the 1990s Russia as a country in transition was the predominant notion of Europe’s Eastern neighbour (ibid.). Generally speaking, Russia’s role in European identity formation, Neumann argues, has not functioned as something purely non-European. It has rather functioned as an internal “irregularity” (ibid.) against which the (Western) European identity consolidated itself. In other words (Western) Europe was truly and purely European, i.e. it constituted its own prototype, and Russia was not “*just*” yet truly European (ibid.; cf. p. 111). The theme of transition elaborated upon by Neumann as well appears in line with this reasoning.

Although it would be possible to examine the Council Presidencies with regard to identity politics and the question of ‘self’ and ‘other’, this study’s approach differs from Iver B. Neumann’s approach as it will not treat Europe or the European Union as a homogeneous whole. Taking this point of departure in the recognition that the EU fails to speak in one voice in its relations with Russia, it will examine which role differences among the Member States still play in formulating an approach toward Russia. Although European integration has gone very deep already – its degree is actually unique in the world – it can be said that the national identity is usually still pre-dominant to a European identity that is supposed to be shared by all the peoples in the European Union. To a large extent, the Member States are still sovereign and conduct their own foreign policies also according to their national identities and traditions. Russia might be an “other” to their national “selves”, but this does not necessarily mean that their European identity is defined exactly against some Russian other. The Russian other as such is not a historical and spatial constant either (Neumann, 1999, p. 111). The representation of Russia as an ‘other’ has changed due to shifts in, for example, religious

contexts, i.e. Orthodox belief versus Roman Catholic and Protestant beliefs, and political contexts, e.g. collapse of the Soviet Union (ibid.).

On the other hand, the European Union is arguably based on common values and ideas, such as “liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law” (TEU, Art. 6(1)). By representing and promoting these values abroad, they may become visible as commonalities to the Europeans. Countries, peoples or cultures that do not share these values then do become the “others” to the Europeans and Russia may potentially to be among those “others”, alone since it is not a member states. Is Europe then united against Russia? Or is Europe divided by Russia? Or is Europe united with Russia? Depending on the results, this study will contradict or complement Iver B. Neumann’s argument of Russia being Europe’s ‘other’.

The theoretical approach borrowed from the English School will be of help to clarify these questions as the English School approach also takes into account actors’ values, identities and the like, which may become evident thanks to the discourse analysis. The discourses identified in this study can eventually tested on compatibility and contradiction with what might be called the *discourse of Russia as a learner* identified by Iver B. Neumann, which, according to him, has taken a hegemonic position in European debates about Russia for five centuries (cf. above; Neumann, 1999, p. 110). The English School approach towards the research question for the social reality is also highly suitable to characterize the social structure of EU-Russia relations. Therefore, it is conceivable that certain self-other-dynamics will be identified which would consequently complement Iver B. Neumann’s reasoning and findings.

Similar approaches taking into account self-other-dynamics are employed also by scholars such as Rikard Bengtsson (2008) and Andrei P. Tsygankov (2008). Bengtsson looks at the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy in the light of “EU self-image, images of the neighbourhood and perceptions of the interaction logic between the EU and the neighbourhood” (Bengtsson, 2008, p. 597). Without paying almost any attention towards the self-other-dynamics between the EU and Russia (in comparison to Neumann’s study), Bengtsson comes to the strongly angled and seemingly undifferentiated conclusion that “Russia is a hostile and different rather than transcient [*sic*] other” (ibid., p. 613) in comparison to other countries in the EU’s neighbourhood.

Tsygankov elaborates upon self-other-dynamics within the discipline of International Relations itself. He argues that due to “the “West’s” hegemony in international relations (IR) theory” (Tsygankov, 2008, p. 762) with regard to Russian models as the respective ‘other’ the

discipline has struggled “to come to terms with the problem of difference or the Self / Other dialectic” (ibid.). Yet, Tsygankov identifies certain tendencies of rapprochement, recognition, and acceptance between ‘Western’ and Russian approaches to International Relations in the more recent past (ibid., p. 773).

2.4.4 *Approaches based on Worldviews and Values*

EU-Russia relations have so far also been approached in studies with a special focus on worldviews and values. One of these scholars employing an approach like that is Hiski Haukkala who notes that the formalization of EU-Russia relations particularly in the form of the PCA and the four Common Spaces still appear rather ineffective and problematic (Haukkala, 2003; 2005).

In his article *A problematic ‘strategic partnership’* (2003), Hiski Haukkala examines the EU’s security policy with regard to Russia as well as EU-Russian cooperation in the field of security. Haukkala points out that both the EU and Russia share a wide range of priorities and perceptions of the security situation (ibid., p. 17). This applies especially to issues such as terrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, drug and human trafficking, and regional conflicts just to name a few (ibid., pp. 15-16). Cooperation has, however, remained problematic due to “the similarities [being] largely superficial, whereas the deeper logics underlying them are not fully compatible” (ibid., pp. 17-18). By these deeper logics Haukkala means differences in the worldviews fostered by the EU and Russia: He describes the EU as an increasingly “post-modern and post-sovereign political system” (ibid., p. 16) characterized by integration, pooling of sovereignty (ibid.), and neo-functional approaches to cooperation with the potential for spill-over effects (ibid., cf. p. 19). Contrastingly, Russia appears more as a largely modern state with “rigid state-centric interpretations of the indivisibility of sovereignty still play[ing] a crucial role” (ibid., p. 16).

In his article *The Relevance of Norms and Values in the EU’s Russia Policy* (Haukkala, 2005) Hiski Haukkala elaborates upon the norms and values cropping up in the EU’s Russia policy. Specifically, Haukkala investigates the role they play in the policy and in how far they are shared by the EU and Russia. In general, the EU can be regarded as a largely normative actor in international relations and “norms and values form what can be called the normative core of EU’s Russia policy (ibid., p. 7). The norms largely correspond to provisions of the *acquis communautaire* (ibid., p. 6); and values “act as the very foundation and prerequisite on which the relationship rests in the first place but on the other they act, in addition and above the norms just discussed, as the benchmarks against which the future

breadth and depth of interaction is measured (*ibid.*, p. 7). In this respect, the EU's Russia policy does not differ from the EU's policy to other third countries in its direct neighbourhood (*ibid.*, p. 16). Yet, the promotion and communication of norms and values towards Russia in particular has proven to be no easy undertaking as Russia tends to follow its own agenda without being willing to accept external influences (*ibid.*, p. 13; p. 15; p. 17).

In both articles the core problem in EU-Russia relations causing inconsistencies and conflicts boils down to the divergence between post-modern EU and modern Russia with an own agenda and great power aspirations. Be it cooperation in security matters or the compliance with supposedly shared values, both times Haukkala argues that the only effective way to overcome the gaps in EU-Russia relations is to be patient (Haukkala, 2003, p. 19; 2005). Concluding, Haukkala describes the EU as "simply willing to wait out its recalcitrant partner, relying on its immense and slow gravity to pull the laggard into line" (Haukkala, 2005, p. 19).

More recently, Hiski Haukkala's dissertation (2008) builds upon an approach that takes into account both worldviews and values. He develops a theoretical approach including considerations of so-called new institutionalism in order to find out whether there are differences in the EU's and Russia's worldviews each determining the normative basis for the EU-Russia institutions (Haukkala, 2008, p. 83). These possible differences in worldviews and consequently differences in the set of norms and values inherent to each the EU and Russia may eventually serve as a basis for an explanation for "the recurring difficulties in the EU-Russia relationship" (*ibid.*). To be note here is that Haukkala's conceptualization of the EU-Russia institution is taken from the English School's conceptualization of secondary institutions based on a set of primary institutions (*ibid.*, p.106; cf. Buzan, 2004, p. 187). This feature of the English School also plays a significant role in this study's theoretical analysis (cf. chapter 6). With regard to his research question (Haukkala, 2008, p. 83), Haukkala concludes "that the level of commonality between the European Union and Russia when it comes to normative foundation of their institutionalized relationship is very low" (*ibid.*, p. 236). This situation would account for a relationship with a high potential for conflict since there are many different understandings and perceptions (*ibid.*, p. 97). Due to the persistence of the primary institution of sovereignty in EU-Russia relations, Haukkala characterizes the EU-Russia International Society as rather static (*ibid.*, p. 247).

Hiski Haukkala's approach to the European Union in his studies under discussion treats the EU as a rather homogeneous actor in international relations. In this respect, his approach differs substantially from this study's approach as well as the one employed in the

ECFR's Power Audit (cf. below). Haukkala explains conflicts and inconsistencies largely by pointing out differences in worldviews, perceptions, and the importance credited to certain values. His argumentation is convincing, but he apparently does not take into account possible internal divisions within the EU that may contribute to the course and development of EU-Russia relations. This is a point that this study will set out to elaborate upon. In particular, this study will look at the internal division of the EU influencing the character of EU-Russia relations. Haukkala's finding of a static International Society may thus be confirmed or relativized due to the difference in this study's approach towards the EU. Nevertheless, differences in world views, perceptions, and norms and values may also play an important role as they may be articulated differently by the Council Presidencies under investigation. They will not necessarily provide a direct explanation for the ineffectiveness of the various formalizations of EU-Russia relations. However, they will possibly reveal reasons for internal inconsistencies which contribute to a too vague and too flexible approach by the EU towards Russia. Finally, Hiski Haukkala recognizes his characterization of "monolithic EU and Russian worldviews" (ibid., p. 248) and puts forward the prospect of conducting further research on the origin of these worldviews.

3. THE ENGLISH SCHOOL AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Why the English School?

To remind, the main research question of this study is ‘What kind of social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges from the articulations of the changing Council Presidencies?’ This question requires a theoretical and analytical framework that is able to capture such social realities that are to be characterized in this study. The question about the character of a social reality of international relations that emerges from articulations, i.e. a form of social interaction, may suggest the resort, for example, some constructivist theory such as Alexander Wendt’s *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999). Its portrayal of the three cultures of anarchy, i.e. the Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian cultures corresponding respectively to enmity, rivalry, and amity (Wendt, 1999, p. 246 ff; see also Moisiu, 2008), may appear as a promising approach to the main research problem of this study. Still, even though this study is on the construction of a social reality undertaken by state representatives, the state-centric ontology of Wendt’s *Social Theory of International Politics* does not render the three cultures of anarchy a fully satisfactory conceptualization of social realities in international relations for this study. Contrastingly, the English School, which forms a basis for Wendt’s theory (e.g. Wendt, 1999, pp. 31-32), is such a theoretical framework that, thanks to its elaborate key concepts International System, pluralist and solidarist International Society, and World Society, appears more suitable for the task of characterizing a social reality in international relations.

The reason for this is the circumstance that these three concepts are not exclusively focused on states as possible actors in international relations with the potential and ability to influence the shaping of that social reality. From this feature of the English School and especially its three key concepts understood as a form of Weberian ideal-types (Dunne, 2007, p. 134; Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 53; p.123) results the English School’s core asset as theoretical framework within the discipline of International Relations. It is in particular the ability to approach and capture complex social realities shaped by a variety of different actors in an accessible theoretical framework. In order to show how the characterization of the social reality of EU-Russia relations shall be conducted, this chapter will start out with a general introduction of the English School. This general overview will be followed by further specifications and detailing that will eventually lead to the version of the English School that appears the most suitable for approaching the main research question of this study.

3.2 Historical Overview

The English School as a theoretical framework in the discipline of International Relations has its origins in the late 1950s when Herbert Butterfield called the British Committee on the Theory of International Relations into being (Dunne, 2007, p. 129). The members of that Committee may be considered to be the founding fathers of the so-called English School. The list of English School representative includes – without claim of completeness – names such as Herbert Butterfield, Hedley Bull, Charles Manning, Martin Wight, and Adam Watson. Charles Manning is widely recognized as the initiator of the English School's theoretical considerations and therefore as the provider of a point of departure for further developments of the theory (Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 15).

Although the British Committee on the Theory of International Relations ceased to exist in its original form, these scholars still remain influential in today's debate and are continuously subject of revision and reconsideration by scholars who today view themselves as adherents of the English School. Concerning the early years of the English School, however, some argue that the English School is exclusively limited to those who are or were members of the British Committee on the Theory of International Relations (*ibid.*). Tim Dunne (2007) and especially Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami (2006) give a more detailed overview on this debate on the English School as theoretical framework among those who feel affiliated with it. Not only for this reason, but also for that debate's irrelevance on the English School's actual theoretical achievements and qualities, this will not be elaborated upon in any further detail. Contrastingly, this chapter will focus on the substantial and integral characteristics of the English School as a theoretical framework within the discipline of International Relations. Taking into consideration that scholars from around the world nowadays participate in the debate and reconstruction of the English School theory – as, for example, the English School Bibliography initiated by Barry Buzan (2008) indicates –, and not just an exclusive club of a selected few, I deem it justified to undertake my own modest considerations on the English School theory and its more recent developments, i.e. during the 1990s and 2000s, which shall be relevant for the analysis attempted in this study.

The key essence of the English School is its analytical concepts or methodology including International Society, International System, and World Society. These three major concepts provide the main analytical framework of the English School and are generally shared by all English School scholars. The main subject of theoretical debates among English School scholars are the precise definition of these three key concepts, their meta-theoretical

and ontological features, as well as their interrelatedness. These issues will be further evaluated upon in the following sections.

3.3 Meta-Theoretical Debate and Disunity

The meta-theoretical standing of the English School has been subject to debate especially since the early 1990s after Hollis and Smith's book *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (1990), which caused wide self-reflection in the discipline, had been published. On the one hand, with reference to the early English School, Jackson argues that the English School of Carr and Butterfield is just another "version of classical realism" (1996; quoted in Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 14). On the other hand, Linklater and Suganami identify early traces of social constructivism in the work of Charles Manning who states that "the sorry scheme of things [or the reality of international relations] was not the work of Nature...It is artificial, man-developed, a 'socio-fact' in the jargon of some" (Manning, 1975; quoted in Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 48).

Social constructivism emphasizes that humans construct their environment in a way that it would never exist in nature. This very much captures the ontological thesis of constructivism stated by Barry Sandywell (2008, p. 96) as "what appears to be "natural" is in reality an effect of social processes and practices". Since objects are created they do exist and form an undeniable part of reality; yet their meaning for reality as perceived by humans is given to them by human construction, interaction, and eventually by habitualization and institutionalization (Berger & Luckmann, 2002, p. 42). Habitualization suggests the potential of an action to occur again and again in the future, i.e. performing the action becomes a habit (ibid.). This habit then is institutionalized "whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors" (ibid.). The typifications are thus shared and are therefore "*available* to all the members of the particular social group in question" (ibid.). Consequently, meaning is only attributed to object, values, norms, as well as states and institutions once they are habitualized and shared by all members of the social group in question, "rather than being the product of purely individual thought or meaning" (Fierke, 2007, p. 168). Similarly, Frank Schimmelfennig (2001, p. 58) reports the perception of "international system as an institutional environment structured by intersubjective cognitions and norms"¹. In Fierke's words

¹ Frank Schimmelfennig does not use the term "international system" according to the English School terminology labelling a key concept. He rather means in international sphere in general in which international relations take place.

explicitly social phenomena, such as states or alliances or international institutions, that is the collective subjects of international relations, may build on the basic material of human nature, but they take specific historical cultural, and political forms that are a product of human interaction in a social world (Fierke, 2007, p. 168).

Despite Manning's early employment of social constructivism, also more recent representatives of the English School have not arrived at one universal version of their theory which is homogeneous already in its meta-theoretical and ontological foundation. Richard Little (2000, p. 395), for example, argues "that the school, from an early stage, has been committed to developing a pluralistic approach to the subject, expressed in both ontological and methodological terms". Little places the English School on three different ontologies, i.e. realism, rationalism and revolutionism (ibid., p. 402), each represented by the three key concepts, International System, International Society, and World Society. This pluralist ontology, according to Little, also requires epistemological pluralism as well, with realism demanding a positivist, rationalism demanding an interpretive methodology, and revolutionism "drawing on critical theory" (ibid., p. 395).

Adding to the theoretical variety of the English School, the debate also includes the conceptualization of the three key concepts, especially International System and International Society, which appear interchangeable to some. For example, Robert H. Jackson (1995, p. 112), himself a representative of a more recent and strongly normative strand of the English School, argues that the

distinction between system and society should probably be abandoned. Because all relations between human beings – including people who speak and act in the name of states – necessarily rest on mutual intelligibility and communication, however minimal, they are social at least in a minimal sense.

By arguing this way, Jackson automatically rejects Little's reasoning, which does not allow the interchangeability of International System and International Society on ontological grounds. Instead, Jackson appears to promote a rather constructivist strand of the English School as he points to the social character of inter-human relations (cf. above).

Tim Dunne also follows a more pure constructivist track resembling the work of Charles Manning (cf. above) and strongly contrasting to Little's pluralist approach to the English School's ontology. For instance, he argues for the distinction of the English School from positivist US neo-institutionalism, which is very much based on rational-choice-assumptions emphasizing "interest-based cooperation" (1995a, p. 141) instead of a "natural law 'theory of society or community'", which applies to his conception of the English School (ibid.). Dunne therefore abandons possible links between the English School and positivist

rationalism as meta-theory which largely dominates American IR theory (cf. *ibid.*, p. 146). Instead, he places the English School “four-square in the constructivist camp” (*ibid.*). Since the English School therefore appears hardly compatible with rationalism-based neo-realism and neo-liberalism (*ibid.*; cf. p. 142), Dunne’s approach contradicts the attempt of Barry Buzan to combine the English School with those two IR theories (Buzan, 1993). With international relations taking place in a constructivist environment, as Dunne suggests, the key concepts do not take an ontological role, but are rather presented as the outcome of social interaction and reconstruction in international relations.

In order to avoid ontological confusion as might occur with an approach suggested by Little, the version of the English School to be employed in this study will orient itself strongly towards constructivist approaches as suggested by Dunne. By developing the theoretical approach of this study it will also become clear why Jackson’s proposal to abandon the distinction between International System and International Society does not appear sensible here. For those reasons, the three key concepts will be defined and elaborated in depth in the following section.

What remains to be said about the English School in general is that there is no commonly agreed-upon approach to it; there are as many versions of the English School as there are authors and scholars who feel affiliated to it. The differences between these versions go as deep as core meta-theoretical assumptions and considerations, which may at times impede the perception of the English School as a coherent and homogeneous theoretical orientation within the discipline of International Relations. What all the strands and orientations of the English School share, however, is the conceptualization of International System, International Society, and World Society, whose precise role and function may again be subject to profound debate within the English School. Yet, what most scholars appear to agree upon is that “the interplay of these three concepts is the primary theoretical contribution of the English school” (Dunne, 2007, p. 127; cf. Little, 2000).

3.4 The Key Concepts

3.4.1 International System

The notion of International System corresponds very much to the structure of meaning of realism and neo-realism in International Relations as these theories are state-centric and presume the international system to be anarchical (Dunne, 2007, p. 138; Buzan, 2004, p. 7; cf. Morgenthau, 1967; Waltz, 1979). With the English School, the ontology of these theories becomes merely a part of another theoretical framework that does not fail to capture more

complex situations that go beyond the realist ontology. According to the concept of International System as well as realism, the international sphere is comprised of anarchy in which states are the only actors. Yet, a further parallel of International System with realism is the states' highest and only priority in international politics said to be its own individual interest, i.e. power. Following from this, in an International System states conduct mere power politics among each other. That is, a state aims at maintaining or increasing (if not maximizing) their power in relation to other states. More often than never, the latter is considered to be a necessity for the former, in order not to fall prey to an even stronger power. The concept of International System suggests that there is a certain degree of contact between the states which makes them have an effect on each other's behaviour on the international stage (Diez, 2001, p. 47; see also Buzan, 2004, p. 7). A state that does not maintain any kind of contact to another state is therefore not part of an international system. Turning the argument around, one can state that an International System is a group of states that are in any (minimal) kind of contact with each other in order to conduct power politics. According to Buzan, Tilly defines an international system as a group of states that "interact with each other regularly and to the degree that their interaction affects the behaviour of other states" (Tilly, 1990; quoted in Buzan, 2004, p. 7).

3.4.2 *International Society*

The second key concept of the English School is International Society. A classical definition of this concept that is often referred to also in more recent English School literature can be found in *The Expansion of International Society* by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (1984). According to these two prominent representatives of the classical English School, International Society is

a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognise their common interest in maintaining these arrangements (Bull & Watson, 1984, p. 1; see also Buzan, 1993, p. 330; 1999, p. 4).

Thus, just as individuals form a society by their interaction the same is true for states in the international arena. An International Society is created, upheld, and developed, i.e. constructed and reconstructed, by its members and their interaction with each other. The group of members of an International Society, i.e. the actors constructing and reconstructing it, is considered to be mostly comprised of states. Yet, also non-state actors may be –

depending on the character of the particular International Society – influential in its formation and development. Non-state actors here may be Non-governmental organizations, multinational companies, as well as civil societies with transnational features and actions and will be further elaborated upon below.

The aim of the classical English School in both its early years as well as more recent version was mainly to offer an analytical framework for the global level. Thomas Diez and Richard Whitman accordingly point out that the classic conception of International Society nowadays appears applicable to the global system almost without exceptions (2002, p. 48). At the same time, Diez and Whitman suggest that the EU as the subject of their analysis and theoretical considerations represents “a specific sub-system of the current international system in which the societal element is stronger than elsewhere” (ibid.). This means that “within the EU this [international] society is particularly well developed in that the set of common rules is particularly dense” (ibid.). Following from this, an International Society may not only form on the global level, but also on the sub-global, i.e. regional, level as the European Union “presents itself as an international society that has been formed within a particular regional context” (ibid., p. 45). Therefore, the concept of International Society, as well as International System and World Society, appear also suitable for an analysis of relations between actors in a specific region without having to transfer the analysis to the global level.

3.4.3 World Society

The concept of World Society in the English School is the concept that has received the least attention in the literature. The definitions and perceptions of that concept are thus the most blurry ones and the concept is the hardest to capture in a precise definition (Diez & Whitman, 2002, p. 48; see also Buzan, 2004, p. 7). Whereas International System and International Society are strongly state-centric conceptualizations of international relations, the conceptualization of World Society follows a different orientation. If at all, states only play a very subordinate role in the concept of World Society. The concept instead emphasizes the importance of non-state actors such as non-governmental organisations, individuals, the global or regional population, and furthermore transnational companies or corporations. They interact with each other on a transnational level without states taking an active role and “penetrate the shell of the sovereign states” (Dunne, 2007, p. 140). This means that the interaction takes place beyond national boundaries regardless of nationality or any kind of nationalism. Instead, the interaction and cooperation is motivated by a common set of largely cosmopolitan ideas, values, possibly economic interests, possibly a shared culture, and again

especially a common identity. Not states' interests but rather interests of civil societies on a global or regional level, i.e. humanity, are promoted (Diez & Whitman, 2002, p. 48). Dunne, moreover, emphasises the importance of human rights as prime indicator for World Society (Dunne 2007, p. 140). Here, human rights are regarded as a set of values that "traditionally lay outside international society" (ibid.) and, for example, is manifested in the UN Charter (ibid.). Shortly, the concept of World Society covers all kinds of non-state international or transnational actions and interactions.

3.5 The Function and Role of the Key Concepts

3.5.1 Meta-Theoretical and Ontological Considerations

As Dunne states, the English School functions within a constructivist meta-theory (cf. above). For an analysis following Dunne's reading of the English School, this means that before applying the key concepts to the sources and observations, a pre-interpretive step is taken: Before the actual English School analysis, the assumption predominates that international politics and international relations take place in a social sphere and are shaped by the interaction between the different actors (Dunne, 2007, p. 132). In other words, the actors, be it states or non-state actors, socially construct and reconstruct the reality of international relations, which is the basic and most essential assumption of any social constructivist theory. The reality of international relations is thus not considered as a natural fact, but is instead socially constructed. The character of, for example, EU-Russia relations relevant to this study, may thus be considered a social reality subject to reconstruction and perceptions of the participating actors.

The three key concepts outlined above thus do not themselves create an ontology whose function would be to explain the existential order of things in international politics. This approach cannot be confused with a mere positivist methodology without theoretical significance, inviting for analyses based on hypothesis testing (cf. Dunne, 2007; p. 134). However, this view may be challenged, as the theoretical key concepts are treated as "contending" (Dunne, 2007, p. 134), a notion that "is driven by a search for defining properties which mark the boundaries of different historical and normative orders" (ibid.). The key concepts serve as the English School's core analytical equipment which functions on the basis of the English School's constructivist ontology. International System, International Society, and World Society thus are concepts which help to assess an actor's social presumptions of international relations and thereby contribute to the understanding of the

character and dynamics of international relations. Since they are contending (cf. above), it is their interplay that bears the most analytical value. Given the constructivist ontology, the English School does not claim to deliver precise descriptions of how the world ‘really’ is in its mind-independent capacities, but how different actors presume the world and international relations to be and how these actors attempt to shape and reconstruct it. It abstains from making claims on the ‘givenness’ of certain structures and capabilities (Dunne, 1995, p. 146; cf. above) as, for example, Waltz’ (1979) structural realism does with states, their material attributes and capabilities, and the structure resulting from these. To be noted here, however, is the English School’s primary assumption of the given existence of actors, meaning that, for example, states and transnational organisations are considered as given in the arena of international relations. The reality of international relations and possibly certain structures as assumed by Waltzian realism are the result of social construction. This ontological feature is thus shared with Alexander Wendt’s *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999), which is widely considered a classic of constructivist theory in International Relations.

Consequently, statements on, for example, an International System being close to classical and structural realism (cf. above) do not mean that the concept of International System as such establishes a realist or structural realist ontology. Identified elements of International System rather hint at presumptions of reality as well as actions in line with the classical or structural realist IR theories. The same way of reasoning can be transferred to the other two key concepts accordingly. In this sense, Dunne concludes his article *The Social Construction of International Society* by stating that

For Manning, Wight and Bull, international society is not ontologically prior to the practices of states, and the practices of states are only given meanings by their conscious participation in common institutions. On this reading, international society is a social construction; it is, to use Wendt’s phrase, ‘what states make of it’ (1995b, p. 384).

In other words, any interpretative step taken along English School concepts is preceded by the assuming the constructivist ontology in international relations.

3.5.2 *Purity versus Non-Purity*

The conceptualization of three different analytical models in the English School invites to elaborate on questions requiring a clear either-or-answer. The danger is to attempt a clear categorization of a research problem into either International System, or International Society, or World Society. This, however, would be a misunderstanding of the English School’s aims and would not bear justice to the analytical potential carried along by the English School as

the result would in most cases be an oversimplification of the examined reality. One of the core assets of the English School is its potential to capture complex problems in an accessible theoretical framework. In order to be able to conduct such an analysis, one should not view the three key concepts as pure, i.e. they do not function exclusively from each other. Instead, a core argument of the English School states that the three concepts exist simultaneously, next to each other. Despite his pluralist approach to the English School's ontology (cf. above), Richard Little's argument shall be helpful here. He argues that a single key concept has no ontological significance; instead they are all "operating within a common reality" (1995, p. 15). In the social reality in question – which in this case characterizes EU-Russia relations – one key concept may, however, be dominant to the two other ones. Yet, no matter which key concept is the dominant one in the analysis in question, it is usually and almost always possible to trace elements of the other two, which make a clear categorization impossible and non-desirable. In Little's words, "it must never be forgotten that this [dominant] element is lodged in the context of the other two" (ibid.). Some English School scholars take the argument even a step further by also pointing out that the concepts are interrelated; for example, relating to Barry Buzan's argument, the construction or 'thicker', more solidarist, reconstruction of International Society usually brings along with a promotion of features of World Society by the reconstructing actors (Buzan, 1993, p. 338), i.e. actors of World Society receive a wider scope for the participation in international relations. Otherwise, the articulation of a developed or 'thicker' International Society just remains a discursive occurrence without actual reconstructive, practical implications.

Following from this, it may be argued that International System, International Society, and World Society do not exist in their absolute purity. The concepts are seen as interrelated and create more than just three possible categories representing reality. In fact, taking into account the complexity of reality, there may be countless variations of different degrees creating a seamless spectrum of possible perceptions of international relations including both materialist consideration on its realist end of International System and ideational and value-oriented consideration on its revolutionist end of World Society (cf. Little, 2000). International System, International Society, and World Society provide the analyst with an analytical framework and equipment enabling a more graspable abstraction of reality's complexity. Although Robert H. Jackson acknowledges that "all relations between human beings" (1995, p. 112) are social at least in a minimal sense, his suggestion to abandon the distinction between International System and International Society may be turned down in the light of the above elaborations on purity and non-purity as the three key concepts all appear

necessary in the version of the English School opted for in this study. Precisely, the key concepts function as a set of ideal types à la Max Weber constituting “analytical distinction[s]” (Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 123) which are unlikely to occur in empirical reality in their pure form.

3.6 Organising the Spectrum – Variations of International Society

Assessing international relations on the seamless spectrum mentioned above with the help of the three key concepts alone may turn out to be tiresome as difficulties might occur in differentiating results on the spectrum. Being aware of severe oversimplification, it is conceivable that the results of analyses along the three rather crude key concepts might resemble more a menu of an à-la-carte restaurant than differentiated academic conclusions: ‘We mainly observe elements of International Society intermixed with some International System. As completion there is a dash of World Society.’ This problem arises from the arguably state-dominated spectrum of international relations with International System and World Society at its ends. Theoretically, the ends of the spectrum are thus pure International System and pure World Society, or pure individual state-centrism and pure cosmopolitan transnationalism. Everything else in between would then take some form of International System (cf. Dunne, 2007, p. 138). As argued above, however, none of the key concepts can ever be traced in its purity without elements of the other key concepts next to it. The character of the International Society situated somewhere between International System and World Society is thus determined by the strength and quality of the elements of International System and World Society relevant to the problem in question. In order to express an International Society’s tendency towards either one of the other two key concepts in a more differentiated way, the English School offers two variations: the pluralist and the solidarist International Society. In simple terms, a pluralist International Society tends towards International System, and a solidarist International Society tends towards World Society. Yet, the theoretical differentiation between the two variations has been sophisticated much further by the English School and deserves closer attention as they will also be relevant for the analysis conducted in this study.

3.6.1 Pluralist International Society

Pluralist International Societies are characterized by a focus on common values and ideas containing the preservation and promotion of individually national interests of the member state. The membership in an international society is thus rather regarded as a means to the end

(Buzan, 2004, p. 47). The end here may be seen in the maintenance of a largely Westphalian order including the principles of territorial sovereignty and non-intervention (Linklater & Sukanami, 2006, p. 132; cf. Dunne, 2007, p. 138). The states' behaviour in a pluralist International Society corresponds to rather realist interpretations of international politics. Consequently, a pluralist International Society is situated closer to International System on the spectrum of international relations meaning that the character of the pluralist International Society tends to slightly resemble an anarchical International System (ibid., p. 46; cf. above). According to Linklater and Sukanami, the defining difference between International System and pluralist International Society is that "in an international system, according to Bull's definition, states accept the empirical reality of each other's existence; in a pluralist international society they take the additional step of respecting one another's right to sovereign independence" (Linklater & Sukanami, 2006, p. 130). Furthermore, the states forming a pluralist International Society agree upon rules and conventions which additionally contribute to the preservation of individual statehood and sovereignty. In Timothy Dunne's words "the rules are complied with because, like rules of the road, fidelity to them is relatively cost free but the collective benefits are enormous" (Dunne, 2007, p. 137). Thus, a pluralist International Society may at times appear rather static due to the promotion of the status-quo characterizing relations between the member states of the particular International Society (cf. Haukkala, 2008, p. 247). This may also be the case if the states are already integrated to a deeper or thicker degree than, for example, a purely Westphalian system would allow. If, despite some integration, the preservation of status-quo enjoys highest priority, the International Society is static and therefore pluralist as attempts to deepen integration are discarded.

3.6.2 *Solidarist International Society*

As in a pluralist International Society, in a solidarist International Society the states in question share common ideas and values. Both variations of International Society therefore still fulfil the more general definition of International Society based on Bull and Watson (1984, p. 1; cf. above). The great difference of a solidarist International Society to a pluralist International Society is the "content and character of the rules and institutions" (Dunne, 2007, p. 137): In a solidarist International Society, they largely revolve around a common identity (Diez & Whitman, 2002, p. 47), humanitarianism, and cosmopolitan ideas (Dunne, 2007, 137). Consequently, it is not the national interest of the single state that is of highest priority, but the common interest of the collective, i.e. the International Society, its populations and

humanity. The rationale behind the solidarity is humanism and the idea that by solidarity and cooperation the overall benefit for humanity disregarding nationalities (i.e. cosmopolitanism) will be greater than if single states manoeuvre through the international sphere on their own (Buzan, 2004, p. 47). Therefore, in a solidarist International Society next to states as important actors, there are also a number of prominent non-state actors, such as NGOs and the civil society (ibid., p. 48). This characteristic puts the solidarist International Society – in contrast to the pluralist International Society and International System – closer to World Society. The extent to which non-state actors are able to influence the solidarist character of an International Society still depends on the willingness of states to permit or at least tolerate transnational activity. This is because the final competence to regulate transnational activity still lies to a large part within states' spheres of sovereignty. Therefore, a solidarist International Society cannot eventually be confused with World Society, in which states are marginalized. It is, however, conceivable that states not only tolerate transnational or cross-border activities by non-state actors, but that they also actively promote them as they may, for example, be considered beneficial for humanitarian or socio-economic reasons.

The emphasis on humanitarian ideas and the promotion of human rights also brings along a justification for armed intervention in other states that act against those ideas and principles (Dunne, 2007, pp. 137-138). This is a clear diversion from traditional Westphalian principles such as sovereignty and non-intervention and therefore states another major difference from a pluralist International Society. From this finding, a normative debate has arisen within the English School and Linklater and Sujanami (2006, p. 143) hold that “solidarists who defend the breach of national sovereignty have to recognize the risks involved in relaxing prohibitions against the use of force, and the dangerous precedents which may be set by condoning intervention”. The principle of non-intervention in pluralist International Society is seen by some as a guarantor for the preservation of peace and human rights, as most human rights violations occur in times of war (ibid., p. 142).

Nevertheless, the higher potential for humanitarian intervention may be considered an extreme form of the “penetrat[ion] of the shell of the sovereign states” (Dunne, 2007, p. 140), which may also be undertaken by transnational non-state actors in a more peaceful and non-violent fashion. These transnational actions often related to cosmopolitan ideas are indicators for solidarist International Society to be an entity in progress and permanent change towards homogeneity and integration (Linklater & Sujanami, 2006, p. 146). As opposed to the rather static nature of pluralist International Society aiming at the preservation of the status quo, solidarist International Society may appear more dynamic and progressive towards an

international order based on liberal principles such as cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism. This in turn still bears the risk of “stigmatiz[ing] those who fail to observe liberal principles of legitimacy” (ibid., pp. 145-146).

3.7 Logic of Inquiry

3.7.1 Constructivist Ontology

As indicated above, the inquiry through the lens of the theoretical framework of the English School undertaken in this study is based on the assumption of international relations taking place in a social sphere which is constructed and reconstructed by the actors active in that sphere (cf. above; Dunne, 2007, p. 132). This constructivist ontology does not support a given existence of a power structure in international relations, but provides that the environment and conditions of international relations are primarily socially constructed. Therefore, the three key concepts of the English School, International System, pluralist and solidarist International Society, and World Society, do not possess independent ontological significance. In international relations, they are the product of social construction and interaction between actors and serve the analyst as tools in analyses and studies along the English School theoretical framework. Following from these constructivist assumptions, the subjects of inquiry are not limited to state actors alone, as other purely state-centric theories such as structural realism or liberalism would suggest, but the subjects of inquiry may also include “regions, institutions, NGOs, transnational and subnational groups, individuals, and the wider community of human kind” (ibid., p. 131).

The subjects of inquiry in this study are in particular the German, Portuguese, and Slovenian Council Presidencies. The discourses dominant in their articulations will serve as the basis for an analysis of EU-Russia relations very much in line with the tradition of the classical or historical English School. The classical English School, and in particular, for example, Adam Watson (1992) as one of the most prominent representatives of that strand, focused on question about the kind of international social structures emerge from given geographical and historical contexts. This study can be seen as tying in with that tradition as it aims at characterizing EU-Russia relations as a regional occurrence in the early 21st century. In addition, this study will also aim at showing how and why that particular social structure emerges from the given context of EU-Russia relations.

3.7.2 Theory and Research Problem

This particular study will examine how representatives of state governments construct and articulate EU-Russia relations while they act and function on behalf of the European Union. This means that the state governments in their function of EU Council Presidencies take an exceptional role to their regular one as heads of state and government. The subjects of inquiry are thus state actors who act on behalf of another entity of which their states are part. By their actions towards and social interactions with representatives of the Russian Federation they construct and re-construct the social reality of EU-Russia relations. This is primarily done by verbal articulation which will be subject to investigation by discourse analysis in this study. The discourse analysis here serves as the method to identify the overflowing discourses according to which the council Presidencies articulate and therefore reconstruct EU-Russia relations. A detailed description of the methodology follows in the next chapter. The relevance to this chapter, however, is the discourse analysis' role to identify the social reality on which EU-Russia relations are reconstructed. The assumption of international relations being socially constructed stands thus before the actual employment of the three English School key concepts as analytical tools becomes possible. The actual interpretation will only be done after the discourse analysis; it will focus on the discourses identified before through discourse analysis and interpret them as carrying attributes for the three analytical key concepts. This means that the outcomes of the discourse analysis will serve as the subjects of analysis along the English School concepts in order to characterise EU-Russia relations by an attempt to place them on the spectrum of international relations. In other words, the discourse analysis will reveal how EU-Russia relations are articulated and re-constructed by the actors under investigation, and the English School will provide the lenses and tools to characterize these re-constructions of EU-Russia relations according to a coherent theoretical framework.

The major research question of this study “What kind of social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges from the articulations of the changing council Presidencies?” as such leaves enough scope for all kinds of social realities as the research result. Yet, since this study focuses on the articulations undertaken by state representatives the pre-assumption appears justified that the EU-Russia relations will be characterized as some sort of International Society, i.e. the dominant concept will be International Society and not either International System or World Society. A certain degree of institutionalization of EU-Russia relations has already become visible, for example, in the regular EU-Russia summits established by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1997 which is still to be renewed: Following Berger and Luckmann's reasoning, regular meetings of representatives of the EU and the

Russian Federation are a habit which is likely to occur again in the future and thus uphold a certain character of EU-Russian relations. With the PCA of 1997, both sides agreed on a reciprocal typification of that habit which thus becomes an institution (cf. above; Berger & Luckmann, 2002, p. 42). These examples of interaction account for the existence of an institutionalized social reality of EU-Russia relations as articulated by the German, Portuguese and Slovenian Council Presidencies, the characterization of which along the English School concepts is the ultimate aim of this study.

4. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS METHOD

4.1 English School and Discourse analysis

As pointed out above, the English School is a theoretical framework within the constructivist meta-theory: According to Diez and Whitman (2002, p. 46), the English School perceives international politics and international relations not only to be conducted within anarchy. It additionally states that it does have societal qualities which materialize in International Societies as well as World Societies. Therefore, an analysis based on the English School requires a method with such an ontological standing. Since Discourse analysis is widely regarded as a theory for social interaction with language and articulations as its main instruments for the construction of societies, it appears suitable to be employed as a method in combination with the English School.

In particular, it is language that enables members of any society to communicate and interact with each other. In fact, it is communication and interaction by which a society is primarily constructed, i.e. “any society is discursively created and upheld” (ibid.). With states being the main actors at least in International Society, it is their representatives or “the diplomats and leaders who think and act on behalf of the state and its institutions” and therefore create International Societies by interacting and communicating with each other (Dunne, 2007, p. 133). Studying the language and discourse employed by diplomats and leaders will show how especially International Societies, but also International System and World Societies, are the product of communication and discursive interaction of different state- and/or non-state actors respectively (ibid.); for example, Diez classifies the founding of the European Economic Community as a result of a speech act (Diez, 1999, p. 600). That is why Discourse analysis suits to analyze how Societies are articulated, i.e. constructed, reconstructed and developed, by their respective representatives and what hegemonic discourses are shared by them. Taking the assumption that communication and interaction create a society, Discourse analysis will also be suitable to examine the result of communication and interaction between representatives of the EU and Russia, which will enable a characterization of EU-Russia relations at certain points of time.

4.2 Approaches to Discourse analysis

This study will make use of discourse analysis in order to identify the Discursive Nodal Points (DNPs) stabilizing the EU discourse on EU-Russia relations and tying together various key discourses into discursive formation. The identification of these key discourses will show how

EU-Russia relations are articulated by the rotating Presidencies. Eventually, this allows drawing conclusions on the character of social reality of EU-Russia relations to emerge from the articulations.

There is not just one clear and ‘correct’ way of conducting a discourse analysis; in fact, there is a huge variety of approaches to discourse analysis. The different strands and branches all have in common the assumption that no text possesses a given meaning; meaning only evolves from interplay between the text and its contexts (Angermüller, 2008, p. 189). Two of the most common schools of Discourse analysis are the French strand and the Anglo-American strand. The following sections will give an overview of the French strand, as Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who form the major basis of the method of this study, can be considered belonging to that strand. Additionally, the Anglo-American strand will also be introduced due to Thomas Diez (2001), who developed Laclau and Mouffe’s method to the form deployed in this study, also borrowing from it. Although there are still a considerable number of other categories of discourse analysis (Angermüller, 2008; Jasinski, 2001, pp. 169-172) presenting all categories here would be beyond the scope of this chapter. This overview is therefore limited to the two categories relevant to this study.

4.2.1 *The French Strand*

The core characteristic of the French discourse analysis is the focus on the linguistic analysis of articulations, statements, or utterances (Angermüller, 2008, p. 191). The main questions posed by the French strand are of philosophical and sociological nature about power-relations created by the use of language or, put more generally, by articulations (Torfing, 2005, p. 3). Although the French strand is sometimes presented as a rather unitary approach to discourse analysis – due to a common neo- or post-Marxist theoretical heritage –, there are also differences within the strand itself as a closer look at some of its representatives will reveal. Three of the most prominent representatives of the French strand are Michel Pêcheux, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Lacan. Pêcheux’s major methodical approach to discourse analysis, the so-called *analyse automatique du discours* (automatic analysis of discourse, AAD), aims at “analysing the linguistic form in which ideology appears” (Wallis, 2007, p. 253). Pêcheux’s theory of discourse is based on the assumption that semantic processes, i.e. the articulation of meaningful words, phrases and the like, are historically determined by and depend on the social and ideological formations in which the articulator performs (ibid., p. 257). These theoretical assumptions about discourses create the link to other representatives of the French strand of Discourse analysis.

In *The Order of Discourse* (1974, pp. 35-37), Michel Foucault formulates similar assumptions in four methodical principles: reversal, discontinuity, specificity, and exteriority. Here, especially the principle of reversal requests the analyst to examine in what way the author of the articulations is limited by his position in the already existing discourse. Moreover, in his more prominent work, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault calls into question the meaningfulness of single works of single authors. Instead, he argues that there is a systematic relationship between discursive events which thus create discursive formations (Jasinski, 2001, p. 173). The unifying element of discursive formations is thus not a certain coherence created by a common point of reference or else. Instead, it is dispersion and regularity of dispersion – an idea that also Laclau and Mouffe draw upon in their theoretical constructions (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, pp. 105-106).

Lacan, as the third representative of the French strand of discourse analysis, is originally situated in the discipline of psychoanalysis. Yet his works are considered to be highly influential for discourse analysis. A work that the two fields, psychoanalysis and discourse analysis, draw upon is *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis* (1981). This double influence also becomes visible in the fact the Laclau and Mouffe relate their conceptualization of *nodal points* to Lacan's concept of *points de capitons*, i.e. "privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a signifying chain" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). The concept of nodal points will be further elaborated upon below.

4.2.2 *The Anglo-American Strand*

Whereas the major analytical focus of the French strand of discourse analysis is very much on philosophical and sociological questions about power-relations created by the use of language (Torfing, 2005, p. 3), the Anglo-American strand of discourse analysis represents a rather pragmatic approach to discourse analysis with its focus on more technical analyses of the use of language (Angermüller, 2008, p. 189; p. 193; Jasinski, 2001, p. 170). Consequently, Jasinski (2001, p. 171) situates the Anglo-American strand close to rhetoric. The analytical focus is on the everyday use of language and oral interaction and the list of labels compiled by Jasinski for the Anglo-American strand also includes "*speech act analysis*" (ibid., p. 170), i.e. speech act theory. However, this study will not cover actual speech situations; rather the relevance of the Anglo-American strand in this study is the performative dimension of language, as pointed out by speech act theory.

The 'father' of speech act theory is the American scholar John Austin who thus is also one of the main representatives of the Anglo-American strand (Angermüller, 2008, p. 193;

Torfining, 2005, p. 6; Diez, 1999). Austin's speech act theory points out that language possesses next to its 'constative', i.e. descriptive or stating, dimension also a 'performative' dimension (Diez, 1999, p. 600). This means that it is possible to actually do something with language. Austin coined the term "performative sentence" in order to capture this finding (ibid.; Potter, 1996, p. 11) which also constitutes the essence of Austin's speech act theory. This idea is, furthermore, implied by the title of Austin's book *How to Do Things with Words* published in 1975 (see Torfining, 2005, p. 30; Diez, 1999).

William Connolly can be seen as another representative of the Anglo-American strand of Discourse analysis (Torfining, 2005, p. 3). According to Torfining, Connolly is very much influenced by French post-structuralists and discourse analysts (ibid.). Therefore, his approach seems less pragmatic than other approaches of the Anglo-American strands. Drawing upon Gallie (1956), Connolly characterizes 'essentially contested concepts' as concepts and terms whose pre-conditions for them to be applicable to a certain situation is subject to debate and dispute among various actors (Connolly, 1993, p. 10; Diez, 2001, p. 16). There might be a common idea among the debating actors about what the contested concept is; but "[c]ommonly accepted criteria of its application are weighted differently by opposing parties, and certain criteria viewed as central by one party are rejected as inappropriate or marginal by others" (ibid.). This logic possesses clear parallels to Laclau and Mouffe's notion of discursive struggles determining various hegemonic centres or *nodal points* (cf. below; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

4.3 The Discourse analysis of this Study

The method in this study has its basis in the work by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and developed by Thomas Diez (2001). The major methodical instrument of this study will be Thomas Diez' concept of Discursive Nodal Points (DNPs). DNPs are a further development of Laclau and Mouffe's concept of *nodal points*. In the following sections, first Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical contributions to Discourse analysis will be presented, then Thomas Diez' DNPs will be elaborated upon in the context of this study. Finally, inspired by Torfining (2005), the formulation of this study's own method will also take into account Laclau and Mouffe's ideas of hegemony.

4.3.1 Laclau and Mouffe and Hegemonic Nodal Points

Due to the major influence of Foucault and Lacan as well as their post-Marxist colouring, Laclau and Mouffe can be considered to belong rather to the French strand of discourse analysis. Nonetheless, Torfing states that Laclau and Mouffe attempted to combine various discourse theories in order to create “a coherent framework that can serve as a starting point of social and political analysis” (Torfing, 2005, p. 9).

When Laclau and Mouffe first wrote their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) it was not their prime intention to make a methodical contribution to discourse analysis. Instead, they designed a neo-Marxist social theory or ontology drawing upon a re-reading and critique of various Marxist theoreticians, especially Gramsci (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). The essence of Laclau and Mouffe’s theory is that social order is shaped by hegemonic relations created by discursive struggles and articulations that determine a hegemonic ‘winner’. On the way to showing how hegemony evolves, Laclau and Mouffe make their major contribution to Discourse analysis which will be employed in this study. The notion of socialist strategy, in contrast, will not be followed here.

Laclau and Mouffe start off from some very basic assumptions: They state that *articulations* are any sort of practice that creates a relation between elements (1985, p. 105). The entirety of articulations in turn creates an overall structure which Laclau and Mouffe call *discourse* (ibid.). Due to the participation in interaction and debate of different actors comprising a society, *discourse* is never stable and is subject to re-articulation and reconstruction. This means that the meaning of a discourse can never be ultimately determined or located at one fixed point (ibid., p. 111-112). Yet, discourse always tends “to construct a centre” (ibid., p. 112) around which meaning is established and consolidated. This is because otherwise “the very flow of differences would be impossible” (ibid.), i.e. articulations would never have a meaning or ‘make sense’ which would make communication and social interaction impossible. The centres around which meaning partially fixes itself are named “*nodal points*” by Laclau and Mouffe, who base the idea on Lacan’s *points de capiton* (ibid.; cf. above). These nodal points do not contain meaning by themselves or give meaning to the discourse as such. Rather, they are ‘empty signifiers’ which only contain meaning due to discursive struggle, i.e. the content they are filled with other overflowing and hegemonic discourses determining the discourse in question (ibid.).

According to Laclau and Mouffe’s theory, the nodal points are privileged to other points which might have potentially served as nodal points as points of fixation in the discourse (ibid.). In other words, these nodal points have become hegemonic in relation to

other points in the process of articulation and re-articulation, i.e. the discursive struggle that fills the DNPs with content. Re-articulation is to be mentioned here next to articulation as one nodal point might be hegemonic just for a certain time. Due to the flow and overflow of discourses and the openness of discourse (ibid., p. 113) eventually another nodal point might be hegemonic instead, i.e. takes its place in the course of discursive struggle next to a variety of other nodal points. Hegemony is thus, in the words of Laclau and Mouffe, “quite simply, a political *type of relation, a form*, if one so wishes, of politics; but not a determinable location within a topography of the social. In a given social formation, there can be a variety of hegemonic nodal points” (ibid., p. 139). It is exactly this variety of hegemonic nodal points that needs to be found as the first major step of the analysis in this study. In addition, Torfing (2005, p. 13) summarizes the function of nodal points as follows:

Discourse theory aims to draw out the consequences of giving up the idea of one transcendental centre. The result is not total chaos and flux, but playful determination of social meanings and identities within a relational system which is provisionally anchored in nodal points that are capable of partially fixing a series of floating signifiers.

With the help of these nodal points, I will aim at fulfilling the main task of this study, i.e. the characterization of the relational system or discursive formation. I further presume that this formation is shaped by hegemonic struggles in the moment of articulation.

The elaboration on the function of nodal points also clarifies that Laclau and Mouffe’s theory is a framework purely for discourse analysis or the analysis for the use of language. The ontological dimension of Laclau and Mouffe’s theory as a social theory is revealed. However, taking Laclau and Mouffe’s conceptualization of hegemonic nodal points as a more pragmatic approach appears suitable for the analysis of the linguistic articulation and re-articulation of social and political relations – something which this study aims to conduct.

4.3.2 Thomas Diez and Discursive Nodal Points

Diez situates his conceptualization of discourse analysis close to Laclau and Mouffe, yet, removes it from the abstract ontological problematic, and puts it into a more pragmatic framework as he concentrates on questions concerning European integration and European politics. One might think that this approach is thus not exactly suitable for analysing the EU’s relations with third countries. However, from a more general English School perspective, the study of European integration can be regarded as the construction, deepening, and widening

of an International Society, just as this study intends to investigate what kind of International Society emerges from the articulations of the Council Presidencies.

The notion of discourse put forward by Diez already reveals in its very foundation the close relation to Laclau and Mouffe (cf. above): Any practices establishing a relation between elements are called *articulations* (Diez, 2001, p. 16; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). Putting this into the context of this study, the elements are some items or themes within EU-Russia relations as they are articulated by the representatives of the EU, e.g. Council Presidencies, and Russia. These discursive elements define the character of EU-Russia relations. The entirety of articulations in turn create an overall structure which is called discourse (Diez, 2001, p. 16; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). Following from this, any articulation of EU-Russia relations is automatically part of the more general EU-Russia relations discourse (cf. Diez, 2001, p. 16).

Since, however, EU-Russia relations can be articulated differently by different actors under different circumstances, the characteristics of EU-Russia relations are subject to change. Therefore, Diez agrees with Laclau and Mouffe that the meaning of a discourse can never be ultimately determined or located at one fixed point (ibid.; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 111-112). Instead, discourse always tends to create several “central concepts” (Diez, 2001, p. 16) around which meaning is established and consolidated. These centres and central concepts are the *nodal points* already presented above. In Diez terminology (2001, p. 15) they are called “Discursive Nodal Points” (DNPs). DNPs take a “central function in [a] political debate” (ibid., p. 16) and thereby they provide some stability of meaning in a discourse (ibid.; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 112). However, the DNPs are not stable themselves. They are subject to constant reconstruction by the actors just as the actors themselves are subject to constant reconstruction by the discourse or structure they perform within (Diez, 1999, p. 607; 2001, p. 17). This also corresponds to Foucault’s principle of reversal in *The Order of Discourse* which emphasizes the limitation and denies the transcendence of single actors (cf. above.; Foucault, 1974, pp. 35-37).

The PCA can be considered as containing one such set of DNPs. Thus, the PCA represents the stabilization of hegemonic struggles in the EU-Russia discourse at a certain moment in time. In other words, it is one possible illustration of momentary stabilization of meaning. Since the EU-Russia discourse has been rearticulated several times over the last decade, the hegemonic discourse in 1997 is most likely no longer currently hegemonic. This is why the re-articulation and re-negotiation of a renewal of the PCA have not been completed yet.

4.3.3 DNP and Hegemony

Similar to Laclau and Mouffe, Thomas Diez does not view a discourse as one unitary, homogeneous closed system. Instead, various discourses overlap and overflow each other and are connected by the nodal points which are “constituted within an intertextuality that overflows it” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 113). Diez states that DNPs stabilize the meaning of a discourse or fill a political debate with meaning by the “tying together of a number of discourses on other, more general concepts” (Diez, 2001, p. 16). Where several discourses come together, it is inevitable that some articulations are incompatible with each other and form antagonisms. The result is a struggle in which opposing concepts compete for hegemony, i.e. the domination and consequently the re-articulation of the discourse. In other words, the struggle will “lead to the articulation of a new hegemonic discourse” (Torfing, 2005, p. 16). As already outlined above, the newly articulated discourse may be characterized by a new array of hegemonic nodal points or DNPs (ibid.).

Relating this to the context of this study, Discursive Nodal Points would refer to something that is shared by the actors. To illustrate, the PCA as the fixation of struggles at a given moment contains references to the respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law as well as the liberalization of trade (just to name a few significant examples). Supposedly, these were the hegemonic DNPs at the time of the signing of the PCA and it would be interesting to analyse what kinds of discourses they bind together. In this work, I examine the way in which EU-Russia relations are spoken about at present state of affairs with only provisional formalization of EU-Russia relations. In ongoing discursive interaction the hegemonic DNPs are filled with different meanings and contents and may therefore tie together partly incompatible discourses. This renders the key concepts occupying DNPs “essentially contested concepts” (Connolly, 1993, chapter 1; cf. Diez, 2001, p. 16). This is partly because the actors adapt their articulations according to factors that emerge out of actuality, e.g. certain events or political disputes which determine the ‘atmosphere’ of EU-Russia summits. The meaning and content given to the DNPs thus depends on which discourses are hegemonic in the EU-Russia discourse at the time of articulation.

4.4 Methodical Application

Designing the method for this study, I started off from the abstract social and political theory by Laclau and Mouffe. The highly abstract nature attributed to Laclau and Mouffe’s theory shall not be considered a weakness. On the contrary, it can well be considered one of the strongest and even most fascinating characteristics of the theory. It is due to the abstractions

that the theory turns out to be applicable to a wide range of problems and questions and gives justice to the complexity of relations between and within the social and political spheres. It is necessary to point out here that the present chapter does not aim at capturing the whole complexity of Laclau and Mouffe's theory, but the major features most relevant for this study. Having transformed that theory into a more practicable method suitable discourse analysis in the field of EU-Russia relations with the help of Thomas Diez' DNPs, the following sections will set out how the method will be applied to the research material for the research to be fruitful in results.

4.4.1 Identification of DNPs

The first step of the analysis will be to identify the DNPs in the sources at hand. The sources are the press conferences and statements delivered during the EU-Russia summits taking place once during each Council Presidency and other articulations concerning Russia issued during the Presidencies. The DNPs are the central concepts of the political debate articulated by the Council Presidencies in interaction with Russia (cf. above; Diez, 2001). However, the DNPs are initially 'empty signifiers' that are only filled with meaning by discursive struggle in a political debate. Due to the DNPs initially being 'empty signifiers', identifying them and, consequently, the discourses tied together in them will be necessary in order to identify the discursive formation of each Presidency. The articulations of different actors, i.e. representatives of Presidencies, may be dominated by different discourses which potentially results in giving the DNPs different meanings.

For example, some of the discourses of a Presidency might be fixed around the DNP of human rights. Since, however, the content of DNPs can be seen as 'essentially contested concepts', the concept of human rights may be tied to different discourses. Human rights, for example, may have a high priority in the articulations of one Presidency and should be promoted by any means. Another Presidency may find human rights 'important' as well, but this Presidency's human rights-DNP is overflowed by something called the "Westphalian sovereignty-discourse" which suggests that the EU should not meddle into other states' internal affairs, even if it is for the sake of human rights. This corresponds very much to the notions of sovereignty and non-intervention being characteristics of a pluralist International Society introduced in chapter 3 (p. 30). In terms of the discourse theory introduced above, this means that a discourse hegemonic in one Presidency's articulations might not be hegemonic in the articulations of another Presidency. Concerning the same issue in EU-Russia relations two different discourses are hegemonic and drown out each other in the articulations of either

one Presidency: A possible discourse of liberalism motivating criticism on the human rights situation by Presidency A is drowned out by a discourse of sovereignty by Presidency B promoting non-intervention (cf. Dunne, 2007).

4.4.2 *Logic of Analysis*

Identifying the DNPs, analysing the ways in which they are filled with meaning and, on this basis, identifying the overflowing, hegemonic discourses according to the procedure set out above will be the first three steps of the analysis. Referring to the research question of this study, the discourses as such will not yet tell much about the character of the social reality of EU-Russia relations emerging from those articulations. Since similar DNPs can be filled with different meaning (cf. example of human rights above), the character of the social reality can only be determined by assessing the quality and character of the discourses. The role of the DNPs themselves will now only be of secondary priority as they merely served as a tool in identifying the discourses and wider discursive formations underpinning the Presidencies' statements. As there are most likely several DNPs around which the EU's EU-Russia discourse establishes itself, and consequently a number of different discourses tied together in the DNPs, a statement of whether the social reality of EU-Russia relations as it emerges from these articulations will clearly constitute a pluralist or clearly solidarist International Society will most likely not be possible. Yet, by determining the solidarist and pluralist elements in the Presidencies' discourses, it will be possible to state a tendency towards either one as well as drawing conclusions about how and why the social reality bears its distinct characteristics. These solidarist and pluralist elements will be determined by the quality of the discourses hegemonic in the Presidencies' articulations. Determining the quality or character of the discourses will be a rather interpretative undertaking. Nonetheless, quality or character will be informative about priorities, understandings, perspectives, and possibly underlying ideological convictions of the different Presidencies, which may or not be shared by the other Presidencies. At the very end of this work, the elements hinting at the three English School key concepts characterizing EU-Russia relations will be identified.

The results of the discourse analysis in this study should thus be the hegemonic discourses during the Presidencies of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia. The quality or character of those discourses will then reveal societal features among the EU member states while interacting with Russia. Russia may in this respect be regarded as some sort of catalyst for the disclosure of societal patterns within the foreign policy and among the member states of the European Union. These societal elements will – due to the English School's ontology

of social construction – enable us to draw conclusions from the discourses and articulations
what kind of International Society emerges from those.

5. THE DISCOURSES OF THE COUNCIL PRESIDENCIES

In the following section, the primary sources will be combed for relevant articulations by the three Council Presidencies in question that describe or characterize the EU-Russia relations at the given time. For this reason, the key events in EU-Russia relations during each Presidency will be introduced and the primary sources relevant to them discussed. The entirety of all concepts in each Presidency's articulations will then enable the identification and distinction of hegemonic DNPs. After that, the actual discourse analysis will be conducted.

5.1 The German Presidency: January – June 2007

5.1.1 Articulations and Concepts

This section will introduce each key event relevant for EU-Russia relations and having caused articulations by the German Presidency in chronological order. The key concepts dominating the discourse will be emphasized. They will form the basis for the actual discourse analysis which will be conducted afterwards. The discourse analysis will not as such be initiated right away since the knowledge of all sources relevant is required to conduct a fruitful discourse analysis. This is justified by the Foucauldian questioning of the transcendence of single works by single authors (cf. above) or the argument by Laclau and Mouffe stating that there is not just one transcendental centre around which meaning establishes itself (cf. above; Torfing, 2005, p. 13). Therefore, this section will be of rather descriptive nature. Moreover, the sources by the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidency will be processed in a similar way.

1. EU-Troika meeting with the Russian Federation

The German Presidency's first occasion for officially articulating EU-Russia relations was the European Union Troika meeting with the Russian Federation in Moscow on February 5th, 2007, with the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and his Russian counterpart Mr. Lavrov. Due to the PCA being about to expire, the content of the discussions during the meeting was characterized by the idea of initiating a renegotiation of the PCA, or a negotiation of a new PCA respectively. The German Presidency was not the first Presidency to discuss the renegotiations of the PCA. Already during the Finnish Presidency in 2006 hopes had arisen about a possibly soon start of negotiation rounds on a new PCA. Yet, the issue had been passed on to the German Presidency in 2008 as the two sides, the EU and Russia, had not been able to find common ground for the initiation of a round of renegotiation.

The press release on the meeting issued on the website of the German Presidency explicitly took up the problematic character of EU-Russia relations. It stated that EU-Russian cooperation was characterized by “deficits”, which, however, had been “openly discussed”. What is particularly interesting about the press release is that in addition to the usual mentions of “partnership” and “cooperation”, it makes reference to a “common future” between the EU and Russia (German Presidency, 2007a).

2. Signing of the border treaty between Latvia and Russia

The second occasion for the German Presidency to articulate the character of EU-Russia relations was given by the signing of the border treaty between the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation on March 27th, 2007. The treaty finally defines the Latvian-Russian border which had been an issue since Latvia’s independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. In this occasion, the German Presidency issued a declaration on behalf of the EU as a CFSP statement on the following day (German Presidency, 2007b):

On behalf of the European Union the Presidency welcomes the signing of this treaty. It is a sign of the increasing confidence between Latvia and Russia and a contribution to the deepening of a *partnership* between the EU and the Russian Federation based on *trust*. The European Union looks forward to early ratification of the treaty.

Besides the concept of confidence² between Latvia and Russia, EU-Russia relations are here characterized by partnership and trust. Unlike the press release of the Troika meeting, which turns on the problematic character of EU-Russia relations, the declaration obviously paints a rosier picture of the relations between Russia and Latvia or Russia and the EU. The DNP’s confidence/rapprochement, partnership and trust are in a key role in accomplishing this. The rapprochement of Latvia and Russia may be regarded as significant as relations between Latvia and Russia have been problematic since Latvia’s independence. Not only in Latvia but also in the other Baltic states, Russia, or the Soviet Union respectively, had been regarded as the aggressive occupier in the post-WWII period. Furthermore, the significant Russian minority in Latvia and Russia’s influence have caused debate and tensions between the two countries.

3. Trilateral meeting on internal security between EU, Russia, and USA

On April 4th, 2007, the German Presidency held a trilateral meeting on internal security with Russia and the USA on behalf of the EU. Although this was a trilateral meeting, articulations

² The term used in the German version of the CFSP statement is *Annäherung* whose most suitable English translation is *rapprochement*. It thus has a different meaning than *confidence*.

of the character of the EU-Russia relationship by the German Presidency can be regarded meaningful for the relations between the EU and Russia. The press release on the meeting quotes the German Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble and takes up the DNP of “cooperation” between the EU, Russia and the US in the context of terrorism and organised crime the tackling of which is characterised as a “shared responsibility” (German Presidency, 2007c). According to Schäuble the EU, Russia and the US should “serve as an engine for international cooperation in the field of home affairs policy” (ibid.) Furthermore, the press release states that “participants stressed the special importance of close cooperation and the strategically significant dialogue” (ibid.).

4. Demonstrations in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novgorod

During March and April 2007, the Russian opposition movement *The Other Russia* with chess world champion Gary Kasparov as leading figure organized several *Marches of Those who Disagree* in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novgorod. Since the marches were dissolved violently by the authorities and hundreds of demonstrators and journalists were detained, the marches raised especially international media attention and criticism towards the Russian authorities (Sager, 2008, pp. 156-158). On April 4th, 2007 the German Presidency issued a CFSP statement on the treatment of Russian authorities to demonstrators. The statement was critical in tone with regard to the actions of Russian security forces which, according to the statement, “raise questions about the proportionality of these actions” (German Presidency, 2007d). The statement turns on the DNP of “human rights including freedom of speech and of assembly” and the German Presidency emphasises the fact that it is “concerned” about the events and that human rights issues are “addressed regularly within the context of consultations between the European Union and the Russian Federation” (ibid.).

5. EU-Troika meeting with the Russian Federation on ministerial level

Before the EU-Troika meeting with Russia in Luxembourg on April 23rd, 2007, the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier delivered a statement to the journalists. Steinmeier pointed out that a major issue to be discussed during that meeting would be the Russian import ban on Polish meat. The Russian Federation had maintained that import ban since 2005 for food-hygienic reasons. The import ban became an issue in EU-Russia relations when Poland vetoed the initiation of negotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement (BPB, 2008a). In relation to the CFSP statement of April 16th (cf. above), further dominating concepts or DNPs

in this statement are concern about human rights and rule of law in Russia, dialogue, and the concept of inter-reliance (*Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein*³) (German Presidency, 2007e).

During the press conference, Minister Steinmeier's articulations on EU-Russia relations are dominated by the concepts of openness, partnership, shared responsibility (in the solution of international conflicts), common paths, and dialogue. Steinmeier also emphasises that issues such as import bans are rather "technical" (German Presidency, 2007f). What is particularly interesting is that Minister Steinmeier speaks of a "fateful significance" of European-Russian relations for both Europe and Russia giving rise to destiny/fate as one of the unique DNP's of the German Presidency (ibid.).

6. EU-Troika meeting on Justice and Home Affairs

The EU-Troika meeting with Russia in Moscow on April 23rd and 24th was held under the themes of Justice and Home Affairs. The press release revolves around the idea that the EU and Russia share problems such as "fight against international terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in human beings and narcotics...[and] illegal migration" (German Presidency, 2007g). Cooperation in criminal and civil matters was emphasised on this basis. Furthermore, the press release also takes up the possibility of "joint border management", "possibilities of legal and temporary migration between Russia and the EU" and "facilitating passenger traffic by simplifying visa provisions" (ibid.). Such cooperation is supposed to be beneficial to freedom, security, and justice, relating to the respective Common Space (ibid.; European Commission, 2009a).

7. The Estonian Embassy in Moscow

On May 2nd, the German Presidency issued a CFSP-statement commenting on the situation in front of the Estonian Embassy in Moscow and Estonian-Russian relations in general. Similar to Latvian-Russian relations outlined above, Estonian-Russian relations have been strongly characterized by tensions stemming from diverging interpretations of the common Soviet history (cf. above). Given the relatively big minority of Russians among the Estonian population, internal and external tensions may easily affect each other. This was the case when the years-old dispute about the Soviet monument in Tallinn's city centre escalated. The removal of the statute of the Soviet soldier in April 2007 caused anger and unrest among the

³ The notion of *Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein* has a positive connotation in the German language; the fact of being inter-reliant is regarded as beneficial as long as both sides are aware of their mutual responsibility and act accordingly. Another possible English translation is the term *interdependence*; however, it does not carry the same positive connotation as *Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein*. Therefore, the author chose the term *inter-reliance* which captures the meaning of *Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein* in the most appropriate manner possible.

Russian minority in Estonia as well as in Russia towards Estonia. The results were attacks by Russian youth organizations on the Estonian embassy in Moscow which took several days. (BPB, 2008b).

The statement issued by the German Presidency is quite critical in tone instead of emphasising cooperation: “The Presidency of the European Union is gravely *concerned* about current developments in *relations* between Estonia, a Member State of the European Union, and the Russian Federation. At the present time the situation of the Estonian Embassy in Moscow gives cause for concern” (German Presidency, 2007h; emphasis added). By emphasising Estonia’s position within the EU the German Presidency expresses the EU’s and the member states’ solidarity with other member states. An initially bilateral issue between a member state and a third country thus also becomes an issue on the level of the European Union. The statement continues by stating that the Russian Federation should “comply with its *international obligations* under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and protect the staff and premises of the Estonian mission and ensure unimpeded access to it” (ibid.). The German Presidency represented itself as the voice of reason attempting to “de-escalate” the heated situation. Indeed, one characteristic DNP in this statement is the distinction between reasons and passions. The statement refers to “the emotionally charged atmosphere surrounding the Soviet war graves in Estonia” and mentions the need for a “dispassionate dialogue”, “understanding” and “respect” (German Presidency, 2007h).

8. Fifth Round of Human Rights Consultations

On May 3rd, the EU and Russia held the fifth consultations on human rights (German Presidency, 2007i). The press release on the event contains states that “the EU raised a number of specific concerns about the human rights situation in Russia, in particular regarding freedom of opinion and assembly, above all in the run-up to the parliamentary and presidential elections”. Furthermore, the press release revolves around the concept of concern on the freedom of the press, the situation of Russia’s civil society, and the rule of law. In order to improve the situation of human rights and related issues, cooperation within international institutions such as the Council of Europe were discussed (ibid.).

9. EU-Russia Summit in Samara, Russia

On May 18th, the 19th EU-Russia Summit took place in Samara. Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel represented the European Union as the Council President. The transcripts of the press conference are only available in German language (German Presidency, 2007j). Therefore, it

will be abstained from extensive quotations here. Nonetheless, the chancellor articulates EU-Russia relations on the basis of the concepts of trade, partnership, concern on human rights situation (demonstrations during the summit), dialogue, openness, honesty (also on controversial issues), and cooperation in energy, Europol, borders, and the Galileo project (ibid., pp. 3-4). In the question-answer round of the press conference, the chancellor's articulations on EU-Russia relations next to the concepts already mentioned are coined by the concepts of inter-reliance (*Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein*⁴) and strategic partnership (ibid., pp. 7-8; pp. 10-11). Concerning the question of the Russian import ban of Polish meat, Angela Merkel speaks of responsibility of the Council Presidency for the other member states (ibid.; p. 8). The press release on the event is structured around the same concepts as have been employed by Angela Merkel during the press conference (German Presidency, 2007k; cf. above). The predominant concepts are, however, the concern about the human rights situation, trade, dialogue, and cooperation in various fields (ibid.).

10. Investigations into the Murder of Alexander Litvinenko

On the occasion of the unexplained background of the death of the former FSB-agent Alexander Litvinenko in London in November 2006 the German EU Presidency issued a CFSP statement on June 1st, 2007. Alexander Litvinenko had been living in exile in London where he published a book unfolding dubious and illegitimate processes within the FSB (Sager, 2008, p. 69). In 2006, Litvinenko fell prey to intoxication by polonium, a rare but highly radioactive substance. Investigations by Scotland Yard led to FSB-agent Andrei Lugovoj as the main suspect. The Russian Federation refused Lugovoj's extradition under constitutional law (BPB, 2008a). The CFSP statement by the German Presidency reads as follows:

In the light of the extradition request made to the Government of the Russian Federation by the British Government on 28 May 2007, the EU Presidency expresses its hope that all necessary steps will be taken to *resolve* the murder of Alexander Litvinenko. It expects the Russian judicial system to *cooperate* constructively with the British authorities. It stresses the European Union's earnest desire to see the case fully *resolved* and the culprits *punished* (German Presidency, 2007l).

⁴ See footnote no. 4; the spelling of the term in the transcript of the press conference is *Aufeinanderangewiesensein* (German Presidency, 2007i, p. 7), which must appear as monstrous excrescence of German compound words to non-native speakers of the German language. In order to make the term more understandable and its components more recognizable, the spelling here is *Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein*, which is also a possible correct spelling.

The following list includes the identified DNPs that will serve for unfolding the discourses underlying the articulations introduced above. In alphabetical order, the dominating concepts and DNPs of the German Presidency's articulations are

- Civil society
- Common future
- Common paths
- Cooperation
- Deficits
- Destiny/fate
- Dialogue
- Dispassion
- Honesty
- Human rights
- International institutions
- Inter-reliance
- Openness
- Proportionality
- Respect
- Rule of law
- Russian-British relations
- Russian-Estonian relations
- Russian-Latvian relations
- Russian-Polish relations
- Security
- Shared responsibility
- Strategic partnership
- Trade
- Trust
- Understanding

5.1.2 *From DNPs to Discourses*

Having identified the major concepts occurring in the official articulations of the German Council Presidency related to Russia and EU-Russia relations, it is now possible to identify discourses and meta-narratives making up the discursive formation of EU-Russia relations as articulated by the German Presidency. The concepts pointed out above may be regarded as signal words for the discourses which are hegemonic in these articulations, i.e. they are the 'empty signifiers' that also take the position of DNPs.

a) The Cooperation-DNP and Its Companions

A concept that comes into sight in most articulations of the German Presidency is the concept of cooperation in a wide array of forms and fields, mainly with the intention to tackle specific issues, deficits, and problems (German Presidency, 2007a; 2007c; 2007g; 2007i; 2007j; 2007k; 2007l). The interest here is to inquire into which kinds of discourses the cooperation DNP ties together in the articulations of German Presidency.

Along with the cooperation-DNP, there are a number of other concepts that may facilitate the identification of the discourses of the German Presidency. These concepts are openness, common future, dialogue, strategic partnership, shared responsibility, honesty, trade, common paths, and inter-reliance (2007a; 2007c; 2007j; 2007k). In an attempt to identify how they organise themselves into discourses, it is interesting to take a note of the fact that some of these concepts – especially inter-reliance and shared responsibility – are

strongly linked to the idea of a common destiny or fate by Foreign Minister Steinmeier (2007e; 2007f):

Let me say something besides the dispute on meat imports, perhaps somewhat emphatically but with much greater seriousness: Europe's relation to Russia definitely bears *fateful significance* for us as for Russia and for this stands not at last the life work of Boris Yeltsin. And before that task we must not – neither Europeans nor Russians⁵ – before that task we must not fail, no matter how difficult this may be in detail (German Presidency, 2007f; translation by author⁶).

Here, Steinmeier values EU-Russia relations as highly important for both sides. He bases the relations not on some material interests such as trade, economy, and military security and stability, but gives them an idealistic foundation comprised of a common destiny and fate. He makes reference to Boris Yeltsin⁷, who is viewed as a key figure in the rapprochement between Europe and post-Soviet Russia during the 1990s (ibid.). In this light he also articulates the already mentioned idea of inter-reliance: “For the rest, nothing will change the situation in which we, Europe and Russia, will be reliant on each other in order to help solving conflicts further on in our proximity but also globally” (German Presidency, 2007e; translation by author⁸). I have designated the discourse which connects all these DNPs as the *discourse of inter-reliance*. Inter-reliance is the closest translation possible of the idea of *Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein* (cf. above) which crops up in the speeches by both Chancellor Merkel (German Presidency, 2007j; 2007k) and Foreign Minister Steinmeier (German Presidency, 2007e). The term describes a rather positive variation of interdependence as it emerges from concepts such as common future or fate, common paths, and shared responsibility (cf. German Presidency, 2007a; 2007c; 2007f). Inter-reliance is a form relationship which brings benefits to all the parties; maintaining this kind of relationship is wished by all of them as not doing so would also bring direct disadvantages and problems.

⁵ Apparently, Frank-Walter Steinmeier does not count Russia to Europe as he clearly distinguishes between Russia and Europe here. In a study on the idea of Europe and Europeanness maintained by EU policy-makers and their implications the relations between the EU and third countries this would be an interesting finding as it suggests that Frank-Walter Steinmeier views EU-membership as necessary criterion for Europeanness (cf. Prozorov, 2008, p. 187; Prozorov, 2007).

⁶ Frank-Walter Steinmeier: „Lassen Sie mich mal etwas abseits von dem Streit um Fleischimporte sagen, vielleicht etwas emphatisch aber mit umso größerem Ernst. Europas Beziehung zu Russland ist durchaus von schicksalhafter Bedeutung für uns wie für Russland, und dafür steht nicht zuletzt das Lebenswerk von Boris Jelzin. Und vor dieser Aufgabe dürfen wir nicht – weder Europäer noch Russen – vor dieser Aufgabe dürfen wir nicht versagen, egal wie schwierig dies im Einzelnen auch sein mag“ (German Presidency, 2007f).

⁷ Boris Yeltsin passed away on April 23rd, 2007, on the day of the EU-troika meeting. Apparently, the message of Yeltsin's death reached Foreign Minister Steinmeier shortly before the press conference, which is why he expresses his grief at the beginning of his statement (German Presidency, 2007f).

⁸ Frank-Walter Steinmeier: „Im Übrigen verändert sich nichts an einer Situation, in der wir, Europa und Russland, aufeinander angewiesen sein werden, um Konflikte in unserem Nahraum aber auch global weiterhin lösen zu helfen“ (German Presidency, 2007e).

The fact of being inter-reliant as such is thus seen as beneficial and as worthy and even necessary to be maintained and exploited.

In other words, inter-reliance may be seen as the basis for the EU-Russia relationship as articulated by the German Presidency. The Presidency articulates inter-reliance as the point of origin for the strategic partnership as articulated not only by the Presidency, but also by the Commission and the High Representative (2007a; 2007b; 2007f; 2007j; 2007k). The term ‘strategic partnership’ thus appears to be the official labelling for EU-Russia relations among the EU’s foreign policy actors that. In order for the strategic partnership based on inter-reliance to be beneficial and long-lasting, it requires cooperation (German Presidency, 2007a; 2007c; 2007g; 2007i; 2007j; 2007k; 2007l), openness (2007a, 2007f; 2007j; 2007k), trust (2007b), and honesty (2007j). The motive behind these requirements can be traced back to the fact that – according to the German Presidency – the EU and Russia are inter-reliant and interdependent. This way of filling the DNP of cooperation with content creates the discourse of inter-reliance.

b) Bilateral relations and Problem Solving as DNPs

An inter-reliant relationship as described above may easily bear the potential of emotional discussions and irrational argumentation – similar to arguments or romances that may arise between siblings or spouses who usually maintain relationship that are strongly based on emotions. Yet, this does not seem to be the case with the European Union and Russia as characterised by the German Presidency. Despite close relations, fateful connectedness, and inter-reliance articulated by the German Presidency (see especially German Presidency, 2007f; 2007j), the interaction between the EU and Russia during the German Presidency is never emotional. Instead, when it comes to conflict bearing issues such as Polish meat (2007e; 2007f), Estonian-Russian relations and attacks on the Estonian embassy in Moscow (2007h), and investigations by British authority in the Litvinenko case (2007l), the German Presidency resorts to concepts such as “dispassionate dialogue”, “openness”, “understanding” and “respect”.

It is quite obvious that these concepts are signifiers not for an emotional approach to problem-solving, but for an approach characterized by rationality and pragmatism. Let me take up the concept of respect in the way in which it crops in connection to Estonian-Russian relations and the situation in front of the Estonian embassy in Moscow (2007h). It does not call for a cordial, possibly affectionate contact with Russia, but for an appropriate distance between conflicting parties so as to allow a solution-oriented approach to problems at stake.

This finding is supported and strengthened by the employment of the concept of “dispassion” by the German Presidency in the issue of Estonian-Russian relations (ibid.): “Given the emotionally charged atmosphere surrounding the Soviet war graves in Estonia, it would be advisable to have a *dispassionate dialogue* on the matter” (ibid.) The concepts and DNPs can thus be said to organize themselves around the *discourse of pragmatism*, with pragmatism being the rational, non-emotional approach to problem solving. It is an attitude or philosophical perspective that has its foundation on the belief that the truthfulness of ideas – in the case of EU-Russian relations it is the resolution of issues and problems between the two sides – is verified by their practicability and workability. The merit of proposed problem solutions is not their ideological or idealistic background but, in fact, their potential to function well and bring results. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008).

The discourse of pragmatism becomes not only visible in the articulations concerning bilateral issues between EU member states and Russia, but also in the solution-oriented approach to issues on the level of EU-Russian relations: The discourse of pragmatism intersects with the *discourse of inter-reliance* given that the both share the DNPs of cooperation, openness, and dialogue. As a result, the *discourse of inter-reliance* turns out to be of pragmatic nature as well. Put differently, it is the solution-oriented concepts of cooperation, openness, and dialogue that shape the *discourse of inter-reliance* and not possibly concepts such as monologue, offendedness, and non-cooperation or non-interaction, which might crop up if the circumstance of inter-reliance is not recognized by one side or not acted upon accordingly. This de-emotionalizing effect of the discourse of pragmatism on the overall discursive formation of the German EU Presidency has significant influence on the articulations of the character of EU-Russian relations by it. As the European Union and Russia are said to be inter-reliant, the two sides agreed on the establishment and institutionalization of a partnership in 1997. Although the attempts to renegotiate this PCA fail in 2007, the German Presidency still articulates EU-Russia relations as a partnership, even though there is only some provisional interim agreement (2007a; 2007b; 2007j; 2007k).

The discourse of pragmatism also influences the way in which “strategic partnership” between the EU and Russia is represented by the German Presidency. In the words of Angela Merkel, “[d]espite considerable differences of opinion, particularly on the subject of human rights, the EU is firmly committed to a strategic partnership with Russia” (2007k). Put differently, Angela Merkel believes “that we do not only need a strategic partnership, but that we are living amid a strategic partnership, which we are developing step by step” (2007j, p.

10; translation by author⁹). The term ‘strategic partnership’ qualifies the character of the partnership and denies the possibility of it being based on common ideas or ideologies, morals, values, trust, and possibly some emotional traits as might be the case with friendships, marriages and other unions. Instead, the use of the term ‘strategic’ here implies that the partnership is based on calculation, rational choice, and long-term planning.

According to Charles Kupchan (2001) “the term *strategy* refers to the means that policymakers choose to attain desired ends. Strategy is, in effect, a course of action, a plan for achieving specified goals” (emphasis original). Following from this, a strategic partnership is a means to the end in order to effectively tackle common issues (cf. *ibid*). It rather resembles a business partnership between two enterprises with rather materialistic aspirations. In short, as the European Union and Russia are inter-reliant (*discourse of inter-reliance*), some sort of partnership is deemed to be the most practicable solution for various problems; the partnership is not articulated for idealistic but for rational or materialistic reasons which render the partnership strategic (*discourse of pragmatism*). Since the German Presidency’s articulations follow the discourse of inter-reliance and discourse of pragmatism, the term ‘strategic partnership’ does carry the connotation of a means to some ends. This might also be the case with some other EU member states who do not uphold as close and possibly friendly relations to Russia as Germany does, but instead maintain aversion and tension towards Russia.

c) The Human Rights-DNP and its companions

The only issues that cause direct criticism by the German Presidency directed towards Russia are those concerned with human rights and the rule of law: On several occasions, the German Presidency clearly stated its “concerns about the human rights situation in Russia” (German Presidency, 2007i; see also 2007d; 2007e; 2007f; 2007j; 2007k). The human rights in question here are further specified to freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press (2007d; 2007i). Concern on these rights as well as the human rights in general is the most dominant concept especially in the articulations on the demonstration in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novgorod (2007d), on the general situation of human rights in Russia (2007i), and the demonstrations in the run-up and during the EU-Russia summit in Samara (2007j; 2007k). When Russia is the topic in writings from a Western perspective, the issue of human rights always crops up and has become a customary

⁹ Angela Merkel: „... ich glaube, dass wir nicht nur eine strategische Partnerschaft brauchen, sondern dass wir mitten in einer strategischen Partnerschaft leben, die wir Schritt für Schritt weiterentwickeln.“ (German Presidency, 2007j, p. 10).

element of any work about Russia. The aim of touching upon human rights issues in Russia is not to point them out once more. Rather, with the help of DNPs as analytical tool looking at how the issue is dealt with here seems promising as it expresses the character of EU-Russia relations as such.

Presenting the existence of a discourse of human rights as a research result would, however, be premature and non-satisfactory as there are further concepts that appear in connection with and next to the human rights-DNP. These are in particular the concepts of civil society and NGOs and the rule of law:

Other concerns raised related to freedom of the press, the position of Russian non-governmental organizations (*NGOs*) and civil society following the entry into force of the law on NGO activities and the counter-extremism law, as well as respect for the *rule of law* and the situation in Chechnya” (2007i).

Further hints to the concept of the rule of law can be found also in the CFSP statement on the demonstrations in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novgorod (2007d) when the German Presidency questions the proportionality of police actions, as well as in the CFSP statement on the Litvinenko case (2007l) when the German Presidency “stresses the European Union's earnest desire to see the case fully resolved and the culprits punished” (*ibid.*).

Human rights, the rule of law, and an open civil society are generally seen as universal values that represent core features of liberalism as socio-political ideology. Liberalism “allow[s] the greatest scope for individual liberty by combining the rule of law, limited government, constitutionalism..., and respect for individual rights” (Calhoun, 2002). Given these aspects, it is justified to argue that the German Presidency's articulations on issues such as human rights, the rule of law, and civil society, are governed by a *discourse of liberalism*. In other words, the concept of human rights and its companions function as a nodal point which fixes a liberal discourse. By promoting these universal values of the ideology of liberalism, the German Presidency's behaviour and articulations are in line with Barnett's and Duvall's definition of liberalism (2005, p. 5) as being

revolved around the belief: in the possibility, although not inevitability, of progress; that modernization processes and interdependence (or, now, globalization) are transforming the character of global politics; that institutions can be established to help manage these changes; that democracy is a principled objective, as well as an issue of peace and security; and that states and international organisations have an obligation to protect individuals, promote universal values, and create conditions that encourage political and economic freedom.

Further articulations that hint at a discourse of liberalism as supported by this definition are, for example, the Presidency's suggestion of cooperation within the Council of Europe as

international institution to promote human rights and to foster progress in the civil society (German Presidency, 2007i).

A connection of the discourse of liberalism to the discourse of inter-reliance and the discourse of pragmatism might not appear too clearly at first glance. However, the link can be traced by identifying possible reasons for the articulation of concern about the situation of human rights, civil society, and the rule of law in Russia. Emphasis on human rights and related concepts might not appear too surprising given that liberalism and liberal democracy officially are the core ideology of the European Union and most of its member states; promoting the values and features characterizing liberal democracy could thus be regarded as “natural” behaviour of a responsible Council Presidency. This assumption seems justified since the EU defines itself “as an area of freedom, security and justice” (TEU, Art. 2) based on the values and principles of “liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law” (TEU, Art. 6(1)).

Moreover, the interpretation may be enhanced by taking the *discourse of inter-reliance* into consideration. Due to the situation of the EU and Russia being inter-reliant, tackling issues openly and not ignoring them is regarded to be the most suitable solution. Therefore, also the concepts of openness, dialogue, and cooperation are articulated in connection with the concepts of human rights and other issues between the EU and Russia (2007e; 2007i; 2007j; 2007k). Furthermore, inter-reliance does not prevent one side from articulating concern or criticism because it might fear to insult the other side. It is precisely inter-reliance that enables and even requires the open articulation of criticism and dialogue, because in an inter-reliant relationship both sides theoretically have an interest to maintain and develop that relationship and not to disturb it as doing so would create a disadvantageous situation. This also requires that both sides perceive the relationship as inter-reliance. Therefore, the German Presidency deems it important that both sides, “despite such difficulties, are able to interact pragmatically with each other” (2007f; translation by author¹⁰; cf. *discourse of pragmatism*).

5.1.3 Summary of the German Presidency’s Discourses

The discourse analysis has revealed that the German Presidency’s articulations on EU-Russia relations in 2007 were primarily dominated by the underlying discourses of inter-reliance, pragmatism, and liberalism. Inter-reliance is the core characteristic of EU-Russia relations as

¹⁰ Frank-Walter Steinmeier: „Dass wir dennoch, auch bei solchen Schwierigkeiten, in der Lage sind, pragmatisch miteinander umzugehen, zu Verständigungen zu kommen, das zeigt die Unterzeichnung des Protokolls über die Erweiterung des bestehenden Partnerschafts- und Kooperationsabkommens...“ (German Presidency, 2007f).

articulated by the German Presidency. Pragmatism is the fashion of interaction between the EU and Russia deemed necessary by the German Presidency in order to stay focused on the common interest and common good. Given the situation of inter-reliance, non-pragmatic interaction might turn out emotional, irrational, and thus non-beneficial and possibly dangerous for both sides. Liberalism may be regarded the underlying ideology of the European Union itself and possibly of the German government while holding the office of the Council Presidency. In case of apparent incompatibility of the ideology of the German Presidency with the ideology Russian government – for example, in human rights issues and the rule of law (e.g. German Presidency, 2007d; 2007l) – the discourse of liberalism is allowed to take a hegemonic position, because inter-reliance requires openness and dialogue. These are also prime features of a strategic partnership that is articulated by the German Presidency, again motivated by the discourses of inter-reliance and pragmatism. Summing up, EU-Russia relations emerge from the articulation of the German Presidency as a strategic partnership, whose motivation is rooted in the inter-reliance of the EU and Russia, and whose core feature is pragmatic interaction. Both inter-reliance and pragmatism in turn allow and require open expressions of disagreements, which in this case are part of the discourse of liberalism. To be noted here is that the term ‘strategic partnership’ is not an invention by the German Presidency; it rather appears to be part of the general official jargon employed not only by the Presidencies, the Commission, and the High Representative of the CFSP, but also by the representatives of the Russian Federation. Therefore, the term ‘strategic partnership’ does not bear too much significance as it does not herald a new era of cooperation between the EU and Russia. Instead, as Sergei Prozorov puts it

the mutual declaration of the ever-greater ‘strategic partnership’ became a staple phrase of the official discourse of EU–Russian relations, forcefully reiterated in the mutual ‘strategies’ of the two parties towards each other in 1999 and reaffirmed in 2004 in the context of the EU enlargement (2006, p. 3).

5.2 The Portuguese Presidency: July – December 2007

5.2.1 Articulations and Concepts

Similar to the respective section concerning the German Presidency, this section will introduce the sources and events stemming from the Portuguese Presidency in chronological order. The relevant concepts will be highlighted and will form the basis for the actual discourse analysis.

1. EU-Russia Summit in Mafra, Portugal

The EU-Russia summit on October 26th, 2007 was the first occasion for the Portuguese Presidency to issue an articulation concerning Russia or EU-Russia relations. The welcome address of the Portuguese Prime Minister José Sócrates (Portuguese Presidency, 2007a) appears rather declaratory, but makes clear reference to Portugal's history as the setting of the summit is the Palácio Nacional de Mafra which "is one of our most important monuments, a grandiose religious and architectonic project from the XVIII century" (ibid.) Furthermore, the welcome address revolves around the ideas of cooperation and strategic partnership which are essential parts of the overall EU jargon when it comes to EU-Russia relations (ibid.).

During the press conference (2007b) the Portuguese Presidency emphasizes especially the strong trade relations between the EU and Russia. Other dominant concepts in these articulations are history, strategic partnership, cooperation, interdependence, and constructive dialogue in questions concerning investment and economics. Furthermore, José Sócrates welcomes President Putin's proposal for a mutual human rights monitoring system as an instrument for trust building (ibid.). José Sócrates does not deny issues or disagreements between the participants of the summit. Yet, these issues are not specified any further, but the Prime Minister stresses the importance of political dialogue and consultation (ibid.).

The press release issued in connection to the summit (2007c) repeats largely the same key concepts that cropped up at the press conference. It alludes to openness, strategic partnership, investment dialogue, mutual cooperation, understanding between parties, trade, visa dialogue (Common Space), consultations, and effective multilateralism.

2. Meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council

In the run-up of the meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council the Portuguese Presidency issued two press releases, one announcing the troika meeting on home affairs on November 22nd and 23rd, 2007 (2007d), and another announcing a troika meeting on justice on the same dates (2007e). Besides the announcement of the meetings, the press releases are rather short in content. The relevant concepts around which the press releases revolve are dialogue (2007d; 2007e), as well as partnership, and cooperation (2007e).

During the press conference of the meeting with both the Portuguese Minister of Home Affairs Rui Pereira and Minister of Justice Alberto Costa (2007f) especially the importance of cooperation in a wide range of fields concerning justice and home affairs was stressed. Other concepts characterizing EU-Russia relations articulated by the Portuguese Presidency were partnership, dialogue on a practical level, as well as frankness and openness

that are needed for trust building (ibid.): “On sensitive issues associated with legal cases, legal investigations trust depends on frank dialogue on the problems themselves. Now, at this meeting we have started that real [*sic*] frank dialogue...and that’s what we need” (ibid.; direct quote from English simultaneous translation).

3. EU-Russia meeting at margins of GAERC

On December 10th, 2007, the EU held another Partnership Council with the Russian Federation. It took place in the environment of the Council for General Affairs and External Relations (GAERC). During the press conference of the Partnership Council, the Portuguese Presidency was represented by the Portuguese Foreign Minister Luís Amado (2007g). In his opening statement, Mr. Amado illustrated the interaction between the EU and Russia at the meeting as “frank, sincere discussion” (ibid.) which hints to the concepts of openness and dialogue. In the light of the issue of the independence of Kosovo, he pointed out that the EU is not a federal state with easy and fast decision-making procedures in external affairs (ibid.). He also suggested that “[the EU member states] will find common ground for a common position independently of the flexibility that we need to assume for the action of sovereign states, members of the European Union” (ibid.).

4. Suspension of the CFE Treaty

On December 12th, 2007, the Portuguese Presidency issued a CFSP statement on the occasion of Russia suspending the CFE Treaty (Treaty on Conventional Arms in Europe of 1992). The Portuguese Presidency on behalf of the EU views “the CFE Treaty as the cornerstone of security and stability in Europe” (2007h). For that reason, the Presidency deems it indispensable that Russia “continue[s] to engage with CFE partners” (ibid.). In order to resolve issues and disagreements, “constructive proposals” are promoted to be followed (ibid.).

5. Closure of regional offices of the British Council in Russia

On the occasion of the closure of regional offices of the British Council¹¹ in Russia the Portuguese Presidency issued a CFSP statement on December 21st, 2007. The CFSP statement emphasises the EU’s efforts “to develop a solid cultural relationship with the Russian Federation, as a key part of the EU-Russia partnership” (2007i). Furthermore, cultural

¹¹ The British Council is “the UK’s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. As well as education, we run programmes in the arts, science, sport, governance and English language” (British Council, 2008).

institutions are seen playing an “important role in fostering cooperation between the Russian Federation and EU Member States”. A key aim of cultural cooperation between the EU and Russia is to create “mutual knowledge of peoples and Cultures” (ibid.).

The concepts and DNPs identified in the Portuguese Presidency’s articulations that will serve for the unfolding of the overflowing discourses and meta-narratives are briefly listed here to give a short overview:

- Constructive, practical dialogue
- Consultation
- Cooperation
- Effective multilateralism
- Frankness
- Human rights
- Interrelation
- Openness
- Portugal’s national history
- Security
- Sovereignty of EU member states
- Stability
- Strategic partnership
- The nation of Portugal
- Trade
- Trust
- Understanding

5.2.2 *From DNPs to Discourses*

With the concepts identified above it will now be possible to identify the discourses in the Portuguese Presidency’s articulations towards and concerning Russia. The procedure will be similar to the one followed in the respective section on the German Presidency’s articulations (cf. above).

a) The Portugal-DNP and National Sovereignty

In various articulations of the Portuguese Presidency in the context of EU-Russian relations and EU-Russian interaction, a direct reference to Portugal as a state and nation can be noticed quite clearly: In the welcome address of the EU-Russia summit in October 2007, Prime Minister Sócrates refers to Portugal’s national history (2007a). Furthermore, he opens the press conference by saying that “it was an honour for me and an honour for my country to host this summit between Russia and the European Union, all the more so because we have chosen a historic building, one of the most important places in Portugal, for this meeting” (2007b; direct quote from the simultaneous translation). In his articulations, José Sócrates refers to the Portuguese national history and monuments, i.e. the *Palácio Nacional de Mafra*,

which still today play an important role in the Portuguese national identity formation¹². By doing so, Sócrates distinguishes Portugal as a nation-state from other countries including the other EU member states. It is therefore justified to speak about a *discourse of national self-distinction* which underpins the articulations of the Portuguese Prime Minister. The theme and discourse of national self-distinction also becomes visible in the headline of the press release on the EU troika meeting with Russia on justice and home affairs (2007e): Although the meeting took place on EU level with the Portuguese Presidency representing the European Council and the 27 member states, the press release is entitled “Portugal and Russia together in the fight against terrorism and human trafficking” (ibid.) and thus creates at first the impression of a bilateral meeting between two nation-states.

Communicating the nation-statehood of Portugal was thus apparently an important concern for the Portuguese government while holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. An important feature of (nation-)statehood as well as the non-federal character of the European Union is the sovereignty of nation states including the EU member states. In reference to the dispute over the status of Kosovo, the Portuguese Foreign Minister Luís Amado announces that “[the EU member states] will find common ground for a common position independently of the flexibility that we need to assume for the action of sovereign states, members of the European Union” (2007g). It can thus be argued that next to the discourse of national self-distinction there is a *discourse of sovereignty* taking a hegemonic position.

The discourse of sovereignty is connected to the discourse of national self-distinction in that they both stress a nation state’s individuality and right of self-determination without external influences. Whereas the discourse of national self-distinction covers rather Portugal’s individuality as a distinct national state which ‘happens’ to be a member state of the EU – the self-distinction is thus rather an intra-EU matter – the discourse of sovereignty is part of the Portuguese Presidency’s articulations towards third countries external from the EU’s supranational context, but part of the traditional Westphalian order.

The discourse of sovereignty may thus also serve as an explanation for the apparently low importance of human rights issues in comparison to the German Presidency’s articulations (cf. above). Human rights issues are touched upon once during the press conference of the EU-Russia summit: “We discussed human rights” (2007b; direct quote from the simultaneous translation). Apart from this statement, Prime Minister Sócrates introduces

¹² The *Palácio Nacional de Mafra* is a religious convent and palace built by order of King João V between 1717 and 1730 (Anderson, 2000, pp. 120-121). The Portuguese government has granted the palace the status of a National Monument (*Monumento Nacional*; IPPAR, 2006).

new ideas for further cooperation in the field of human rights between the EU and Russia that were raised during the meeting. The few mentionings of human rights in comparison to the previous summit in Samara (German Presidency, 2007i; 2007j) motivate a journalist to make the following statement during the question-and-answer round of the press conference: “The Portuguese Presidency has attempted to minimize the differences between the EU and Russia on the human rights and democracy front” (Portuguese Presidency, 2007b). Prime Minister Sócrates reacts to this by stating that “there was no deliberate minimization strategy on the part of the Portuguese Presidency when it came to human rights. I told you in my opening statement that we had raised this” (ibid.). Following from the equality of states among each other as suggested by the concept of sovereignty, non-intervention in internal politics is a logical consequence. Non-articulation of concern about, in this case, the situation of human rights (as opposed to articulations of the German Presidency; cf. above) is thus natural behaviour of an international actor, who stresses the importance of concept and principle of sovereignty, and not a “deliberate minimization strategy” (ibid.; cf. Dunne, 2007). The *discourse of sovereignty* takes a strongly hegemonic positions here with the result that a possibly existing *discourse of liberalism* (cf. German Presidency) causing articulations on concern and criticism is drowned out and becomes invisible and thus ineffective in the discourse of the Portuguese Presidency. These observations are supported by the fact that the Portuguese Presidency in contrast to the German (2007i) and the Slovenian Presidency (2008h) did not issue a press release on the sixth round of human rights consultations, but only mentioned these during the press conference of the summit in Mafra (Portuguese Presidency, 2007b). The non-issuing of a press release may be regarded a form of non-articulation which in this case equals non-intervention in terms of Westphalian principles such as sovereignty. Articulation may thus in turn be viewed as a first step of intervention.

b) Interrelation and Strategic Partnership

The major part of the articulations of EU-Russia relations by Portuguese Presidency are dominated by the concepts of trade, cooperation in a wide array of fields, trust, practical dialogue, consultation, understanding, openness, and frankness (2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2007d; 2007e; 2007f; 2007g). These concepts all describe the character of interaction between the EU and Russia. The kind of relation that exists between the EU and Russia is named “strategic partnership” (2007a; 2007b; 2007c) by the Portuguese Presidency and is again in line with the general EU jargon when it comes to EU-Russia relations (cf. above; Prozorov, 2006, p. 3). That strategic partnership, according to the Portuguese Presidency, requires the kind of

interaction that is outlined by the concepts of cooperation, trust, open dialogues, mutual understanding, and frankness in order to be able to exist and to be successful. In the words of Minister of Justice Rui Pereira “trust depends on frank dialogue on the problems themselves. Now, at this meeting we have started that real [*sic*] frank dialogue...and that’s what we need” (2007f; direct quote from English simultaneous translation).

The close similarities to the articulations of the German Presidency are obvious (cf. above); yet, the idea of inter-reliance, which suggests connection at a deeper, more ideational, and possibly emotional level (cf. above; footnote 4), does not show up in the articulations of the Portuguese Presidency. What is unique to the Portuguese Presidency is that the place of inter-reliance is taken by the rather vague concept of interrelation especially in the fields of economy and trade (2007b), i.e. a relationship in which the parties form some sort of cause and effect of or to each other. Therefore, one could argue for the existence of a *discourse of interrelation*. The concept of interrelation with references to practical matters such as economy and trade suggests a shallower kind of relationship articulated by the Portuguese Presidency which needs to be framed into a strategic partnership for beneficial outcomes. ‘Strategic’ in this case means again calculation, rational choice, and long-term planning, i.e. a means to the end (cf. above; Kupchan, 2001). Due to the shallower nature of an interrelationship (as opposed to inter-reliance), the articulations do not need to be modified by a discourse of pragmatism in order to enable dispassionate solution-oriented interaction, as interrelation and strategic partnership as such already suggest a higher degree of pragmatism. Also the *discourse of sovereignty* plays into this as the high importance of the sovereignty prohibits far-ranging intervention, comments, and passionate debates on certain issues (cf. above).

5.2.3 Summary of the Portuguese Presidency’s Discourses

The discourse analysis has revealed that the Portuguese Presidency’s articulations on EU-Russia relations in 2007 were primarily dominated by the discourses of interrelation, national self-distinction, and sovereignty. The core feature of EU-Russia relations is interrelation, meaning that the EU and Russia affect each other in a certain way, which is not specified any further by the Portuguese Presidency. The discourses of national self-distinction and sovereignty do not allow too deep interaction and intervention. This is why the Portuguese Presidency also maintains the articulation of EU-Russia relations as a strategic partnership based on interrelation. It is a means to the end in order to follow interests that the two sides appear to have in common. Due to the hegemonic position of the discourse of sovereignty,

there is also hardly any commentary on situations in Russia that are in fact in conflict with the EU's values and objectives. The non-articulation of criticism also contributes to the EU-Russia relations' appearance as good, honest, and stable. This in turn is in line with the Portuguese government's apparent objective to gain a high profile and good reputation during its term as EU Council Presidency. As Simon Hix puts it, the EU member states "like to be seen as having held 'good' Presidencies" (Hix, 2005, p. 81). This intention becomes visible in its discourse of national self-distinction, which puts an emphasis on the nation state of Portugal standing out from the supranational European Union.

5.3 The Slovenian Presidency: January – June 2008

5.3.1 Articulations and Concepts

This section will again, similar to the respective section on the two previous Presidencies, introduce and present the sources from the Slovenian Presidency to be examined in this study.

1. Closure of regional offices of the British Council in Russia

With reference to a previous statement of the Portuguese Presidency (2007i), the Slovenian Presidency issued a CFSP statement on the closure of regional offices of the British Council in Russia January 17th, 2008 (2008a). The Slovenian Presidency expressed its concern with regard to the processes in Russia and points at their contradiction "to the spirit of the cultural cooperation Russia agreed to pursue". Furthermore, the statement stresses the importance of cultural institutes for the formation of "mutual knowledge of peoples and cultures" which are a "key to developing EU-Russia cultural relations under the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement" (ibid.).

2. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission to the Russian Presidential elections

On February 7th, 2008, the Slovenian Presidency issued a CFSP statement on the cancellation of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission to the Russian Presidential elections. According to the OSCE, Russia, introduced harsh limitations to the ODIHR mission although, as a member state of the OSCE, it had committed to common standards on election observation (OSCE, 2008). As a reaction to the cancellation of the mission, the Slovenian Presidency expresses its regret about the unsuccessful mission of the ODIHR in the run-up of the presidential elections in Russia as well as "its full support to the election observation

activities of the ODIHR and to the existing standards and commitments under the Copenhagen document” (2008b).

3. EU Troika-Russian Federation meeting

On February 11th, 2008, the Slovenian Presidency announced the EU Troika-meeting with the Russian Federation in a press release (2008c). The topics to be discussed were cooperation between the EU and Russia in general, and more specifically cooperation in external security matters.

During the press conference of the troika meeting (2008d) the Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel characterized EU-Russian interaction and relations with the help of the concepts of partnership, formalization of relations, friendly and sincere dialogue, and frequent meetings. Minister Rupel also emphasized that the participants of the meeting have openly discussed issues concerning external security and external relations, especially the question of Kosovo and Serbia. Furthermore, he stressed that the meeting’s purpose was not to discuss the bilateral relations between Slovenia and Russia, but the relations between the EU and Russia.

The respective press release (2008e) refers to Minister Rupel stressing long tradition of cooperation between the EU and Russia. The Minister also “pointed out that Slovenia is the first Slavic country to have assumed the Presidency of the EU Council”. Additionally, the press release emphasizes the importance of Russia and the EU for “the consolidation of peace and stability in a region sharing a common history and civilization”. Concerning the presidential elections in Russia in March 2008, Minister Rupel is reported to have “expressed his regret that no agreement had been made to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission”. Also the closure of regional offices of the British Council was an issue of discussion as “this institution can play an important role in establishing intercultural dialogue”.

4. Presidential elections in Russia on March 2nd, 2008

After the presidential elections in Russia on March 2nd, 2008, with Dmitry Medvedev as the new, designated President of the Russian federation, the Slovenian Presidency issued a press release on March 3rd (2008f) and a CFSP statement on March 4th (2008g). The press release informs the public about a phone call between the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša and the winner of the elections Dmitry Medvedev (2008f). According to the press release, “the Slovenian Prime Minister and the Russian President-elect agreed that, given the strategic

importance of partnership between the European Union and Russia, a stable legal framework for cooperation was essential". Given that Slovenia is the first Slavic member state of the EU to hold the Council Presidency, the term of the Slovenian Presidency is regarded as bearing promising opportunities "to further strengthen relations between the European Union and Russia".

The CFSP statement on the presidential elections (2008g) reports the Presidency's regret on the failure of the OSCE/ODIHR mission (cf. above). The statement also points out "that the electoral process did not allow for truly competitive elections. The lack of equal media access for the opposition candidates is of particular concern". The election of a new president has, however, raised the "hope that this partnership with Russia will be further strengthened and developed constructively during the tenure of Mr Dmitry Medvedev as President of the Russian Federation". The Slovenian Presidency also emphasizes its anticipation "of political and social reforms, the strengthening of rule of law and individual freedoms as well as the economic modernisation" in Russia.

5. Seventh Round of Human Rights Consultations

The Slovenian Presidency issued a press release on the occasion of the seventh round of human rights consultations between the EU and Russia on April 17th, 2008, (2008h). The press release points out the frank and constructive character of the meeting during which the Slovenian Presidency as well as the Russian representatives brought up "a number of concerns related to specific human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Russian Federation" and the European Union. The two sides "discussed cooperation concerning human rights within different international organizations, including United Nations human rights fora", the Council of Europe, and the OSCE.

6. Georgia

Concerning the developments in the conflict areas Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia the Slovenian Presidency issued CFSP statement of April 18th, 2008. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are Georgian provinces which in the past had claimed independence from the Georgian government in Tbilisi. Russia was said to exert significant influence in these two provinces; at least South Ossetia is considered to completely be economically dependent on Russia (BPB, 2008c; 2008d). The CFSP statement also touches upon Russian involvement in the conflict

(2008i)¹³ and emphasizes the EU's concern especially "regarding the latest decision of the Russian Federation, announced by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 16 April 2008, to establish official ties with institutions of the de facto authorities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia without the consent of the Government of Georgia". The CFSP statement particularly revolves around the principles of "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia" as well as international law, and promotes the peaceful settlement of the issues at stake.

7. EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council Meeting on Freedom, Security, and Justice
The EU and Russia held their eighth Permanent Partnership Council meeting on April 25th, 2008. Already on April 21st, the Slovenian Presidency issued a press release announcing the meeting (2008j) which stresses the importance of cooperation in a wide range of fields concerning security and justice. The press release issued on April 25th, 2008 after the meeting informing the public about the results of the meeting (2008k) is also strongly based on the idea of cooperation which is accompanied by satisfaction on developments in certain fields and anticipation of a renewed formalization of EU-Russia relations and cooperation. The participants of the meeting also adopted a joint statement after the meeting (2008l). It revolves around the same ideas and concepts as the press release (cf. above; 2008k).

8. EU Troika-Russia meeting

On April 29th, 2008, the EU Troika held a meeting with Russia as preparation for the EU-Russia summit in June 2008. The press release (2008m) expresses the wish "to intensify mutual cooperation" on the basis of a new EU-Russia agreement to be negotiated. The press release also mentions the prospect of a free trade agreement next to a new EU-Russia agreement and gives "particular importance" to the issue of human rights to be discussed during the summit. According to the press release, Foreign Minister Rupel "emphasised that the European Union and Russia share a responsibility for global stability and security". Furthermore, the "'frozen conflicts' in Abkhazia and South Ossetia" were also part of the discussion during the troika meeting.

¹³ The violent escalation of the conflict in August 2008 led to the temporary occupation of parts of Georgia by the Russian army. To that time the Council Presidency was already held by France. The articulations of the French Presidency on EU-Russia relations are, however, not subject to this study.

9. Tensions between Georgia and Russia

The risen tensions between Georgia and Russia has caused the Slovenian Presidency to issues a CFSP statement on May 5th, 2008 (2008n) in which the Presidency expresses its concern about relations between Georgia and the Russia. The statement revolves around the EU's "firm commitment to the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Georgia" based on international law, and promotes a "peaceful settlement of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts" as suggested by the United Nations and the OSCE.

10. EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Research

On May 26th, 2008, the first EU-Russia Permanent Council on Research was held Ljubljana, Slovenia. The respective press release of the Slovenian Presidency (2008o) expresses satisfaction on cooperation in research between the EU and Russia and points at the importance of their partnership. After the meeting the EU and Russia also adopted a Joint Statement (2008p). The press release (2008o) and the Joint Statement (2008p) are very similar even in their formulation and both evolve around the same concepts, i.e. cooperation, satisfaction, and partnership (cf. above).

11. EU-Russia summit in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia

The 21st EU-Russia summit took place in Russia on June 27th, 2008. On June 26th, the Slovenian Presidency already announced its aspirations for the meeting in a press release (2008q). The press release claims that "the 21st EU-Russia Summit...will be a historic one" as the start of negotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement was expected. The Russian President's proposals regarding the future of Euro-Atlantic security structures were also discussed. A major issue to be discussed were global challenges in security, economy, and climate change during the 21st century, which "will depend on how the European Union and the Russian Federation handle their partnership in the decades to come". The press release also announces bilateral talks between the Slovenian Prime Minister and the Russian President.

During the press conference (2008r) – whose transcript is not published by the Slovenian Presidency but by the Kremlin – the opening statement of Prime Minister Janez Janša emphasizes "the symbolism of this summit, at which for the first time Slavic languages have been heard on both sides", which he regards as beneficial for EU-Russia relations which he characterizes as friendship. Furthermore, he considers the common Slavic languages and culture as a promising point of departure for international cooperation. As response to a

question on “general European security” (ibid.) asked by a journalist during the press conference the Prime Minister also makes reference to common European values and European civilisation and culture inherited by the EU, North America, and Russia, which he deems worth to be protected.

The press release issued after the summit by the Slovenian Presidency (2008s) emphasizes the “friendly atmosphere” in which the talks were held and presents the summit as the starting point “of the new phase in the process of deepening the strategic partnership introduced by the negotiations on a new fundamental agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation”. The “spirit of a new beginning” was also fed by the fact “the EU Presidency is for the first time being held by one of the countries that joined the EU in May 2004” which “is also the first Slavic country at the helm of the EU Council”. Issues discussed during the summit were common “fundamental challenges of the twenty-first century”, which are to be tackled by “EU-Russian cooperation” eventually leading to the establishment of “an open and integrated market”. Among the discussed issues was also the “strategically important area of energy” which requires “open dialogue on energy and strengthening cooperation”. Furthermore, the participants of the summit consider human rights “an important value basis underpinning [their] partnership” and “welcomed the progress made by Russia on the way towards membership in the World Trade Organisation” (ibid.).

Due to the newly reintroduced habit of issuing joint statements during the EU-Russia summits, the participants have agreed on a joint statement on cross-border cooperation (2008t) and a joint statement on the launch of negotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement (2008u). The joint statement on cross-border cooperation (2008t) revolves around the idea of strategic partnership based on equality and mutual interests. The joint statement on the launch of negotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement points at the future requiring a new formalization of EU-Russia relations (2008u).

The concepts and DNPs identified in the Portuguese Presidency's articulations that will serve for the unfolding of the overflowing discourses are briefly listed here to give a short overview.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| - Civilization | - Human rights |
| - Common challenges | - Individual freedoms |
| - Common history | - Integration in world economy |
| - Concern | - Intercultural dialogue |
| - Constructive engagement | - Mutual interests |
| - Cooperation | - Mutual knowledge |
| - Cultural cooperation | - Negotiations |
| - Democracy | - Openness |
| - Economic modernization | - Peacefulness |
| - Equality | - Political/social reforms |
| - European civilization including
Russia | - Regret |
| - European values | - Rule of law |
| - External security | - Satisfaction on cooperation |
| - Formalization of relations | - Security |
| - Free trade | - Shared responsibility |
| - Frequent meetings | - Slavism |
| - Friendliness | - Slovenian-Russian relations |
| - Friendly/sincere dialogue | - Spirit of new beginning |
| - Friendship | - Stability |
| - Future | - Strategic partnership |
| - Georgia's independence | - Support |
| - Georgia's sovereignty | - Symbolism |
| - Georgia's territorial integrity | - Transparency |

5.3.2 *From DNPs to Discourses*

a) The DNPs of Cooperation, Dialogue, and Partnership

Similar to the two previous Presidencies, the most used and most dominant concepts are cooperation, dialogue, and (strategic) partnership (2008a; 2008c; 2008d; 2008e; 2008f; 2008h; 2008j; 2008k; 2008l; 2008m; 2008o; 2008p; 2008r; 2008s; 2008t). The Slovenian Presidency articulates EU-Russia relations also as 'strategic partnership' and is this in line with a general EU jargon which is also employed by the German and Portuguese Presidencies (cf. above) as well as the European Commission and the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (e.g. German Presidency, 2007j; Portuguese Presidency, 2007b): "Leaders from both sides welcomed the start of the new phase in the process of deepening the strategic partnership introduced by the negotiations on a new fundamental agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation" (2008s). The major difference between especially the three Presidencies in question is the foundation that they base the strategic partnership upon. While the German Presidency justifies the strategic partnership by inter-

reliance, and the Portuguese Presidency by interrelation, the Slovenian Presidency articulates the basis of the strategic partnership as shared responsibilities (2008m; 2008r; 2008s), common challenges (2008r; 2008s), stability (2008m), security (2008m; 2008q; 2008r), interdependence especially in energy matters (2008s), equality, and mutual interests (2008t). These concepts, which appear strongly connected and overlapping, represent the DNPs of what I label as a *discourse of equality and interdependence*.

Given the circumstances of mutual interests, shared responsibilities, and interdependence, the Slovenian Presidency stresses the importance of dialogue and cooperation as the core features of a successful strategic partnership (2008a; 2008c; 2008d; 2008e; 2008f; 2008h; 2008j; 2008k; 2008l; 2008m; 2008o; 2008p; 2008r; 2008s; 2008t). The concept of equality shows that the Slovenian Presidency views the EU and Russia as equal players who form a partnership with the partners being on the same level. At the time of the Slovenian Presidency the strategic partnership appears to be successful indeed and worth to be maintained as the Slovenian Presidency expresses its satisfaction on the developments especially in the fields of judicial cooperation (2008k; 2008l) and the Common Space of Research and Education (2008o; 2008p). For this reason of success and fruitfulness, the Slovenian Presidency wants to maintain and strengthen the strategic partnership by a renegotiation of a new EU-Russia agreement and thus a new formalization of EU-Russia relations (2008d; 2008k; 2008l; 2008m; 2008u). According to the press release on the EU-Troika meeting with the Russian Federation on April 29th, 2008

The EU is looking forward to this meeting because Russia is an important partner with which the EU wishes to intensify mutual cooperation. In this context, the Slovenian Foreign Minister assured his counterparts that the mandate for negotiations on the new partnership agreement and cooperation between the EU and Russia received overwhelming consent at today's EU Council debate, with just a few aspects that still need clarification, so he expects this work to be concluded in the near future (2008m).

A new EU-Russia agreement is thus regarded as the most suitable framework for a successful and beneficial utilization and pursue of shared responsibilities, mutual interests, equality, and interdependence, which, according to the Slovenian Presidency, form the basis of EU-Russia relations.

b) The DNPs of Language, Culture, and Civilisation

On several occasions, the Slovenian Presidency points out the common Slavic heritage of both Slovenia and the Russian Federation (2008e; 2008f; 2008r; 2008s). During the EU-Russia summit in June 2008, the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša emphasized

“symbolism of this summit, at which for the first time Slavic languages have been heard on both sides” (2008r) as “the ancestors of Slovenes and Russians spoke the same language” (ibid.). Following from this, the identification of a discourse of Slavism may appear justifiable. Yet, a discourse of Slavism would overemphasize the bilateral dimension between Slovenia and Russia and ignore the European or multi-lateral dimension that the Slovenian Presidency connects to their articulation of Slavism. According to the press release of March 3rd, 2008, “Mr Janša and Mr Medvedev concurred in their opinion that the current EU Presidency, being held as it is for the first time by a Slavic Member State, constitutes an opportunity to further strengthen relations between the European Union and Russia” (2008f). Here, Slavism is articulated as an important link between Russia and the European Union who “together contribute to the consolidation of peace and stability in a region sharing a common history and civilization” (2008e). The link is thus explicitly on a level of culture and civilisation based on common values (2008r) which are shared by the “three inheritors of European civilisation and culture – the European Union, North America and Russia” (ibid.). With Slavism representing a cultural link between the EU and Russia (and North America) it is thus also based on the common values shared by the three representatives of “our European civilisation” (ibid.). Therefore, instead of a discourse of Slavism one may rather speak of a *discourse of Euro-Slavism*.

Euro-Slavism may be considered an ideological orientation emphasizing the common culture and language of all Slavic peoples with an orientation to European values and civilisation. In other words, Euro-Slavism is a way of articulating the Slavic peoples as being united within Europe and a pan-European civilisation (cf. above) and therefore also including Russia in Europe but also refusing Russia its hegemony in the region as would be the case with some conceptions of Pan-Slavism¹⁴. This political dimension of Euro-Slavism also becomes evident in the Slovenian Presidency’s expressed intention “to accelerate Serbia's drawing nearer to the EU” (2008e). According to the Bosnian Institute (2005), especially this feature of Euro-Slavism has already been promoted by the Slovenian intellectual Taras Kermauner, yet apparently rather unsuccessfully, in his book *Letters to a Serbian Friend*: “Much fun was made, in particular, of my Euro-Slavism, i.e. my proposal that we should leave behind Stalinism and ethnic nationalism and go forward together into Europe” (ibid.). The concept of Euro-Slavism has also been part of cultural and political debates in Slovenia

¹⁴ David MacKenzie (2008) defines Pan-Slavism generally as “international organization and cooperation among Europe's Slav peoples. It combined nationalist elements with imperialism following intellectuals' political awakening in eastern [*sic*] Europe after the French Revolution. Pan-Slavism asserted the Slavs' affinity, based on related languages despite major differences in their citizenship, historical background, and religion” (See also Encyclopædia Britannica, 2009).

and other Slavic countries especially in the run up to their accession to the European Union (STA, 2002; see also STA, 2003). In a news piece on the Slavic Forum in 2002, the Slovenian Press Agency makes a clear distinction of Euro-Slavism from Pan-Slavism:

What first springs to mind after the meeting is undoubtedly Pan-Slavism. But no matter how obvious the connection seems, it is surely unfair. Pan-Slavism is a time from mostly sad historic memory - the Catholic and the Orthodox Slavs never walked through the same door (STA, 2002).

The cultural inclusion of Russia into Europe by the discourse of Euro-Slavism may also serve to explain the motivation behind the Slovenian Presidency's expression of regret and concern on the occasion of the closure of regional offices of the British Council (2008a; cf. Portuguese Presidency, 2007i). In addition, the Slovenian Presidency states that "Cultural institutes form an essential element for the mutual knowledge of peoples and cultures, and should be strongly supported. They are also key to developing EU-Russia cultural relations under the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement" (ibid.). Euro-Slavism as the major link for EU-Russia cultural relations can thus also be seen as a channel for intercultural dialogue; the initiation of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue was one of the main priorities of the Slovenian Presidency (2008e).

The discourse of Euro-Slavism also becomes visible in its hegemonic position by the emphasis of the spirit of new beginning and common future during the EU-Russia summit in June 2008:

The spirit of a new beginning was heightened by the fact that, on the Russian side, the EU-Russia Summit was chaired for the first time by the new Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, while on the EU side, the EU Presidency is for the first time being held by one of the countries that joined the EU in May 2004. Slovenia is also the first Slavic country at the helm of the EU Council (2008s).

The Slovenian Presidency justifies the spirit of new beginning with the announced start of renegotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement which is documented in the respective Joint Statement issued during the summit (2008u; cf. 2008s). The Slovenian Presidency's articulations of concern about the crisis in Russia-Georgian relations, which had taken a hegemonic position before June 2008 (2008i; 2008m; 2008n), are completely overflowed by the Euro-Slavic enthusiasm caused by the advance in the re-formalization of EU-Russia relations in June 2008. The Georgian crisis is mentioned neither by the Slovenian Prime Minister during the press conference of the EU-Russia summit (2008r) nor in the press release on the summit (2008s). Only the High Representative of the CFSP Javier Solana briefly refers to that issue: "Concerning the frozen conflicts: we talked about Georgia and we will continue to cooperate" (2008r).

c) The Human Rights-DNP and its companions

An issue that is talked about by the Slovenian Presidency as well is the issue of human rights. Besides the expression of concern about developments in Russia-Georgian relations on some occasions (2008i; 2008m; 2008n), the situation of human rights in Russia is the major issue that causes the Slovenian Presidency to articulated direct criticism and concern (2008b; 2008h; 2008m; 2008r; 2008s). For example, concerning the presidential elections and the election campaigns, the Slovenian Presidency on behalf of the EU articulates regret about unequal conditions for the candidates: “The EU regrets, however, that the OSCE/ODIHR had to conclude that a meaningful election observation mission was not feasible. The EU also regrets that the electoral process did not allow for truly competitive elections. The lack of equal media access for the opposition candidates is of particular concern” (2008m). Related concepts to these articulations are the concepts of transparency (2008g) and the rule of law (2008e; 2008g). The reference to individual freedoms here also hints to the concept of human right. Following from these findings, it is possible to identify a *discourse of liberalism* that takes a hegemonic position in the articulations of the Slovenian Presidency (cf. German Presidency). This discourse of liberalism shaping the articulations of the Slovenian Presidency is again in line with the definitions of liberalism by Calhoun (2002) and Barnett and Duvall (2005, p. 5; cf. above). Especially the statement on the occasion of the presidential election in Russia that “the EU is looking forward to the implementation of political and social reforms, the strengthening of rule of law and individual freedoms as well as the economic modernisation announced by him during his election campaign (2008g)” corresponds to Barnett and Duvall’s (2005, p. 5) definition which mentions “progress” and “modernization processes” as features of liberalism. Furthermore, the prospect of Russia’s integration into the world economy by joining the World Trade Organization as significant economic international institution is also welcomed by the Slovenian Presidency (2008s).

The discourse of liberalism may here be again enabled by the articulated equality and interdependence (discourse of equality and interdependence). As pointed out above, a successful partnership based on equality and interdependence requires openness between the involved parties. Due to this required openness the Slovenian Presidency is encouraged to promote human rights as part of the EU’s and possibly the Slovenian Republic’s ideology (cf. German Presidency). Thus, in addition to the primarily strategic characteristics of the EU-Russia partnership articulated by the three Presidencies in this study, the Slovenian Presidency, just like the German Presidency, attempts to extent EU-Russia relations by an ideological dimension, with the ideology being liberalism in both cases.

5.3.3 Summary of the Slovenian Presidency's Discourses

The articulations of the Slovenian Presidency on EU-Russia relations are mostly dominated by the discourses of equality and interdependence, Euro-Slavism, and liberalism. The framework for EU-Russia relations is 'strategic partnership' which is in line with the overall EU terminology on EU-Russia relations; in so far the articulations of the Slovenian Presidency do not differ significantly from the articulations of the other Presidencies or representatives of other EU institutions. The basis for the strategic partnership given by Slovenian Presidency is, however, formed by equality and interdependence as well as related concepts such as shared responsibility, security, and common challenges. The circumstance of interdependence is again treated rather rationally with the strategic partnership to be considered the most suitable means to common ends. The discourse of Euro-Slavism, however, stresses the potential that EU-Russia relations have in possibly moving beyond a merely rational and materialistic strategic partnership based on interdependence towards a more idealistic partnership based on a common culture and civilisation. Liberalism here takes the same position as in the articulations of the German Presidency: It is the ideology of the European Union and of the Slovenian Presidency, who promotes this ideology also towards Russia. The discourse of liberalism is not cushioned by a possible discourse of sovereignty as it is the case with the Portuguese Presidency. Instead, it is enabled and deemed necessary due to interdependence, equality, mutual interests, shared responsibility and the like, which constitutes a process similar to the correlation of liberalism and inter-reliance in the articulations of the German Presidency.

6. FROM DISCOURSES TO SOCIAL REALITY

The results of the discourse analysis conducted in the previous chapter will now be assessed by a theoretical application. The theoretical framework of the English School as outlined in chapter 3 will help to guide the analysis of discourses discovered in chapter 5. In particular, this chapter will aim at answering the research question. It will point out what kind of social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges from the discourses which are hegemonic in the articulations of the recent German, Portuguese, and Slovenian Presidencies as they speak on behalf of the EU. By doing so, this chapter will also attempt a contribution to the solution of an issue that the English School as IR theoretical framework has been criticised of: According to Linklater and Suganami (2006, chapter 3), social constructivist Martha Finnemore has pointed out several shortcomings of the English School, including “only giving definitions for analytic categories and almost never giving systematic discussions about rules of evidence” (Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 103). This attempt will be conducted following Linklater and Suganami’s suggestions building on Bull, i.e. the key concepts will be employed as “idea[s] in lights of which we can make sense of an aspect of contemporary international relations” (ibid.). In other words, this chapter will produce an analysis conducted according to an “interpretive mode of inquiry” (Dunne, 2007, pp. 130-133).

The articulations of the three EU council Presidencies appear not to shape one singular homogeneous social reality of EU-Russia relations. The actors in question are representatives of states and state-like entities. Furthermore, the element of International Society seems to cover the lion’s share of the analysed international social structure. Due to this, the elements of and hints towards International Society will be discussed first. In turn, the notions of International System and World Society will help point out the pluralist and solidarist features in the social structure of EU-Russia relations.

6.1 EU-Russia relations and Pluralist International Society

6.1.1 *Bases for Relations: Inter-reliance, Interrelation, and Interdependence*

The German Presidency’s *discourse of inter-reliance* is mostly motivated by articulations that presuppose a pluralist International Society. It expresses the basis for EU-Russia relations as the situation of being inter-reliant, makes reference to a common destiny or fate, and argues that shared responsibilities bring along the necessity for interaction and cooperation. Since, however, inter-reliance is not further defined by the German Presidency (2007e; 2007j;

2007k) we can only trace the meaning from the translation of and elaboration upon the term *Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein* (p. 53).

The discourse of inter-reliance corresponds to the definition of a pluralist International Society. The strategic partnership is discussed in terms which correspond to Tim Dunne's definition of a pluralist International Society as a situation where compliance with commonly agreed rules for interaction "is relatively cost free but the collective benefits are enormous" (Dunne, 2007, p. 137; cf. above). Interaction and cooperation between the EU and Russia can be regarded as a mere means to an end which is to beneficially exploit the given circumstance of inter-reliance. To illustrate, Angela Merkel points at economic benefits (2007j) and Frank-Walter Steinmeier mentions the joint solution of conflicts in their common neighbourhood (2007e). This shows how the seemingly emotional connotations of 'inter-reliance' are weakened by the calculation on the price of cooperation and benefits brought to all members of the pluralist International Society.

The argument for the discourse of inter-reliance being closer to the pluralist International Society end of the spectrum than that of a solidarist International Society is also supported by the fact that it does not initially revolve around humanitarian or transnational ideas and values. The discourse of inter-reliance is premised upon cooperation in a wide array of fields that not only concern statehood and sovereignty, such as border security and fight against terrorism (2007c; 2007g) but also touch upon fields with a more humanitarian connotation, such as human rights (2007i). The fundamental character of the discourse of inter-reliance is thus its emphasis on benefits that both sides gain from corresponding behaviour. Cooperation in any field may thus eventually be regarded as a form of utilization of inter-reliance, i.e. it is a means to an end.

More specifically, the members of that pluralist International Society in the discourse of inter-reliance are the European Union and the Russian Federation. The discourse emphasises that they are equal members with equal benefits and equal obligations stemming from inter-reliance. Nevertheless, inter-reliance is the feature which makes the EU-Russia regional International Society distinct from a possible global International Society: According to the German Presidency's articulations, the EU and Russia recognize their unique situation of being inter-reliant. This leads to the articulation and establishment of an exceptional International Society comprised only of the EU and Russia. Due to this inter-reliance as the basis of the pluralist International Society, according to the German Presidency, also carries a nonmaterial and spiritual connotation of being connected by a common destiny and fate. In other words, the particular pluralist International Society comprised of the EU and Russia

revolves around the *belief* that close cooperation between the EU and Russia is the only possibility for both sides to benefit. Inter-reliance therefore almost functions as some kind of ‘religion’ that gives a group of actors a common basis for the formation of a society.

Similar presumptions about the character of EU-Russia relations are embedded in the *discourse of interrelation* of the Portuguese Presidency and the *discourse of equality and interdependence* of the Slovenian Presidency: The discourse of interrelation forms the basis for EU-Russia relations as articulated by the Portuguese Presidency. However, it does not suggest the same spirituality as the discourse of inter-reliance, the approach towards Russia by the Portuguese Presidency is much more pragmatic. The maintenance of ‘good’ and close relations between the EU and Russia in form of a ‘strategic partnership’ is regarded as beneficial, especially in the field of trade and economics (2007b). This can be taken to reflect the fact that the emergence of the market as a key institution in EU-Russia relations has challenged many core pluralist values (Aalto, 2007, p. 463). Due to these strongly solidarist features of the discourse of interrelation, its appearance remains ambiguous, as the institutionalized relations between the EU and Russia are referred to as a means to some economic ends which may also aim at power consolidation in the international arena (cf. *ibid.*). Despite the more pragmatic nature of the discourse of interrelation in comparison to the discourse of inter-reliance (cf. German Presidency), the discourse of interrelation labels EU-Russia relations as unique. This again motivates the articulation of a regional International Society of its own with the EU and Russia as its members.

The Slovenian Presidency’s articulations are shaped by the *discourse of equality and interdependence* in such a way that the EU and Russia are portrayed as equal players in international relations. They depend on each other in the solution of certain, also shared, problems and issues. This means that in order to successfully tackle these issues, the EU and Russia need to coordinate their actions and cooperate where possible. The most suitable framework for cooperation for the two sides is argued to be the ‘strategic partnership’. Although the idea of interdependence is slightly different from the notions of inter-reliance articulated by the German Presidency, and the notion of interrelation by the Portuguese Presidency, the meaning of interdependence for EU-Russia relations remains largely the same: The Slovenian Presidency actualises with the discourse of equality and interdependence a kind of social structure of EU-Russia relations which comes close to the pluralist International Society end in the spectrum of English School concepts. ‘Equality’ here indicates that, from the point of view of the Slovenian Presidency, the EU and Russia recognize each other as equally important actors in international relations which are also

assumed to hold an equal kind of sovereignty. This comes close to the discourse of sovereignty identified in the articulations of the Portuguese Presidency. ‘Interdependence’ here indicates the reason for the partnership between the EU and Russia which is not only articulated by the council Presidencies, but also by the President of the Commission as well as the President of the Russian Federation (Portuguese Presidency, 2007b; cf. German Presidency, 2007i; Slovenian Presidency, 2008r; Prozorov, 2006, p. 3).

Moreover, interdependence, just as inter-reliance and interrelation, highlights EU-Russia relations as a special case. The pluralist International Society emerging from the discourse of equality and interdependence is thus not an ‘ordinary’, global International Society. Instead, the ‘special’ circumstance of being interdependent forms the basis for an International Society on its own which is comprised of the EU and Russia. It is most adequately characterized as pluralist since it turns out to be generally a means to some ends. Moreover, as the numerous press releases on various Partnership Councils indicate (pp. 69-70) cooperation between the EU and Russia remains so far an elite project as it is largely initiated and coordinated by official or ‘state’ authorities. Due to this emphasis on authorities and political elites the discourse of equality and interdependence articulates the pluralist International Society as rather thin as no interaction on a ‘deeper’ level involving non-state actors is mentioned. This in turn would speak for a thicker kind of International Society.

6.1.2 Conduct and Recognition: Pragmatism and National Self-Distinction

The interpretation of EU-Russia relations being partly articulated as a pluralist International Society is also extended to the assessment of the *discourse of pragmatism*. It was in a hegemonic position during the German Presidency and thus regulated the conduct between the EU and Russia to some extent. In particular, the function of the discourse of pragmatism is to influence the behaviour of the EU and its member states in such a way that it does not become overly emotional which would mean that the more important benefits of inter-reliance are lost out of sight (cf. above). The discourse of pragmatism prevents the sovereign EU member states from leaving the established frameworks and rules of interaction between the EU and Russia aside. The discourse of pragmatism therefore presupposes that bilateral relations between the member states and Russia take the form of an International System which is comprised by sovereign nation-states moving in an environment of anarchy. In addition to this, however, the discourse of pragmatism upholds a pluralist International Society comprised of the EU, its member states, and the Russian Federation, i.e. the discourse of pragmatism prevents elements of International System to become hegemonic in EU-Russia

relations. It is thus presupposed that on this regional level there exists a group of states that all – in a spirit of pragmatic problem solving – “have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognise their common interest in maintaining these arrangements” (Bull & Watson, 1984, p. 1; cf. above).

The conduct between the EU and Russia is also regulated by the *discourse of national self-distinction* and the *discourse of sovereignty*. These discourses are hegemonic in the articulations of the Portuguese Presidency. The discourse of national self-distinction is not directly relevant for the articulation of EU-Russia relations. It is rather that the occasion of representing the European Union towards an important third country was welcomed by the Portuguese government as an opportunity to present their country in an advantageous manner. Interestingly, the Portuguese Presidency emphatically articulates just the EU mostly as a pluralist International Society comprised of a group of sovereign nation-states. Challenging interpretations of the EU as a solidarist International Society (e.g. Dunne, 2008, p. 22), these nation-states are argued to form an International Society merely for facilitated conduct with each other and the safeguarding of the individual nation-statehood and sovereignty which ensures the “flexibility that we need to assume for the action of sovereign states, members of the European Union” (Portuguese Presidency, 2007g). Broadly, this corresponds to Linklater and Saganami’s (2006, p. 130) definition of a pluralist International Society in which states “take the...step of respecting one another’s right to sovereign independence.” In the articulations of the Portuguese Presidency the discourse of national self-distinction presents Portugal as a nation-state with a rich national history and a strong national identity that make Portugal distinct and individual from the other member states of the European Union. This is not to say the Portuguese Presidency views the remaining member states of the European Union as some homogeneous, grey entity. Rather, it emphasises particularly the representation of Portugal as a nation state, and at the same time grants the other member states their nation-statehood as they are all equal members of that group of states called European Union, which is not to be confused with a federation of political entities. This view is in line with Barry Buzan’s interpretation of the EU as a ‘convergence international society’, i.e. a group of states taking “similar political, legal and economic forms” (Buzan, 2004, p. 160). The characterization of the EU as a ‘confederative international society’ which implies the “creation of a single political entity” is thus discarded (ibid.; cf. Dunne, 2008, p. 22). Membership in the European Union or compliance with its values is, furthermore, not a strictly binding requirement to be a member of the pluralist International Society as articulated by the Portuguese Presidency.

Here, the link to the discourse of sovereignty becomes visible which is eventually relevant for an articulation of EU-Russia relations in terms of a pluralist International Society. The *discourse of sovereignty* which again emphasises the sovereignty of Portugal and includes the recognition of other states' sovereignty also includes Russia in that pluralist International Society. Due to this recognition, the Portuguese Presidency does not work on the basis of the assumption of a mere power political constellation (i.e. an anarchic International System). Since the EU, i.e. the group of states that Portugal finds itself a member of, is interrelated with Russia, maintaining close, cooperative relations named 'strategic partnership' is considered to be beneficial in economic terms.

Overall, however, the European Union as such does not take a prominent position in international relations as the key players are sovereign nation-states. Following a conceptualization set up by Barry Buzan, the EU can thus be characterized as a coexistence international society, which corresponds very much to the "Westphalian system in which the core institutions...are the balance of power, sovereignty, territoriality, diplomacy, great power management, war, and international law" (Buzan, 2004, p. 160; cf. Little, 2007, p. 145). As to the character of the EU-Russia international society structure, the Portuguese Presidency does not articulate any ideological or humanitarian motives for the partnership with Russia, which is a clear differentiation from a solidarist International Society. The few mentionings of human rights issues, which are not further defined, may be seen as hints towards a solidarist International Society of some form. Nevertheless, the way in which this discursive nodal point is filled with meaning does not change the overall characterization of EU-Russia relations as a pluralist International Society since the Portuguese government or Presidency respects Russia's sovereignty over internal affairs. EU-Russia relations are thus to a certain degree also non-articulated as pluralist International Society by the Portuguese Presidency.

6.2 EU-Russia Relations and Solidarist International Society

6.2.1 Liberalism

The *discourse of liberalism* identified in the articulations of the German and Slovenian Presidencies presupposes a solidarist International Society as it comprises articulations of humanitarian values and ideas such as the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, and civil society. Yet, unlike the elements of pluralist International Society in which Russia is included the discourse of liberalism rather treats Russia as an outsider of the solidarist International Society. As the definition of a solidarist International Society indicates, the

emphasis on humanitarian issues brings along a justification for intervention into third countries' internal affairs. The articulation of concern about the situation of human rights and democracy in Russia (p. 48; pp. 50-51; pp. 66-68) and criticism of apparently disproportionate police operations (p. 48) may be regarded as a form of intervention in Russian internal affairs by the German and Slovenian Presidencies on behalf of the European Union.

The solidarist International Society emerging from the discourse of liberalism is thus comprised by the EU and its member states which bethink themselves of the values and principles that they have based the EU on, i.e. "liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law" (TEU, Art. 6(1)). The promotion of these ideas and values thus leads to the creation of an exclusive solidarist International Society whose membership criteria are quite narrowly defined and from which Russia is excluded. Compliance with these values and ideas is a requirement for the inclusion in the solidarist International Society. Non-compliance leads to exclusion from the International Society and justifies intervention by the solidarist International Society, which is here done by the representative organ of the German council Presidency. In short, Russia does not comply with the criteria and is therefore excluded which becomes visible by the intervention in form of criticism and the articulation of concern. Furthermore, the exclusion of Russia from the solidarist International Society along with the intervention for higher moral reasons constitutes what may be labelled a delusion of world politics according to Robert Jackson (2005, p. 129). The delusion occurs by the confrontation of pluralist institutions such as state sovereignty with solidarist institutions as in this case liberalism and human rights which results in a normative dilemma "in which the right course of action is not self-evident" (ibid.). According to Jackson, opting for the promotion of one institution will always be on the expense of the other institution while both of them are considered as indispensable for the preservation of order and peace by actors in international relations (see also Buzan, 2004, p. 185).

Yet, the articulated hope for "political and social reform" (2008g) as well as the prospect of Russia joining the WTO (2008s), i.e. trade liberalisation as an element of solidarist International Society (Aalto, 2007, p. 463), signify the Slovenian Presidency's readiness for including Russia in that solidarist International Society if certain pre-conditions are met. The prospect of Russia's accession to the WTO is another indicator for the increasing importance of the market as a key institution in EU-Russia relations "which challenges many core pluralist, most distinctively sovereignty, territoriality and the balance of power" (Aalto, 2007, p. 463).

6.2.2 *Civilisation*

The *discourse of Euro-Slavism* is interesting for the reason that it uniquely emphasises cultural, historical, and linguistic features that are shared by the “civilisations” of the EU and Russia (p. 67; pp. 70-71), and in a broader context also by the civilisations of North America (p. 71). The emphasis here is thus not on state actors and cooperation between political entities that shape international relations, but rather on societies that share certain cultural characteristics and narratives on Europeanness and European civilisation, as pointed out by the Slovenian Presidency. Since the emphasis here is on the civilisations of the aforementioned regions, i.e. the populations that arguably share a common culture, one may argue that the discourse of Euro-Slavism can be regarded as articulating features of World Society or as what Barry Buzan calls the interhuman domain (Buzan, 2004, p. 138; p. 200). This interhuman domain or society is comprised of individuals and is “mainly manifested as large-scale patterns of shared identity” (ibid., p. xvii). Following the discourse of Euro-Slavism, the large-scale patterns of shared identity within the World Society at hand are the perception of the Slavic civilisation as being inherently European. It therefore forms a manifest part of a grand European interhuman domain that includes the peoples of Europe, North America, and consequently also Russia (p. 67; pp. 70-71).

The discourse of Euro-Slavism is a construct which is unique to state representatives of the Republic of Slovenia. Therefore, the articulation of a World Society comprised of some sort of European civilisation is simultaneously also relevant for relations between the political entities of the EU and Russia. Correspondingly, the historical English School of Butterfield, Wight, and Watson is reported to view World Society based on a shared culture “as a prerequisite for international society” (Buzan, 2004, p. 28, emphasis original). The more recent English School as represented by Barry Buzan has relativized the status of shared culture as indispensable for solidarist International Society and stresses the importance of the “institutionalization of shared interests and values” (ibid., p. 61). Yet, the approach by the Slovenian Presidency to Slavic and European civilisation can be regarded as an attempt to articulate an International Society on the basis of a World Society. Thus, the discourse of Euro-Slavism reveals the Slovenian Presidency’s view on the shared European civilisation as “an underlying cultural pattern [which] would facilitate the development of an interstate society” (ibid., p. 200). In other words, the discourse of Euro-Slavism simultaneously suggests a solidarist International Society which revolves around a common European identity and whose highest priority is the common interest of the European and Euro-Slavic collective and humanity (pp. 70-71). The members of the solidarist International Society articulated by

the Slovenian Presidency under the discourse of Euro-Slavism are thus the EU, Russia, all other Slavic countries, as well as the countries of North America. The World Society pointed out above can be regarded as an exact parallel to the solidarist International Society, with its member being the corresponding societies and peoples.

The Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša presents the World Society comprised of the ‘European civilisation’ as worthy of protection by the EU and Russia who “together contribute to the consolidation of peace and stability in a region sharing a common history and civilization” (2008e; cf. above). Civilisation thus emerges as a value shared by the members of the International Society. It may thus be treated in a similar way as human rights being the classical example for a value framework or institution of a solidarist International Society in English School literature (Buzan, 2004, ch. 6; Dunne, 2007, pp. 141-144). In this context, it appears somewhat puzzling that Buzan argues that “the debate about solidarism in [*sic*] not primarily (or even at all) about shared identity or common culture” (Buzan, 2004, p. 61) and simultaneously makes a strong case for nationalism as a primary institution of international society (ibid., pp. 184-185). In Buzan’s reasoning, nationalism implies self-determination, people’s sovereignty and hints therefore to the pluralist end of the spectrum of International Society (ibid.; cf. Portuguese Presidency).

Yet, since nationalism also implies a strong sense of shared identity and common culture, it shares some features with the theme of civilisation articulated by the Slovenian Presidency and the discourse of Euro-Slavism. The prime difference between nationalism and ‘civilisationalism’ is that nationalism is limited to individual countries and ‘civilisationalism’ overarches countries and stresses commonalities between different societies and peoples in a certain region disregarding their nationality. Whereas nationalism is regarded as a possible primary institution of a pluralist International Society, ‘civilisationalism’ can thus be regarded as a possible primary institution of a solidarist International Society backed up by a parallel World Society. The Slovenian Presidency’s articulations and the discourse of Euro-Slavism constitute a practical example for an attempt to create such a constellation. Moreover, the Slovenian Presidency also opens a door to the way out of a dilemma that Russia is said to find itself in. According to Buzan with reference to Samuel P. Huntington, Russia belongs to a group of ‘torn states’ which are “unsure of which civilisation they belong to” (Buzan, 2004, p. 221): Since the discourse of Euro-Slavism includes all Slavic peoples in the European civilisation, the Russians could foster their Slavic identity which appears fully compatible with any promotion of Europeanness. However, this depends on how open Russia shows itself

to the theme of Euro-Slavism as it is just one approach to identity formation suggested by the Slovenian Presidency.

6.3 Primary Institutions: Spheres of Inclusion and Exclusion

All three Presidencies articulate EU-Russia relations in some form of International Society from which Russia is at times included and at times excluded: On the one hand the discourses of inter-reliance, pragmatism, national self-distinction, sovereignty, and equality and interdependence bring into existence a pluralist International Society of which Russia is a member equal to the EU. On the other hand, the discourse of liberalism is an element of a solidarist International Society which largely equals the European Union. When defined against the background of this discourse, Russia emerges as an outsider and morally and ethically on a lower rank than the EU which justifies criticism of internal affairs in Russia. When the EU is characterized as a solidarist International Society, Russia is simultaneously condemned to the role as a non-member. Consequently, one might even go as far as to claim that the discourse of liberalism hints towards an international social structure with features of an International System: The discourse of liberalism accounts for the existence of a solidarist International Society that justifies intervention by its morally higher liberal ideology. This form of interventionism corresponds very much to Jan Zielonka's conception of the European Union as empire which exerts its influence beyond its official territory defined by the borders of its member states (Zielonka, 2008, p. 475). The intervention implied by the discourse of liberalism does not make use of hard power instruments. Instead, the EU attempts to exert normative power which in Zielonka's terminology can also be called a "power model" (ibid., p. 480), which would "imply showing other actors that European norms can also work for them, and providing economic incentives for adopting these norms" (ibid.; cf. Haukkala, 2005). In addition, following a somewhat Waltzian logic of anarchy included in the conceptualization of International System, the discourse of liberalism – when applied outside the EU – envisages the EU and Russia as independent units that oppose and intervene in each other's internal affairs for whatever motives.

Another interpretation of this situation that would point a way out of the contradictions and tensions created by the features of solidarist International Society is that inclusion and exclusion happen with regard to different primary institutions in play in the social reality of EU-Russia relations. Barry Buzan defines primary institutions as "relatively fundamental and durable practices that are evolved more than designed" and as "constitutive of actors and their patterns of legitimate activity in relation to each other" (Buzan, 2004, p. 167). For example,

inclusion in the pluralist international society occurs thanks to the somewhat ‘spiritual’ institutions of inter-reliance, interrelation, and interdependence being the grand ideational reasons for maintaining EU-Russia relations. Inter-reliance, interrelation, and interdependence are articulated by the respective Council Presidencies as legitimizing interaction with Russia. Contrastingly, institutions concerning more of day-to-day politics such as human rights, the market, and democracy provide the context for the discourse of liberalism to unfold. Instead of carrying a ‘spiritual’ connotation, it rather carries an ideological connotation of socio-politics which appears only inherent to the EU. The result is that the EU emerges as a solidarist sub-International Society within the pluralist EU-Russia International Society. Some of the primary institutions of that solidarist International Society are, for example, human rights and democracy. These institutions form the basis of a self-perception of being on another moral or ethical level. Consequently, these institutions legitimize the EU’s interventionist behaviour towards Russia as an outsider of the solidarist International Society (cf. Buzan, 2004, p. 167). This solidarist International Society criticises the other member of the pluralist International Society as it deems honesty and openness necessary for EU-Russia relations to become fully beneficial for all sides (cf. above). Yet, since the solidarist International Society forms a part of a larger International Society, any interventionism implied by solidarism is relativized by the order of the pluralist International Society.

To complete the picture of the EU-Russia International Society and to add to its complexity, the themes Euro-Slavism and European civilisation hint to the solidarist International Society and World Society end of the spectrum. This, however, takes place within yet another institution than the discourse of liberalism points at: On the one hand, the discourse of liberalism shapes verbal intervention in Russia’s internal affairs by the EU as a solidarist International Society promoting and protecting human rights, i.e. Russia is excluded from that solidarist International Society constituted by the primary institution of international law on fundamental rights (cf. Little, 2007, p. 148; pp. 150-151). The circumstances of exclusion are, however, weakened as there is the prospect of inclusion under certain conditions. On the other hand, the discourse of Euro-Slavism represents a solidarist International Society which includes Russia next to the EU and North America with the European civilisation constituting a primary institution. With regards to civilisation, culture, history, and the like, Russia is drawn into the solidarist International Society defined by Euro-Slavism and civilisation and does not emerge as an outsider.

6.4 The Social Reality of EU-Russia relations from January 2007 – June 2008

The finding of the patterns of inclusion and exclusion occurring in different institutions may account for an argument against the contradiction emerging from simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of Russia. In addition, the various institution relevant for EU-Russia relations also account for the existence of a certain order in EU-Russia relations, and not contradictory chaos of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion. Still, in the English School terms contradictory articulations of EU-Russia relations reflect ambivalent approaches towards Russia within the single Presidencies. The Portuguese Presidency with its rather clear articulations of pluralist International Society may be an exception here. Nevertheless, although all three Presidencies under investigation in this study uphold the general EU jargon of EU-Russia relations taking the form of a 'strategic partnership', each Presidency gives that 'strategic partnership' a different meaning, foundation, justification, and priority. These different approaches by the rotating Presidencies therefore reveal the complex and ambivalent character of the international social structure of EU-Russia relations; different Presidencies offer different and contradictory discourses the opportunity to become hegemonic at different times.

More precisely, the articulations of each Presidency are at times dominated by a discourse that is unique to that particular Presidency and not shared by the other ones. In particular, this accounts to the discourse of inter-reliance of the German Presidency, the discourse of national self-distinction revolving around the DNP of the nation in the case of Portugal, and the discourse of Euro-Slavism of the Slovenian Presidency. As indicated in chapter 3 on the theoretical framework, it is not possible to clearly categorize the social reality of EU-Russia relations according to the three key concepts of the English School. Rather, several elements of each key concept and their sub-concepts have been identified. It is their interplay that most adequately describes the character of the social reality of EU-Russia relations.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the social reality of EU-Russia relation emerging from the articulations of the changing council Presidencies widely corresponds to the conceptualization of an International Society. This, however, is a very broad concept and the articulations of the three council Presidencies presented here, on the one hand, only confirm this theoretical assumption as they all articulate the EU-Russia International Society in different ways with emphasis and priority on different topics, issues, and ideas. On the other hand, the presented analysis has added some flesh around the bones of this abstract presumption. It has specified why and how the international social reality of EU-Russia relations sometimes appears closer

to the solidarist end and sometimes closer to the pluralist end of the spectrum of international relations. It has also illustrated what brings the feature of an international system – i.e. a social reality that revolves around power politics – out of the analysed social reality.

Furthermore, what can be read from the analysis of the discourses of EU Presidencies is that the rotation of Presidencies also results in a rotation of the articulation of EU-Russia relations. The social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges from the articulations of the three Presidencies as a highly complex formation and each Presidency only reproduces only a fracture. The conducted analysis, however, has disclosed some institutional patterns in this complexity.

It should be kept in mind here that only three Presidencies have been considered in this study. Consequently, it would have been interesting to analyse what kinds of patterns emerge from the complexity if more Presidencies had been investigated. However, the scope of this study does not allow any further investigations. Yet, it can be maintained that already the snapshot of three Presidencies provides a revealing insight in the complexity of the social reality of EU-Russia relations.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to answer the main research question ‘What kind of social reality of EU-Russia relations emerges from the articulations of changing EU Council Presidencies?’ In order to determine what this social reality entails, a discourse analysis according to Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and Thomas Diez (2001) has been conducted. The research material was provided by the articulations relevant to EU-Russia relations by the German, Portuguese, and Slovenian Presidencies between January 2007 and June 2008. The discourses identified in this analysis were then taken as character traits of the social reality of EU-Russia relations and examined through the lens of the IR theoretical framework of the English School. The English School was opted for in the theoretical analysis due to its distinct ability to capture a wide range of different and complex problems in international relations in a coherent and comprehensible theoretical framework.

The theoretical analysis in the previous chapter found that the various discourses that are hegemonic in the articulations of the three Council Presidencies hint not just at one area or end of the spectrum on international relations (p. 28). The discourses instead cover almost the whole spectrum of international relations with elements of different kinds of pluralist and solidarist International Society, elements of International System, and elements of World Society. Although the most common elements quite expectedly hint towards some kind of International Society, sometimes tending to the pluralist end and sometimes tending to the solidarist end, the variety of discourses reveal a highly complex social reality of EU-Russia relations. In particular, this means that the social reality appears as a multi-layered structure with a multitude of actors holding a wide range of at times contradictory perceptions and priorities. Observing the social reality of EU-Russia relations selectively therefore resembles a roulette gambling game of which the outcome is uncertain and incalculable. Still, this study has shown how the practice of rotating Council Presidencies brings varying social patterns (e.g. of inclusion and exclusion) to the surface. Any attempt to interpret EU-Russia relations as a predominantly bilateral formation between the two homogeneous entities of the EU and Russia would mean neglecting the internal complexity of the EU itself. In the assessment of the social reality of EU-Russia relations, it would consequently be fatal to regard the EU as one single, homogeneous actor; this is especially due to the practice of the rotating Council Presidencies. As this study has shown, each Presidency gives the EU-Russia ‘strategic partnership’ a different meaning, foundation, justification, and priority, which becomes clear through the variety of discourses identified in their articulations.

With regard to studies with looking at member states' different approaches towards Russia (cf. 2.4.3) this study confirms the ambiguous character of the EU's approach to Russia which can be strongly influenced by the member states. Germany's 'special relationship' with Russia may be seen as closely related to the discourse of inter-reliance and its somewhat spiritual connotation (pp. 79-80). Yet, the undermining of EU policies by Germany cannot be confirmed with regard to the German Presidency. Portugal's characterization as a 'Friendly Pragmatist' with strong business interests appears quite accurate thanks to its quite consistent articulation of an EU-Russian pluralist International Society mostly based on trade interrelation (pp. 80-81). In contrast, Slovenia's characterization of a 'Friendly Pragmatist' may appear somewhat too careful especially if one takes into account the discourse of Euro-Slavism and its emphasis on shared culture and civilisation. In addition to possible business interests indicated in the *Power Audit*, the discourse of Euro-Slavism introduces a wide range of non-materialistic or idealistic considerations into the social reality of EU-Russia relations (pp. 74-75; pp. 85-87). In this light, one might even consider to categorize Slovenia as a 'Trojan Horse' or 'Strategic Partner' if one chooses to hold on to Leonard and Popescu's terminology.

Furthermore, this finding is also in line with arguments that the strategic partnership only bears superficial value which is supported by the patterns of exclusion and self-exclusion on the Russian side (pp. 6-7). On part of the EU, this argument is supported by the patterns of inclusion and exclusion of Russia from certain formations and institutions of International Society. The 'strategic partnership' articulated by both the EU and Russia is thus not much more than a rhetoric creation as the EU's approach is modified by each Council Presidency on its own terms. However, the spheres of inclusion may suggest some stronger effort by the EU create a meaningful and positive relationship between the EU and Russia. In particular, the discourse of Euro-Slavism and the institution of civilisation may serve as a point of departure for further rapprochement between the EU and Russia as they open up areas where a deepening of EU-Russia relations could occur.

In relation to previous research examining EU-Russia relations from the point of view of identity formation (pp. 14-16), this research neither clearly confirms nor denies Neumann's findings on Russia as Europe's 'other'. The elaboration upon primary institutions (pp.87-88) may, however, constitute the closest relation to Iver B. Neumann's study: Especially by the process of exclusion within certain institutions such as liberalism in general or human rights in particular areas are pointed out within which also a process of 'othering' may occur. This is made possible through the emphasis on differences between the EU and Russia such as, for

example, compliance and non-compliance with liberal principles. In contrast, since the English School is interested in kinds of social processes other than self-other-dynamics (i.e. the sharing of values, ideas, understandings as well as the institutionalization of relations) the results of this study are in parts also different to Neumann's finding: The analysis has also identified some areas of inclusion which speak for the existence of certain commonalities and a variety of shared features between the EU, its member states, and Russia.

The patterns of inclusion and exclusion identified in this study may also account for a link to Hiski Haukkala's work. In line with Haukkala's argument, especially the pattern of exclusion within certain institutions occur on the basis of divergence of the value sets fostered by the EU and Russia. This applies especially to the institutions accounting for a solidarist International Society. However, the patterns of inclusion which occur in both pluralist and solidarist institutions speak for a higher degree of commonality in worldviews. It has to be noted here, that these worldviews are not necessarily in line with the EU's world view as such – taking the EU as a member state-independent actor in international relations. Rather, these worldviews are the member states or Council Presidencies' worldviews coming to the surface due to the practice of rotation. In this light, this study may thus be regarded a modest contribution to Haukkala's intended "disaggregat[ion]" (Haukkala, 2008, p. 248) of a seemingly homogeneous worldview of the EU – a line for further research that Haukkala suggests to follow in the future (ibid., pp. 247-248).

This study has, however, not only opened up possibilities for the assessment of EU-Russia relations in connection with previous research, but it points also at opportunities to extend the research on its own terms into different directions. Firstly, the analytical part of this study focuses on three Council Presidencies as a case study. The research design is thus not just applicable to these three Presidencies. It is therefore conceivable to apply this research design to the articulations of other Presidencies in the past and to the ones that are still to come as long as the institutional reform, which the EU has been struggling with for some years now, does not end the practice of the rotating Council Presidencies. It may in contrast appear even more interesting and possibly more sensible to include the articulations of the representatives of the Russian Federation in the analysis. This way, both sides of the relationship would be taken into consideration and a more complete picture could emerge from the analysis. It might in addition also be possible to identify diverging approaches by Russia towards the different Council Presidencies as the bilateral relations between Russia and the particular member state may play a role as well.

In any case, the study at hand has revealed the complex and at times ambiguous and contradictory nature of the social reality of EU-Russian relations. Even if institutional reform ends the practice of rotating Presidencies, it is hardly conceivable that this will bring about major changes in the complexity of the social reality of EU-Russia relations since the member states as such will remain as they are. Coherence in the EU's approach to Russia will, however, require further and deeper reform. Yet, the likelihood of this prospect to be realised remains disputable: For example, of the three Presidencies under investigation in this study, Portugal arguably follows the most coherent approach as it consistently articulates EU-Russia relations as a pluralist International Society. On a supranational level, the Portuguese Foreign Minister accordingly prefers to equip the CFSP with "flexibility that we need to assume for the action of sovereign states, members of the European Union" (Portuguese Presidency, 2007g). Flexibility on the individual state level can only lead to incoherence on the supranational level, or to "the Proliferation of the Fuzzy" as Emerson (2005, p. 1) might put it, here obviously caused by the adherence to certain pluralist primary institutions.

Nonetheless, in order to create a more promising approach towards Russia with regards to both coherence and rapprochement, this study has identified several areas within which this undertaking could be pursued. This especially applies to the solidarist institution discussed above as they suggest a more dynamic relationship between the participants (pp. 30-32). Pluralist primary institutions account for a more static relationship (pp. 29-30). As already indicated above, the discourse of Euro-Slavism opens up possibilities to promote contents emphasising cultural and civilizational commonalities. Before this background, it will in the long run become increasingly difficult, for example, to uphold the discourses of exclusion and self-exclusion on the Russian side (Prozorov, 2007) as well as to justify the strict visa-regime on parts of the EU (ibid.). The discourse of liberalism, which so far strongly accounts for patterns of exclusion, also bears possibilities for inclusion by the promotion of the market as primary institution. The prospect of inclusion by compliance with other liberal institutions such as democracy and human rights do not appear as promising. This is because the prospect puts Russia again into the role of a learner – something that Russia has recently endeavoured to avoid. Currently, the only sensible variant might be a process of getting to know each other and learning from each other. The discourses of inter-reliance, interrelation, and interdependence as hinting towards a pluralist International Society are important here as well since thanks to them interaction, exchange, dialogue have found their regular basis. Without these, no matter how many generations have to pass, learning and convergence are impossible.

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