New Frontiers in European Studies

Guildford, 30 June - 1 July 2011

www.uaces.org

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Paper Presented at "New Frontiers in European Studies": UACES Student Forum

12th Annual Conference

University of Surrey, Guildford, 30 June – 1 July

Session 5 Panel A: "The EU as an International Actor: Great Powers and Conflict Resolution"

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Title: "Mutual Misunderstanding: Conceptual Misperceptions in Russia-EU Relations"

(Paper based on the Master Thesis "Mapping the Paradigmatic Foreign Policy Positions of Russia and the EU" defended at the University of Flensburg in pursuit of an MA/MSSc degree in "European Studies")

Abstract: The purpose of the paper is to study the paradigmatic shifts within the normative – power politics dichotomy in the Russian foreign policy discourse and to examine how these shift affected the perception of the European Union as a political actor and the prospects for Russia-EU relations. The paper proposes a specific methodological framework for content-analyzing Russian strategic foreign policy documents, thus examining the foreign policy orientations manifested in the Annual Presidential Addresses, the Foreign Policy Concepts and the National Security Strategies of Russian Federation across the whole transition period.

Adopting a constructivist framework, the study focuses on how the national identity crisis in Russia combined with the external (especially, European) responses to Russia's development have contributed to the instable, incoherent and sometimes contradicting foreign policy positioning in the quest for constructing a national and international "self" which could be both "a part of Europe and apart from Europe". The paper argues that the perceived marginalization of Russia on the European political space has created a situation when the EU has been used as a negative significant other in the process of constructing a distinct identity, which is based on the denial of Russia's "Europeanness" and the adoption of an alternative understanding of the basic European values and norms. By studying the structure and the core concepts within the Russian "normative" rhetoric, the paper explains how conceptual misperceptions and reciprocal misunderstandings have prevented a constructive political dialogue between Russia and the EU.

Key words: Russian National Identity, Content-Analysis, Discursive Discontent, Russia-EU Political Communication

Introduction: Theoretical Basis and Methodology

The problematic of Russia-EU relations has been subject to much research conducted in the past and taking place in the present. Studies have also encompassed the thematic of mutual perceptions of the actors and have revealed that the relations between Russia and the EU are defined by a high level of ambiguity, ambivalence, distrust, "misunderstandings and frustration" (Gomart 2008). The crisis in relations, as agreed by many scholars, followed the period of stagnation (2003 – 2006) and has continued since 2006. The realists argue that this crisis in stems from a clash of interests, born out of the asymmetric interdependency trap (Hughes 2006; Leonard & Popescu 2007; Bordachev 2007), while the advocates of a more liberal approach argue that the aggravation of relations is connected to Russia's slide towards an authoritarian political regime in the time of Putin's presidency.

If we are to analyze the nature of the relationship crisis between Russia and the EU we should focus on the ideational specifics of national political and cultural environments and not reduce the analysis to a single aspect, be it the motif of promoting national interest or political transformations within a quasi-democratic system. The constructivist perspective, unlike the traditional realist and liberal approaches, provides a theoretical framework suited for studying the role and influence of ideational differences in the relations between Russia and the European Union, since it allows for accepting cultural relativism and it does not bear the stamp of generalization inherent in the approaches, which have been developed "in the West, by the West and for the West" (Tsygankov 2009). The constructivist approach has a number of important implications for this study. First, it assumes that ideational structures are as important in shaping the behavior of political actors as are material structures. Second, the mechanism of interest formation is embedded in the actors' identities. Identities inform interest, which inform action ("Identities are the basis of interest" (Wendt 1992). Third, agents and structures are mutually constituted, thus practice shapes and redefines ideational structures over time.

This approach challenges the traditional realist view that actors' actions are shaped by the drive for relative material gains and are constrained by the available resources, while ideas are employed to justify or rationalize purely egoistic power-driven actions and desires. It is argued, in turn, that actions are shaped by actor-specific interests, which are formed in the process of communication, they are constrained by normative limits and rationalized (or justified) with the help of those ideas which "already have moral force in a given […] context" (Wendt 1992).

If one is to analyze the normative (or otherwise) aspirations in foreign policy, it is necessary to avoid, as far as possible, claims of presumed objectivity, recognizing the role played by time, place and power in shaping these claims (Tocci 2008). This statement serves as an important

guideline for this study, as it is assumes that there can be no objective criteria for distinguishing between moral and immoral, normative and non-normative foreign policies.

The studies that have looked at the Russia-EU relations from the prism of the constructivist approach have confirmed that, first, the national identity discourse and the foreign policy debate in Russia are intertwined and are mutually influencing each other (Groys 1992; Hopf 1999; Kassianova 2001; Lo 2002; Tsygankov 2009; Thorun 2009; Clunan 2009); second, that the West has been repeatedly used as a referent point in Russia's discursive quest for self-identification, both nationally and internationally, performing the role of the significant other in the socialization of norms and values (Baranovsky 1999; Tsygankov 2009; Heller 2010); and third, that the referent role of the West, and specifically Europe has been becoming increasingly negative in the Russian discourse (Prozorov 2007; Makarychev 2008). It has been argued that Russia is attempting to question and contest the normative claims of the EU, but there is a lack of empirical studies analyzing Russia's negation of the "Normative Power EU" in constructing a distinct national and international identity and the conceptual misperceptions and misunderstandings that arise from this phenomenon, as well as how these discursive differences influence the state of Russia-EU relations. Thus, the study will try to address this gap, both thematically and methodologically.

The aim of this paper is to analyze and empirically test the manifested shifts in the Russian official foreign policy rhetoric across the "normative" – "power" politics scale and to study the changing perceptions of the European Union across time and in connection to the transformation of the Russian foreign policy paradigm. The study will be committed across two general lines of research which were encompassing specific research questions and were designed to inquire into the endogenous factors of perception-formation on the European Union in the Russian official foreign policy discourse based on changes within the Russian foreign policy positioning, and the direct imagery of the EU in the Russian strategic foreign policy documents. A specific content-analytical framework has then been created for the outlined goal of mapping the course of deviations of the Russian foreign policy debate within the defined ideational borders and constraints and for scoring the foreign policy position on the "normative" – "power" politics scale across time. The definitions of the "normative" and "power" politics categories draw heavily upon the traditional inter-paradigmatic IR debate between realism and idealism, while "normative" and "power" politics have been conceptualized so as to outline the opposite ends of the Russian foreign policy discourse. The EU has been *per se* taken as an actor manifesting a normative foreign policy position.

In line with the constructivist approach, which suggests that national interests, specifically, and the foreign policy positioning, in general, develop in line with the identity debate and are influenced by endogenous historical and cultural aspirations as well as exogenous influence from the significant others (Hopf 1999; Clunan 2009; Tsygankov 2009), and that significant others take the role of promoters of norms and values and provide models of conduct on the international arena, the study hypothesizes that the strengthening of the referent role of the EU in Russia's foreign policy discourse would concur with an increase in normative manifestations in the official foreign policy debate. This trend will be empirically verified through the conducted content-analysis. Another goal is to test the supposition that a relatively more "normative" foreign policy positioning would positively influence the political communication between Russia and the EU.

The analysis is carried out using the content analysis methodology and applies a specifically created research framework designed for the specific study of the selected sources and for answering the stated research questions.

The main methodology applied in this study for tracing longitudinal changes in the Russian foreign policy position across the "Normative" – "Power" Politics scale and for analyzing the "Europe of Nation States/European Union" imagery divide in the Russian external perception of the EU is quantitative content analysis.

Content analysis as a research methodology is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff 2004). This research uses the methodological mechanics of the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifesto Project/Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MRG/CMP/MARPOR) (Klingemann, et. al., 2006), but unlike MARPOR the research purpose of which is mapping party policy positions in parliamentary competition, this analysis has an altogether different scope and only borrows the basic principles of the quantitative analysis technique. Since this study aims at analyzing the ideological positioning of Russian Federation in foreign policy documents, as well as at studying the specific political image of the EU as perceived in these documents a technique known as "double-coding" would be applied. This method is used for a more nuanced and detailed description of the data accumulated in the process of primary generalized research (Volkens, et. al. 2011).

1. **Transformations of Russia's Official Foreign Policy Position**

   1.1. **Peculiarities of Russia's Foreign Policy Debate: Outlining the Characteristic Features**

Russia's foreign policy debate possesses a number of peculiarities, which are essential for the study of the transformations in Russia's foreign policy thinking and official foreign policy positioning.

First of all, the debate on Russia's international actorness is embedded in and intertwined with a much wider and much more complicated debate on the construction of a national self. Since Russia has never been a traditional nation-state in a European sense of the word, there was no historical identity, which Russia could return to once the Soviet system broke up. This lead Russia to look for sources of identity formation outside the borders of the state. In this context foreign policy became an important instrument for the national self-identification, while national identity also influenced the direction foreign policy was taking (Groys 1992; Tsygankov 2001; Kassianova 2001; Lo 2002; Tsygankov 2008; Clunan 2009).

Second, the West has been serving as a reference point in the national self-identification, establishing the context for the national identity formulation and exerting decisive influence (positive and negative) over the particular value system, which translated itself into the foreign policy positioning (Baranovsky 2000; Feklyunina 2008; Heller 2010).

Third, the foreign policy debate in Russia possesses a highly elitist nature, with the state possessing a monopoly on identifying Russia's foreign policy course (Zimmerman 2002). This also means that foreign policy is one of the sources of state legitimization, which makes Russian leaders extremely sensitive towards external affirmations and acknowledgements or lack thereof.

All this supports the assumption that Russian foreign policy evolves within the inner discourse on identity and draws heavily on the recognition of the Western other, at the same time being highly sensitive towards these external evaluations. In the absence of an adopted single vision of national identity the foreign policy orientations also become inconsistent and constantly contested.

Taking these implications into account, we will briefly analyze the transformations of the Russian foreign policy position throughout almost two decades of transition.

   1.2. **Tracing the Foreign Policy Shifts in Russia's Foreign Policy Discourse: From "Western Liberalism" to "Great Power Rhetoric"?**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Russian foreign policy, as seen by many researchers, was first characterized by a period of so-called "romantic illusions" and "infantile euphoria" (Plice 1996), then moved towards "great power balancing" (Tsygankov 2009), and finally ended up on the stage, denoted as "pragmatic realism" (Tsygankov 2009) or "great power politics" (Mankoff 2009).

The researchers propose a different set of criteria for analyzing the shifts in Russian foreign policy positioning. Most of the conducted research on the official discourse is based on the analysis of separate articulations and putting them in a wider context of internal and external policy developments. We shall trace the dynamic of Russia's foreign policy position change across the "Normative"-"Power" politics scale in order to provide a comparative cross-time evaluation of foreign policy emphasis. The Annual Presidential Addresses and Foreign Policy Concepts are taken as indicators of policy emphasis at a certain point of time. Content-analysis provides a tool for systematic description of official foreign policy communication.

This approach allows for the estimation of salience of certain foreign policy issues in foreign policy documents across the whole transition period. It also provides an opportunity for highly nuanced comparison of how and to what extent these issues have been used in communicating the transformation of foreign policy orientation.

Figures 1. and 2. (Appendix) provide a visual representation of the dynamic transformations of the Russian foreign position manifested in official foreign policy documents.

The trend demonstrated by the Annual Presidential Addresses shows that foreign policy debate throughout 1993-1999 was highly unstable and demonstrated sharp yearly shifts from a normative to a power-politics orientation and reverse. In comparison, the period from 2002 to 2007 has shown a gradual and steady evolution from a manifested *Realpolitik* to a more normative rhetoric, while 2008 has shown a dramatic drop back to the power-politics orientation, this tendency continuing until 2010.

At the same time, the development of the foreign policy rhetoric of the Foreign Policy Concepts shows a steady uninterrupted evolution across the normative scale. The immediate implication would be that despite the common assumption that the Russian foreign policy positioning has been moving from liberalism to realism, Russian leaders have been using a normative rhetoric in their political communication directed towards the foreign and domestic public.

The realist response to this finding would be that the normative logic has been used for the purpose of rationalizing and justifying the power intentions and motifs, but taking into account the constructivist response, we will have to consider these transformations in the context of internal and external developments at critical points such as the internal political debate between Westernizers and realists in 1995s when the liberal Foreign minister Kozyrev was replaced by

Evgeniy Primakov, the NATO-led war in Yugoslavia and the Western critique of Putin's aggressive policy towards Chechnya in 1999, Russia's response to the "illegitimate use of force" in Iraq and finally the Georgian crisis in 2008.

The quantitative content analysis of strategic foreign policy documents has shown that there are central issues in Russia's discourse: military power (positive/negative), international cooperation and national interest, around which the debate usually evolves, but the question remains open whether the conceptual understanding of these central issues remains stable.

The analysis has also that the concept of "national interest" has been transforming in its meaning together with Russia's changing foreign policy self-identification, which in turn was responding to the changes in the external environment (Table 1.)

TABLE 1. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL IDENTITY AND RELEVANT CATEGORIES ACROSS THE YELTSYN AND THE PUTIN/MEDVEDEV PERIODS

	National Interest (1993-1999)	National Interest (2000-2010)
Military power (contra)	**-0,66642**	**0,644056**
Military power (pro)	0,633969	-0,25389
Cooperation	**-0,84351**	**0,58822**
NATO (pro)	0,894105	-0,12788
NATO (contra)	**-0,65532**	**0,740668**
Regional stability and security	0,186138	**-0,52007**
Regional integration (pro)	-0,3446	**-0,50034**
Multipolarity	0,578795	0,689089
Uniplarity (confrontation)	**-0,42616**	-0,22855
Global Peace	**-0,55542**	-0,21363

Source: Analysis based on Pearson's correlation coefficients calculated for percentage values of the National Identity category and other categories (taken as dependent variables). Because of the high estimates of the standard error and high probability of accidental correlations, only high coefficients ranging from (-1 to 0.5) and (0.5-1) are taken into account.

The national interests formulations and the closely connected to it topics of cooperation, militarization and world order also include highly emphasized negative/positive attitudes towards NATO.

This confirms the assumption that there is a high dependency between the direction Russian foreign policy is taking and the considerations over its external environment. Russia's perceived place in the world and the acknowledgement of this place from the Western counterparts is an important factor in the development of the official foreign policy discourse. As we have seen, the Russian debate on foreign policy choices has developed in the context of a constant search for a national identity, which was influenced by the "Russia with the West", "Russia against the West" or "Russia on its own" choices. It is remarkable how foreign policy positioning was vulnerable to external factors, or rather, to the actions of the significant actors in the West. For

Russian leaders the external evaluation of their foreign policy course was important, much more important was the perceived acknowledgement and respect for Russia's manifested image.

2. The European Dimension in Russia's Official Foreign Policy Discourse

There is a wide range of studies on Russia's perception of Europe as a geopolitical space, cultural, economic and political actor. The international relations literature has provided an extensive account of Russia's view upon Europe and later the EU in a retrospective research from the tsarist time to the Soviet period and finally in the time of the post-Soviet transition. Authors stress the rather ambiguous attitudes that Russia demonstrated throughout history (Baranovsky 2000: 448), but all of them share the view that Russia has traditionally prioritized the European dimension in its foreign policy perceptions (Baranovsky 2000: 448).

The constitutive part of Europe in Russia foreign policy self-determination, as well as in its national identification debate goes along the traditional question whether Russia is "a part of Europe or apart from Europe".

The Russian discourse on its "Europeanness" incorporates three main groups of attitudes: liberal westernizers, pragmatic nationalist and fundamentalist nationalists (Allison 2008: 47). While liberal westernizers see Russia as a part of Europe, the fundamentalist nationalists tend to combine Russian European characteristics with its Asian features to produce a distinct Eurasian identity, and the pragmatic nationalists also see Russia as a European country, but stress its distinct characteristics, unique and inherent in its culture and history.

Another way of putting Europe as a reference point in Russia's identity construction is by opposing Europe to the concept of the West. Following this line of reasoning Russia is part of Europe, but not the West. Morozov (2003) argues that this is a tradition that stems back to the Cold War time, when there was a dichotomy of "false" and "true" Europe. The modern distinction between good West of Europe/EU and bad West of America/NATO is a continuation of the Soviet tradition.

A novelty in Russian discourse on Europe, which developed with the enlargement of the EU and the active political, economic and "ethical" role the EU started playing on the European space, is the debate on "Old" and "New" Europe and the consideration on the self-identification choices this divide presents in itself. In the debate the divide between Old and New goes roughly along the West-East lines. Thus, the Old Europe appears to be embracing the New one. The conflict for Russia's self-identification is constructed by Russia's exclusion from the integrationist project of the EU and the security organization of NATO, whereas the Eastern European states, which in Russia's view are closer to her, than to the Old Europe, are being included. This deepens the problem of identity and creates the question about Russia's place in the merging Old/New

Europe space. A. Makarychev (2004) suggests that Russia has a menu of choices as related to the Old-New Europe debate. The two extremes would be to denounce the integrationist project and declare itself the "Real Europe", or to reinterpret the Old/New Europe as the Wider Europe and treat the Old/New Europe divide as the outdated past. The scholar argues, that whichever choice Russia makes, the modern realities have already taken its toll on the Russian understanding of itself. What the outcome of the self-identification conflict as regards to Europe would be is yet to come, but it has already translated itself into the Russian discourse on exclusion and self-exclusion in its relations with the European Union (Prozorov 2007). The exclusion-inclusion conflict in the self-identification debate has an important impact on Russia's readiness and desire to embrace the European values and norms or to choice to reject them and propose its own set of specific normative guidelines which would constitute a specific identity for Russia. As it has already been noted, Russia's foreign policy self-identification, which is deeply rooted in the historical search for a national self, draws heavily on the "West" as one of the significant reference points. The external relations discourse and foreign policy orientation draw from internal and external factors.

The dynamic of reference frequencies to the "European" dimension of Russian foreign policy demonstrates the stably high emphasis on Europe (Appendix: Figures 3, 4). The unstable shifts in the presidential addresses (from high emphasis in 1993 to 1999) can be explained by Yeltsyn's indecisive moves between prioritizing the cooperation and integration in the CIS in an attempt to promote the restore the regional power status on the post-Soviet space and developing friendly relations with Europe in an attempt to balance the power of the United States. But generally, Europe has always been viewed as one of the prioritized partners along with the countries of the CIS. More interesting is however the question of which role was attributed to the European Union.

In contradiction to the common assumption that Russia, due to its realist foreign policy orientation does not acknowledge the European Union as a political player in world politics, the structure of the "European" dimension in the Russian foreign policy discourse shows high significance, which Russia attaches to the EU as a strategic partner. This contradicts both the realist thesis and the liberal thesis: when the Russian foreign policy position was assumed to be following the liberal orientation (early Yeltsyn's presidency) the acknowledgement of the EU was low as compared to the high importance placed on individual states (primarily of the countries of Eastern Europe) as well as on such structures as NATO, OCSE and the Council of Europe. Despite the fact that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Russia and the EU was signed in 1994 and came into force in 1997, neither of these years has shown increased interest in political cooperation with the European Union from Russia's side.

The situation drastically changed, however when Putin commenced presidency. Starting with the FPC 2000, the EU has been seen as the one significant strategic partner on the European political space. This also corresponds with Russia's rhetorical turn towards a normative position throughout 2002-2008.

We shall first look at the fragmentation of the European dimension throughout 1993-2000 and try to explain the reasons for a generally low interest towards the EU at the time when Russian foreign policy position was assumed to be more open to the West.

From 1993 to 1999, as the graphs show, the European space in Russia's foreign policy thinking was extremely fragmented. The priorities were dispersed among such political actors, as the EU, its member states, the post-Communist European states and specific European organizations: NATO, OSCE and CoE. This fragmentation is continuous in the Foreign policy conceptions (with changing emphasis), but the APAs demonstrate a rather exponential trend.

In the years of Yeltsyn's presidency, when most of the strategic documents concerning the Russia-EU relations have been signed (PCA 1994, The Common EU Strategy on Russia 1999 and the Strategy of the Development of Relations between Russia and the European Union 1999), it seems that the EU has not been viewed as a significant player on the European political space whatsoever, while much higher emphasis was placed on NATO.

Even though generally NATO was viewed by Russia as a relic of the cold war, a useless and potentially dangerous aggressive military instrument, the constant threat that Russia perceived in the presence on NATO on the European space, and, more specifically, the political influence of the USA in Europe was significant. The mentioning of NATO's activity on the European space always had a negative connotation in Russia's strategic foreign policy documents. While stressing the need for non-proliferation and reducing arm forces in Europe, Russia insinuated that "some actors" were willing to continue the policy of confrontation.

Russia kept emphasizing its negative attitude towards NATO's enlargement to the East; the APAs and the FPCs equally stress that the US military presence in Europe contradicts the logic of promoting European security, since the interests of the USA and European states could be quite opposite and at times even conflicting. In Europe, on the other hand, the US has been seen as the main sponsor of European security; moreover, America has not been putting obstacles in the way of European integration, but, to the contrary, has been providing Europe with an umbrella of security (Bordachev 2007: 81).

This misperception of the nature of NATO's role in Europe has had a negative impact on Russia-EU relations and the mutual perceptions of the actors.

The high emphasis placed on European institutions such as the OSCE and CoE in the nineties is a result of Russia's miscalculations concerning the role these organizations were supposed to play in the post-confrontation system and the influence they were allowed to have on European affairs. These emphases showed the inadequate understanding of the nature and character of EU's political ambitions from Russia's side (Bordachev 2007: 80).

The European Community has openly manifested its desire to develop cooperation and promote competences in the area of foreign and security policy already in the Maastricht treaty with the institutionalization of the second pillar. However, Moscow has intentionally or unintentionally ignored the Union's manifestation of will to act and responsibility for promoting regional security on the European continent. The OSCE was viewed by Brussels more as a symbolical institution, rather than a strategic security alliance. The competences of the OSCE were supposed to include human rights issues and compliance with democratic principles, but no more. Due to the overloaded structure and participation of two many states it was doomed to become a supplementary machine without military or political resources.

Russia, on the other hand, as the tables demonstrate, has been putting hopes on this organization throughout 1993-1999.

The FPC 1993 stressed its desire to see the OSCE develop into one of the main instruments for maintaining security in Europe. As part of the OSCE Russia wanted to claim its role as one of the contributors to the construction of a new European security architecture, while the OSCE should replace NATO as an outdated remnant from the Cold War period. The EU, to the contrary, was struggling to increase its own influence as a security actor in the region and viewed Russia's proposals as an attempt to gain influence in what the single Europe saw as its area of responsibility.

Scholars also note a striking preference for the development of bilateral relations with the member states of the European Union. This is explained by the general bilateral and outspokenly personal nature of Yeltsyn's diplomacy and the assumption that Russia is prioritizing bi-lateral economic deals on oil and gas with some of its strategic partners in the EU over multi-lateral negotiations within the EU institutional framework.

However the analysis of issue salience in APAs and FPCs reveals that the relative emphasis on European member states in strategic foreign policy documents was quite low. High emphasis in the early years of transition was made on the East European countries, which Russia considered its historical allies viewed as part of its zone of responsibility. East-European and Baltic states (which refused to become members of the CIS) were referred to in the context of their democratic transition and Russia's high concerns about the status and rights of the Russian-speaking population of these countries.

In the line with Russia's foreign policy transformations in 1993-1999, Europe was first viewed as a partner in economic relations and as a contributor to Russia's democratic and economic transition, later, with the adoption of the "balancing paradigm", Europe was seen in an increasingly geopolitical light, as a potential counter-weight to the power of the US on the European security space, but also as a potential threat to Russia's gradually diminishing role in Eastern Europe.

With Putin, however, the European Union started being prioritized as a strategic partner on the European space. As we have noted earlier, this has coincided with Russia's manifestation of a normative orientation in its foreign policy conduct. Given that Europe has traditionally been significant for Russia's self-identification and that the inclusion-exclusion problem started playing an important role for Russia's choice in its value orientation with the emergence of the European Union as a normative actor on the European political space, one would assume that this has been a signal on the part of Russian policy makers that they were indeed ready and willing to extend a hand of cooperation and to embrace the European system of norms and values.

This assumption, however, contradicts with reality, where Russia-EU relations have been turning increasingly more problematic. In order to understand this phenomenon, we will have a closer look at the ideational conflict that has been persistent in the relations between Russia and the European Union throughout the whole period of transition.

3. The Conflict of Opposing Identities in Russia-EU Relations

Europe has played a significant role in Russia's foreign policy; it has also taken a role of the significant Other in the process of Russian political self-identification. At the same time, the attitude of Russia towards the EU has been marked by high ambivalence, caused by Russia's internal misunderstandings of the EU's ambitions as an international actor, Russia's instable foreign policy position, but also by the EU's internal conflicts in defining a common position towards Russia and the general contradicting attitudes that the EU demonstrated towards it. Thus, the question arises whether Russia is a victim of European indecisiveness, or whether the EU is a victim of Russia's instability and what role ideational differences play in the problematic Russia-EU relations.

This section will look more closely at the EU's self positioning as a global actor and try to pinpoint the problems and contradiction of the created image of Normative Power Europe. Then, we will look at the transforming attitudes of Europe in its pursuit of normative goals in relations

with Russia and finally analyze how ideational misunderstandings, misconceptions and bi-lateral misperceptions influenced the Russia-EU relations as international actors.

The paradoxes of the EU global actorness and the contradictions in its promoted image in the context of restrained foreign policy capabilities would undoubtedly have an impact on the nature and character of EU's external relations. The next section will analyze whether the EU has been consistent in maintaining its role as normative foreign policy actor in its relations with Russia and how it influenced the quality of Russia-EU political communication, given the instabilities in foreign policy positioning that Russia has been demonstrating in the transition period.

3.1."Normativity" in Russia-EU Relations: Myth or Reality?

It is not surprising that the EU, where values lie at the core of the identity, where they are vital for civic institutionalization, as well as international identity formation alike, has had high expectations from Russia on this issue (Allison 2008: 167). The Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia 1999 was quite explicit as to what place Europe saw Russia taking in the world and on the European space; it welcomed "Russia's return to its rightful place in the European family […] on the foundation of shared values enshrined in the common heritage of the European civilization". The strategic goals of the EU in relations with Russia have also been outlined, among which was the development of a "stable open and pluralistic democracy in Russia, governed by the rule of law". The European Security Strategy clarified that the EU's objective was creating stability, prosperity and security on its borders, emphasizing the importance of its relations with Russia. The EU has repeatedly underlined its intention to promote equality, good governance, human rights, the main principles of market economy and sustainable development. The EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement also bears a stamp of the EU normative approach for promoting cooperation with Russia.

With the intensity they have been stressed, these preconditions for a cooperative relationship were received and understood on the Russian side as well.

Baranovsky has noted that for post-Soviet Russia simply proclaiming its "Europeanness", as was the case in Gorbachev's time was not enough. Since Russia "pretends to operate as a "normal" member of the international community, certifying its participation in the family of "civilized" countries […] becomes a critical test" (Baranovsky 2009: 448).

Both Yeltsyn and Putin in the early years of their presidencies have been taking on the pro-European normative rhetoric.

Putin never missed an opportunity to emphasize that Russia is an "integral part of the European civilization", and that it "completely [shared] the fundamental European values and principles". He also adopted R. Prodi's expression "sharing everything, but institutions" in describing the

nature of Russia-EU relations. But over years of unsuccessful cooperation, Russia's manifested adherence to European was gradually decreasing giving ground to a more pragmatic and functional approach, where values and norms were steadily moved away to the background.

In 2004 Russia proclaimed that it would participate in European affairs "not as an object of "civilizing" influences on the part of other states or groups thereof, but precisely as an equal among equals".

Bordachev, one of the pro-European scholars in Russian academic debate, defined the EU-Russia relations starting with 2004 as "the era of pragmatism". The reasons for the failure of a constructive dialogue on normative grounds he sees in both, Russia's inner political transformations which translated themselves onto Russia's increased confidence on the international arena and, in the failure of the European Union to come up with a consorted position in its negotiations with Russia (Bordachev 2007: 126).

In this context many have argued that the EU's stubborn adherence to the normative agenda was getting counter-productive. Gomart (2008), for instance, noted that constantly repeating the "rule of law" mantra is getting outdated and not particularly successful in relations with Russia.

EU officials have also urged to "move away from grand political declarations and establish an issue-based strategy and agenda". Some EU officials openly admitted that it was "nonsense" to suggest that relations with Russia could be based on common values".

Thus, the European Union in its relationship with Russia also seemed to be steadily moving away from the position of a "normative mentor", making the choice for pragmatism in mutual relations instead. 2005 has been the year when the EU openly adopted a pragmatic policy strategy towards Russia: interests were supposed to be at the heart of the relationship and values were represented as one of the interests in dealing with Russia (Allison 2008: 169). The pragmatic approach was dictated by the purely economic interests of the European states. Thus the normative goals have remained a "dead letter, while concrete actions have focused on pursuit of narrow possession interests" (Fernandes in: Tocci (ed.) 2009).

3.2.(Mutual) Reciprocal Misunderstanding

The move towards "pragmatic cooperation" has signaled a failure in the EU's normative positioning in relations with Russia. The defectiveness of Russia-EU relations is seen by many as a result of an inability to "speak the same language" and "agree on common terms of dialogue". Scholars and officials alike stress that before any productive cooperation can be achieved, Russia and the EU should at first agree on the basic concepts.

The inability to reach a consensus so far has been to a large extent due to the common misperceptions between Russia and the EU.

In Russia there is an ambiguous view upon the international nature of the European Union. Albeit acknowledging EU's high economic potential and seeing the European integration model as a possibly frame for applying on the post-Soviet economic space, Russia's perception of the European Union is still dominated by the image of an underdeveloped hard power and an incoherent foreign policy player (Secrieru 2009; Bordachev 2007). The internal instability of the EU is reflected in Russia's fragmented view.

In relations with Russia the EU does not have a single coherent strategy. This indeed reduces Europe's capabilities of asserting normative power over Russia. There are two main competing approaches to the relations with Russia in the European Union: creeping integration and strategic containment. This divide to some extent marks the difference of approaches between the so-called "New" and "Old" Europe (Bordachev 2007). Popescu and Leonard group the European countries into "Trojan Horses" (Cyprus and Greece), who often defend Russia's interest and are ready to veto EU common positions, "Strategic Partners", who enjoy special bilateral relations with Russia on energy policy, "Friendly Pragmatists", who put business relations above political issues, "Frosty Pragmatists", who are also interested in pragmatic relations, but put more emphasis on the normative basis of the relationship, than others and, finally, the "New Cold Warriors", who have an explicitly hostile relationship towards Moscow and are ready to block any EU negotiations with Russia (Leonard & Popescu 2007). This study on the Russia-EU relations has also concluded, that Russia is "setting itself up as an ideological alternative to the EU, with a different approach to sovereignty, power and world order. Where the European project is founded on the rule of law, Moscow believes that laws are mere expressions of power – and that when the balance of power changes, laws should be changed to reflect it" (Leonard & Popescu 2007). There might be more truth in this statement than it seems, but the statement can also be re-formulated: Russia is operating with the traditional ideational categories of national interests, power, security and cooperation, but the meaning that Russia puts into those notions is not the same as that common in the European context. Russia is not trying to provide an "ideological alternative" to the EU, what Russia is doing looks more like trying on an "alternative ideology". Russia has demonstrated its unwillingness to further discourse on the universalism of European values, instead developing a discourse on their relativity (Gomart 2008: 9). Russia seems to be ready to offer an alternative reading of the set of norms constructive of the European Union, but definitely not to substitute them by some kind of Russia-only norms and values (Makarychev 2009: 148).

A significant part of the EU-Russia discursive discord can be explained through the way both actors utilize the normative language of communication – "while frequently using the same normative vocabulary Russia and the EU seem to infuse them with different meanings (Makarychev 2008: 148). To demonstrate these misinterpretations of concepts A. Makarychev uses Ian Manners' key norm identifiers that shape EU policies: peace, democracy, liberty, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law, liberty, and argues that there are indeed significant differences in the way Europe defines and operates with these values and how Russia utilizes them.

We shall also test this assumption by means of looking at the reference frequencies of the "Foreign Policy objectives" categories and analyzing the groupings that these categories appear in. First of all, it should be noted, that the FP objectives categorized in our content-analysis framework draw on the EU foreign policy objectives analyzed by K. Smith (2008) based on a general analysis of those outlined in the Maastricht Treaty 1993, the European Security Strategy 2004 and the Reform Treaty 2007. What is interesting is that the categories representing the same values that the European Union proclaimed in carrying out its foreign, in the Russian political discourse are not connected to the European dimension at all. Table 2. shows the relations between the intensity of collective reference to these values and to Europe.

The Putin/Medvedev rhetoric shows no correlation between these issues, whatsoever, while one can notice high negative correlations between Europe, the values of human rights, democracy and good governance and regional stability and security. Moreover, Europe was most likely to appear as a strategic partner, when the attitude towards integration was negative.

TABLE 2. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND FP OBJECTIVES ACROSS YELTSYN'S AND PUTIN/MEDVEDEV PERIODS

	Europe (1993-1999)	**Europe (1999-2010)**
Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance	**-0,50396**	-0,34107
Regional Stability and Security	**-0,86748**	0,136031
Regional integration (positive)	0,235827	0,034361
Regional integration (negative)	**0,773008**	0
Fight against international crime	-0,06925	0,38813

Source: Analysis based on Pearson's correlation coefficients calculated for percentage values of the Europe category and FP Objectives categories (taken as dependent variables). Because of the high estimates of the standard error and high probability of accidental correlations, only high coefficients ranging from (-1 to 0.5) and (0.5-1) are representative.

This is easily explained by the fact, that for Russia regional political and economic integration, as well as questions of regional stability and security are directly connected to the countries of

the near abroad. When Russia turns its priorities to the CIS countries, Europe and the European Union lose in importance. Interestingly, the debate on human rights and democracy also evolved around the countries of the near abroad. Here the most emphasized topic was the protection of the rights of Russian speaking population abroad. This has been the main orientation of Russia's human rights debate in official foreign policy communication. In referring to human rights violations in Estonia and Latvia, Russia is trying to take an upper hand in the "normative" debate with Europe. Russia is counterweighing the violations of compatriots in Europe to its multiethnic nature, where cultural, ethnic and religious differences are tolerated, claiming on these grounds to be "more European, than Europe itself".

Democracy is also a concept for interpretation, since Russia has, on the one hand, been promoting the country-specific idea of "sovereign democracy" and "democratic multi-polarity", but, on the other hand, Russia is feeling free to criticize states that have been violating the principles of international democracy (i.e. not accounting for the interests of all parties involved). Thus, Russia has been particularly active in pointing the finger at the "non-democratic" orange revolution in the Ukraine, which has been relying in financial support from outside. Thus, Russia uses the European "normative" ideas, but it rather sees them as a point of reference for country-specific interpretation, rather than an example to follow, which from a European perspective might seem like perversion and mockery of those very core values that the Europe is operating with.

While Russia was over-concerned about the acknowledgement and recognition of its international role from its significant others, the EU has been too preoccupied with dealing with internal integration challenges and has been engulfed in Eurocentrism, largely ignoring the others' perception of itself.

The tensions and permanent frustrations, resulting from interdependency (Medvedev 2008: 217) in Russia-EU relations go beyond the conflict of power-sharing and mutual security concerns, or differences in political and economic regimes. The underlying level of conflict is the existing reciprocal misunderstanding of one"selves" and each other as international players and the consequent confusion in defining the basic guidelines and principles of the desired nature of relationship. On the one side, Russia has been struggling with a self-identification challenge, influenced by the battle of different internal approaches, which together with the environmental reactions to its behavioral choices, determined the constant shifts and flails in the foreign policy paradigm. In its quest for acknowledgement from the significant others Russia has manifested inconsistent change of foreign policy orientation, defining and re-defining the main concepts of its political positioning. The lack of perceived satisfactory level of respect from the side of the

relevant European Other has served as a determinant factor of Russia's manifested turning away from the value system, propagated by Europe. This lead to an adherence to a completely different ideation paradigm with self-defined concepts of national interests, power, security and cooperation, the language of which is foreign to Europe.

On the other side, the EU was struggling with the same identification challenge, trying to define its role as an international actor and manifest a sustained image to the outside world. Maybe not to the same extent as did Russia, but the European Union also needed acknowledgement of its international status from other international players. The inner nature of the EU as well as the external perceptions determined the direction the EU was moving in terms of setting up a consistent foreign policy paradigm. The constructed foreign policy identity of normative power EU within which Europe is trying to conduct its foreign policy is also inconsistent with the EU's wish of acting as an independent political and security actor, a desire that cannot be fulfilled. Thus the image perceived

The "cognitive dissonances" in mutual perceptions stem from the misperceived concepts that govern the political thinking of the two actors within their communication. The EU, which manifests itself as a follower of the liberal paradigm, and Russia which positions itself in the role of a pragmatic realist in external relations, create these dissonances themselves and both "suffer" from them.

Conclusion

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the development of a new world order Russia, much like the European Union, has been confronted with a challenge of constructing an international role and defining a foreign policy identity.

The analysis of the official foreign policy documents has confirmed the highly instable nature of the foreign policy position, which has demonstrated shifts and flails across the "normative"-"power" politics scale in the context of a constantly re-defined discourse on national identity and as a response to the developments in the external environment and the reactions of the West to Russia's constructed international image. Moreover, the concepts employed and the meaning they were filled with also tended to change with the changing context of the discourse.

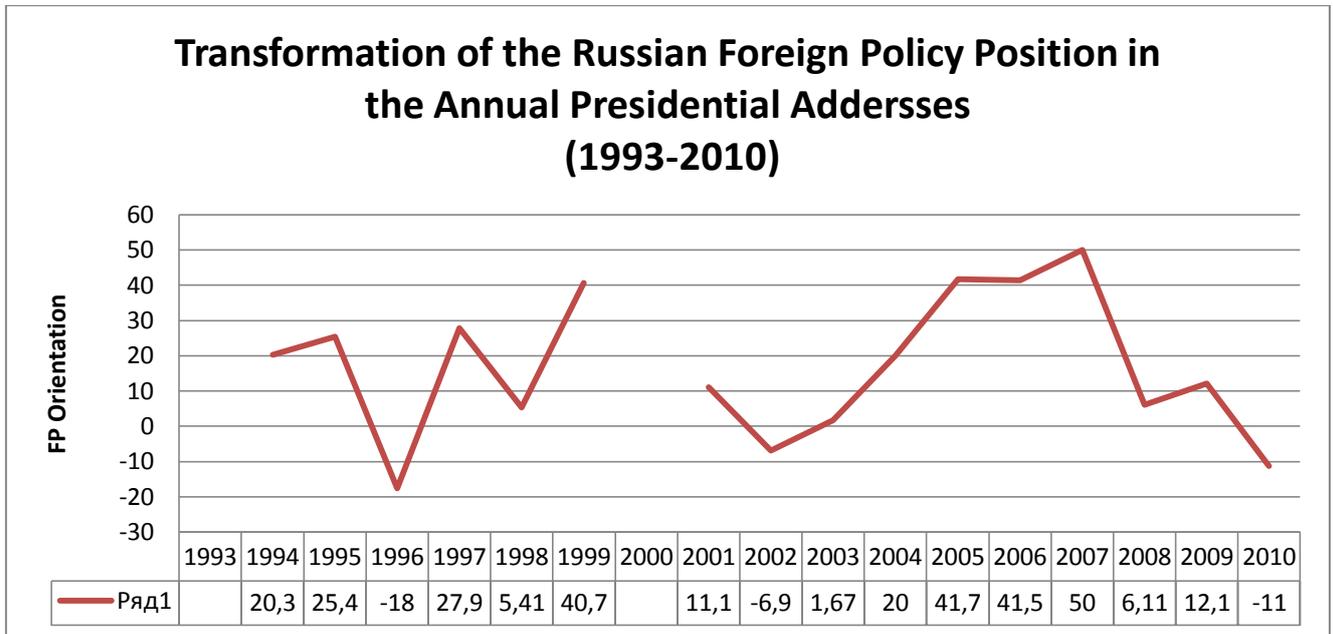The empirical analysis of the foreign policy manifestations has also revealed certain interesting findings.

Contrary to the assumptions that Russia has been steadily moving from a liberal foreign policy vision towards a more power-oriented and realist one, the study has shown that, first of all, in the early years of Yeltsyn's presidency there has been no stable foreign policy orientation (normative or otherwise) and the foreign policy shifts were to a large extent reflecting the inner instability of the discourse on Russia's role in the new world system and the character of its relation with the West; second, Putin's foreign policy rhetoric was comparatively more stable and was evolving in a much more normative key, compared to that of Yeltsyn.

In regard to the Russia-EU relations this finding has been especially significant, since the study has also shown that the prioritization of the European Union on Russia's side has coincided with the general trend of pursuing (at least rhetorically) a more normative position in foreign policy manifestations. This finding, however, does not imply that Russia has been adopting the European system of norms and values. Quite to the contrary, in the context of Russia's quest for a political self-identification, which has been challenged by its formal exclusion from the merging "New/Old" Europe, Russia has been using the normative rhetoric not to associate itself with Europe, but rather to set itself off against Europe. By proposing an alternative interpretation of the key European values, such as democracy and human rights, Russia has been using Europe as a "negative" significant other in the construction of its own political identity. This has been an important step for the construction of Russian national identity, but, on the other hand, it has also pushed Russia and Europe further away from each other, since it widened the ideational gap between the two actors.

In the situation where both Russia and the European Union have been struggling for defining ones' foreign policy personalities the development of productive and cooperative relations has been hindered by ideational misperceptions and misunderstandings.
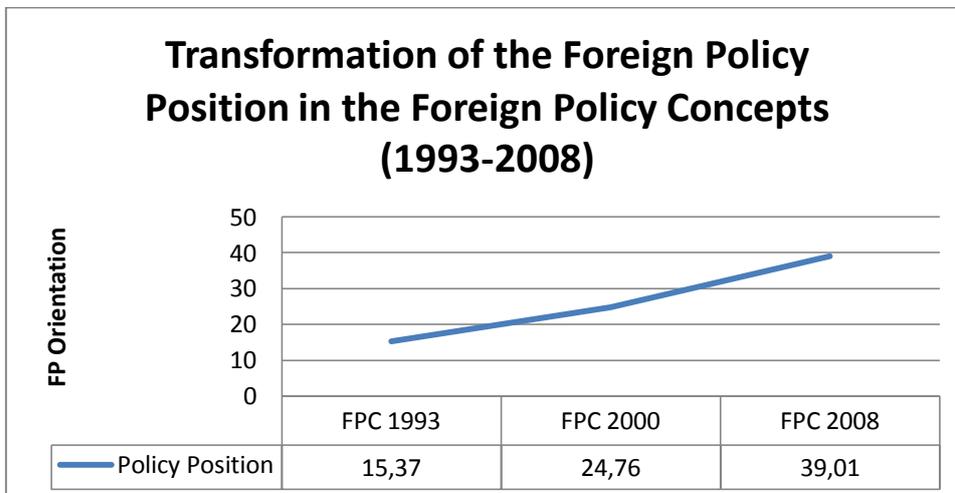
Appendix

FIGURE 1. TRANSFORMATION OF THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY POSITION ACROSS THE "NORMATIVE"-"POWER" POLITICS SCALE IN ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES (1993-2010)

Transformation of the Russian Foreign Policy Position in the Annual Presidential Addersses (1993-2010)

|	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ряд1		20,3	25,4	-18	27,9	5,41	40,7		11,1	-6,9	1,67	20	41,7	41,5	50	6,11	12,1	-11

Source: Author's calculations based on the content-analysis framework for strategic foreign policy document of the Russian Federation. The scale has been created by subtracting the percentages of "normative" statements from the percentages of "power"-politics statements. Thus, positive scores represent a relatively more normative foreign policy orientation, whereas negative scores signal a more "power"-politics orientation.

FIGURE 2. TRANSFORMATION OF THE FOREIGN POLICY POSITION IN FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPTS (1993-2008)

Transformation of the Foreign Policy Position in the Foreign Policy Concepts (1993-2008)

	FPC 1993	FPC 2000	FPC 2008
Policy Position	15,37	24,76	39,01

Source: Author's calculations based on the content-analysis framework for strategic foreign policy document of the Russian Federation. The scale has been created by subtracting the percentages of "normative" statements from the percentages of "power"-politics statements. Thus, positive scores represent a relatively more normative foreign policy orientation, whereas negative scores signal a more "power"-politics orientation.

FIGURE 3. ISSUE SALIENCE: RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC PARTNERS IN ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES (1994-2010)
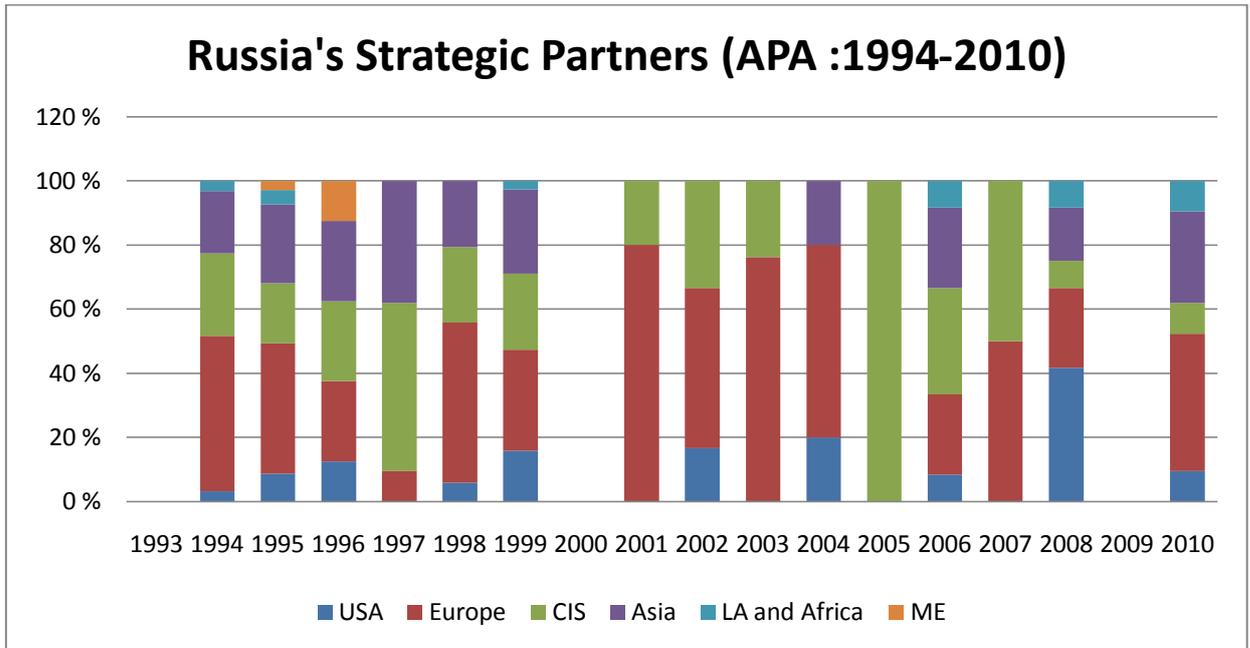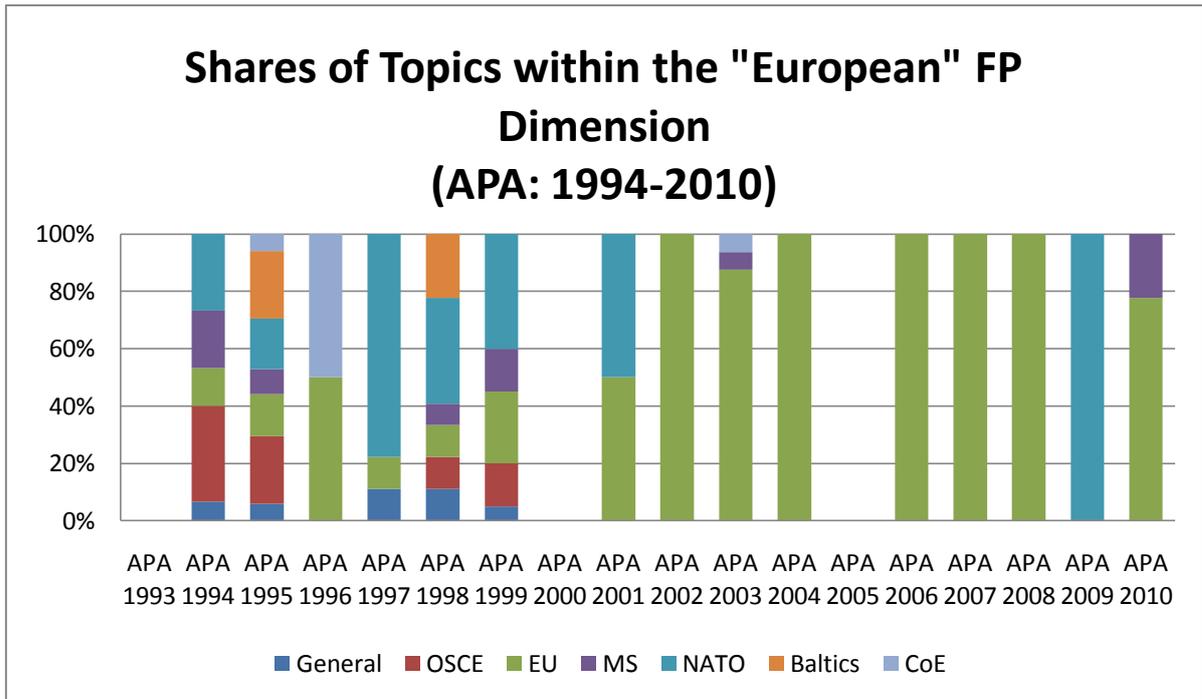

Source: Author's calculations based on the content-analysis framework for strategic foreign policy document of the Russian Federation.

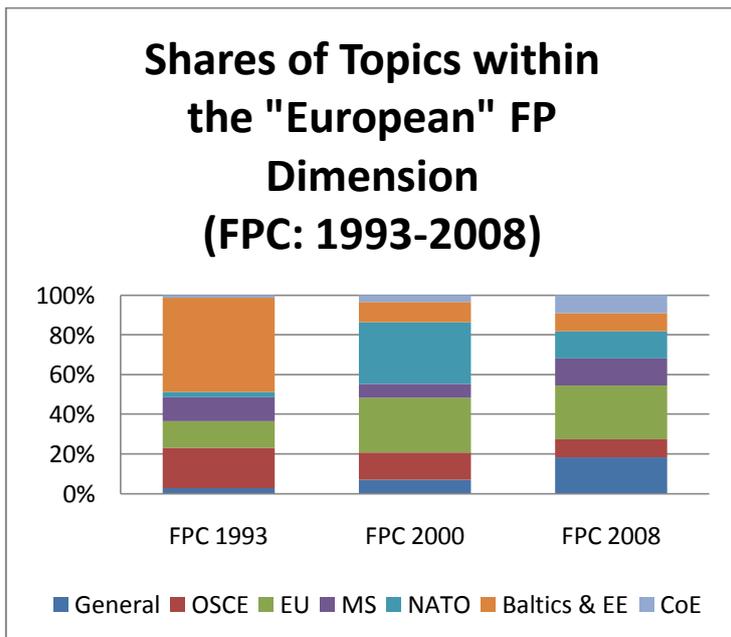**FIGURE 4.** ISSUE SALIENCE: RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC PARTNERS IN FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPTIONS (1993-2008)
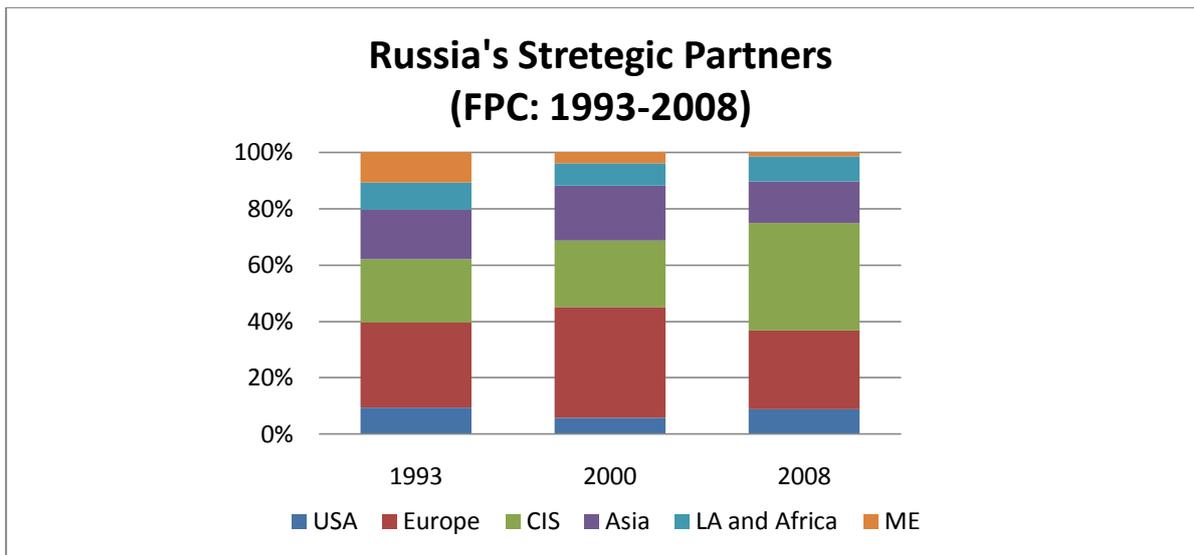
Source: Author's calculations based on the content-analysis framework for strategic foreign policy document of the Russian Federation.

Source: Author's calculations based on the content-analysis framework for strategic foreign policy document of the Russian Federation.

FIGURE 6. ISSUE SALIENCE WITHIN THE "EUROPEAN" DIMENSION (FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPTIONS)

Source: Author's calculations based on the content-analysis framework for strategic foreign policy document of the Russian Federation.

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