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Diploma Thesis

**Russia's Wars in the Ukraine and Georgia: A parallel case study
of Russia's choice to engage in the 2014 Ukraine Crisis and 2008
Russo-Georgian War**



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Abstract

The present diploma thesis examines the reasons for the Russian Federation's military action in the 2014 Ukraine crisis and the 2008 Russo-Georgian War. The scope of research is focused on the various actors that held a stake prior to the conflicts and how these conditions in the international arena influenced Russian decision making. In this capacity, the thesis seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the involved actors' positions and ambitions and how these impacted the eventual unfolding of events. The method chosen to conduct this work is an expected utility approach. A spatial model will be constructed in which all the information about players' preferences and acceptable outcomes is represented visually. Then an analysis will be concluded that seeks to find overlaps/discrepancies between actors' positions and will eventually determine the failure of negotiations.

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague 27.07.2021

David Neppel

Table of Contents

1. AIMS	1
2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
3. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	3
4. METHODOLOGY	6
4.1. OVERVIEW	6
4.2. THE MODEL	7
4.3. THE DIMENSIONS	7
4.4. THE IDEAL POINT (IP)	7
4.5. THE STATUS QUO	8
4.6. THE INDIFFERENCE CURVES	8
4.7. POWER	9
5. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
6. CASE I: THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS	13
6.1. OVERVIEW	13
6.2. THE MODEL	15
6.3. THE FIRST STATUS QUO (SQ)	32
6.4. SALIENCE	34
6.5. ANALYSIS	35
6.6. THE SECOND APPLICATION OF THE MODEL	42
6.7. THE SECOND STATUS QUO (SQ2) (R=3 W=5)	43
6.8. UKRAINE'S NEW IDEAL POINT (IP2) (3 1)	44
6.9. ANALYSIS	48
6.10. COLLAPSE OF THE GAME THROUGH POWER AND COMMITMENT	50
7. CASE II: THE RUSSO-GEORGIAN WAR	54
7.1. OVERVIEW	54
7.2. THE MODEL	56
7.3. ANALYSIS	75
7.4. POWER	83
7.5. CONCLUSIONS AFTER THE FIRST STATUS QUO	84
7.6. SECOND APPLICATION OF THE MODEL	85
7.7. ANALYSIS	90
7.8. POWER	92
7.9. THE COLLAPSE OF THE GAME	93
8. CONCLUSION	95
9. FIGURES	98
10. BIBLIOGRAPHY	102

List of Abbreviations

- 'BT'- Breakaway Territories of Georgia (Abkhazia, South Ossetia)
- 'c'- Degree of central control that Georgia holds over Abkhazia and South Ossetia
- CIS- Commonwealth of Independent States
- EU- European Union
- 'G'- Georgia
- IP- Ideal point
- MAP – NATO membership action plan
- NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- 'r'- Russian influence in the Ukraine
- 'RU'- Russia
- SQ- Status Quo
- SQ1- First Status Quo
- SQ2- Second Status Quo
- 'w'-Ukraine's/Georgia's relationship to the West
- 'UKR'- Ukraine
- USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

1. Aims

Arguably the two most severe foreign policy choices that the Russian Federation has conducted since its existence, are the wars fought in Georgia and the Ukraine. Both of these campaigns could be seen as cataclysmic events, which changed the power, security and political dynamics of both Europe and the World. By invading two sovereign states, the Russian Federation fundamentally repositioned its international standing and clearly demonstrated her ambitions for the future.

Such monumental decisions are accompanied by a series of risks and benefits, all echoed in a myriad of factors that have to be considered prior to any action. Russia would have to have not only been sure of its own capabilities, but also of the ones that they were faced up against. This did not only include the short-term military rationale of defeating the Ukrainian/Georgian armies but would also have to have factored in potential long-term consequences inflicted by the broader international community. Russia would have had to be completely aware of her own priorities, her vision for the future and her readiness to absorb potentially adverse developments.

Therefore, if one seeks to understand the reasons behind these conflicts breaking out, one too has to examine the standing that not just the immediate belligerents had but place their position into the broader context of the geopolitical actors and strategies present in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. This paper seeks to provide a comprehensive view of these conditions, in order to not only highlight the Russian reasoning behind going to war, but to provide an insight into the general trends, ambitions and approaches of all the actors that Russia would have to consider before initiating a conflict. By doing so, this paper ultimately seeks to recreate the factors that influenced all the players' decisions and examine the reasons for conflict breaking out.

2. Research Questions

1. The primary aim of this thesis is to examine the reasons why the Russian Federation chose to engage militarily in the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis and the 2008 Russo-Georgian War. Particular focus is placed on the dynamics between international actors, of whom Russia is one and how the conditions of the international space have influenced/forced Russia's decision making.
2. By conducting a parallel case study, this paper hopes to uncover broader commonalities and trends present in the decision-making of the Russian Federation in the 21st Century.
3. By applying a game-theory approach which places particular emphasis on all the actors involved in the case studies, this thesis seeks to discuss other potential outcomes and agreements that could have avoided armed conflict.

3. Introduction and Context

Both the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia and the 2014 conflict with the Ukraine, could be seen as symptoms of several broader political trends that the Russian Federation has been subject to since the early 2000's.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia entered a period of steep decline. The once formidable global empire lost a significant part of its territory and much of the influence over the regions that it had once controlled. Coupled with that came a stark recession, a disastrous war in Chechnya and a general decline in living standards and stability. Much of these developments were presided over by the country's first president Boris Yeltsin and would not be contained until after his reign.

The new president, Vladimir Putin inherited much of the disastrous conditions of the Yeltsin era, when he ascended to power in 1999. Despite these challenging conditions, Putin vouched to not only restabilise the country again, but to also return it to the power and prestige it had once possessed. Immediately after gaining power, Putin resumed many of the populist strategies that had been present in the USSR. These included symbolic gestures such as reinstating the old anthem, but also had more severe outcomes, such as the crushing of the de-facto independent Chechen administration in the second Chechen War. Under Putin's leadership the country's economy began to recover and stabilise, crime and political instability was stifled and some of Russia's international prestige was restored. In terms of foreign policy, Putin began to take a clear anti-Western stance relatively early on. He stressed the idea that Russia was a major world power and deserved the respect and influence fitting to such a title. While only a few years before Yeltsin had offered to sell Karelia back to Finland, Putin now incessantly criticized any expansion of NATO or the EU. Constantly arguing that the West was provoking and threatening Russia, Putin began to massively rearm, and it became clear that he would insist on Russia regaining a fixed sphere of international influence.

Unfortunately for the Kremlin however, the West paid little attention to these demands. Following the Cold War, the institutional expansion of Western cooperation and alliances skyrocketed. Many of the former Warsaw pact nations were eager to join both the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. These wishes were gladly fulfilled by the established Western powers and soon it appeared that all of Central- and much of Eastern-Europe would be firmly embedded in the Western political, economic and military

institutional framework. Despite its protests, there was very little that Moscow could do to challenge these developments. Indeed, the Russian Federation has recovered some of its strength, but was in no way capable of challenging either the established Western power or the desire of the former satellite states to escape from under the Kremlin's thumb.

The almost two decades between the fall of the USSR and 2008, saw a steady trend of Western expansion, leaving the EU and NATO right on the border to Russia. Indeed, it seemed as if nothing could deter this trend and that there was no stop to all of the former Soviet empire shifting towards the West. Naturally, this applied to the Ukraine and Georgia too. Both countries had been integral parts of the Soviet Union and remained of key strategic interest to Russia. For this reason, their shift from East to West took considerably longer than in previously already independent states such as Poland for example. The political, economic and social conditions present in Georgia and the Ukraine were still heavily undermined and dominated by Russian interests. Nevertheless, by 2003 the populations of these countries have reached a breaking point. The so-called 'colour revolutions' broke out, voicing the growing demands for better living standards, the end to the Soviet era autocracies and the curtailing of the rampant corruption.

Indeed, at first the colour uprisings did appear to be another logical step towards the final westernisation of the former eastern bloc. Pro-Western and pro-democratic parties ascended to power in Kyiv and Tbilisi and appeared highly motivated to pursue the demands of the revolutions. At first, it also seemed as if there was little that Russia could do about these changes. Just as the velvet revolution in the Czech Republic or the anti-communist uprising in Romania, the colour revolutions seemed to present the breakaway point for Georgia and the Ukraine from Russia. There was a difference, however. As mentioned, these countries had been important parts of the USSR and were much closer integrated and dependent on Russia, than other countries in central and eastern Europe. Further, the enthusiasm for the revolution was not uniformly shared among all sections of the population. Both countries had significant population of either ethnic Russians or of Russophile separatist ethnicities. For the Ukraine, these were centred in Crimea and the eastern Donbass Oblasts. For Georgia, the centres were in the separatist regions of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara.

It is unclear whether the fostering of differences between the countries' ethnic groups had been a Russian strategy from the onset, or whether these groups were only instrumentalised during the Putin reign. What is certain however, is that Russia came to rely heavily on these

latent or frozen conflicts, in order to maintain some hold over these countries. By covertly supporting the Russian ethnic minorities in Ukraine and providing material and diplomatic assistance to the breakaway territories of Georgia, Russia could assure that the nations would not be fully united and that tensions would always be on the brink of flaring up.

The instrumentalization of ethnic or separatist minorities was a deliberate effort at effectively splitting the country into two equally weak factions. The rump state led by the ethnic majority would have to find itself with a constant sore, that devoured resources and political capital without being fully resolved. The separatist or autonomous regions on the other hand, would rely on Russian support and would either function as a straight up base for Russian operations (Georgia), or as a powerful political lobbying group for Moscow's interests (Ukraine). A further added benefit would be that by creating this latent instability and the constant threat of potential conflict, the affected countries would always struggle to be included in non-Russian institutions, as political stability would usually be a prerequisite for participation.

These conditions already made the proclaimed targets of the colour revolutions difficult to obtain. Especially since, once the colour revolutions took hold, the Russian efforts to undermine the countries' political stability were even further expanded. Nevertheless, the revolts were still born out of genuine popular sentiment and the new governments had strong resolve and support. This was not only domestically the case, but international approval was also high.

These conditions effectively present the backdrop to both the cases in 2008 and 2014. As can be seen, there are several forces at work simultaneously and various powers seek to fulfil their agendas as quickly as possible. It could certainly be argued that there was an element of time pressure on many sides. For the Ukraine and Georgia, the revolutions sought to capitalise on their momentum and implement fast changes. For Russia it was clear that something would have to be done, otherwise another two pillars of their international sphere of influence would be lost.

This brief introduction into the historical and political conditions already shows that there is an abundant number of independent forces which all seek to enforce differing political agendas. Of course, none of these participants could act independently of the others and would certainly have to consider the implications of their choices. Therefore, an analysis of the subsequent events will have to do the same and first account for all the different preferences, policies, and threats, then examine how they differ/overlap with those of the

other actors and finally square up the relative power and bargaining strength of each of the participants.

4. Methodology

4.1. Overview

The method chosen in this paper is a game-theoretical analysis, of the participants' expected utility (Bueno de Mesquita 2013). For this purpose, the analysis will take place in a 'game', in which for each of the cases, the international actors will be seen as 'players'. The key component of the analysis is the establishment of each participants' range of acceptable outcomes, including their most ideal scenarios.

Since this approach is largely based on Bruce Bueno de Mesquita's approach to game theory, the game will be framed as a negotiation (Bueno de Mesquita 2010). De Mesquita developed this approach, as a means to simplify and facilitate the analysis of complex, multi-party negotiations, such as among states and companies. The idea is to identify each players' range of acceptable outcomes, visually represent them in a graph and try to establish overlaps between these acceptance/indifference-curves (Bueno de Mesquita 2013). Negotiations prove to be successful if these overlaps are correctly identified and handled as the basis for a mutually beneficial outcome.

Naturally, the aim of this paper is to examine the contrary to de Mesquita's 'ideal outcome'. After all, all the cases focus on the reasons why the involved parties decided to take military action. Therefore, the concept will be applied in reverse, essentially examining why negotiations failed, the game ended, and war ensued.

The reason why this particular form of analysis was chosen is because it is particularly well-suited to examine multiple actors and strategies at the same time (Bueno de Mesquita 1981). Since it is visual, it allows all of the different preferences to be entered into a graph which simplifies the observations of an otherwise rather convoluted series of parallel developments, intentions and threats. Another major advantage is that game theory allows the parallel analysis of two or more otherwise separate trends, which all factor into an actors' decision making process. For instance, the level of control that Georgia has over its breakaway regions and the cooperation that the country sustained with the West, are on the surface only loosely related. Nevertheless, they were both instrumental in the decision making of both Georgia and

Russia, prior to the outbreak of war. Game theory allows these ‘dimensions’ (Bueno de Mesquita 2010) to both be included, thus making the results of the analysis much more nuanced and comprehensive.

Finally, it is important to note that despite the use of numerical values and mathematical tools, this analysis remains qualitative. The numbers employed in the games are derived from academic sources and public information and are assessed and explained in a qualitative manner. Game theory then helps simplify a classical qualitative analysis and offers another tool in which such an analysis can be conducted.

4.2. *The Model*

In order to operationalise the game, a model will be constructed. This ‘spatial’ model will be visualised as a graph, containing all the information related to the players’ preferences and their potential overlap (Bueno de Mesquita 2013). All models are made in RStudio.

4.3. *The Dimensions*

The first essential information contained in the graph, are the numbers displayed along the x and y axes; the two dimensions of the game. Both will display the numerical values assigned to a series of potential outcomes. In both cases, the scale reaches from 1 to 10, with both ends representing the most extreme scenarios. For example, for the case of the Ukraine crisis, the number 10 for the x-axis, would mean the Ukraine essentially becoming a Russian satellite state. Similarly, the number 1, would mean the total separation of the Ukraine and Russia and full Ukrainian integration in the EU, NATO and Western political sphere.

Crucial to establishing an accurate analysis is that these variables are scaled appropriately. Essentially this means that the difference between the values always has to be the same, so the difference between $x(1)$ and $x(2)$ has to be the same as between $x(2)$ and $x(3)$ etc. This is important because the model relies on an accurate visual representation. If the distances between the values are not the same and sudden jumps in the significance of outcomes appear then the entire continuity of the players’ preferences would be distorted.

4.4. *The ideal point (IP)*

Once the model’s parameters are established, the information relating to each participant can be entered. This starts with the most important piece of information, the players’ ideal points (Bueno de Mesquita 2010). This point on the graph is devised from the players’ values on the

x-axis together with their values on the y-axis. It serves to represent the players' most desired scenario. This is important, because it will serve as the 'centre' of the players' range of acceptable scenarios. The more central or 'moderate' their ideal point is, the more likely they are to have overlaps with other participants.

4.5. *The status quo*

The status quo is an integral part to the model. It effectively shows the conditions present at the time the game begins. Only by understanding the conditions that exist at the SQ, can all the ambitions, actions and discontent of the participating players be understood (Bueno de Mesquita 2013).

The status quo is also vital in demonstrating changes in the conditions of the game, over time. The analysis in this paper is conducted by applying the model twice, at two different status quos. The first one is set at a time where conditions are relatively stable. The purpose of including this is to highlight that even though conditions might seem 'normal', tensions can already exist which then might lead to further significant developments. The second application is set at a status quo immediately before the outbreak of violence. This serves to show first of all, instrumental changes from the 'normal' conditions as well as to highlight the immediate causes that made the negotiations fail.

4.6. *The indifference curves*

Once the ideal points are reached, the players' 'indifference curves' have to be determined. These take the shape of circular or oval spheres, with all the points in their areas, containing acceptable outcomes to the players. These curves are arguably the most important aspects of the analysis, as they demonstrate the scenarios which could lead to agreement e.g. successful negotiations and conversely demonstrate the space which leads to the failure of the negotiations (de Mesquita 2010).

Technically a player can have an infinite number of indifference curves, as different prioritisations yield different ranges of acceptable outcomes. However, for the purpose of this analysis only the indifference curve that runs through the status quo is relevant.

The logic behind constructing these curves is based on the notion of maximum expected utility (Bueno de Mesquita 2013). Players will always seek to enforce outcomes that are the most desirable to them. This simply means that any player would favour scenarios that are closer to their ideal point, over scenarios that are further away. Therefore, the first essential

prerequisite to establishing a player's indifference curve, is that it runs through the status quo. Since the SQ is the prevailing condition at the time of the game, any scenarios further away from it would mean a 'worsening' and no rational actor would be willing to agree to that. If a players' indifference curve falls short of the status quo, it means that the prevailing conditions are unacceptable for the actor.

For actors who have equal preferences for both dimensions, the indifference curve is a circular shape. Therefore, their ideal point and the status quo suffice to draw the curve. However, there are also actors that prioritise one dimension over the other, for example Abkhazia and South Ossetia are much more concerned with the status of their independence, than with the Western involvement in Georgia. This preference will then be shown by an oval shape of the indifference curve. In order to determine the scale of the oval, another factor has to be included, which is the players' salience (Bueno de Mesquita 2010). The salience is effectively the ratio to which they prioritise one issue over another. If the salience is 1:1, then both are prioritised equally, and the curve is circular. If the ratio is 1:4 then the priority for one dimension is only the quarter of the priority for the other and the curve is elliptical.

Since this analysis is not based on strict statistical data, it is quite difficult to establish a fully justified ratio in advance of applying this model. After all, the information is derived from qualitative sources and all numerical values are effectively a code for concrete outcomes. Therefore, the application of the salience in this papers' analysis was conducted by establishing likely 'maximum tolerable outcomes' for the affected players and skewing the curves according to these likely no-go boundaries. From there, an estimate for the salience can be entered into r-studio, where all the models are created.

4.7. *Power*

Power is the final component that will be added to the analysis. It is a more elusive factor, that will not appear visually in the model but is nonetheless crucial to conducting the analysis. Power explains why certain situations can be forced and why some players are likelier to shape outcomes along their will. Power can also provide players with a 'veto'. This means that a particularly powerful player can decide to collapse the game, even if all the other players are opposed to it.

5. Literature review

There is extensive scholarship on the topic of Russia's foreign wars in the 21st century. Various angles are examined for the cases of the Ukraine, Georgia and overarching themes that include both. This section provides a brief overview of some of the sources used and the broader research questions that have been examined in the literature regarding this topic.

Naturally, a large focus of research is concerned with Russia's involvement and ambitions in the case of the Ukraine. Authors such as Freedman and Shevtsova have examined the Russian involvement in the Ukraine from a strategic point of view (Freedman 2019; Shevtsova 2020; 2014). They argue that the Ukraine crisis was in large parts influenced by broader and deliberate ambitions on the part of the Russian government, to ensure their continued dominance over the region. Similar thoughts are echoed by Shah and Verma, who argue that Russia pursues the goal of maintaining and expanding its sphere of influence (Shah and Verma 2018).

Much of the scholarship concerning this direction of research also looks at the Ukraine crisis as an outcome of a rivalry between Russia and the West (Lakomy 2016; Syaiful Rohman, Marthen Napang, and Siti Nurhasanah 2021). They argue that the Western security apparatus has expanded steadily into what was formerly Russian dominated territory, leading to a clash between the blocs (Duke and C. 2017; Duna 2017; Engle 2014; Lazarević Dušica 2009). Again, the deliberate strategic decision of Russia to engage in these conflicts is stressed (Saltzman 2012; Herpen 2014; O'Loughlin, Toal, and Kolosov 2016)

Somewhat opposed to this view stands Sanshiro Hosaka, who contends that Moscow's original 'active measures' have failed and the annexation of Crimea was an attempt at securing an already dire situation (Hosaka 2018). A similar idea is applied to the Donbas war by Bowen, pointing out that much of the events in 2013 and 2014 were initially out of Moscow's control (Bowen 2019).

Relevant scholarship to this thesis was also concerned with developments in Ukraine which were independent/semi-independent of Russia, mainly the Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions. A particularly useful resource was 'The Maidan and Beyond', an edited collection of pieces by various authors (Shevtsova 2014; Åslund 2014; Kudelia 2014; Hale and Ortung 2016). These examine the conditions present in the Ukraine prior and during the Euromaidan uprising, as well as Russia's involvement. Similar points of research are being examined by Pardo and Minakov (Pardo 2011; Minakov 2016).

The scholarship on the Orange revolution is more limited, mainly being concerned with potential reforms, its eventual failure and Russia's efforts at undermining it (*Orange Revolution and Aftermath : Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine* 2010; Pardo 2011; Saari 2014). Similarly, I could find relatively few sources on pre-revolutionary Ukraine's relationship to the West/NATO (Gerhring, Urbanski, and Oberthur 2017; Lazarević Dušica 2009; Welberts 2009). Finally, there is a large amount of scholarship on the annexation of Crimea. However, this largely considers the legal perspective of the takeover, which is only of partial relevance for the scope of this paper. Some sources are nevertheless relevant such as Vidmar (Vidmar 2015).

The Georgian war was covered slightly less in academic literature than the Ukrainian crisis. The research angles were also somewhat different, with emphasis being placed more on the course of the war as well as the end of a previously established international order.

The scholarship examining the Georgian case through the lens of a great-power struggle is rather extensive. This view is prominent in two books by Asmus and Gharton, that have been very important to the research in this paper (Asmus 2010; Gharton 2010). They argue that the case of Georgia should be understood as a competition between an advancing West and a defending Russia. In this sense they tie into a larger body of work which examines the Georgian conflict through Russia's interests (Filippov 2009; Saari 2014; Ellison 2011; Karagiannis 2013).

An equally important angle of research would be the Western involvement in the Georgian War and its prelude. Authors such as Bowker and Moraski highlight the expansion of the West and the threat that that presented to Russia (Bowker 2011; Moraski 2013). A more broad view which was also relevant to the research concerned the general trends of EU/NATO expansion and the ambitions that these actors had in the region. This is echoed by scholars such as Kuchins and Arnoult (Sukhiashvili 2019; Kuchins, Mankoff 2016; Arnoult 2014).

Naturally, an essential angle of research for the war in Georgia is also concerned with the status, politics and history of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The writings of Emil Souleimanov examining ethnic conflict have been insightful in highlighting the dynamics within the breakaway regions (Souleimanov 2013). Often developments in the breakaway regions are connected to concrete Russian policies and it is argued that Abkhazia and South Ossetia can be instrumentalised to enforce Russian goals (Fischer 2016; Gogia 2009; Nagashima 2019; Sotiariou 2019).

This is tied to a broader concept which has appeared several times in the research for both the case of Georgia and that of Ukraine, which is ‘coercive diplomacy’. The idea lies in a power (Russia) employing several tactics at once, with the goal of undermining another power and eventually enforce its goal (Souleimanov, Abrahamyan, and Aliyev 2018; German 2009; Allison 2008).

Finally, as with the Ukraine, useful scholarship was also studied in regard to independent/semi-independent phenomena within Georgia, mainly the Orange revolution and the ambitions of Mikheil Saakashvili. Again, the literature on these topics was not extensive, largely focusing on ambitions and failures (A. A. Tokarev 2015; Kukhianidze 2009; Mitchell 2012; Monson 2009).

Naturally there is also some scholarship which ties the cases of Ukraine and Georgia together or places aspects of the cases into broader phenomena. The first of these is a general narrative of Russian resurgence and its re-entry into the realm of superpowers (Viljar Veebel 2016). Another approach is the already mentioned broader look at the wars in Georgia and Ukraine being a symptom of a contest between Russia and the West (Lazarević 2009; Matsaberidze 2015; Rohman, Napang, and Nurhasanah 2021).

6. Case I: The Ukrainian Crisis

6.1. Overview

Russia has long held close ties to the Ukraine. The two countries were united for most of the preceding centuries, the latter only becoming independent with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, Russia has retained considerable influence on Ukrainian internal affairs, ranging across the domains of politics, economics and culture (Shevtsova 2020). While independent, the Ukraine still was considered to be firmly in Russia's sphere of influence. She depends on Russia as her largest trade partner and primary supplier of energy needs, most notably petrol and natural gas (Svoboda 2019). Further, a sizeable Russian-speaking minority resides in the Ukraine, exercising considerable political power, especially in Crimea and her eastern regions.

For Russia, the Ukraine was an important partner in securing the continued projection of influence into Europe (Matveeva 2018). This was in large part due to the Russian Black Sea Fleet being stationed in the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol. Further, many of the Soviet-era manufacturing hubs were located in the Ukraine, thus remaining important to Russian interests. This was especially the case for the automotive and armament industry, since the Ukraine produced a lion's share of Soviet engines.

The relationship however was not always amicable. Throughout the history of both countries' independence, major feuds disrupted their relationship (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2016). These began right at independence, with the issue over the control of Crimea, which had been administered by Ukraine since 1954, but was also claimed by Russia. Further, the Ukraine possessed about a third of the Soviet nuclear Arsenal at independence, making it one of the world's largest nuclear powers. The return of these armaments to Russia too caused significant contention. Relations were further marred by a series of disputes over the supply of natural gas and the control over the energy pipelines into Europe (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2016). Tensions came to a height when the Ukraine declared their intentions to join NATO and began to covertly support Georgia in the Russo-Georgian War in 2008.

In the meantime, the domestic situation too has changed drastically within the Ukraine. While the Russian-speaking population and the generation of Ukrainians growing up in the USSR still somewhat supported close ties to Russia, young Ukrainians began to demand more connection to the West (*Orange Revolution and Aftermath : Mobilization, Apathy, and the*

State in Ukraine 2010). The Ukrainian political establishment, which was largely pro-Russian, ignored these trends and proceeded to nominate Viktor Yanukovich in an election riddled by large scale fraud and manipulation. The population reacted and the 2004 'Orange Revolution' broke out. The uprising generally called for more democracy and increased cooperation with the West. The subsequent election of Viktor Yushchenko and brief period of liberalisation led the Ukraine to seek ascension into NATO and potentially even the EU (Welberts 2009).

Naturally, these developments angered Russia severely, now seeing the Ukraine as a potential threat to its hegemony. Through a variety of exercised pressures, plus the disintegration of the Orange Revolutionary movement, Russia managed to retain its former influence by 2010 (Shevtsova 2014). The year saw the election of the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich and a renewed strengthening of Ukraine's position within the Russian sphere of influence.

Yanukovich gradually reversed most of the pro-Western reforms implemented since 2004, most notably declining to sign the Ukrainian association agreement with the European Union.

The segments of the country which still held the ideals of the Orange Revolution and saw themselves increasingly disappointed by the lack of change between 2004 and 2013, saw Yanukovich's actions as unacceptable. As the president declined to sign the association agreement with the EU, large protests erupted, which would grow into the Euromaidan movement. The prolonged revolution, which cost several hundred lives, ended with Yanukovich fleeing to Russia and a staunchly pro-Western and anti-Russian faction coming into power (Terzyan 2020).

Since this new revolutionary leadership had endured a much more intense and prolonged fight, compared to their 'orange' predecessors, the determination for permanent change was considerably higher (Terzyan 2020). The revolutionaries explicitly rejected Russian influence and called for close ties with Europe, beginning with the signing of the association agreement. Naturally, such a state of affairs could not simply be tolerated by Russia. Already during the protests, with Yanukovich still in power, Russia imposed a sudden trade embargo, which blocked the import of Ukrainian goods to Russia and the export of Russian goods (primarily energy), to Ukraine (Vynnyckyj 2019).

As the government finally collapsed, Russia did not hesitate to act militarily and swiftly invade the Crimean peninsula. Only weeks after the conclusion of the Maidan protests, Crimea held a controversial referendum, which proclaimed the desire of allegedly 99.5% of

voting Crimeans to form an independent state (Vidmar 2015). Shortly after, Russia annexed the peninsula, arguing that the legitimate Crimean government had desired to do so. Both the referendum are considered illegal under international and Ukrainian law and Crimea is widely recognised to still be a part of the Ukraine (Vidmar 2015).

Simultaneously to the events unfolding in Crimea, several eastern-Ukrainian oblasts spawned pro-Russian rebel movements, which demanded autonomy as independent ‘people’s republics’ (Matsuzato 2017). The Ukrainian government reacted militarily, and a war broke out, which lasts to this day. Again, Russia is believed to have lent extensive support to the eastern-Ukrainian militias, with some claims even alleging that Russia has orchestrated these uprisings. It is proven, that Russian forces operated and to some degree continue to operate in the rebel hotbeds of Donetsk and Luhansk and certainly that extensive material and political aid (600,000 Russian passports handed to Ukrainian militiamen), has been provided by the Russian Federation.

These acts have been widely condemned by the West. Both the European Union and the United States have imposed harsh sanction regimes on Russia and have exerted extensive diplomatic pressure, to entice a withdrawal (Bagheri and Akbarpour 2016). Additionally, both Western powers have supported Ukraine through financial and non-lethal material assistance. Despite the harsh condemnation and economic intervention however, the Western response has largely been rhetorical, failing to force a settlement.

6.2. *The model*

6.2.1. *Brief description*

As outlined in the ‘methodology’ section, the analysis of the case will be conducted through a spatial model. The two dimensions, as in all the cases will be the parties’ position on the issue and their inclination towards either military or diplomatic means to enforce their position. This model will be applied at two points, to establish and analyse the change- namely in status quo- of the situation. Subsequently, the individual power behind each actor will be assessed, to establish the reason why negotiations failed.

The actors involved will be in the first application, the Ukraine, Russia, the European Union and the United States of America. In the second application, the actors will be the same, with the addition of pro-Russian separatists. The reason for the inclusion of this fifth group in the second application of the model is the change in power dynamics. Ukraine can no longer

exercise all the power it might have held at the first status quo, due to the loss of a significant portion of population, economic, military and strategic capabilities.

6.2.2. *The scales*

Each of the values along the two scales is assigned to a particular set of scenarios, regarding the Ukraine's geopolitical position. These scenarios are derived from two factors, which are Russian influence in Ukrainian internal affairs (r) and Ukraine's relationship to the West (w).

The relationship between the Ukraine and Russia

r1: Cold-hostile relationship with Russia

- This scenario would essentially entail the Ukraine's complete departure from the Russian sphere of influence. Perhaps marginal economic ties could still exist between the two countries, but otherwise the relationship would be cold and condemning. There would be no cultural/linguistic commonality felt and Russia would have no say in the country's internal affairs. No pro-Russian/Soviet parties would exist. Similar to Lithuania.

r2: Cold relationship to Russia

- The relationship to Russia would still be highly suspicious. Some cultural and historical connections would be acknowledged, but the majority of the population would still not see any further ties to Russia. Russia would exert no influence on domestic affairs, any pro-Russian/Soviet parties would be insignificant. Similar to the position of the Ukraine today.

r3: Neutral/cold relationship to Russia

- The relationship to Russia would be diplomatically neutral, with a decent amount of trade but extremely limited political influence. Some of the elderly would still consider themselves more Soviet and the Russian-speaking minority would seek to preserve some of these cultural ties but consider itself Ukrainian. The political parties claiming to represent such groups would still be marginal.

r4: Neutral relationship to Russia

- The relationship to Russia would be diplomatically neutral, with a semi-strong pro-Russian/Soviet faction existing in parliament, without gaining power though. This party would be partially influenced by Russia. The Russian speaking minority would identify itself as both Russian and Ukrainian. A large section of the Soviet-era generations would at least in part see a commonality with Russia. Similar to Moldova.

r5: Neutral relationship to Russia

- Trade with Russia would be equal to that with the West. The political spectrum would be divided between pro-Russian and pro-Western parties, which would each periodically come to power, within a largely democratic system. The Russian government would have a significant say in the pro-Russian factions' ideology but would not dominate entirely. Culturally, the majority of the people would see themselves as at least culturally Russian-influenced. The generations aged fifty or older, plus the Russian-speaking minority, would see themselves as more Russian than Western.

r6: Friendly relationship to Russia

- Diplomatic relations to Russia would be friendly. The two countries would cooperate in a variety of agreements and organisations. The pro-Russian/Soviet faction in parliament would be influential and ascend to power more often than its counterpart. The Russian government would directly decide that party's agenda. The population would largely see itself as rooted in an Eastern tradition. The Russian-speaking minority would see themselves as Russian in terms of culture and in parts politically. Similar to Armenia today.

r7: Friendly relationship to Russia

- The diplomatic relations between the two countries would allow for extensive economic and some military cooperation. Russia would be Ukraine's largest trade partner. The pro-Russian/Soviet faction would be dominant. The majority of the population would see itself closer to Russia than the West. The Russian speaking minority would decidedly be politically and culturally Russian.

r8: Very close relationship to Russia

- The Ukraine would depend entirely on Russia economically, with only limited third-party partnerships. Russia would have a significant say in the country's internal affairs, through a all-dominant pro-Russian party, which is directly steered from Moscow. Some separatist tendencies would exist among the Russian-speaking population.

r9: Full dependency on Russia

- All aspects of political, social and economic life would be severely dominated by a Russian agenda. The political leadership would be selected by Moscow and depend on it for its survival. Large parts of the population would consider themselves to be Russian. Similar to Belarus.

r10: Complete dominance by Russia. Loss of autonomy

- The Ukraine would be internationally isolated, existing as either a puppet state or part of the Russian Federation. Similar to Chechnya, Transnistria, Abkhazia.

The relationship between the Ukraine and the West (w)

w1: Extremely close relationship to the West

- The Ukraine would be fully integrated economically, socially and politically in the West. This would entail NATO membership and excellent relations with the EU. The entire population would broadly consider itself Western and European. Flawless democracy. To some extent the Ukraine would have a status similar to that of the Baltic countries at the early 2000's.

w2: Close relationship to the West

- Largely similar to p1 regarding the relationship to the West. The Ukraine would aim to join NATO as soon as possible. Cooperation with the EU would extensive, albeit without the prospect of soon membership. Strong democracy. The majority of the population would consider itself European, with some historical ties to Russia. Similar to western Ukraine today.

w3: Friendly relationship to the West

- Economic and cultural ties between the Ukraine and the West would still be extensive, albeit political cooperation would be more limited. The Ukraine would aspire to become a NATO and EU member at an unspecified point in the future. The majority of young to middle aged people would see themselves as European, with some of the more elderly partially identifying with Soviet/pan-Slavic ideas. Strong democracy. Similar to Bosnia today.

w4: Friendly/neutral relationship to the West

- The political system would still largely be pro-Western and would seek to gradually integrate itself into the Western system, although without joining NATO or the EU. The decidedly Western/European identity would be most dominant among Ukrainian-speaking people, younger than 50. The elderly and Russian speaking would not be anti-Western but would see their identity as Eastern European, with no direct political affiliation to the West.

w5: Neutral relationship to the West

- The affiliation to the West would be largely economical, with a desire for further trade integration. The political system would be balanced, with the pro-Western faction gaining power regularly. People younger than 40 would have a generally Western outlook but acknowledging a strong Eastern part to their identity too. The segments of the population seeking further political integration with the West would be limited to the people younger than 30. The elderly and Russian speaking would generally want to restrict cooperation with the West to economics. The democracy would be stable, with some corruption. Similar to Serbia.

w6: Neutral ties to the West

- Economic cooperation with the West would still exist, but all other affairs would be conducted separately from each other. The pro-western political faction would still retain some influence, but be largely side-lined. The pro-Western bloc of the population would be almost entirely restricted to people born after 1991. The country would be democratic but with extensive election and political fraud.

w7: Cold-neutral ties to the West

- Economic cooperation between the Ukraine and the West would be of secondary importance. Any diplomatic cooperation would be restricted to superficial actions. The pro-Western political faction would largely be insignificant. Any pro-Western sentiment among the population would be restricted entirely to the wish for more economic cooperation. The country would be only partially democratic.

w8: Cold ties to the West

- Relations to the West would be confined to marginal economic interests, with otherwise cold diplomatic ties, garnering occasional Western condemnation. Large portions of the population would harbour at least some anti-Western sentiments. No longer democratic

w9: Cold-hostile relationship to the West

- Apart from diplomatic representation no ties to speak of would exist to the West, with constant, mutual condemnation.

w10: Hostile- to no relationship to the West

- The Western nations would no longer recognise the Ukraine as a sovereign state.

6.2.3. Establishing the Ideal points

Russia (r7|w8)

Ukraine-Russia relations (r=7)

Russian foreign policy in the last two decades has been centred around the idea of re-establishing the international power and prestige that has been lost with the fall of the Soviet Union (Blidaru 2020). This has been shown in several ways, ranging from expansionist and imperialist rhetoric, to direct political and sometimes even military intervention in the countries' affairs, that it considers to be within its sphere of influence (Saltzman 2012).

Naturally, the Ukraine is an integral part of this sphere (Shevtsova 2020). The two countries have a long-shared history, which according to the rationale of the Russian government, justifies continued dominance from Moscow over Kyiv. Indeed, prior to the collapse of the USSR, there has been no independent Ukrainian state for several centuries and the Ukraine has always occupied a central role in Russian/Soviet political, cultural and strategic thinking. Since the collapse of the Soviet state, the Ukraine still remained firmly in Moscow's grasp (Veebel 2016). By being one of the largest countries in Europe and one of the most populous and developed parts of the former USSR, the Ukraine is a jewel of Russia's foreign influence. A loss of control would not only signify a much-decreased Russian presence in Europe and deal a devastating blow to Russia's prestige, but would also lead to Russia feeling even more 'encircled' by the West (Shah and Verma 2018) .

Further, the Ukraine is a vital strategic point for virtually all realms of Russia's foreign policy (Freedman 2019). The two countries are close economic partners, the Ukraine remaining an important part of the Russian Soviet-era manufacturing apparatus. For instance, Ukrainian-supplied engine technology was vital to the Russian attempt at modernising its aging military infrastructure (Malmlöf 2016). In the civilian realm too, the former Soviet industrial hub, supplies a large quantity of essential tools to Russia. The economic importance of the Ukraine extends beyond the bilateral trade relationship. The Ukraine is an important transit point for Russian oil and gas exported to the West, with several important pipelines running through Ukrainian territory (Nanay 2015).

Militarily, the Ukraine offers an important access to the Black Sea. For Russia this access is crucial, since it is otherwise severely limited in the potential points from which to launch naval operations. For this reason, the Black Sea fleet- Russia's most important naval force- has been stationed in Sevastopol, Crimea since imperial times and remains there to this day (Bogdan 2014).

Therefore, Russia would want to ensure that their control over the Ukraine remains firm and cannot be challenged. Unfortunately, for them however, there have been a series of issues, ever since both countries became independent. For one, there have been several disputes on the state-level, primarily focused on Energy disputes and the status of Crimea/Sevastopol (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2016). These disagreements have repeatedly soured the relationship between the two countries and have led the Ukraine to flirt with alternatives to Russia, namely the European Union. While these inter-state disputes have been problematic for the Russian

government, they were nevertheless issues that could be resolved eventually and would not warrant excessive action.

Contrary to that, stood the large public dissatisfaction with the continued Russian influence in Ukraine. The Orange revolution was a sombre reminder to Moscow, that their stable reign over Kyiv, could be threatened by mass-popular action (Saari 2014). The government ascending to power following the Orange protests was openly pro-Western and the first one to call for the transformation of the political system away from Russia. While these voices became increasing confused and eventually collapsed under series of internal disputes, the Russian government would still remain wary of the growing anti-Russian sentiment in the Ukraine (Lakomy 2016).

Therefore, it can be confidently argued, that Russia's ideal scenario for the relationship between the two countries would be one which can rely on a strong state that is firmly aligned with Moscow's interests. The democratic process should be designed along the lines present within Russia itself and the political agenda should be dominated by pro-Russian interests. This corresponds most with a '7' on the r-scale.

Naturally, even further control along a Belarus-type of system could be welcomed as well by the Russian government. It is unclear however if such a level of control was really in Moscow's interest (Robinson 2016). For one, the anti-Russian voices within the Ukrainian population do already exist and any attempt at establishing a full-fledged dictatorship would likely be met with significant opposition. Further, even if the establishment of a pro-Russian authoritarian state in the Ukraine should be successful, the aforementioned opposition is likely to grow even further, thus paradoxically undermining Russia's efforts in the region. Instead, a value of 7 is an ideal compromise in which Russia has to invest relatively little while being ensured the stability of the system and the continued pursuit of her interests.

Ukraine-Western relations (w=8)

Naturally, the aforementioned rationale about Russia's own relationship to the Ukraine, also connects to the Ukrainian relationship to the West (Freedman 2019). In many ways the West and especially the European Union are Russia's main competitors in the region. The economically much more powerful Western bloc has made several advances towards the Ukraine, tempting it with favourable trade and political offers (*Near Abroad: Putin, the West and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* 2017). This was reciprocated by various

Ukrainian governments through attempts at intensifying its relationship both with NATO and the European Union. Of course, this presents an issue for Russia. She watched as many of the formerly Soviet-dominated countries in Central and Eastern Europe subscribed to Western doctrines and joined the associated organisations. Several times, Russia has explicitly mentioned the Eastern expansion of the EU and NATO as a direct threat to its interests. Naturally, if the West would manage to establish a permanent foothold in the Ukraine, one of Russia's last strategic holdings in Europe would be lost.

Unfortunately for Russia however, the EU has a strong case to make. This applies especially to the young ethnically Ukrainian people, that have not lived through the Soviet era (Diuk 2012). Many Ukrainians have already gone abroad to work and study in the West, simply due to the much superior wages and living standards. Western culture as well, has been permeating into Ukrainian society, with music fashion and food, becoming increasingly less Russian. Especially the young generations which have carried both the Orange Revolution and the Euromaidan, have been conditioned by these trends (Diuk 2012).

It is unlikely that Russia's ambitions of control could coexist with these continued trends. The Russian Federation simply does not have the capacities to provide the same incentives as the EU and US do. Therefore, the most likely ideal for Russia, would be a minimal Western-Ukrainian relationship, which would permit as little Western influence as possible to enter the country (Engle 2014). Of course, with the advent of the internet and increasingly globalised culture this would not be entirely possible, but nevertheless sufficient propaganda and domestic support from the political and economic elite in the Ukraine would suffice to at least temporarily fulfil Russia's ideal, which would correspond to an '8' on the w-scale.

Naturally, even less association between the two blocs would technically be even more favourable for Russia. This however would bring some problems with it as well. Most notably, a complete severing of relations between the Ukraine and the West, would make the former entirely dependent on Russia. While this might be an advantage to maintain control, it could be an issue due to Russia's own precarious economic situation. If the Ukraine would be entirely isolated in the international system, Russia would have to provide for the wellbeing of the Ukrainian citizens. She is unlikely to achieve that and living standards in the Ukraine would drop. This would subsequently fuel civil discontent and could again destabilise the situation. Therefore, a situation in which the West still provides some economic relief, but

otherwise refrains from any other interference would be the ideal outcome for Russia, which is an '8' on the scale.

The Ukraine (r7|w6)

Before proceeding to the justification of the values chosen, it has to be pointed out that this ideal point corresponds to the point of view of the Ukrainian government at the point of the first status quo (SQ1). While naturally, there were several factions with vastly different attitudes towards the issue, the representation on the graph is reserved to international actors. Since the Ukraine still acted in unison at the point of SQ, the ideal point will be defined from the point of view of Viktor Yanukovich's government. In the second analysis, after the Euromaidan and the advent of the Russo-Ukrainian war, this will change. The IP of the Ukraine will then be defined by the interests of the revolutionary interim government.

Relationship to Russia (r=7)

When examining the Ukrainian preferences, it is most essential to understand the interests of the ruling political elite at the time. Far more do the personal priorities of these politicians' matter, than the otherwise grander interests of the country. The Ukrainian government at the time was staunchly pro-Russian, arguably owing its grip on power to the neighbour in the East (Freedman 2019). Particularly Viktor Yanukovich, the former president, was known to be ardently pro-Russian and otherwise rather unpopular with the broader Ukrainian public. In fact, it was Yanukovich's first attempt at seizing the presidency, which caused the Orange revolution. In 2004, he emerged as the victor in an election which was riddled with irregularities, voter-fraud and foreign influence. The public reacted to that and rose up against Yanukovich's victory, eventually succeeding in getting the election annulled.

Only due to the collapse of the Orange-revolutionary movement and the fierce infighting of its leadership, did the pro-Russian faction even gain the chance to compete again in the elections of 2010 (Pardo 2011). This time Yanukovich succeeded, as he could rely on extensive Russian assistance and the backing of many of the pro-Russian and Soviet influenced Eastern- and Southern-Ukrainian regions. Nevertheless, the spirit of the Orange Revolution had not entirely faded, and the Yanukovich presidency was marred by severe opposition and -as is retrospectively known- ended in his ousting during the Euromaidan protests (Terzyan 2020).

Since Yanukovich's powerbase was centred in the Russian minority regions and his appeal was otherwise low, both domestically and internationally, the Ukrainian relationship to Russia has to be understood as a bid for political survival (Shevtsova 2014). Russia could supply the essential tools for Yanukovich and his party to remain in power. No other international body was particularly keen on conducting business with the Ukraine, while Russian trade and energy helped keep the struggling economy afloat. Further, Russia could also help indirectly, by threatening to intervene in any attempted uprising- "to protect the Russian minority". Further, investments from Russia, helped the political elite in Ukraine to enrich both itself and potential competitors (Åslund 2014). Without these assistances, it is unlikely that Yanukovich could have clung onto power, or even reached the presidency in the first place.

Naturally, the Russian support did not come for free. In exchange for the favours that Moscow provided, Kyiv was expected to fulfil Russian key demands (Hosaka 2018). This is exemplified by the renewal of the lease on the port of Sevastopol, which allowed Russia to station its Black Sea fleet in Crimea until 2046, or by the 'regional languages law', which would have effectively acknowledged Russian as an official language of Ukraine (Moser 2013).

The ideal point to balance the levels of support from Russia, with their demands, would be a value of '7' on the r-scale. Anything higher than that would mean losing power for Yanukovich, as his country's sovereignty would be decreased. Also, the risk of inflaming domestic protest would grow exponentially, the more Russia interfered in Ukrainian affairs. A prospect that Yanukovich was decidedly worried about, considering his 2004 experiences. Anything less than '7' on the r-scale would mean that likely some of the Russian demands would not be met. This would mean that the level of support would decrease accordingly. Considering Yanukovich's precarious hold on power, these options would be increasingly dangerous.

Relationship to the West (w=6)

The desired relationship of the Ukrainian Government to the West, too has to be seen through the spectrum of Ukraine-Russia relations. Since Yanukovich relied on Russia to remain in power and distance to the West is an important Russian demand, the Ukrainian government was already on risky turf in its approach towards the EU and NATO (Kudelia 2014). While most of the Ukrainians did not hold any issues with the West and a lot of them support further mutual approach, the government was largely against it, due to its commitments to Russia.

Nevertheless, Yanukovich was not blind to the advantages that closer ties to the EU and NATO could entail. Naturally, any economic cooperation would benefit him too, as it would first help to further enrich important parties in the country (Åslund 2014) and second appease some of the opposition. The latter point is vital, because as stated before, the pro-Western, anti-Yanukovich sentiment in the country has not yet faded.

For this reason, the Ukraine flirted several times with further cooperation with the European Union. The official state goal, even under Yanukovich, remained to further integrate economically with the West (Mannin and Flenley 2018). This was to be achieved through two major agreements: the 'European Union association agreement' and the 'Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade agreement'. Both of these aimed at allowing easier economic cooperation between the EU and the Ukraine and eventually allow for visa-free travel and further integration.

Especially regarding the EU-association agreement, Yanukovich's dilemma becomes apparent. On the one hand, the treaty would provide great improvements to the country's struggling economy and thus would likely boost his popularity. On the other hand, it would anger his backers in Moscow and likely cost him any chance of long-term political survival (Kudelia 2014). A further issue would be that any advances from the EU would not come for free. Several times the Union threatened to pull out of negotiations, over the problematic state of the Ukrainian democracy (Mannin and Flenley 2018). Since Yanukovich could only be in power due to the state of the Ukrainian democracy at the time, any favourable agreement with Europe would also be either unlikely to come to fruition or would again cost him his political career. For this reason, negotiations over both treaties were commenced and then aborted several times, leading to the final refusal of signing it and the outbreak of the Euromaidan protests (Kudelia 2014).

Therefore, the best solution that Yanukovich could hope for would correspond to a '6' on the w-scale. It would still allow for some cooperation with Europe, while not angering Moscow, nor forcing him to adopt policies to his disadvantage. Anything higher than that would lead to no added benefit from financial cooperation. Anything lower, would likely upset Moscow or force him to change.

The European Union (r=3|w=2)

The Ukrainian relationship to Russia (r=3)

The European Union's preferences regarding the Ukrainian-Russian relationship are founded in her own priorities. The EU has consistently positioned itself as an international actor, whose main priority is the global enforcement of her values (Gänzle 2009). A largely pacifist power, the EU has sought to employ its economic and political weight, to steer governments and populations towards what it regards as her core principles. First and foremost, of course, this means a free and transparent democracy, which strives for equal treatment and opportunities for all. Central to these principles is the notion that the country's population should be the primary decision maker and only if the majority of the people are content and emancipated, can EU priorities be fulfilled.

In many ways Russian actions present the direct opposite of the EU's aspirations (Duna 2017). Russia is unafraid to employ either military threats, or actual military force. It also is unconcerned about a country's domestic issues, as long as her priorities are fulfilled (Blidaru 2020). In this regard, Russia is happy to conduct business with dictatorships, as they are obviously easier to negotiate purely interest-based settlements with and further facilitate long-term insurances too. For precisely this reason, Russia, especially within the space that she regards as her sphere of influence, is even happy to promote and support dictatorships. Naturally, with such reasoning the opinion and wellbeing of a country's domestic population is of secondary importance.

Given the stark dichotomy between essential values for the EU and essential values for Russia, it becomes apparent that it is unlikely that the two systems can coexist in a joint space. The EU as a largely ideological actor, can only invest itself in a particular matter, if these ideological demands are met. This is unlikely however, as long as the Russian agenda is present. Nevertheless, the EU cannot simply 'leave the Ukraine to the Russians'. After all, the EU does see itself holding a degree of responsibility for all countries in Europe and wishes to eventually spread its values throughout the continent (Egbert Jahn 2015). Considering the incompatibility with Russia however, the EU must necessarily want Russian influence to be as limited as possible.

Nonetheless, it has to be recognised that the abstract goal of 'no Russian influence' is unlikely to be achieved. The Ukraine was integral part of both the Russian Empire and the Soviet

Union, with the two countries' common history spanning over almost a millennium. Therefore, it would be impossible to erase the Russian presence in the country. This, however, would not be the EU's goal either. The Union holds no issues with cultural or linguistic commonalities, as long as they do not spill over into the political realm. Unfortunately, though, the Russian government has had a history of instrumentalising minority demands and cultural similarities for its own personal gain (O'Loughlin, Toal, and Kolosov 2016).

Therefore, the EU has to find a balanced ideal, where the relationship to Russia is weak enough to sustain the Union's values, but enough space is left to appease the sentiments among the large Russophile population. Such a point would be located at '3' on the r-scale. It would ensure that not just the political agenda was pro-Western, but that European ideas would be prevalent among large sections of the population. Simultaneously, the Russian-speaking and elderly generations could still exercise their identity on a non-political basis, which again would align with the European dogma for respect among cultures. Anything higher than '3' would exponentially raise the risk that the Russian political agenda permeated into the country, thus undermining European priorities. Anything lower would disregard the century-old connection between Russia and the Ukraine, thus antagonising some of the population and breaching the EU's self-proclaimed values.

Relationship to the West (w=2)

Judging from the preceding paragraphs on the EU's ideal vision of a Russo-Ukrainian relationship, it might seem like the Union is only too eager to accept the Ukraine with open arms. Judged from a purely ideological point of view, this might be true. After all, the long-term goal of the Union is to eventually see the entire continent united. Of course, the Ukraine belongs to that continent and if she were to fulfil the necessary ideological and structural demands, the EU would indeed welcome her.

However, as stated, such a view is mainly ideological. First of all, the EU has itself undergone several crises in the years preceding 2014, most notably the World Financial Crisis of 2008 and the Euro crisis, which was still not fully resolved by 2014. These developments rather abruptly ground the EU expansion policy to a hold (Jahn 2015). While Croatia was admitted in 2013, Brussels grew weary of hasty expansion, especially for economically insecure members. The Ukraine is a populous and large country which in 2014 still had to recover completely from the post-Soviet slump. The country's economic base still relied on antiquated heavy-industry and the population was among the poorest in Europe. For these reasons, a

quick ascension to the Union would be highly unlikely, as it would not only disrupt the fragile balance of the post-crisis EU but would also place an additional economic burden on Brussels, which at that point could not be sustained (Jahn 2015).

In addition to the objective concerns vis a vis an ascension during such troubled times, the Ukraine was far from fulfilling the necessary criteria for EU membership. As mentioned, economics played an important role, but far more significant was the questionable political situation (Pridham 2011). The EU condemned the Yanukovich government several times for the untransparent election processes that brought him and his party to power. Human rights abuses and an intimidation of the press also were harshly criticised by Brussels (Pridham 2011). Naturally, such a political system would present a major hurdle to future integration of the two entities. Even if Yanukovich were to lose power, the evaluation process for EU membership would take a considerable amount of time and a long-term change towards European values would have to be proven.

Nevertheless, the EU was still willing to enhance her ties with the Ukraine. Even if full-fledged membership would be unlikely soon, some steps of integration should be taken. As the Orange revolution has shown, the Ukrainian public was in favour of more-Europe and Brussels was willing to act on that. In this spirit, the EU proposed the association agreement with the Ukraine as well as the deep and comprehensive free-trade agreement, both of which have been elaborated on above. Both these steps are clear indicators for a European wish to eventually accept the Ukraine as a member and the immediate willingness to enhance the relationship.

Therefore, the ideal point for a Euro-Ukrainian relationship from the point of view of the EU, would be at a '2'. The EU was committed to maximise the potential for friendly relations, given the circumstances at the time. More integration than the level of '2' would not be possible, since both in Brussels and Kyiv problems existed, that would take a long time to fully be overcome. Less integration, however, would be contrary to the European principle of promoting her values to the maximum extent possible.

The United States (r1|w1)

Ukraine-Russia relations (r=1)

The United State's preferences in the Eastern-European power dynamics are driven almost entirely by strategic considerations. Dating back to Cold War times the US' strategic doctrine has been one of isolating the Soviet Union/Russia. These trends have decidedly continued since the end of the Cold War and even through the brief period of rapprochement between the US and the newly democratic Russian Federation. The US views Europe to belong to its own sphere of influence and sees Russia as a key competitor in this domain (Shah and Verma 2018). Therefore, the highest US priority in this question is to push back Russian influence as far as possible.

As the largest and most-important decision-maker in NATO, the US has pushed rather intensely to continue the Cold War doctrine of Russian isolation (Shah and Verma 2018). Since the fall of the iron curtain, NATO has expanded significantly, now encompassing most European countries and directly bordering the Russian Federation (Barany 2009). Unlike the process of EU-eastward expansion, the expansion of the Atlantic alliance has not stopped. As recently as 2017, North Macedonia and Montenegro were accepted in the organisation. Of course, NATO membership is not solely decided on the strategic potential vis a vis Russia. It is also a way of ensuring military dependence to the United States and thus at least partial ascension into the US sphere of influence. The fact that virtually all NATO members accepted in the last two decades were Central or Eastern European countries, thus formerly under Russian influence, suggests that curtailing Russia was still a high priority in Washington.

Especially, by 2014 such considerations have become even more important. Russia re-entered the league of super-powers through a sustained period of economic and military recovery. The state which has once been described by Senator John McCain as "A gas station masquerading as a country", was suddenly of imminent geopolitical importance (Duke and C. 2017).

Countless provocations and aggressions, most notably the Russian invasion of Georgia, have shown that the US can no longer count Russia as a defeated, insignificant power. The Obama administration, which still ran the US in 2013, reversed its initial 'reset' policy towards Russia and resumed increased confrontation ('Obama and Putin' 2018). Washington was determined not to yield to the apparent impression in Moscow that the transatlantic

relationship was beginning to weaken, and that the US was on the verge of withdrawal from its overwhelming international presence.

Therefore, the US was highly determined to curtail Russia in its operations. Among all the players in the game, the US together with Russia are the only actors who derive their priorities from the concept of a sphere of influence. This idea which is closely linked to national pride and international prestige, is one that is driven by the notion of constant expansion. Together with expanding one's own sphere, it is also vital to shrink the opponents. The Ukraine, other than being another favourable strategic point (of which the US possesses a lot, considering the network of US bases surrounding Russia), does not hold much added value. Depriving its use for Russia however, would be highly favourable to the US, which is why the value for their ideal point is '1'.

Ukrainian-Western relations ($w=1$)

Determining the US' position on the Ukraine's relationship to the West is somewhat complicated. Naturally, the US too subscribe to the European/Western values, previously illustrated. Ideally, they would want the Ukraine to have good to very good relations to the West, while being less constrained by realpolitik considerations, than the EU.

Simultaneously, the US is much more flexible in her choice of allies. She naturally prefers democratic countries, but democracy is not an absolute prerequisite for cooperation.

Therefore, yes, Washington would ideally like to see a fully democratic, free and anti-Russian Ukraine, but would also be willing to accept other scenarios, if her main strategic priorities would be fulfilled (Menon and Ruger 2020).

To put it simply, the Ukraine as a country is not particularly important to the United States. Washington holds several key priorities, which should be fulfilled, everything else is of secondary importance. Central to these priorities would be the Ukrainian membership in NATO and the permission for US/NATO troops to use Ukrainian soil. Based on this key consideration, which arguably out rules all other concerns the value of the US ideal point is at '1'. This ideal point however, more than with any other actor, should be seen as 'purely ideal'. This means that the US would prefer such an outcome, but arguably has one of the lowest saliences in this regard, which will be elaborated further on.

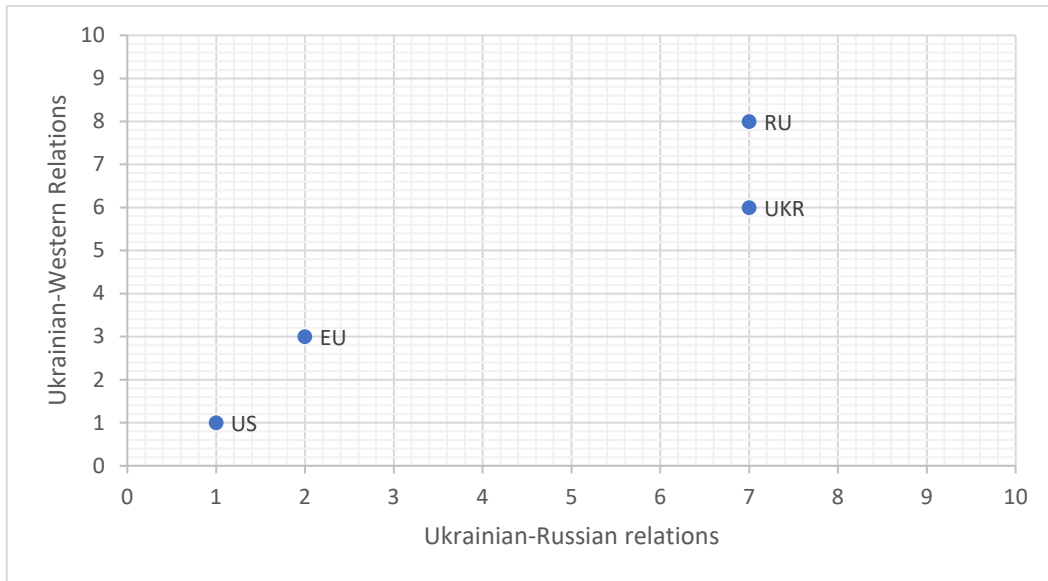


Fig.1

6.3. *The first Status Quo (SQ)*

As previously specified, for each of the model's application there are two Status Quo's. The purpose of the first SQ, is to identify the range of acceptable scenarios for each of the players and their overlaps. Once that is established, it is assumed that for all players except for the Ukraine, the ranges will remain the same. This is due to the relatively short time between the two SQs and no changes in the faction's leadership. For example, Barack Obama was US president in both 2013 and 2014, the same applies for Vladimir Putin as Russian president. The Ukraine is different since the leadership and national priorities changed significantly. The main Ukrainian government turned decidedly away from Russia and towards the West, while the pro-Russian militants in Eastern and Southern Ukraine turned the opposite way. To account for this change, the second SQ is established, with the purpose of identifying the changes that no longer allowed for a diplomatic settlement and thus ended the game in war.

SQ1 (r6|w5)

The first Status Quo is placed at the point immediately before the eruption of the Euromaidan protest. This point is chosen as representative, as it signifies a period with relatively little major changes and thus represents a 'normal state'. Yanukovich is still in power and can rely on a relatively stable grip on it. No major protest have taken place beforehand and no agreements/approaches towards the EU and the West have been made. Russia too, has not conducted any actions which could be describes as 'out of the ordinary'. Therefore, this point

is well suited to examine each party's base preferences and attitudes towards the situation without having to account for any reaction to an immediate event.

Russo-Ukrainian relationship ($r=6$)

The value of '6' is based primarily on the relatively short-term reign of the Yanukovich government. On first glance it might be surprising that the value is not higher, since him and his party are, as previously elaborated, openly Russian (Freedman 2019). Indeed, even in the short term that Yanukovich held power some of the pro-European policies of the preceding government have either been reversed or shelved (Kudelia 2014). Nevertheless, considering that he has only in power for four years at that point, no complete deterioration in democracy could be proven. Also, while Russia did hold influence, it is difficult to argue that Moscow directly dictated the political agenda in Kyiv (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2016). This could reasonably be expected to change if Yanukovich were to have remained in power, but at that point the situation in the Ukraine could generally be considered as 'normal'. Therefore, any value higher than '6' would imply excessive Russian involvement, which cannot be proven at that time.

Any value lower than '6' would effectively label Russo-Ukrainian relations as 'neutral'. This would not accurately represent the truth either. Yanukovich made several steps towards rapprochement with Russia and the intensification of the relationship (Svoboda 2019). Further, even when excluding Yanukovich and his actions as a factor, Ukraine has still historically been much closer to Russia than to any other party. This is signified through the intense economic, cultural and military collaborations that the two states sustained even in the wake of the Orange Revolution- the continued lease of the Sevastopol port is evidence to that.

The Ukrainian relationship to the West ($w=5$)

The years prior to the Euromaidan protests saw a gradual warming of EU-Ukrainian relations (Mannin and Flenley 2018). While the Yanukovich government was still cautious of any too overt advances towards the West, gradual preparations for further integration were on the way. As mentioned before, the Ukraine was offered the association agreement and the deep and comprehensive Free trade area with Europe (European Neighbourhood Watch iss.80 2012). Most cooperation with the US was conducted via the Ukrainian bid to join NATO, which was initiated in the wake of the Orange revolution.

While all of these events point towards a potential warming of relations, none of these plans have been implemented at that point. Instead, Yanukovych flip flopped around the issues, occasionally claiming to advance towards the EU/NATO, only to eventually decline. Most advances towards the West were still officially part of the Ukrainian agenda, such as converting their military supplies to NATO standards, but were not acted upon.

Therefore, the value assigned on the w-scale is a 5. The combination of the aspirations for more integration, while also the periodical condemnation from both sides, implies a thoroughly neutral relationship.

6.4. *Salience*

Once the status quo is established, the final component needed to determine each players' preferred/tolerated scenarios is their saliency. As previously stated, the saliency indicates the extent to which each of the players favours one of the variables, over the other. For instance, the United States' primary concern is less focused on the Ukrainian relationship with the West, rather than the degree of Russian influence on the country. Therefore, the American indifference curve, will have a more oval shape, which includes a broad range of potential w-values, but a slimmer range of potential r-values. In this capacity, the saliency is a crucial component of the model, as it allows for preferences towards either outcome to be included, thus yielding a much more accurate picture of either players' true intentions.

As with the other variables, the method for determining the saliency is qualitative. Especially for such a value, which amounts to basically a ratio, it is difficult to source any mathematically accurate data. Therefore, the approach taken in this paper is to find the 'maximum-tolerable' r/w-value for each player and then establish the curve based on these two extreme points, and the SQ.

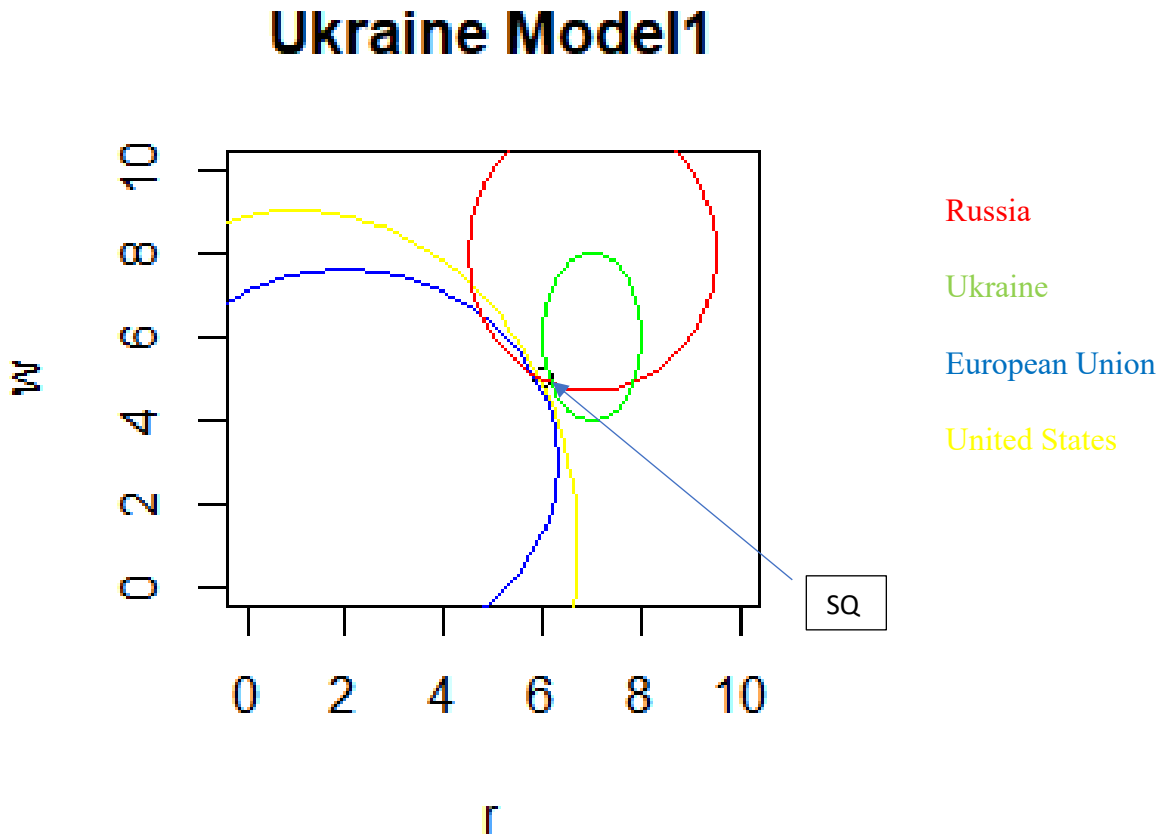


Fig.2

The figure above shows the first application of the model for the Ukrainian game, created in RStudio. The circles and ellipses on the graph represent the varying indifference curves of each of the participants. As mentioned before, these are drawn around each of the players' ideal points and cross through the status quo (SQ1), which is highlighted in roughly the middle. With this visual representation present, a first analysis of the conditions at SQ1 can be conducted.

6.5.1. Preliminary Observations

The European Union

Unsurprisingly, the area of tolerable scenarios for the European Union is confined to the lower values for both variables, shown on the lower left corner of the graph. The EU's

tolerance curve is circular, which is due to it prioritising both r and w , equally. This is down to the previously elaborated EU emphasis on principles (Gänzle 2009), which would not allow increased cooperation with the Union if the ties to Russia are not adequately severed. For this reason, the lower end of the curve is located at $(r=5|w=1)$, suggesting that for full integration into the European system, the maximum tolerable relationship to Russia is neutral. This factor remains consistent when examining a few other extreme points of the EU's indifference curve. For instance, the upper end of the circle $(r=1|w=7)$, is followed by a decline in the w -value, which would suggest some compulsory reproachment towards the Ukraine from the side of the EU in the case of complete separation from Russia. Likewise, the tolerable point with the peak w value $(r=2|w\sim 8)$, suggests that the EU is only willing to accept a cold/neutral relationship with the Ukraine, if the latter's relationship is equally cold to Russia. The point with the highest acceptable r -value $(r\sim 6.5|w\sim 3.5)$ also suggests that the EU can only can at the maximum have a friendly but largely neutral relationship with the Ukraine, if she decides to build more than friendly ties to Russia. Overall, these findings are relatively intuitive as it has already been established that the EU is relatively confined due to its ideological stance to relationship/alliance building and it is therefore logical that its range of preferences is largely confined to a combination of both low w and r values.

The United States

Unlike the European Union, the United States' indifference curve takes an elliptical shape. The curve is skewed towards the y axis, showing more flexibility towards w than r . Naturally, this is in line with the previously discussed American priority of confining Russia, rather than necessarily expanding the Western-Ukrainian relationship (Shah and Verma 2018). Despite this clear prioritisation however, the model also shows that the US is rather tolerant in its range of acceptable scenarios. In fact, the US's tolerance curve is the largest of all the participants, which makes sense since it has the largest distance between IP and SQ. Despite this large tolerance however, the model also shows that America has a clear limit on the r -scale. Starting from the status quo, the tolerance curve remains basically stable at $r\sim 7$, which shows that the US is unwilling to accept any further improvement in Russo-Ukrainian relations, regardless of how well the Ukraine is tied to the West. Conversely, the US shows a lot more indifference when it comes to the w values. Starting from the status quo, the range of acceptable w -scenarios rises, as the r values decline. This reaches a peak at $(r=1.5|w=9)$, again underlining the US priorities.

Russia

Naturally, the Russian curve is located at the upper-right corner of the graph, echoing her clear preferences towards an anti-western, Russian-influenced Ukraine. When compared to the Western powers, the Russian range of acceptable solutions is significantly smaller. This is coupled to the relative importance that the Ukraine holds for Russia unlike the importance it holds for the West (Shevtsova 2020). The shape of the curve is circular. This stems from the equal prioritisation of both dimensions, which is grounded in Russia's strategic interest in the Ukraine, that is composed of the equal importance of maximising control in the Ukraine and keeping Western influence minimal. Nevertheless, the location of the Russian curve, suggests a general prioritisation for w-values, as both ends of the circle end at $w=10$. A further important extreme point is at the minimum r-value at $(r=4.5|w=8)$, that suggests that Russia would even be willing to accept having relatively limited influence in the Ukraine, when it meant that Western influence would be largely expelled. Interestingly however, when the w-value reaches one of its maximums at the right end of the curve $(r=5.5|w=10)$, the minimum tolerated r-value increases. This of course suggests that with no Western influence at all, Russia would see itself compelled to gain some influence in the Ukraine.

Another rather surprising feature of the model is the maximum r-value for Russia at $(r=9.5|w=8)$. While this point naturally still implies almost full control over Ukrainian affairs, it does not stipulate the absolute annexation of the country. Further, the curve shows that from this point onwards, the level of desired Russian involvement actually declines, the less the West is tied to the Ukraine. This would probably be due to Ukraine's role in Russian national security strategy (Pynnöniemi 2018). If the Ukraine is off limits as a potential strategic base for the West, Moscow's security would be less threatened and it would probably not be necessary to invest as much as a full annexation, since all strategic advantages would already be given.

Finally, unsurprisingly the best relationship that Russia would tolerate between the Ukraine and the West lies at $w=5$ and is therefore neutral. Such a w-value can only be accepted by Russia however, if she still holds a strong degree of influence in the country, as shown by the lowest w-value at the point $(r=7|w=5)$. If Russian influence is to decline, so must the Western, which the low extreme of the r-value at $(r=4.5|w=8)$ again highlights.

The Ukraine

The Ukraine has the smallest tolerance curve of all the participants. This is due to the previously elaborated dilemma that the Yanukovich government found itself in. They rely on Russia too much, to allow any serious deterioration of relations, but also want to maximise their own power which would be hampered by excessive Russian influence (Shevtsova 2014). Similarly, they would like to see the economic advantages of increased cooperation with the West, but any extreme improvement of relations would likely be coupled with Russian anger and major Western demands (Kudelia 2014). Nevertheless, in principle the relationship to the West is still secondary to that with Russia. Since Yanukovich needed Moscow a lot more than Brussels or Washington, the range of acceptable Western relationships is higher than that to Russia and thus the curve is oval.

This confinement that Yanukovich found himself in is echoed by the extreme points of the curve. The minimum/maximum r -values are both 1 unit away from the Ukrainian IP, at $\min(r=6|w=6)$ and $\max(r=8|w=6)$. Again, this shows that Russian influence is essential to the regime's survival, but if it becomes excessive it would present an issue as well. The extreme w -values show that in principle the Ukraine would be open to a reasonably friendly relationship with the West at $\min(r=7|w=4)$, but it is not essential as $\max(r=7|w=8)$ shows.

6.5.2. *Overlaps*

Arguably the most valuable component of the model are the overlaps between each of the participants' tolerated scenarios. Naturally, the largest overlaps will lie between friendly or allied nations, which is best demonstrated by the EU's range of acceptable scenarios being entirely within the range of the American indifference curve. The same applies to almost all of the Ukrainian curve overlapping with the Russian.

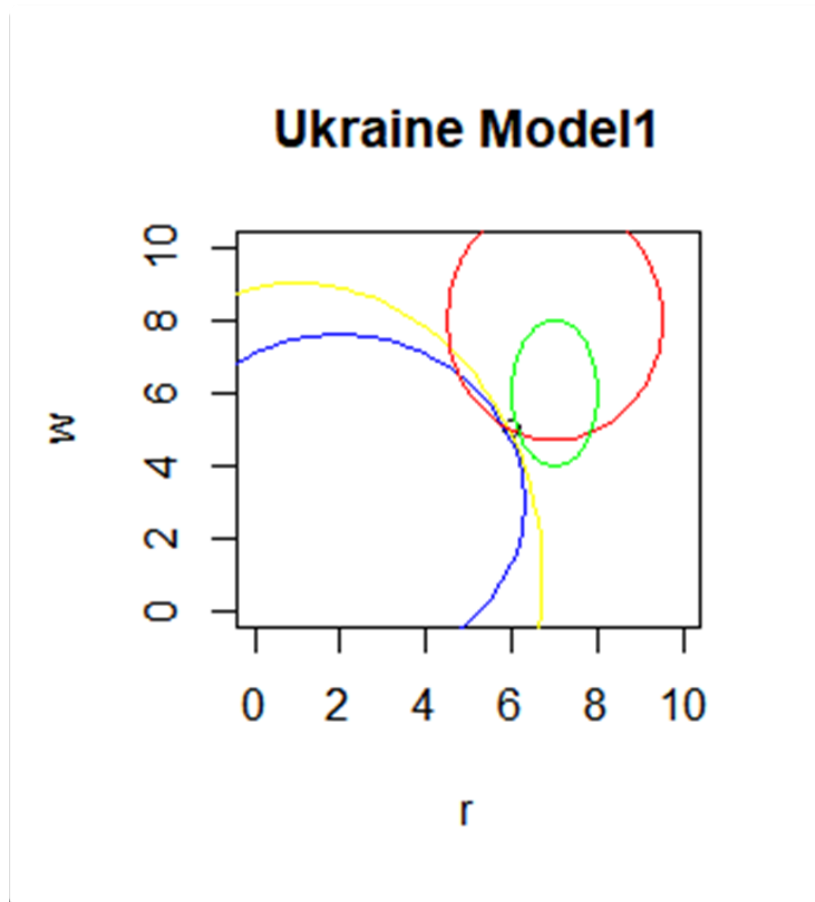


Fig.2.2

More interesting however are the overlaps between the more competitive players. Starting off, it has to be stated that the SQ is essentially the only spot in which all the players are overlapping. This is due to the Ukraine being confined in its indifference and thus having only a very limited area of acceptable outcomes. Further, Russia is also unwilling to budge much on its position, due to the strategic importance that the Ukraine holds for her (Freedman 2019). While Russia does have some overlap with the other powers, the areas are rather small, as neither party involved is overly flexible within its range of choices. This combination between an effectively static Ukraine, that has an ideal point very close to the status quo and Russia which is slightly more flexible, results in the interesting outcome that most agreements concerning the Ukraine's position, are not actually acceptable to the Ukraine itself. In this respect, the game is at the verge of collapse at SQ1 already. If the status quo is the only point that the players can agree on, it is unlikely that the fragile balance can survive any significant changes.

The first of such overlaps is the one entirely between the United States and Russia. This area, located between ($r \sim 6 | w \sim 6$) and ($r \sim 5.5 | w \sim 7.5$), shows a range of scenarios which the two former cold war rivals could agree on. Examining this area, rather clearly suggest a sort of neutral peace in which the West would yield most of its influence, in exchange for relatively limited Russian involvement. While the compromise would still be skewed in Russia's favour, as she could retain significant influence while being ensured virtually no Western interference, it could still be described as a relatively neutral compromise. The second major area of overlap, which connects the US, Russia and the EU, is in many ways similar. The important component of this tiny overlap is the part of the EU's indifference curve. It shows a largely similar compromise to that between the US and Russia, only with slightly less Russian influence, ranging at around $r = 5.5$ to $r = 6$ and slightly better relations with the West, ranging between $w = 5.5$ to $w = 6.5$. Despite these minor changes, this area of overlap would again amount to basically both sides reducing their investment in the Ukraine, with Russia remaining as slightly favoured. This is a potential outcome, since most of the great powers involved in the game have larger strategic ambitions (Engle 2014). Of course, no such outcomes could be accepted by the Ukraine. For Yanukovich it would effectively mean that both parties that could potentially support his fragile reign, would agree to largely reduce their support.

The very slim overlaps between the larger participating powers and the complete exclusion of the Ukraine both reinforce the previously stated volatility of the game. This is further enhanced by the nature of the overlaps, which all stipulate relative mutual withdrawal from the Ukraine. Meaning, that even in the few points that the countries could strike an agreement, none would really gain a lot of additional value. Considering such a fragile situation at the onset, it becomes evident that a major upset such as the Euromaidan protests, would likely lead to a shift in SQ, which is not placed within the tiny area of overlap. Especially considering, that such a change would almost by default be initiated by the Ukraine, which objectively could not be in favour of the overlapping compromise, even when excluding Yanukovich as the decision maker.

6.5.3. *Power*

Moving on from the initial spatial analysis of the model at SQ1, the final factor for the analysis can be introduced. Power is a vital component, as it can explain potentially unlikely outcomes, that could not be determined by simply analysing the graph. Considering that this

is only the analysis of the situation prior to the major eruption, the specific power dynamics are not necessarily as determining as they will be at SQ2. Nevertheless, power (or in this case rather the lack thereof) can still be a useful indicator for why a cataclysmic event such as the Euromaidan might have broken out and eventually went on to change the course of the game.

Without even having to determine specific numbers, it is apparent that there is a stark power-imbalance present in the game. Three of the four involved players, the EU, Russia and the US, could be considered global superpowers, with a significant impact and influence far beyond their borders. Two of these powers, the EU and Russia, further have a long-standing presence in the region and are sizeable decision-makers in virtually all of Eastern European geopolitical affairs (Rohman, Napang, and Nurhasanah 2021). Opposed to this community of powerful nations stands the Ukraine, a relatively young country, which has never attained absolute sovereignty from its eastern neighbour (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2016). Struggling with the course it should choose between east and west, the Ukraine not so much participates in the game from the point of individual national priorities, rather than it is forced to choose between two foreign forms of influence (Lakomy 2016). This dilemma and its ensuing lack of power is further emphasised by the position of Yanukovych, who has committed himself to Russia, but still struggles with sizeable pro-European sentiment among his electorate.

When examined from the power angle, the lack of overlaps makes a lot more sense. In effect the three large powers are participating in a different game than the Ukraine is. Yanukovych's main goal is to survive. From this premise he has manoeuvred himself into a position in which he cannot afford any flexibility, neither to Russia nor to the West (Kudelia 2014). Instead, he plays for himself hoping to remain at the fragile point of compromise, which is the first status quo. The three remaining players, however, primarily play against each other, each hoping to maximise their influence in the region (Engle 2014). Therefore, it only makes sense that the only agreeable outcome for them all is to mutually withdraw their commitment in the Ukraine. Even if this is certainly not an outcome that Yanukovych or any other Ukrainian as a matter of fact would favour, they still find themselves forced to accept it due to a lack of power.

Exactly this happened shortly after SQ1. The European Union offered to complete the long ongoing negotiations over an association agreement with the Ukraine, which was largely favoured by the Ukrainian population. Yanukovych, under pressure, initially seemed to follow through on the demands and seemed poised to sign the contract. In the last minute however,

he backtracked under Russian pressure, which was the catalyst for the Euromaidan (Shveda and Park 2016). Despite this pro-Russian act however, Yanukovych could still not fully associate himself with Russia, due to severe internal opposition, which left him with fewer favours from Moscow as well (Vynnyč'kyj 2019). This too is explained by the model. Any level lower than $w=5$, Russia would not accept and thus lead to the collapse of the game. Thus, Yanukovych was forced to waive the economic benefits that association with the EU would bring, while not receiving any further aid from Moscow. To the contrary, Moscow kept exerting economic pressure on Kyiv throughout this time (Svoboda 2019). Effectively, this would lead to a point roughly at $(r=5, w=6.5)$, which is right at the border of overlap between all the major powers, except for the Ukraine. Despite this being an unacceptable scenario for Kyiv, it would nevertheless have to have accepted it, since the power is skewed decidedly in the other participants' favour.

When examined from this point of view, the reasons for the Euromaidan become a lot clearer. Instead of a sudden outbreak, it can be seen as a rational choice in a desperate situation. The existing system clearly constrained the nations power to such a degree, that they were faced with an objectively unacceptable outcome. The people could either remain with Yanukovych and accept that outcome or change the system and hedge their bets for improvement with either of the large actors. Considering that the future scenario under Yanukovych clearly lied outside the field acceptable for the Ukraine, it made sense that if the power dynamics in the game could not be changed, then one of the participants had to.

6.6. *The second application of the model*

As alluded to before, this paper considers the Euromaidan protests and their aftermath to be the central event to the unfolding of the Ukrainian crisis, the annexation of Crimea and the ensuing Russo-Ukrainian war. In many ways, the game analysed has already collapsed by the conclusion of the Euromaidan, as one of the players, the Ukraine, effectively changed and fractured into two factions. These factions are the new Ukrainian interim government and the pro-Russian militias which began to operate in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Nevertheless, the second Status Quo is still important as it illustrates the point directly before Russian intervention into the Ukrainian issue. In this context, SQ2 provides important insight into Moscow's rationale, when faced with an unavoidable decision. The facts are laid out and

Russia is forced to respond. Therefore, by understanding SQ2 and the reasoning that was pursued in its wake, this paper hopes to understand the ultimate Russian choice to intervene militarily and thus collapse the game.

Just as with the first application, a Status Quo (SQ2) has to be determined, as well as the position of each of the actors regarding the new circumstances. Since there was no major policy or priority realignment from either of the external (great) powers, in a general sense, this paper assumes that their overall preferences/tolerances have remained the same.

Therefore, the ideal points and indifference curves for Russia, the EU and the US will be the same as in the first model. For the Ukraine however this is different. Since the country has undergone a violent revolution and the accompanying seismic changes, neither the government nor its opposition have remained the same. A new ideal point will be established for the Ukrainian interim government, which still will be referred to as “the Ukraine”.

6.7. *The second Status Quo (SQ2) ($r=3|w=5$)*

The time chosen for the second Status Quo, should be one that reflects a point at which the game reaches a critical phase. Unlike SQ1, SQ2 should not represent the ‘normal’ scenario per se, but instead illustrate the point in which one or several actors are forced to respond to a change in the situation. In this respect, the imminent end of the game is already apparent. The point of analysis lies only in determining why a certain outcome (collapse) materialised over another (successful negotiations).

For the Ukrainian game, such a point clearly lies at the end of the Euromaidan protests. The revolution had been ongoing for several months, becoming progressively more brutal in its course. After a prolonged period of struggle, Yanukovich is finally overthrown and a new government seizes power.

Relationship to Russia $r=3$

The course of the protests and the subsequent stance of the new interim government reveal the new situation. Aside from generally being pro-European, the protests gradually grew more anti-Russian, as rumours of Russian involvement on behalf of Yanukovich began to spread (Minakov 2016). Most famously, accusations were raised that Russian sharpshooters targeted the protesters encamped on the Maidan square. While these accusations remain unproven, it is

evident that Russia provided ample financial and political support to the struggling Yanukovich government. As it gradually became clear that Yanukovich would not be able to cling onto power, Russia resorted to the drastic measure of ceasing gas exports to the Ukraine, further antagonising the revolutionary population (Hosaka 2018). Such events all factored into the expressed wish of the new Ukrainian government to fundamentally restructure the bilateral relationship with Russia (Onuch and Sasse 2016). Considering that at the conclusion of the protests both countries have initiated measures to cool bilateral relations, the r-value at SQ2 lies at 3.

Relationship to the West $w=5$

In regard to the relationship with the West, little has changed from SQ1. Indeed, Western and particularly European nations have voiced enthusiastic support for the Ukraine and have sanctioned several figures in the Yanukovich regime (Onuch and Sasse 2016). Nevertheless, the change was too fresh for any meaningful rapprochement between the two parties. Naturally, it can be assumed that negotiations for further cooperation and closer ties would likely have been initiated in the future. At the point of SQ2 however, the Ukraine was still attempting to stabilise itself, conduct a thorough transition and to suppress various opposing elements. Nevertheless, the willingness already expressed by both parties indicates an w-value of at least 5, with strong chances of further decreasing in a potential future.

6.8. *Ukraine's new ideal point (IP2) (3|1)*

Relationship to Russia ($r=3$)

As outlined before, the Ukraine has undergone tremendous changes following the Euromaidan. New in power was a consortium of relatively young revolutionaries that took a decidedly pro-European and anti-Russian stance (Vynnyckyj 2019). Arguably at the outbreak of the protests, the former outweighed the latter. The original idea was not so much driven by anti-Moscow sentiment rather than the desire to become part of the Western-European community and to depose the corrupt and stagnant regime (Åslund 2014). Nevertheless, it was no secret that Yanukovich was heavily backed by Russia and that Moscow has had a powerful stake in virtually all Ukrainian governments since independence. This has been a major issue among Ukrainian liberals and nationalists alike and continuing with the legacy of

the Orange Revolution, changing relations with Russia remained a central element to the protesters' demands.

Nonetheless, the cultural and historical commonalities between the two countries still prevented the initial sentiment to be entirely hostile to Russia (Minakov 2016). After all, a large portion of the population grew up during the Soviet era, spoke Russian and did not necessarily have an issue with their eastern neighbour. Furthermore, the large ethnically Russian population too had to be considered that made up the majority of the Crimean and Donbas populations. Economically too, the two countries were linked extensively. Russian companies conducted extensive business in the Ukraine and vice versa Ukrainian companies operated in Russia. Russia was the Ukraine's largest trade partner (Åslund 2014), essentially exporting the bulk of its industrial production to their neighbour. In return they received natural gas, which is the most important power source for the Ukraine.

Despite these linking factors however, the opinion towards Russia worsened progressively as the revolution drew on (Vynnyč'kyj 2019). The harder Yanukovich cracked down on the protests, the more unfavourably his backers in Moscow were seen. This was coupled with a staunchly anti-Ukrainian rhetoric in the Russian media, which is also widely consumed in the Ukraine (Lankina and Watanabe 2017). Gradually, the issues with Yanukovich were perceived to be directly tied to Russia's continued presence in the Ukraine and the notion became that one could not be permanently removed without the other (Minakov 2016). The previously mentioned alleged direct intervention from Moscow and the increasingly important nationalist faction at the Maidan both added fuel to the fire. The events that finally decided the revolution's stance on their neighbour were the Russian gas embargo and the granting of asylum for the fleeing Yanukovich.

An enraged and traumatised public demanded a clear stance from the interim government. They immediately promised to decrease the influence of Russia in the country and to significantly cool ongoing bilateral relations (Hale and Orttung 2016). Putin was not shy either to emphasise his dislike of the new rulers in Kyiv, by not recognising the new Ukrainian government for a considerable amount of time. Therefore, the relationship of the two countries reached a hitherto unprecedented low and was likely to worsen further, regardless of the ensuing events (Matveeva 2018).

The revolution was largely driven by patriotic Ukrainians, with a strong nationalist element among them. The population at large still remembered the promises and the demise of the Orange revolution and was eager to make sure that Russia would not get a second chance at dismantling their hard-fought achievements (Vynnyč'kyj 2019). Finally, the interim government itself was largely comprised of revolutionaries that unsurprisingly aimed for their goals to be immortalised. All these factors combined largely lead to an ideal point that is as far away as possible from Russian influence. Of course, the previously mentioned ties between the countries would not instantly disappear, but especially from the point of view of the fresh revolution, the hostility that Russia was already showing would be a strong indicator for progressively colder relations. Therefore, the new Ukrainian ideal r value is placed at 2. This means some cultural commonalities and minimal economic ties, but absolutely no political say for Russia in Ukrainian affairs.

Relationship to the West ($w=1$)

As the name “Euromaidan” already suggests, the proximity to the West and especially the European Union was a key element to the protesters’ cause. Much of the initial dissatisfaction at the Yanukovych regime and the ultimate catalyst for the outbreak of the insurrection, can be traced back to the failed European integration of the Ukraine (Shveda and Park 2016). After all the initial trigger for the large-scale protests was Yanukovych’s refusal to sign the EU-association agreement. This sentiment was especially hard felt among the young ethnic Ukrainians in the Western part of the country. Many young Ukrainians looked to the West as a place of opportunity, many had already worked in the EU and Western cultural and economic influences have long perforated Ukrainian society (Nadia M. Diuk 2012). Especially after the demise of the Orange revolution and the subsequent period of decreased liberalisation and economic stagnation, many young Ukrainians looked to other formerly Communist countries such as Poland or the Czech Republic and demanded a similar level of prosperity. The leadership following the Euromaidan was made up precisely of these people, former Orange-revolutionaries and young pro-European politicians. Therefore, it can be clearly assessed that the new Ukraine would want to have as close a relationship as possible to the West.

Added to the general desire for the benefits that come with Western integration, also came potential security considerations. Following the Orange Revolution, the Ukraine initiated the process to eventually become a NATO member. This was due to the perceived threat from

Russian retaliation, which could already be felt in 2004 (Menon and Rumer 2015). Naturally, the need for external protection became far more urgent in 2014 (Menon and Rumer 2015). Russia had fought the revolutionaries during the protests and did not signal that it was ready to stop once Yanukovich was removed. Of course, the new government in Kyiv realised the threat and therefore at that point, security cooperation was arguably even more important than European integration.

Thus, it can clearly be established that from both an ideological as well as a realpolitikal view the Ukraine favoured very close ties to the West. Since the wish to integrate with the West was strong and urgent the w-value for the second Ukrainian ideal point is placed at 1.

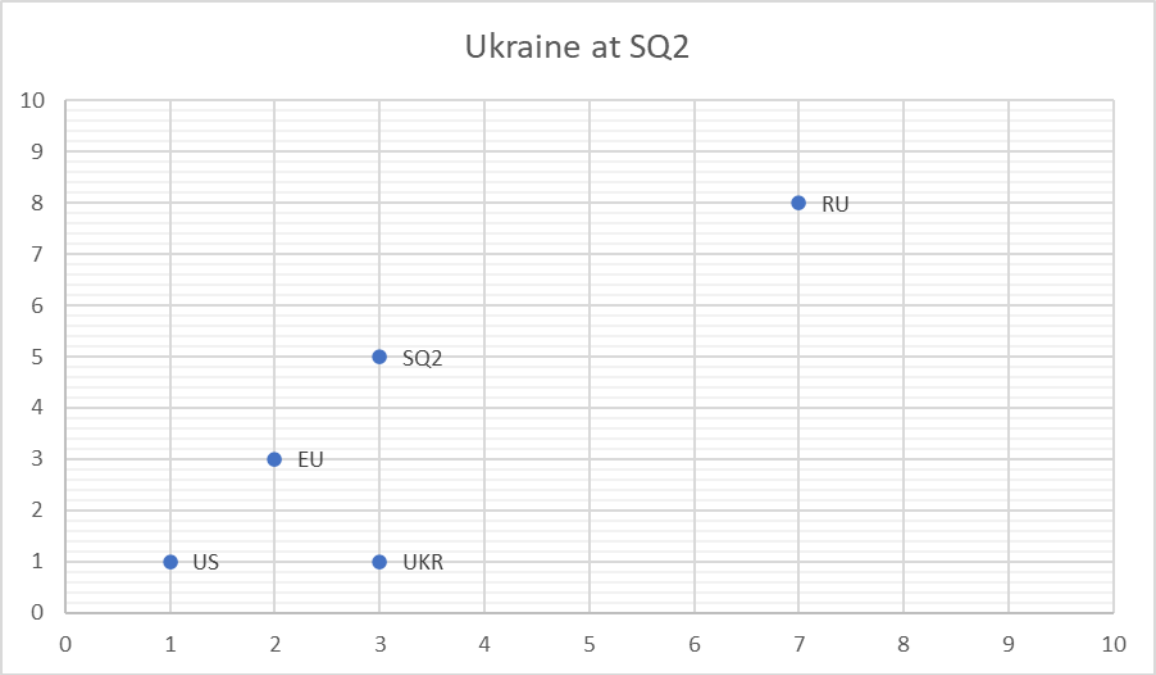


Fig.3

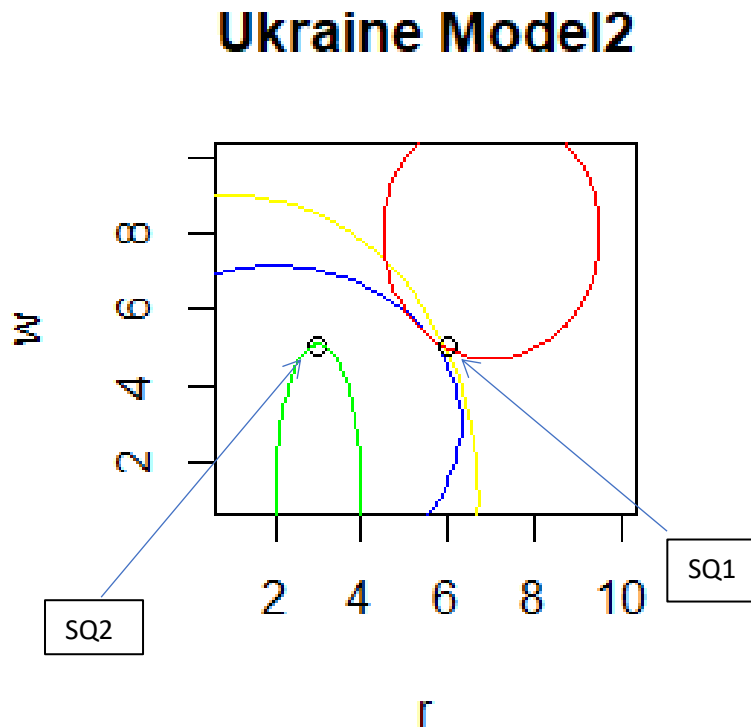


Fig. 4

As was the case with the first model, the Status Quo(s), ideal points and indifference curves have again been plotted in Rstudio. Both models are similar in many ways, since the positions for the EU, US and Russia have not changed. Therefore, the mode of analysis will have to be conducted in a slightly different way than in the first case. It is no longer necessary to examine the extreme points for each of the players, only for the Ukraine. Also, overlaps between the players remain the same as in the first model. Instead, the main focus will have to be placed on changes from model 1 to model 2 and most importantly the reasons for the eventual failure of the game will have to be inferred. In order to do that, the variable of power will become significantly more important than it was in the first model and will be discussed in combination with the analysis.

Preliminary observations

The first major change from the first to the second model is the position and indifference curve of the Ukraine. The country's preferences and tolerable scenarios have shifted from being generally pro-Russian and keeping the West at an arm's length, to virtually the exact opposite. The entire Ukrainian set of acceptable scenarios is within the curves of both the EU and the US. Adding to that, the Ukraine has no more overlaps with Russia and is the actor that is the furthest away from the Russian set of acceptable scenarios.

Similar to the characteristics of the first model, the Ukrainian range of acceptable scenarios remains rather small. This is especially the case regarding the relationship to Russia. As highlighted before, the new Ukrainian government was decidedly opposed to any further Russian influence in the country (Vynnyč'kyj 2019). Therefore, even a rather extreme value such as $r=2$ would still be acceptable for Kyiv. Nevertheless, the two countries still share an extensive common history and a large portion of the population are still tied to Russia through language, culture and the economy. For this reason, a completely separate relationship, such as $r=1$ would still not be possible. Conversely, the government would also tolerate some degree of economic and cultural cooperation, extending to a value of $r=4$. Such a relatively high r -value would only be acceptable however, if the relationship to the West would be excellent ($w=1$). This makes sense, as an intensive relationship with the West, including NATO and EU membership would also mean that Russian political influence would be curtailed (Menon and Rumer 2015) and limited cooperation safe.

The most extreme w -value is located at the status quo. This value is clearly not the Ukrainian choice per se but is much more tied to the decisions of the West. Even if the EU, NATO and US are sympathetic to the Ukrainian plight, fast changes towards more integration are still difficult to implement. Especially, since Russia at that point was openly threatening the Ukraine, while simultaneously working at destabilising the country as much as possible (Sanshiro Hosaka 2018). Considering the precarious condition that the Ukraine was in at that time, it is apparent that they strove for as much and as fast Western support as they could get. This is also shown by the very steep decline of the w -value on either side from the status quo. If the relations with Russia were to further deteriorate, the Ukraine would need Western help to both ensure its security as well as assist them breaking the previous economic dependency on Russia. Simultaneously, if relations with Russia were to improve, the new government would require Western assurances that Russia would no longer be able to infiltrate and

eventually control Ukrainian politics again. In this context it can be assumed that the status quo was accepted temporarily, but if the game had not collapsed, a gradual change towards lower acceptable w -values would be highly likely.

The second major change from model 1 to model 2 is the position of the status quo. This is probably the most important information that the second model contains and is the key to why the game eventually collapsed.

The change that SQ2 underwent from SQ1, is that the r -value of the Ukraine has decreased quite significantly. From previously being a country that has had rather extensive Russian influence in both society and politics, it has moved to having largely neutral economic ties and some political hostilities. This change has placed SQ2 firmly within the range of acceptable scenarios for the two Western powers and is still supported by the Ukraine. Simultaneously, it is certainly far off from both the Russian ideal point as well as its range of tolerable outcomes. This already clarifies that there is no possibility of a negotiated settlement that all parties are content with. The only overlaps in the positions remain the same as they were in the first model. However, now the status quo is much closer to the European and American ideal point, which would mean that these players would act against their interest if they were to agree to a settlement on the basis of the old overlaps. At the same time Russia could not accept SQ2. Thus, the second model clearly indicates a dilemma.

6.10. Collapse of the game through power and commitment

Judging from the preliminary observation, one could already conclude that the game failed because there is too strong a discrepancy between the status quo and the acceptable scenarios for all the players. The West and the Ukraine wanted one thing, while Russia wanted another, they could not agree and thus went to war. While technically this explanation is valid, it does not answer the question raised to a sufficient degree. For one, all of these actors disagree severely on a host of issues, which does not necessarily always lead to an armed conflict. More importantly, the situation is one in which three actors stand against one, so could Russia not be forced into submission? In order to answer this, two factors are crucial. The first is the power that each of the actors holds in this given situation, the second is the level of investment that each of them is willing to make towards a favourable resolution of the game.

Power is a crucial component to the analysis, as it effectively provides actors with a 'veto'. This means that powerful players can force scenarios that others disagree with, through threats of ending the game. If the other players are not as powerful as the one threatening,

they might re-evaluate their position since the collapse of the game could be worse than an unfavourable compromise. What is important to consider when establishing and applying the power of each actor, is that power in this sense is always relative. Even if players are extremely powerful based on objective criteria, such as wealth or military strength, they might not be able to fully utilise this strength in any given context.

On the surface, both the EU and the United States are considerably more powerful actors than Russia is. They outclass their opponent both militarily and economically and would technically have the strength to maintain the conditions of the game at the levels of SQ2.

Nevertheless, this raw, potential power does not have to translate into the relative power necessary to force their own goals. First of all, the EU is not a monolith and does not have its own united armed forces. Therefore, opinions on intervention in Ukraine were divided and if anything, countries would have to break with the general rationale of both NATO and the Union and would have to embark on independent military interventions. Further, the EU as a whole has also consistently presented itself as a largely pacifist actor that would only consider military intervention in the most extreme case (Gerhring, Urbanski, and Oberthur 2017). The case of intervention against Russia would present an even more difficult decision, as confronting Moscow militarily would almost certainly involve a much larger commitment and would carry a much larger risk than any of the wars that the EU has fought in the last fifty years. Even if in a full-scale campaign European forces would have a good chance to secure the Ukraine's territorial integrity, the risk of escalation was extremely high and that would certainly be unacceptable for Brussels.

The United States would not have to worry about most of these considerations. The US is far enough away and much more used to expeditionary warfare than their European counterparts. Also, they have an extremely powerful and prepared military force, that is capable of intervention almost anywhere. Nevertheless, they too did not want to invest these capabilities into intervention in the Ukraine. First, the Obama administration had made it clear that the US' strategic priorities were to gradually shift from Europe to East Asia. Second, from the US perspective, the Ukraine still belonged to the Russian sphere of influence, which Washington paradoxically seems to respect more than might be expected (Woźniak 2016). Therefore, even if Russia were to regain complete control over the Ukraine, not much would change for overall US strategic interests (Woźniak 2016). Instead, in their rationale any conflict between

Russia and the Ukraine would largely be 'internal' and even if they would be prepared to support Kyiv and sanction Moscow, any large-scale military action would not be worth it.

These considerations were even further aggravated by the Ukraine still not belonging to any official alliance or partnership that would ensure its protection. If the West was to intervene, they would do it purely on the basis of ideological principle, without having either an institutional commitment nor having an immediate benefit, other than the curtailment of Russia. If anything, the outcomes of an intervention would have likely led to an overall worse situation, especially for the EU. While the Ukraine could have perhaps been secured, the gas shipments from Russia would certainly have ceased (Jirušek 2018) and other even worse consequences would not be unthinkable either.

Thus, the power dynamics were different than they seemed after all. Since much of the power that both the EU and especially the US is grounded in their military strength, this potential power can only become actual power if they are also prepared to make use of that strength. As highlighted in the paragraphs above however, both actors seem averse to employing this strength. Contrarily, Russia has demonstrated several times before that for them military force is an option, which in relative terms makes them the most powerful actor in the game and the only one that possesses the vetoing power of going to war. Naturally, Russia was aware of these considerations long before the conflict and the only question that remains is whether it is in Russia's interest to use its veto and end the game.

To answer this, only two scenarios have to be compared to each other and assess which one is closer to the Kremlin's ideal point.

The first scenario is the conditions at the second status quo. As discussed, if Russia were to contend itself with this outcome it would accept a staunchly anti-Russian and pro-European government in Kyiv. This would mean a likely new NATO state right on one of Russia's strategically most important borders. Further, it would mean the loss of its naval base in Sevastopol and likely the loss of an important economic partner. The Russian sphere of influence in Europe would be shrunk even further and Putin could find himself humiliated both internationally and domestically.

In contrast to this scenario stands a limited military engagement. This would not have to aim at a full-scale invasion of the Ukraine, but at securing strategically important areas. At first this intervention would probably come with some operational costs, but if conducted

efficiently could be finished in a short time. It would likely result in the severing of Russian-Ukrainian relations and with it of bilateral trade and any hope for Russia to obtain a major say in Kyiv. At the same time however, strategic areas such as Crimea and the border regions would be secured, which at least in military grand strategy would secure Russia's ambitions. This would also have the added benefit of permanently destabilising the Ukraine, forcing them to expand much of their limited resources and would likely stall any alliance/integration efforts with the West. Finally, major international backlash could be expected. Probably both the EU, US and potentially other international actors and bodies will condemn Russia harshly and implement a strict sanctions regime. While military intervention is extremely unlikely, the sanctions alone could make Russia struggle significantly. After all the nation relies on foreign trade heavily and many of Russia's elites have their money abroad.

However, the final component that has to be considered is the economic power that Russia can also exercise on the West. While indeed sanctions would be a lot more damaging to Russia than they would be to the EU, the EU still relies on one crucial resource which is natural gas (Jirušek 2018). If Russia were to threaten cutting off the gas supply, then Europe would sooner or later have to react to that. Therefore, a sanctions regime would still be light enough to secure the energy supplies, or would end in time to not jeopardise European energy security (Jirušek 2018). Europe would probably aim to pressure Russia into reconsidering with quick, extensive sanctions, but would unlikely keep up the pressure for a sustained amount of time.

In this light, it becomes clear that an invasion was the clearly more rational choice for Russia. By invading, they would at least secure their most immediate priorities in the region, while averting further Western intervention. Also, they would prevent the Ukraine from stabilising and being fully integrated with the West, which would turn them into an involuntary buffer state. Finally, Putin could show his military prowess to a domestic and international audience which would likely gain him further support and even some limited international prestige. These were all top priorities for Russia and even if there would be some consequences, none of them would be severe enough to remain with the status quo. Indeed, Russia would have to temporarily suffer, but in the long run an invasion still secured vital objectives, which otherwise could not have been reached.

7. Case II: The Russo-Georgian War

7.1. Overview

Similar to the Ukraine, Georgia has been part of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union, for more than two centuries. Georgia presented an important strategic location for these empires, as it guarded the entrance to the Caucasus and thus southern Russia, as well as providing a strategically important coastline on the Black Sea (Ellison 2011). Following the independence of Georgia, which was the first of the non-Baltic Soviet Republics to secede from the Union, Russian influence over its former territory waned. Nevertheless, Georgia loosely remained within the Russian sphere of influence, being a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and still remaining economically reliant on Russia. Georgian politics, while largely pursuing an independent course, were still tied to the former Soviet rulers and Moscow retained an important say in Georgian affairs (V. Veebel 2017).

The means to guarantee a continued Russian presence in Georgia were largely provided by the issues tied to at first three and eventually two breakaway regions of Georgia. These regions were Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara. All three of these regions hold sizeable ethnic minorities which have a unique culture and sometimes different religion from the Georgian mainstream (Sotiriou and A. 2019). Even during Soviet times ethnic conflicts in these regions were brewing. Throughout Communist times the power balance shifted repeatedly between local ethnic groups and Georgians, which fuelled tensions between the groups. These tensions rose dramatically by the 1980's, as Moscow's grip began to loosen, and Tbilisi was looking to maximise its control of a future independent Georgia. Immediately following Georgian independence, the three ethnic-minority regions declared their independence/wish to remain within the USSR, leading to a series of unresolved armed conflicts. Especially the regions of Abkhazia, situated in Georgias North-Western coast, and South Ossetia, situated in North-Central Georgia, had strong independence movements and are still beyond Tbilisi's control to this day (E. Souleimanov 2013).

Russia has sought to exploit the volatile ethnic situation in Georgia by covertly and sometimes openly supporting the breakaway republics. Both Abkhazia and South Ossetia border the Russian Federation and view themselves as much closer connected to Russia than Georgia. Moscow welcomed that sentiment and provided arms and financial support to the regions (Ambrosio 2016). The rationale behind these actions was to destabilise Georgia

sufficiently, to on one hand retain some Russian influence in the country and on the other hand deter any involvement from outside actors such as the West and Turkey. Throughout the 1990's and early 2000's, this strategy paid off, as the pro-Russian regions remained out of Tbilisi's reach and the country could not stabilise itself enough to fully escape from under Moscow's thumb. Keeping the conflicts cold also meant that Russia could position itself as a key negotiating partner, which both sides had to rely on indefinitely to avoid another outbreak of violence. This even allowed Russia to retain a sizeable troop presence of peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which further played into Russia's strategic interests (Ambrosio 2016).

This situation changed in 2003, following the Georgian 'Rose Revolution'. The first of the so-called colour revolutions, the Georgian people revolted against the corrupt leadership of the country. They protested the increasingly dire economic situation, the unchecked corruption (Kukhianidze 2009) and separatism and the continued Russian influence over Georgia. Following the uprising, the new president Micheil Saakashvili promised three major changes, which all presented an issue for Moscow.

The first of these changes was the improvement of the Georgian economy. A major project towards the realisation of this goal was the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (Muhammad Zubair Iqbal and Nasir Shah 2015). The pipeline was already planned under Saakashvili's predecessor, Eduard Shevardnadze and was further accelerated after the Rose Revolution. The project envisioned the transportation of Azerbaijani oil from Baku through Tbilisi to Turkey. This was to open up a major new energy source for Europe and Georgia alike. For several reasons, Russia was opposed to the project. For one it created an energy alternative for Europe, which could potentially harm Russia's influence on the continent (Muhammad Zubair Iqbal and Nasir Shah 2015). The same issue applied to Georgia, which previously had received much of its fossil fuels from Russia. Additionally, it isolated Armenia which is arguably Russia's strongest ally in the south Caucasus and a cornerstone of Russian Caucasian policy. Finally, and probably most importantly, the completion of the pipeline severely increased the West's interest and involvement in the Caucasus and especially Georgia, areas which Russia viewed as within its sphere of influence.

The second change that Saakashvili sought to implement was an improved relationship to the West, with NATO and potentially even EU membership being major future goals (Davit Sukhiashvili 2019). Georgia's ambitions to join NATO were already declared by

Saakashvili's predecessor and pursued intensely after the uprising. In 2007 Georgians held a referendum which favoured NATO membership by an overwhelming 77% (Kyle 2019). Naturally, Russia was heavily opposed to these plans. Moscow was already weary of NATO's major eastern expansion, which by now encompassed virtually all former Warsaw Pact countries in Europe. While a strong NATO presence on the continent was already perceived as a threat for Moscow, a NATO expansion in the Caucasus would be a strategic disaster.

The last of Saakashvili's plans, involved the breakaway regions in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara. Saakashvili was a committed Georgian nationalist that viewed the de-facto independent territories as a decisive long-term hurdle, which had to be removed if the country was to stabilise (A. A. Tokarev 2015). Immediately after his ascension to power, Saakashvili began with the preparations to retake control over the South-Georgian region of Adjara. Similar to its northern counterparts, Adjara, which is a culturally Turkic region, governed itself as a de facto independent entity since the fall of the USSR. The region was among the wealthiest of Georgian territories, containing an important access to the Black Sea as well as the major city of Batumi. Further it was the least Russian-dominated of the breakaway regions, which was an additional incentive for Saakashvili to begin his reconquest of Georgia in Adjara. Initially Batumi refused Tbilisi's advances, but the region was successfully returned under the control of the central government by 2004.

Tbilisi's successes in Adjara made the authorities in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia rather nervous, especially since Saakashvili openly advocated for the return of the other regions as well. Combined with the previously outlined geopolitical changes, Russia saw a major threat evolving in the South Caucasus (Karagiannis 2013). This case study seeks to examine the motivations and rationale behind each of the actors involved in order to explain the failure of negotiations and the outbreak of war.

7.2. *The model*

7.2.1. *Brief description*

Similar to the Ukrainian case, a model will be constructed in which the preferences and acceptable scenarios for each of the participants will be mapped along two dimensions. The first of these dimensions is the degree of Georgian control over its breakaway regions (c). The second dimension is Georgia's relationship with the West (w). These dimensions will again be placed numerically on a scale from one to ten. As with the first case, the model for the second case will again be applied twice, at two given status quos. After each application, the

element of relative power will be added to the analysis to establish the ultimate reasons for the failure of negotiations.

The actors involved in this case are Russia, Georgia, the European Union, the United States and the breakaway regions (Abkhazia + South Ossetia). Russia and Georgia have to be included since they are the main belligerents in the conflict. The choice to include the EU and US is down to the possibility at the time that these actors would get involved in the conflict. After all, the West has shown an increasing presence in global issues prior to 2008 and NATO membership for Georgia was by no means out of question. The breakaway regions have been included because, even if according to international law, they were part of Georgia, they still acted largely independently at that time. Most of the conflict took place in their territory and arguably their actions contributed significantly to the development of the conflict which therefore makes them crucial to understanding the issue. The choice to combine them as a single actor, despite being two separate entities is down to the extensive similarities between their ambitions and strategies.

7.2.2. The scales

Each of the values on the scales corresponds to a set of scenarios regarding the direction that Georgian politics was to go into. The scales' dimensions are: Georgian control over its breakaway regions (c) and Georgia's relationship to the West (w).

The important priority when it comes to the scaling is, that for one, realistic outcomes are presented and for the other that the distances between the values are proportionate. This is important because the spatial models rely on visual analysis, which must be scaled appropriately. For example, the distance between values one and two must be the same as the distance between values five and six.

Georgian Control over Breakaway regions (c)

c1: Total control of the central government over breakaway territories. No regional autonomy.

- In this scenario Abkhazia and South Ossetia would be fully controlled from Tbilisi. There would be no form of regional representation and all affairs of the regions would be decided directly by the capital. Local customs and traditions would only be practiced in private, but no official recognition would be granted for local languages, religious and national holidays etc. Similar to a department of France.

c2: Full central control from the government. Very limited regional autonomy.

- The regions would still be largely governed from the capital. Regional representation would be only in the form of an advisory council, that does not hold any legislative or executive power and any form of local government would be dominated by ethnic Georgians. The Georgian language would still be the only official language.

c3: Full central control from the government. Limited regional autonomy.

- Tbilisi would still have the final say over all affairs of the regions. While legislative power would still lie entirely with the central government, limited local government would hold some executive power. This local representation would be split relatively evenly between Georgians and Abkhaz/Ossetians. The use of local languages would be allowed on official business alongside Georgian. Similar to Tatarstan in Russia.

c4: Partial central control. Solid regional autonomy.

- The relationship between the regions and the central government would be similar to a tight federation. Tbilisi would hold most legislative power, but some laws specific to the region could be decided by the local authorities. Executive power would largely be in local hands, with the ethnic Georgian representation being a minority in parliament. Official business would have to be conducted in both the local languages and Georgian.

c5: Shared control between the local and central government. Solid regional autonomy.

- The relationship between the regions would be similar to a loose federation. The regions would be labelled autonomous republics. Legislative power would lie with both the central and regional governments. In clearly defined areas such as for example education, the local government would have full autonomy. Executive power would lie entirely with the local governments. These would almost entirely be run by local ethnicities and the primary language of business would be Abkhaz/Ossetian. Similar to a State in the German Federal Republic.

c6: Limited central control. Extensive regional autonomy.

- The local governments could decide on and implement laws covering most areas. The central government would only retain control over taxation, defence and foreign policy.

c7: Extremely limited central control. Extensive regional autonomy.

- The central government would only retain control over defence and foreign policy. The territories would have the right to raise their own taxes, with only limited payments to Tbilisi. The regions would have the right to nominate a head of government, such as a president. A local police force would be raised. The only languages allowed in parliament would be the local languages.

c8: Almost no central control. Extensive regional autonomy.

- The unity between the entities would largely be on paper. Instead of control, it would be seen as a 'cooperation in certain fields' with the central government. The heads of state of the autonomous regions would see themselves as equal to the Georgian president. Local governments would be allowed to raise a military force and decide over matters of taxation, with no payments to Tbilisi. Georgian troops in the area would be limited to predestined bases and could be expelled on the wishes of the local authorities. Similar to Kurdistan in Iraq.

c9: No central control. Full regional autonomy.

- The regions would be de facto independent. The regions would no longer participate in the central governments political processes. The local government would have full legislative and executive power. Travel between the regions would be restricted and the autonomous territories would mint their own currency and issue their own citizenships. Foreign policy would be decided independently albeit the regions would unlikely be broadly recognised internationally. Any cooperation with the central government would be limited to covert diplomacy and would only be motivated by the issue of lacking international recognition.

c10: Independence.

- The regions would be completely independent, and the central government would make no attempts at directly involving itself in their affairs, albeit it would still claim the regions to be part of Georgia. There would be no cooperation between the entities. The regions would be sufficiently recognised internationally that they can function independently. Similar to Taiwan.

Relationship to the West (w)

w1: Excellent relationship to the West.

- Georgia would cooperate extensively with the West both in economic and security matters. The country would be part of NATO, as well as the EU association agreement. Western troops would be permanently stationed in Georgia. The West would be Georgia's largest trade partner as well as donor of financial aid.

w2: Very good relationship to the West.

- Cooperation would be strong in a variety of fields. Georgia would be part of the NATO membership action plan (MAP) and EU association agreement, albeit no foreign troops would be stationed in the country. The West would be committed to defending Georgia in the case of conflict. Trade and financial aid would remain extensive.

w3: Friendly relationship with the West.

- Cooperation would be extensive in the economy and significant in defence. The West would be committed to defending Georgia in the case of conflict. Georgia would be part of the MAP and EU association could be a possibility in the future. Trade would be extensive, financial aid would be moderate.

w4: Friendly-neutral relationship with the West.

- Cooperation would be decent in both the economy and in defence. The West would threaten serious consequences in the case of conflict, including some possibility of military intervention. Georgia could likely be part of the MAP soon. Trade would be extensive.

w5: Friendly-neutral relationship to the West.

- Cooperation would be moderate in the economy and defence. The West would threaten serious consequences against actors that engaged in conflict with Georgia. However, this would not include military intervention.

w6: Neutral relationship to the West.

- Cooperation in both the economy and defence would be focused on specific areas such as energy or troop training. The West would threaten some consequences in the case of conflict.

w7: Neutral-cold relationship to the West.

- Cooperation between Georgia and the West would be sporadic and largely focused on select economic issues, such as energy. There would be extremely limited defence cooperation, similar to the few projects Russia conducts joint with NATO.

w8: Cold relationship to the West.

- Any economic cooperation would be conducted by private initiatives and no large-scale projects would be pursued. No defence cooperation would exist.

w9: Cold-hostile relationship to the West.

- The relationship would be largely limited to diplomatic services. Economic cooperation would be extremely difficult as both entities officially discourage/prohibit trade.

w10: Hostile relationship to the West.

- Only mutual embassies would exist, no other cooperation.

7.2.3. Defining the Ideal Points (IP)

Russia (c8|w10)

Georgian Control over the Breakaway regions (c=8).

Fostering and supporting independence movements and the concept of the ‘Russian World’ in former Soviet Republics has been a major feature of Russian foreign policy since the collapse of the USSR (O’Loughlin, Toal, and Kolosov 2016). It is a widely employed tool of the Russian government, to ensure a continued level of control over its former territories. The logic is, that by creating an ongoing and preferably dormant conflict, neither of the parties involved would be strong enough to escape Russian influence (Kazantsev et al. 2020).

Such a step has several advantages for Russia (Fischer 2016). For one, it can control another country's affairs, without being directly implicated. This means that they can essentially shift the blame for violence onto supposed domestic movements which have no ties to Russia. Further, Russia is often a mitigating party in the ceasefire agreements, which often allows them to deploy rather large military forces as peacekeepers. This has been the case after the Transnistrian war, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and even after the initial clashes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Also, a dormant conflict ties up a large portion of the parties' resources, which slows down their development and keeps them dependent on Russia. Finally, countries involved in wars are unlikely to be admitted to new alliances, such as NATO or the EU.

Arguably, no other country has been as heavily influenced by this strategy as Georgia (German 2009). At the breakup of the USSR, three territories in the former Georgian SSR immediately declared their independence and especially Abkhazia and South Ossetia, were supported heavily by Russia. This approach makes sense, since the South Caucasus remained an important region for Russia, even after the dissolution of the USSR (Roy Allison 2008). The area was seen as vital for Russian national security, both for the protection of its own southern border and its access to the Black Sea. Georgia is impacted twofold by these strategic concerns. For one, Georgia has the longest Caucasian border with Russia, which automatically places it in the focus of Russia's Caucasian policy. Further, Georgia was the most eager to leave the Soviet Union. After the Baltic countries, Georgia was the first to declare itself independent. After independence, Georgia was disinclined to further cooperate with Russia and a reluctant member in the Commonwealth of independent states (CIS).

Especially the latter point turned Georgia into a concern for Moscow and led them to employ their tactic on a major scale. The reasoning was that if they could not gain control over the whole of Georgia, they would secure strategically important regions on their border (Abkhazia and South Ossetia both border Russia and are along vital transit routes through the Caucasian mountains) and ensure that Georgia was too weak to pose any possible threat (E. A. Souleimanov, Abrahamyan, and Aliyev 2018). This strategy was pursued with high effectiveness, leading Georgia to be close to a failed state in the early 2000's. Despite popular opposition to Russian involvement in Georgia, Tbilisi still relied on support from Moscow, while having no effective control over its breakaway territories.

Naturally, Russia viewed the developments following the Rose revolution with considerable concern (Roy Allison 2008). Saakashvili's efforts appeared to be effective. Despite Russian resistance and sanctions (Newnham 2015), his administration managed to consolidate the economy and partially eradicate the corruption which has been crippling the country since independence. Most notably however, Georgia managed to reconquer Adjara, which was an economically significant breakaway republic and a base for Russian sailors. If Georgia were to stabilise and develop sufficiently, it could be a significant security concern for Russia and attractive ally for her perceived rivals. Since the developments coming from Tbilisi did not seem to stop, the remaining breakaway territories were the only stumbling-block left for Georgian consolidation and therefore of major importance to Russia (Ellison 2011). Even if Georgia's situation were to otherwise improve, the continued separation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia would at least protect Russia's direct security concerns regarding borders and the frozen conflict would dissuade major foreign intervention in Georgia.

Taken all the factors mentioned above together, the Russia's ideal c-value is at '8'. The reason why it is not higher, is because Russia's ultimate aim is to preserve the status quo prior to the Rose revolution. Their interests are not focused on the renegade republics, but what impact they have on Georgia. If they remain an official part of the country but are independent enough to constantly be a sore spot for Georgia, they fulfil Russia's aims much more effectively than when they just declare complete independence and thus allow Georgia to somewhat 'move on'. Further, like this Russia would still not be completely implicated in the issue and would neither have to take responsibility for destabilising Georgia, nor would it have to divert resources towards the support of the breakaway territories.

Georgian relationship to the West (w=10)

Arguably, the threat of a Western presence in the Caucasus is of even more concern to Russia than maintaining control over its former Soviet territories (Kazantsev et al. 2020). The Caucasus is one of Russia's most important and vulnerable borders. The small territory presents an ideal bottleneck to guard Southern Russia and provides access to the Black Sea, Russia's most important marine body. In this respect it would be a major concern for Moscow if the West could establish a presence in this traditionally Russian -dominated area.

Many of the developments that took place in Georgia around the early 2000's however, pointed towards the increasing possibility of a Western expansion into the Caucasus (Davit Sukhiashvili 2019). For one, Saakashvili and the entire Rose-revolution movement were

generally pro-Western and advocating for Georgia's ascension into NATO and the EU. This sentiment was partially reciprocated from the West, due to the renewed importance of the region for European energy security, provided by the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

Russia viewed these developments with extreme concern. The two decades since the fall of the Soviet Union have seen a massive expansion of NATO and Western ideology, threatening virtually all historic areas of Russian influence (Barany 2009). By and large these developments had still excluded the Caucasus in which Russia remained the dominant power. If the West were to advance on her southern border as well, it would mean that Russia was completely surrounded by NATO bases and thus vulnerable from all sides.

Vladimir Putin especially, viewed this as an unacceptable outcome. He had taken over Russia in 1999 and had since rebuilt the country from an economically and socially collapsing state to a formidable regional power. For him, the West still presented a serious threat and keeping them out of the Caucasus would be an important step towards securing Russia and its sphere of influence, while also signalling the return of Russia's power status (Filippov 2009). Finally, stopping NATO expansion into Georgia could also break the trend of general expansion and at least leave the remainder of the Russian sphere of influence intact. Therefore, Russia's ideal w-value lies at 10.

Georgia (c3|w2)

Georgian control over breakaway regions (c=3)

Returning control over the breakaway territories was a central aim of the Georgian government since independence (Gharton 2010). With the loss of the areas, a significant portion of Georgia's non-mountainous land was lost, as was a major portion of its coast. Naturally, this had severe economic and societal effects, that the government was desperate to curtail. In the popular opinion, the loss of the breakaway regions was a powerful symbol and was inherently linked to the weakness of the central government and the continued foreign dominance over the country (Monson 2009).

These were the sentiments that fuelled the Rose revolution. The popular movement essentially demanded Georgian sovereignty under a functioning administration and the control over the lost territories was integral to that (Terzyan 2020). The Saakashvili government, which was born out of the uprising shared this sentiment and saw the full reclamation of Georgian territory as the only way in which the country could progress. Indeed, the administration

followed through on these demands as quickly as it could and successfully reintegrated Adjara, only a few months after the revolution. The willingness to even employ military force against Adjara, if necessary, already proves that Georgia saw the reintegration of the territories as an indispensable step.

The willingness to use force did not stop with Adjara, however. After realising that Abkhazia and South Ossetia were unlikely to transition back under central control voluntarily, Georgia began a significant military build-up ('Tbilisi Blues | Foreign Affairs' n.d.). In the period between 2004 and 2007 the country dramatically increased its military spending (Dyčka, Faus 2016). At one point almost 7% of the country's GDP were allocated for the military, which made Georgia one of the largest military spenders at the time. Considering the continued weak economic situation and the plethora of other expenditures that the Saakashvili government has committed itself to, the military budget highlights very well how important the issue of the renegade republics was to Tbilisi.

This is even further amplified by the situation present in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The central government was in a ceasefire with the regions and had allowed Russian peacekeepers to be stationed there. Thus, if a conflict was to break out, the Georgian government would have to have been aware of almost certain consequences from Moscow, even including the possibility of a military confrontation. This of course cannot be corroborated in hindsight but can also certainly be seen as a scenario that Saakashvili would have been aware of at the time as well. That they nevertheless kept pursuing the course of reconquest again places the issue extremely high on their scale of priorities.

Judging from the previously raised arguments it could be concluded that the ideal Georgian c-value would be placed at 1. However, this does not have to be the case. For one, these renegade republics have governed themselves for almost two decades at that time and to completely strip them of their autonomy would be exceedingly difficult. Further, Georgia has already shown with the case of Adjara that it is willing to accept a semi-federal relationship with the republics ('Regions and Territories: Ajaria' 2011). Adjara to this day holds the title of autonomous republic. Finally, and probably most importantly, the main issue is not solely toed to the material or strategic advantages that these regions hold. Instead, eliminating them as a source of conflict would be the main contribution towards Georgian stabilisation and consolidation. Therefore, it is likely that Tbilisi would accept some local autonomy in exchange for peace and cooperation and their ideal c-value is best placed at 3.

Georgian relationship to the West (w=2)

As pointed out in the section above, Georgia engaged in a series of highly risky steps. With most of the changes initiated by the new government in Tbilisi, they upset their powerful neighbour to the North. Even with their improved military, Georgian politicians knew that ultimately, they could not withstand Russian pressure for a sustained amount of time. Furthermore, most of the new Georgian expenses also cost a lot of money which strained the country's troubled economy. Both these problems were further exacerbated by a major issue, which was that Georgia desperately lacked international allies. With most of its neighbours Georgia had neutral to cold relations and on the global scene was still largely perceived as a part of the Russian sphere of influence.

The Rose revolution saw these issues and hoped that Western support could alleviate most of them. Indeed, Western backing would certainly improve Georgia's standing and bargaining position (Gharton 2010). Through European and American funds, more projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline could be realised, which would present an important source of income for the country. Western military assurances would place Georgia under the protection of NATO which would on one hand deter Russia and on the other help with the reconquest of the breakaway republics (Kyle 2019). Therefore, the West would be a vital ally for Georgia and probably the only medium through which the country could realistically fulfil the goals of the revolution.

Indeed, at the time it did not seem like an impossible prospect for Georgia to integrate quickly into the Western security and economic system. After all, both the European Union and NATO had recently undergone a major eastern expansion (Barany 2009). Many of the formerly socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe were in fact admitted to the alliances in the year of the Rose revolution. Therefore, based on the need that Georgia had for Western support and the comparison with other newly admitted countries, the ideal w-value would be at 1.

Nevertheless, Georgia would still have to consider the Western perspective as well. For one, Georgia was still technically at war, which made its integration into both NATO and the EU problematic. Despite the conflict being dormant, it would still have been unlikely that quick complete integration would have been possible. Similar to Moldova for example, Georgia would still have to find a lasting solution before being admitted. Further, Georgia by many was still perceived to be more Caucasian than European, which especially in the eyes of the

US placed them under continued Russian dominance. This too had an impact. Finally, some member states in the EU began opposing eastern expansion in that period, which could also have been an issue.

These points would still not deter the ultimate Georgian ambition of integrating with NATO and the EU. The w-value of 2 in this case could be seen as a temporary goal, which was to be adjusted lower once certain goals have been matched.

The European Union (c5|w5)

Georgian control over the breakaway territories (c5)

There are two dimensions that have to be considered when establishing the c-value that the European Union holds. Certainly, the first is the general sentiment of support that the EU holds for Georgia. As previously discussed, the Union has undergone a period of eastern expansion prior to 2008 (Barany 2009). This on one hand signals the openness of the community to include formerly Russian dominated countries. On the other, the Union now includes ardently anti-Russian countries such as Lithuania, which now also hold a say in support of Georgia (Lasas 2012). Therefore, when considering the republics as effectively Russian puppet states, it could be inferred that the European Union would favour a rather low value.

However, it is not so easy to describe Abkhazia and South Ossetia as pure Russian puppet states. Without a doubt, Russia holds massive influence over and, in these territories, but they could not be described as a pure Russian creation. After all these regions have a long and complex history which saw clashes between local ethnic groups and Georgians even back in Soviet times. Especially Abkhazia was a wealthy region during the Soviet era, which saw itself more tied to a Soviet identity rather than a Georgian one (O'Loughlin, Toal, and Kolosov 2016). Similar to Transnistria in Moldova, Russian support together with local initiative is the likeliest reason for initial separatism. Therefore, the split at least in part, also stems from local initiatives which makes it difficult for the EU to outright condemn it. Therefore, the EU would probably prefer to largely ignore the conflict, as remains the case with Transnistria today.

Nevertheless, if the EU were to be pushed towards voicing an opinion, they would likely settle on a solution which accommodates both considerations. For one they would not want Georgia to completely lose control as that would damage the country while empowering

Russia. Nevertheless, they would also hope to encourage the rights of minorities within this framework and decrease the likelihood for conflict. Therefore, a loose federal system, as it exists also in Europe would likely be the EU's ideal outcome, which is at $c=5$.

Georgian relationship to the West ($w=5$)

As outlined before, the European Union had just recently undergone a period of major expansion. At that time the idealistic goal of eventually incorporating all European nations in a large community and perhaps even a state was still strong. After the ascension of the central European and Baltic states, also first Eastern European states were poised to join (Romania, Bulgaria). Therefore, it seemed not at all unlikely that on principle the EU would be open towards much closer cooperation with Georgia (Arnoult 2014). This was even further enhanced with the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which now also increased the economic and strategic importance that Georgia held for the Union. Also, Georgians after the Rose revolution were seen as generally pro-European and committed to the values that the Union espoused.

However, the eastern expansion was not met with uniform enthusiasm. The same applies for NATO, especially among the founding members, the idea to include Georgia was met with scepticism (Duke 2017). This was followed by a broader public suspicion, especially when Romania and Bulgaria were admitted. This would likely have slowed the overall European enthusiasm for cooperation and integration of Georgia. Further, the EU at the time was following a relatively reconciliatory stance with Russia, where it sought to avoid direct confrontations (Whitman, Juncos 2009). This would also have conflicted with a soon and extensive improvement of EU-Georgian relations. Finally, the state of war that Georgia was still in, presented a final hurdle.

Therefore, the overall attitude of the Union was of largely maintaining neutrality. They would not be opposed to a more Western influenced Georgia but would also not want to risk antagonising Russia.

The Breakaway Republics ($c10|w10$)

Georgian control over the Breakaway Territories ($c=10$)

Conflict between ethnic Georgians and ethnic Abkhaz/South Ossetians dates back to the Soviet era. Prior to the Russian conquest of the entire region, Abkhazia and South Ossetia made up their own kingdoms with a distinct culture and tradition, which were not tied to

Georgia. During the Soviet era however, these areas were incorporated into the Georgian SSR, which led them to be controlled by Tbilisi. Throughout the Soviet period, the control within the regions shifted several times between the ethnic Georgians that began to settle there and the native population. Under Stalin, an ethnic Georgian, many of the ethnic Abkhaz and South Ossetians were deported, reducing their numbers to less than 20% of the regions' population. Throughout the later half of the twentieth century however, the regions began to be repopulated by the local ethnicities, who gradually regained the main say in the autonomous republics. This period is associated with positive times, especially in Abkhazia (Souleimanov 2013). The central authority in Moscow welcomed the strong autonomy movements in the Georgian SSR, which they saw as a good way to weaken the increasingly independent minded sentiments in Tbilisi. The city of Sukhumi became an important port and tourist destination and Abkhazia prospered. To this day, the Soviet era is remembered as a golden age in the breakaway regions and most of the population favours a return to Russia for this reason.

At the time of Georgian independence, the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union did not yet seem absolutely certain. Georgia was the first non-Baltic state to secede from the Union and the peoples in the autonomous republics saw themselves betrayed, as much of their prosperity and autonomy was tied to Moscow. This was further aggravated by the prospect of being even further dominated by the Georgians, with whom they have had a series of violent clashes even during Soviet times (Cheterian 2009). Several massacres and violent exchanges were conducted from both sides, as the Georgian settlers saw the land to be legitimately theirs, while the ethnic Abkhaz and Ossetians rejected that. Similar clashes occurred in the political arena, which saw both of the two sides heavily repressing the other, whenever they increased their power in the region. Towards the end of the 1980's the native ethnicities have finally managed to secure most of the political power in the region, which they were not willing to surrender. The prospect of being governed from Tbilisi once and for all, was unacceptable to the Abkhaz and South Ossetians, which is why they declared their own independence almost immediately after Georgia seceded from the USSR (Fischer 2016).

The historical conditions already explain to a large part why the breakaway republics favour independence strongly. They associated the Soviet era with a time of prosperity and self-determination. Whereas in their relationship with the Georgian government and population, they had a long-standing hatred and fear of further oppression. These historical conditions of course still factored into the breakaway republics' ideal point by 2008. Nevertheless, the

region has changed significantly since. The economy has taken a steep downturn following years of war, international isolation and the expulsion of a significant part of the working population who were ethnic Georgians (Sotiriou 2019). Also, the collapse of the Soviet Union was almost two decades ago at that point and the population that still experienced the old times was getting progressively older.

Nevertheless, the determination to cede from under Tbilisi's control remained very strong at the time (Sotiriou 2019). This is mainly tied to the perception of, and the relationship to the Georgians. Tbilisi never stopped engaging in at least a limited form of conflict and retained a highly aggressive rhetoric against the regions. Extensive propaganda also kept rearing a hatred against Georgians, which remained virulent even amongst the younger generation. Finally, Russia also involved itself in the areas. By supplying aid and passports, Russia could create the image of the benevolent neighbour, while Georgia was an enemy determined to destroy the regions' autonomy (Sotiriou 2019). This is also echoed in the perception of the struggling economy. Georgia is seen at fault for destroying the once prosperous regions, while Russia is seen as the only helping hand. This has ultimately kept the desire, which has been central in Abkhazia and South Ossetia since secession, that eventually the regions should be reunited with Russia. Since independence per se, is not as important as independence from Georgia, the ideal c-point for Abkhazia and South Ossetia lies at 10.

Georgian relationship to the West (w=10)

Naturally, the breakaway republics' primary concern is for their own independence and most other questions of foreign policy are secondary (Garb 2009). Especially since they do not consider themselves to be part of or in any way tied to Georgia, they are unlikely to have a particularly strong stance on Georgian foreign policy on a principal basis.

Nevertheless, they could also deduce that a Georgian-Western alliance could be a major issue for them. If Georgia were to cooperate with, or even become part of NATO, the military capabilities of the country would certainly increase. Further, any cooperation with the West would also improve Georgia's economic standing, which they in turn could utilise to improve their military and strike at the breakaway regions. A Western presence in Georgia would of course also trouble Russia. This affects Abkhazia and South Ossetia twofold. For one, they are ardently pro-Russian and generally favour geopolitical developments that are in Russia's interest. Further, the regions could also be worried that they get caught up in the negotiations

between the great powers. For instance, Russia could use the regions as a bargaining chip, that it employs to trade against a potential Georgian-Western relationship.

Thus, there are many outcomes that a further integration between Georgia and the West could produce and all of them seem favourable for Georgia while potentially dangerous for the breakaway Republics. Therefore, the ideal w -value for Abkhazia and South Ossetia would be one of least possible Western intervention and that would be at 10.

The United States of America (c3|w3)

Georgian control over the Breakaway Territories (c=3)

America's main involvement in the region at the time was driven by a general goal of containing Russia. While the region was not yet a high priority to US foreign policy at the time (Gharton 2010), the preceding years under Putin have certainly seen a Russian resurgence. While the US was still not too preoccupied by these developments it would still want to limit the extent to which Russia can return to the status of a superpower. For this goal, strong countries surrounding Russia would be an ideal tool and Georgia would of course be one such country (Kuchins and Mankoff 2016). Thus, if Georgia could gain firm control over Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it would present a serious border to Russian influence extending further south.

Nevertheless, if the republics were retaken and governed with excessive force, a conflict could erupt as well. This would not be in America's favour as both according to American and Russian doctrine, Georgia falls into the Russian sphere of influence and thus would likely allow Moscow to intervene and expand its influence. Thus, the US would ideally favour an outcome in which Georgia has firm enough control over the renegade regions, to discourage Russian expansion. While also reaching such a settlement through a bilateral agreement between Georgia and the separatists, which would prevent conflict and Russian interference.

Georgian Relationship to the West (w=3)

By 2007-2008, American doctrine was still largely fashioned along the dominant liberal idea of a Western, American led global hegemony. The assumption was that after the Cold War, authoritarianism was effectively eradicated and gradually all countries would transition into pro-Western democracies (Kuchins and Mankoff 2016). Of course, the US was supportive of any such developments worldwide and was ready to assist such processes through both financial and military means. After all, at that point this prophecy did not seem at all

disproven. Many of the formerly authoritarian regimes had fallen and soon embraced a pro-Western attitude. This did not only apply to formerly socialist countries in Europe but could be observed throughout the world. Therefore, from a purely ideological point of view, the United States would have absolutely supported very close ties between the West and Georgia.

There were some constraints, however. For one, the NATO summit in Bucharest had just been concluded which denied Georgia immediate membership in the transatlantic alliance. While reluctantly, the US still agreed with the decisions made in Bucharest, which already prevents extremely close ties between the two entities. Further, the US was still active in numerous global theatres and the Caucasus was still not of primary importance. Therefore, the ideal for Washington was a stable and promising relationship that nevertheless did not require extensive investment. This lies at $w=3$.

7.2.4. The first Status Quo (c9|w6)

The first status quo is set immediately after the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania. The members of the transatlantic alliance convened to discuss a number of issues, including Georgian and Ukrainian ascension to the NATO ‘Membership Action Plan (MAP)’ (‘NATO Summit Bucharest 2008’ n.d.). Russian President Vladimir Putin also attended the conference, to represent Russia’s interest regarding various topics. The United States lobbied heavily for Georgia’s and Ukraine’s inclusion in the MAP, while naturally, Russia was decidedly against. By threatening to severely deteriorate relations with the West, especially the European Union, Russia framed the Georgian and Ukrainian questions as pivotal dealbreakers that simply could not go against Moscow’s interests (‘Russia Army Vows Steps If Georgia and Ukraine Join NATO | Reuters’ n.d.). Many of the EU’s major nations, including Germany, France and the United Kingdom, saw the potentially worsening relations with Russia as too big of a disadvantage, compared to the benefits of Georgian and Ukrainian NATO memberships. Finally, the European powers overruled US interests and the decision on the former Soviet republics’ ascension to the MAP was postponed to December 2008.

Georgian control over the breakaway territories (c=9)

Placing the c-value at 9 for SQ1 is relatively straightforward. Despite several diplomatic incidents and sporadic exchanges of threats from virtually all involved actors, the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia has remained relatively static since the ceasefire agreement in 1993 (Asmus 2010). The republics were still entirely self-governed with the furthest reach of

the Georgian government extending to the Kodori gorge, in eastern Abkhazia. Several attempts were made by the Saakashvili government to reintegrate the breakaway lands into Georgia proper. These included a 2005 peace-proposal which would grant the territories considerable autonomy, but would place them back under the control of Tbilisi ('RIA Novosti - Opinion & Analysis - Chronicle of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict: Fact Sheet' n.d.). This was rejected by the South-Ossetian leadership, which then led the Georgian government to declare a parallel authority for South Ossetia, under the region's former prime minister. This official regional government, however, did not possess any power in the territory and thus the republic remained out of Tbilisi's reach.

Internationally, the issue was regarded as a frozen civil war, with no nations recognising the independence of either of the territories. Despite both renegade republics having made formal appeals to the Russian Federation to be recognised as independent states, no active developments took place. The status quo reached at the ceasefire remained largely intact, albeit Russia had recently lifted the CIS imposed sanctions against Abkhazia (Gogia 2009).

Nevertheless, Russia used potential recognition as a bargaining tool, aimed at dissuading the Western powers from admitting Georgia into NATO. Much of the debate over recognition seemed shelved following Bucharest, as Russia had broadly achieved its aims.

Thus, the situation regarding the renegade territories has largely remained unchanged by April 2008. The level of autonomy that the republics exercised could label them as de-facto states and thus has to be placed at values $c=9-10$. Nevertheless, no country, including Russia has yet formally recognised the territories, which places them at $c=9$.

Georgian relationship to the West ($w=6$)

The 2008 Bucharest summit dealt a harsh blow to Saakashvili's expectations. Instead of the much hoped for admission to NATO and the repositioning of Georgia's geopolitical standing, the alliance essentially committed itself to the post-cold war status quo. In a relatively open fashion, the major European powers admitted, that the Caucasus was part of the Russian sphere of influence and feared any confrontation with Moscow over the issue. While generally sympathetic words were sent towards Tbilisi, no concrete actions were presented at the conference (Duke and C. 2017). Instead, Brussels reinforced the notion that it did not wish for any confrontation with Moscow. This somewhat deteriorated the relationship between Georgia and the EU. Saakashvili and the Rose revolution had been openly pro-European and had hoped that through the demonstration of common values, they would receive the backing

from the EU. The sentiments in Brussels however were, that the any further expansion to the East would on one hand mean the expense of already strained resources and secondly would draw them into an ‘unnecessary’ conflict with Russia (Duke 2017). From this point, the w-value could arguably be placed even higher than 6, as Georgia justifiably felt betrayed by the EU, as Saakashvili’s statement comparing the EU’s decision to ‘appeasement’ shows (*Reuters* 2008).

Despite Georgia’s disappointment from the EU however, there has also been a positive sign coming from the West. The US was very adamant on admitting Georgia to NATO and generally including the country in the Western sphere of influence. George Bush openly stood up for Georgia, even lobbying against some the US’ most powerful allies. The two countries had a steadily improving bilateral relationship since Georgian independence, with extensive joint development and security cooperation (Gharton 2010). For instance, unlike many of the US’ NATO allies, Georgia committed a large force to both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The Bush administration supported the Rose revolution and has visited Saakashvili in Tbilisi. Following the disappointing result in Bucharest, the US assured Georgia of continued support and promised to keep advancing the Georgian cause for NATO membership (Kuchins, Mankoff 2016).

Overall, it is difficult to assess the exact value for Georgia’s relationship with the West at SQ1. On the one hand, the rhetorical side as well as the intentions voiced by both parties indicate a better-than-neutral relationship. As pointed out, all parties except for Russia and the renegade republics were generally in favour of closer integration and cooperation. And indeed, some of these developments did take place (Lazarević 2009). However, this was largely limited to bilateral gestures, rather than any institutional integration.

While the intentions were good, the practical outcomes were still different. The years after the Rose revolution, leading up to the 2008 summit saw a lot of positive intentions being voiced. Unfortunately for Georgia however, the signals from the West appeared to be largely rhetorical and the actions displayed in Bucharest more showed a tacit approval for the existing conditions and the continued Russian influence over the region (Lazarević Dušica 2009).

When regarding practical outcomes alone, considering that Georgia was not integrated with the West on an institutional level and could not be viewed as part of the Western ideological, economic and political sphere, the relationship between the two entities is largely neutral and therefore best placed at a 5.

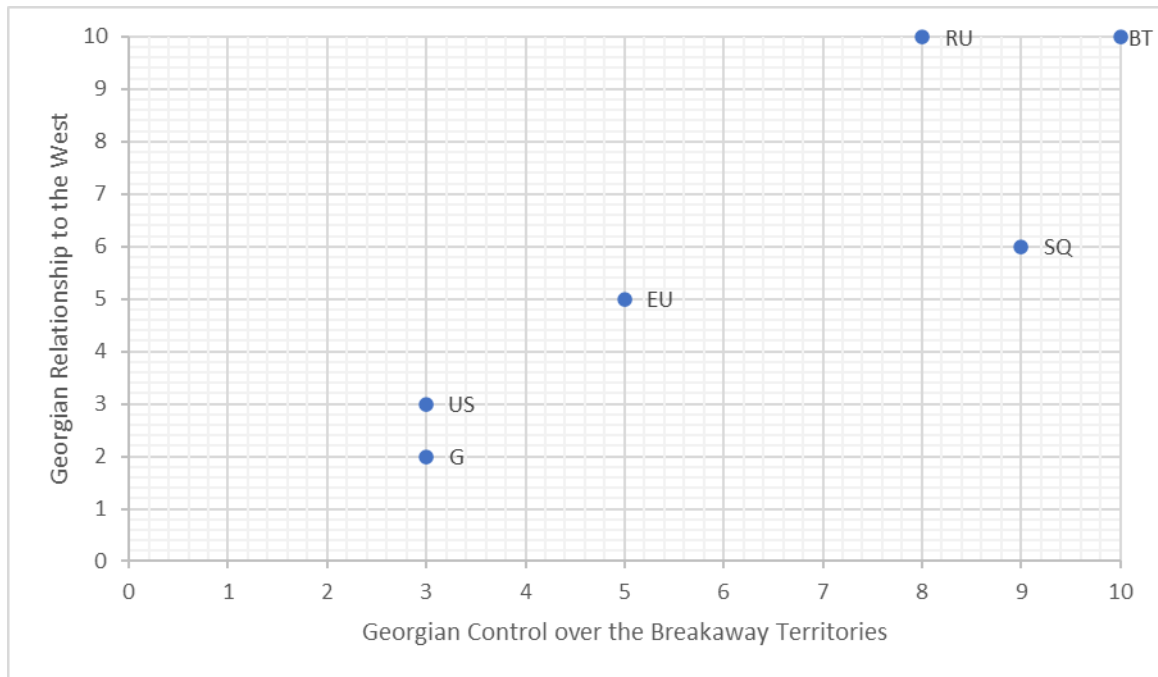


Fig.5

7.3. Analysis

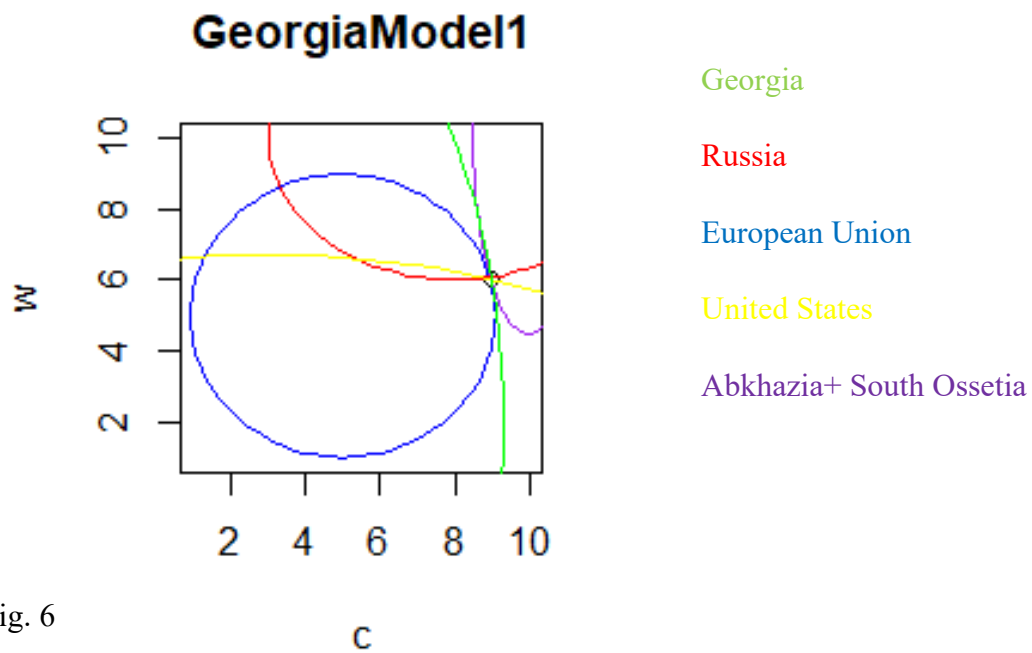


Fig. 6

As with the Ukrainian case study, the ideal points have been entered into the graph and the corresponding indifference curves have been drawn around them. The analysis is again a visual assessment of the graph's properties, such as extreme points, overlaps etc. The indifference curves have again been established on a qualitative basis and their exact composition will be elaborated in the individual analysis of each actor. Once the first visual properties and overlaps are determined and discussed, the factor of power will be added to conclude/further explain the situation present at SQ1.

7.3.1 Preliminary Observations

Russia

The Russian indifference curve is centred around the graph's top-right corner, where its ideal point is located ($c_8|w_{10}$). The curve is skewed towards the w -values, which is due to Russia's increased attention towards Western interference in its perceived sphere of influence. The country is more flexible about the degree of control that Georgia has over the renegade territories, because Russia's primary concern is more with the overall control that it can exercise over the Caucasus region, rather than the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Ellison 2011). This is shown by the relatively flat section of the indifference curve, ranging from roughly ($c_5|w_6$) to ($c_9|w_6$), the status quo. Along this stretch of the curve, where also Russia's lowest w -value is located, ($c_8|w_6$), there is a sizeable difference in the c -values, ranging from solid autonomy under the central government, to almost complete independence. The w -values however remain almost constantly around $w=6$, which shows that Russia is prepared to accommodate various solutions to the Abkhaz and South Ossetian question, while there is a clear boundary for Western interference at a largely neutral Georgian-Western relationship, ($w=6$) (Kazantsev et al. 2020).

This is further shown by the lowest acceptable Russian c -value at ($c\sim 3.5$). This value is interesting as it shows that Russia could even accept reasonably strong Georgian central control over the republics in exchange for absolutely no Western presence. This value is part of a steep section of points, in which w changes, but c does not. This shows that despite the relatively high level of central control over the territories that Russia is willing to accept, there is a clear boundary. This is due to Moscow still holding some responsibility for the Russophile populations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which after all are mostly Russian citizens and consider themselves to be part of the "Russian world" (Nagashima 2019; O'Loughlin, Toal, and Kolosov 2016).

After the steep section, the c -values begin to increase and the w -values to stabilise until reaching the aforementioned flat section. This shows the correlation between Russia's support for the renegade republics and the Georgian relationship to the West. If the Western influence is minimal, then Russia is content with a broad range of solutions to c . Which is why the open end of the curve at $w=10$, stretches from $(3.5|10)$, to $(10|7)$. If Western influence increases though, then the support for independence does too. This is unsurprising, as Russia has repeatedly shown that they are happy to employ separatist movements as tools to enforce their own geopolitical preferences (E. A. Souleimanov, Abrahamyan, and Aliyev 2018).

Only after the status quo, does the Russian curve slightly increase in w . This could be due to the republics at that point being under considerable threat of Georgian invasion. In this case Moscow would like to see less Western involvement in the region, as Tbilisi is unlikely to wage a successful campaign without support. Another explanation for the tilt in the curve is that after $c=9$, the territories would be either incorporated into Russia or would be so dependent on their neighbour that they would effectively be under Russian control. There also, Moscow would want a minimal Western presence, as now their enemy would be at their border.

Georgia

The most notable feature of the Georgian indifference curve is its extremely steep angle. Extending from the status quo, as the w -values decrease, the Georgian curve is essentially a straight line. This highlights a very clear boundary for c -values, at $(c=9)$. This makes sense, as the existing SQ is already highly unfavourable for Georgia (Monson 2009), which is also shown by the Georgian curve being the furthest away from its ideal point among all the players. Since Georgia prioritises territorial integrity over Western support, it is evident that Tbilisi is unwilling to budge any further than the already highly problematic c -value. This simultaneously implies that almost any change in the SQ would be favourable for Georgia.

The angle of the Georgian curve also shows that at that point, Tbilisi is essentially open to accept any w -value, as long as it means an improvement (or at least not worsening) of c . This is further highlighted by the only slight variation in the curve which is shown by the section of high w -values extending from $(c=8|w=10)$, to the status quo. This section has a minimal bend towards c -values, indicating that Tbilisi could accept virtually no Western involvement in the country, in exchange for marginally more control over the breakaway territories.

Following these observations however, it has to be stressed that Georgia is forced into accepting this state of affairs (Gharton 2010). By placing a player into such an undesirable position, the volatility of the game also increases, which will be further elaborated on in the ‘power’ section.

Abkhazia and South Ossetia

The breakaway regions’ indifference curve is relatively straightforward. Unsurprisingly, there is a clear boundary for acceptable Georgian control, which is set at de-facto independence at the value $c=9$. The curve is clearly skewed towards the c -values, which is best shown by the extremely steep stretch ranging from $(c=9|w=10)$, to the status quo. Naturally, this is due to the territories’ primary concern being with independence and recognition (Garb 2009), rather than Georgian policy. Of course, the territories are still generally pro-Russian, which is why their curve is confined to mostly high w -values. Nevertheless, it is interesting that the Abkhaz and South Ossetian minimal w -value is even lower than that of Russia. At $(c\sim 10|w\sim 4)$, the renegade territories would accept a pretty good Georgian-Western relationship, in exchange for full independence and recognition. For this reason, it is important to include Abkhazia and South Ossetia as sovereign actors in the game. They do hold an agenda of their own and would technically even be willing to defy Russian interests to obtain it. This is especially the case with Abkhazia, that is decidedly for independence from both Georgia and Russia (Garb 2009). Of course, they are generally pro-Russian and depend heavily on Russia’s goodwill to continue existing, but they should not be regarded only as Russian proxies.

The United States

The United State’s main priority is evidently with the Western presence in Georgia. The US indifference curve stretches throughout the entire graph, encompassing all c -values, while never exceeding a w -value of ~ 6.5 . This is caused by the predominant US doctrine at the time, which highly prioritised the maximum expansion of the Western presence (Bowker 2011). Naturally, such a strategically promising area as Georgia is not excluded from that logic and as mentioned before, the US were the primary supporters of Georgian admission to the NATO membership action plan (MAP) and eventual full membership (Kuchins, Mankoff 2016). The status of the breakaway territories is of secondary importance, as the US has a primarily strategic interest in Georgia.

The European Union

The EU's indifference curve suggests that it is probably the most neutral actor in the game, with a very wide range of acceptable scenarios. For instance, the EU's highest and lowest w -values ($w \approx 9$, $w = 1$) both come with $c = 5$ and the EU's highest and lowest c -values ($c = 9$, $c = 1$) both correspond with $w = 5$. This means that in effect, the EU is prepared to accept almost all outcomes. This makes sense, since the European Union at the time had just recently undergone a large expansion and was still consolidating its new position as a major actor in eastern Europe (Jahn 2015). The expansions of 2004 and 2007, were the largest that the Union had undergone to that point and some considerable opposition had formed to further growth (Jahn 2015), which would hamper a clear commitment to both the Georgian and Ukrainian plights (Barany 2009). In addition, the EU, was just beginning to feel the effects of the 2008 crisis, which also stood in the way of any immediate geopolitical decisions.

Naturally, on principle the Union would be willing to cooperate and support Georgia, which is after all indicated by the large portion of low w -values in the EU's curve. Nevertheless, these ideological wishes would always have to be considered together with a potential Russian response. Among the actors involved in the game, the EU is clearly the most concerned about a conflict with Russia, which was demonstrated by the conclusions of the NATO summit (Barany 2009). This explains why the w -values start rising after the c -values decline from a point of $c = 5$. The EU is essentially showing its commitment to the Bucharest resolutions, which after all, they lobbied for the most. Even if values as low as $c = 1$, are technically acceptable for the Union, the relatively high w -value at that point ($c = 1 | w = 5$), suggests that they would not want to be implicated in the consequences of such a major change.

Naturally, the EU understood that their position in Bucharest also echoed a tacit approval of Russian demands. Effectively they committed themselves not to be involved with Georgia, which is shown by the echelon of high w -values, peaking at $w \approx 9.5$. Thus, the upper half of the EU's indifference circle can be seen as their realpolitik acceptance of the existing dynamics, while the lower half suggests an ideological interest in expanding and securing a Western set of values as far as possible.

7.3.2. Overlaps

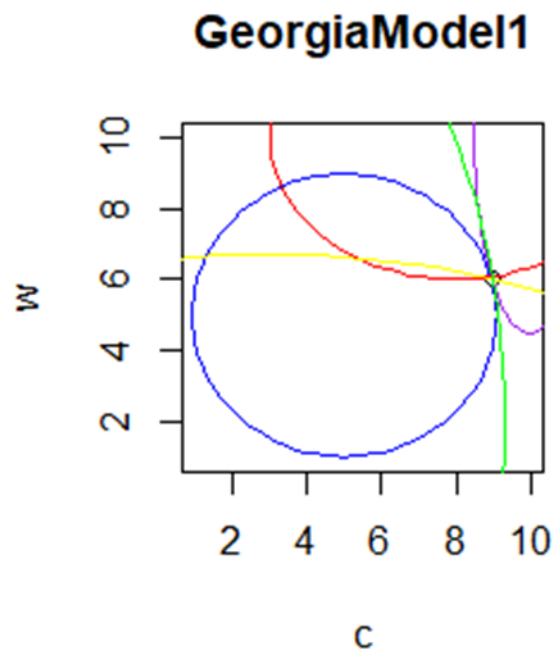


Fig.6.1

Unlike the Ukrainian case, there are several interesting overlaps between the various players' indifference curves.

The first major one is naturally between Russia and the separatist regions. Almost all of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian curve fits within the range of Russia's acceptable scenarios. Russia was actively supporting the regions for most of their autonomous existence and employs them as a key tool to expand her interests in the region, therefore most of what is acceptable to them is also acceptable for Russia (Sotiriou and A. 2019). Vice versa, Abkhazia and especially South Ossetia both have voiced a close affinity to Russia and the former Soviet system. They depend on their northern neighbour and protector for their existence, which is why they clearly hold a generally pro-Russian stance (Garb 2009).

A second intuitive overlap lies between the Western players in the game. A large section of the European indifference curve aligns with the American one. As these actors are largely ideologically aligned, it makes sense that they hold a large section of similar acceptable outcomes.

Nonetheless, the EU and US, do not overlap as much as their alliance/similarity might suggest. A large portion of the EU's upper-half circle of acceptable outcomes is not supported

by the United States. Again, this is down to the different strategic perspective through which the players approach the Georgian issue. The EU wants to stabilise the region and avoid conflict with Russia, while the US wants to expand the Western presence into the Caucasus (Muzalevsky 2009).

This explains why there is a significant overlap between the EU and Russia. Since the Union's stance at Bucharest was driven mainly by avoiding conflict with the Russian Federation, they naturally would have to have a broad range of acceptable scenarios that pen out in Russia's interests. The level to which Brussels is willing to accommodate Moscow is deep enough, that there is even a small section that overlaps with both Russia and the separatist regions. This bit effectively corresponds to the status quo, which makes sense, since the EU in large parts lobbied for SQ1 to remain in place. Again, tying into the EU's overall low prioritisation of the Caucasus and the rationale of maintaining the existing order, to avoid tensions, and to focus on other issues (Gharton 2010).

The US is less concerned with such considerations. They do insist on a Western presence in the region (Andrew C. Kuchins and Jeffrey Mankoff 2016), albeit it might be limited. From this angle, their loyalties do not even necessarily have to lie with Georgia. This is shown by an area of overlap between the status quo and $(c=10|w\sim 4.5)$. In this area the US and the renegade territories agree at a point at which the territories are not only independent but also internationally recognised. This would be an interesting scenario, as it lies completely outside of all the other players' acceptable range and would effectively involve the US 'flipping' the renegade regions. In exchange for recognition, Washington could demand perhaps an increased American peacekeeping force in the area, or they could hope to win over the Abkhaz and South Ossetian governments to their side, through economic incentives.

Another rationale behind this overlap could also be the US simply ceding these territories to Russian influence and consolidating a pro-Western Georgia proper. After all, Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been a major springboard for Moscow's influence over Tbilisi and if they are removed, the US could hope to strengthen and stabilise a Western-oriented Georgia. Of course, all of these considerations would hardly lead to a realistic settlement, as all the other powers would be opposed and there is even the risk of re-escalating a hot conflict.

The player that holds the largest areas of overlap with others, is Georgia. Georgia in large parts overlaps with Russia while completely containing the EU and largely containing the US

within its area of acceptable outcomes. This is due to Tbilisi being forced into a difficult position, which ironically makes it one of the most flexible actors in the game. In essence, most possible outcomes and settlements that the game provides, are better for Georgia than the existing conditions. At SQ1 however, these outcomes are not decided by Georgia, but are largely influenced by other, more powerful actors, as will be further elaborated in the section on power.

Therefore, the most striking overlap in the first model can be described as being between ‘the great powers’, despite overlapping with Georgia too. Between the points of $(c=5|w=6.5)$ and the status quo, Russia, the US, the EU and Georgia have an area of agreement. This long oval shape first of all suggests a rather flexible approach of the ‘great powers’ regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Ranging from $c=5$, to $c=9$, the overlapping area shows a clear prioritisation of the Western presence in the region. Of course, this is due to all of these great powers, viewing the conflict through the lens of larger geopolitical priorities (Muzalevsky 2009). In essence, the Abkhaz and South Ossetian question could in such a ‘great power game’ be seen as a bargaining chip, that the sides exchange in return for the more important geopolitical considerations (Ellison 2011). This bargaining nature is also shown by the slight tilt that the area of potential agreement has from left to right. If the republics are to return under partial Georgian control, the Western presence in the region has to decline as suggested by the first initial point of overlap $(5|6.5)$. If the republics are to be more independent then the Western influence should increase, as shown by the Status Quo.

This area of overlap, however, also shows that the nature of a ‘big power’ settlement would still in large parts favour Russia. All of the agreeable area is located above $w=5$ and the room for negotiation is relatively limited. Since both Western powers still regard the Caucasus as being somewhat within the Russian sphere of influence (Veebel 2016), they can both contend themselves with a settlement that allows some Western presence and does not ensure complete Russian dominance over Georgia or the renegade territories. In this sense, despite the long reach of the overlap’s c -values, the entire area could still be seen as effectively preserving the status quo. As mentioned, the main priority for all the great powers is the geopolitical variable of w . Since this one hardly changes throughout the overlap, a settlement derived from there would amount to effectively preserving the great powers’ status quo.

7.4. *Power*

The final element to consider is the factor of power. As with the Ukrainian case, power is crucial component of the game which explains why certain decisions were made, why certain abnormalities exist and why negotiations succeed/fail. As with the Ukraine, the element of power is not only defined by absolute terms such as the raw military, economic or diplomatic capabilities of an actor. Instead, power has to be regarded as relative to the case, meaning; how involved is an actor? What is its history in the region? Is there a clear will/commitment to the issue?

A decisive power imbalance exists between the various participating actors. For one, Russia, the EU and US still remain significant global and regional powers, while Georgian and especially the renegade republics' influence is much more limited. Especially the major imbalance between Georgia and Russia, explains why despite its clear will, Georgia is still forced to accept the status quo. Clearly, the Saakashvili government and the Rose movement that brought it to power were driven by the two components of reestablishing national unity and improving the economic conditions of the country by creating closer ties to the West (Monson 2009). Neither of these things materialised completely by the point of SQ1, which is after all almost five years after the Rose uprising. Of course, the desire and intentions of Tbilisi remained the same, but there was little that could be done since Russia still shielded the breakaway territories from any potential re-annexation (Muzalevsky 2009). Similarly, any extensive integration between Georgia and the West was too prevented by Russia, who threatened severe consequences in case of such an event. Russia holds the most relative power in this game, as it is a militarily strong nation that has a long history of presence and dominance in the region. She too is the most committed among the large powers to the cause, while the others are either non-involved or have only began relatively recently to consider the Caucasus as an area of potential strategic expansion. This is why, even if the issue was raised at Bucharest, Russia succeeded in pressuring all other parties into maintaining the status quo (Özkan 2012).

The NATO summit could have also contributed to Russia feeling even more powerful than it was. By getting the EU and the reluctant US to agree to abstain from intervention in Georgia, Russia was emboldened to either maintain or potentially even expand its influence over the Caucasus. This would explain why Russian support for Abkhazia and South Ossetia significantly increased immediately after the conclusion of the summit.

However, this could also be seen as a response to the actions of the second most powerful actor in the game, the US. For one, the US at the time still considered itself and was largely accepted to be the uncontested global hegemon. They had an unparalleled economic, military and political advantage over virtually all of the other players competing in the game. While being relatively new to the region, the US still had the potential to have a serious impact on its politics. In fact, an independent US incursion into the Caucasus had already begun, by relatively open support for the Rose Revolution, the military cooperation between Georgia and the US in Iraq and the joint training exercises the two countries announced (Andrew C. Kuchins and Jeffrey Mankoff 2016). Additionally, they did not view Russia to be anywhere on par with them. Therefore, the power balance in the region was already being contested at the point of the first Status Quo (Özkan 2012). Also, the US were very vocal of their desire for Georgian-NATO integration and appeared ready to continue bilateral cooperation, even if the alliance did not participate.

7.5. *Conclusions after the first Status Quo*

At first the game at SQ1 appears to be relatively stable. After all the major powers appeared to have struck a compromise at Bucharest and Georgia is too weak to seriously upset the game. Nevertheless, the conditions are considerably more volatile than they appear.

A crucial component that has to be considered is that similar to the Ukraine at SQ1, the primary decision maker in the Georgian case is the government e.g. Saakashvili. His entire mandate rests on the promises of reform and the reconquest of the renegade territories (Kukhianidze 2009). If these promises are not fulfilled, it is unlikely that the president would remain in power for long (Mitchell 2012). Thus, even if Georgia as a state appears relatively flexible, as all outcomes are better than the existing one, Saakashvili as president is under much more pressure. The main issue is that even if any change is favourable, what happens if there is no change at all? Considering how stable the game appears it was an increasingly likely scenario that SQ1 could simply be preserved. This, however, is impossible for Georgia, despite its paradoxical synthesis of flexibility and constraint. Saakashvili had to move, even in the face of overwhelmingly bad odds. Thus, instead of stabilisation, the NATO summit in fact provided an impetus for intensification, as will be shown at SQ2.

Georgia was not the only player that drew serious conclusions from the NATO summit. Russia, despite virtually achieving all of its aims, still looked at the American actions and attitudes in Bucharest with concern. While the EU depended on Russia as an energy supplier

and could thus be somewhat held in check (Moraski 2013), the US did not. For this reason, Russia too saw the Bucharest conference as an impulse to implement changes. According to several statements later, Putin made the decision to invade Georgia as early as the 4th of April 2008, the closing day of the NATO summit. Adding to the volatility of the situation was also the fact that the Russian presidency was scheduled to change, in May of the same year. Therefore, Putin was further incentivised to conclude any major policy steps before his administration came to a close.

Finally, the United States was also discontent with the conditions of SQ1. They had lobbied heavily for Georgian and Ukrainian admission to NATO and still stuck with their doctrine of maximum expansion. Especially in the case of Georgia, the US was unlikely to throw the towel after Bucharest. The two countries were already cooperating on a variety of security issues and were planning to even expand this cooperation (Kuchins and Mankoff 2016). Whether through her own active expansion into Georgia or maintaining her current involvement and thus presenting a threat to Russia, the US policy in the Caucasus further aggravated tensions after SQ1.

7.6. *Second application of the model*

Immediately following the first status quo, some major changes happened in the game. Instead of adhering to the agreement in Bucharest, almost all the actors began to undertake either serious actions or credible threats, which further destabilised the already fragile situation. This could largely be attributed to the volatility of the game, which was already discussed in the conclusions to SQ1.

Even though all the players' preferences remained largely the same, all of them began to aggravate the conditions to a point at which conflict was close to unavoidable. This is different to the Ukrainian case, as it is not a single player that influenced the change in the status quo, but instead SQ2 is derived from multiple actors' actions. Therefore, before the model can be constructed and numerical values can be ascribed to SQ2, the events leading up to it will be outlined. After that, SQ2 will be inserted into the model and the eventual reasons for the game's collapse will be discussed.

The second status quo (SQ2) ($c=10|w=4$)

The second status quo is set on the eve of hostilities between Georgia and South Ossetia, on the 31st of July 2008. These began on the 1st of August and soon saw extensive Russian

involvement, eventually culminating in the full-scale invasion of Georgia. As highlighted before, the time between the NATO summit and commencement of hostilities was marked by several threats and detrimental actions, committed by almost all of the involved players. The sum of these actions created the situation at SQ2, which made a conflict almost unavoidable.

Events leading up to SQ2

Immediately following the conclusion of Bucharest, Russia made it clear that it wanted to change the situation in Georgia. According to Yuri Baluyevsky, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian military, it was even as early as the 4th of April 2008, the closing date of the NATO summit, that President Putin decided that Georgia was to be invaded (van Herpen 2014). Even if such plans were not as concrete at that point, Russia certainly moved to aggravate the situation in the Caucasus. The first major step was initiated less than two weeks after SQ2, which was the appeal of the Russian parliament for the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. Following this, Russia officially recognised documents issued by the renegade republics as well as some of their self-proclaimed government bodies (German 2009). These diplomatic actions were followed by concrete military steps. In the months between SQ1 and SQ2, Russian fighter jets shot down a Georgian surveillance drone, the number of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia was increased and Russia deployed railroad troops to South Ossetia (Asmus 2010). The final major step leading to the second Status Quo was a large military training exercise in the North Caucasus, which placed a large number of Russian troops on Georgia's/South Ossetia's borders, who did not return to their barracks even after the exercises were officially concluded (Ellison 2011). It was evident that this exercise was aimed to both prepare Russian troops for action in Georgia and to mobilise a force on time for an upcoming conflict. This is evidently shown by the nature of the training, that was aimed at a potential enemy that was extremely similar to the Georgian armed forces (Ellison 2011).

The breakaway republics too, initiated steps to aggravate the situation. Especially in South Ossetia, there were several clashes between the South Ossetian authorities, Georgian servicemen and South Ossetians loyal to Tbilisi. There were several bomb blasts and abductions in South Ossetia, all aimed against alleged Georgian agents (Ellison 2011). The rhetoric too, became increasingly aggressive, with Abkhaz, South Ossetian and Russian media calling for preparations to defend against a supposedly upcoming Georgian invasion into the breakaway territories.

These calls were not unfounded, as Tbilisi too conducted several moves that aggravated the situation. For one, Georgian rhetoric after the NATO conference also became more aggressive, stressing the need to re-establish control over the lost regions as soon as possible. And indeed, in the first stages of the conflict, it was Georgia that first attacked and pushed towards the reconquest of Tskhinvali (Asmus 2010), albeit this was after the point of the second status quo. Georgia also began to station a significant number of troops in the Khodori Gorge, a part of Abkhazia still under the control of the central government (Gharton 2010). This passage through the Caucasus mountains was of vital strategic importance and a militarisation by Georgia was interpreted in Abkhazia and Russia as a potential sign of an upcoming invasion. Finally, Georgia kept also appealing to the West, especially the United States, for more general integration and especially military support.

Indeed, this support was granted in the form of a joint military exercise. It was conducted in Georgia, by the Georgian army, US army and several Caucasian states, at the same time as Russia conducted its exercise north of the border (Ellison 2011). While officially the US stated that the training was intended to prepare Georgian forces for action in Iraq, it was evident that the exercise titled 'immediate response 2008', was also meant as a deterrent to Russia. Generally, the US kept supporting Georgia and her ambitions through several diplomatic, economic and military means, all of which increased after the first status quo.

Georgian Control over the breakaway territories (c10)

The main change regarding the c-value of the second status quo is that of heavily increased Russian steps towards recognition for Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Asmus 2010). Even though Russia has tacitly supported the regions throughout their existence as independent entities, the de-facto status of recognition does change their international standing significantly. For one, Russia could soon establish official diplomatic ties with the Abkhaz and South Ossetian authorities, thus gaining an arguing basis for both expanded support as well as military protection. Further, these steps also signals Russia's unwillingness for any compromise with Georgia that would involve the resumption of Tbilisi's control over the breakaway territories. This means, that even though in the everyday conditions of the renegade republics, as well as their relations with most of the world have not changed, their independence will soon be ensured officially by Russia and in many forms such as through the recognition of documents and institutions already has (Kazantsev et al. 2020). Therefore,

the control of Tbilisi over the territories has further decreased, since now any attempt at regaining control would be met with severe consequences from Moscow.

In addition to the official changes, there were also unofficial developments that de facto decreased the last vestiges of Georgian control. Since Russia had been pursuing a protracted passportization policy, the regions were in large parts inhabited by Russian citizens, another potential point to justify a Russian intervention in the case of conflict (Nagashima 2019). Added to that stand also the economic independence that the renegade republics received, as they could now freely trade with Russia and since many of their citizens were Russian citizens as well, they could base much of their economic activities in the neighbouring country too. Thus, the renegade republics were de-facto completely independent entities that even though largely unrecognised, could function as states. Accordingly, the c-value for the second status quo lies at 10.

Western presence in Georgia (w4)

The Western presence in Georgia is clearly led by the United States. Unlike the European Union, who preferred to not aggravate Russia over the Georgian question, the US did not cease its advance into the Caucasus and maintained both diplomatic and other support for Tbilisi (Gharton 2010). The US was ready to advance its sphere of influence as far as possible and Saakashvili was very open for any support from Washington. This cooperation was made rather public, also in part to signal Russia that Georgia was not without friends (Ellison 2011). For this reason, there were a series of public discussions between the two countries, including a visit by United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Tbilisi ('Condoleezza Rice Visits Georgia over South Ossetia Conflict', the Guardian 2008). The height of the Western involvement in Georgia was reached during the 'immediate response 2008' military exercises in which the United States provided the largest contingent of forces to the training.

However, despite these open gestures between Georgia and the US, Tbilisi could still not count on unconditional Western protection. For one, the European Union has not changed its stance and preferred to limit its involvement in Caucasian affairs. Even the US, still did not prioritise the Caucasus highly at the time and despite the gestures was unlikely willing to engage in a conflict with Russia. Especially, since Georgia lacked the institutional memberships in organisations such as NATO, any extensive support would be uncertain. Finally, it is unclear whether the joint Georgian and US exercise was indicative of further integration in the future, or whether it was simply a short-term symbol to deter Russia.

Therefore, the w-value for the second status quo lies at 4. Indeed, the West has somewhat bolstered its presence in the region and has shown at least limited willingness to support Georgia in a potential upcoming conflict. Further, the American attitudes both at the Bucharest summit and especially after, showed a strong determination to eventually integrate Georgia in the Western sphere of influence. Nevertheless, despite these developments little has happened in concrete terms and Georgia's relationship to the West still remained ambiguous. No value lower than four could be supported by the actual actions that occurred up until then, since developments between Washington and Tbilisi could still go either way. Nevertheless, the relationship could not be described as strictly neutral either, which is why the value is set at $w=4$.

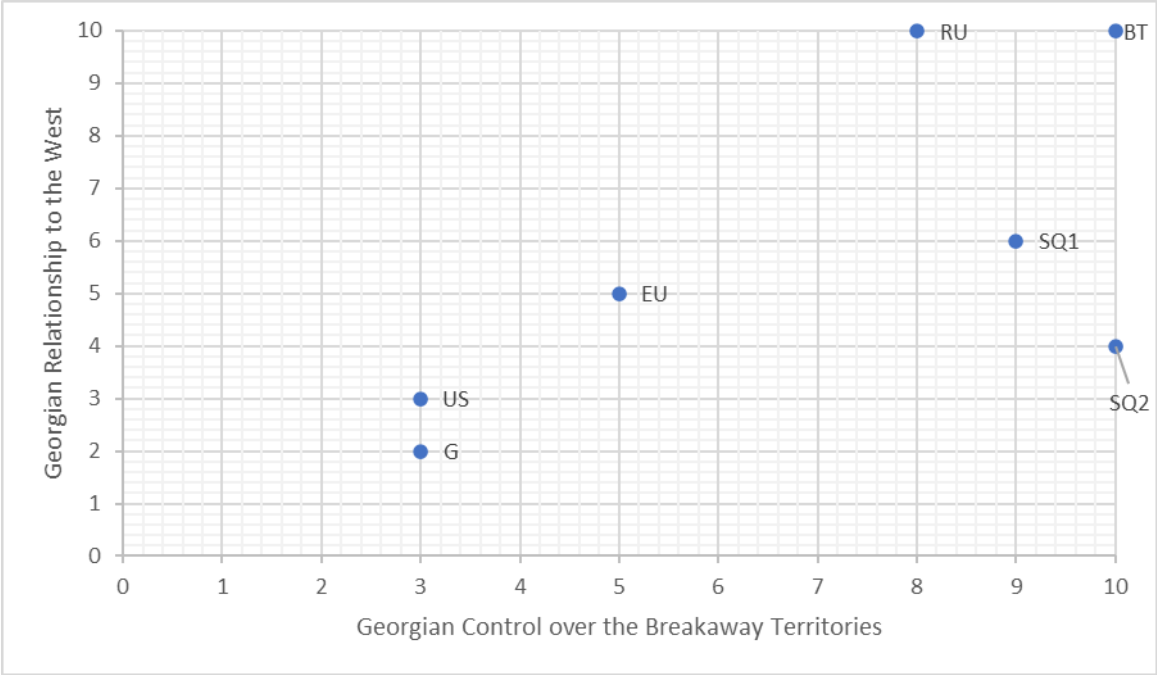


Fig.7

7.7. Analysis

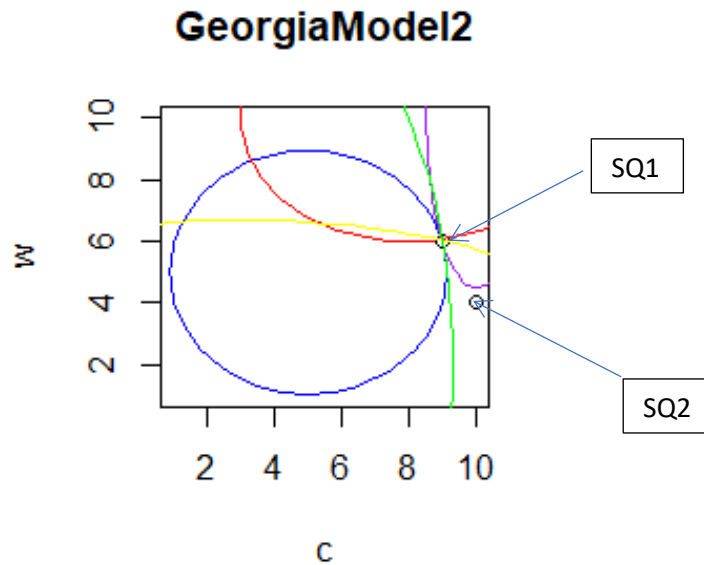


Fig. 8

As pointed out before, the general preferences of either of the players have not changed from the first status quo, to the second. Unlike with the Ukrainian case, there was no major cataclysmic event that would have shifted an actor's stance dramatically. Instead, the pressures were built up gradually, by each of the players continuing to pursue its agenda.

Therefore, the only new visual feature of the model is the inclusion of the second status quo. This point lies in the lower-extreme right corner of the model, corresponding to de-facto full independence for the renegade territories and a moderate but stable Western presence in Georgia. Clearly, this point is far from most of the players' range of acceptable scenarios. The only actor that would support such a status quo unconditionally would be the United States. Since its priorities are mainly led by w-values, the improvement from $w=5$, to $w=4$ between the two status quo's is a favourable outcome for Washington. Nevertheless, even for them, the second status quo is right on the edge of their acceptable range. This is due to the increased American/Western presence in Georgia still being relatively limited. In an ideal outcome, the US would like to see both extensive cooperation with Tbilisi as well as Georgian inclusion into a western institutional framework, such as NATO (Kuchins and Mankoff 2016).

Other than the US' curve, the only other range of acceptable scenarios that lies close to SQ2 is that of the renegade republics. This is unsurprising, as the breakaway territories' priority

undoubtedly lies with the question of independence/Georgian control (Garb 2009). At this point, the maximum level of independence is reached and thus corresponds with the Abkhaz and South Ossetian ideal c -value of 10.

Nevertheless, the second status quo still comes short of the acceptable range for the breakaway republics. Since their ideal c -value is reached, the only explanation for the disagreement must lie with w . The first way in which the w -factor can explain this condition is the straight-forward one. The renegade republics rely heavily on Russia as their sole source of international support and their political agendas are heavily dominated by Moscow (Kazantsev et al. 2020). Considering that an increase in Western influence would be unacceptable for Russia, so would it be unacceptable for the breakaway territories. This would especially be the case if an increased Western presence would be accompanied by military cooperation and the subsequent strengthening of the Georgian army. In this case, the republics could fear invasion and might also see their Russian support decline, as Moscow could be deterred by the prospect of a conflict with NATO.

While this intuitive explanation is valid and has very likely influenced the Abkhaz and South Ossetian rationale, there is another interesting way in which the w -factor could explain the disagreement with SQ2. This explanation is linked to the overlap between the US' and the breakaway territories' indifference curves, discussed in the models' first application. There it was stated that a potential agreement could be reached between the US and the republics, in which Washington approves of Abkhaz and South Ossetian independence, in exchange for either influence within the territories or the stabilisation of Georgia under Western patronage. The second status quo lies remarkably close to this overlap. Probably the reason why the renegade republics still fall short of being satisfied with the outcome of SQ2, is that the US has shown no direct intentions to support them. While indeed, the status quo was reached, its c -value was effectively forced by Russia and the territories. A settlement along the area of overlap, however, could only be reached by the active and enthusiastic participation of the US, which was not provided. Instead, Washington signalled clearly that they stood behind Georgia (Gharton 2010), thus, if anything, further aggravating tensions and worries in Tskhinvali and Sukhumi.

Other than the discussed actors' curves, all other players' acceptable scenarios lie relatively far from SQ2. For both Georgia and the European Union, this is unsurprising. Georgia clearly cannot accept, as the status of the renegade republics has not only not improved, but even

worsened from SQ1 to SQ2. Especially considering that this is an unnegotiable issue for Tbilisi, they will be vehemently opposed. The EU was probably the largest supporter of SQ1 and was instrumental in establishing it. Thus, they too are clearly opposed.

More surprising, however, is Russia's opposition to the second status quo. After all, Moscow was the actor that took the most drastic actions to change the conditions after the Bucharest summit and was probably the most influential in creating SQ2. Nevertheless, Russia still is discontent, which is tied to the prioritisation of *w* over *c*. Just as the other great powers involved in the case, the Russian involvement in the region is motivated by much deeper strategic thought than simply the issue of the renegade republics (German 2009). Similar, to the United States, Russia is far more concerned with its strategic dominance of the territory, as well as the presence/absence of rivals. Therefore, even if Russia could enforce relatively desirable *c*-values, she could not do the same with *w*. Instead, from Moscow's perspective the *w*-values have even further deteriorated, which is the source of disagreement with the second status quo. This is indicative of a broader dilemma that Russia faced, which will be explored more extensively in the final section.

7.8. *Power*

In the Georgian case, the power conditions are far more ambiguous than they were in the Ukrainian example. There are some clear power imbalances such as between Georgia and Russia, but when it comes to the major powers it is a lot less clear.

For one, at that time Russia was still not considered to be the major world power it is today. Of course, it was a significant international actor which had some very strong regional influence, but it was also a recovering nation that stood far from having overcome the troubled periods of the 1990's (Daalder 2017). Since the disastrous war in Afghanistan, Russia had not been involved in a foreign conflict and the state of its armed forces was largely viewed as antiquated and ineffective. Simultaneously, Russia still had a highly significant presence in the region, an advantage in influence over the breakaway territories and above all a strong desire to engage in the conflict (Souleimanov, Abrahamyan, and Aliyev 2018). This position allowed Russia to almost completely force the question of Georgian control over the breakaway republics. If Moscow desired the areas to be independent, they would be.

The United States were in many ways the opposite of Russia. They were the unquestionably strongest military power at the time. They maintained a global presence and were prepared to enforce their desire virtually anywhere. Simultaneously however, they were also new to the region and uncertain about the degree that they were willing to get involved. Although Georgia was a good place to gain a foothold in the Caucasus, the US still had many other high priorities. Nevertheless, the status that the United States held in 2008 was still so powerful that if they decided to get involved somewhere, they would. Even the case of Georgia shows that, where not only Russia, but also Washington's European allies were opposed to involvement, but this did not deter them. Therefore, the US essentially had the power to force w-values, if they wanted to.

7.9. *The collapse of the game*

Several major sources of tension exist by the time of SQ2. The first one is the remaining issue that Georgia had with the breakaway territories. As stated, it was imperative for the Saakashvili government to regain a hold over Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Kukhianidze 2009). Since the Rose Revolution had also been several years before SQ2, these demands became even more pressing. The time between SQ1 and SQ2 saw some significant developments in that regard. The Russian announcement that they were to formally recognise the territories on one hand meant a provocation to Georgia on the other ignited further pressure to act.

At the same time, Russia too stood in a dilemma. As discussed in the section on power, the main Russian priority was to remain the Caucasian hegemon. This factor however appeared increasingly threatened. For one, Georgia seemed poised to act on its resolution of regaining control over the breakaway republics. More concerningly, the US were also beginning to expand their presence steadily between SQ1 and SQ2. In a confrontation Russia could easily suppress Georgia, but there was little that could be done once the United States had established their presence (Gharton 2010). The main advantage that Russia had in this context, was that the US had not yet committed itself completely to Georgia and it was unclear how willing the US was to engage in a potential conflict.

These two considerations highlight the time pressure that both Russia and Georgia were under. Both of them knew that considering the ongoing trends, the situation would continue to develop against their wishes. For Georgia, the more time they let pass the likelier it would be that the breakaway republics fully consolidate themselves under Russian support and

recognition. Further, Saakashvili's promises would not be fulfilled, eventually leading to discontent and perhaps even deposition.

For Russia it was clear that if nothing was done, the West would expand and strengthen its presence in the region, eventually leaving Moscow with no way to contest that (Asmus 2010). Russia was even more aware of that since such scenarios had only recently taken place in several eastern-European countries, which traditionally had stood under Russian/Soviet influence. Of course, Moscow was also aware of Tbilisi's pressure to act, which further enticed them act quickly.

Therefore, for two of the participating players it is clear that collapsing the game through some drastic action is more favourable to maintaining it at the second status quo. While Georgia would provide the eventual catalyst for conflict, by SQ2 the first one to act on this rationale was Russia. By intensifying the conflict in South Ossetia immediately, Russia could achieve several aims. For one, any Georgian ambitions for more sovereignty and control would be stifled. Further, by significantly destabilising the region Russia would deter the West from any attempts at institutional inclusion of Georgia. Also, a general Western involvement would then be tied to a much larger commitment, which might also foster more scepticism from Washington. Finally, Russia could reinforce its own position by strengthening its allies and stationing more troops in the renegade territories.

Going back to the second model it becomes clear that provoking conflict was effectively the only strategy Russia could employ to maintain its interests. There was not enough negotiating power to reach a settlement on w-values that would be favourable for Moscow. They also already extracted the maximum achievable outcome from the c-dimension, while still not reaching an overall desirable outcome. Thus, the only way in which Russia could obtain its desired scenario was by collapsing the game and subsequently reframing the status quo and the basis for negotiation in its interest. Considering the trends that have taken place up to SQ2 it is also clear that Russia had to act quickly, as more time passed the more Western obstacles they would face.

8. Conclusion

The first broad observation that can be drawn from these case studies is that this period in Russian foreign policy was defined by pressure. This pressure goes both ways. On the one hand Russia exercises it to enforce its will, on the other Russia too is repeatedly pressured into action. There is remarkably little voluntary cooperation and very rarely have any agreements been reached. This can most likely be linked to the origins of Russia's relationship with the Ukraine and Georgia. Both of these countries only remained under Moscow's sphere of influence, because Russia from the point of independence has exercised an immense amount of pressure on them. Naturally, if the relationship is forced from the onset, most of the developments are likely to occur by force as well.

And so, they did. Paradoxically, Russia managed to jeopardise its own goals by achieving them. This means that the only way in which Russia could maintain its influence over its former Soviet republics, is by locking them in a perpetual cycle of political instability, poverty and corruption. Indeed, for almost one-and-a-half decades this system worked, and Moscow could dominate the political and social spheres in Georgia and the Ukraine. By employing this strategy however, Moscow unwittingly set up the conditions that created the revolutions which would eventually place the Kremlin in a dilemma. This is already shown by the strange indifference curves that both the Ukraine and Georgia have at their first status quo. The Ukrainian indifference curve is very small and indicates that there was effectively no wiggling room for the country's leadership to improve the conditions of the growingly discontent population. For Georgia, it is even more extreme, because their indifference curve does not even intersect with the status quo and the game is only held stable by Russian pressure.

Unsurprisingly, such conditions cannot last forever. Eventually both Saakashvili and the Ukrainian people saw the need to act and did so by instigating a revolution, calling for Western aid and uniformly condemning Russia. As the unfolding of the games at the second status quos show, there was relatively little that Russia could do about these developments. In Georgia, they had already exhausted the maximum potential of their political power and created the de-facto independent entities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In the Ukraine, Russia had reinstated a sympathetic regime after the Orange Revolution and hoped to maintain power through that. In neither case did these measures suffice and arguably Moscow found itself with the back to the wall.

A major contributing factor to that was that time stood against Russia. Whether Moscow held control or not, sooner or later developments would turn against its favour. In both the examples, the developments between the first and the second status quo placed Russia under immense time pressure. If they did not act immediately, it was clear that the countries would consolidate themselves, develop and eventually join the long ranks of other formerly Soviet/Eastern Bloc states, that were now fully independent of Russian influence.

It could be argued that by this point already, Russia had lost out. After all their ultimate goal had always been complete and reliable control over the countries' affairs, while not having to commit either excessive force or provide too many material incentives. The fact that the revolutions broke out already signalled that no matter what happened, Russia would have to abandon some of these goals. It was clear that both in the Ukraine and Georgia popular sentiment had turned against Russia and the fact that the Euromaidan was the second anti-Russian revolution that the Ukraine has had, should be indicative of the fact that control was not going to resume.

This presented Moscow with a choice. Either they were to accept the new conditions and accommodate themselves with the status of diminished power, or they would attempt to salvage as much of their position as possible. Since political and covert pressures no longer worked, the only other solution to obtain this would be through a military invasion. In essence, this is the final answer to why Russia engaged in the wars in Georgia and the Ukraine. For them it was simply the only way in which they could save as much of the mostly lost influence. Negotiations would not have been an option since at the point that these would have been initiated, any outcome would be worse than the ones produced from a war.

The closest that Russia could have gotten to achieving some of her goals through negotiation, would have been in the form of a 'great power settlement'. Interestingly, in both cases there were some overlaps between the game's major powers (Russia, US, EU), that could have yielded some agreement. For Russia this would have had the advantage that at least it would temporarily ensure that the West did not encroach on her sphere of influence. On the other hand, in all of these settlements the domestic desires of the affected countries would have been ignored. It is likely that the Euromaidan protest would still have erupted and its basically certain that Georgia would have pushed to retake its breakaway territories. As a condition of a great power agreement Russia would have had to allow these developments to unfold. Once the new regimes were fully consolidated however, they would also have pushed to escape

from Russian control. Sooner or later Moscow would have found itself under the same pressure that unfolded in reality, if not worse.

Thus, it can be said that negotiations failed because Russia had nothing to negotiate for. For more than a decade, Russia has helped to create a situation in which both Georgia and the Ukraine had no other choice than to erupt in a popular revolt. From that point onward, the bulk of Moscow's ideal desires for the regions were already lost. Any power and pressure that could still have been exercised was exhausted and the more time Russia let pass the more certain the situation was to worsen. Therefore, the only rational choice was to initiate a conflict to at least seize the few remaining essential strategic domains by force.

9. Figures

All graphics were created by the author in RStudio and Microsoft Word.

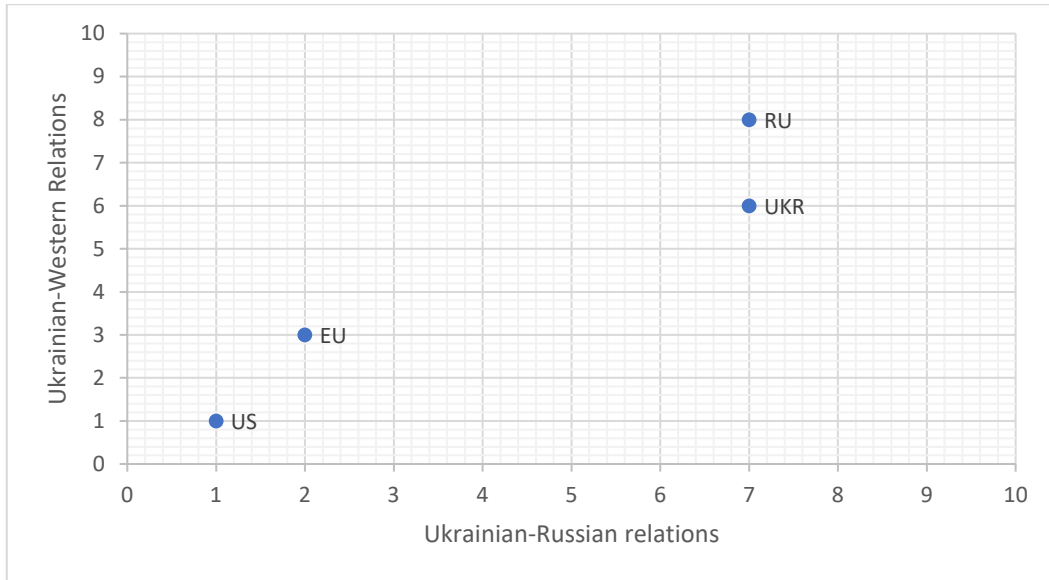


Fig. 1

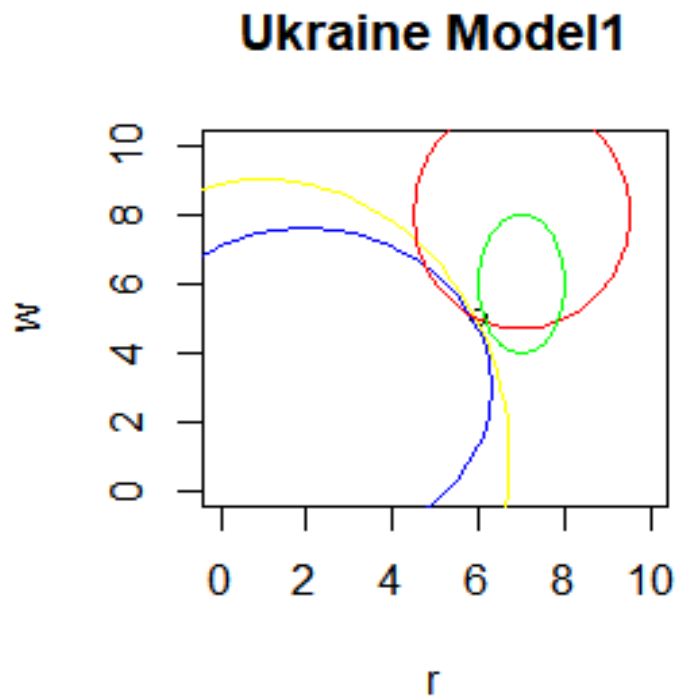


Fig.2

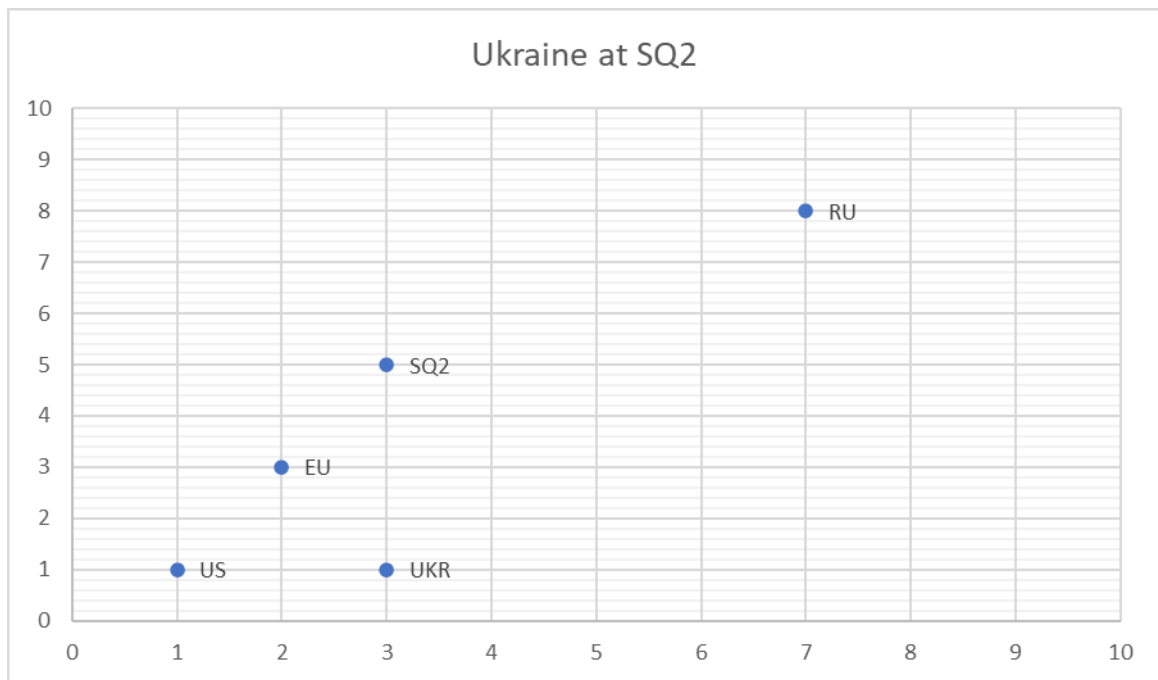


Fig. 3

Ukraine Model2

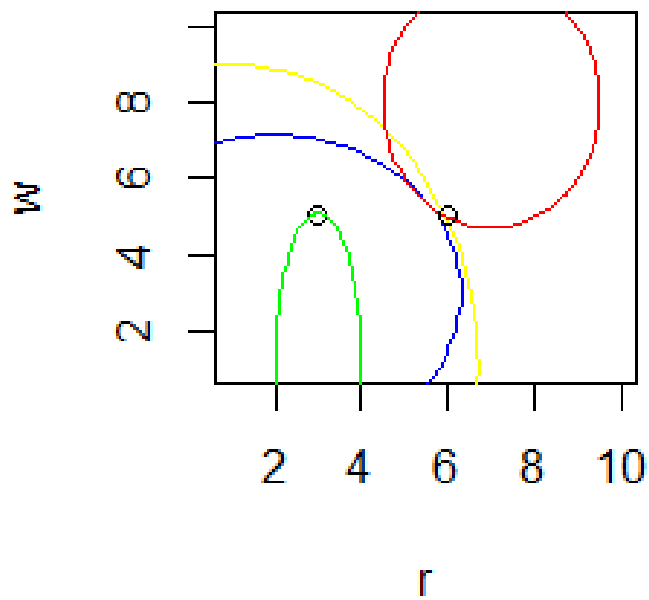


Fig.4

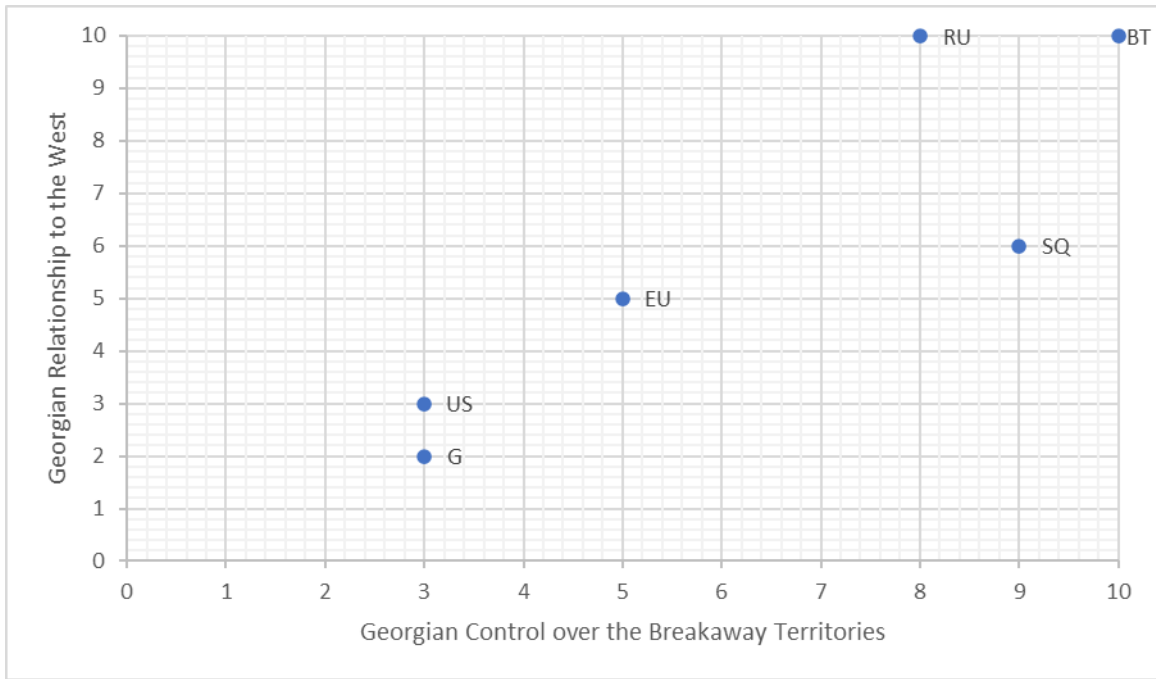


Fig. 5

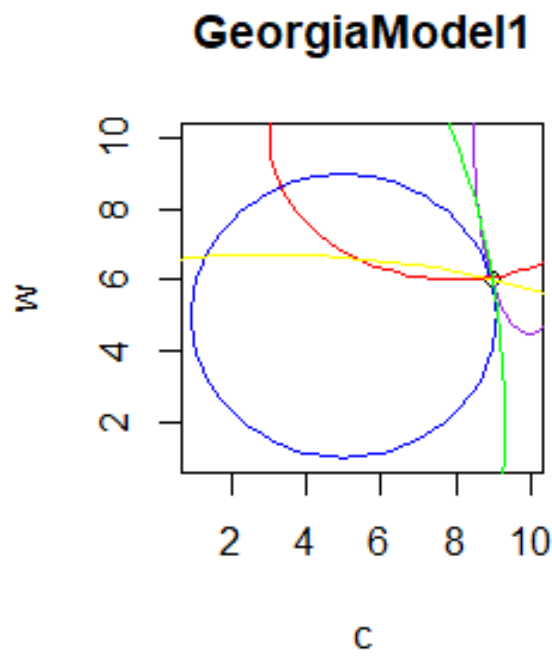


Fig.6

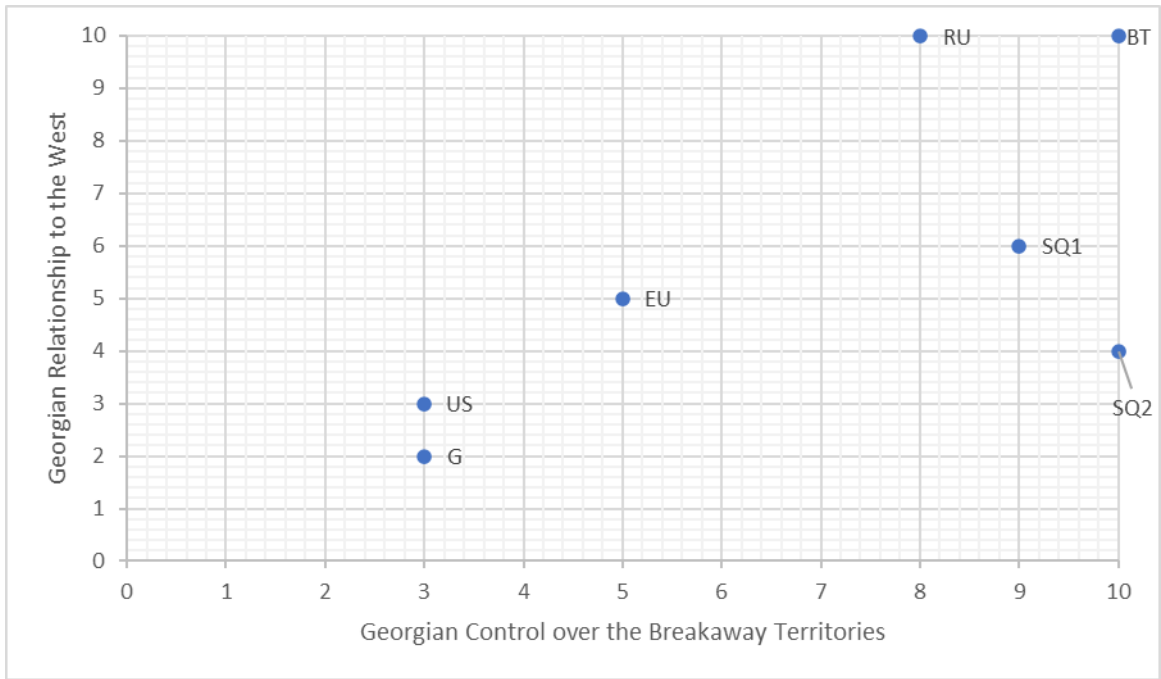


Fig. 7

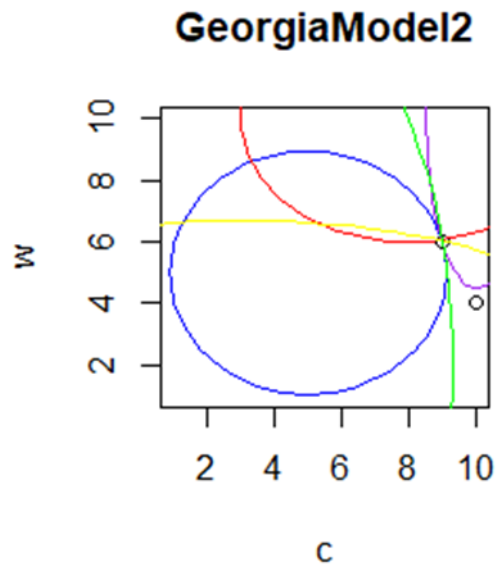


Fig.8

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