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The Role of Energy Security in Determining Foreign Policy:
The Case Study of the European Union and Georgia

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Abstract

Security of the energy supply is a cornerstone of the European energy policy. Considering that Russia is the biggest energy importer to Europe, the EU is facing constant energy security challenges. During the nearest past, Europe has repeatedly witnessed how Moscow uses energy as a political leverage. Which was a clear evidence for the EU that Russia is not a reliable supplier. That is why the energy market diversification is one of the main objective of the European energy security path.

The research aims to explore reasons why the transit potential of Georgia effects on the foreign policy of the European Union towards the country. The thesis develops hypothesis according to which Georgia's potential to transit Caspian Energy to Europe is an important source of energy diversification and reduction of Russian leverage for the EU, which plays an essential role in determining EU's foreign policy to Georgia.

The hypothesis is backed up with the rational choice theory according which actors behave in a rational and self-interest manner, furthermore the existence of institutions is explained by reference to the benefit or value its actors gain from its existence (Martin, 1992).

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Introduction

The European Union is highly dependent on the imported energy resources. The EU's main gas supplier is Russia which underlines the need to enhance the diversification of routes, suppliers and energy sources in EU.

The security of supply is one of the top priorities for the EU common energy policy. In particular, reducing the gas import dependency from Russia due to the gas crisis of 2006 (that happened because of a shortage of gas production in Russia and an increase in its domestic demand which left it unable to meet the exports obligations) and in December 2008 (due to its gas pricing dispute with Ukraine) leaving thousands of EU households without heat in severe winter weather conditions (European Commission, 2008.) According to the European Commission's Energy security action plan, diversification of energy suppliers and the routes is crucial for EU energy security and the EU's Eastern Partners play a key role in the transit of gas to the EU since, with the exception of Armenia, they host the largest part of a vast pipeline network. (European Commission, 2008)

Even though Georgia is not an important energy producer, it is a significant transit country in terms of its geostrategic position between Western Europe and Central Asia. The strategic location of Georgia gives Europe an opportunity to transit Caspian energy to Europe through Georgia, without crossing Russia.

The thesis aims to research the link between Georgia's energy transit potential and EU' foreign policy to Georgia. The research question is formulated as follows: *Why and in what degree Georgia's strategic location and transit potential determines the foreign policies the European Union towards the county.*

In order to achieve the research aim the following **objectives** should be fulfilled:

- To explore the European Union energy security challenges
- Results of the dependency on the Russian energy

- Explore the ways for increased energy security of the EU
- To emphasize the role of the Caspian Energy for the EU energy security
- Analyze Georgia's energy transit potential
- Research EU foreign policy and direct interests in Georgia

The relevance of the Issue – Energy security issues and the high dependence on the external market, especially on Russia is still a key and unsolved challenge for the European Union. Having overviewed the latest reports and document of the energy prices, strategies and action plans of the European Union it is obvious that EU pays a crucial attention to the energy diversification issue.

In the EU energy security action plan 2015 we read ““Establish and further develop energy cooperation and dialogues – Work should continue to enhance existing and to establish new energy cooperation and dialogues with increasingly important producing states or regions, transit states or regions, countries of the neighborhood as well as key global and regional strategic partners and interlocutors. Conditions permitting, the EU could also consider reframing the energy relationship with Russia. ” (EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan 2015, 5).

Having the direct hint that Georgia as one of the energy transit state is an important partner, and further cooperation is needed, I believe that my research is relevant, as it explores the link and the reasons why Georgia's transit potential determines the EU foreign policy towards the country.

The thesis elaborates ***Hypothesis*** - Georgia's potential to transit Caspian Energy to Europe is an important source of energy diversification and reduction of Russian leverage for the EU, which plays an essential role in determining EU's foreign policy to Georgia.

According to the hypothesis, Georgia transit potential is *an independent variable*, while the foreign policy of the European Union is a *dependent variable*.

While operationalizing variables the thesis will review the EU energy security challenges, Georgia's transit potential and the foreign policy of the European Union to Georgia. The research will also draw a significant attention to the energy security concept and Russia's factor that threatens European energy security and Georgia's transit potential as well.

Theoretical Explanation - Building on Rational Choice theory, whereby actors behave in a rational and in self-interest manner, the Institutional Rational Choice approach emphasizes the role of strategic interaction in the determination of political outcomes (Kenneth, 1993). It assumes that actors create institutions in order to realize benefits which are often conceptualized in terms of gains from strategic cooperation (Martin, 1992). In addition, the existence of institutions is explained by reference to the benefit or value its actors gain from its existence (Martin, 1992)

Methodology

The Research uses the case study method design combining qualitative content analysis and the secondary quantitative analysis.

The case study method provides the tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts. This qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. (The Qualitative Report, 2008).

According to Robert Yin “a case study design should be considered when: a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. (The Qualitative Report 2008, 545).

Robert Stake Yin defines the several types of the case study, however I will stop my attention on two of them to use in my research:

- 1) Explanatory Case Study - used if you were seeking to answer a question that sought to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. In evaluation language, the explanations would link program implementation with program effects (The Qualitative Report 2008, 545).
- 2) Descriptive Case Study - This type of case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (The Qualitative Report 2008, 546).

In order to fulfill the above mentioned research methodology at the initial stage of the research, the relevant literature were gathered including:

- Secondary Statistical data
- Action Plans and Strategic Documents
- Academic Journals, articles, books relevant to the research issue.

In order to collect the afore mentioned documents, I used online libraries, scientific databases, official webpages for instance, British Petroleum, SOCAR, European Commission, as well as the official think thank research papers of the European Commission.

Theoretical Explanation

The Decision of the European Union to diversify energy market in order to decrease Russia's leverage and deepen relations with Georgia as the energy transit country can be explained with the Rational Choice Theory.

Rational choice theories have made rapid inroads into the study of EU politics, most notably through the application of rational choice institutionalist to study EU decision-making.

“Rational Choice theory methodological approach that explains both individual and collective outcomes in terms of individual goal-seeking under constraints “(Snidal 2002, 74).

This formulation in turn contains three essential elements:

- 1) Methodological Individualism
- 2) Goal –seeking or utility maximization
- 3) Existence of various institutional or strategic constraints on individual choice. (Snidal, 2002)

The first of these elements, methodological individualism, means simply that rational choice analyses treat individuals as the basic units of social analysis. Rational choice approaches seek to explain both individual and collective behavior as the aggregation of individual choices. Individuals in this view act according to preferences that are assumed to be fixed, transitive and exogenously given.

Second, individuals are assumed to act so as to maximize their expected utility, subject to constraints. That is to say, individuals with fixed preferences over possible states of the world calculate the expected utility of alternative courses of action and choose the action that is likely to maximize their utility.

Rational choice model assumes that states act according to individual preferences, the institutional and strategic situations in which individuals interact and the quality of the information available to actors seeking to maximize their individual utility. Many rational choice theories – including an increasing number in EU studies are formulated as formal models, which express theoretical models in mathematical terms. (Neal, 1998)

The essence of rational choice theory resides in its:

- 1) Instrumentalism
- 2) Individualism
- 3) Subjectivism.

These three aspects, when combined, result in the fundamental aim of rational choice theory, which is to understand sociopolitical relations and institutions as the instruments created and used by mutually disinterested and rationally self-interested agents in the

attempt to maximize the degree to which they can successfully pursue their particular ends and satisfy their particular preferences, whatever those might be.

- 1) Instrumentalism refers to the methodological decision to view sociopolitical relations and institutions as dependent variables, their nature and existence to be explained and understood with reference to actions undertaken by antecedently defined individual selves. Such a view is to be distinguished from any approach to understanding sociopolitical reality which takes either relations or institutions to be independent variables, the actions and identities of individual selves thence being seen as parts with reference to these wholes. Instrumentalism, then, must deny that human beings are in any inherent or intrinsic sense social beings, for to accept such a thesis would be to presuppose what instrumentalism purports to explain - the social relations between individual selves. Instrumentalism seeks to understand relations in terms of selves, not selves in terms of relations
- 2) Individualism because antecedently defined selves are the foundation, the independent variables, in explanation on the instrumentalist approach to relations and institutions, "individualism" is a second aspect of rational choice theory. Further, these separate selves are "antecedently defined" insofar as they are understood to be rationally self-interested maximizers of utility. Hence "individualism" refers to both a specification of individual action as the fundamental term in social explanations and to a motivational theory about individuals sufficient to generate such explanations.
- 3) Subjectivism means that rational choice theory treats the problem of value in a way consistent with the tenets of instrumentalism and individualism, that is, the good for an individual is constituted by the content of his or her preferences, the object of his or her desires. Value is subjective in a double sense; it is defined relative to the individual subject and there is no objective order or standard to serve as a basis for assessing the intrinsic moral worth of alternative definitions. On this subjective account of the good, there can be a "common good," insofar as each separate self

happens, as a contingent matter of fact, to hold a preference in common. The common good would then be an aggregate of similar individual goods. What there cannot be, on the subjective account of the good, is a common good understood as an end which it is morally incumbent upon all men and women to pursue, regardless of their particular preferences or desires. Were this so, the good would not be defined relative to particular subjects. (Neal, 1998)

Energy Security Concept

There is a bias in the literature to deal with the energy security of importers and not that of exporters. Starting with the importers' perspective, energy security refers to that situation whereby states face no energy shortages and meet their energy needs at no excessive cost and without further deteriorating the state of the environment. It is the state whereby states ensure adequate energy supplies from reliable suppliers and at reasonable prices. It can be defined as:

- The guarantee of a stable and reliable supply of energy at reasonable prices
- Securing adequate energy supplies at reasonable and stable prices in order to sustain economic performance and growth
- Being driven by the need to secure energy supplies and deliver clean, affordable energy to combat climate change
- A condition in which a nation and all or most, of its citizens and businesses have access to sufficient energy resources at reasonable prices for the foreseeable future free from serious risk of major disruption of services
- The reliable, stable and sustainable supply of energy at affordable prices and at an acceptable social cost
- The concept of maintaining stable supply of energy at a reasonable price in order to avoid the macroeconomic dislocation associated with unexpected disruptions in supply or increase in price (Proedrou 2012, 4)

In short, for importers energy security means security of supply, pursuit of diversified sources of supply, suppliers and routes of supply to minimize risks and vulnerabilities stemming from any kind of dependence, at competitive prices and without harming the environment.

For exporters, on the other hand, energy security equates with security of demand at competitive prices that will guarantee significant profits for the exporter. Parallel interests

for exporters include aversion of recession in importing states that will reduce energy demand, as well as aversion of switch to alternative sources and of diversification of suppliers.

If energy security is about the risk and uncertainty of supply disruptions for importer countries, then exporters have similar interests. Exporter countries are often heavily dependent on revenues from energy resources sale for their state budgets and for their broader economies. Lower revenues than projected can have important social and political impacts. (Esakova 2012, 40)

To combine energy security perspectives from both, importer and exporter countries, the most proper definition would be to see energy security as a 'sound balance between energy supply and demand serving the purpose of facilitating sustainable economic and social development for both importers and exporters. "This broader definition enables us to see the energy field as a system where both exporters and importers are active and satisfy their needs and, most importantly, their interests are not seen under a conflictive, as is usually the case, but under a cooperative prism" (Proedrou 2012, 5).

European Union Energy Security Challenges – Dependency on Foreign Energy Markets

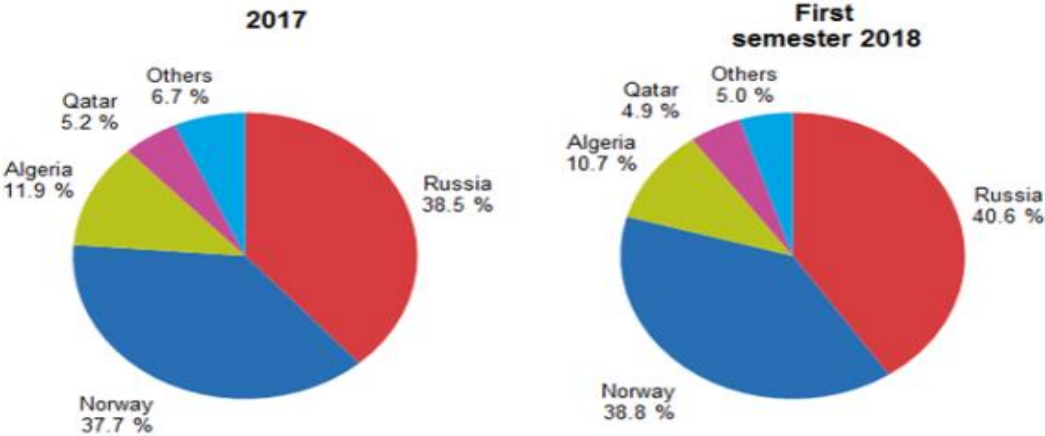
Security of energy supply is a cornerstone of European energy policy. It receives specific mention both in the Constitution Treaty and in the Lisbon Treaty (Selivestrov, 2009) Proximity with the Middle East, North Africa, Russia and the North Sea facilitates energy trade between these regions and the EU. The EU's well developed and lucrative market remains attractive for exporters, not least since EU Members pay high prices and in hard currency, while most of the exporters depend for their survival and prosperity on energy born revenues. On the other hand, however, the particularities of the global energy market,

such as transportation safety hazards, hiked prices that may hold growth down, resource nationalism and unreliable suppliers, as well as the monopolistic role of OPEC, are all relevant risks for the EU. For these reasons, although the EU is able to secure adequate supplies, the danger of supply shortages at any time in the future can and should not be downplayed. In addition, it is questionable for how long the EU should remain dependent on fossil fuels in the face of mounting environmental degradation and progressively depleting resources. Taking into account the main tenets of the current energy landscape, as well as the outlook for the future and the trends in the global energy market, we can trace the main threats for EU energy security. In particular, the main challenges are: (Proderou, 2011)

- High Import Dependency - The main liability of the EU is its high import dependency both on oil and gas. The Chart 1 and the Chart EU’s dependency on Natural Gas and Oil supplies from external markets.

Chart 1

Extra-EU imports of natural gas from main trading partners, 2017 and first semester 2018
(share (%) of trade in value)

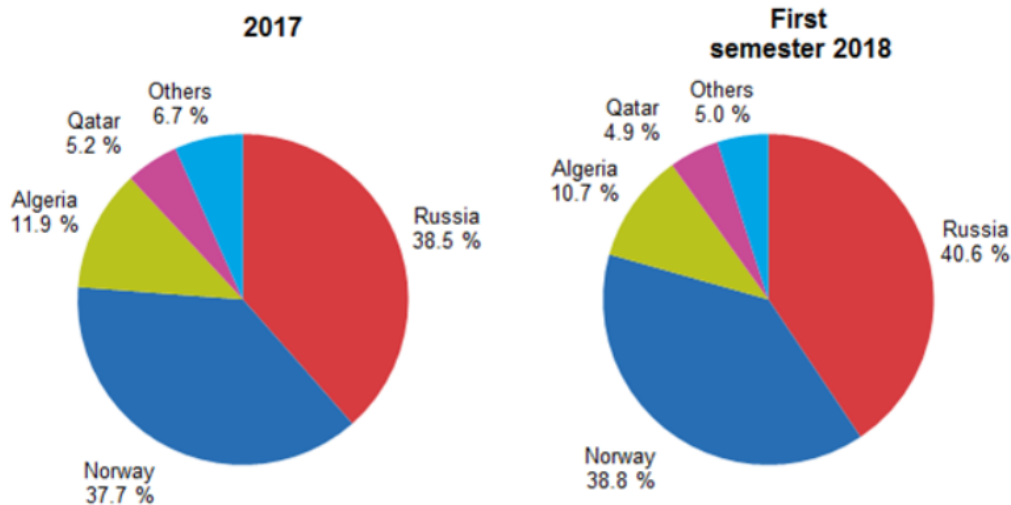


Source: Eurostat database (Comext) and Eurostat estimates



Cart 2

Extra-EU imports of natural gas from main trading partners, 2017 and first semester 2018
(share (%) of trade in value)



Source: Eurostat database (Comext) and Eurostat estimates

eurostat 

The fact that the majority of oil producing countries retains monarchical/Authoritarian regimes with poor governance structures adds to importers' vulnerability. This problem is not limited to the oil sector; most gas-rich states are also unstable and potentially problematic, begging the question whether the EU's energy security strategy has been prudently designed. The recent trend of resource nationalism means that energy is increasingly used as a foreign policy tool as well, a rather disquieting development for the EU. (Proedrou, 2012)

Another EU energy security challenge is - Increased Competition by the Developing World

The global energy market would be able to operate more efficiently and absorb the shocks emanating from individual producing states in case global energy demand and consumption were constrained. Indeed, for decades the West's energy security was not significantly jeopardized, the two energy crises of the 1970s notwithstanding, exactly because producers eventually needed to sell their energy products in order to raise revenues. As a rule energy

supply surpassed energy demand and the West assured for itself adequate energy inflows (Falola and Genova 2005).

The recent impressive boost of energy demand from the developing world, primarily China and India, has significantly squeezed the energy security margin of the West and subsequently of the EU. Supply only marginally surpasses demand and thus any bottleneck in production, transportation or refining can significantly hamper the smooth operation of the energy market. In addition, now oil producing states have more outlets for their energy and can choose markets not only by commercial but also geopolitical criteria.(Proedrou, 2012)

The imbalances brought to the ratio of global supply to global demand are one of the central reasons why oil and gas prices have increased manifold the last decade. Many analysts consider that the EU has to learn to live by high energy prices. This is a critical aspect of the EU's attempt to launch a new development and growth round for its economy, especially after the global economic recession of 2007–2008, as well as amidst the public sector deficits of a handful of its Members and the growing rates of euro-scepticism within the EU. High energy prices mean that oil and gas imports will act as a burden on the EU economy, estimated to absorb 2 per cent of its GDP (IEA 2009). Even worse, one cannot exclude the possibility that energy prices may further increase in the future (Euractiv 2010), due to rising energy demand from the developing world and potential crises in energy producing regions. Even the consideration that the swing oil producer, Saudi Arabia, might import the domino of revolutions in the Arab world and face internal struggles that will put its production capacity under strain is enough to make prices skyrocket. (Proedrou, 2011).

Environmental Challenges

The European Commission sees itself as the pioneer of sustainable development and a green economy for the twenty-first century. It is the leading international actor in regulating the promotion of cleaner forms of energy and supporting the passage to less energy-intensive

modes of production. To this direction even in case the EU significantly diversifies its energy mix, however, the impact will not be decisive unless other great polluters such as the US and China agree to substantially contribute to the implementation of a global green agenda and reduce their overall emissions. (EU monitoring report on progress towards, 2017)

Dependence on Russian Energy – Giving a political leverage to Russia

Russia is an energy superpower. The country has the second-largest proved reserves of natural gas in the world and is also the second-largest producer of natural gas. According to the 2017 BP Statistical Review of World Energy, it has the sixth-largest proved reserves of crude oil, and is its third-largest producer. It hardly uses all of this energy wealth at home; Russia is the world's largest exporter of natural gas and second-largest exporter of crude oil and refined products. (European Parliament, 2018).

However “Russia uses its energy wealth for three reasons: to gain economic benefits; to maintain, increase and exert its political influence in its perceived sphere of influence, the so-called near abroad; and, should the need arise, to exert political pressure on end-consumers.” (European Parliament 2018, 13).

Historical Context

The roots for Russia's use of energy as a foreign policy trace back to the Soviet period. The Kremlin consciously began an effort to make Russian energy indispensable throughout both Eastern and Western Europe. By the 1970s, Soviet energy influence was a major headache for the West. This energy influence declined temporarily in the late 1980s and 1990s, due to low oil prices, the dislocations of the collapse of the USSR, and the privatization of many oil

companies. However, Russia's resources and extensive network of pipelines ensured that its 'petro-power' was ready to reemerge under President Putin. (Huotari, 2011)

During the 1950s and 60s the Soviet Union deepened its efforts to link itself to its Warsaw Pact allies economically. Under the Council for Mutual Economic cooperation of all sorts was designed to complement the Soviet Bloc's military and ideological ties. While the CMEA had begun under Stalin, in 1949, in those years the Bloc members felt economically exploited. Khrushchev, in contrast, hoped to build a 'socialist division of labor,' in which the USSR and its allies would all profit. At the same time, this web of mutual dependence would make it very difficult for any state to leave the group. A key part of this emerging 'socialist division of labor' was the USSR's role as the dominant supplier of raw materials and energy to the rest of the Bloc. A pattern began then which continues today: Russia deliberately gave its allies oil and gas at highly subsidized prices but only if they remained politically compliant. (Huotari, 2011)

Loyal states which experienced political problems, such as Poland during the Solidarity period of 1980–1981, were helped with even more generous subsidies. Meanwhile, critics of the Kremlin such as Romania were forced to rely on the much pricier world market for fuel. The reliance of Eastern Europe and the rest of the USSR on Russian oil and gas was only increased by these subsidies. Huge energy-hungry industries were built up, many of which relied totally on subsidized fuel. Average consumers, too, were accustomed to profligate energy use. For example, many apartments throughout the Soviet Bloc were built with no individual thermostats and no gas meters, encouraging waste. As we shall see, this legacy of dependence remains a powerful source of leverage for the Kremlin today (Huotari, 2011)

Soon another important part of today's Russian energy influence was formed: the idea that the new East European pipelines would also allow large amounts of Soviet oil and gas to be exported to the capitalist west. This would earn Russia valuable hard currency, and would also serve as an important political tool, perhaps allowing Moscow to pry Western Europe

away from American influence. Even in the early 1960s, U.S. leaders feared that the “Druzhba” oil pipeline, then under construction from Russia to East Germany, would allow the Soviets to gain influence in the West. Accordingly, the U.S. pressed West Germany and other suppliers to halt shipments of large diameter pipe and other equipment to Russia. (Huotari, 2011)

The issue simmered for decades, with another major confrontation erupting under President Reagan, who pressed NATO to boycott the new natural gas pipelines which Russia was building to Western Europe. Nonetheless, the new links were completed, and have only deepened over the years. (Huotari, 2011)

The stage was set, then, for Russia to be able to use its energy power in two effective ways: first, by subsidizing its allies, and second, by selling to its enemies at full world market price, reaping rich profits. Either way, the Kremlin gained power. In retrospect, high oil prices appear to have been a major factor in the 1970s and early 1980s in bolstering Moscow’s belief that it was winning the Cold War. (Newnham, 2012)

As part of an effort to build a unified economy and promote unity across the USSR, the Kremlin developed an integrated gas and oil transportation network with the Russian Soviet republic at its middle. Pipelines were built from gas and oil fields in Soviet states like Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to Russia, from where gas and oil was re-distributed or sold to Europe, the Soviet Union’s main energy export market. In return, these Soviet states were provided with subsidized gas (Newnham, 2012).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gazprom lost access to the gas and oil fields and the transportation networks in energy-rich former Soviet states. But with alternative supplies absent, former Soviet states that had now grown accustomed to low energy prices - became vulnerable to Russian price increases or supply disruptions. Belarus, for instance, is fully

dependent on Russia for its natural gas with nearly 70 per cent of Belarus' total energy mix. (European Parliament 2018, 14).

Recent Developments

Russia's ability to use its resource abundance as an instrument of foreign policy has been President Vladimir Putin's successful strategy of using energy as a foreign policy leverage. In the early 2000s, Putin set out to reverse the privatization of Russian energy assets and turn Gazprom and Rosneft into national champions. For instance, between 2004 and 2007 Yukos, a private Russian energy firm that at one point produced 20 per cent of Russia's oil output, was forcibly carved up and its assets purchased at bargain prices by Rosneft. In 2006 Shell was pushed to sell its majority stake in the Sakhalin-II gas project to Gazprom. The concentration of Russian energy resources in a handful of state-owned enterprises has been a crucial factor in enabling Russian energy export policy to become an extension of Russian foreign policy. (European Commission Report, 2017)

Russia uses the following ways and methods to use energy as a tool of coercion:

- Pricing policy of energy supplies
- Asset control
- Supply cuts
- Contractual restrictions
- Alternative supply routes (European Parliament 2018, 14).

The following table by the European Parliament, shows the chronology of Russia's usage of energy as a political tool.(European Commission Report, 2018)

Table

| Date | Country affected | Event | Geopolitical rationale | Economic rationale |
|----------------------|------------------|---|--|---|
| 1993 | Ukraine | 25 per cent cut in gas supply | Pressure to send nuclear weapons back to Russia | Non-payments by Kiev |
| January 2003 | Latvia | Cut-off of oil supply to Ventspils export terminal | Effort to gain control of Ventspils Nafta/ Assert control over oil export routes | Tariffs at export terminal considered too high |
| February 2004 | Belarus | 100 per cent cut in gas supply for 30 hours | Pressure to get ownership of Beltransgaz | Failure to pay for past gas deliveries |
| Late 2005 | Belarus | Significant gas discount to USD 46.68 per tcm | Carrot to get access to Beltransgaz | undisclosed |
| January 2006 | Ukraine | Gas supply disruption | Punishment of pro-Western Viktor Yuschenko for seeking closer ties to EU & NATO | Outstanding debt and pricing dispute, after gas contract expiration |
| July 29, 2006 | Lithuania | Russia's Transneft stops oil supplies through pipeline feeding Mazeikiu refinery. | Punishment after Mazeikiu Nafta refinery is sold to Polish PKN Orlen | Technical problem |
| 2006 | Moldova | Gas price increase | Political signalling in wake of Ukraine crisis | Failure to pay debts |
| 2006 | Armenia | Gas price increase | Purchase of Armenia-Iran gas pipeline & foreclose alternative suppliers | Adaptation to market-based pricing |

Table 2

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|--|--|
| March 2008 | Ukraine | Gas supply cut by 25-50% | Return of Yulia Tymoshenko as prime minister in December 2007 | Outstanding debt |
| July 2008 | Czech Republic | Oil supply drop | Punishment for signing agreement on US anti-missile radar system | Technical problem |
| December 2008-January 2009 | Ukraine | Gas supply cut | Punishment for President Yushchenko's support for Georgia in 2008 war. | Breakdown of talks over past payments and future pricing |
| 2011 | Belarus | Purchase of Beltransgaz | Control over key transit pipelines | Collateral for gas debt |
| July 2013 | Kyrgyzstan | Purchase of Kyrgyzgaz | Consolidate Russia's geopolitical influence in Kyrgyzstan | Cancellation of Kyrgyzgaz' debt |
| August-December 2013 | Armenia | Gas price increase, followed by gas discount | Convince Armenia to join Eurasian Economic Union | undisclosed |

Table 3

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| September/October 2014 | Poland, Slovakia and Germany | Gas supply drop on Yamal-Europe pipeline & Brotherhood pipeline | Increase pressure in run-up to new EU sanctions | Effort to stop re-export of Russian gas to Ukraine through Poland & Slovakia |
| November 2015 | Ukraine | Gas supply cut | conflict in Ukraine | Failure to pay in advance for next shipment of gas. Reversal of previous discounts |
| February 2016 | Venezuela | Rosneft increases stake in Petromonagas to 40% | Extend Russian influence in South America, and support for anti-US regime. | Access to new oil assets |
| Late 2016-early 2017 | Belarus | Gas price increase | Pressure for Belarus' opening up to EU | undisclosed |
| 2017 | Venezuela | Rosneft loans to PDVSA | Increase Russia's foothold in South America | Access to new oil assets |
| Early 2017 | Turkmenistan | Block Turkmen exports to Russia | Isolate potential competitor | Disagreement over pricing |
| 2020 (date of expected completion) | Ukraine | Nord Stream 2 & Turkish Stream pipeline | Punishing neighbour that has fallen out of favour & increase pressure on central and eastern Europe | Avoid transit risk |

(European Commission 2017, 15-16)

The tables shown above is an illustration how Russia uses its energy as a tool and a leverage of the foreign policy.

Russia supplies the European market through three major gas pipeline systems: one runs through Ukraine and Slovakia, the second through Belarus and Poland, and the third runs directly to Russia's largest gas consumer, Germany. Two of the three pipeline systems depend on the cooperation of transit states to function. This interdependency ensures that though Russia can flex its energy muscles from time to time, it cannot afford supply cuts or disruptions to last too long. (European Commission report, 2017)

From Russia's perspective, this dependence on transit states creates a risk for its supply contracts and restricts its freedom of maneuver in its foreign policy. Gaining control over the transport infrastructure was one option, but transit-free pipeline capacity would serve Russia's strategic interests better. Amongst other things, it means that Russia would become less dependent on countries in its 'near abroad' for bringing energy to end consumers in Europe. It creates a new source of leverage: without compromising on the reliability of its supplies, it can divert gas flows away from transit countries with which it has political or economic disagreements. Once these diversionary pipelines are built, all else staying the same, Russia can use its energy leverage over 'difficult' transit states more forcefully. (European Parliament 2018, 25).

European Energy Security Concepts – The ways to Increase Energy Security

Energy disputes between Russia and transit states, which at times have also caused disruptions further downstream in EU countries, have damaged Russia's image as a reliable supplier. In response to the Ukraine gas crisis in the late 2000s, the EU started to take energy security more seriously. The monopolistic position of Gazprom became a key concern. Many

of the EU's efforts have been directed at making the energy market function better by promoting liberalization and enforcing EU energy law, thereby making energy imports less susceptible to foreign policy bargaining. (Pick, 2012)

The thinking behind this is that energy is a commodity that should be traded 'normally' in a liberalized and integrated European market. The EU's role thereby is to set, and enforce, regulations for suppliers and remove obstacles for the adequate functioning of the market. The most powerful instrument in responding to Gazprom's energy coercion is arguably its enforcement of its internal energy market regulations. (European Commission 2018, 31)

In 2015 the Commission charged Gazprom with setting unfair prices, seeking to split the European gas markets through the use of destination clauses, and preventing the diversification of supply by making gas supplies conditional upon specific commitments to gas pipeline infrastructure projects such as South Stream. By 2017, Gazprom appeared ready to settle and concede the European Commission's main points. It would thereby avoid a fine. Gazprom would drop destination clauses and allow quicker price reviews in its longer-term contracts. In October 2017, however, the Commission said it still wants more concessions from Gazprom. The steps it has taken, however, weaken Russia's ability to use energy exports to exert political pressure in Europe. The removal of destination clauses would also make it possible for EU states to re-sell their gas, making predatory pricing by Gazprom more difficult. (European Commission 2018, 31)

According to the European Commission report in order to promote the liberalization of the energy market, the EU supports the diversification of energy sources, particularly for those countries that are dependent on single-source suppliers like Russia. A key element of this is the connection of gas grids across the EU, through the construction of a system of interconnectors and reverse-flow pipelines. This has an important energy security dimension, as ideally this would allow natural gas to be shipped from different parts of the European Union to where it is needed so that supply can meet demand irrespective of where

the gas enters the EU. This would make the EU resilient in the face of supply disruptions. (European Commission 2018, 32)

Furthermore, the European Commission's report claims that the EU's effort to diversify supplies includes the development of energy links to third countries and developing new sources of gas. As part of its Energy Union strategy, the EU has decided to invest more in energy diplomacy (European Commission 2018, 34).

At the same time, it's important to mention that the second point of the EU Energy Diplomacy action plan states as follows: "Establish and further develop energy cooperation and dialogues – Work should continue to enhance existing and to establish new energy cooperation and dialogues with increasingly important producing states or regions, transit states or regions, countries of the neighborhood as well as key global and regional strategic partners and interlocutors. Conditions permitting, the EU could also consider reframing the energy relationship with Russia." (EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan 2015, 5).

As we read in the action plan, it is implied that transit states are strategically important for EU's energy security and that, those countries/ strategic partners are the source to reframe the energy relationship with Russia.

In addition in the action plan we read "Foreign policy should give particular priority to partners and initiatives crucial to EU efforts to strengthen the diversification of EU energy sources, supplies and routes, as identified in the Energy Union Communication, in particular in our neighborhood (e.g. the Southern Gas Corridor, the Euro-Mediterranean energy cooperation, the East Mediterranean region, Energy Community)" ((EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan 2015, 6).

As we understand from the EU energy security action plan, the main source to achieve energy security is strengthening energy diversification, where Southern Gas Corridor plays a crucial role.

EU Energy Diversification

As mentioned above the EU energy policy is based on the principle of diversification. The European Commission defines energy security as the state where basic future energy needs will be satisfied through domestic energy resources and strategic deposits under economically acceptable terms and using diversified, stable, reliable and accessible external supplies. Diversification is crucial since it allows importers to withstand supply shortages caused by any supplier, for any political, economic and/or technical reasons, through the contracting of additional supplies by alternative producers. Diversification then works as a shield of protection against high dependency rates on individual producers, as well as discourages exporters from exercising blackmailing policies to exploit asymmetric interdependence. (Proedrou 2012, 45)

The relevance of Caspian Sea basin in EU Energy Diversification

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, three states were formed in Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Their proved reserves of natural gas are 27.8 tcm (trillion cubic meters), which is 13.3% of the total volume in the world (International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy 2018, 150).

Table 1 presents the Central Asian states proven reserves, production, consumption and net exports in detail according to the British Petroleum Report 2012 (International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy 2018, 150).

Table 4

| Country | Production bcm | Consumption bcm | Net exports bcm | Proven reserves bcm (%) |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Azerbaijan | 14.8 | 8.2 | 6.6 | 1.3 (0.6) |
| Kazakhstan | 19.3 | 9.2 | 10.1 | 1.9 (0.9) |
| Turkmenistan | 59.5 | 25.0 | 24.5 | 24.3 (11.7) |
| Uzbekistan | 57.0 | 49.1 | 7.9 | 1.6 (0.8) |
| Total | 135.8 | 83.3 | 42.5 | 27.8 (13.4) |

Table 1 presents the Central Asian states proven reserves, production, consumption and net exports in detail.

Despite the fact that pipelines transporting Central Asian gas to distant markets should pass through several countries with strategic interests, Central Asian countries are looking for alternative pipeline projects that will diversify their transit routes as well as export markets. There are four major powers striving for potency in Central Asia: Europe and Turkey, led by the USA in the West, Russia in the North, rapidly growing China in the East and Iran seeking to become a regional power in the South. Russia's reaction to the political events in Ukraine in 2014, and in particular its accession to the Crimea, military involvement in the separatist movements in eastern Ukraine and the catastrophe of the Malaysian airline MH17 caused a great comment on the European dependence on the Russian energy sector in general and, in particular, on the natural gas. The price dispute, which led to the cessation of Russia's supply to Ukraine in June 2014 and the possibility of interruptions with gas supplies to Europe, has led to resumption of appeals for the diversification of European gas supplies and the reduction of Russian imports. (International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy, 2018).

The Caspian is of central interest for European energy security, in order to diversify energy market. Although the supply chain from the region has been traditionally kept under Russian Federation control. Today, the Caspian is also at the crossroads between the great and contradictory energy interests of the Russian Federation and Europe. In the last decade, the EU has become increasingly ambitious in planning the oil pipelines of the Caspian Sea, which exclude the territory of the Russian Federation, and the project of the Nabucco pipeline has been for many years at the heart of these strategic efforts. (Esakova, 2015)

While talking about the importance of Caspian Sea energy to Europe, we should firstly mention the Southern Gas Corridor. As mentioned above, diversifying energy is a key aspect of EU energy security agenda. Already in 2008 the EU had announced a strategy to open up new gas import routes from Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East – a project known as the Southern Corridor. (Pascaul and Elkind, 2010)

In order to diversify EU gas supply, and to provide Caspian suppliers with new export routes, several projects have been studied, re-evaluated, scrapped and resurfaced for the Southern Gas Corridor. The European Commission's declared objective remains to eventually supply 10% of European gas demand via an enhanced Southern Gas Corridor, but the current scenario would see the Corridor initially supply about 2% or 3% of Europe's demand. This may seem minor, but the countries receiving the gas – from Bulgaria to Greece – are those that have the biggest energy security concerns due to reliance on Russian gas. (International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy, 2018)

The source diversification provided by the Southern Gas Corridor is not a panacea for European energy security but represents an important step in expanding Europe's energy frontiers towards the Caucasus and potential future partners in Iraq, Turkmenistan or Azerbaijan. The Caspian and the Central Asian countries have a number of options to diversify their transport routes as well as export markets. While there is only the Turkmenistan–China pipeline to reach eastwards, three routes extend from Central Asia to

the West: Via the Caspian Sea, via Iran, and via Russia. Nabucco-West vs. TAP. After years of fierce competition among Europe's energy giants, the developers of a major Azerbaijani natural gas field in the Caspian Sea recently picked the TransAdriatic Pipeline (TAP) project over the Nabucco West project to transport Caspian natural gas to Europe. (International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy, 2018)

Furthermore, Azerbaijan is one of the major oil producing countries in the Caspian Sea region which was quick to open its doors to international investors after independence in 1991. The development of the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli (ACG) group of offshore fields and the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi Ceyhan (BTC) oil export pipeline in 2006 were visible and successful results of this policy, making Azerbaijan one of the very few countries outside OPEC that has increased its conventional oil output since 2000. (Pascaul and Elkind, 2010)

Georgia's potential to transit Caspian Energy

As a part of the ancient Silk Road Georgia historically was on a significant trading route between East and West. Georgia's importance for energy transit became obvious in the beginning of 20th century by oil exports from Azerbaijan to the Black Sea ports and its role as the key energy transit country was revived in Post-Soviet times. (Margvelashvili, 2011)

This Chapter will examine the independent variable – Georgia's Transit Potential.

Baku-Tbilisi Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline carries oil from the Azeri-Chirag-Deepwater Gunashli (ACG) field and condensate from Shah Deniz across Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. It links Sangachal terminal on the shores of the Caspian Sea to Ceyhan marine terminal on the Turkish Mediterranean coast. In addition, crude oil from Turkmenistan continues to be transported via the pipeline. Starting in October 2013, we have also resumed transportation

of some volumes of Tengiz crude oil from Kazakhstan through the BTC pipeline. (British Petroleum, 2017)

Most importantly, BTC route does not include Russian territories while transporting Azerbaijan oil to the Western territories. BTC has significantly altered the balance of power in the region, strengthened the political and economic autonomy of the states such as Azerbaijan and Georgia, reducing Russian influence. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is shown in the map:



(<http://caspiabarrel.org>)

Another pipeline- carrying energy to the west through Georgia is Baku Supsa Western Export pipeline. Likewise the Baku Ceyhan Pipeline, WREP goes through Georgia without crossing Russia.

The map bellow, this map shows the existing and planned oil and gas pipelines from Baku, Azerbaijan, including the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline. The map highlights the important

strategic location of Georgia, as all the pipelines goes though the country. See the map Bellow:



(Socar az)

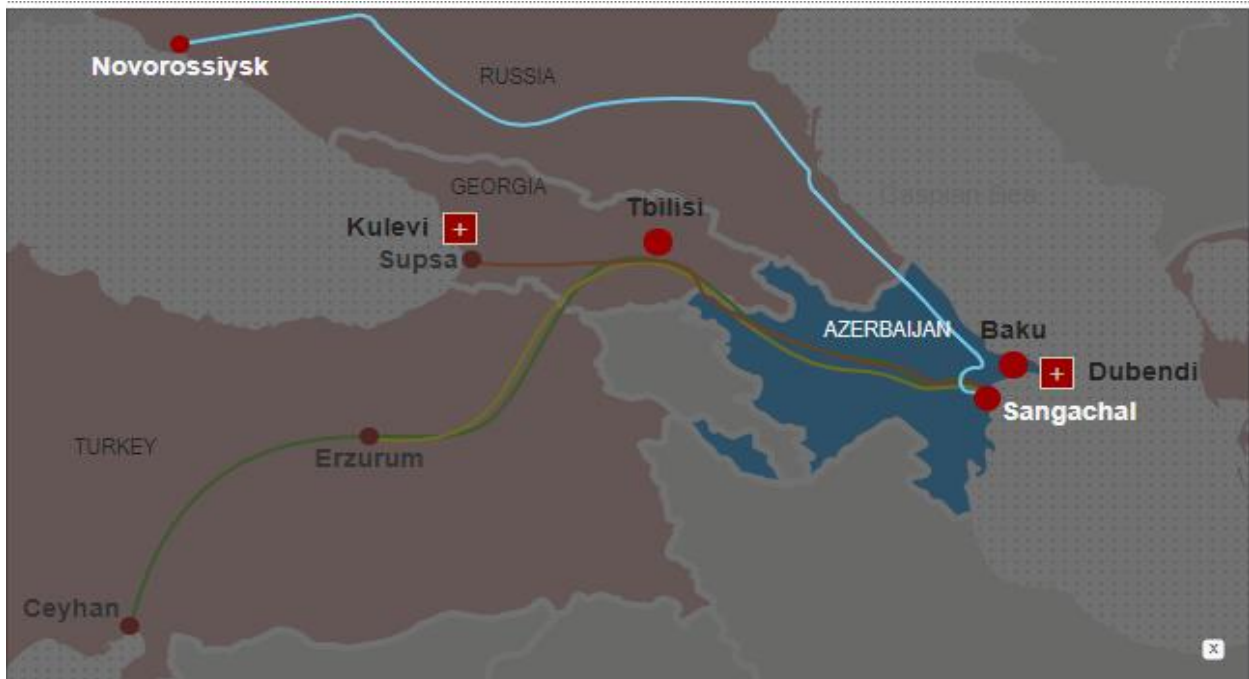
Russia's attempt to present Georgia as a troublesome energy transit route

The European Union's attempt to diversify Energy market competes Russia's interests various ways. If for EU Russia is the biggest energy importer, vice versa, for Russia, EU is the biggest

Energy exporter. Decreasing Russian energy consumption will importantly heat Russia's economy, furthermore, will decrease Russia's leverage over Europe.

On the other side, maintaining influence over the south Caucasus is Russia's prior nostalgia of the Soviet Union. Developing Georgia as a state which transit energy to Europe, and helps Europe to decrease Russian Energy is too much resistance for Russia, therefore Moscow does it's best to hinder the abovementioned plans in many ways.

Firstly, in order to weaken the role of the BTC pipeline, Moscow tries to Russia tries to enhance the role of the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline from Baku to Novorossiysk via Grozny and Tikhorest, which opened in 1997 (Karagiannis, 2002). As you see the map bellow Novorossiysk pipeline doesn't cross Georgia at all, that proves Russia's attempt to block Georgia as an energy transit state. See the map bellow:



(Socar)

Furthermore escalating territorial conflicts between Russia and Georgia is Moscow's obvious attempt to destabilize and weaken Georgia make it non-profitable partner for the west (Karagiannis, 2002).

Moscow attempts to create destabilization in Georgia in order to undermine Georgia's status as a transit state was not excluded. These sorts of attempts were stopped several times by the government of Georgia and its strategic partners: the European Union and the United States of America. Generally the energy transit projects are long-term projects that require huge investment. Therefore the transit country has to be secure and stable, so that the energy producing and receiving countries do not feel that their resources are under threat. The political elite of transit countries as well as the political elite of energy exporter and importer countries should have confidence in each other, regardless of their political and ideological convictions. This is especially important at the first stage of negotiations on international transit projects.

"While implementing the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzrum projects all participating sides – the producing country (Azerbaijan), the transit countries (Georgia and Turkey) and the receiving countries (the European Union and the United States of America) were acting in coordination with each other. In that period resistance from the Russian side could not stop the project because mutual consent and trust existed between the political elites of the participating countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey).

It is also worth mentioning that Russia was economically very weak and the territorial integrity of Russia was also under threat, which also bettered the prospects of these projects' execution. Consequently Russia could not undermine western economic expansion in the Caucasus and Caspian region as a whole "(Transparency International Georgia 2008, 6).

During the Russian military operations against Georgia in August 2008 neither were any of the international pipelines (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan¹⁸, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzrum¹⁹ or Baku-Supsa)

nor any part of the internal energy infrastructure (except for Energo –Pro’s network in the areas of immediate neighborhood of break-away regions) of Georgia were damaged or hit (though a few aviation shells were dropped in areas surrounding the international pipelines). Supposedly, had the Russian air force been ordered to hit the pipelines, it would have done so without problem in the course of a several-day long bombing campaign. Therefore, we may come to the conclusion, that Russia did not have the intention to damage the pipelines. The fact that shells were dropped in the surrounding areas can be considered a warning message for the countries that produce energy and for those consuming it that:

- Georgia is not a safe country though which to transit resources;
- The safety of the pipelines going through Georgia depends on the good will of Russia;
- It is impossible to protect the pipelines with only satellite supervision; (Transparency International Georgia 2008, 6)

Nabucco Project – EU Russia Rivalry

Nabucco is a strategic gas pipeline project for the European Union, which is expected to contribute to the diversification of sources and routes of natural gas supply and, consequently, to improving energy security in Europe. The project is an element of a broader US-European idea of building an independent from Russia East-West gas export corridor. Such a corridor would enable European access to gas from Caspian Sea region (Azerbaijan and Central Asia) and also from the Middle East (Iran, Iraq and Egypt). The Nabucco gas pipeline is planned to run through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to Austria (to the gas hub in Baumgarten), from where gas will be further distributed to other EU member states. (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2016)

The Nabucco gas pipeline, which was listed among the priority infrastructure projects of the EU's TEN (Trans-European Networks) program as early as 2003, has gained significantly in importance since the Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis in 2006. As part of the common Energy Policy for Europe concept, which was presented in early 2007, it became the most important EU gas pipeline project enabling diversification of supplies. A special European coordinator was appointed to facilitate more rapid implementation of the project. Nabucco also plays a major part in the US policy on Eurasia. Washington has for many years promoted building oil and gas export routes from the Caucasian and Central Asian states, designed to omit Russian and Iranian territories. This is part of its strong commitment to developing the Caspian states and of European energy security. Since the successful launching of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline in 2006, the completion of the Caspian gas export route to the EU has become one of the priority goals of US energy policy in the region. (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2016)

According to Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH (2010) the Nabucco project describes a gas pipeline connecting the Caspian region, Middle East and Egypt via Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary with Austria and further on with the Central and Western European gas markets. The pipeline route with a length of approximately 3,300 km should start at the Georgian/Turkish and/or Iranian/Turkish border respectively and run via Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to lead to Baumgarten in Austria.

The pipeline's transport capacity is supposed to amount 31 bcm per year. The total investment costs are approximately 7.9 billion Euro. From an EU point of view Nabucco should represent an opportunity to diversify gas supply options and to reduce the EU's dependency on Russia. As supply sources for Nabucco, the Caspian region, i.e. especially Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, and the Middle East, i.e. Egypt Iran and Iraq are discussed. However, up to now, there are no supply contracts concluded which might affect the commissioning of the project. (Dieckhöner, 2010)

While getting acquainted with the western literature about the Nabucco gas pipeline project, I noticed that Nabucco pipeline is often compared with the symbol of European energy security and the way of getting independence from Russia's energy dependence.

Except getting decreasing dependence on Russian energy, the most attractive thing in Nabucco project for the EU was that one supplier could not provide enough gas volumes to fill Nabucco. Therefore, several suppliers would be contracted which increases the diversification of supply sources. Based on a geopolitical analysis, at least two countries from the Middle East and Caspian region were included as suppliers for the European gas market which could be rendered possible via Nabucco. To put in a nutshell, the Nabucco project would help to cope with the EU's security of supply challenges because:

1. It could provide significant gas volumes from non-European countries if sufficient volumes are were contracted;
2. It would diversifies supply sources;
3. It would diversifies supply routes transiting mainly European Member States. (Strachota, 2013)

Even though the Nabucco pipeline seemed so attractive, implementing the project is postponed. One of the key factors which complicate the implementation of Nabucco is the fact that its existence per se is contrary to the interests of Russia, which is the largest exporter of gas to Europe.

As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, while exploring the energy security concept, it is mentioned that energy security has two variations, from importer side and for exporter as well.

The nabucco project would seriously heat Russian economy, policy, foreign policy leverage, position of the European market and would also limit access for its competitors and to

maintain its control over gas exports from the Caspian region. Meanwhile, Nabucco is intended to supply independently from Russia gas non-Russian sources.

These supplies would be aimed at Russia's traditional markets in Southern and Central Europe, Hence the Russian attempts to impede the completion of Nabucco in its originally designed form. The signs of increasing feasibility of the project implementation especially the Western successes in Azerbaijan and the intensified activity of EU and US diplomacy in Central Asia, which have appeared over the past year or so, give impetus to such Russian attempts (Strachota, 2013).

The activation of Russian policy has become noticeable not only in the European countries, where the planned outlet markets and/or transit territories of the new gas pipeline are located, but also in the Caspian region, which is expected to be the main source of gas for Nabucco. Russia has been trying to play on the problems linked to the project implementation and to turn them to its profit. (Strachota, 2013).

In order to hinder implementation of the Nabucco Russia became active related to South Stream. Moscow's actions perfectly illustrate the methods which Russia has been using in an attempt to defend its interests and torpedo any initiatives which do not comply with them.

South Stream gas pipeline is planned to stretch from Russia across the Black Sea bed to Bulgaria, where it would split into two, with the southern pipe going to Greece and Italy, and the northern one going to Hungary and other Central European countries. This means that South Stream would supply the same markets as the pipes of the emerging East-West export corridor and is a counter-proposal to the concept of the export of Caspian gas to Europe independently of Russia. (Baran, 2008)

Consequently, even though the project has been initiated by the world's largest gas producer Russia, which guarantees a resource base, it is difficult at the moment to clearly determine the economic profitability or likelihood of its construction (Baran, 2008).

As a result of the intensive actions taken by the Russian Federation, over recent months, South Stream has received political support from a number of Balkan and Central European countries, including those also engaged in Nabucco; agreements have been signed with Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary to set conditions for carrying out of South Stream in their territories and a similar agreement is expected to be signed with Greece Russian-Austrian co-operation has been enhanced. Although such agreements do not settle the future of the project, they give the impression of increasing progress and, in line with other Russian actions, seem to pose a threat to the implementation of the Nabucco project (Strachota, 2013).

What would the implementation of Nabucco pipeline mean for Georgia?

As mentioned above, Nabucco Project, which was the Great hope of diversification and getting independence from Russia, for the EU would cross Georgia. More precisely, Georgia would be the one of the most important transit state in this project. It is interesting to discuss what would the project mean for Georgia?

Firstly, it was estimated that Georgia would get a billion cubic meters of gas a year from a new gas pipeline on account of transit, Furthermore, as discussed by Georgian experts , accomplishment Europe would be highly dependent on Georgia's security that's is why be really interested in the security of Georgia as a vitally important transport corridor. That is why, experts believed that the USA, NATO and EU would provide Georgia with serious

support in security strengthening and will contribute into the intensification of Euro-Atlantic integration of the country. (European Dialogue, 2011)

However it should be mentioned that on the day on 13th of July while signing the project agreement Dmitry Medvedev unexpectedly visited Tskinali, that was an obvious sign of demonstrating and threatening that Georgia would finally lose those territories (European Dialogue, 2011)

Nevertheless, Russia's actions the fact is that, Nabucco project – symbol of EU energy independence and freedom, would make Georgia as an energy transit hub, crucially important country for the European Union and the USA as well.

EU Foreign Policy towards Georgia

In this chapter the dependent variable – EU's foreign policy to Georgia will be explored.

Nevertheless, Russia's attempt to portray Georgia as unstable partner Relations between EU and Georgia are deepening. Below I will try to shortly overview EU Foreign policy towards Georgia.

EU Policy towards Georgia deepened after the Rose Revolution. After the president of Georgia became Mikheil Saakashvili, the Council of the European Union officially proposed to incorporate Georgia in the ENP policy. Despite that fact that this proposal did not mean the prospective EU membership, the government of Georgia took a clear EU path and

appointed a special minister for European integration. The ENP in Georgia included substantial funding, assistance and other rewards, including visa liberalization and access to the EU's single market, and at the same time, setting conditions to be met in return for these advantages (Steenland ,2016).

Since the launch of the ENP in 2004, Georgia is one of the two countries in the region where the EU assistance per capita has been increased (Buscaneanu 2013, 13). The principle of “more for more” has been applied only to Georgia (Buscaneanu 2013, 13). So, despite the fact that Georgia was not the regional leader in terms of democratic liberties, it received the highest amount of assistance per capita from the EU (Buscaneanu, 2013). Overall EU incentive structure under the ENP was consistent in the case of Georgia. Its democratic progress was paralleled by an increase in the offered material benefits (Buscaneanu, 2013).

As for the Eastern Partnership Program which was approved at the meeting of the European Council on 19 March 2009, it facilitates further integration of Georgia into the EU, promotion of common values, and strengthens regional security and economic development through bilateral and multilateral formats. Eastern Partnership Program further deepened EU Georgia Relations in several ways:

- 1) Significantly, the negotiations on an Association Agreement (AA) officially started on July 15th 2010 and by launching AA negotiations, the EU indicated that the EaP's incentives are credible and achievable for partner countries.
- 2) Only after the EaP's launch, EU and Georgia began negotiating visa issues and, consequently, the implementation of another EaP key incentive, visa facilitation agreement, has progressed (Rinnert 2011, 11).
- 3) Law convergence processes need to be considered as harmonization with the EU law is a necessary pre-condition for Georgian progress of EaP-related projects such as a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA).

4) Under EaP, 62 civil society organizations have become a part of the Georgian civil-society platform (Rinnert 2011, 12)

Herewith, it is worth noting that the democracy and human rights are the values which are considered as fundamental and universal ones that should be promoted in order to work effectively on poverty reduction, prevention of conflicts and their resolution. For this, the European Union delivers support to Georgia by employing needed approaches at central government, regional and local level as well. With regard to the human rights, the main source of funding comes through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which has financed a large amount of different kinds of projects in Georgia through large and micro-projects aiming at combating torture in places of detention and rehabilitating victims of such mistreatment, protecting rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, enhancing public participation in local and national affairs, securing free and fair elections and freedom of the media in Georgia. The fact that the European Commission strongly intervened in the justice sector over past ten years will be quite evident if we consider more than 15 EUR million that has been provided to sustain a common understanding with Georgian institutions and civil society sectors to promote the creation of a legal framework allowing the application of these crucial principles (European Union, 2007).

Another important program – *Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development Program* – has been the beginning of developing the capacities of civil society actors for more effective interaction with the State. This program aims at improving local authorities' capacity in involving local communities in their affairs and targets actions especially in remote regions where non-state actors need strengthening and the program develops cooperation with local authorities as well, in order to deliver basic services to people in need. Apart from this, the European Union permanently emphasizes the importance of dialogue and deepened cooperation with the non-governmental organizations and therefore, it is in

regular contact with civil society actors – so, the civil society is a partner and a beneficiary at the same time (European Union, 2007). The EU recognizes the valuable contribution that civil society makes to Georgian reforms and development, therefore, supports it in different ways: EU provides financial support to civil society actions through instruments such as ENI, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities' programs and Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). The main framework for the above-mentioned regular consultations with civil society is the Georgian Civil Society National Platform, which was established in 2010 and includes over 70 organizations (European External Action Service, 2016).

In order to support good governance, Georgian Parliament has benefited from a variety of actions, in terms of material support and in the reform of its administrative procedures as well. All aspects of the electoral system have received intensive support from the European Commission supporting to reform the legislative framework by working with the election administration officials, providing training for non-partisan election observers (European Union, 2007). Additionally, the EU funds program and projects which aims at raising awareness about freedom of the media and the central role it can play in the social and political dialogue. A large amount of funds have been devoted to the development of independent media through a number of projects, such as creating of journalism networks, training for the Georgian Public Broadcaster, etc. These projects aim at increasing public access to high quality, independent information (European Union, 2007).

Lastly, the European Union funded the project *Young lawyers for effective access to Civil, Social and Economic Rights*, which was carried out by the Georgian Young Lawyer's Association. This project provides legal aid through centers in the cities of Georgia by which the Association assists citizens in the field of Administrative and Civil Law, in preparation of administrative and the other kinds of complaints, etc. (European Union, 2007).

Annually, the EU provides over 100 EUR million in assistance to Georgia. This funding comes mostly from the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) which supports Georgia in achieving the goals set out in the Association Agreement, signed in 2014. Key priority sectors are public administration reform, agriculture and rural development and justice sector reform. In addition to this, Georgia benefits from EU Regional and Multi-country Action Programs under the ENI, which provide contributions for infrastructure development, interconnectivity with neighbors in areas such as energy, transport and environment, support to civil society, access to EU programs, etc. EU also seeks to improve studying and mobility opportunity for Georgian students (European External Action Service, 2016).

The political relations between the EU and Georgia especially deepened in June 2014, when the EU and Georgia signed an Association Agreement (AA), which entered into force on July 1 2016. Along with the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) Agreement, the EU builds on a foundation for far-reaching Georgian political and economic integration with the European Union. The AA is the outcome of the EU's European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which is the important part of the EU foreign policy (European External Action Service, 2016). It should be emphasized once more that the AA and DCFTA aims at strengthened political association and economic integration between the EU and Georgia for which significant reforms are needed to pursue and therefore, to bring Georgia closer to the EU by aligning its legislation and standards to the EU legislation (European Union External Action, 2016).

With the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and visa-free regime, Georgia reached the new level of integration with the European Union at which the EU will not tolerate any significant deviation from democratic norms. The countries which are more deeply integrated with the EU than Georgia, they are relatively more democratic as well. So, it should be considered that democratization and Europeanization processes are deeply connected to each other: "Without further democratization there will be no further

integration with the EU” (Lebanidze 2017, 5). Moreover, Georgia accomplished visa-free regime offered by the EU to neighboring countries as the prospect of “further integration and liberalization to promote free movement of persons, of course, in exchange of making certain efforts by Georgia before having accomplished it (Buscaneanu 2013, 17).

In addition, the dialogue and cooperation between Georgia and the EU aims at strengthening stability, independence and effectiveness of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, particularly by

- 1) Ensuring that constitutional amendments, if contemplated, are subject to comprehensive consultation domestically and with the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission;
- 2) Improving the balance between flexibility and stability of the consultation and strengthening the budgetary powers of the Parliament in line with the Venice Commission opinion;
- 3) ensuring respect for the roles of the Prime Minister and President under the constitution;
- 4) ensuring adequate checks and balances in the political system as Georgia undergoes transition from semi-presidential to parliamentary system;
- 5) Pursuing implementation of the democratization strategy in compliance with the European Charter of Local Self Government (Tsintskiladze ,2016).

EU’s direct interests in Georgia

As we discussed above, the European Union has deepened foreign policy to Georgia, especially after Rose Revolution. I would like to discuss the reasons of EU’s interests in Georgia. For This I will use the book written by Dov Lynch on “Why Georgia Matter” where Paper

specifies all of the reasons why Georgia is an important partner and the issue of interest for the West, however in this part I will specify on the EU's part. (Lynch, 2006)

According to the Lynch, EU has five direct interests in Georgia.

First, The Union has an interests to fulfill the expectations born with the Rose Revolution. It's important for the EU and its member states that good governance is established in Georgia and that its territorial integrity is restored peacefully. For the European Union member states, Rose Revolution was the first steps for Georgia to the democratic governance. (Lynch, 2006)

Second, Georgia is an important neighbor of the enlarged European Union. The EU has a number of objective interests in its stability and prosperity. A weak and failing Georgia could serve as a source of threats or their transit towards Europe, The EU has an interests in Georgia nor to become a challenge in terms of international organized crime, drug trafficking from Central Asia, or the pressure of illegal labor migration, This interest is all the more salient because Georgia is situated on the Eastern coast of the Black sea, a region of rising importance for the EU. A democratic and stable neighbor has a crucial importance for the European Union. (Lynch, 2006).

Third, the Union has a direct interest in the stability of Georgia for the transit of energy production from the Caspian Sea. With the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, Georgia has emerged as an important transit state for Caspian oil to European market. (Lynch, 2006)

Fourth, EU is interested in peaceful settlement of Georgia's territorial conflicts with Russia, as the resumption of hot wars would unravel all the gains Georgia has achieved since the Rose Revolution. (Lynch, 2006)

Finally as Lynch claims, Georgia matters for reasons associated with the new security threats defined after 11 September. It is important that Georgia does not become an unwilling host or conduit for international terrorist groups. (Lynch, 2006)

As we see, all of the reasons why Georgia matters for EU are more or less interconnected. European Union needs a peaceful, stable partner, with a democratic governance that has a strategic location to transit Caspian Energy to Europe and take a crucial part in Diversifying European Energy market.

EU Georgia Energy Relations

According to the ENP Action Plan for Georgia, implementing a coherent energy policy converging gradually with EU energy policy objectives, including security of energy supply, is one of the objectives of EU- Georgia relations. In that context, one of the dimensions of EU-Georgia energy cooperation is established through Energy Community (EnC), an international organization established in 2005 with such objectives as creating an integrated energy market and enhancing security of supply among its members. (Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2009)

The EU-Georgia Association Agreement requires that Georgia harmonize its energy laws with the EU acquis. According to the European Parliamentary Research Service report, Energy is an area of shared interest for the EU and Georgia, and this is accelerating Georgia's connections with the EU. Furthermore, the EU, , is extending its internal rules beyond its

borders, providing new means of integrating eastern energy markets with European ones and increasing supply security. (Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2009).

Furthermore, according to the European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan, the level of cooperation with Georgia in the field of energy has expanded significantly. In general, the goal of this cooperation is to bring Georgia's energy policy in conformity with the European Sustainable, Competitive and Safe Energy Strategy (Gegeshidze, 2012)

This goal is fully shared by Georgia and the European Union and is reflected in the Action Plan for such groups as issues of energy policy closer to EU energy policy objectives; Gradual approximation to EU internal energy and gas market principles; Development of energy networks; Improve energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources; Continuation of cooperation in the field of Caspian and Black Sea Regional Energy; Transit of Caspian Sea energy to Europe via Europe. Based on the analysis of the above mentioned groups and the issues involved in them, all three aspects of the agenda can be:

1. Harmonization of legislation and regulatory acts of Georgia and EU energy sector;
2. Development of internal infrastructure (part) of energy in order to improve Georgia's energy security;
3. Efficient use of energy outflow from Georgia to facilitate the strengthening of EU energy security.

However, it should be noted that the above groups are divided into the quality of the data in the form of subjects. It is obvious that many issues, based on complexity, require further decomposition as more specific issues. Thus, the agenda of cooperation in the field of energy needs to be refined in some areas more specifically. This will facilitate the uniform interpretation of the tasks and equal motivation of the obligations undertaken by the parties at the stage of implementation of the Action Plan. (Gegeshidze, 2012)

The following is noteworthy: Although Georgia and the EU have a common goal of energy cooperation, they have different tactical priorities on the way to achieve this goal. In other words, Georgia and the European Union make different accents on the aspects of the above agenda. For example, a favorite aspect of the EU is traditionally harmonizing the legislation and institutional compatibility. For Georgia, the third aspect of cooperation is the most important. Since the purpose of this analytical card is to consider the possibility of using the transit resource of Georgia in order to ensure the third aspect of EU security, we will explain the positions of the parties in this regard and assess the factors that motivate motivation. (Geegeshidze, 2012)

Georgia: Position, Arguments

Position. The existing capacity and potential of the energy flow from the territory of Georgia should be utilized for the transit of Caspian energy carriers in Europe as much as possible. The Caspian Direction must become a serious (key) factor for ensuring European energy security. For this purpose, the capacity of the power line should be expanded and, if necessary, additional infrastructure facilities and increase the volume of gas and gas.

Arguments:

1. In the Caspian Sea (in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea) due to the large reserves of oil and especially natural gas, the growing need for EU countries on traditional sources of energy will be ensured.

This will increase the level of interdependence between Georgia and the EU. As a result, the EU will be motivated to become more actively involved in solving the political problems facing Georgia (improving relations with Russia, conflict resolution); (Geegeshidze, 2012)

2. An additional precondition (supporting factor) recognizing the European Union as Georgia's European country, which, together with the successful implementation of the

Action Plan, will create a serious basis for the development of the prospect of Georgia's integration into the European Union;

3. As a result of increase of natural gas volume through the territory of Georgia, the volume of replacement transit fees of Georgia will also increase, which will contribute to strengthening the country's energy security. (Gegeshidze, 2012)

EU: Position, Arguments

Position. Caspian energy supplies, especially natural gas, are importing energy for European energy security, but not decisive. Determining the importance of this significance is too early and requires additional study. In addition, the transit corridor is politically unstable and has high risk for new investments. Thus, at this stage (unless the political problems are resolved) the technical assistance to develop the corridor should focus on investment projects and not investment projects.

Arguments:

1. The European Union's vision of providing energy security is still in process of development. Such a vision should be based on the agreed energy policy, which, inter alia, determines the importance of the import of Caspian energy resources to Europe through Georgia. The prospect of the construction of the trans-gas pipeline may be of paramount importance, as in this case the South Caucasus energy corridor will be more valuable for Europe.

2. In terms of energy security, it is no less important to reduce energy spending. Furthermore, it is considered that further development of renewable energy sources, will decrease the liquid gas imports. Introduction of solidarity principle, joint exploitation of the new prospective energy sector with the US and Russia, etc. It will significantly enhance the overall energy security of the EU countries. Despite the abovementioned factors, Russia as a major source of oil and especially natural gas suppliers will maintain its significance for a

long time. Since the northern European gas pipeline will be in place, this value will grow even more. (Gegeshidze, 2012)

It should also be taken into consideration that China and India are emerging as "competitive consumers", which will further increase the demand for intergovernmental companies. That's why the correlated and partnership relations with Russia acquire vital importance for Europe. Therefore, in order to avoid Russian irritation, more caution is needed in supporting the development of serious transit infrastructure in the South Caucasus. (Gegeshidze, 2012)

Conclusion

The European Union has been increasing efforts to maintain gas supply security especially vis-à-vis its main gas supplier, Russia. In that context, Eastern Partnership countries, serving either as gas suppliers or transit/corridor countries, have an undeniable role for the EU. (European Parliament think tank, 2016)

Security of gas supply depends on close EU cooperation with its EaP partners and interconnections between them. There have been some welcome developments, such as the Southern Gas Corridor that transports Caspian gas to the EU, which reflects the importance of the EaP partners and also contributes to EU energy security and the ambitious Energy Union project. (European Parliament think tank, 2016)

The aim of the research has to explore the link and the reasons why and in what degree the energy transit potential of Georgia could effect of the European Union foreign Policy towards the Country.

The aim of the research was to explore reasons why Georgia's transit potential determines the EU foreign policy to Georgia. To be more precise, the research question was formed as

follow: *Why and in what degree Georgia's transit potential determines European Foreign Policy towards Georgia?*

The thesis *elaborated hypothesis that Georgia's potential to transit Caspian Energy to Europe is an important source of energy diversification and reduction of Russian leverage for the EU, which plays an essential role in determining EU's foreign policy to Georgia.*

While operationalizing variables thesis reviewed Georgia's transit potential, EU energy security challenges, EU's interests Foreign policy and interests in Georgia.

The paper used single case study method combining qualitative content analysis and the secondary quantitative analysis. As the result of the research hypothesis was explained with the theory of rational choice institutionalism.

The thesis examined a number of academic sources, the European Union energy security strategy and the energy security action plan. All of the sources clearly determined that energy diversification and decreasing Russia's leverage over Europe objective to reach the main aim – that is energy security.

Furthermore, in each document it is clearly written that energy transit countries are important partners and deepening relationship with them is crucial. Georgia has the very strategic location and it's the fact that after the Rose Revolution, since the country chose clear European path, EU Georgia relations have importantly deepened.

The thesis concludes that Russia's constant attempt to use energy as a political tool and a leverage made Europe seek alternative energy suppliers and make energy diversified. Georgia's transit potential plays a crucial role in diversifying Europe's energy supply market, which importantly reflects on EU's foreign policy to Georgia. Nabucco project has been a clear example, how crucial Role Georgia had in EU hopes of Energy security, freedom and diversification.

The fact is that Russia as an energy exporter acts in favor to its interests and does it's best to remain the status of the biggest energy supplier of Europe and show off that Georgia is not a reliable partner.

Nevertheless Russia, attempts, Georgia still stays as an important partner for the European Union and the hypothesis that Georgia's transit potential plays a crucial role in it has been confirmed.

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თეონა ჯაფოშვილი

ენერგეტიკული უსაფრთხოების როლი საგარეო პოლიტიკის

განსაზღვრისას:

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