

VARIETIES OF REGIONALISM:
REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE
POST-SOVIET SPACE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the question of how and why the function of regional organisations varies in different areas of the world. It contributes with insights from the post-Soviet space. A theoretically informed empirical study examines how two former Soviet republics conceptualise the function of two regional organisations: the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM (GUAM). The literature agrees that the two like other organisations in the post-Soviet space do not produce integration or other forms of regional governance. Nevertheless, the member states continue to actively participate in these organisations. The thesis inquires to which end the states continue their membership.

The analytical perspective examines how the member states' conceptualisations of an organisation's function depend on the domestic political regimes. The thesis considers two members of the CIS and GUAM. One, Azerbaijan, has a hybrid regime with an authoritarian shape. The other, Ukraine, has a hybrid regime with stronger affinity towards democracy. It is argued that policy-makers conceptualise the function of a regional organisation according to the patterns of rule in their domestic political regimes. The ruling elite's conceptualisation may diverge from the stated function of the organisation, if the stated function is not compatible with the domestic political regime.

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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration of Russian and Ukrainian letters in this thesis follows the Library of Congress system.¹ The rules for Russian letters, which do not find an equivalent in the English alphabet, are outlined in table 1. Table 2 and 3 contain the respective rules for Ukrainian and Azerbaijani² letters.

Table 1: Transliteration of Russian Letters

Russian Letter	English Transliteration
ж	zh
з	z
й	i
х	kh
ц	ts
ч	ch
ш	sh
щ	shch
ъ	“
ы	y
ь	‘
ё	yo
э	e
ю	yu
я	ya
-ый	yi
-ий	ii
-ии	ii
-ие	ie
-ой	oi

Table 2: Transliteration of Ukrainian Letters

Ukrainian Letter	English Transliteration
г	h
є	ie
ж	zh
з	z
и	y
ї	i
й	i
х	kh
ц	ts
ч	ch
ш	sh
щ	shch
ь	‘
ю	yu
я	ya

¹ See: <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/roman.html>

² The transliteration follows the suggestions of: **Imranli-Lowe, Kamala** (2012), *The First Armenia Republic and its Territorial Conflicts with Azerbaijan*. PhD, Birmingham University.

Table 3: Transliteration of Azerbaijani Letters

Azerbaijani Letter	English Transliteration
c	j
ç	ch
ə	a
ğ	gh
x	kh
ı	y
j	zh
q	g
ö	o
ş	sh
ü	u

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CDC	Community of Democratic Choice
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
CU	Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in the framework of the EurAsEC
EU	European Union
DCFTA	EU Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GUAM	Organisation for Economic Development and Democracy - GUAM
HTI	Holding Together Integration
NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PSA	Production Sharing Agreement
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SES	Single Economic Space
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States of America
VLEC	GUAM Virtual [Law Enforcement] Center (VLEC) on Combating Terrorism, Organized Crime, Drug Trafficking and Other Dangerous Types of Crime

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last 70 years, regional organisations have increasingly come to structure the international landscape. States from all areas of the world are active in one or more regional organisations. The academic literature widely explains state engagement in these organisations in terms of a commitment to strengthening security and welfare in the region through integration or other collective solutions¹

Immediately after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the former Soviet republics also started founding economic and security-oriented regional organisations. They created about ten such organisations in the period of 1991-2012 of which the following five are active in 2013: the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), the Collective Security Treaty Organisations (CSTO), the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM (GUAM)², and the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in the framework of EurAsEC (CU).³ By working together within the framework of regional organisations the former Soviet republics, thus, followed a global trend. The organisations also reflect global trends in their design, which strongly reflects internationally well-established models such

¹ Two strands of literature determine the debate. Integration theories argue that the integration of liberal democracies in regional organisations increases societal welfare and stabilises the region. See one of the fathers of this idea: **Mitrany, David** (1975), *The Functional Theory of Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press. The new regionalism literature sees regional organisations as a response to the challenges of globalisation. A core representative of this school is Björn Hettne. See: **Hettne, Björn and András Inotai** (1994), *The New Regionalism: Implications for Global Development and International Security*. [Helsinki]: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research.

² This organisation has changed its name several times according to the member state composition. From 1996-1998 it was called GUAM – the acronym for Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. In the period 1999-2005 Uzbekistan was a member of the organisation, which became GUUAM. In 2006 it was re-launched as GUAM with the amendment 'Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development'. For the sake of simplicity, however, this thesis uses only the acronym GUAM. In case it is necessary the thesis will explicitly indicate that certain developments took place when Uzbekistan was part of the organisation.

³ The others are, for instance, the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) founded in 2005, the Caucasus Four in 2000, the Single Economic Space (SES) found in 2003 and the Customs Union of 1996. None of these has formally been dissolved. In addition, the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation was initiated in 1996 and merged into EurAsEC in 2006. Further, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) are mostly composed of former Soviet republics. Since they involve states beyond the post-Soviet space, the thesis does not treat them as regional organisations in the post-Soviet space.

as the EU or NATO.⁴ Furthermore, the proclaimed agenda of these organisations, namely to reach different degrees of integration in order to provide regional governance, is in line with what Western actors in particular promote internationally as a function of regionalism.⁵

Despite this adjustment to global trends, none of the organisations in the post-Soviet space has so far performed the above listed aims. Their observable function significantly deviates from the expectations discussed by the literature on old and also new regionalism.⁶ The old regionalism school argues that regional organisations act as a framework for integration. Integration processes lead political actors to subordinate national policies to the supranational jurisdiction exerted by regional organisations.⁷ The new regionalism shifts attention from integration towards collective solutions of a formal or informal nature. These should protect societies against the negative externalities of globalisation. It argues that the pressure of globalisation leads to regional governance in varying forms.⁸ The literature on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space, however, agrees that none of the

⁴ The CSTO resembles the structure of NATO. The CIS, EurAsEC, GUAM and the CU reflect to varying degrees the EU structure.

⁵ **Jeschke, Anja and Tobias Lenz** (2013), *Does Regionalism Diffuse? A New Research Agenda for the Study of Regional Organisations*. Journal of European Public Policy, Vo. 20, No. 04, p 628.

⁶ The literature uses the term *old regionalism* to summarise the theories that were developed with regard to the regional organisations which emerged in the so-called first wave of regionalism after the Second World War. They are strongly EU centred. *New regionalism* describes a strand of literature which discusses regional organisations as a response to globalisation. A third strand of literature is comparative regionalism, which aims at enhancing the old and new regionalism debate through studies of individual regional organisations. For this distinction see inter alia: **Warleigh-Lack and Ben Rosamond** (2011), *Studying Regions Comparatively. Back to the Future?*. In: Warleigh-Lack, Alex, *et al.* (eds.), *New Regionalism and the European Union*. London: Routledge, p 19; **Jeschke and Lenz**, *Does Regionalism Diffuse? A New Research Agenda for the Study of Regional Organisations*, 626.

⁷ This thesis depicts early constructivist, functionalist, neo-functionalist and liberal and realist intergovernmentalism schools as part of the old regionalism school. The given definition roughly reflects that of Ernst B. Haas. It is discussed in detail in chapter 2.2.1. See: **Haas, Ernst B.** (1961), *International Integration: the European and the Universal Process*. International Organisation, Vo. 15, No. 3, p 366.

⁸ The concept of new regionalism has been strongly developed by authors like Björn Hettne. Case studies on regional organisations that emerged after the 1980s, when the influence of globalisation increased, indicate that a number of the organisations do not comply with the above mentioned core argument. See chapter 2.2.2 for a lengthy discussion. **Marchand, Marianne et al.** (1999), *The Political Economy of New Regionalism*. Third World Quarterly, Vo. 20, No. 5, pp. 900-9; **Hettne, Björn et al.** (1999), *Globalism and the New Regionalism*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

organisations have managed to assume regional governance functions.⁹ Overall, the organisations appear to have exercised little stabilising effect over the region. These observations induce most analysts to deem the organisations irrelevant and to widely ignore them.¹⁰ If studies devote attention to the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space they tend mainly to discuss the failure of integration.¹¹

There is, however, an aspect to which the literature pays little attention. The majority of the organisations continue to exist, despite the fact they allegedly do not produce any meaningful impact. Yet, a glance at the intra-organisational processes shows that they are actually far more active than often assumed. Neither the CIS, the CSTO nor GUAM have stopped their activities. They have rather enhanced their profile. Most of the former Soviet republics participate in the CIS, for instance, more consistently and with greater commitment than the public statements on the foreign policy orientation of the countries indicate. This applies in particular to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and to Ukraine.¹² Against this background, the question arises as to why former Soviet republics continue their membership in organisations which do not lead to integration or multilateral governance of the post-Soviet space. Only a few member states, namely Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Georgia, have withdrawn their membership from

⁹ See for example: **Kubicek, Paul** (2009), *The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism?* Review of International Studies, Vo. 35. Chapter 2.3 will discuss in detail the assessment of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space by the literature.

¹⁰ Studies analyse international relations in the post-Soviet space predominantly from a bilateral rather than a multilateral perspective. The predominant analytical perspective focusses on Russia's relations towards the former Soviet republics. Some representative studies are: **Buszynski, Leszek** (2005), *Russia's New Role in Central Asia*. Asian Survey, Vo. 45, No. 4; **Godzimirski, Jakub** (2007), *Russia and the CIS: Spaces, Paradigms and Patterns*. In: Dusseault, David (ed.), *The CIS: Form or Substance?* Helsinki: Aleksanteri Institute; **Kjærnet, Heidi** (2010), *Azerbaijani-Russian Relations and the Economization of Foreign Policy*. In: Overland, Indra, *et al.* (eds.), *Caspian Energy Politics*. London: Routledge.

¹¹ **Kubicek**, *The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism*; **Wilson Rowe, Elena and Stina Torjesen** (eds.) (2008), *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge.

¹² This group of states ranks as rather anti-CIS in the literature. See for example: **Nikitin, Alexander** (2007), *The End of the 'Post-Soviet Space'. The Changing Geopolitical Orientations of the Newly Independent States*. Russian and Eurasia Briefing, Vo. 7, No. 1, p 6; **Willerton, John and Mikhail Beznosov** (2007), *Russia's Pursuit of its Eurasian Security Interests: Weighing the CIS and Alternative Bilateral-Multilateral Arrangements*. In: Malfliet, Katlijn, *et al.* (eds.), *The CIS, the EU and Russia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p 60.

some of the organisations.¹³ Are the organisations, indeed, dysfunctional if the member states continue to actively engage in them? The recent debate on comparative regionalism suggests this conclusion to be too short sighted. Case studies on regional organisations in various areas of the world testify to the fact that the member states alter the function of the interaction in these organisations according to their regional and domestic environment.¹⁴ The debate encourages a shift away from the integration and regional governance paradigms described above in favour of an open investigation of the organisations' actual function.¹⁵ The thesis aims at exploring the actual function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space, in order to add to the knowledge about these organisations. The following sub-section will specify the research interest and its relevance.

1.1. RESEARCH INTEREST AND RELEVANCE

As indicated above the existing literature gives only a limited account of the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The contributions primarily indicate what the organisations do not do and how they ought not to be understood; namely as efficiently triggering integration. Weak evidence is, however, given about what they actually do. Accordingly, little discussion exists on the factors that cause this alternative interpretation of the organisations' function. This thesis is committed to closing this research gap for two core reasons.

Firstly, a better understanding of the role and the potential of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space adds to the knowledge about how the former Soviet republics shape their relations with their formerly Soviet neighbours. A differentiated picture of the organisations helps to adequately assess the existing

¹³ Georgia has withdrawn from the CIS in 2009. Turkmenistan has reduced its membership to an associated status and *de facto* suspended it in the period of 2005-2007. Uzbekistan has left GUUAM in 2005 and has withdrawn from the CSTO in 2012.

¹⁴ See for example: **Aris, Stephen and Andreas Wenger** (eds.), (2013), *Regional Organisations and Security: Conceptions and Practice*. London: Routledge; **Börzel, Tanja** (ed.), (2012), *Roads to Regionalism*. Farnham: Ashgate; **Warleigh-Lack, Alex** (2008), *Studying Regionalisation Comparatively. A Conceptual Framework*. In: Zimmek, Koeseler (ed.), *Elements of Regional Integration*. Baden-Baden.

¹⁵ **Börzel, Tanja** (2011), *Comparative Regionalism. A New Research Agenda*. KFG Working Paper, No. 28, p 27; **Warleigh-Lack, Alex** (2006), *Towards a Conceptual Framework for Regionalisation: Bridging 'New Regionalism' and 'Integration Theory'*. *Review of International Political Economy*, Vo. 13, No. 5, p 762; **Goltermann, Lukas et al.** (2012), *Roads to Regionalism*. In: Börzel, Tanja (ed.), *Roads to Regionalism*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 6-9.

and prospective effects of the organisations. This is relevant with regard to the political connotations that accompany the development of some regional organisations. In recent years the Russian leadership, in particular, has tried to frame the successful development of EurAsEC, the CSTO, the CU but also new developments within the CIS as symbol of Russia's power to re-integrate the former Soviet republics.¹⁶ Some analysts and policymakers are also concerned that the processes of regionalism in the post-Soviet space exclude or compete with some states' ambitions to associate or integration with the EU.¹⁷ An explorative analysis of the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space as envisioned in this thesis may improve the toolkit for evaluating these concerns.

Secondly, additional insights on the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space correspond to the research agenda of comparative regionalism. Authors engaged in this research strand call for a characterisation of the varieties of regional organisations. Especially the organisations in the post-Soviet space are strongly underrepresented in this debate.¹⁸ Some authors call for a more systematic investigation of why states interpret the opportunities and employ the instruments offered by regional organisations differently. In this regard the interplay of domestic political regimes and the member states' interpretation of an organisation triggers specific interest.¹⁹ The summary of the analytical approach below will explain how the thesis intends to pursue the analysis of the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and to explore the factors that shape this function.

¹⁶ **President of Russia** (14 February 2013), *Vladimir Putin Spoke at an Expanded FSB Board Meeting on the Results of its Activities in 2012*. [Online].

¹⁷ This primarily applies to Ukraine and the question its membership in the CU, which would rule out to sign the deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU. But also new agreements in the CIS occasionally provoke these concerns. See: **Sushko, Oleksandr** (2004), *The Dark Side of Integration. Ambitions of Domination in Russia's Backyard*. The Washington Quarterly, Vo. 27, No. 2; **Shumylo-Tapiola, Olga** (2012), *The Eurasian Customs Union: Friend or Foe to the EU?* The Carnegie Papers, p 21.

¹⁸ **Börzel**, Comparative Regionalism. A New Research Agenda, 12.

¹⁹ **Börzel**, Roads to Regionalism, 22. **Legrenzi, Matteo and Cilja Harders** (2008), Introduction: Beyond Regionalism? Regional Cooperation, Regionalism and Regionalization in the Middle East. In: Legrenzi, Matteo and Harders, Cilja (eds.), *Beyond Regionalism? Regional Cooperation, Regionalism and Regionalization in the Middle East*. Farnham: Ashgate, p 2; **Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond**, Studying Regions Comparatively. Back to the Future?, 22.

1.2.ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The research interest of this thesis concerns regional organisations that have been built by and between former Soviet republics. This thesis is, however, able to make an insightful contribution only by exemplary case studies. From the entire case universe of five regional organisations the thesis studies the function of two organisations. For reasons which the sub-section 'empirical design' will outline the CIS and GUAM serve as case studies. The decision how to study the function and the factors that shape the function have been informed by the literature on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and beyond. The following aspects sum up the core arguments that inspired the research focus.

First, most of the literature concerning the post-Soviet space analyses the regional organisations according to their stated aims, structure, adopted agreements and their implementation. The majority of the literature evaluates these features according to the basic assumptions of integration theories and neo-realism.²⁰ However, as mentioned above, studies on regional organisations in different areas of the world indicate that states alter their interpretation and employment of the structures and interaction opportunities in a regional organisation according to their needs.²¹ Only a few contributions on the post-Soviet space, mainly on Central Asia, have picked up this assumption and have explored the rationales of the member states in the organisations.²² Therefore this thesis will analyse what function the regional organisations have in the eyes of two member states. The term 'function' requires some specification. The thesis argues that how the states conceptualise the organisations' function is reflected in the aims which they pursue by participation in

²⁰ Chapter 2.3 will detail this statement. See for example: **Obydenkova, Anastassia** (2011), *Comparative Regionalism: Eurasian Cooperation and European Integration. The Case for Neofunctionalism?* Journal of Eurasian Studies, No. 2; **Kubicek**, The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism; **Flikke, Geir** (2009), *Balancing Acts: Russian–Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO*. NUPI Report.

²¹ Chapter 2.2.2 will dwell on this aspect. Examples of authors that interpret regional organisations in specific areas of the world respectively are: **Nesadurai, Helene** (2003), *Globalisation, Domestic Politics and Regionalism*. London: Routledge; **Herzig, Edmund** (2004), *Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia*. International Affairs, Vo. 80, No. 3.

²² **Torjesen, Stina** (2007), *Understanding Regional Co-operation in Central Asia, 1991–2004*. DPhil in International Relations, University of Oxford; **Aris, Stephen** (2011), *Eurasian Regionalism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*. Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan; **Collins, Kathleen** (2009), *Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Central Asia*. Europe Asia Studies, Vo. 61, No. 2.

the organisation, and in the type of activities which they prefer for achieving the aims. The thesis explores how state officials and private economic actors interpret the organisations' function.²³

The analytical focus is, secondly, inspired by the debate of how varying political regime characteristics inform the ruling elites' conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations. There is a general consensus that democracies are more open to regional integration than authoritarian states. The literature, however, leaves some questions weakly answered. What makes regional integration unattractive for authoritarian regimes? What makes it nevertheless attractive for ruling elites in authoritarian regimes to participate in regional organisations? Which mechanisms induce them to alternatively conceptualise the function of regional organisations?²⁴ The post-Soviet space provides a fruitful ground for studying these puzzles since it offers organisations with authoritarian and pluralist, albeit not consolidated, democratic members.²⁵ Of specific interest with regard to the post-Soviet states is how the ruling elite²⁶ manages to perform *virtual regionalism*. Virtual regionalism indicates the ability to participate in regional organisations by avoiding any socialisation into intensive multilateral co-operation or integration.²⁷ In search of some answers the empirical study of this thesis compares how an authoritarian republic, Azerbaijan, and a pluralist one, Ukraine, conceptualise the function of the CIS and GUAM. The inductive analysis discloses two political

²³ For the sake of readability, the thesis still uses the collective term 'states' in the presentation of the research process and findings. The collective term is, however, used to describe the perceptions of policy-makers who represent the state in the organisations under study.

²⁴ **Börzel**, *Comparative Regionalism. A New Research Agenda*, 19.

²⁵ An overview of the diversity of political regime types in the post-Soviet space may be given with reference to the Freedom House Nations in Transit Index. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan score as consolidated authoritarian regimes. Armenia scores as semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes and Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine as hybrid regimes with a strong pluralism but also authoritarian features. **Freedom House** (ed.), (2011), *Nations in Transit 2011*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

²⁶ This thesis employs the term *ruling elite* to denote actors in hybrid regimes who are *de facto* involved in the processes of domestic rule. This includes powerful individuals, who hold positions in the polity, but also powerful individuals outside state structures. Who exactly can be identified as members of the 'ruling elites' depends on the specific nature of the hybrid regime in question. The literature on hybrid regimes argues, as section 3.4.3 will outline, that elites outside of the state apparatus need to be considered when discussing rule in hybrid regimes. See e.g.: **Karl, Terry Lynn** (1995), *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*. *Journal of Democracy*, Vo. 6, No. 3, p 82.

²⁷ **Allison, Roy** (2008), *Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia*. *Central Asian Survey*, Vo. 27, No. 2.

regimes' characteristics as relevant. The first is the foreign policy-making process. It determines which conceptualisation of regional organisations guides the states' participation in the CIS and GUAM. Secondly, institutions, which guide domestic rule²⁸, significantly shape policy-makers' conceptualisations of the function of regional organisations. The analytical perspective outlined leads to the research questions below.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Overall three research questions emerge. The first two serve to identify how state officials conceptualise the function of the CIS and GUAM. A third question explores the domestic origins of their conceptualisation. The thesis asks:

- What aims do member states pursue by participating in these regional organisations?
- What types of activities do they prefer for achieving the aims?
- How do domestic patterns of rule shape the goals which are pursued and the activities that are preferred?

1.4. THE CORE ARGUMENT

It will be argued that policy-makers conceptualise the function of a regional organisation according to domestically established patterns of rule. If policy-makers do not have the power to alter the organisation's stated function they may alter the *de facto* function of the membership and activities in the organisation according to their needs. Azerbaijan and Ukraine employ the regional organisations studied to consolidate their independence and sovereignty. The organisations primarily enhance the states' ability to single-handedly respond to domestic and regional challenges. Only some policy-makers from Ukraine pursue collective solutions, which primarily build on non-formalised policy-coordination. The thesis highlights in

²⁸ This thesis employs the term *rule* instead of governance or authority. The literature often uses governance to describe a style of rule that builds on liberal democratic principles, a connotation which the thesis wants to avoid. The term authority implies in the understanding of Max Weber that the people ascribe legitimacy to a ruler. This is a connotation which goes beyond the interest of the thesis and is therefore circumvented. For the connotation of governance see: **Weiss, Thomas G.** (2000), *Governance, Good Governance and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges*. Third World Quarterly, Vo. 21, No. 5. For the concept of authority see: **Weber, Max** (1968), *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p 212.

four steps how policy-makers in Azerbaijan and Ukraine conceptualise the function of the regional organisations studied and where this concept originates. It specifies the two sets of pursued aims, the preferred types of activities in the organisations, and the impact of domestic patterns of rule as follows.

With regard to the pursued aims the findings suggest a need to distinguish between ultimate and intermediary goals. The thesis borrows this terminology from Arnold Wolfers who has discussed the need to differentiate between individual foreign policy goals. He argues that scholars need to define the scope of a foreign policy goal according to the specific situation. According to Wolfers, foreign policy goals are rarely remote goals. Mostly they serve as a means for other goals and are thus in his terminology intermediary goals.²⁹ Discussing both type of goals separately allows the analysis to consider not only the aim pursued by the general membership in an organisation, but also of the goals pursued by committing to the concrete activities in the organisations. This helps to unveil the often puzzling relationship between the general goal to avoid policy co-ordination mentioned above, and the commitment to agreements that require policy co-ordination. As ultimate goals both states strive to strengthen their sovereignty through engagement in these organisations. With reference to Stephen Krasner's notions of sovereignty, the thesis argues that Azerbaijan and Ukraine predominantly intend to consolidate their Westphalian and domestic sovereignty. The latter describes the states' ability to exert authority domestically.³⁰ In Ukraine policy-makers also search for means to consolidate their ability to control regional cross-border flows via these regional organisations. Krasner depicts this ability as interdependence sovereignty.³¹ What are the intermediary goals through which to approach the previously mentioned ultimate goals? Azerbaijan and Ukraine both intend to manage and minimise persisting interdependencies in the following three ways:

- enhancing the country's material and methodological capacity to independently tackle domestic and regional challenges;

²⁹ **Wolfers, Arnold** (1962), *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, p 68.

³⁰ **Krasner, Stephen** (1991), *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton: Princeton, University Press, pp. 4-12.

³¹ *Ibid.*

- strengthening the country's regional and international visibility and leverage;
- and maintaining the organisations as a format for regional interaction.

The regional organisations offer a **variety of activities** in support of these aims. It is insightful to cluster the activities according to the intensity of multilateral co-ordination they require. Offering a multilateral environment is a core feature of any regional organisation. It is therefore decisive to understand how the member states exploit this environment. Both states prefer activities that require no or only temporary multilateral co-ordination. Permanent multilateral policy co-ordination, as required in integration, is not compatible with domestic patterns of rule. The political regimes in Azerbaijan and Ukraine resemble hybrid regimes in which informal practices dominate politics. The hybrid regime in Azerbaijan builds strongly on authoritarian patterns of rule, whereas pluralism and broader civic participation characterise the hybrid regime in Ukraine. These regime characteristics have the following implications for the ruling elite's conceptualisation of regional organisations.³² High-level officials in particular avoid commitments to long-term multilateral policy co-ordination, since domestic policy practices strongly rely on their ability to alter policies flexibly. The rule of law³³ is weakly enforced and does not provide the necessary environment for creating stable and transparent policy practices that is accountable to external actors. Nevertheless, in both Ukraine and Azerbaijan low-level officials see potential for durable activities, which policy-makers can activate for a temporary co-ordination of policies. These strongly build on non-formalised practices. The ability of state officials to promote such co-

³² The literature defines hybrid political regimes in general as combining institutions of the ideal types 'authoritarianism' and 'democracy'. The discussion of hybrid political regimes in the post-Soviet spaces stresses the strength of informal practices that determine policy processes and undermine or alter the function of the formal polity. Section 1.5.1 will outline to what degree Azerbaijan and Ukraine resemble hybrid political regimes. Chapter 3.4.3 will discuss the concept of hybrid political regimes and the implications for the conceptualisation of regional organisations in detail. See for example: **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*, 76; **Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way** (2010), *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 56.

³³ The formula rule of law depicts an ideal situation in which state interference in the life of its citizens takes place in the framework of the established legislation. It is a constitutive element of the liberal democratic ideal-type of rule. See: **Weber**, *Economy and Society*, 662; **Radin, Margret Jane** (1989), *Reconsidering the Rule of Law*. Boston University Law Review, Vo. 69, No. 4.

ordinated activities depends on the foreign policy-making processes. In Azerbaijan high-level officials prevent the development of collective solutions by top-down policy-making. In Ukraine low-level officials have more influence on policy-making. But insufficient policy co-ordination makes it impossible to take full advantage of these multilateral opportunities. The following paragraphs will detail the empirical and methodological design of the analysis.

1.5. EMPIRICAL DESIGN

As already mentioned, the empirical research focuses on two former Soviet republics and their engagement in two regional organisations. This *small-N* case study design intends to meet three challenges. Firstly, studying how policy-makers in the case-study countries conceptualise the regional organisations required original empirical data beyond official documents from the organisation or states concerned. The latter hardly reflect the actual intention of the countries.³⁴ Thus data from interviews with policy-makers directly involved in the organisations from both countries appeared more helpful. The workload of such qualitative analysis made it necessary to concentrate on a low number of cases. Secondly, the validity of research findings increases with the number of cases considered.³⁵ The analysis focuses upon the impact of political regimes on the conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations. On this basis it is proposed to compare varying political regimes.

With reference to these arguments it was decided for the purposes of this thesis to analyse how policy-makers from Ukraine and Azerbaijan conceptualise the function of the CIS and GUAM. A comparison of the policy towards the two organisations allows one to discern whether a country's policy is unique to a specific regional organisation or follows patterns which can be observed vis-à-vis other organisations. Comparing Azerbaijan and Ukraine makes it possible to explore how

³⁴ This aspect will be discussed in detail in chapter two. See the following contributions as exemplary references. **Dragneva, Rilka** (2004), *Is 'Soft' Beautiful? Another Perspective on Law, Institutions, and Integration in the CIS*. Review of Central and East European Law, Vo. 29, No. 3; **Dusseault, David** (ed.), (2007), *The CIS: Form or Substance?* Helsinki.

³⁵ **George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett** (2005), *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p 17; **Rueschemeyer, Dietrich** (2003), *Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?* In: Mahoney, James and Rueschemeyer, Dietrich (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

the ruling elite in a hybrid regime with an authoritarian shape and a hybrid regime with affinity towards democracy conceptualise the function of the same regional organisations. In Azerbaijan the ruling elites under Heydar and Ilham Aliyev have since 1994 established an authoritarian regime in, for instance, Juan Linz' definition of the term.³⁶ The regime is characterised by limited pluralism, marginalisation of the political opposition and a lack of channels for the political participation of society.³⁷ In addition, personalised relations and dependencies strongly determine politics in Azerbaijan and undermine or alter the formal polity. Economics and politics are strongly intertwined.³⁸ Ukraine made a substantial turn towards democracy in the early 2000s but did not consolidate democracy. It is still a hybrid regime. Strong pluralism in form of competing parties and political and economic elites marks the political regime.³⁹ Societal actors also have very significant room for political participation. Nevertheless, politics is still not primarily driven by formal political institutions and the consequent application of the rule of law.⁴⁰

Azerbaijan and Ukraine participate in a wide range of CIS and GUAM activities, which made a comprehensive study of their engagement difficult. Therefore the thesis investigates their policies regarding two selected GUAM and CIS activities. In order to deliver a better basis for a comparison the focus rests on GUAM and CIS activities in the same issue-area. These within-cases are activities in the issue-areas of trade and security. As trade-related activity the establishment of a free trade agreement is studied. With regard to security-related activities it is problematic to present congruent cases for Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Limited access to state agencies, especially those dealing with security matters, rendered it impossible to collect enough data on the same activities in the two countries. The empirical

³⁶ **Linz, Juan J** (2000), *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 161-70.

³⁷ **Rasizade, Alec** (2004), *Azerbaijan after Heydar Aliev*. Nationalities Papers, Vo. 32, No. 1; **Radnitz, Scott** (2012), *Oil in the Family: Managing Presidential Succession in Azerbaijan*. Democratization, Vo. 19, No. 1.

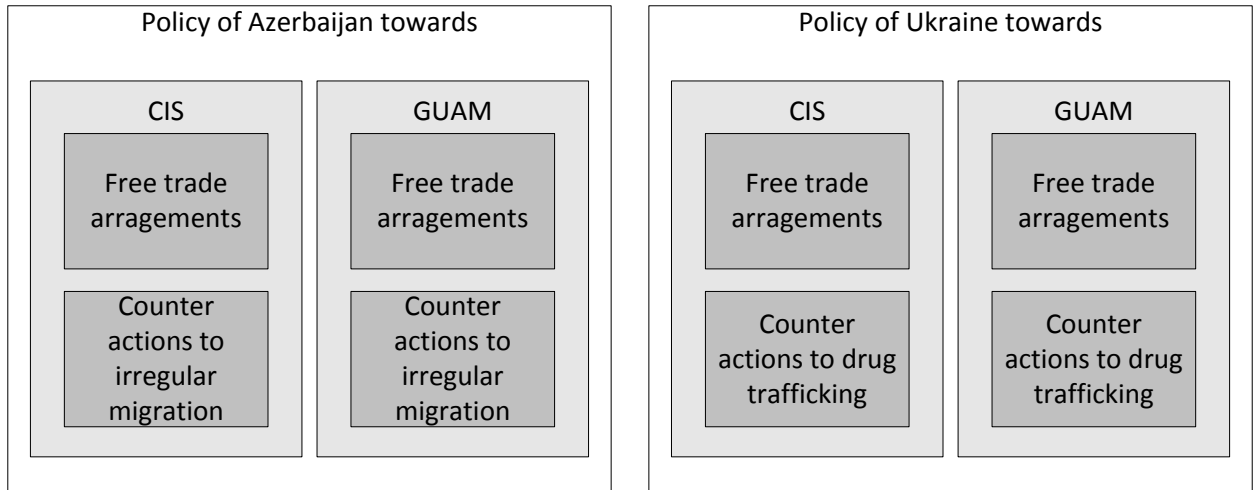
³⁸ **Eisenstadt, Schmucl Noah** (1973), *Neopatrimonialism*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 15-16; **Guliyev, Farid** (2013), *Oil and Regime Stability in Azerbaijan*. Demokratizatsiya, Vo. 21, No. 1, p 122.

³⁹ **Aslund, Anders** (2006), *The Ancien Regime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs*. In: Aslund, Anders and McFaul, Michael (eds.), *Revolution in Orange: the Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p 23.

⁴⁰ **Way, Lucan** (2005), *Rapacious Individualism and Political Competition in Ukraine, 1992-2004*. Communist and Post-Communist Studies, Vo. 38, pp. 147-51.

findings for the security-related activities will therefore rest on CIS and GUAM migration activities in the case of Azerbaijan and anti-drug-trafficking activities in the case of Ukraine. Figure 1 visualises the case-study design. To provide a more pronounced idea about the case study components, two subsections shall now give a brief account on the political regimes in Azerbaijan and Ukraine and on two regional organisations under study.

Figure 1: Overview of Empirical Cases



1.5.1. POLITICAL REGIMES IN AZERBAIJAN AND UKRAINE

This section will argue that the concept hybrid regime describes the current political regimes in Azerbaijan and in Ukraine. A hybrid regime incorporates by definition elements of the ideal types 'authoritarian' and 'democratic' rule.⁴¹ Transition research introduced this term to cover the political regimes that experienced democratisation after the 1970s but have never consolidated democracy.⁴² This broad definition applies to both Azerbaijan and Ukraine, but the degree to which the political regimes of the two countries have incorporated democratic elements varies. As section 3.4.3 will detail, a core feature of hybrid regimes relevant to both case countries is that elections produce uncertainty.⁴³ The incumbent cannot take political survival for granted. Elections do not meet the standards of being free and

⁴¹ **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*, 76.

⁴² **Diamond, Larry Jay** (2002), *Thinking about hybrid regimes*. *Journal of Democracy*, Vo. 13, No. 2, p 25.

⁴³ **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 56; **Hale, Henry** (2005), *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia*. *World Politics*, Vo. 4, No. 58, p 141.

fair as they ideally do in democracies. It is therefore not the outcome of voting that is the core driver of this uncertainty. Rather the event of elections may shuffle the loyalty of crucial social actors including the political and economic elites but also the wider population. This indicates that more important than formal institutions like elections are informal institutions of personalised relations between the incumbent and crucial economic, political and social players.⁴⁴

This section will proceed by giving a brief account of the hybrid regime in Azerbaijan which rests strongly on authoritarian mechanisms. It will then discuss the case of Ukraine where the transformation has introduced stronger mechanisms of civic participation which has paved the way for more political competition and pluralism.

Azerbaijan's first years of independence were marked by an unstable political leadership and political regime. The first president Ayaz Mutallibov foundered to consolidate power in the course of the developments of the conflict with Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia that developed into a war in 1991. After six months in power Albufaz Elchibey replaced him as president and tried to establish a democratic regime. The leading political power in this time was the independence movement Popular Front of Azerbaijan (APF). The democracy project failed, since the leadership lacked the monopoly of the use of force. In the course of a coup d'état, Elchibay went into exile in 1993.⁴⁵ His successor Heydar Aliyev stabilised the security and political situation in the country by two means. In 1994 he negotiated a cease fire agreement in the matter of Nagorno-Karabakh. Secondly, Aliyev managed to form a power centre around his person and to marginalise meaningful opposition forces. From 1994-2003 Heydar Aliyev ruled the country and smoothly transferred power to his son Ilham Aliyev in 2003.⁴⁶ The political regime in Azerbaijan after 1994 can be described as hybrid regime with strong authoritarian features. The dominant appearance of the regime is an authoritarian one in, for instance, Juan Linz' definition of the term.⁴⁷ Limited pluralism, marginalisation of the political

⁴⁴ **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*, 80; **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 56.

⁴⁵ **Cornell, Svante E** (2011), *Azerbaijan since Independence*. London: M.E.Sharpe, p 177.

⁴⁶ **Valiyev, Anar M.** (2006), *Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan. A Failed Revolution*. Problems of Post-Communism, Vo. 53, No. 3, p 21.

⁴⁷ **Linz**, *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*, 161-70.

opposition and a lack of channels for the political participation of wider society characterise political processes in Azerbaijan.⁴⁸ It is a hybrid regime, since the ruling elites have incorporated basic elements of a democratic polity in the constitutions. However, amendments in the 2000s have shifted the power increasingly to the president.⁴⁹ The competitiveness of elections at central but also communal level is strongly constrained. At least, multiple parties and opposition candidates take part in the elections.⁵⁰ Ilham Aliyev has so far been re-elected twice with an official turnout of about 85%, which indicates that his power basis is still relatively stable. However, certain uncertainty exists. Both in 2008 and in 2013 uprisings in Baku accompanied the election. Especially in 2013 the incumbent anticipated the unrest and made use of a repertoire of repressive actions to prevent the spread of riots that might lead to the overthrow of his regime.⁵¹

However, regime stability does not primarily rest on repressions against opposition forces, but on the inclusion of strong economic and political players into a system of redistribution of economic gains and power. Analysts agree in describing the regime built by Heydar and inherited by Ilham Aliyev as massively reliant on informal institutions besides the formal institutions of the polity.⁵² Like the leaders of many other former Soviet republics Heydar Aliyev has used privatisation as a means to ensure the loyalty of potential veto-player.⁵³ A personalised network has emerged which alters the function of the formal institutions in favour of the president and perpetuates the intertwining of economic and politics.⁵⁴ Ilham Aliyev was forced to alter the network structure in order to marginalise actors who did not support his

⁴⁸ **Rasizade**, Azerbaijan after Heydar Aliev; **Radnitz**, Oil in the Family: Managing Presidential Succession in Azerbaijan.

⁴⁹ **Heinrich, Andreas** (2010), *The Formal Political System in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. A Background Study*. Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen, Arbeitspapiere und Materialien, No. 107, pp. 11-18.

⁵⁰ **Valiyev**, Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan. A Failed Revolution, 25-26.

⁵¹ **Gahramanova, Aytan** (2009), *Internal and external factors in the democratization of Azerbaijan*. Democratization, Vo. 16, No. 4, pp. 786-88.

⁵² **Cornell**, Azerbaijan since Independence, 82. **Rasizade, Alec** (2003), *Azerbaijan in Transition to the "New Age of Democracy"*. Communist and Post-Communist Studies, No. 36, p 347. **Rasizade**, Azerbaijan after Heydar Aliev, 139. **Guliyev, Farid** (2005), *Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Transition to Sultanistic Semiauthoritarianism? An Attempt at Conceptualization*. Demokratizatsiya, Vo. 13, No. 3, p 416.

⁵³ **Gahramanova**, Internal and external factors in the democratization of Azerbaijan, 784.

⁵⁴ **Rasizade**, Azerbaijan in Transition to the "New Age of Democracy", 355.

presidency. However, the logic of rule remained the same.⁵⁵ Ilham Aliyev's regime builds on the rents from oil and gas exports.⁵⁶ They generate enough resources to satisfy influential elites. The income is only reluctantly invested into economic and infrastructure initiatives that would increase the economic welfare of the society.⁵⁷ The unresolved conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh has become a tool for averting widespread internal unrest which would weaken the country's stability. The conflict is in 2012 still stuck in a 'no war, no peace' situation. The ruling elites in Azerbaijan as well as in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh perpetuate the line of conflict rather than promoting reconciliation.⁵⁸ This creates a climate where even opposition actors play down demands for regime change in order not to weaken the ruling elites ability to manage the unresolved conflict.⁵⁹

The regime characteristics which the thesis argues to be most important for the question of how the ruling elites approach regional organisations can be summarised as follows. Informal institutions prominently shape politics in Azerbaijan and are thus crucial for the survival of Ilham Aliyev's regime. Aliyev has created a regime that relies on personalised networks. Non-transparent processes determine the ruling. He and other members of the ruling elite are therefore in the first instance accountable to powerful economic and political actors and only secondarily to the wider society. Sporadic investments in the increase of welfare and repressions against opposition forces have until 2013 been enough to prevent serious regime challenges. Another factor that contributes to pacifying regime critics is the unresolved conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The next paragraphs will outline that the political regime in Ukraine is less authoritarian.

⁵⁵ **Cornell**, Azerbaijan since Independence, 113; *ibid.*,180.

⁵⁶ **Guliyev**, Oil and Regime Stability in Azerbaijan, 122.

⁵⁷ **Luecke, Matthias and Natalia Trofimenko** (2008), Whither oil money? Redistribution of oil revenue in Azerbaijan. In: Najman, Boris, *et al.* (eds.), The Economics and Politics of Oil in the Caspian Basin. London: Routledge ; **Maharramov, Ramil** (2010), Petroleum-fuelled public investment in Azerbaijan: Implications for competitiveness and employment. In: Overland, Indra, *et al.* (eds.), Caspian Energy Politics. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. London: Routledge, p 47.

⁵⁸ **Ghaplanyan, Irina** (2010), *Empowering and Engaging Civil Society in Conflict Resolution: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh*. International Negotiation,Vo. 2010, No. 15, p 90. **Shahnazarian, Nona and Ulrike Ziemer** (2012), *Young Soldiers' Tales of War in Nagorno-Karabakh*. Europe-Asia Studies,Vo. 64, No. 9, p 1670.

⁵⁹ **Hoffmann, Katharina** The Persuasive Power of International Democratic Socialization in Authoritarian Environments. Insights from Azerbaijan. 4th ECPR Graduate Conference, 4-6 June 2012 2012 In: Jacobs University Bremen.

Ukraine's development after its independence has raised the expectation that the country will be one of the few to consolidate democracy.⁶⁰ The political regime has not live up to these expectations, but is far more democratic than the political regime in Azerbaijan. Ukraine's first decade of independence was marked by authoritarian tendencies under Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994) and Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004). After the so-called 'Orange Revolution' in 2004 Ukraine made a substantial turn towards democracy. Since 2010 Victor Yanukovich (2010-2014) has developed a more authoritarian style of rule that ended in his overthrow in spring 2014. All these political changes have been initiated by elections except for the overthrow of Yanukovich in 2014. However, analysts agree that the population, through their voting and protests, has rather functioned as resource for powerful elites to trigger political change than as the source of political change.⁶¹ Lucan Way and Heiko Pleines see fragmentations in elite circles as the main sources of political change. The turn of crucial actors in the elites from Kravchuk, who was considered as unpromising candidate in the 1994 elections, to Kuchma paved the way for the Kuchma's presidency.⁶² Differences between Kuchma, Yushchenko and Timoshenko have resulted in the creation of the democratic forces that have initiated the 'Orange Revolution' in 2004.⁶³ It was the defection of the heads of the security forces and the city government in Kyiv that have paved the way for a successful 'Orange Revolution'.⁶⁴ The capability of incumbents to directly rig elections has always been limited due to the existence of veto-players in the elite circles and the

⁶⁰ Levitsky and Way, for example, have already declared Ukraine a stable a democracy after the 'Orange Revolution' in 2004. **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 214.

⁶¹ **Hale**, *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia.*, 141; **Hale, Henry** (2006), *Democracy or Autocracy on the march? The colour revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism.* . *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, No. 39, p 321.

⁶² **Way, Lucan** (2004), *The Sources and Dynamics of Competitive Authoritarianism in Ukraine.* *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vo. 20, No. 1, p 151; **Hale**, *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia.*, 149.

⁶³ **Pleines, Heiko** (2012), *From Competitive Authoritarianism to Defective Democracy: Political Regimes in Ukraine before and after the Orange Revolution.* In: Stewart, Susan, *et al.* (eds.), *Presidents, Oligarchs and Bureaucrats. Forms of Rule in the Post-Soviet Space.* Farnham: Ashgate, p 130.

⁶⁴ **Hale**, *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia.*, 156.

emerging civil society in Ukraine.⁶⁵ The power struggle in Ukraine has therefore always been marked by a broad set of tools for influencing the competition prior to the elections. Among these are an uneven access of candidates to mass media, the fabrication of libel, corruption and rule by law, namely the creation and application of legislation in favour of the incumbent.⁶⁶ Under Kuchma blackmail and repression were part of the repertoire.⁶⁷

This toolbox indicates that formal institutions have in Ukraine a limited impact and are challenged or altered by informal institutions. The basic mechanisms are similar to the ones in Azerbaijan. Politics and economics are strongly interwoven in Ukraine. A number of oligarchs emerged from the process of privatisation. In order to stay in power an incumbent has to ensure the loyalty of the oligarchs through the distribution of economic and power incentives.⁶⁸ In contrast to Azerbaijan the political and economic elites have always been fragmented and were competing.

In his presidency Viktor Yushchenko managed to consolidate the competition between the oligarchs which ultimately inspired political competition.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the interplay between economic and political players continued to predominantly shape the political processes. Core bodies of the polity had remained captured by economic interest groups. The parliament, Verkhovna Rada, for example served more the representation and influence of business elites than

⁶⁵ **Pleines**, From Competitive Authoritarianism to Defective Democracy: Political Regimes in Ukraine before and after the Orange Revolution, 129; **Way**, The Sources and Dynamics of Competitive Authoritarianism in Ukraine, 148.

⁶⁶ **Pleines**, From Competitive Authoritarianism to Defective Democracy: Political Regimes in Ukraine before and after the Orange Revolution, 129; **Malygina, Katharina** (2010), *Ukraine as a Neo-patrimonial State: Understanding Political Change in Ukraine in 2005-2010*. SEER Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe, No. 1, p 17; **Levitsky and Way**, Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 4.

⁶⁷ **Darden, Keith** (2001), *Blackmail as a Tool of State Domination: Ukraine under Kuchma*. East European Constitutional Review, Vo. 10, No. 2/3, p 4.

⁶⁸ **Puglisi, Rosaria** (2008), A Window to the World? Oligarchs and Foreign Policy in Ukraine. In: Fischer, Sabine (ed.), *Chaillot Paper*. Paris: Institute for Security Studies; **Pleines**, From Competitive Authoritarianism to Defective Democracy: Political Regimes in Ukraine before and after the Orange Revolution, 128-33; **Malygina**, Ukraine as a Neo-patrimonial State: Understanding Political Change in Ukraine in 2005-2010, 14-15. **Wolowski**, Ukrainian Politics after the Orange Revolution - How far from Democratic Consolidation?, 42-45.

⁶⁹ **Aslund**, The Ancien Regime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs, 23.

functioning as an organ of representation for the people.⁷⁰ The increase in political competition also paved the way for constitutional changes that reduced the presidential power. However, even Yushchenko has de facto never accepted these changes. His presidency was marked by severe power struggles between himself, the prime minister and the Verkhovna Rada.⁷¹ Informal practices remained dominant in Ukrainian politics. In the period 2010-2014 Yanukovich tried to reduce competition and to again centralise power in the hand of selected groups of economic elites.⁷² In the course of the Orange Revolution civil society actors have gained room for political participation. They have become a societal force which the incumbents have to factor in. However, biased media broadcast and dependence on financial resources makes them still strongly dependent on influential economic and political actors.

The following regime features turned out to influence strongly the ruling elites policy towards regional organisations. The essence of the hybrid political regime in Ukraine is the intertwining of politics and economics which is managed by informal, thus, non-transparent processes. The incumbent is therefore strongly dependent on members of political and economic elite. Characteristic for Ukraine is strong competition between the various political and economic actors. The political leaders need to consider the demands of the wider society far more than in Azerbaijan. Ukraine can be described as a hybrid political regime with strong pluralism.

This brief outline of the political regimes in Azerbaijan and Ukraine as it is discussed in the literature shall suffice for describing the societal background against which the ruling elites develop their regional policy and for justifying the use of the concept 'hybrid regime' for theoretically framing the regimes. The empirical chapters, but especially chapter 8 will based on primary data highlight how the above described mechanisms of rule are visible and impact the policy of the ruling

⁷⁰ **Wolowski, Pavel** (2008), *Ukrainian Politics after the Orange Revolution - How far from Democratic Consolidation?* In: Fischer, Sabine (ed.), *Ukraine: Quo Vadis?* Paris: Institute for Security Studies European Union, p 41.

⁷¹ **Hale**, *Democracy or Autocracy on the march? The colour revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism.* , 314. **Malygina**, *Ukraine as a Neo-patrimonial State: Understanding Political Change in Ukraine in 2005-2010*, 7.

⁷² **Kudelia, Serhiy** (2012), *The Sources of Continuity and Change of Ukraine's Incomplete States.* *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, No. 45, pp. 426-27.

elites towards the CIS and GUAM. In order to introduce the reader to these two organisations, the next sections will provide a brief overview of the development and activities of the CIS and GUAM.

1.5.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CIS

The CIS was founded upon Russian initiative in 1991 by Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.⁷³ In the following three years all former Soviet republics, except for the Baltic States, joined.⁷⁴ However, the republics assume different qualities of membership. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are full members. In contrast, Ukraine and Turkmenistan are only associated states, since both states did not ratify the CIS charter in 1993.⁷⁵ It is important to note that these legal nuances do not provide any constraints for the states' participation in the CIS. In the period 1993-2009 Georgia also belonged to the CIS.⁷⁶

The foundation of the CIS marked the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union. This induces policy practitioners and analysts to dub the organisation an 'instrument for the civilised divorce' of the republics of the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ Indeed, the CIS declared to aim at maintaining certain integrated Soviet structures. But it also announced from the very beginning to seek for more intensive integration.⁷⁸ These intentions only partially materialised. The CIS was neither able to maintain the integrated market and defence structure as envisioned in the early documents nor to establish

⁷³ **Russian Federation, Republic of Ukraine, Republic of Belarus**, 8 December 1991, *Soglashenie o sozdanii Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv* [Agreement on the Foundation of the Commonwealth of Independent States].

⁷⁴ The thesis will always exclude the Baltic States when referring to the former Soviet republics, since the Baltic States from the very beginning distanced themselves from regional organisations in the post-Soviet space.

⁷⁵ **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 22 January 1993, *Ustav Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv* [Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States].

⁷⁶ After having left the organisation in 2009 Georgia is still party to several CIS agreements. **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 2 October 2009, *Reshenie ob Uchastii Gruzii v Mezhdunarodnykh Dogovorakh i Resheniyakh Organov Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv* [Decision of Georgia's Participation in International Agreements and Decisions of CIS bodies] 2 October 2009.

⁷⁷ **Putin, Vladimir**, 25 March 2005, Press Conference Following Russian-Armenian Talks **Solov'ev, E** (2009), *Faktor 'myagkoi sily' v politike Rossiyskoi Federatsii na postsovetском prostranstve* [Soft Power Factor of the Policy of the Russian Federation in the Post-Soviet Space]. *Rossiia i Novye Gosudarstva*, No. September 2009, p 2.

⁷⁸ **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 21 December 1991, *Alma-Atinskaya Deklaratsiya* [Alma-Ata Declaration].

institutions which would facilitate the declared integration. However, the organisation has enhanced its profile of sectoral activities in course of the last 22 years. In 2012 it covered primarily various activities on trade and energy-security, projects concerning societal matters and education, non-traditional security challenges and, relatively weakly but nevertheless existent, military related areas.⁷⁹ Since 2007 the CIS members have expanded their agenda flexibly to deal with topical issues such as the global financial crisis.⁸⁰ From the very beginning two diverging ambitions of the member states characterised the development of the organisation. Primarily Russia, but at times also Kazakhstan and Belarus have promoted integration, while most other states reject this idea.

The organisational structure of the CIS mirrors these diverging ambitions. Due to repeated attempts of the above-named states to lure the CIS members into integration commitments and the widened range of activities, the organisational structure hypertrophied. It shall suffice to present only the core bodies and decision-making rules (Appendix 1 visualises the core structure and characteristics of the CIS). The Council of Heads of State, Council of Head of Governments, and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs serve as core decision-making bodies. The highest organ is the first-named body, while the latter two are in charge of preparing and implementing the decisions of the Council of Heads of State.⁸¹ The Economic Council represents an attempt to pursue economic integration. It was founded in 2000 and originally envisioned as a supranational body, but never gained this status. Instead the council oversees the implementation of trade-related CIS

⁷⁹ These clusters of activity include the following issue-areas: **trade related issues** (trade regulations, tax and customs, production, monetary and currency regulations, transport); **societal matters and education** (social security, higher education, specific social minorities, cultural activities and democracy promotion); **military co-operation** (border forces, peace building, military-industrial complex, military trainings); **'non-traditional security challenges'** (counter-actions against terrorism, organised crime, especially drug trafficking, irregular migration and human trafficking, information, environment)

⁸⁰ **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 2007, *Konzeptsiya o Dal'neishego Razvitiya Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i Plane Osnovykh Meropriyatii po ee Realizatsii* [Concept of Future Development of the CIS and Plan for its Realization].

⁸¹ The Council of Head of Governments mainly co-ordinates the co-operation activities. It functions as linkage to the respective agencies on the national level which need to be involved. The Council of Foreign Ministers co-ordinates the implementation of decisions between the sessions of the CHS and CHG. **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 2 April 1999, *Polozhenie o Sovete Ministrov Inostranykh Del Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv*; **CIS Council of Heads of States**, Alma-Atinskaya Deklaratsiya [Alma-Ata Declaration].

decisions.⁸² An Interparliamentary Assembly is set to advise the councils. About 68 permanent and 14 temporary sectoral bodies (otraslye organy) represented in 2012 the core sectoral activities of the CIS. They lack decision-making powers, but prepare the sector-specific work of the above-mentioned councils. Given their weak competences, studies on the CIS often neglect these sectoral bodies.⁸³ According to the empirical findings of this thesis, however, the member states strongly value the activities in these bodies.

When observing the CIS from a distance, its activities manifest themselves primarily in the approximately 1337 decisions that were in force in 2010.⁸⁴ However, scholars estimate that about 90% of them exist merely on paper.⁸⁵ This high number of inefficient agreements is facilitated by flexible participation options and weak enforcement structures. The so-called 'multi-track and multi-speed principle' permits flexible participation in CIS bodies and sectoral activities. The member states may opt to not sign an agreement, to withdraw from agreements or to join later.⁸⁶ In addition, the states may sign agreements with reservations on specific

⁸² The Economic Council, founded in 2000, is the only CIS body, in which decisions are taken by majority vote. **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 25 January 2000, Reshenie o Polozhenii ob ekonomicheskome sovete SNG [Decision on the Statue of the CIS Economic Council]. This characteristic is interpreted as step towards supra-national governance. However, the rather flexible application of this rule substantially weakens the supra-national effect of this rule. It therefore can be described as having supra-national tendencies rather than being a supranational body. Negative effects from potential outvoting are negligible, since the body ranks low in the decision-making hierarchy. In addition, non-participation is allowed and does not render the agreement invalid. This reduces the pressure of majority voting **Kembayev, Zhenis** (2009), *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area*. Berlin: Springer, p 85..

⁸³ Most articles on sectoral activities of CIS are published by CIS members or in CIS supportive formats, e.g. the Eurasian Integration Yearbook. **Vinokurov, Evgeny** (2009), *Mutual Investments in the CIS Banking Sector*. In, Eurasian Integration Yearbook 2009. Almaty: Eurasian Development Bank; **Shishkov, Yuri** (2008), *Cooperation in the CIS Machine-Building Sector: Decreasing rather than Increasing*. In, Eurasian Integration Yearbook. Almaty: Eurasian Development Bank.

⁸⁴ These include (draft) agreements, (draft) decisions, memoranda, conventions and protocols.

⁸⁵ **Smbatian, Anna S** (2005), *Common Economic Space and Some Thoughts on Protection of the Russian Market against Unfair Trade*. *Journal of World Trade*, Vo. 39, No. 5, p 938; **Cooper, Julian** (2008), *Russia's Trade Relations within the Commonwealth of Independent States*. In: Wilson Rowe, Elena and Torjesen, Stina (eds.), *The Multilateral Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge, p 173; **Tumbarello, Patrizia** (2005), *Regional Trade Integration and WTO Accession: Which is the Right Sequencing? An Application to the CIS*. IMF Working Paper, Vo. 5, No. 94, p 8.

⁸⁶ **CIS Council of Heads of States**, *Ustav Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv* [Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States]; **CIS Council of Heads of Governments**, 9 October 2009, Reshenie o Pravilakh protsedury Soveta glav gosudarstv, Soveta glav pravitel'stv, Soveta ministrov inostrannykh del i Ekonomicheskogo soveta SNG [Decision on the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Heads of State, Heads of Government Council, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Economic Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States].

stipulations. To protect against negative externalities of treaties by means of such reservations is an international practice established in the Convention of Vienna. As Dragneva indicates, it is unusually excessively used within the CIS.⁸⁷ The minority of CIS documents require domestic ratification.⁸⁸ This makes it easier for the CIS members to adopt and put in force agreements, at least formally. Apart from these elements, the lack of significant implementation monitoring bodies triggers a volatile attitude of the member states when it comes to implementing CIS documents. Two bodies are in charge of arbitration and conflict resolution. The economic court interprets agreements in case of conflict, if the affected parties agree to have the court involved. In any case, it has only recommending powers.⁸⁹ The final instance for conflict solutions is the Council of Heads of State, which being a political not a judicial body has little impact.⁹⁰ Most strikingly, despite the agreements having little impact, the CIS has not stopped negotiating and adopting new potentially binding agreements. The case studies will provide some explanation as to why such agreements are nevertheless attractive. For the moment, this subsection will sketch the core parameters of the two sectoral activities that serve as within cases: trade and migration but also drug-trafficking related security matters.

The CIS has always devoted much attention to trade issues, as the large share of trade-related documents in the legal acts corpus of 28% indicates.⁹¹ Since 2004, efforts to put core trade agreements into practice have increased.⁹² The most comprehensive tool for this since 2008 has been the 'Strategy for the Economic

⁸⁷ **Dragneva**, Is 'Soft' Beautiful? Another Perspective on Law, Institutions, and Integration in the CIS.

⁸⁸ **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 1 June 2010, Spravka o dokumentakh, prinyatikh v ramkakh SNG v 1991-2010 godakh [Overview of the documents adopted within the CIS in 1991-2010 years]

⁸⁹ **Dragneva**, Is 'Soft' Beautiful? Another Perspective on Law, Institutions, and Integration in the CIS, 308.

⁹⁰ **Smbatian**, Common Economic Space and Some Thoughts on Protection of the Russian Market against Unfair Trade, 941.

⁹¹ The author made this calculation based on all 1178 CIS documents which had been adopted by the member states by the end of 2010. Trade-related agreements account for 28%, 25% are devoted to education and social issues, 16% concern CIS procedures, 14% military issues, 13% non-traditional security challenges, 4% transport and less than 1% reflect the ambition for a common foreign policy orientation. The calculation does not differentiate agreements, treaties and decisions since such a differentiation has little impact. Some countries, e.g. Azerbaijan, consider all international documents regardless of their names as international treaty. See: **Abdullahzade, Cavid** (2007), *The Status of International Treaties in the Legal System of Azerbaijan*. Review of Central and East European Law, No. 32, p 236.

⁹² After 2004 the number of documents that state their mission as improving the realization of various trade related agreements grows.

Development of the CIS until 2020'. The strategy is an umbrella document that co-ordinates all CIS economic activities, a large part of which concern free trade. It stipulates general goals and co-ordinates working groups and action plans.⁹³ A separate working body co-ordinates the implementation of the strategy. Its flagship project has been the new free trade agreement (FTA), which has been prepared by a special working group on expert level. It follows two previous but unsuccessful attempts. In 1994 most CIS member states adopted and ratified an FTA. Russia, the actual initiator of the document, opted out of ratification. Being the most important trade partner for the former Soviet republics, Russia's defection stalled efforts to implement the agreement.⁹⁴ Some five years later Russia again initiated the negotiation of an amending protocol to the FTA, which basically re-wrote the entire FTA text. The protocol shared the fate of the 1994 FTA. Russia's third try in 2008 finally resulted in an FTA adopted in 2011 and ratified by Russia in spring 2012. It became effective in 2012 for three of the eight signatories and for five more in 2013.⁹⁵

Activities concerning drug-trafficking and migration are not concentrated in one significant agreement. Several bodies, including the Office for the Fight against Organised Crime, are in charge of anti-drug-trafficking activities. About 40 documents define the broad lines of the priorities and programmes in this field. Most of them concern methods for measuring and combatting drug-trafficking, joint standards for inter alia customs controls. Some stipulate the development of model legislation concerning these issues.⁹⁶ The CIS itself does not undertake joint anti-

⁹³ These relate inter alia to matters of customs, production standards, cargo transport regulations and the competitiveness of the production in the member states. See: **CIS Council of Heads of Governments**, 14 November 2008, Reshenie o Strategii ekonomisheskogo razvitiya SNG na period do 2020 goda. [Decision on the Strategy of Economic Development of the CIS until 2020]

⁹⁴ **Dragneva, Rilka and Joop De Kort** (2007), *The Legal Regime for Free Trade in the Commonwealth of Independent States*. International Comparative Law Quarterly, Vo. 56, No. 2; **Tumbarello**, Regional Trade Integration and WTO Accession: Which is the Right Sequencing? An Application to the CIS, 8.

⁹⁵ The FTA has been signed by Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In February 2013 the ratification processes have been completed by the first five states. For the document see: **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 19 October 2011, Dogovor o zone svobodnoi trgovli [Agreement on the Free Trade Zone].

⁹⁶ The core documents are: **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 5 October 2007, Reshenie o Programme sotrudnichestva v bor'be s nezakonnym oborotom narkoticheskikh sredstv, psikhotropnykh veshchestv i ikh prekursorov na 2008-11 [Decision on the Programme for Co-operation in the Fight against Illicit Distribution of Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors in 2008-11]; **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 10 October 2009, Zayavlenie ob aktivizatsii sotrudnichestva v borbe s

drug-trafficking operations, but some member states participate in operation 'Kanal', which the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) organises annually.⁹⁷ Since 2007 CIS migration activities have been co-ordinated by the Council of Heads of Migration agencies. While this body primarily discusses visa regulations and labour migration, in matters of irregular migration it receives support from various councils, including that of border guards and customs services. The CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre, which was founded in 1999, provides additional support, even though it primarily focuses on matters of international terrorism.⁹⁸ CIS migration activities concentrate on exchanging information, harmonising legislation, developing integrated monitoring instruments and establishing an integrated labour market.⁹⁹ Chapters 6 and 7 in particular will discuss how Azerbaijan and Ukraine exploit the opportunities provided by these sectoral activities.

1.5.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GUAM

The second organisation of interest to this study is the 'Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM'. It unites Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova with the proclaimed aim of enhancing regional security by intensified economic and security co-operation and integration. GUAM substantially distinguishes itself from the CIS in terms of organisational design and type of activities. As this sub-section will show, GUAM has a trim structure and produces far less multilateral legalised agreements. It, however, concentrates on the same issue

nezakonnym oborotom narkoticheskikh sredstv, psikhotropnykh veshchestv i ikh prekursorov [Declaration: to Intensify the Co-operation in Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors]; *ibid*.

⁹⁷ This operation of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation includes military and law enforcement bodies. It was first launched in 2003. In typical operations of several days' duration 'Kanal' detains about 1-20 tons opiates per year on the so-called Northern Route from Afghanistan to Europe. See: e.g. **RIA Novosti**, *About 16 Ton Narcotics Confiscated in a Week in Course of Operation CSTO 'Kanal'*. 13 December 2011..

⁹⁸ For more information on the CIS ATC see: www.cisatc.org

⁹⁹ As chapter 7 will discuss in detail, one of the joint instruments is a common data base that registers migration flows. The idea of an integrated labour market that regulates migration processes came up in 1999. In an attempt to revitalise its ambitions, the CIS adopted the agreement on the formation of a joint migration policy in 2006. See: **CIS Economic Council**, 1999, Reshenie o proekte kontseptsii formirovaniya obshchego rynka truda i regulirovaniya migratsii rabochei sily [Decision on the Draft Concept for the Formulation of a Common Labour Market and Coordination of Labour Migration]; **CIS Council of Foreign Ministers**, 16 October 2006, Reshenie o proekte Soglasheniya ob osnovnykh printsipakh v oblasti migratsii grazhdan SNG [Decision on the Draft Agreement on the Basic Principles of Co-operation Concerning the Migration of CIS Citizens].

areas as the CIS with the exception of military activities. The diverging approaches to shared fields of activity render a comparison GUAM and the CIS intriguing. The comparison is also promising in terms of the insights provided into the types of activities which Ukraine and Azerbaijan prefer in a multilateral context in the post-Soviet space. Both states significantly contributed to establishing the organisation. GUAM, hence, reflects an organisation in the spirit of Azerbaijan and Ukraine, while the CIS tells about how the states adjust to pre-defined structures.

GUAM emerged at the sidelines of the OSCE review conference of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe in 1996 with a security focus. The Azerbaijani delegate spontaneously persuaded the other former Soviet republics, which face existing or potential secessionist threats, to jointly express their concern over remaining Russian forces in the post-Soviet space.¹⁰⁰ After several additional meetings Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine established GUAM as consultative forum (*Konsul'tativnyi forum GUAM*). In 2003 GUAM developed into a union (*Ob'edinenie GUUAM*¹⁰¹) with administrative structures and a charter. Only in 2006 did the members establish the fully-fledged regional organisation with a new charter as it exists in 2013.¹⁰² GUAM elicited Uzbekistan's interest as a forum of former Soviet republics not associated with any other security organisations.¹⁰³ Accordingly, Uzbekistan joined GUAM in the period 1999-2005.¹⁰⁴ With its organisational structure GUAM also widened its activity profile.

Already in the first years the member states extended GUAM's fields of activity from matters of the secessionist conflicts to economic, other security and societal issues. In 2012 it covered trade, energy, tourism, technology, transport, education, organised crime, drug-trafficking, irregular migration, the illicit proliferation of

¹⁰⁰ Reported by a staff member of the foreign ministry (AZ_MFA_1)

¹⁰¹ In the period 2001-2006 the regional organisation was named GUUAM. The additional 'U' stands for Uzbekistan, which joined the regional organisation during these years. Uzbekistan was deemed a rather passive member after 2003.

¹⁰² All members except for Moldova have ratified the 2006 GUAM Charter. Moldova only ratified the 2002 Charter. Due to this fact the registration of GUAM with the UN is still pending. **Sarov, Igor and Igor Ojog** (2010), *The Foreign Policy of Moldova*. Chişinău: Cartdidact, p 176.

¹⁰³ **Afanas'ev, Viktor** (2005), *GUAM kak proekt sotrudnichestva chernomorskikh gosudarstv*. NOMOS, Vo. 2.

¹⁰⁴ From the very beginning Uzbekistan was rather reluctant to actively engage in GUAM, which was named GUUAM during this period. In 2006 Uzbekistan decided to access the Collective Treaty Organisations and, hence, left GUUAM.

nuclear substances, emergency situations and international terrorism. GUAM declares that it approaches these matters with less orientation towards integration than the CIS. It seeks to establish an integrated free trade area and integrated instruments in its issue areas, but primarily intends to support the members in integrating into the more relevant European and Transatlantic structures.¹⁰⁵ However, until 2012 GUAM failed to position itself as link between the member states and the EU, NATO or similar organisations. Also, its achievements in terms of integrated measures in the defined issue-areas are still weak. But an increasingly sophisticated structure of sectoral bodies should improve GUAM's performance.

Similar to the CIS three councils constitute the decision-making structure. The Council of Heads of State functions as highest decision-making body. Second in the hierarchy is the Council of Foreign Ministers, which since 2009, after GUAM summits of Head of State stalled, has been the *de facto* leading body. Both councils are intergovernmental bodies that take decisions only by consensus. As a rule GUAM pursues only activities to which all four members agree. This principle is widely interpreted when it comes to GUAM agreements. Nearly half of the adopted agreements are treated as valid, even though they lack Moldova's signature.¹⁰⁶ The council of so-called 'national co-ordinators' prepares the work of these two bodies. In 2004 the GUAM Interparliamentary Assembly enhanced the organisational design. It consists, however, only of up to four members of parliament per country and does not carry much weight. The strongest drivers of GUAM are ten sectoral bodies. They lack decision-making competences, but specify and enhance the activity profile. The daily routines are managed by the GUAM secretariat in Kyiv, to which each country except Moldova delegates a representative.¹⁰⁷

GUAM's activities themselves are not necessarily reflected in multilateral agreements. This makes an assessment of the organisations' performance at a

¹⁰⁵ Kornilov, Igor' (2008), *Konsolidatsiya usilii stran GUAM na proektakh i programmakh vostochnoi politiki ES* [Consolidation of the Efforts of GUAM Countries in the Projects of the Programm of the EU Eastern Policy]. In: Kornilov, Igor', *et al.* (eds.), 'Skhidnii Vymir' polityky ES: Materialy 'kruglogo stolu' [Eastern Dimension of the EU Policy: Round Table Statements]. Kyiv: NIPMB.

¹⁰⁶ GUAM (2008), *Compilation of the GUAM Documents*. Baku: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, pp. 9-12. The up-date on the years 2009-2011 has been taken from the legal data base of the Ukrainian Parliament accessible via: <http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/c>

¹⁰⁷ Moldova is currently represented by a member of the Moldovan Embassy in Ukraine. The official reason for not delegating another individual to the secretariat is given as financial constraints.

distance difficult. About 25 agreements pave the way for the GUAM activities, but GUAM hardly adopts new and strongly legalised multilateral agreements. The existing GUAM agreements primarily indicate the parameters for developing activities in a specific issue-area. Accordingly, the organisation also lacks arbitrage and implementation monitoring mechanisms. Instead of agreements, GUAM engages in a number of joint operations in the spheres of security, joint transport and tourism projects. The activities usually start at a very practical level, are relatively small-scale and have little structural outreach. In the course of their development they may touch upon legal aspects, which are then ideally discussed at higher ministerial level. One of the few at least theoretically binding and precise agreements is the FTA adopted in 2002.¹⁰⁸ Its implementation is as difficult as in the CIS, as the paragraph below will show. The GUAM FTA has been initiated in 2000, signed in 2003 and ratified by the last parties in 2005.¹⁰⁹ It legally entered into force for most GUAM states in 2003.¹¹⁰ Analysts argue that the FTA has from the very beginning ailed due to the members' inertia regarding the adjustment of domestic legislation to the document.¹¹¹ GUAM officials can indeed refer to a growing trade turnover between the GUAM countries after the FTA establishment in 2003.¹¹² This, in the first place, is a correlation without much causal effect. At least policy practitioners, economic actors and analysts stated that in 2011 they had not seen any practical impact of the FTA.¹¹³ GUAM's lack of arbitrage bodies is, according to staff from the GUAM secretariat, problematic for the implementation of the FTA. The secretariat therefore lobbies for establishing arbitrage mechanisms. Given the weak implementation of the FTA, GUAM has developed other projects that aim at converging member states economically. A larger project is the GUAM transport

¹⁰⁸ **GUAM**, Compilation of the GUAM Documents, 86-96.

¹⁰⁹ Ukraine and Georgia discussed this option during a meeting in 2000. See: **Newsline RFERL**, *Ukrainian Premier Visits Georgia*. 7 August 2000; *ibid*.

¹¹⁰ As one of the basic documents for an efficient FTA a first version of the rules that identify the origin of goods and assess their eligibility for the preferential trade arrangements has been adopted in 2006. According to GUAM_Official_3, an up-dated version was pending in 2011.

¹¹¹ **Japaridze, Tedo** (2008), *The Organization for Democracy and Development - GUAM: A Road Map to Relevance?* . Central Asia and the Caucasus, No. 51-52, p 82.

¹¹² According to a GUAM document, the trade turnover between the GUAM states doubled from 2063 to 4500 million US dollars in the period 2006-2011. See: **GUAM**, 2012, *Zona Svobodnoi Torgovly GUAM [Free Trade Zone GUAM]*.

¹¹³ Except for GUAM_Official_1, GUAM_Official_3 and AZ_MFA_7 all interviewees who discussed the FTA agreed to this assessment.

corridor that envisions building a trade bridge between Asia and Europe.¹¹⁴ One of the early subprojects of this corridor has been the Odessa-Brody Pipeline for oil shipments. Ukraine built this pipeline in the late 1990s and strove to gain Azerbaijan's commitment to fill the pipeline with oil shipped from Azerbaijan via Georgia to Odessa and from there to Poland.¹¹⁵ However, this project was cut from the GUAM agenda in 2003. In 2005 a proposal named 'Trans-Danubian Energy and Transport Bridge' was discussed in GUAM. The project was envisioned as the lynchpin of GUAM, since it was envisioned to accelerate realising the GUAM transport corridor.¹¹⁶ Due to the reluctance of Moldova to participate the concept was taken off the GUAM agenda.¹¹⁷ Ever since, GUAM has developed smaller projects. One of these is the GUAM 'Tourproduct' with the aim to foster tourism. It has little outreach, since it is not more than a tourist tour through all four countries designed by tourism companies from all GUAM states for foreign tourists. The project has, however, initiated the discussion of infra-structure, border transit and other legal aspects, which potentially impact the tourism landscape beyond this product. The GUAM activities in the second within-case, security matters, have a broader outreach but are similarly driven by practical interactions.

GUAM's flagship body, which co-ordinates security activities, is the GUAM Virtual Law Enforcement Centre (VLEC). Its portfolio includes combatting terrorism, drug- and human-trafficking and other forms of organised crime. VLEC was set up in 2002

¹¹⁴ The transport corridor concept initially included an energy transport grid, including gas, oil and electricity transportation.

¹¹⁵ The pipeline has been built in 2002. Until 2004 Ukraine did not manage to find a hydrocarbon supplier. In 2004 after a contract with Russia was achieved the pipeline was used in inverse direction until 2012. In 2012 Azerbaijan started to supply the pipeline. See: **Balmaceda, Margarita** (2004), *Ukraine's Persistent Energy Crisis*. Problems of Post-Communism, Vo. 51, No. 4, p 40; *Ukraine Reverses Odessa-Brody Pipeline Flow*. (2012), Oil and Gas Eurasia [Online].

¹¹⁶ A core idea was to develop joint co-ordination and enhance the electricity power stations and grids in the GUAM countries to facilitate the export of electricity via GUAM to Europe and Asia. **Rada Natsional'noi bezpeky i oborony Ukrainy**, 2006, Ekonomichnyi proekt GUAM 'Pridynaiskyi Energo-Transportnyi Mist' Initsiatyvy Ukrainy [Economic Project GUAM the 'Trans-Danubian Energy- and Transport Bridge].

¹¹⁷ The project would have involved the reactivation of a power plant in Moldova. Ukrainian representatives who attended negotiations on this project refer to the fact that most of the electricity infrastructure in Moldova is in the hands of the Russian Electric Power Company RAO UES. (UA_NSDC_2) To the disappointment of an interviewee who had been strongly involved in the formulation of this concept, only few parts of it had been realised; none of it in the framework of GUAM. (UA_Analyst_3)

in collaboration with the US.¹¹⁸ VLEC provides the opportunity to share information and jointly engage in law enforcement operations.¹¹⁹ Since 2009 the GUAM states have agreed to install devices for cryptographic protection that allow the exchange of 'top secret' intelligence data. In 2011 all legal barriers were resolved and the states waited for the equipment.¹²⁰ VLEC itself provides the opportunity to share information and jointly engage in law enforcement operations. Specific working groups manage the activities related to drug-trafficking and irregular migration. They prepare and evaluate the annual GUAM operations 'Perekhvat' on human-trafficking and 'Nakostop' on drug-trafficking.¹²¹ An additional security-related activity is worth mentioning as it is relevant for Azerbaijan. GUAM tried to increase international awareness of secessionist conflict in the GUAM states through speeches and submitting draft resolutions to the UN General Assembly. A draft resolution submitted in 2006 has not been adopted yet, but due to efforts of the GUAM members was still under discussion in 2012.¹²² The GUAM states prepared a new resolution in 2011 but did not submit it, since Ukraine withdrew its support.¹²³

¹¹⁸ After the September 11 terrorist attacks, when GUAM put the fight against international terrorism and organised crime, including irregular migration and human trafficking on the agenda. This attracted US support and attracted funding for VLEC equipment. **GUUAM**, 20 July 2002, Agreement on Cooperation among the Governments of GUUAM in the Field of Combat Against Terrorism, Organized Crime and Other Dangerous Types of Crime.

¹¹⁹ For many years this meant video conferencing equipment that facilitated communication in the GUAM sub-groups for instance on irregular migration and drug-trafficking.

¹²⁰ This stage of development has been confirmed by GUAM_Official_2, the interviewee from the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, who is in charge of the co-operation with GUAM, in spring 2011 and by an official from the Ministry of Interior in Azerbaijan in summer 2011. A U.S.-GUAM communiqué in September 2012 indicates that the equipment is still not in place. See: **GUAM**, 26 September 2012, GUAM – United States Joint Statement

¹²¹ This operation has been held annually since 2010. The GUAM states develop joint standards of procedure and statistical measurements for these operations. The operations are simultaneously carried out in all GUAM countries by the national by the law enforcement bodies. See: **GUAM**, 14 December 2011, 8th Meeting of the Working Sub-Group on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration (WGS-TIP). 'Narcostop' was initiated in 2007 and has since then been realized annually. See for example: **GUAM**, 20 May 2011, 8th Meeting of Working Sub-Group on Combating Drug Trafficking

¹²² In 2006 GUAM submitted a joint resolution on the 'protracted conflicts'. In 2012 the resolution was still pending due to Armenian interference. See: **U.N. General Assembly, 62nd Session**, 4 December 2007, (A/62/L.28) Agenda Item 16 Protracted Conflicts in the GUAM Area and their Implications for International Peace, Security and Development. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine: Draft Resolution; **U.N. General Assembly, 66th Session**, 26 January 2012, (A/66/670–S/2012/64) Agenda Item 35: Protracted Conflicts in the GUAM Area and their Implications for International Peace, Security and Development. Letter from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General.

¹²³ AZ_MFA_2 reported in 2011 that Georgia suggested a GUAM draft resolution on the situation in Georgia after the war with Russia in 2009. Azerbaijan has been relatively open towards the

Appendix 2 provides an overview of the structure and development of GUAM. Some reflections on the data collection and analysis methods in the following section will complete the discussion of the empirical study.

1.6. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

Main data for this study were collected in the period 2010-2012. The thesis covers developments from the countries' independence in 1991 to 2012 in so far as it contributes to enhancing the picture and data are available.

The empirical findings build strongly on qualitative data collected by field research in the case countries. These are primarily data from qualitative semi-structured interviews with state officials involved in CIS or GUAM matters, but also policy analysts and private economic actors. The study focussed on these three groups of interviewees, since they provide different and often competing perspectives. The different perspectives facilitated a critical evaluation of the validity of the interview narrative. Data acquisition took place during two research stays in each country between 2010 and 2012. During a stay of eight weeks in each country 40 interviews were conducted in Ukraine and 34 in Azerbaijan. Additional data include documents of the states or regional organisations and articles from Azerbaijani, Ukrainian and Russian newspapers. In addition, the study uses quantitative economic data from the UN comtrade data base¹²⁴ as background to the within-case on free trade matters. The data analysis followed principles steps of the Grounded Theory research procedure.¹²⁵ The qualitative data analysis software NVIVO facilitated a systematic, reproducible and therefore controllable interpretation of the data.

1.7. THESIS OUTLINE

The following paragraphs will explain how the individual chapters will present the above summarised analytical approach and the findings of the empirical study. They will provide an overview of the content and core argument of each chapter. The thesis is structured in three parts. Chapters 1-4 will detail the analytical approach by

resolution but not entirely convinced. However, the Ukrainian side ruled out support for any such resolution. The draft was thus taken off the agenda in May 2011.

¹²⁴ Accessible via <http://comtrade.un.org/>

¹²⁵ **Glaser, Barney G and Anselm L Strauss** (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. London: Aldine Transaction.

outlining how the research may enhance the existing literature, by developing the guiding theoretical assumption accordingly and, finally, by identifying the methodological tools. In the second part, four empirical chapters will present the findings on how policy-makers in Azerbaijan and Ukraine conceptualise the function of the CIS and GUAM and whence these conceptualisations originate. Each chapter will devote attention of one of the in section 1.2 outlined dimensions that constitute the conceptualisation of the function. Chapter 5 will analyse the ultimate goals, chapter 6 the intermediary goals, chapter 7 the instruments and chapter 8 the impact of foreign policy-making and implementation practices. The third part, chapter 9, will link the theoretical reasoning and empirical findings and spell out the research results in more abstract terms. The objective thereby is to make the findings accessible to future research on the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and beyond. It is the overall aim of the analysis to highlight the commonalities and differences in how policy-makers from Azerbaijan and Ukraine conceptualise the function of the CIS and GUAM. To this end the thesis does not present the studies on Azerbaijan and Ukraine independently, but rather compares the results for the individual dimensions discussed in the empirical chapters.

Chapter two reviews how different strands of the literature discuss the functions of regional organisations. The chapter takes the literature on old and new regionalism and case studies on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and other areas of the work into consideration. The chapter identifies the analytical focus and the research gap to which the thesis intends to contribute. The thesis aims at understanding the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. Expanding the knowledge supports not only the research on the post-Soviet space but also on comparative regionalism. It suggests an empirical study of how policy-makers in the former Soviet republics conceptualise the function of the organisations, including their proposed policy instruments.

Chapter three narrows the previously defined analytical perspective down into the analytical framework of this thesis. It defines the core theoretical concepts employed in the thesis. The chapter also develops a heuristic tool for studying

regional organisations in the post-Soviet area. It draws on an amalgam of theoretical approaches including concepts of sovereignty, neo-institutionalist assumptions and theories which focus on domestic and foreign policymaking in non-democratic states. Outlining the analytical framework will facilitate the reading of the empirical chapters and pave the way for the translation of the empirical results into abstract theoretical terms.

Chapter four explains the empirical research design for studying the research questions. The aim is to make transparent the criteria informing the empirical design and the proceedings shaping data interpretation. This should enable the reader to adequately evaluate the quality of the research data. It presents the empirical design as an explorative case study building on a qualitative coding and a re-constructive analysis of expert interviews, which are triangulated by governmental documents and economic data.¹²⁶

Chapter five makes an initial step in the analysis of the function of the CIS and GUAM by spelling out which ultimate goals policy-makers pursue in the CIS and GUAM. Empirically the ultimate goals are derived from the aims the policy-makers associate with the general membership in both organisations. The analysis argues that the states' involvement in the regional organisations serves the consolidation of independent statehood: namely, the consolidation of what Stephen Krasner calls Westphalian and domestic sovereignty. Ukraine, to a greater extent than Azerbaijan, seeks to also consolidate control over cross-border flows. To this end both countries intend to re-organise and reduce persisting unfavourable dependencies and to create new favourable dependencies on the part of other former Soviet republics on Azerbaijan or Ukraine respectively.

Chapter six spells out which intermediary goals policy-makers pursue in the sectoral activities for advancing the ultimate goals identified in chapter five. A minor aim, especially relevant in Ukraine, is to maintain stable structures for exchange and co-operation in economic and security matters that affect domestic stability. More relevant is the ambition to improve leverage in the post-Soviet area. The third aim is

¹²⁶ Triangulation refers to strategies of evaluating the validity of research data by comparison with data from other sources. See: **Flick, Uwe** (2007), *Managing Quality in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, p 40.

strengthening the country's position in the international community. Finally, actors from both states intend to keep the CIS and GUAM alive in order to achieve aims two and three.

Chapter seven identifies the types of activities instruments which policy practitioners in Azerbaijan and Ukraine prefer in CIS and GUAM. It discusses how strongly these activities build on multilaterally co-ordinated actions. The chapter argues activities are preferred that build on weak or temporary multilateral co-ordination. Ukraine, more than Azerbaijan intends to build durable structure for regional interaction that can temporarily be activated. Activities that require permanent co-ordination are avoided. Overall the states opt for activities that increase the states' capacity to independently respond to domestic and transnational challenges but avoid intensive multilateral co-operation.

Chapter eight highlights how established foreign policy practices in the case countries lead to the approaches to CIS and GUAM analysed in chapters five to seven. Policy-making processes in Azerbaijan and Ukraine as well as common practices to regulate security and economic interaction between former Soviet republics receive attention. The analysis reveals that policy-making processes in Azerbaijan allow policymakers to maintain active membership in regional organisations and not to aim for multilateral solutions to shared transnational challenges. In the case of Ukraine, multilateral solutions are supported by a higher number of officials. But due to inefficient policy co-ordination they cannot sufficiently exploit the potential of some multilateral instruments. However, also in Ukraine most multilateral practices do not comply with the needs of the policymakers.

The concluding **chapter nine** synthesises the findings of chapter four to eight into an abstract frame of the conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. It suggests that the empirical findings may inform the heuristics of future studies on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and other non-democratic environments. The chapter argues that the analytical tools may improve on-spot analyses of developments in regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. They also facilitate a systematic exploration of the nexus

between the varying concepts of regional organisations and domestic political regimes. However, it argues that further research on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and other areas of the world is needed to substantiate the findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: VARYING FUNCTIONS OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

This chapter introduces the literature on regional organisations in different parts of the world, and specifically in the post-Soviet space. It highlights how this thesis intends to contribute to the debate. It is argued that the thesis will provide knowledge on the function and mechanisms of regional organisations in an area of the world that is understudied in this regard. This knowledge will sharpen understanding of regional similarities and differences in the global phenomenon of 'regional organisations' and will advance assumptions about the potential global impact of regional organisations. The chapter will outline the research gap upon which the thesis focuses by discussing the insights and shortcomings of three debates.

The chapter consists of two sections. The first section will reflect on the questions driving the general study of regional organisations in order to pin-point the relevance of the research interest. It will be argued that in academia and policy circles the prevailing discussion of regional organisations as global governance players calls for research into the varying functions of regional organisations. The second section will examine how contributions to the old and new regionalism debate, as well as case studies on regional organisations inform the analytical focus of this thesis. The thesis will be presented as a contribution to the comparative regionalism debate on the function of regional organisations and its nexus with the domestic environment in the member states. The focus draws on consideration of the impact of the domestic environment of the member states given by authors of the old and new regionalisms and on insights into the diversity of functions of regional organisations provided by case studies on regional organisations. Especially stimulating are studies on regional organisations in South-East Asia, Latin America and Africa. The third section devotes attention to the literature on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. It will highlight the intention to add to this strand of the literature by turning attention from integration to the search of

alternative functions of these organisations. A concluding section will summarise how the thesis intends to contribute to the mentioned strands of literature.

2.1.REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

This subsection argues that studies, like this thesis, on the varying function of regional organisations in specific areas of the world constitute a relevant contribution to the discussion of the global role of regional organisations. This claim draws on the gap between the normative assumptions that drive the debate and the empirical evidence given on the function of regional organisations. Both the integration theories of the 'old regionalism' and contributions to the 'new regionalism' literature promote the vision of regional organisations as regional and global governance actors.¹ However, empirical studies on individual regional organisations have highlighted that hardly any of them managed to assume significant regional governance functions as, for instance, the EU has done. In this light, the thesis argues that the normative assumptions which pervade both academic and policy discourses require an adjustment to the actual function and capacity of the regional organisations. Analyses of the *de facto* functions of the regional organisations will produce a more valid picture.

Different strands of the literature on regional organisations share the basic normative assumption that regional organisations produce stabilising effects for the member states and the regions concerned.² The arguments invoke four mechanisms. Neo-realism explains regional organisations as protection from and bandwagoning with hegemonic powers.³ Functionalist scholars promoted the development of regional organisations after the Second World War as means to enhance peace between states.⁴ They argue that increasing global economic linkages require regional responses. Succeeding approaches such as neo-

¹ The term governance denotes authority structures and processes that regulate how power is exerted and decisions are made in a given society. It may refer to the national, regional and global level. Chapter 3.3.4 gives a precise definition of the term.

² According to Rick Fawn, Robert Gilpin also identified malevolent forms of regionalism that would contribute to economic decline and encourage conflict. This variety of regionalism has never been strongly considered in the debate on regional organisations. See: **Fawn, Rick** (2009), *'Regions' and Their Study: Wherefrom, What for and Whereto?* Review of International Studies, No. 35, p 18.

³ The theory assumes that no deep integration is possible under these conditions. **Waltz, Kenneth** (1979), *Theory of International Politics*. New York: Random House, pp. 126-28.

⁴ **Mitrany**, *The Functional Theory of Politics*, 101.

functionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and 'new regionalism' preserved and enhanced this assumption.⁵ Inspired by progressive globalisation⁶ these approaches emphasised that security aspects, the so-called 'non-traditional security challenges', also require regional co-operation and integration.⁷ They depict the turn of nation states to regional multilateral organisations rather as a maxim than as an option for the solution of fundamental governance matters.⁸ In particular, authors explain the third wave of regionalism after 1985, from which e.g. MECORSUR, APEC and the CIS emerged, in terms of the pressure of globalisation.⁹ Besides the accelerating processes of globalisation, the erosion of the bipolar power-structure of the international system after the Cold War led scholars like Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver to assume that regional units will increasingly determine the international arena.¹⁰ Their call to consider not only states but also regional organisations in matters of international security has strongly informed the academic debate.¹¹

The vision of regional organisations which interact internationally and shape world politics also shapes policy debates. The UN, for example, is a vivid proponent of strengthened co-operation between regional organisations, especially in matters of global security governance.¹² The EU also promotes regional co-operation in its foreign policy. EU-related research therefore investigates its capacity to promote

⁵ **Moravcsik, Andrew** (1993), *Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach*. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vo. 31, No. 4, p 476.

⁶ The term is grasped as a comprehensive restructuring of the global political economy at all levels, which is triggered by increasing social, economic and political interdependencies. See: **Marchand et al.**, *The Political Economy of New Regionalism*, 898.

⁷ **Buzan, Barry** (2003), *Regions and Powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 12.

⁸ **Nesadurai**, *Globalisation, Domestic Politics and Regionalism*, 33.

⁹ Fawcett defines the following three waves of regionalism. 1945-1965: e.g. European Institutions, NATO, League of Arab States; 1965-1985: e.g. ASEAN, ECOWAS, SADC; after 1985: e.g. APEC, MERCOSUR, CIS, SCO, CSTO, EurAsEC see: **Fawcett, Louise** (2008), *Regionalism in World Politics: Past and Present*. In: Koesler, Arianne and Ziemmek, Martin (eds.), *Elements of Regional Integration*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

¹⁰ During the Cold War international security dynamics were primarily determined at global level due to the competition between the super powers. Since the end of the Cold War, so the argument goes, no single power has had the capacity to determine global developments. Consequently, regional powers gain capacity to act. Interdependencies at regional level gain importance. Finally, some de-territorialising effects of globalization call for regional responses beyond state level. This argument is developed at length e.g. in **Buzan**, *Regions and Powers*, 6-14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹² **United Nations** (ed.), (2005), *Yearbook of the United Nations*. Canada: United Nations Publications, p 96.

regional organisations abroad.¹³ Like other regional organisations, GUAM, the CIS and the CSTO have incorporated the notion of regional organisations as global players in their rhetoric. They refer to the relevance of regional organisations for global governance in order to increase their international recognition.¹⁴

The postulation at the root of this academic and political approach is a global shift towards 'post-Westphalian governance patterns'.¹⁵ A glance at the regional organisations in different regions of the world, however, casts doubt on the validity of this postulation. In 2012 the EU is still the sole regional organisation to which member states have substantially transferred sovereignty. EU and NAFTA are the only regional organisations that assume comprehensive tasks of regional governance in economic and social regards.¹⁶ Hardly any regional organisation is as capable of serious regional security governance as NATO.¹⁷ This observation leads scholars to re-consider 'what is the outcome of regionalism [including regional organisations] in the individual parts of the world'?¹⁸ This question indicates that it is necessary to improve knowledge about the actual function of the individual regional organisations in order to evaluate the potential of global governance through regional organisations.

This puts the comparative study of the various regional organisations on the research agenda. In recent years, strong contributions have been made with regard to most areas of the world. The post-Soviet area is, however, hardly considered. It is

¹³ **Börzel, Tanja** (2009), *The Diffusion of (Inter-)Regionalism*. KFG Working Paper Series, No. 7.

Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond, *Studying Regions Comparatively. Back to the Future?*, 28.

¹⁴ See for the CSTO: **Hoffmann, Katharina** (2013), *The Collective Security Treaty Organization: A Multilateral Response to New Security Challenges?* In: Aris, Stephen and Wenger, Andreas (eds.), *Regional Organisations and Security: Conceptions and Practice*. London: Routledge; **Weitz, Richard** (2006), *Terrorism in Eurasia: Enhancing the Multilateral Response*. China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly, No. 4., see for GUAM: **Japaridze**, *The Organization for Democracy and Development - GUAM: A Road Map to Relevance?*, 76.

¹⁵ **Hettne, Björn** (2005), *Regionalism and World Order*. In: Farrell, Mary, *et al.* (eds.), *Global Politics of Regionalism*. London: Pluto Press, p 284.

¹⁶ **Hurrell, Andrew** (2005), *The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory*. In: Farrell, Mary, *et al.* (eds.), *Global Politics of Regionalism*. London: Pluto Press, p 52.

¹⁷ ECOWAS has established mechanisms of military intervention not only on paper but also in practice. However, analysts suggest that ECOWAS nevertheless has only limited stable regional governance competences, since the member states' commitment to ratify and implement joint documents is limited. See for instance: **Cowell, Frederik** (2011), *The Impact of the ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy*. *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vo. 19, No. 2, p 341.

¹⁸ **Börzel**, *Comparative Regionalism. A New Research Agenda*, 5.

important to close this gap for two key reasons: First, about five regional organisations have existed in the post-Soviet space for a decade and more. These regional organisations picked up the organisational design of regional organisations in other regions of the world, but the intra-organisational processes distinguish them from these. So far little knowledge exists about the function of these intra-organisational processes. Studying their specifics will contribute to the knowledge of varieties of regional organisations. Second, the organisations, especially the CSTO and GUAM, strive to intensify their interaction with other regional organisations in the UN framework or with NATO.¹⁹ An adequate assessment of the prospects and effects of such collaboration requires a sound knowledge about these organisations' capacity. The comparative regionalism research provides inspiring assumptions for this research but is also marked by some shortcomings. The following section will outline which assumptions from this debate will guide the research and which gaps in the debate this thesis will focus on.

2.2.INSIGHTS FROM COMPARATIVE REGIONALISM

This section argues that the combination of the so-called old and new regionalism literature in the comparative debate is fruitful for the analysis of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. Its theories are not comprehensively applicable to the post-Soviet space, since they build on premises that do not resemble the developments in this space. Nevertheless, the comparative perspective offers some explanatory factors and a change of perspective concerning the organisations' function. One is encouraged to reconsider existing interpretations of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and to enhance the comparative literature in the following ways. First of all, comparative regionalism emphasises the contingency of form and function of regional organisations on the societal characteristics of the member states. Secondly, it suggests considering other intentions besides integration, if the member states do

¹⁹ For GUAM: **Tolstov, Sergei** (2008), *The GUAM Phenomenon: Its Experience as a Regional Cooperation Structure and its Prospects as an International Organisation*. Central Asia and the Caucasus, No. 51-52, p 37. For the CIS: **Deutsch, Karl Wolfgang** (1954), *Political Community at the International Level: Problems of Definition and Measurement*. New York: Doubleday.

not cede sovereignty to supranational bodies and institutions.²⁰ Thirdly, it challenges the paradigm of the welfare and security of the societies as the driving factors behind engagement in regional formats by pointing to the precedence of the survival of the ruling elite in non-democratic regimes. This thesis intends to advance the comparative regionalism literature in two regards. It will shed light on a geographic blank spot in the debate. Further, it intends to help unveiling the still weakly studied impact of the domestic environment of states on their conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations. The post-Soviet space promises insights into the role of sovereignty concepts for the engagement of non-democratic states in regional organisations, since the regional organisations are built by states that only gained full sovereignty in 1991. It will also suggest some rationales behind an instrument that occurs in different world regions, namely ‘spaghetti-bowl agreements’. The next two sub-sections will outline how old and new regionalism as well as case studies on regional organisations provide some guidance for the analytical focus of the thesis.

2.2.1. GUIDANCE FROM OLD REGIONALISM

The theories of the old regionalism developed with regard to the first wave of regionalism share the emphasis on regional integration as a long-term end and core mechanism of regional organisations. The strand comprises constructivist, functionalist and intergovernmentalist approaches. As this section will highlight, their definition of integration is not applicable to the post-Soviet space, but their discussion on the driving and hampering factors of integration can inform the analytical focus of this thesis. Functionalist and intergovernmentalist theories in particular promote a concept of integration that builds on the states’ adherence to legalised multilateral institutions agreed in regional organisations.²¹ The thesis uses the term ‘legalised multilateral institutions’ to describe multilaterally agreed and formalised rules often of binding character that in many cases include mechanisms

²⁰ In this thesis institutions are depicted with reference to Douglass North as written and non-written rules or codes of behaviour that constrain social actions. They are to be distinguished from the term organisations or bodies. The latter describes a set of formal rules and actors. Their actions are also based on institutions but a body is not an institution itself. Chapter three provides a detailed definition of the term.

²¹ **Mitrany**, *The Functional Theory of Politics*, 114-21.

to monitor and enforce their application and indeed determine the interaction between the signatories.²² According to Ernst Haas, the father of neo-functionalism, integration is achieved if national political actors 'shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new and larger centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing nation states.'²³ Scholars agree that the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space have so far not achieved a degree of interaction that resembles integration.²⁴ While in most of these organisations it is a common practice to adopt multilateral legalised rules, these rules have hardly become institutions in the interaction between the signatories.²⁵ None of the former Soviet republics has so far *de facto* ceded sovereignty to any of these regional organisations. Thus, the concept of integration is not applicable to the post-Soviet space, even though the term is often used when analysing regional organisations in the post-Soviet space.²⁶ Nevertheless, constructivist, functionalist and intergovernmentalist approaches offer some assumptions that are insightful for the study of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space as the following paragraph will show.

²² 'Legalisation' is defined as ideally consisting of obligations, namely binding rules, precise formulation of these rules and the delegation of their monitoring to a specific organisation. The degree of legalization varies. Only few regional organisations, like the EU or the WTO, include all three aspects. Other groups are hardly legalised. Some authors therefore distinguish 'hard' legalization, where all three criteria are met, from 'soft' legalization, where a combination of some criteria exists. See: **Abott, Kenneth et al.** (2002), *The Concept of Legalization*. In: Keohane, Robert (ed.), *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*. London: Routledge, pp. 132-6.

²³ **Haas**, *International Integration: the European and the Universal Process*, 366-7.

²⁴ **Obydenkova**, *Comparative Regionalism: Eurasian Cooperation and European Integration. The Case for Neofunctionalism?*, 91; **Flikke**, *Balancing Acts: Russian–Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO*, 6. **Kembayev**, *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area*, 90-1. **Olcott, Martha Brill et al.** (1999), *Getting it Wrong : Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

²⁵ **Dragneva and Kort**, *The Legal Regime for Free Trade in the Commonwealth of Independent States*, 234; **Kubicek**, *The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism*; **Nikitin**, *The End of the 'Post-Soviet Space'*. *The Changing Geopolitical Orientations of the Newly Independent States*, 3.

²⁶ The literature on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space is still strongly occupied with assessing failure and progress of integration. Chapter 2.3.1 will provide detailed evidence for this statement.

Constructivist approaches depict the emergence of a 'security community' as an effect of regional organisations.²⁷ Karl Deutsch interprets interactions in regional organisations as ideally creating a shared sense of community, which ensures the absence of warfare in conflict situations. Both he and Emanuel Adler argue that a security community can be formed not only via legalised multilateral institutions but also by informal institutions that intensify the societal ties and collaboration between members of a regional organisation.²⁸ This assumption guides this thesis to explore the effects of non-formalised practices within the regional organisations under study, since they lack legalised institutions.

In the concept of functionalism David Mitrany introduces the idea of a spill-over from intensified interaction and co-operation between the member states to integration and from integration in some issues areas to integration in others.²⁹ From the point of view of this thesis, this assumption poses the question of why interaction within the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space does not produce any spill-over effects towards integration or other forms of collective solutions to shared problems. Arguments of neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism suggest which factors might fruitfully be explored in the search for answers. All three approaches discuss aspects of the domestic politics of the member states as a potential obstacle or driver of interactions in organisations. The realist intergovernmentalism developed by Stanley Hoffmann argues that the readiness of member states to cede sovereignty to regional organisations is decisive. Due to the fact that the transfer of power to regional organisations erodes the nation state, a state would prefer diversity instead of integration.³⁰ Hoffmann identifies national consciousness, the social and political system of a state and nationalist ideology as constraints to integration.³¹ Accordingly, concepts of

²⁷ **Deutsch**, Political Community at the International Level: Problems of Definition and Measurement. **Adler, Emanuel** (1997), *Imagined (Security) Communities: Cognitive Regions in International Relations*. Millennium, Vo. 26, No. 2.

²⁸ **Deutsch**, Political Community at the International Level: Problems of Definition and Measurement, 33. **Adler, Emanuel and Michael Barnett** (eds.), (1998), *Security Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 217.

²⁹ **Mitrany**, The Functional Theory of Politics, 114-21.

³⁰ **Hoffmann, Stanley** (1966), *Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe*. Daedalus, Vo. 95, No. 3, p 888.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 885.

sovereignty may provide insights into how states conceptualise the function of regional organisations. In his neo-functionalist contributions Ernst Haas asks if the potentially established institutions in the regional organisation provide states with new conflict resolution instruments, since these may convince them to cede sovereignty to the regional organisations.³² By a similar token Andrew Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism pays attention to the preferences of national policy-makers regarding the result of interactions in regional organisations. The costs and benefits of existing regional interdependencies strongly determine the national preferences.³³

In a nutshell, when leaving the integration-paradigm of the old regionalism aside the theories may inform the thesis in four regards: first, to focus not entirely on legalised multilateral institutions; second, to inquire about the potential capacity and constraints of the negotiated legalised multilateral rules for the member states; third, to explore the impact of the sovereignty considerations of the member states against the background of existing interdependencies; and, fourth, to ask why the interactions in the regional organisations do not lead to any spill-over in terms of collective solutions. To further narrow down the research focus the thesis, as the next subsection will show, consulted the new regionalism literature and explorative case studies on various regional organisations.

2.2.2. NEW AND COMPARATIVE REGIONALISM

In the wake of globalisation and the emergence of regional organisations in the 1980s, which hardly achieved integration, scholars re-interpreted the form and function of regionalism. The new regionalism literature promoted two assumptions that are insightful for this thesis. First, the school acknowledges the diversity of formats, structures and models of regionalism.³⁴ Regional interaction is rather

³² **Haas**, *International Integration: the European and the Universal Process*, 367.

³³ **Moravcsik**, *Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach*, 481.

³⁴ Authors of new regionalism stress the impact of society-led and non-formalised regional interactions, and argue that the role of state-led regional organisations will decrease with the intensification of globalisation processes. This forecast turned out to have weak relevance for many organisations in Latin America, South East Asia and also in the post-Soviet space. See: Herzig, Edmund (2004), *Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia*. *International Affairs*, Vo. 80, No. 3, p 516. **Gomez-Mera, Laura** (2008), *How 'New' is the 'New Regionalism' in the Americas? The Case of MERCOSUR*.

vaguely conceived as the ‘tendency and political commitment to organise the world in terms of regions’.³⁵ Secondly, the new regionalism argues that the function of regional organisations is wider than integration, and suggests a variety of at least two functions, namely to protect states against the negative consequences of these processes or to fuel integration into global processes, e.g. by improving the international competitiveness of domestic firms.³⁶ However, the new regionalism argues that the erosion of the nation state through globalisation processes render finding collective regional solutions a must for nation states.³⁷ While the assumption of varying functions of regional organisations provides some guidance for the study of the post-Soviet space, the assumption that the function is inevitably driven by the need to find collective solutions is less helpful. The CIS, GUAM, EurAsEC, the CSTO and the CU have matters provoked by globalisation processes on their agenda, but so far only the CU has produced some collective solutions.³⁸ Accordingly, the causal nexus from globalisation pressure to the states’ readiness for collective solutions is apparently less direct than the new regionalism debate initially assumed. By the same token, scholars who studied regional organisations in Latin America and South East Asia have criticised the new regionalism.³⁹

The observed gap between the assumed function of regional organisations and the empirically observable results of these organisations induced scholars of regionalism to call research on comparative regionalism. Region-specific studies will highlight the varieties of regionalism more precisely.⁴⁰ Alex Warleigh-Lack and Ben

Journal of International Relations and Development, No. 11, p 293; **Dent, Christopher** (2005), *Taiwan and the New Regional Political Economy of East Asia*. The China Quarterly, No. 182, p 388.

³⁵ **Hettne, Björn and Fredrik Söderbaum** (2008), The Future of Regionalism. Old Divides, New Frontiers. In: Cooper, Andrew F, *et al.* (eds.), *Regionalisation and Global Governance. The Taming of Globalisation?*. London: Routledge, p 66.

³⁶ **Mittleman, James** (2000), *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 111-30.

³⁷ **Farrell, Mary et al.** (eds.), (2005), *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*. London: Pluto, p 3; **Marchand et al.**, *The Political Economy of New Regionalism*, 898.

³⁸ **Torjesen, Stina** (2008), *Russia as a Military Great Power. The Uses of the CSTO and the SCO in Central Asia*. . In: Wilson Rowe, Elena and Torjesen, Stina (eds.), *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge, p 181.

³⁹ **Carranza, Mario** (2003), *Can Mercosur Survive? Domestic and International Constraints on Mercosur*. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vo. 45, No. 2, p 77; **Nesadurai**, *Globalisation, Domestic Politics and Regionalism*, 40.

⁴⁰ **Hettne and Söderbaum**, *The Future of Regionalism. Old Divides, New Frontiers.*, 68.

Rosamond call for lifting the divide between integration theories and new regionalism in search of a generalizable theory.⁴¹ Authors suggest various analytical categories for the study of regional organisations. The following two categories are understudied and hence of most interest to this thesis⁴²: first, the identification of the ‘functionality’, which inquires for aims and mechanisms of the processes within regional organisations.⁴³ Secondly, the impact of the domestic context on the state’s behaviour in regional organisations deserves more attention. Scholars demand a more systematic study of the functionality and theory-guided approaches on the interplay between the domestic and international environment.⁴⁴ So far the post-Soviet space is particularly underrepresented in the debate. In particular, original empirical studies that would have the capacity to inform the debate are rare.⁴⁵

In this light the thesis is committed to exploring the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and investigating its domestic origins. Accordingly, the thesis places itself within the recent comparative regionalism debate and aims to gain more guiding insights from case studies on regional organisations in South-East Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Organisations from these regions of the world provide a good case for comparison, since their characteristics are similar to that of organisations in the post-Soviet space. MERCOSUR, ASEAN, the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also survived several decades without integration through legalised multilateral institutions and are still relatively active.⁴⁶ Despite the similar weakness

⁴¹ **Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond**, *Studying Regions Comparatively. Back to the Future?* .

⁴² Other categories are the ‘genesis’ of the organisation, asking how a format has been build; the impact on the region and beyond; and the institutional design of an organisation. **Goltermann et al.**, *Roads to Regionalism*, 6.

⁴³ **Warleigh-Lack**, *Towards a Conceptual Framework for Regionalisation: Bridging 'New Regionalism' and 'Integration Theory'*, 763-5.

⁴⁴ **Börzel**, *Comparative Regionalism. A New Research Agenda*, 22. **Warleigh-Lack**, *Towards a Conceptual Framework for Regionalisation: Bridging 'New Regionalism' and 'Integration Theory'*, 762.

⁴⁵ An example that discusses the post-Soviet space in a comparative volume is not more than a review of secondary literature. The article builds on literature that mainly refers to integration theory and neglects insights from other regional organisations. It is hence less informative for the debate. **Wirminghaus, Niklas** (2012), *Ephemeral Regionalism: The Proliferation of (Failed) Regional Integration Initiatives in Post-Soviet Eurasia*. In: Börzel, Tanja (ed.), *Roads to Regionalism*. Farnham: Ashgate.

⁴⁶ **Gomez-Mera**, *How ‘New’ is the ‘New Regionalism’ in the Americas? The Case of MERCOSUR*, 295; **Nesadurai, Helene** (2009), *ASEAN and Regional Governance after the Cold War: from Regional Order*

of multilateral legalised rules some organisations, MERCOSUR for instance, strongly commit to the negotiation and adoption of such rules, as the CIS, EurAsEC or the CSTO do.⁴⁷ Other organisations reduce this practice to a minimum, as GUAM does. Examples are the SCO, the OIC or ASEAN.⁴⁸ A frequently invoked concern of scholars working on the post-Soviet space is that the organisations produce agreements that overlap with previous multilateral agreements, agreements adopted in other regional organisations or with bilateral agreements. Authors see this overlap as a core source of the weakness of such multilateral legalised rules.⁴⁹ This resonates with observations in the above mentioned regions. Scholars have mainstreamed the term ‘spaghetti-bowl agreements’ for African organisations especially to stress the high number of competing and overlapping treaties.⁵⁰ The security agreements of ASEAN are overlapping and weakly enforced.⁵¹ The pervasiveness of this phenomenon demands an explanation. The thesis intends to contribute with some insights on the function of this practice.

The similarities described do not only raise the above mentioned sub-question for the research, but also deliver potential answers to the function of the interaction within regional organisations. First of all, ASEAN experts in particular have picked up an idea that has already been voiced by early constructivist approaches; namely to explore the non-formalised dimension of interactions. Most explicitly ASEAN promotes its own model of non-formalised co-operation, dubbed the ‘ASEAN-Way’. The term stands for ‘informality, organisations minimalism [...] and intensive consultations [...]’.⁵² Apart from that, some authors propose an alternative understanding of the function of regional organisations. Helene Nesadurai and David Arase, for instance, see ASEAN as a body for the defence of domestic

to Regional Community? The Pacific Review, Vo. 22, No. 1, p 93. **Legrenzi and Harders**, Introduction: Beyond Regionalism? Regional Cooperation, Regionalism and Regionalization in the Middle East, 8.

⁴⁷ **Carranza**, Can Mercosur Survive? Domestic and International Constraints on Mercosur, 76.

⁴⁸ **Aris**, Eurasian Regionalism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, 20-27.

⁴⁹ **Dragneva and Kort**, The Legal Regime for Free Trade in the Commonwealth of Independent States, 246.

⁵⁰ **Börzel**, Comparative Regionalism. A New Research Agenda, 12.

⁵¹ **Arase, David** (2010), *Non-Traditional Security in China-ASEAN Cooperation: The Institutionalization of Regional Security Cooperation and the Evolution of East Asian Regionalism*. Asian Survey, Vo. 50, No. 4, p 818.

⁵² **Acharya, Amitav** (2001), *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge.

sovereignty.⁵³ ASEAN offers the possibility to find solutions to conflict issues and to minimise military conflict in the region. In addition, Arase argues that the survival of the political regimes in the ASEAN countries requires a certain degree of economic welfare. States try to improve economic welfare via interactions in ASEAN.⁵⁴ Stephen Aris interprets the SCO as a mechanism to empower the domestic and foreign policy of the Central Asian states. It enables the reduction of bilateral tensions and fosters economic development.⁵⁵ According to Edmund Herzig, Iran's engagement in regional organisations is a chance to ideationally influence the other members.⁵⁶ These interpretations offer valuable guidance for this thesis. They underline the utility of deducting the member states' conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations, including their choice of instruments, from the ruling elites' perception of domestic needs. Factors that have been presented as decisive by representatives of the old regionalism also play a decisive role in the above presented interpretations. Sovereignty concerns are for instance a crucial factor that decisively influences the states' proneness to the idea of integration and their alternative interpretation of the functions of regional organisations. Also, the choice of instruments strongly depends on the preferences of the ruling elites in their specific domestic environment. The intention to enhance the welfare of the domestic society via regional organisations, as was promoted by the old regionalism, may well be part of the ruling elites' agenda. However, the appropriate instrument is not necessarily integration. Finally, the comparative perspective shows that the function of both formalised practices such as the adoption of multilateral legalised rules and non-formalised practices should be investigated to grasp the relevant instruments offered by the organisations.

As mentioned above, leading scholars of regionalism search for a comprehensive framework to explain the diversity. In order to further this aim the existing literature requires a more systematic analysis of the varying function of regional

⁵³ Nesadurai, 2009 #807@98}Arase, Non-Traditional Security in China-ASEAN Cooperation: The Institutionalization of Regional Security Cooperation and the Evolution of East Asian Regionalism, 834; Acharya, Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia, 64.

⁵⁴ Arase, Non-Traditional Security in China-ASEAN Cooperation: The Institutionalization of Regional Security Cooperation and the Evolution of East Asian Regionalism, 811.

⁵⁵ Aris, Eurasian Regionalism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, 179.

⁵⁶ Herzig, Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia, 507.

organisations and the origins of the specific conceptualisations. So far the literature provides some suggestions but no framework that gives evidence about the underlying causal relations or conditioning factors and would therefore enable the application of the insights gained for one organisation in the study of other organisations. The link between sovereignty and the conceptualisation of regional organisations deserves more attention. Also, none of the contributions intensively engages with the actual instruments offered by the regional organisations to pursue particular aims, such as the defence of sovereignty. This thesis intends to contribute with insights on these aspects to the comparative regionalism debate. On the way to formulating a precise analytical focus, the next section shall discuss what arguments the literature on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space could contribute.

2.3. STUDIES OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

Regional organisations are common phenomena in the post-Soviet space. About ten regional organisations emerged after 1991 of which the CIS, EurAsEC, CSTO and GUAM proved relatively durable. A new Customs Union emerged in 2010 and a Eurasian Union is planned in 2015. Nevertheless, studies of these organisations have, as already mentioned, hardly informed the comparative regionalism debate. In two sub-sections this section will discuss the origins of this underrepresentation and highlight what change of perspective the thesis may contribute to the debate on regional organisations as oriented towards the post-Soviet space. The first section presents the scant attention paid to the post-Soviet space as a reaction to how scholars framed these organisations. The majority of authors describe regional organisations in the post-Soviet space as dysfunctional. The tendency to deem these regional organisations as a failure is in turn a consequence of the authors' strong orientation towards old regionalism and a neglect of insights from comparative case studies. The second sub-section will highlight that only a few authors discuss an alternative explanation for the function of the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. Overall, the section will highlight that the

existing literature provides little explanation for why the allegedly dysfunctional organisations still survive and are even relatively active.

2.3.1. THE PREVAILING INTERPRETATION: FAILED INTEGRATION

Alexander Nikitin dubs regionalism in the post-Soviet space as an ‘alphabet soup’ to suggest that it is not more than an accumulation of multiple acronyms.⁵⁷ His framing rests strongly on the observation that the CIS, EurAsEC, the CSTO, GUAM and the many other organisations that emerged between 1991 and 2012⁵⁸ all claimed to promote integration but failed to achieve it. As argued in section 2.1 scholars of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space widely agree that none of the organisations had until 2012 produced substantial integration. They draw their convincing conclusion on the following characteristics which the regional organisations share.

The organisations that have emerged in the post-Soviet space until 2012 are similar in their structures and in their declared integration aims. This applies especially to the CIS economic format, the SES of 2002, EurAsEC and the CU.⁵⁹ The structure of GUAM differs, but the organisation also declared the intention of pursuing economic integration, though not beyond a free trade area.⁶⁰ Except for GUAM and the CSTO all organisations intensively engage in the negotiation and adoption of multilateral agreements. The CIS for instance has adopted several hundreds of trade agreements, of which at least 90% exist merely on paper.⁶¹ The same applies to the

⁵⁷ **Nikitin**, *The End of the ‘Post-Soviet Space’*. *The Changing Geopolitical Orientations of the Newly Independent States*, 3.

⁵⁸ The others are e.g. the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) founded in 2005, the Caucasus Four in 2000, the Single Economic Space (SES) founded in 2003 and the Customs Union of 1996. None of these has formally been dissolved. In addition, the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation was initiated in 1996 and merged into EurAsEC in 2006. Further in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) the majority of members are former Soviet republics. Since they involve states beyond the post-Soviet space, the thesis does not treat them as regional organisations in the post-Soviet space.

⁵⁹ **Hoffmann, Katharina** (2012), *Eurasian Union – A New Name of an Old Integration Idea*. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 112; **Shadikhodjaev, Sherzod** (2009), *Trade Integration in the CIS Region: A Thorny Path Towards a Customs Union*. *Journal of International Economic Law*, Vo. 12, No. 3.

⁶⁰ The term integration is used in the official GUAM speech, but authors correctly point out that economic integration is primarily envisioned in terms of free trade and not a deeper customs union. See: **Kuzio, Taras** (2000), *Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM*. *European Security*, Vo. 9, No. 2, p 83.

⁶¹ **Smbatian**, *Common Economic Space and Some Thoughts on Protection of the Russian Market against Unfair Trade*, 938; **Cooper**, *Russia’s Trade Relations within the Commonwealth of*

many EurAsEC and the fewer GUAM and CSTO agreements. None of the organisations have managed to establish multilateral legalised institutions. Some authors argue that the CU has some first achievements in this regard. Others argue that the limited economic effect which the CU has shown in 2012 primarily relies on bilateral concessions made by Russia and only weakly on the adopted multilateral legalised regulations.⁶² It is, in any case, too early to evaluate the degree to which the multilateral legalised rules of the CU indeed have produced integration. In line with their weak integration progress none of the organisations has set up supranational bodies. Prior to the creation of the CU in 2012, the CIS and EurAsEC were the only organisations with developed some rules of supranational character. Supranational institutions had, however, not been established in any of the regional organisations by 2012.⁶³ The legal framework of the organisations, especially the CIS, is marked by 'softly legalised', namely weakly binding, mechanisms. In addition, a powerful conflict solution and arbitration body is absent in all regional organisations.⁶⁴ Inter-state relations in the post-Soviet space are also marked by the coexistence of bilateral and multilateral agreements which often overlap and compete.⁶⁵ In addition, multilateral agreements in the individual regional organisations tend to cover similar issues. This creates a 'spaghetti-bowl' of agreements. Generally, analysts share the opinion that primarily bilateral, not multilateral, agreements have weight. In a nutshell, regional organisations in the post-Soviet space have established organisation bodies, adopt formal multilateral agreements and nominally engage in harmonisation of law and integration without achieving tangible integration. These observations hardly allow for any other conclusion than recognising the absence of integration via these organisations.

Independent States, 173; **Tumbarello**, Regional Trade Integration and WTO Accession: Which is the Right Sequencing? An Application to the CIS, 8; **Willerton and Beznosov**, Russia's Pursuit of its Eurasian Security Interests: Weighing the CIS and Alternative Bilateral-Multilateral Arrangements, 50. *ibid.*

⁶² **Blockmans, Steven et al.** (2012), *Towards a Eurasian Economic Union: The Challenge of Integration and Unity*. CEPS Special Report, No. 75.

⁶³ See the institutional analysis of all regional organisations in: **Kembayev**, Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area.

⁶⁴ **Dragneva and Kort**, The Legal Regime for Free Trade in the Commonwealth of Independent States, 243-57.

⁶⁵ **Shadikhodjaev**, Trade Integration in the CIS Region: A Thorny Path Towards a Customs Union, 2-5; **Willerton and Beznosov**, Russia's Pursuit of its Eurasian Security Interests: Weighing the CIS and Alternative Bilateral-Multilateral Arrangements, 50.

Nevertheless, some authors with an academic background in Russia are eager to cast the organisations in a better light by identifying some integration progress. Tatyana Valovaya, for example, draws a picture of successful deep integration in the post-Soviet space on various levels. While the CIS is, in her eyes, at the first integration stage, namely the efficient free trade area, EurAsEC and the Customs Union have successfully moved to deeper integration.⁶⁶ Given her professional role in the Eurasian Economic Commission, her article is more a political statement than a research contribution and fails to give evidence of the integration success. Denisov also stresses the relevance and strength of CIS integration.⁶⁷ Others are more cautious. They admit the current weakness of the CIS, but stress the integration potential and its added value to the former Soviet republics.⁶⁸ In support of Russia's political efforts to institutionalise co-operation between the CSTO and NATO a number of authors emphasised the viability of the CSTO in the region, albeit without supplying much convincing evidence.⁶⁹

The majority of analysts, however, take the above described dynamics of the CIS, EurAsEC, CSTO and GUAM as evidence of these organisations' failure. They often depict the CIS directly or indirectly as defunct, or as a presidential club or paper organisation.⁷⁰ The CIS is 'an attempt of economic and political integration, but [...] does not reach much development in regional co-operation'.⁷¹ Some authors admit that the CIS has been effective in 'facilitating the managed disintegration of the

⁶⁶ **Valovaya, Tatyana** (2012), Eurasian Economic Integration: Origins, Patterns, and Outlooks. In: Vinokurov, Evgeny (ed.), Eurasian Integration Yearbook 2012. Almaty: Eurasian Development Bank, p 59.

⁶⁷ **Denisov, Andrei** (2009), *The CIS in 2009: Achievements, Issues, Prospects*. International Affairs Minneapolis-Moscow, No. 2.

⁶⁸ **Vinokurov**, Mutual Investments in the CIS Banking Sector; **Vinokurov, Evgeny** (2008), The CIS Common Electric Power Market. Almaty: Eurasian Development Bank; **Gurova, Irina and M Efremova** (2011), *Regional Trade Potential in the CIS*. Problems of Economic Transition, Vo. 53, No. 12; **Shishkov, Yuri** (2008), *CIS: Fifteen Years of Efforts in Vain*. Social Sciences (Minneapolis-Moscow), Vo. 39, No. 1.

⁶⁹ See for example: **Nikitin, Alexander** (2007), *Post-Soviet Military-Political Integration: The Collective Security Treaty Organisation and its Relations with the EU and NATO*. China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly, Vo. 5, No. 1; **Weitz**, Terrorism in Eurasia: Enhancing the Multilateral Response.

⁷⁰ See for example: **Flikke**, Balancing Acts: Russian-Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO, 6; **Kembayev**, Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area, 90-1; **Olcott et al.**, Getting it Wrong : Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

⁷¹ **Obydenkova**, Comparative Regionalism: Eurasian Cooperation and European Integration. The Case for Neofunctionalism?, 91.

USSR', but not in 'providing a viable framework for (re)integration'.⁷² Only a few authors name concrete CIS achievements during the disintegration, though. One is the continuation of the transnational service infrastructure like pensions regulations.⁷³ However, these are in 2012 *de facto* not regulated on multilateral basis. Mark Webber and Richard Sakwa also stress that the solution of disputes concerning the Soviet nuclear weapons can 'in part be accounted for by a process of multilateral diplomacy within the CIS.'⁷⁴ Accordingly, analysts assumed that the CIS seen as a 'mechanism for civilised divorce'⁷⁵ would vanish, in particular with the emergence of GUAM, the Single Economic Space, the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation, the CSTO and EurAsEC in the late 1990s.⁷⁶ With similar reasoning authors describe co-operation in GUAM, CSTO and the other formats basically as a failure.⁷⁷ Libman and Vinokurov interpret GUAM as held together by a few shared problems rather than long-term co-operation objectives and forecast a rather unpromising development.⁷⁸ Already in the early 2000s scholars saw GUAM as a non-starter with weak integration prospects.⁷⁹ Since the political visibility of GUAM decreased, the organisation is hardly a topic in the literature.⁸⁰ Examples of the

⁷² **Dragneva and Kort**, The Legal Regime for Free Trade in the Commonwealth of Independent States, 234.

⁷³ **Sakwa, Richard** (2007), The CIS: Conflicts of Space and Time. In: Dusseault, David (ed.), The CIS: Form or Substance? Helsinki: Alexanteri Institute, p 305.

⁷⁴ In addition, the CIS is suggested to account for the absence of territorial revision claims between the former Soviet republics. **Sakwa, Richard and Mark Webber** (1999), *The Commonwealth of Independent States, 1991-1998: Stagnation and Survival*. Europe-Asia Studies Vo. 51, No. 3, p 382 and 91.

⁷⁵ **Solov'ev**, Faktor 'myagkoi sily' v politike Rossiyskoi Federatsii na postsovetском prostranstve [Soft Power Factor of the Policy of the Russian Federation in the Post-Soviet Space], 2.

⁷⁶ **Batyuk, Vladimir** (1999), *Russia and the CIS: Does the CIS Exist Anymore?*. UK Ministry of Defence [Online], p 34.

⁷⁷ **Torjesen**, Understanding Regional Co-operation in Central Asia, 1991-2004; **Allison**, Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia; **Collins**, Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Central Asia.

⁷⁸ **Vinokurov, Evgeny and Alexander Libman** (2012), Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p 19.

⁷⁹ **Schmidt, Jürgen** (2003), Von GUUAM, dem postsowjetischen Raum und einem Totenglöckchen [About GUUAM, the Post-Soviet Space and a Death Knell]. In: Aleksandrova, Olga, *et al.* (eds.), Rußland und der postsowjetische Raum [Russia and the Post-Soviet Space]. Baden-Baden: Nomos; **Troschke, Manuela** (2003), Neue Wirtschaftsunion oder doch nur Theater?: Die GUUAM, die Eurasische und die Zentralasiatische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft. [New Economic Union or Just Theater? The GUUAM, the Eurasian and Central Asian Economic Community]. In: Aleksandrova, Olga, *et al.* (eds.), Rußland und der postsowjetische Raum [Russia and the Post-Soviet Space]. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

⁸⁰ The following contributions are some of the very few that mention GUAM. **Kubicek**, The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism?

CSTO literature indicate that it is evaluated similarly. The CSTO has ‘failed to develop into a collective security organisation with a multilateral character’.⁸¹ Carol Saivetz argues that the CSTO still searches for a role.⁸²

These assessments mirror the integration results of the regional organisations under study very well. If their function is integration they have failed. However, when framing these organisations as dysfunctional or dead the literature did not consider a crucial empirical observation. All of the organisations turned out to be rather robust and had managed to survive for more than a decade by 2012. Some authors describe the continuation of the CIS with the words that it ‘hobbled on through the 2000s [...]’.⁸³ Analysts of GUAM also admit that the organisation has ‘demonstrated an impressive durability’⁸⁴ and is more vital than usually expected.⁸⁵ Indeed, these two organisations as well as the CSTO and EurAsEC not only survived until 2012, but also widened their profile of interaction. Despite the fact that adopted multilateral legalised rules have hardly become institutions, the member states have not ceased negotiating multilateral agreements. Only Georgia has withdrawn from the CIS, in 2009, and Uzbekistan from the CSTO, in 2011. The other former Soviet republics actively participate in the CIS, GUAM and CSTO activities even if they have, like Turkmenistan in the CIS, only observer status. These developments require some explanation. If the organisations are indeed dysfunctional, it would be irrational for the former Soviet republics to remain active participants in these organisations. Guided by a neo-realist perspective some authors argued especially in the early 1990s that the membership of some former Soviet republics in the CIS was primarily a result of pressure from Russia.⁸⁶ The argument appears weak for the situation in the 2000s where Georgia managed to withdraw from the CIS without ‘punishment’. Withdrawing from an organisation

⁸¹ **Torjesen**, Russia as a Military Great Power. The Uses of the CSTO and the SCO in Central Asia. , 184.

⁸² **Saivetz, Carol R.** (2012), *The Ties that Bind? Russia’s Evolving Relations with its Neighbors*. Communist and Post-Communist Studies, No. 45, p 403.

⁸³ **Kubicek**, The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism?

⁸⁴ **Latawski, P C** (2001), *The Limits of Diversity in the Post-Soviet Space: CIS and GUUAM*. Conflict Studies Research Centre Working Paper, p 87.

⁸⁵ **Barkovsky, Anatoli** (2003), *Where is GUUAM Heading?* . Central Asia and the Caucasus, No. 20, p 152.

⁸⁶ **Pataraja, Tamara** (2000), *Georgia & the CIS Security System*. War and Peace in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe [Online], p 55.

like the CIS is apparently an option. If the former Soviet republics stay in these organisations they presumably attribute a function to them. This reasoning induces the thesis to investigate the *de facto* functions of the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The next section will discuss the way in which only a few authors have so far engaged in the endeavour to identify the alternative functions of the CIS, GUAM, EurAsEC or CSTO. Authors like Rilka Dragneva encourage such ambition. She has in recent years criticised the dominance of the ‘failure-success paradigm’ for glossing over the actual developments in organisations like the CIS.⁸⁷

2.3.2. ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ORGANISATIONS’ FUNCTION

The above stated ambition to explore the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space aside from the integration paradigm corresponds to the recent agenda of the comparative regionalism debate. This agenda has so far only weakly guided the contributions on regionalism in the post-Soviet space. This sub-section will discuss the few contributions that so far have discussed the function of the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space in other terms than integration. It will highlight the angles that are insightful for the thesis and will present the concept of *virtual regionalism* as most thought-provoking.

Despite the accepted assumption that the CIS, GUAM, EurAsEC and the CSTO have hardly lead to integration until 2012, many authors apply functionalist or intergovernmentalist arguments when assessing the organisations and recommending how to improve the efficiency of the regional organisations.⁸⁸ Even rather recent articles devote primary attention to explaining the failure of integration instead of exploring their *de facto* or envisioned effect.⁸⁹ Very few authors explain organisations like EurAsEC or GUAM by new regionalism arguments

⁸⁷ **Dragneva and Kort**, The Legal Regime for Free Trade in the Commonwealth of Independent States, 264.

⁸⁸ Japaridze calls for strong legal institutions and rule of law in the member states. **Japaridze**, The Organization for Democracy and Development - GUAM: A Road Map to Relevance? , 97. See also: **Rakhimov, Mirzokhid** (2010), *Internal and External Dynamics of Regional Cooperation in Central Asia*. Journal of Eurasian Studies, No. 1, p 101. **Obydenkova**, Comparative Regionalism: Eurasian Cooperation and European Integration. The Case for Neofunctionalism?, 97.

⁸⁹ **Kubicek**, The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism; **Obydenkova**, Comparative Regionalism: Eurasian Cooperation and European Integration. The Case for Neofunctionalism?

and expect these organisations to offer protection against the negative externalities of globalisation.⁹⁰ As sub-section 2.2.2 has already argued, the organisations in the post-Soviet space incorporated new regionalism arguments in their mission statements, but have so far hardly produced meaningful collective solutions that would support their striving for joint actions against challenges from globalisation.

The bulk of the literature analyses the regional organisations from a neo-realist angle. This perspective depicts the organisations as tools for Russia's politics of power. The idea is that Russia consolidates its power by (re-)integrating the former Soviet republics.⁹¹ Analysts therefore often label the CIS, the CSTO or EurAsEC often as 'Russian multilateralism'.⁹² Indeed, the Russian foreign policy rhetoric after 2000 supports this argument.⁹³ The developments since 2000 gave evidence that Russia has certain power to drag some former republics to the CSTO, EurAsEC and the CU. This power strongly rests in bilaterally agreed incentives offered by Russia as reward for membership.⁹⁴ Yet Russia lacks the willingness and economic capacity to bear the costs of (re-)integrating the former Soviet republics.⁹⁵ Drawing on this debate Geir Flikke argues that the organisations serve as a platform for Russia to prevent the former Soviet republics from diverging from the Russian policies in the region.⁹⁶ Overall the neo-realist perspective gives a plausible explanation of how Russia conceptualises the function of the regional organisations. It also highlights the power-relations as working at systemic level in the post-Soviet space. However, it falls short of giving a good account of the perspectives of the other member states.

⁹⁰ **Gleason, Gregory** (2001), *Inter-State Cooperation in Central Asia from the CIS to the Shanghai Forum*. Europe-Asia Studies Vo. 53, No. 7, p 1077.

⁹¹ **Saivetz**, *The Ties that Bind? Russia's Evolving Relations with its Neighbors*, 410. **Latawski**, *The Limits of Diversity in the Post-Soviet Space: CIS and GUUAM*, 78.

⁹² **Torjesen, Stina** (2008), *Russia, the CIS and EEC. Finally Getting it Right*. In: Wilson Rowe, Elana and Torjesen, Stina (eds.), *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge, p 153.

⁹³ **Solov'ev**, *Faktor 'myagkoi sily' v politike Rossiyskoi Federatsii na postsovetском prostranstve [Soft Power Factor of the Policy of the Russian Federation in the Post-Soviet Space]*, 1.

⁹⁴ **Allison, Roy** (2004), *Strategic Reassertion in Russia's Central Asia Policy*. *International Affairs*, Vo. 80, No. 3. **Torjesen**, *Russia as a Military Great Power. The Uses of the CSTO and the SCO in Central Asia*, 184; **Flikke**, *Balancing Acts: Russian-Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO*, 5.

⁹⁵ **Sakwa and Webber**, *The Commonwealth of Independent States, 1991-1998: Stagnation and Survival*, 404; **Torjesen**, *Russia, the CIS and EEC. Finally Getting it Right*, 161; **Saivetz**, *The Ties that Bind? Russia's Evolving Relations with its Neighbors*, 410.

⁹⁶ **Flikke**, *Balancing Acts: Russian-Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO*, 11.

The member states do not integrate with Russia to the degree that power-relations in the international system would expect them to do. Proponents of neo-classical realism have observed limitations in the explanatory power of realism in other cases. They advise strengthening the analytical accuracy by taking into consideration that states translate the power-relations at the systemic level into foreign policy in various ways. The specific context needs to be taken into account.⁹⁷ The thesis borrows this argument and claims that we can learn more about the organisations, if we inquire how other members than Russia conceptualise the function of the organisations in the light of Russia's integration approach. With regard to GUAM, for instance, authors widely argue with reference to neo-realism that the organisation is meant to balance Russia's influence and that integration is hampered by Russia.⁹⁸ This argument may, however, not explain why the GUAM states are still active in the organisation after GUAM turned out not to have the power to balance Russia. What purposes does GUAM serve?

In the light of the survival of organisations like the CIS and GUAM the following authors propose other functions to be decisive and suggest some factors, which alter the organisations' function. Richard Sakwa, for example, stated 'the CIS found itself a niche [...]. Aspirations for regional unity [...] may be more viable in the long-run than we are accustomed to think.'⁹⁹ He conceives this niche as expressing a certain commonality and managing minor tasks in the field of transport and other services, but does not give stronger explanations for how the CIS is expected to fulfil

⁹⁷ **Taliaferro, Jeffrey W et al.** (2009), Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy. In: Taliaferro, Jeffrey W, et al. (eds.), *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-4. **Schweller, Randall L.** (2004), *Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing*. *International Security*, Vo. 29, No. 2, p 162;

Reichwein, Alexander (2012), The Tradition of Neoclassical Realism. In: Toje, Asle and Kunz, Barbara (eds.), *Neoclassical Realism in European Politics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p 35.

⁹⁸ **Hansen-Splidsboel, Flemming** (2000), *GUUAM and the Future of CIS Military Cooperation*. *European Security*, Vo. 9, No. 4, pp. 93-102; **Kubicek**, The Commonwealth of Independent States: an Example of Failed Regionalism?, 83-86. **Barkovsky**, Where is GUUAM Heading? ; **Japaridze**, The Organization for Democracy and Development - GUAM: A Road Map to Relevance? , 77; **Muzaffarli, Nazim** (2008), *Politico-Economic Complementarity and Compability between GUAM Member States*. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 51-52, p 17. **Ivanov, Vladimir** (2009), *GUAM: Old Problems and New Challenges*. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 58-59, p 63; **Moroney, Jennifer D P and Sergei Konoplyov** (2002), Ukraine, GUUAM, and Western Support for Subregional Cooperation in Europe's Gray Zone. In: Moroney, Jennifer D P, et al. (eds.), *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy*. London: Praeger, pp. 183-85.

⁹⁹ **Sakwa**, The CIS: Conflicts of Space and Time, 300.

this function. In a similar manner but more vaguely Keith Darden argues that the CIS has created a 'substantial institutional architecture [...] for taking joint decisions on a wide range of economic issues'.¹⁰⁰ He does not provide substantial empirical evidence for this statement. Hence, further research on the CIS' function and core mechanisms appears to be helpful for supporting these arguments. With regard to GUAM analysts emphasise the symbolic value of the organisation, which enables the members to demonstrate statehood and co-operation capacity for strengthening their sovereignty.¹⁰¹ The argument calls for an investigation of the origin and relevance of this symbolic values and its link to sovereignty concepts. Other authors also discuss the relevance of sovereignty concepts as decisive for regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. Sakwa, for example, argues that the principles of Westphalian sovereignty will continue shaping the order in the post-Soviet space.¹⁰² They will thus also shape function of the regional organisations. Alexander Libmann and Evgeny Vinokurov go a step further in their concept of 'holding together integration' (HTI) and name factors that determine the states' concepts of sovereignty. These are state-building processes and the manifestation of interdependencies between the former Soviet republics. Instead of aiming for progressing integration, the states intend to keep a productive integration level and to build sovereign statehood at the same time.¹⁰³ They use these factors to explain why integration processes often stagnate and hardly provide a more comprehensive framework for alternative functions of the regional organisations. The thesis will nevertheless include their emphasis of the two simultaneous but partly contradictory priorities to keep supportive interdependencies alive and to build an independent state.

¹⁰⁰ **Darden, Keith** (2009), *Economic Liberalism and its Rivals. The Formation of International Institutions among the Post-Soviet States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 63.

¹⁰¹ **Schmidt**, *Von GUUAM, dem postsowjetischen Raum und einem Totenglöckchen [About GUUAM, the Post-Soviet Space and a Death Knell]*. Moroney describes the Western support as crucial for GUAM but does not depict GUAM as only a symbolic organisation in search for Western recognition. **Moroney and Konoplyov**, *Ukraine, GUUAM, and Western Support for Subregional Cooperation in Europe's Gray Zone*, 188.

¹⁰² **Sakwa**, *The CIS: Conflicts of Space and Time*, 317.

¹⁰³ **Vinokurov and Libman**, *Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration*, 24-33.

The concept of *virtual regionalism* provides a more integrated perspective on sovereignty concepts and the function of regional organisations. The concept is thought-provoking, since it gives some account of why regional organisations are attractive for the member states, if they do not lead to integration. It builds on the neo-realist argument that power-relations matter and spells out how regional organisations may facilitate positive exploitation of regional power-structures. Roy Allison developed the concept of *virtual regionalism* for the Central Asian states with reference to Libman's notion of 'protective integration'.¹⁰⁴ The term roughly denotes the establishment of integration structures without the intention to actually integrate. The states agree to integration bodies established by the regional hegemon, Russia, in order to gain the hegemon's support in times of domestic unrest or economic decline. The membership in the integration bodies facilitate to bandwagon with Russia. It is motivated by political solidarity rather than interest in integration.¹⁰⁵ Thus the integration structure provided by the organisations is re-interpreted in a way that excludes integration. This reasoning raises three questions: how do the states employ the organisations for bandwagoning purposes? How and why do they prevent being socialised into integration-activities through the interactions in the regional organisations?

Stina Torjesen and Cathleen Collins provide some answers by inquiring after the domestic origins of *virtual regionalism* in Central Asia. Collins refers to the reluctance of authoritarian states to surrender sovereignty.¹⁰⁶ Torjesen digs deeper into the matter in her study, which is one of the very few that build on in-depth empirical inquiry in the member states.¹⁰⁷ Her argument refers to the prevailing patterns of 'indirect rule', namely informal institutions and vested interests that run

¹⁰⁴ **Libman, Alexander and Evgeny Vinokurov** (2012), *Eurasian Integration. Challenges of Transcontinental Integration*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p 165. **Libman, Alexander** (2007), *Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development*. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vo. 59, No. 3, p 416.

¹⁰⁵ **Allison, Roy** (2004), *Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia*. *International Affairs*, Vo. 80, No. 3; **Allison**, *Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia*, 191.

¹⁰⁶ **Collins**, *Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Central Asia*, 251. See also **Flikke**, *Balancing Acts: Russian–Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ Another is the thesis of Stephen Aris on the SCO. **Aris**, *Eurasian Regionalism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*.

counter to the effects of integration.¹⁰⁸ King and Japaridze see *weak state* structures and absence of good governance as also crucial for other former Soviet republics.¹⁰⁹ A few other studies also inquire after the domestic origins of the behaviour of former Soviet republics in the regional organisations.¹¹⁰ Ukraine attracted specific interest as very early on the country assumed a sceptical attitude towards the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The literature depicts Ukraine as state that pursues 'selective' integration.¹¹¹ These studies have, however, hardly gone beyond the integration perspective or inquired after the gains resulting from interaction in the organisations besides some power balancing or alleged integration achievements. Deeper engagement with the domestic origins of behaviour in regional organisations is, therefore, necessary for all former Soviet republics in order to create a more distinct picture.

The concept of *virtual regionalism* and the discussions of the domestic origins are thought-provoking. It is plausible that the newly independent states with non-democratic regimes shape activities in the regional organisations according to the principle of Westphalian sovereignty. The existing literature creates only a blurry picture of the actual outcomes of the regional organisation activities, which is partly a consequence of the lack of empirical studies that include the member states' perspectives. The questions remains what are the actual instruments for the former Soviet republics offered by the regional organisations? What benefits are offered by a multilateral format, if multilateral co-operation is not valued? *Virtual regionalism* seems to originate in *weak state* structures. But how is it actually entrenched and perpetuated in the political processes?

¹⁰⁸ **Torjesen**, Understanding Regional Co-operation in Central Asia, 1991-2004, 316.

¹⁰⁹ **King, Charles** (1999), The Western NIS. From Borderland to Subregion? In: Dwan, Renata (ed.), Building Security in Europe's New Borderlands. Subregional Cooperation in the Wider Europe. London: M.E.Sharpe; **Japaridze**, The Organization for Democracy and Development - GUAM: A Road Map to Relevance? , 89.

¹¹⁰ **Allison, Roy** (2007), *Blockaden und Anreize. Autoritarismus und regionale Kooperation. [Blockades and Incentives. Authoritarianism and Regional Cooperation]*. Osteuropa, Vo. 57, No. 8/9; **Bukkvoll, Tor** (2005), The State as Purpose, the State as Property. National and Private Interests in the Foreign Policies of Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. PhD Thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology; **Kuzio**, Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM.

¹¹¹ **Bukkvoll, Tor** (2004), *Private Interest, Public Policy. Ukraine and the Common Economic Space Agreement*. Problems of Post-Communism, Vo. 51, No. 5; **Wolczuk, Roman** (2007), Ukraine- A Partial, but Reluctant CIS Member. In: Dusseault, David (ed.), The CIS: Form or Substance? Helsinki: Alexanteri Institute.

2.4.CONCLUSION: CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE

The literature review has pointed out that the thesis intends to contribute to three debates on regional organisations. The first debate concerns the question of how regional organisations in different regions of the world may shape the global order. The findings will indicate that the post-Soviet space is another area where regional organisations are relatively robust but will hardly assume regional governance functions. The thesis aims to add some knowledge about the capacity of regional organisations to act as regional or global players. Since most of these organisations claim recognition as partners in global security governance matters such study is relevant.

Secondly, the thesis will enhance the literature concerned with comparative regionalism through the study of crucial research questions raised by this literature in a geographic area that has been hardly considered thus far. The findings will enhance the search for a comprehensive understanding of variety in regionalism. They will broaden understanding of the diversity of functions and instruments in regional organisations. The thesis further digs deeper into the relation between the domestic environment and a states' conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations.

Third, the thesis fundamentally advances research into regional organisations in the post-Soviet space, since it goes beyond the widely-shared conclusion that the regional organisations have failed. The thesis shifts attention to explaining why many regional organisations are more vital than is often assumed, despite the fact that they do not produce integration. It inquires after the actual function of these organisations. By doing so, the thesis links the debate on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space to the current comparative debate. This will enhance understandings of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. It shows that the regional organisations are not the outliers of regionalism that have failed and do not require more study. Further, the thesis goes beyond the neo-realist Russian-centred perspective, which presents a one-sided picture and is not interested in the actual processes in the regional organisations. It will examine the rationalities of the former Soviet republics in the regional organisations beyond the constrictive

scheme that interprets the rationalities as giving way to or resisting Russian pressure. The thesis builds on the shared observation that the former Soviet republics are not eager to cede sovereignty. But the study will go a step further by asking how the states shape their interaction in the regional organisations beneficially under these conditions. It will pay specific attention to the impact of domestic sovereignty concepts and policy practices on the states' conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations. Chapter three will outline how the thesis turns this analytical focus into an analytical framework for studying regional organisations in the post-Soviet space.

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter narrows down the previously identified research focus into an analytical framework. In other words, the chapter defines the theoretical concepts and approaches that enable an analysis of how former Soviet republics conceptualise the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and how this conceptualisation is rooted in their domestic political regimes. The framework serves two purposes. First, it will inform the reader about the concepts which the thesis uses to present the research findings. Secondly, it will formulate the research findings in abstract theoretical hypotheses in order to provide the reader with some guidance for the empirical chapters.

As outlined in chapter 2, the recent comparative regionalism debate postulates theoretical pluralism.¹ The conceptual framework therefore integrates various theoretical approaches. Chapter 2 has argued that studies on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space have intensively studied the applicability of old and new regionalism theories, but fall short of explaining the actual function of the regional organisations by such deductive approaches. Therefore the thesis has conducted an explorative, inductive yet theoretically-informed study that might best enhance the literature. The conceptual framework mirrors this methodological approach. It does not formulate hypotheses that will be tested in the empirical chapters. Testing hypotheses would necessarily have limited the analytical focus to predefined variables and their predefined variations.² By doing so the study would have risked missing out insightful factors. The analysis has therefore been guided by a broader set of theoretical assumptions. The framework specified these assumptions with insights from the empirical findings. It provides the reader with a set of hypotheses that help to understand the empirical analysis presented in chapters 5-8. These hypotheses seek sufficient parsimony to be insightful for both the CIS and GUAM and be potentially transferable to other regional organisations in the post-Soviet

¹ **Warleigh-Lack**, Towards a Conceptual Framework for Regionalisation: Bridging 'New Regionalism' and 'Integration Theory'; **Goltermann et al.**, Roads to Regionalism.

² On the method of theory-testing: **Evera, Stephen van** (1997), Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 27-30; **George and Bennett**, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, 20.

space. But they have not the parsimony that would allow the formulation of a general theory of the function of regional organisations according to varying domestic contexts. Nevertheless, the hypotheses intend to pave the ground for communicating the research findings to other scholars pursuing a similar research.

In sum, the analytical framework considers the following theoretical perspectives for exploring conceptualisations of the function of regional organisations, indicated by the aims pursued in the organisations and the preferred instruments, and for discussing how the conceptualisations are rooted in the domestic political regimes. It takes an actor-centred institutional perspective and analyses the organisations' function from a member state perspective. It disaggregates the states into societal actors and studies primarily the rationales of policy-makers. The framework argues that policy-makers derive the aims they pursue by membership in the organisations from their prioritisation of various aspects of state sovereignty. Practices established within the domestic political regimes determine which aims the states intend to achieve with concrete interactions in the organisations. The framework invokes assumptions regarding which instruments the states prefer for achieving these aims. It argues that internationally diffused ideas and established domestic practices determine the selection of instruments. Finally, the framework provides some assumptions about how policy-making processes in the varying political regimes influence which policy-makers can determine the state's policy according to their conceptualisation of regional organisations.

The chapter will proceed by presenting the analytical framework in four steps. It will first precisely formulate the research questions. Secondly, it will clarify the research object by defining the core concepts used in the thesis. The third sub-section will discuss the relevant theories that form the basis for reasoning how actors in states with varying non-democratic political regimes may conceptualise the function of regional organisations. The section will conclude with a set of hypotheses. The conclusion will dwell on the applicability of the analytical framework to other empirical cases.

3.1.RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This sub-section will present the research questions that specify the analytical perspective. Three questions emerge from the empirical puzzle, which has been sketched out in the introductory chapter, and the shortcomings of the literature as discussed in chapter 2. The research questions strive to change perspectives on understanding the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and where the understanding originates. The study intends to derive knowledge about the function from how member states define the aims they pursue and the instruments they prefer in these organisations. The following two questions will therefore guide the analysis of how the states conceptualise the organisations' function.

- What goals do member states pursue by participating in these regional organisations?
- What types of activities do they prefer for achieving the aims?

The literature review has outlined how scholars share the assumption that characteristics of the political regimes in the member states influence the states' conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations. However, the nexus is weakly spelled out. Inspired by theoretical arguments and empirical findings, the thesis intends to contribute to this question by tracing back:

- How do domestic patterns of rule shape the aims which are pursued and activities that are preferred?

The analytical frame presented in section 3.5 will suggest hypotheses that answer these research questions concerning the studied empirical cases. Before the chapter starts developing the analytical framework, the way in which the thesis employs theory will be clarified in the next section, since this determines how the reader should understand the analytical framework.

3.2. THE ROLE OF THEORY

This section will briefly reflect upon how the thesis employs theory. Social sciences have developed a variety of understandings of theory. The approaches define the role of theory and the criteria for a 'good' theory differently. In order to ensure that the analytical framework developed in this thesis will be evaluated appropriately, this section will briefly delineate the use of theory in this thesis. The thesis uses theory as recommended by a moderate interpretivist epistemological perspective. This perspective argues that social phenomena can be discerned only as historically and culturally contingent. It rejects the neo-positivist claim that grand theories are able to adequately depict social phenomena.³ Accordingly, interpretivist studies do not depict theory-building as the ultimate research aim. In Max Weber's understanding, theory is rather an instrument to discern empirical specifics and to make the findings accessible to successive research on the same phenomenon.⁴ The following paragraphs will specify how this conjecture informed the undertaken research.

The thesis defines theories following Stephen van Evera as 'general statements that describe and explain the causes and effects of [...] phenomena.'⁵ Theory helps to explore the 'set of meanings' behind social action and to communicate the research findings.⁶ In order to do so, the Grounded Theory school suggests that theory needs to be 'grounded in data'.⁷ Dobson points to the critical fact that 'theory is both a way of seeing and not seeing'.⁸ On the one hand, so the argument goes, theory may

³ The idea is to discern general patterns of human behaviour and to eliminate cultural and context contingency of the findings **Giddings, Franklin H** (1922), *Studies in the Theory of Human Society*. New York: The Maximilian Company, pp. 127-43. Karl Popper concentrated on theory building as a means of scientific explanation. He introduced the principle of empirical falsification as the only means of theory testing. **Popper, Karl** (2002), *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. New York: Routledge, p 64. See also: **King, Gary et al.** (1994), *Designing Social Inquiry Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; **George and Bennett**, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.

⁴ **Weber, Max** (1968), *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre [The Methodology of the Social Sciences]*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, p 137.

⁵ **Evera**, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, 7.

⁶ **Blumer, Herbert** (1969), *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p 18.

⁷ **Corbin, Juliet and Anselm L Strauss** (2008), *Basics of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, p 102.

⁸ **Dobson, Philip J** (1999), *Approaches to Theory Use In Interpretive Case Studies – a Critical Realist Perspective*. Proc. 10th Australasian Conference on Information Systems [Online], p 261; *ibid.*; *ibid.*

help to identify relevant factors and links between them. On the other hand, if an analysis is primarily determined by a predefined theory it may ignore relevant explanatory factors. Therefore, the thesis employed theory as recommended by proponents of Grounded Theory in a manner that informs but does not constrain the empirical analysis.⁹ That means that theories have been consulted prior to the empirical study to narrow down the research focus and after the empirical study to translate the empirical findings into abstract assumptions. In the first stage theories political sociology, political science and International Relations served, in the words of Herbert Blumer, as 'sensitising concepts', which informed the analytical focus.¹⁰ These theories helped select an original and empirically investigatable research focus. They also provided preliminary assumptions about the potential rationale of the member states' policy in the regional organisations and about the political processes in authoritarian and non-consolidated democratic regimes. In order to remain open-minded towards alternative factors that might impact upon the phenomenon under study, the insights from these theories have not been translated into testable hypothesis and measurable variables as a neo-positivist approach would require.¹¹

In the data collection stage, theory played only a minor role. It slightly influenced the interview questions. Theory came in again at a late stage of the data analysis with the aim '[of developing] analytical schemes of the empirical world with which the given research' is concerned.¹² First, the data were approached through the lenses of the previously selected sensitising theories.¹³ These offer a number of guiding questions for identifying relevant factors and perceptions in the empirical data. The analysis also identified factors that were not reflected in the sensitising theories. Both factors have been formulated in abstract categories. A second step linked these categories to existing theories and proposed coherent concepts and

Dobson, Philip J (1999), *Approaches to Theory Use In Interpretive Case Studies – a Critical Realist Perspective*. Proc. 10th Australasian Conference on Information Systems [Online], p 261

⁹ According to: **Corbin and Strauss**, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 39.

¹⁰ **Blumer**, *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*, 147.

¹¹ **Evera**, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, 27.

¹² **Blumer**, *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*, 140.

¹³ **Bazeley, Pat** (2007), *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVIVO*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, p 76.

theoretical assumptions.¹⁴ Concepts are ‘words that stand for ideas contained in the data; [...] the products of analysis’¹⁵, which become elements of broader theories when linked by causal assumptions.¹⁶ Following the advice of Kathy Charmaz an analytical frame summarises the findings in abstract terms and formulates theoretical assumptions pertaining to the relevance of the concepts.¹⁷ It is a frame not a theory, since it ‘will provide guidelines for the search for explanations’¹⁸ rather predict causal laws. The frame will guide the reader through the empirical study and is therefore presented before the empirical chapters. On the way to the analytical frame, the chapter will now proceed to specify the research object.

3.3. DEFINING THE RESEARCH OBJECT

Like any research strategy an interpretivist research endeavour has to be clear about its study object. Prior to the empirical part of the research the thesis has consulted literature on regionalism in search of an appropriate definition of the research object. A variety of concepts frame the meaning of ‘regional organisation’, its assumed function and instruments in the literature. The following paragraphs shall briefly present the meaning of terms which are helpful for delineating the study object and are, thus, employed in the thesis. These are the terms regionalism, regional organisation, regional governance, region-building, regional integration, co-operation, compliance and commitment. The first two narrow down the organisations and processes in focus, the latter three consider potential interactions within regional organisations.

3.3.1. REGIONALISM

As the literature review has indicated, this thesis devotes attention to a matter widely described as regionalism. According to some authors, however, regionalism comprises phenomena beyond the research interest of this thesis. It is therefore necessary to define how the thesis approaches regionalism. Regionalism roughly

¹⁴ For a description of an ideal type of the procedure see: **Charmaz, Kathy** (2006), *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage Publications, p 46; **Glaser and Strauss**, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 228.

¹⁵ **Corbin and Strauss**, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 150.

¹⁶ **Blumer**, *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*, 143.

¹⁷ **Charmaz**, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, 127.

¹⁸ **Scharpf, Fritz W** (1997), *Games Real Actors Play*. Boulder: Westview Press, p 37.

defines processes that link states of a geographic neighbourhood or states that share common interests. Integration theories conceived regionalism as the building of multilateral legalised institutions within regional organisations.¹⁹ Authors of the new regionalism incorporate transnational processes beyond regional organisations and define them as processes aiming at 'establishing regional coherence and identity.'²⁰ This thesis maintains the focus of the old regionalism by investigating regional organisations, but not other transnational processes as a new regionalist definition would suggest. However, the research requires a less normative definition of the processes within the organisations than that given by the old regionalism. It therefore refers to Rick Fawn who depicts 'regionalism' as processes of 'co-ordination and co-operation among actors within a given region' that vary in their purpose and quality.²¹ This study depicts regionalism as interactions of varying intensity and purpose within regional organisations. A definition of regional organisations will be presented in the next paragraph.

3.3.2. REGIONAL ORGANISATION

Most studies on regional organisations do not clarify the term and often equate regional organisations with 'region'. A region is often defined by geographic proximity, increasing interdependencies as well as converging cultural and societal identities.²² Some of these criteria apply to the post-Soviet space. Yet it would be misleading for this study to equate regional organisations with regions, since it is not said that the studied organisations serve to build or maintain regions. Therefore an appropriate definition enabling the identification of the case universe of this study needs to focus primarily on the form. A modification of Ademola Abass' definition seems helpful.²³ Regional organisations encompass more than two states

¹⁹ **Fawcett**, *Regionalism in World Politics: Past and Present*, 18; **Herzig**, *Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia*.

²⁰ **Farrell et al.**, *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*, 8.

²¹ **Fawn**, 'Regions' and Their Study: Wherefrom, What for and Whereto?, 13-17.

²² **Paasi, Anssi** (2009), *The Resurgence of the 'Region' and 'Regional Identity': Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Observations on Regional Dynamics in Europe*. *Review of International Studies*, No. 35, p 128; **Marchand et al.**, *The Political Economy of New Regionalism*, 900.

²³ Abass' original definition reads: 'encompassing entities, which may, but not necessarily, belong to a geographically determinable area, having common and disparate attributes and values, but which seek the accomplishment of common goals.' **Abass, Ademola** (2004), *Regional Organisations and the Development of Collective Security: Beyond Chapter VIII of the UN Charter*. Oxford: Hart, p 25.

that belong to a geographically close area. They set up organisational structures and formulate a common agenda. The following three paragraphs will define the potential aims of interaction in regional organisations.

3.3.3. REGION-BUILDING

The literature often uses the term 'region-building' to denote purposeful interactions that create a region. It emphasises the strategic decision of actors to construct a specific region according to their needs.²⁴ Usually the core mechanism for doing so is depicted as increasing interdependencies between the parties of a region. Anssi Paasi criticises the fact that the term often denotes policy strategies. According to him, regions are a complicated constellation of agency, social relations and power that cannot be manipulated by a policy.²⁵ This thesis nevertheless uses the term to describe the intention of actors to construct a region, since even though an actor might not be able to manipulate region-building, the actor may still aim at doing so. Region-building may hence be one of the intentions of membership in regional organisations.

3.3.4. REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Various authors use the notion of 'regional governance' to describe the achieved or expected function of regional organisations. The thesis argues that regional organisations in the post-Soviet space do not assume governance functions. The meaning of governance, therefore, requires some explanation. Among the diverging interpretations of governance that pervade the literature, the thesis concentrates on those with less normative dimensions. Governance roughly refers to how groups of individuals manage their common affairs and exert authority.²⁶ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye more precisely see governance as 'the processes and institutions both formal and informal that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group.

²⁴ See for instance: **Dent**, Taiwan and the New Regional Political Economy of East Asia, 389; **Goltermann et al.**, Roads to Regionalism, 4. Some authors use the notion 'regionalisation' to emphasise the agency in the process. This study, however, refrains from doing so, since regionalisation often refers merely to private actors, which are not primarily considered in this thesis.

²⁵ **Paasi**, The Resurgence of the 'Region' and 'Regional Identity': Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Observations on Regional Dynamics in Europe, 133.

²⁶ **Weiss**, Governance, Good Governance and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges, 796-7.

Governance is the subset that acts with authority and creates formal obligation.²⁷ A component of transnational governance is, as the English school emphasises, the establishment of certain values and standards as guidance for the states and societies in a region.²⁸ Regional organisations are one of the potential actors of regional governance. Scholars argue that organisations like the EU or NATO assume governance functions.²⁹ The organisations in the post-Soviet space do, however, not fulfil these criteria. In the area of the world under study, the organisations appear to try to exert certain authority by establishing common rules. These are hardly recognised by the member states and therefore the organisations lack authority.³⁰ If this thesis is at all concerned with regional governance, it rather asks how processes in the organisations indirectly affect regional governance.

3.3.5. REGIONAL INTEGRATION, MULTILATERAL LEGALISED INSTITUTIONS, COMPLIANCE AND COMMITMENT

Since the thesis explores also the intended function of activities within regional organisations, it needs to define a spectrum of activities with varying functions. Most intuitively scholars and policy practitioners describe activities in regional organisations with integration. This thesis defines the term according to Haas as a shift of loyalty and political activities from a national to a regional centre that 'demands jurisdiction over pre-existing national states.'³¹ The core engine of integration in the understanding of Haas and other representatives of integration theories is the establishment of a multilateral legalised institution. 'Legalisation' implies that the multilateral institutions rely on precisely formulated and often binding rules which define instruments for monitoring the rules' implementation. The thesis distinguishes legalised rules from institutions by arguing in line with Douglas North that rules may become institutions, if they indeed shape the

²⁷ **Keohane, Robert and Joseph S Jr. Nye** (2002), *Governance in a Globalizing World*. In: Keohane, Robert (ed.), *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*. London: Routledge, p 202.

²⁸ **Bull, Hedley** (1977), *The Anarchical Society : a Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan.

²⁹ **Stivachtis, Yannis A and Mark Webber** (2011), *Regional International Society in a Post-Enlargement Europe*. *Journal of European Integration*, Vo. 33, No. 2, pp. 109-10.

³⁰ With this argument the thesis follows Max Weber's definition of authority. The term authority implies in the understanding of Max Weber that the people ascribe legitimacy to a ruler. See: **Weber**, *Economy and Society*, 212.

³¹ **Haas**, *International Integration: the European and the Universal Process*, 366.

interaction.³² According to Kenneth Abott, legalisation can take ‘hard’ forms, whereby all these criteria are met. Legalisation can also be soft, when rules are precisely formulated but are not binding or do not define monitoring instruments.³³ The integration literature usually explores the states’ compliance, hence the degree to which states implement the adopted multilateral legalised rules.³⁴ This question implies that states establish multilateral rules with the aim of letting them regulate interactions between the signatories. The gathered empirical data and also the secondary literature suggest that the former Soviet states hardly implement the agreements adopted. The study should, hence, question the assumption that integration is the aim. The thesis has therefore searched concepts that allow the analysis to inquire after the signatory states’ intention when adopting a given set of multilateral legalised rules. The concept of ‘commitment’ takes up this question. Commitment denotes the states’ voluntary decision to solve regional matters via interactions in regional organisations.³⁵ The thesis is, thus, primarily interested in the kind of commitment the members show in activities of the regional organisations. Since integration cannot be observed in the post-Soviet space, the thesis requires additional terms to describe the activities in the regional organisations and their intended function.

3.3.6. CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION

The empirical data indicated that it is important to differentiate activities in the multilateral frame of regional organisations according to the degree to which they bind the involved actors together. This helps to grasp for which type of activities the actors studied use regional organisations.³⁶ International Relations scholars depict

³² See section 3.3.5 for the precise definition of the term *institution*.

³³ ‘Legalisation’ is defined as ideally consisting of obligations, namely binding rules, precise formulation of these rules and the delegation of their monitoring to a specific organisation. The degree of legalization varies. Only few regional organisations, like the EU or the WTO, include all three aspects. Other groups are hardly legalised. Some authors therefore distinguish ‘hard’ legalization, where all three criteria are met, from ‘soft’ legalization, where a combination of some criteria exists. See: **Abott et al.**, *The Concept of Legalization*, 132-6.

³⁴ Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier use the term compliance to express rule adoption. Compliance has in their view a formal and a behavioural dimension. See: **Schimmelfennig, Frank and Ulrich Sedelmeier** (2004), *Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe*. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vo. 11, No. 2, p 674.

³⁵ **Goltermann et al.**, *Roads to Regionalism*, 7.

³⁶ Chapter 7 will dwell on the varieties of activities and will discuss which activities the actors prefer.

the interaction between states within the spectrum of co-operation and conflict.³⁷ The activities of the in this thesis explored regional organisations certainly fall in this spectrum. The stronger focus on co-operative behaviour in International Relations since the 1980s has led to further differentiation between co-operation and co-ordination. According to Keohane, 'actors adjust their behaviour to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy co-ordination' when they co-operate.³⁸ Co-operation is effective, if states perceive the policy of a state as supportive to their ambitions. To co-ordinate their policy states take potential negative externalities of their actions for other states into account. The process of policy co-ordination may lead to co-operation or discord.³⁹ Keohane, therefore, denotes a minimal mode of co-operation, namely to avoid harming other states as a result of a particular policy. This may include integration but also a less intensive co-ordination of policies. Given the absence of integration in the post-Soviet space, it is of interest to this thesis to spell out the variety of co-ordination activities in the multilateral environment of a regional organisation. It assumes that the intensity of co-ordination of individual activities may vary. As mentioned in the discussion of the term regionalism, scholars often characterise regional organisations according to their primary activities, namely integration, regional governance or co-operation. Identifying the intensity of activities which prevail in the organisations in the post-Soviet space will help characterising the organisations.

3.3.7. CONCLUSION: RESEARCH AGENDA

In sum, the thesis contributes to the study of regionalism by exploring the function of regional organisations. The latter are multilateral intergovernmental organisations with more than two member states. The study assumes that the organisations are not regional governance actors, since the member states do not invest them with the authority to regulate regional matters. It further assumes that region-building, in other words the re-organisation of (inter)dependencies,

³⁷ **Milner, Helen** (1992), *International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses of Cooperation Among Nations by Joseph Grieco; Saving the Mediterranean by Peter Haas. Review Article.* World Politics, Vo. 44, No. 3, p 468.

³⁸ **Keohane, Robert** (1984), *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p 51.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

potentially numbers among the intentions states pursue in the organisations. Drawing on the existing literature, the thesis suggests that the states do not engage in activities of the organisations with the aim of achieving integration. Accordingly, it is necessary to investigate what commitment guides the states to participate in these activities. The thesis suggests identifying this commitment by studying what the states actually voluntarily agree to manage in the regional organisations. In other words, what are the states' policy goals in the organisations? Further, what is the intended intensity of policy co-ordination. This will place the function of the activities on a spectrum between co-operation and discord. The following section will discuss which concepts facilitate the study of this research object.

3.4. GUIDING THEORIES

The previous section clarified that the study takes interest in the function which member states attribute to a regional organisation. Inspired by first empirical insights it suggested exploring what the states intend to achieve in the organisations and to spell out to the kind of multilateral interaction through which they pursue these aims. In order to be able to characterise the organisations, the thesis examines the degree of intensity of co-ordination required by the preferred activities. This section will discuss theories which offer guiding assumptions on the rationales of states in the organisations. First, the section will consult approaches that discuss what domestic and international factors may influence the states. Secondly, it pays attention to varying concepts of sovereignty that influence the states' openness to co-operation. As a third factor, the section will discuss how established domestic practices shape the states' choices of instruments in the regional organisations. Finally, it will investigate how the policy-making processes in the states determine to what degree co-ordinated activities are envisioned. The first section will argue that it strongly depends on the domestic environment of the states how they define their aims and the preferred intensity co-ordination in the activities. The factors discussed in step 2-4 spell out which features of the domestic political regimes influence these decisions. Section 3.5 will present an analytical framework which summarises the theoretical assumptions which after a repeated

consultation of the empirical material turned out to be most helpful for abstractly formulating the research findings.

3.4.1. STATES AS ACTORS IN REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

As chapter 2 has outlined, the majority of contributions on regionalism in the post-Soviet space take the regional organisations as the unit of analysis. They focus on the organisational structures, the adopted multilateral rules and established institutions. Such studies treat the member states in a neo-realist manner as unitary actors.⁴⁰ The thesis is, however, driven by the empirical observation that the regional organisations under study do not develop in the manner anticipated. An exclusive focus on the international level, on the institutions and processes in the organisations, does therefore promise revealing insights. The thesis seeks instead to identify how the states conceptualise the organisations' function and therefore it is necessary to disaggregate the state and consider the relevant domestic players. The study has chosen this focus with reference to strands of literature that claimed the state level to be decisive for a state's foreign policy. First, the debate on neo-classical realism provides rough guidance. Neo-classical realism acknowledges that the international level is constitutive for a state's foreign policy. However, the power-distribution on the international level does not directly translate into foreign policy. Foreign policy is ultimately an interpretation of the international constraints according to the policy-makers domestic situation.⁴¹ This gives priority to the study of foreign policy-makers, more precisely their perception of a given issue in international politics. Various authors propose a spectrum of domestic factors that influence the decision-makers perceptions and actions. These are, for example, the consensus of elites in the perception of the developments at systemic level and the reaction to it, a consensus between elites and other societal actors or social

⁴⁰ Kenneth Waltz, a representative of neo-realism, suggests studying international relations by focussing on the so-called systemic level. This level reflects interplay of states and other units of the international system. He regards the domestic actors and processes of the involved states less decisive. See: **Waltz, Kenneth** (1962), *Man, the State, and War: a Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁴¹ **Beach, Derek** (2012), *Analyzing Foreign Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p 64; **Reichwein**, *The Tradition of Neoclassical Realism*, 41; **Schweller**, *Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing*, 164-66.

cohesion⁴² or national identity.⁴³ Neoclassical realism argues the specific manifestations of state-society relations to be decisive.⁴⁴ Most crucial is the degree to which foreign policy-makers can act independently of intervening societal players in pursuing their preferred policy. It proposes that policy-makers' independence strongly varies across different states.⁴⁵ This argument has inspired the thesis to study which meaning policy-makers give to the engagement in regional organisations and to consider factors and actors that influence the foreign policy processes. Neoclassical realism appears more adequate for studying former Soviet republics than liberal theories do, since it depicts foreign policy-making principally as a top-down process initiated by the ruling elites. Societal actors are relevant but ultimately do not formulate foreign policy.⁴⁶ This reflects the political regimes in the former Soviet republics more adequately than the focus on non-state actors of liberal theories does.⁴⁷ Neo-classical realism has also been mostly employed to explain how states respond to shifts in the power distribution at international level.⁴⁸ This does not allow the thesis to directly draw on its tool box. In addition, the reasoning of neo-classical realism does not provide a coherent theoretical frame for foreign policy-analysis.⁴⁹ The thesis has therefore consulted other contributions that discuss the nexus between the international level and domestic politics.

⁴² **Schweller**, *Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing*, 169; **Reichwein**, *The Tradition of Neoclassical Realism*, 44; **Taliaferro et al.**, *Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, 25.

⁴³ **Beach**, *Analyzing Foreign Policy*, 65.

⁴⁴ **Reichwein**, *The Tradition of Neoclassical Realism*, 38.

⁴⁵ **Schweller**, *Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing*, 170-76; **Reichwein**, *The Tradition of Neoclassical Realism*, 57.

⁴⁶ **Taliaferro et al.**, *Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, 26; **Beach**, *Analyzing Foreign Policy*, 65.

⁴⁷ **Moravcsik, Andrew** (1997), *Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics*. *International Organization*, Vo. 51, No. 4, p 518; **Moravcsik**, *Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach*, 486; **Pollack, Marc** (2001), *International Relations Theory and European Integration*. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vo. 39, No. 2, p 225.

⁴⁸ **Schweller**, *Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing*; **Taliaferro et al.**, *Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, 1-4; **Lobell, Steven E** (2012), *Threat Assessment, the State, and Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Model*. In: **Taliaferro, Jeffrey W, et al.** (eds.), *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁹ **Reichwein**, *The Tradition of Neoclassical Realism*, 36.

Another strand that emerged in the 1980s is oriented directly at state behaviour in international organisations. This strand of literature has developed the following three relevant arguments. Robert Putnam starts from the assumption that state leaders attend international negotiations with the aim of successfully adopting the agreement negotiated. He encourages consideration of the freedom of manoeuvre which domestic actors give state leaders to negotiate at international level. Putnam develops a rational choice model, the two-level game, to analyse the probability with which state leaders adopt agreements.⁵⁰ In contrast to this model, this thesis questions whether adopting multilateral agreements is the main aim of state representatives in the organisations under scrutiny. It will therefore not employ the two-level game, but will consider that state officials acting in regional organisations are bound to domestic players. Graham Allison recommends deciphering the relevant domestic players and their impact on any kind of foreign policy formulation by tracing the bureaucratic procedure of foreign policy-making.⁵¹ Given that he developed his approach for the US, he primarily focusses on the varying impact of formal state bodies and the bureaucratic procedures connecting these bodies in foreign policy-making process. This thesis picks up Allison's statement that foreign policy depends on the priorities of the state actors who participate in foreign policy-making. The analysis will, however, not only consider the formal bureaucratic processes as defined by the constitution and the organisational design of the state administration. It will also take non-formalised institutions into account, since in the former Soviet republics these are often more relevant than the formal policy-making procedures, as will the next paragraph discuss. By doing so, the thesis can refer to Jeffrey Checkel's and Tor Bukkvoll's research on the post-Soviet space. Checkel studied factors that influence Ukraine's compliance with EU regulations and concluded that domestic institutions are relevant. He argued the actual power of state agencies in the policy-making processes and their foreign policy priorities to

⁵⁰ Putnam, Robert D (1988), *Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games*. International Organisation, Vo. 42, No. 3.

⁵¹ Allison, Graham T and Philip Zelikow (1999), *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Longman, p 22ff.

be decisive.⁵² Tor Bukkvoll identified the interest of the political and economic elites in Kazakhstan and Ukraine as crucial for grasping the state's policy in regional organisations. He recommends exploring to whom the policy-makers are accountable.⁵³ Checkel and Bukkvoll made insightful contributions on the domestic impact on the states' policy in matters of regional organisations. But they only weakly spelled out how policy-makers interpret the organisations according to their priorities rooted in the domestic political regime. The thesis will enhance their work in this regard. Having stated that domestic state and non-state actors, their policy priorities and their power to influence policy-formulation is crucial for a state's policy in regional organisations, the next paragraph will discuss how to analyse these factors.

An actor-centred institutionalist approach appears adequate for the analysis of the rationales of relevant players in regional organisations and their domestic embeddedness. The approach depicts actors as rational, but their conceptualisation of rational action depends on their perceptions and preferences. The advantage of this approach vis-à-vis an actor-centred rational choice concept is that it does not define stable preferences according to generalizable and context-independent criteria. Instead the school suggests examining the attitudes and reasoning of the relevant actors, in order to learn about the rationales which guide their action. These attitudes define their policy or, in other words, their intentional actions through which they try to achieve specific aims.⁵⁴ The actors' attitudes and their capacity to pursue a policy defined by these attitudes depend on institutions. The thesis depicts institutions with reference to Douglass North as constraints that shape human action and reduce uncertainty in a society.⁵⁵ They may consist of formally codified rules, but also always include non-written shared norms of

⁵² **Checkel, Jeffrey T** (2001), *Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change*.

International Organization, Vo. 55, No. 3, pp. 380-1.

⁵³ **Bukkvoll**, Private Interest, Public Policy. Ukraine and the Common Economic Space Agreement; **Bukkvoll**, The State as Purpose, the State as Property. National and Private Interests in the Foreign Policies of Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

⁵⁴ **Scharpf**, Games Real Actors Play, 36.

⁵⁵ Douglass North conceives formal and informal institutions as part of the same coin. An institution may consist of informal, thus non-written, rules only. But any formal institution consists of both written and non-written components. See: **North, Douglass** (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 36 and 46.

behaviour and practices.⁵⁶ This study will refer to institutions only, if they indeed shape action. Where constraints are formally established but inefficient, they will be denoted as formal rules. The empirical study did not always manage to comprehensively discern the formalised and non-formalised elements that constrain an observable action. In this case the thesis will speak of established practices. The interview narratives implied that relevant institutions which shape the action of state representatives in regional organisations emerge from the regional and domestic environment of the states. In the course of data analysis literature was consulted that depicts characteristics of the post-Soviet space.

Authors see the following concepts roughly characteristic for the regional and domestic environment of the former Soviet republics. Since 1991 the former Soviet republics have been concerned with state-building, namely the consolidation of an independent polity and economy.⁵⁷ Having separated from the single polity of the USSR, they struggle to re-organise the remaining (inter)dependencies in a way that allows for the consolidation of state-building.⁵⁸ In the light of state-building processes, authors argue that the sovereignty concepts of state actors influence the approach of the former Soviet republics towards regional organisations in the post-Soviet space.⁵⁹ The next section will therefore deliberate on the variety of sovereignty concepts and their origins. As regards the domestic environment, an amalgam of authoritarian and democratic political features is characteristic for the

⁵⁶ The literature often distinguishes between formal and informal institutions. See: **Lauth, Hans-Joachim** (2000), *Informal Institutions and Democracy*. Democratization, Vo. 7, No. 4. This framework does not follow this divide but refers to Douglass North. He conceives of formal and informal institutions as part of (two sides of?) the same coin. An institution may consist of informal, thus non-written, rules only. But any formal institution consists of both written and non-written components. See: **North**, Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance, 36 and 46.

⁵⁷ Both Hille and McMahon and Western suggest this definition. **Hille, Charlotte** (2003), *State Building in the Transcaucasus since 1917*. Leiden: Universiteit Leiden, p 16; **McMahon, Patrice and Jon Western** (2012), Introduction: the Supply Side of Statebuilding. In: McMahon, Patrice and Western, Jon (eds.), *The International Community and Statebuilding. Getting Its Act Together?*. New York: Routledge, p 5. The contribution of Hille is one of the rare examples that apply state-building predominantly to domestic processes as will be done in this thesis. The post-conflict peacebuilding debate tends to depict state-building as international efforts to support the construction of a liberal-democratic rule-of-law state in post-war countries. See for instance: **Paris, Roland and Timothy D Sisk** (2009), Introduction: Understanding the Contradictions of Postwar. In: Paris, Roland and Sisk, Timothy D (eds.), *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding*. New York: Routledge, p 2.

⁵⁸ **Vinokurov and Libman**, Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration, 13.

⁵⁹ See for instance: *ibid.*, 24-33.

former Soviet republics. Authors agree that politics in the former Soviet republics is strongly influenced by informal institutions which undermine or circumvent the formal rules of the polity.⁶⁰ As section 1.5.1 has detailed, Ukraine ranks as a state with a democratic polity that is, however, constrained by informal practices.⁶¹ Azerbaijan numbers among the authoritarian states in which politics are more dominated by informal institutions than by the formal institutions as defined in the constitution.⁶² Sub-sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4 will theoretically elaborate how the domestic institutions in such a regime environment shape the state actors' attitudes and aims in regional organisations.

3.4.2. SOVEREIGNTY CONCEPTS AND THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT

It was mentioned above that state building is a process that has determined the domestic and international politics of the former Soviet republics since 1991. The fact that they have pulled out of a common political unit, the Soviet Union, implies that gaining and maintaining sovereignty was a major concern after the independence. The question of sovereignty turned out to be frequently mentioned in the gathered interview narratives. It was therefore worth engaging with concepts that discuss the link between sovereignty and participation in regional organisations. As outlined in chapter 2, representatives of the old regionalism and experts on the post-Soviet space consider the state actors' conceptualisation of sovereignty as insightful for their policy in regional organisations. The former Soviet republics have for the last 22 years been preoccupied with state-building and thus, inter alia, with consolidating sovereignty. Stephen Krasner argues that the domestic

⁶⁰ See for example: **Wedel, Janine** (2001), *Part II: 'State' and 'Private': Up against the Organisational Realities of Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Trends in Organized Crime, Vo. 7, No. 1, p 7; **Stefes, Christoph H** (2006), *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions. Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*. Basingstoke, pp. 8-13; **Guliyev**, *Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Transition to Sultanistic Semiauthoritarianism? An Attempt at Conceptualization*, 423; **Hale**, *Democracy or Autocracy on the march? The colour revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism*. , 307.

⁶¹ **Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way** (2002), *The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism*. Journal of Democracy, Vo. 13, No. 2; **D'Anieri, Paul et al.** (1999), *Politics and Society in Ukraine*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 95-228.

⁶² **Radnitz**, *Oil in the Family: Managing Presidential Succession in Azerbaijan*; **Guliyev**, *Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Transition to Sultanistic Semiauthoritarianism? An Attempt at Conceptualization*; **Guliyev**, *Oil and Regime Stability in Azerbaijan*.

and international environment of a state creates varying concepts of sovereignty.⁶³ This section details the varieties of sovereignty concepts that are relevant for the former Soviet republics. It will argue that these concepts shape the states' policy in the regional organisations, since regional interdependencies challenge the consolidation of these dimensions of sovereignty.

In the eyes of Krasner, states define concepts of sovereignty according to the challenges which the political regimes predominantly face. The implicit baseline of the argument is that ruling elites aim at regime survival. He distinguishes the following three sovereignty concepts, which refer to international and domestic challenges and are potentially relevant in the post-Soviet space. The first is the Westphalian understanding of sovereignty, which for several centuries has determined international relations. It denotes that states are political organisations, which exclude external actors from their authority structure.⁶⁴ Accordingly, external actors do not have the right to interfere in a state's domestic affairs. For the state-building endeavour of newly independent states that have emerged from a single polity, such as the former Soviet republics, the consolidation of Westphalian sovereignty is a priority due to the potentially persisting (inter)dependencies. Despite the collapse of the single polity, the interdependencies remain strong. Especially, when a regional hegemon emerges from the disintegration it may exploit persisting interdependencies as channels to interfere in the newly independent states' domestic affairs. This is a core issue for the former Soviet republics even in 2012, since they are not only interdependent with but often dependent on the regional hegemon Russia. Protection from Russian interference in particular in domestic matters is thus a main aim for the former Soviet republics.⁶⁵ Furthermore, persisting interdependencies with less powerful constituents of the former single polity may also collide with state-building processes. They may be in contradiction with ambitions to create a distinct national identity.⁶⁶ The principle also implies recognition as an equal partner on the international arena, which, however, the

⁶³ **Krasner**, *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁵ **Vinokurov and Libman**, *Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration*, 25.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

states need to establish in practice.⁶⁷ Achieving such recognition is a priority for newly independent states, since it enlarges their international room for manoeuvre. These factors may thus induce the ruling elites to prioritise the consolidation of Westphalian sovereignty.

Krasner names his second sovereignty concept 'domestic sovereignty'. The term refers to the ability of the ruling elites to efficiently exert authority in the state.⁶⁸ Accordingly, domestic veto-players may threaten this sovereignty. Faced with the challenges of building independent statehood, consolidating domestic sovereignty becomes another priority for the ruling elites. The thesis argues that their strategies to handle matters of domestic sovereignty have two international components. On the one hand ruling elites from other former Soviet republics use persisting ties to the domestic elites of a republic to trigger domestic unrest and constrain the domestic sovereignty. On the other hand, as Libman has argued, the ruling elite of a country may turn to the regional hegemon when seeking support in consolidating its domestic sovereignty.⁶⁹ The ruling elite may also be interested in maintaining favourable economic and security interdependencies, if these stabilise the domestic economy and security.⁷⁰

The third concept is 'interdependence sovereignty', namely the control over flows across the state border that potentially affect domestic security.⁷¹ The former Soviet republics face regional challenges to their interdependence sovereignty from two sources. The persisting intensive societal ties between the former entities of the USSR and the similarities of their political and economic regimes facilitate migration, capital, goods as well as criminal flows in the region that are hard to control. In addition, globalisation processes widen the origin of such transit and

⁶⁷ **Lake, David** (2003), *The New Sovereignty in International Relations*. *International Studies Review*, No. 5, p 305. **James, Alan** (1999), *The Practice of Sovereign Statehood in Contemporary International Society*. *Political Studies*, No. XLVII, p 467.

⁶⁸ **Krasner**, Sovereignty. *Organized Hypocrisy*, 4. On the impact of globalisation effects on sovereignty see also: **Krasner, Stephen** (2009), *Power, the State, and Sovereignty*. London: Routledge, pp. 179-232.

⁶⁹ **Libman**, Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development, 416.

⁷⁰ **Vinokurov and Libman**, Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration, 27.

⁷¹ **Krasner**, *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*, 4.

incoming flows from the post-Soviet space to Asia and other distanced regions.⁷² The attention paid by ruling elites to consolidating the state's interdependence sovereignty depends on the extent to which elites perceive the political regimes to be vulnerable to such flows.

The previous discussion of the varying concepts of sovereignty and their relevance for the former Soviet republics highlighted that Westphalian, domestic and interdependence sovereignty matter for this group of states and their mutual relations. Consolidating their sovereignty in these regards is one of the core aims of their regional policy. Their regional environment induces the former Soviet republics to reduce (inter)dependencies in order to stabilise their Westphalian and domestic sovereignty, but also to maintain and intensify (inter)dependencies as protection of their domestic sovereignty and their interdependence sovereignty. The regional environment, thus, creates contradictory incentives for dealing with persisting interdependencies when consolidating sovereignty. Which strategy the states chose depends on the sovereignty challenges to which the political regimes are most vulnerable. This vulnerability is also determined by characteristics of the domestic political regimes. The next section will show that domestic institutions are decisive in determining which sovereignty concept needs to be prioritised to ensure regime survival.

3.4.3. SOVEREIGNTY CONSIDERATIONS OF VARYING POLITICAL REGIMES

The previous sub-section identified three regional policy aims for newly independent states like the former Soviet republics: consolidating their Westphalian, domestic and interdependence sovereignty. It is now of interest to the thesis how the ruling elites employ membership of and activities in regional organisations to strengthen one or all forms of sovereignty. The empirical data suggest that the ruling elites do not perceive the policy in regional organisations as an end in itself. It rather serves as a means for strengthening the states' sovereignty. In order to work with a sound set of analytical tools the PhD thesis needs thus to distinguish policy aims according to their scope.

⁷² Ibid.,12.

In search of adequate terms for this purpose one comes across the notion of 'national interest'. National interest is often used to describe the aim of a state's foreign policy. In his theory of realism Hans Morgenthau defines national interest 'in terms of power'.⁷³ Power means survival of a state in the international system and is therefore the utmost goal. Morgenthau opted for this very abstract category for the sake of parsimony. His intention was to create a theory that enables analysts to predict foreign policy rather than to explain empirical situations.⁷⁴ The level of abstraction is indeed too high as to give us more precise idea of the foreign policy goals in the subject of study. A core question of foreign policy analyses remains, hence, what is national interest and is there more than one interest.⁷⁵

Theories like neoliberal institutionalism or interdependence theory also operate with survival as the principal foreign policy goals. However, from their perspective other goals determine foreign policy once survival is ensured.⁷⁶ The theories suggest various factors at the international and domestic level as influencing the definition of foreign policy goals. The literature thus implies that there are foreign policy goals with different scopes. Only very few authors develop a terminology that reflects this assumption. Some authors speak of a general foreign policy orientation or 'grand strategy' to indicate that there is one goal to which others are subordinated.⁷⁷ The suggestion of Arnold Wolfers appears to be more precise and therefore more helpful. He admits that 'it is customary to distinguish between goals and means [...]; yet it is impossible to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the two ideas. All means can be said to constitute intermediary or proximate goals, and few goals if any can be considered ultimate, in the sense of being sought as ends in themselves.'⁷⁸ Wolfers suggests speaking of intermediate and remote or ultimate goals when analysing a historical instance. He, however, stresses that we cannot necessarily generalise this qualification of goals. In other instances a remote goal might be an intermediate

⁷³ **Morgenthau, Hans J.** (1978), *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p 6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*,10.

⁷⁵ **Alden, Chris and Amnon Aran** (2012), *Foreign Policy Analysis. New Approaches*. London: Routledge, p 46.

⁷⁶ **Beach**, *Analyzing Foreign Policy*, 39-46.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*,33.

⁷⁸ **Wolfers**, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*, 68.

one.⁷⁹ This limitation does not pose constraints for the use of his set of terms in the thesis, since the research is concerned with a specific empirical situation: the policy in two regional organisations in the period 2010-2012.

This thesis will therefore employ the terms ultimate and intermediary goals. As indicated in the previous section, in the case studied an ultimate goal is strengthening sovereignty. The section will show in the following that it depends on the political regime types which concept of sovereignty the ruling elites prioritise. In a second step it will highlight the intermediary goals, which the states studied aim to achieve in support of the ultimate goal.

As discussed above, the management of interdependencies is crucial for consolidating sovereignty. A closer look at how institutions in the different political regimes shape approaches to the management of interdependencies will allow one to discern the priorities concerning the concepts of sovereignty. Intermediary goals can also best be described as states' strategies to manage interdependencies. It will be argued that hybrid regimes with strongly authoritarian features intend to minimise interdependencies with their regional policy in order to consolidate their Westphalian sovereignty. They may aim to maintain existing interdependencies to a limited degree as an intermediary goal, if it helps to consolidate their domestic sovereignty. The more democratic the state, the more it aims at building fruitful new interdependencies that help to consolidate its interdependence sovereignty. The following paragraphs will substantiate the link between the regime type and the approach to interdependencies.

As the previous section has discussed, the consolidation of sovereignty in all regards indicated by the three concepts is crucial for the newly independent states regardless of their political regime. However, if we look at what the sovereignty consolidation implies for the management of interdependencies it becomes evident that the political regimes can be argued to endow varying priority to the three concepts of sovereignty. The variation rests essentially on the mechanisms by which political regimes ensure their survival. The literature on political regime types in the continuum between the ideal types 'democracy' and 'authoritarianism' suggests the

⁷⁹ Ibid.,69.

regime survival strategy to largely depend on two questions: to which actors are the ruling elites accountable, and how do they manage this accountability. The thesis considers especially the broad literature on hybrid regimes. It offers analytical frames that resemble the empirical situation in both Ukraine and Azerbaijan. This strand of literature concentrates on identifying the dynamics on which regimes are built. It therefore offers insights on the question of accountability.

The traditional delineation of authoritarian and democratic regimes provides basic information on the ruling elites' accountability. Characteristic for democracies is strong societal participation in policy-making and therefore stronger monitoring of the ruling elites.⁸⁰ Democratic societies hold the government accountable via formalised channels of political participation. Max Weber has summarised this mechanism in the concept of rational-bureaucratic authority.⁸¹ By contrast, ruling elites in authoritarian regimes are faced with weaker accountability structures. Decision making power is concentrated in the hands of the incumbent and wider elite circles.⁸² In order to gain more detailed insights on the group of actors to whom the ruling elite is accountable in authoritarian regimes and the underlying mechanisms of this, the thesis consults studies on hybrid regimes.

Before discussing how these studies depict regime survival a few words shall explain why the concept of hybrid regimes is helpful. Contributions on hybrid regimes devote attention to political regimes that according to Terry Karl 'combine elements of both authoritarianism and democracy'.⁸³ Scholars have introduced this rather broadly defined concept to grasp the regimes that emerged from the third wave of transition starting in the 1970s.⁸⁴ This definition does not specify the degree to which or manner in which elements of the ideal types 'authoritarianism' and 'democracy' manifest themselves in a new form of regime. The debate therefore soon called for more precise definitions of hybrid regimes. This evoked a wave of

⁸⁰ **Schmitter, Philippe C and Terry Lynn Karl** (1991), *What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not*. Journal of Democracy, Vo. 2, No. 3, pp. 76-79.

⁸¹ According to Weber, rational-bureaucratic authority rests on 'a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue command.' Formal rules constitute the basis for legitimate authority. **Weber**, *Economy and Society*, 215.

⁸² **Linz**, *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*, 161-70.

⁸³ **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*, 76.

⁸⁴ **Diamond**, *Thinking about hybrid regimes*, 25.

classifications of hybrid regimes in the early 2000s. An enormous variety of sub-types has emerged. Timm Beichelt divides the emergent literature on the one hand into terms like 'illiberal democracy' or 'defective democracy'⁸⁵ that concentrate on manifestations close to liberal democracies. On the other hand there are concepts like 'competitive authoritarianism' or 'patronal presidentialism' with a strong affinity to the so-called 'closed authoritarianism'.⁸⁶ These sub-types theorise the empirical reality of individual case countries that have experienced democratisation without achieving democracy. Some, as for example Henry Hales 'patronal presidentialism', focus more on the mechanisms at hand of the core political actors.⁸⁷ Others, including Steven Levitsky's and Lucan Way's 'competitive authoritarianism' emphasise the leeway of opposition forces to challenge the incumbent.⁸⁸ The varying analytical angles allow scholars to subsume a regime under different labels. Some authors depict Ukraine since 1991 as competitive authoritarianism, others as patronal presidentialism.⁸⁹ Azerbaijan ranks as patronal presidentialism, electoral authoritarianism or hegemonic authoritarianism.⁹⁰ This incomplete enumeration shows that it is rather problematic to define a single ideal type for the intermediate regime type. What Andreas Schedler states for varieties of electoral authoritarianism applies to varieties of hybrid regimes in general: 'The limits of the authoritarian imagination are not logical, but empirical'.⁹¹ It is, thus, not useful to identify one type that fits to the empirical situation in our case countries in the period of 2010-2012. For gaining some insights on the survival of the political regimes under study it is more fruitful to draw conclusions from dynamics synthesised in different sub-types. This allows the thesis to consider the

⁸⁵ **Merkel, Wolfgang et al.** (2003), *Defekte Demokratie*. Band 1: Theorie. Opladen.

⁸⁶ **Beichelt, Timm** (2012), *Forms of Rule in the Post-Soviet Space: Hybrid Regimes*. In: Stewart, Susan, et al. (eds.), *Presidents, Oligarchs and Bureaucrats: Forms of Rule in the Post-Soviet Space*. Farnham: Ashgate, p 18.

⁸⁷ **Hale**, *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia*. **Hale**, *Democracy or Autocracy on the march? The colour revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism*. .

⁸⁸ **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 215; **Hale**, *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia.*, 149-50.

⁹⁰ **Hale**, *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia.*, 144; **Guliyev, Farid** (22 February 2012), *Measuring Hybrid Regimes: An Alternative Measurement Method and Classification of Post-Soviet Regimes*. [Online]; **Schedler, Andreas** (2002), *The Menu of Manipulation*. *Journal of Democracy*, Vo. 13, No. 2, p 47.

⁹¹ **Schedler**, *The Menu of Manipulation*, 42.

multiple analytical perspectives. The theoretical reasoning takes especially studies into account that have been developed for the post-Soviet area. It will be the task of the empirical study to discuss to what degree the theoretical assumptions formulated in the following reflect the situation in Ukraine or Azerbaijan.

A basic feature of hybrid regimes is the existence of elections that are not a mere façade. Opposition parties and candidates exist and the elections for the most important positions in the polity create a certain uncertainty over their outcome. However, unlike in the ideal type 'democracy' the uncertainty is not primarily created by the electorate. The voting is often directly rigged or beforehand manipulated by uneven access to media for the candidates and limited information for the voters. Core players are political and economic elites. They have a number of instruments at hand to manipulate the electorate in favour of or against the incumbent.⁹² The rationale of the electoral process is not primarily vote maximising, but also soothing powerful elites.⁹³ As the 'colour revolutions' have shown, the mechanisms of regime change are not necessarily the election results. Crucial was rather the fact that large parts of the society did not accept the election outcome and opted to strongly react to it. Mass protests caused by electoral fraud or economic crises may challenge the incumbent. Several authors contend that the political and economic elites' decisions to support or not to support the incumbent are decisive for the success of mass protests.⁹⁴ In a nutshell, in hybrid regimes incumbents are only to a limited degree accountable to the electorate, but strongly accountable to powerful political and economic elites.

This shift of accountability stems from the importance of informal institutions in hybrid regimes. The literature agrees that the formal institutions of the polity

⁹² **Brownlee, Jason** (2009), *Portents of Pluralism: How Hybrid Regimes Affect Democratic Transitions*. American Journal of Political Science, Vo. 53, No. 3, p 531; **Ekman, Joakim** (2009), *Political Participation and Regime Stability: A Framework for Analyzing Hybrid Regimes*. International Political Science Review, Vo. 30, No. 1, pp. 9-25; **Alexander, Marcus** (2008), *Democratization and Hybrid Regimes Comparative Evidence from Southeast Europe*. East European Politics and Societies, Vo. 22, No. 4, p 929.

⁹³ **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 56.

⁹⁴ **Alexander**, *Democratization and Hybrid Regimes Comparative Evidence from Southeast Europe*, 929; **Hale**, *Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia.*, 141; **Way**, *Rapacious Individualism and Political Competition in Ukraine, 1992-2004* 196; **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*, 80.

matter in all hybrid regimes.⁹⁵ However, their function is often circumvented or altered by informal institutions.⁹⁶ The essence of the regime is personalised relations between powerful actors in the polity and other powerful actors in the society as for example economic elites. Personalism, clientelism or patron-client relations are some of the terms that are often used to describe these relations. The authors use them to basically express the following. The incumbents have access to material and power resources. They distribute these resources to ensure the loyalty of powerful elites and other societal actors. A mutual dependency between these elites and the incumbent exists. The re-election of the incumbent depends on their loyalty. The elites' access to resources depends on the incumbent's readiness to reward the elites. As a result there is a strong intersection of politics and economics.⁹⁷ Against this background the weak application of the rule of law is symptomatic of hybrid regimes.⁹⁸ The literature describes these mechanisms with reference to the concept of 'neo-patrimonialism'.⁹⁹ Analysts consider such patterns as constitutive for the former Soviet societies.¹⁰⁰

To sum up, in order to ensure regime survival, incumbents in hybrid regimes primarily have to avoid the defection of powerful social players, but they have also to keep up the support of the masses. In respect of both groups of actors it is important to ensure economic growth. It is crucial for the ruler to be able to distribute economic and power incentives in order to ensure the loyalty or to co-opt potential veto players.

⁹⁵ **Erdmann, Gero** (2012), Neopatrimonialism: Problems of a Catch-all Concept? In: Stewart, Susan, *et al.* (eds.), *Presidents, Oligarchs and Bureaucrats. Forms of Rule in the Post-Soviet Space*. Farnham: Ashgate, p 45.

⁹⁶ **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 56.

⁹⁷ **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*, 80; **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 56.

⁹⁸ **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*, 80; **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 9.

⁹⁹ For neo-patrimonialism see for example: **Eisenstadt**, *Neopatrimonialism*, 15-17; **Erdmann, Gero and Ulf Engel** (2006), *Neopatrimonialism Revisited - Beyond a Catch-All Concept*. GIGA-Working Paper No. 16. **Bratton, Maichael; van de Walle, Nicolas** (1994), *Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transition in Africa*. *World Politics*, Vo. 46, No. July; **Pitcher, Anne; et al.** (2009), *Rethinking Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism in Africa*. *African Studies Review*, Vo. 52, No. 1.

¹⁰⁰ **Stefes**, *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions. Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, 15; **Hale**, *Democracy or Autocracy on the march? The colour revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism.*, 307; **Pitcher et al.**, *Rethinking Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism in Africa*; **Guliyev**, *Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Transition to Sultanistic Semiauthoritarianism? An Attempt at Conceptualization*.

The degree to which the incumbent faces challenges in hybrid regimes varies according to the degree to which democratic mechanisms have been established. Where the democratic institutions introduced have caused an increase in civic participation there are potentially more actors who challenge the incumbent than in an authoritarian regime where the incumbent can keep down veto player. The logic of hybrid regimes thus implies a specific approach to regime survival that, however, varies according to the degree to which it incorporates democratic or authoritarian institutions. This can be assumed to also influence their strategy of handling regional interdependencies for the sake of sovereignty. A reflection of these theoretical assumptions and of core results of the empirical studies undertaken in this research project suggests summarizing the ruling elites' priorities as follows.

Ruling elites in hybrid regimes where authoritarian mechanisms still prove effective in eliminating strong opposition players have the following set of priorities. They prioritise the protection of Westphalian sovereignty. In doing so their intermediary goal is to minimise interdependencies. Since the processes of rule are oriented towards reaffirming the loyalty of the domestic elite, it is crucial for the ruling elite to avoid external interference in domestic affairs. The ruling elite will, nevertheless, as a secondary priority, strive to ensure domestic sovereignty by the intermediary goal to maintain certain interdependencies that produce security and economic welfare. Finally, as long as the ruling elites have the capacity to manage the regime-destabilising effects of global and transnational flows, they will hardly consider interdependence sovereignty in their regional policy. Even if so, they most likely intend to keep their interdependencies limited and not establish new ones, in order stay in control of all domestic processes, since any interdependency provides channels for external interference. These assumptions give an account of policy priorities in the case of Azerbaijan.

When ruling elites in hybrid regimes have less capacity to eliminate veto players and have to consider the masses more strongly in their regime survival strategy they are likely to develop the following priorities. As long as domestic rule builds on informal institutions and the incumbent is dependent on the loyalty of economic and

political elites and non-elite societal actors, it is important to limit interference from abroad. Hence the main priority is again to establish Westphalian sovereignty by the intermediary goal of reducing interdependencies. However, given their stronger accountability vis-à-vis non-elite actors in society, this creates the following intermediary goals in support of the domestic sovereignty. It is on the one hand crucial to maintain interdependencies that support the states' domestic sovereignty. These are interdependencies that increase societal security and welfare. Relationships that allow ruling elites to seek regime protection in situations of domestic unrest are also important.¹⁰¹ At the same time, ruling elites need to reduce interdependencies that allow external players to mobilise domestic actors against the ruling elite. Finally, ruling elites in such regimes pay more attention to interdependence sovereignty in their regional policy. They are more vulnerable to negative externalities of transnational flows. In order to ensure security and welfare they have to protect the society from negative impacts of such flows. The relative strengths of societal actors creates more pressure to find adequate solutions for such problems. The creation of new regional interdependencies in defence of threats from transnational flows is an option. But again, they will aim to avoid solutions that allow for external interference in domestic affairs.

This reasoning suggests that the priority setting of both variants of hybrid regimes varies only slightly. The first ultimate aim in both cases is the Westphalian sovereignty, followed by domestic sovereignty. However, the more democratic a regime is and the more veto players it has to manage, the more emphasis is given to the question of domestic sovereignty. While interdependence sovereignty is hardly considered as a topic in the regional policy of more authoritarian hybrid regimes, it is an issue in the regional policy of more democratic hybrid regimes. The latter are also more inclined to keep existing interdependencies and to build new interdependencies if it supports their domestic and interdependence sovereignty. However, they do not want to compromise their Westphalian sovereignty by that.

¹⁰¹ **Libman**, *Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development*, 416.

These ultimate and intermediary goals pose the question as to how participation in a regional organisation achieves these goals. Like most regional organisations the two organisations under study, CIS and GUAM, claim to construct new linkages and increase interdependencies between the member states.¹⁰² How does this fall into line with the intermediary goals to if limit interdependencies?

The next section will develop some arguments in response to this question.

3.4.4. POLITICAL REGIMES AND PREFERRED MULTILATERAL ACTIVITIES

The previous sub-sections hypothesised that the former Soviet republics seek as ultimate goal to consolidate Westphalian sovereignty primarily, domestic secondly and only thirdly interdependence sovereignty through membership in regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The intermediary goal is to do this ideally by minimising persisting interdependencies. Only hybrid regimes with relatively powerful democratic institutions appear open to intensifying interdependencies. Functionalist and intergovernmentalist approaches argue that states access regional organisations with the hope of strengthening what Krasner calls interdependence sovereignty and use the activities in the organisations to increase interdependencies through regional organisation.¹⁰³ Since the cases under study appear to diverge from this logic, it is likely that they also develop a specific approach to the activities in a multilateral environment. In the course of data analysis the impression emerged that the acceptance of activities strongly depends on the degree of policy co-ordination which they require.

To gain a theoretical perspective on this observation the following paragraphs will deliberate on what the nexus between the political regime types and the preferred management of interdependencies implies for the intensity of policy-coordination accepted as adequate in regional activities by the ruling elites under study. They will spell out the intensity of activities which policy-makers in different political regimes prefer. It will argue that the ruling elites in hybrid regimes have, due to

¹⁰² For the declared aims of CIS and GUAM see chapter 1.5.2.

¹⁰³ **Mitrany**, *The Functional Theory of Politics*, 115; **Haas**, *International Integration: the European and the Universal Process*, 368; **Pierson, P** (2004), *Politics in Time. History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p 125; **Moravcsik**, *Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach*, 485.

their reliance on informal practices, little interest in intensively co-ordinated activities. If multilateral co-ordination is envisioned it has to be designed in a way that supports established domestic institutions of rule.

As discussed in section 3.3, the co-operative interactions in regional organisations can be theoretically differentiated into varying intensities of policy co-ordination. Integration via legalised multilateral rules is one the most intensive forms. The other end of the spectrum is marked by uncoordinated activities. Institutionalist approaches indicate that ruling elites accept an intensity and form of international policy co-ordination, which complies with domestically established institutions. The assumption draws on the argument that established institutions are hard to alter and often survive policy and political leadership changes.¹⁰⁴ Given that ruling elites are primarily bound to the domestic institutions, they tend to adjust the intensity and form of international interaction to the domestic environment. The regime characteristics outlined in the previous section allow for some conclusions on the intensity of multilateral interactions which hybrid regimes with a more authoritarian and a more democratic face prefer. The question to be asked for drawing conclusions is how multilateral activities and domestic practices interplay.

The regime types discussed have in common the fact that domestic rule builds on processes which are not predominantly determined by the formal rules of the polity. They strongly rely on unwritten, informal rules that are non-transparent. Accordingly, the ruling elites presumably avoid multilateral legalised institutions. These institutions aim at creating the transparency and predictability of the states' international activities. Enforcement mechanisms intend to constrain the states' opportunities to defect from acting according to these institutions. This is rather contradictory to the informal practices and might challenge the ruling elites' domestic survival. The ruling elites therefore most likely reject any intensive policy co-ordination as required by integration. With regard to less intensively co-ordinated activities, the rationales vary in hybrid regimes with an authoritarian and a democratic face. The former do not only generally prefer uncoordinated or weakly

¹⁰⁴ **Acemoglu, Daron and James A Robinson** (2006), *Persistence of Power, Elites and Institutions*. NBER Working Paper Series, No. 12108, p 2.

co-ordinated activities, since these are compatible with the strong informal component in the political processes. They also have the capacity to consolidate and enforce their authority domestically and to find independent answers to transnational challenges. Accordingly, they are able to pursue only uncoordinated or weakly co-ordinated activities in regional organisations. The more democratic hybrid regimes, in contrast, prefer uncoordinated or weakly co-ordinated activities due to the strong informal features. They, nevertheless, depend on regional policy co-ordination, since societal actors demand effective solutions to security and economic problems created by transnational flows. However, it can be assumed that they seek policy co-ordination that is compatible with the main characteristics of the domestic processes of rule: strong reliance on non-formalised rule and accountability primarily to domestic elites but not to international players.

Within regional organisations the ruling elites of individual states often have only limited capacity to design the intensity and form of activities according to their needs. As chapter 2 has indicated, activities in regional organisations, including those in the post-Soviet space, often follow international role models. In concrete terms, this means they often establish legalised multilateral rules and search for intensive policy co-ordination. Concepts that help to explain why the ruling elite of some states participate in activities which potentially contradict institutions of the domestically established ruling are 'social learning' and 'emulation'. They describe the impact of the international environment on domestic policies as postulated by Peter Gourevitch.¹⁰⁵ The ruling elite may either develop the desire to alter domestic institutions according to these international activities through interaction in regional organisations.¹⁰⁶ Or they may emulate commitment to these activities. They emulate when they participate in the activities, even though they are not willing to or capable of implementing them domestically.¹⁰⁷ The proliferation of a certain format of organisations induces, according to John Meyer and Brian Rowan

¹⁰⁵ **Gourevitch, Peter** (1978), *The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics*. International Organisation, Vo. 32, No. 4.

¹⁰⁶ **Strang, David and John W Meyer** (1993), *Institutional Conditions for Diffusion*. Theory and Society, Vo. 22, No. 4, p 489.

¹⁰⁷ **Simmons, Beth A et al.** (2006), *The International Diffusion of Liberalism*. International Organization, Vo. 60, No. 4, p 800.

other organisations to emulate their format, even though it might not be compatible with the adopting organisations' function.¹⁰⁸ According to Polillo and Guillen the states compete internationally for 'economic, military, diplomatic, and political supremacy and survival.'¹⁰⁹ This international competition sets standards of appropriate behaviour.¹¹⁰ Adopting these standards, even by means of emulation, may legitimise actors and may ensure the survival of the organisation.¹¹¹ Organisations like the EU and the UN internationally diffuse the idea of integration. Hence, emulating integration potentially fuels international recognition.¹¹²

The successful emulation of international activities, however, requires at least two domestic conditions. Firstly, the ruling elites need to be able to participate in crucial stages of the activities, including the formal, not *de facto*, adoption of the outcome, without risking any unintended impact of the interaction. Such unintended impact may be that domestic players reject the adoption of multilateral legalised rules. Secondly, the ruling elites need to ensure that state officials who participate in the activities and are potentially socialised into these activities do not strive to alter the domestic practices accordingly. The domestic conditions that allow for emulation are rooted in policy-formulation processes. In hybrid regimes with effective authoritarian features policy-formulation rests in the hands of a small circle of ruling elites. These have the power to overrule the decisions of low-level state officials and of other institutions of the polity, like the parliament, that may veto decisions made on international level. Policy-making thus follows a strong top-down approach. If democratic institutions have paved the way for more bottom-up policy-making a hybrid regime the room for bottom-up policy-making is larger. Accordingly, state officials who are socialised into internationally promoted

¹⁰⁸ Meyer, John W and Brian Rowan (1977), *Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony*. American Journal of Sociology, Vo. 83, No. 2, p 340.

¹⁰⁹ Polillo, Simone and Mauro F. Guillén (2005), *Globalization Pressures and the State: The Worldwide Spread of Central Bank Independence*. American Journal of Sociology, Vo. 110, No. 6, p 1765.

¹¹⁰ March, James; Olsen, Johan (1998), *The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders*. International Organisation, Vo. 52, No. 4.

¹¹¹ Polillo and Guillén, *Globalization Pressures and the State: The Worldwide Spread of Central Bank Independence*, 1777; *ibid.* Meyer and Rowan, *Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony*, 349.

¹¹² Jeschke and Lenz, *Does Regionalism Diffuse? A New Research Agenda for the Study of Regional Organisations*, 628.

activities are more likely to strive for an adjustment of the domestic institutions to the internationally promoted ideas and practices. In the case of Ukraine, their freedom of manoeuvre is, however, constrained by the nevertheless preferred top-down decision-making and uncoordinated policy-making of different players in the government structures. In lieu of a conclusion the next section will synthesize the core assumptions developed in this section into a set of hypotheses. By adding insights from the empirical studies of this thesis it will develop an integrated analytical framework.

3.5.ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The interpretation of the empirical study undertaken, which will be presented in chapters 5-8, has called for a specific set of analytical tools. It was the task of section 3.4 to discuss the theoretical background to this set of tools. The section has summarised the reasoning of two research steps. On the one hand, it has presented theories that have influenced the development of the research focus prior to the empirical study. These are theories that provide ideas on the linkage between foreign policy goals and political regime types. The section has, on the other hand, elaborated on the theoretical framing of certain phenomena, which the empirical data suggested to be relevant. Namely the conceptualisation of sovereignty, the differentiation between ultimate and intermediary policy goals and the foreign policy formulation processes in the different political regimes. The following will now both synthesise the most helpful elements of the discussed theories and specify the derived assumptions for the empirical cases under study.

It formulates a heuristic framework for studying how former Soviet republics conceptualise the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The framework uses the discussed theories to translate the empirical findings into a set of abstract theoretical terms and hypothesis. These theoretical tools helped organise the presentation of the empirical material and express the findings in a precise way. The findings of this empirical research cannot be widely generalised for other instances as section 4.5 will detail. However, the thesis formulates them in an abstract way with the hope to inspire upcoming research projects on similar instances. As previously indicated, the thesis argues that the following three

dimensions provide evidence about the function of regional organisations: the ultimate goals envisioned by membership, the intermediary goals envisioned in the sectoral activities, and the preferred types of activities of the regional organisation. After stating the main argument the section will present hypotheses concerning these three dimensions. Figure 2 summarises the framework as specified for regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The framework reflects categories that emerged in the course of research from theoretical and empirical reflections.

The following **general argument** draws on theories concerned with social actors, international relations, regionalism and regime types. Policy-makers conceptualise the function of regional organisations according to the patterns of rule in their domestic political regimes. The ruling elite's conceptualisation may diverge from the stated function of the organisation, if the stated function is not compatible with the domestic political regime. In the post-Soviet space regional organisations serve, briefly stated, to consolidate the former Soviet republics' sovereignty by reducing and re-organising persisting interdependencies to the former Soviet neighbourhood. The aim to reduce and preferably not increase interdependencies is driven by the regime survival considerations of the ruling elites. Patterns of informal rule and strong top-down policy-making induce hybrid regimes with an authoritarian face to minimise interdependencies and co-ordination with other former Soviet republics. Characteristics of democratic rule but also informal practices induce hybrid regimes with a more democratic face to strive to minimise, but in certain regards to intensify, interdependencies and coordination. The paragraphs below detail the conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations according to these hypotheses.

The **ultimate goal** of the former Soviet republics of consolidating sovereignty through active membership in regional organisations can be differentiated according to the following priorities. The ruling elite in post-Soviet hybrid regimes with predominant authoritarian features is primarily oriented towards consolidating Westphalian sovereignty. They, secondly, strive to consolidate domestic sovereignty, but hardly consider consolidating interdependence sovereignty via the regional organisations. This priority setting finds the following explanations.

Authoritarian rule that builds on informal practices, a constitutive feature of hybrid regimes, seeks to avoid external interference in domestic affairs, since it may challenge regime survival. Authoritarian regimes need to provide basic security and welfare for their societies in order to substantiate their domestic authority. As long as the authoritarian elites are efficient, they have the capacity to independently enforce their authority in the domestic context and to independently control cross-border flows. The ruling elite in post-Soviet hybrid regimes with an affinity towards democratic institutions also exploit membership in the organisations to consolidate, firstly, Westphalian, secondly, domestic and, thirdly, interdependence sovereignty. Informal practices of rule that compete with democratic institutions make the regime sensitive to external interference in domestic affairs. But in regional organisations the regimes more strongly seek support for their domestic and interdependence sovereignty, due to the following reasons. They need to answer stronger societal calls for security and welfare. This also creates a stronger demand to efficiently protect the society from negative externalities created by cross-border flows.

The intermediary goals by which the former Soviet republics pursue their ultimate goals can be clustered according to the envisioned management of interdependencies. Ruling elites in hybrid regimes with an authoritarian face pursue their ultimate goals by intending to reduce the persisting regional interdependencies, avoiding new interdependencies but strengthening their capacity to act independently. Patterns of hybrid regimes require the ruling elite to strive for the loyalty of other elite members. The capacity to do so requires a flexibility to independently formulate and alter policies. Increasing interdependencies may therefore challenge regime stability. Ruling elites in hybrid regimes with a stronger affinity towards democracy intend to reduce persisting interdependencies but also to intensify them, if they increase the state's capability to stabilise the domestic authority and control cross-border flows.

The following three goals emerge from the empirical data as concrete terms in which the ruling elites of the two regimes studied use regional organisations to pursue their intermediary goals described above. The first is to enhance the state's

capacity to respond to domestic and regional challenges. This will enable them to reduce the regional dependencies. The second goal is to enhance their regional and international leverage. This is intended to reduce existing dependencies and to establish fruitful interdependencies. Thirdly, they intend to maintain the regional organisation as format for regional interaction with the aim of monitoring the development of regional relations.

The former Soviet republics **regard activities** that require varying intensities of international co-ordination as conducive to their intermediary goals. The choice of activities depends on the domestically established institutions for handling the regionally negotiated issues. Most intensive co-ordination requires the development of multilateral legalised institutions. The thesis assumes that hybrid regimes avoid such endeavours due to the principle of transparency and international accountability of regional multilateral legalised institutions. These are incompatible with the non-transparent and weakly monitored institutions in the hybrid regimes studied. If the ruling elite participate in multilateral legalised agreements, it re-interprets their function in a way that is less demanding in terms of co-ordination. The ruling elite in hybrid regimes with an authoritarian face prefer uncoordinated or weakly co-ordinated activities. In turn, the ruling elite in hybrid regimes with a stronger affinity towards democracy values more intensively co-ordinated activities, if these activities support the domestically established institutions. The degree to which the ruling elite is able to not only participate in but also to alter the function of the activities according to their needs, depends on their ability to formulate a policy top-down without bottom-up interference from players in the society at large or the state administration. The ideas of bottom-up policy formulation might oppose ruling elites' ideas of the function of regional organisations, since they may have been socialised into internationally promoted ideas and practices of regional organisations. Strong authoritarian features in a hybrid regime facilitate the re-interpretation of activities in a way that avoids intensive co-ordination. They can avoid any impact of 'social learning' in the course of regional interaction. It permits the re-interpretation of activities in a way that avoids intensive co-ordination. The re-interpretation of the function of CIS and

GUAM activities according to the intermediary goals by the ruling elites in both regimes can be specified as follows:

1. Intermediary goal '**maintaining the regional organisation**': Bureaucratic procedures and negotiations keep an organisation alive. Adopted legalised agreements strengthen its external credibility. Joint activities may ensure the members' interest in the organisation, since they potentially enhance expertise or foster exchange of experiences. Investment projects of capable partners may revitalise the interest of economically weaker members. They increase the organisation's credibility by producing tangible results.
2. Intermediary goal '**strengthening state capacity**': Bureaucratic procedures generate information on developments in the neighbourhood that may be considered in domestic policies. They also allow the diffusion of domestic best practices and induce the partners in the organisation to adjust their policies accordingly. Negotiations allow states to potentially influence other member states' legislation. Adopting agreements in one issue-area may enhance the negotiation leverage in other areas. Joint activities strengthen networks among state officials in the region and advance the capacity of the member states to independently tackle regional and domestic challenges. Investment projects stabilise the economic situation in the investing state and enhance the economy of the recipient.
3. Intermediary goal '**enhancing regional and international leverage**': Bureaucratic procedures signal alliance and commitment to 'international standards of behaviour', namely co-operation and integration. The initiation of agreements signals regional leadership and triggers acknowledgment of regional and international actors. Strong networks between state agencies also enhance a state's regional influence. Improved domestic capacity also improves a state's regional position. Investment projects increase dependence on the investing states. This affects the regional but also international visibility of the sender.

Figure 2: Conceptualisation of Regional Organisations in the Post-Soviet Space: Policy Goals, Instruments and their Function

<p>ultimate goals</p> <p>intermediary goals</p> <p>instruments</p>	<p>strengthening westphelian and domestic sovereignty (and interdependence sovereignty)</p>		
<p>bureaucratic structures/ bodies</p>	<p>stability of the regional organisation</p>	<p>enhancing capacities to respond to regional challenges</p>	<p>enhancing regional and international leverage</p>
<p>agreements (including negotiations)</p>	<p>ensuring continuity of interaction</p> <p>ensuring continuing participation of relevant members of the RO</p>	<p>monitoring developments in the region</p> <p>Influencing policy developments in other states of the region</p>	<p>signalling alliance</p> <p>signalling compliance with 'regional cooperation paradigm'</p>
<p>joint activities (including operations, conferences, councils)</p>	<p>enhancing or continuing communication/ interaction</p>	<p>improving negotiation leverage vis-à-vis powerful actors</p> <p>influencing domestic legislation of other states</p> <p>exchange of best practices</p>	<p>taking lead in spontaneous alliances and improving relevance vis-à-vis other states</p>
<p>'investment' projects (investment in economy but also law-enforcement technology)</p>	<p>produces actual interest in the RO, since these are activities with most gains for member states</p>	<p>building networks between state agencies of RO members</p> <p>strengthening methodological/technical/ financial capacities of the RO members</p>	<p>building networks between state agencies of RO members</p> <p>strengthening methodological/technical/ financial capacities of the RO members</p>
<p>'investment' projects (investment in economy but also law-enforcement technology)</p>	<p>vitalising the interaction in the RO</p> <p>producing tangible results</p>	<p>(sending state) strategic investments abroad for stabilising domestic economy</p> <p>(receiving state) economic/ technical enhancement</p>	<p>building bonds to other states and creating their dependence on the sending state</p> <p>Increasing international credibility</p>

4. METHODOLOGY: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter outlines the methodological parameters of the empirical study. The structure of this chapter is subordinated to three aims. The first is to locate the study in the interpretivist research tradition. Highlighting the premises of the chosen interpretivist approach will ensure an appropriate evaluation of the theoretical and empirical research findings.¹ The second aim is to spell out the empirical design, including the case selection and data collection. This will enable the reader to assess the strength of the empirical research design. The third step intends to inform the reader about the validity of the data interpretation and hence the research findings.

4.1. INTERPRETIVIST METHODOLOGY

This thesis dedicates itself to an explorative research endeavour with theoretical aspirations. The previous chapters outlined that the thesis is interested in grasping the specific interpretation of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space by their member-states. The research gap which the thesis seeks to close concerns the fact that existing theories fall short of explaining how the former Soviet republics conceptualise the function of the regional organisations. Accordingly, a theory-test as proposed by neo-positive schools seems less adequate to gain the intended knowledge. Gerring contends that in such situation an explorative approach focussing on few cases only supports the research interest more adequately.² The empirical study therefore oriented itself to the interpretivist tradition and borrowed the research strategy from Grounded Theory. This section will briefly sketch the advantages and implications of an interpretivist approach for this thesis.

Interpretivist schools seek to explain social phenomena, which appear in a certain time and space, to generate knowledge about social interactions. In contrast to their neo-positivist opponents, interpretivists reject the idea that 'reality' is

¹ Flick, *Managing Quality in Qualitative Research*, 136.

² Gerring, John (2004), *What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?* . *American Political Science Review*, Vo. 98, No. 2, p 349.

discernible through grand theories of human behaviour.³ Interpretivists argue that a specific phenomenon has to be studied empirically and informed by previous research on similar phenomena.⁴ While neo-positivists define formulating and falsifying parsimonious theories as a research aim, interpretivists intend to highlight specific manifestations of an empirical phenomenon.⁵ As discussed in chapter three, they employ theory as a heuristic tool and translate empirical findings into abstract terms.⁶ Their core concern is, however, to avoid the theory putting blinkers on the empirical study. Therefore interpretivist research is not guided by a small set of predefined variables, but tries to identify relevant factors that determine a social phenomenon from a broad range of data. Such inductive approach appears adequate for tracing how the ruling elites in the countries under study conceptualise the function of regional organisations. Measuring variables defined beforehand would constrain the explanatory power of the research findings.

As a second advantage interpretivist approaches do not only consider 'objectively' measurable data as valid. They ascribe explanatory power to perceptions of social actors. This understanding of how to study social phenomena empirically complies with the institutionalist concept of social actors defined in chapter 3. It is therefore appropriate for this study. It is, however, necessary to clarify that the study follows the assumption that perceptions are insightful, but it does not take a constructivist stance that focusses solely on ideas and values. Instead it follows a middle course suggested in Hebert Blumer's social interactionism. He grasps social action as predominantly determined by symbolic action. Symbolic action is a deliberate

³ The neo-positivist school was fundamentally developed by the 'Vienna Circle' in the 1920s. They depicted social sciences as 'exact' sciences that should identify valid theories on causal relations in the world. This approach reflected the well-established discipline physics. The fundamental idea is that human behaviour is like a natural phenomenon driven by universal laws. See: **Giddings**, *Studies in the Theory of Human Society*, 127--43.

⁴ A father of interpretivist approaches is Wilhelm Dilthey. In the 19th century he distinguished natural sciences from social sciences. He rejected the idea of universal laws and defined the primary research interest as explaining specific empirical situations. See: **Dilthey, Wilhelm** (1864-1903), *Logik und System der philosophischen Wissenschaften* [Logic and System of Philosophical Sciences]. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p 127. In this tradition a variety of so-called interpretivist or qualitative research approaches have emerged, including grounded theory, social interactionism, objective hermeneutics and constructivist schools.

⁵ On the procedure of falsifying theories see: **Popper**, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, 64.

⁶ See for instance: **Weber**, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* [The Methodology of the Social Sciences]; **Charmaz**, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*.

(re)action driven by the interpretation of material objects and social action.⁷ Actors are able to change their patterns of action and thinking in the process of interaction with other actors, with objects or with themselves.⁸ They act rationally, but not according to universal preferences as objectivists assume. According to Blumer, interpretations define the meaning of the material and ideational world.⁹ Three factors may thus give evidence of social phenomena: action, material conditions and interpretations of social actors. It is, accordingly, crucial to consider the actors' specific interpretation of conditions and interaction when exploring a phenomenon empirically. The thesis will take an interpretivist path that follows the above sketched line of research interest, use of theory and adequate data according to the methodology of Max Weber and grounded theory procedures.¹⁰ The next section will summarise how these methodological assumptions have driven the research process.

4.2.OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PROCEDURE

This section discusses how the thesis translated the above outlined epistemological considerations into methods for empirical analysis and theoretical reasoning. Figure 3 below visualises that sensitising, in other words guiding, theories stimulate the research focus and an analytical framework finalises the research process. However, the study builds fundamentally on empirical data. While chapter 3 has already outlined how theory is used, the thesis owes the reader some explanation of the empirical research steps. The following two paragraphs will therefore detail the data collection and analysis.

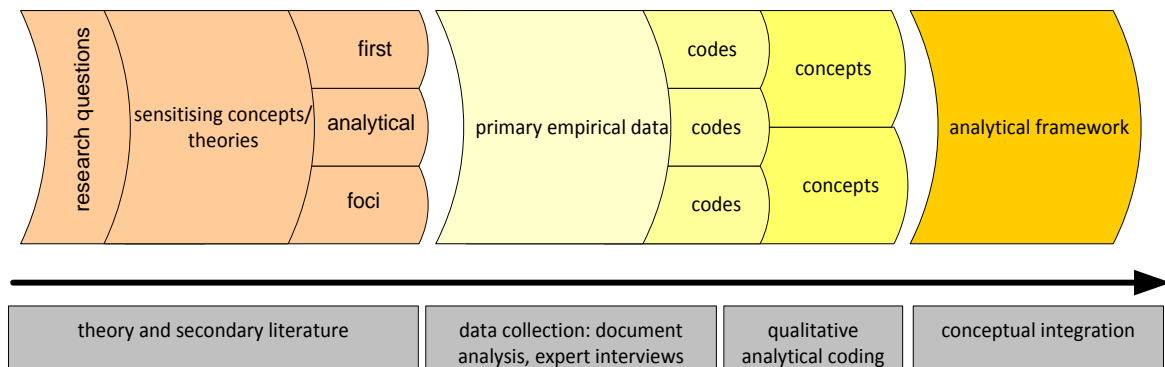
⁷ **Blumer**, Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method, 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*,15.

⁹ *Ibid.*,23.

¹⁰ Grounded Theory is a 'research style' **Breuer, Franz** (2009), Reflexive Grounded Theory. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, p 40. developed in the 1970s by Anselm Strauss/Barney Glaser and which focuses on non-standardised, inductive theory-building.

Figure 3: Research Procedure



Grounded theory inspired the data collection and analysis. It appeared to give the most precise instructions for how to process a large amount of qualitative data in a structured way. The instructions facilitate the reproduction and revision of the individual analytical steps, which is necessary for generating valid findings. This is a condition for responding to the common critique that qualitative methods indulge in unreliable ‘analysis light’.¹¹ The analytical steps proposed by grounded theory seem reproducible enough to minimise volatility and produce reliable findings. The paragraphs below will outline the implications of grounded theory procedures for designing the expert interviews, defining relevant data from field research and for analysing the primary data.

Grounded theory advocates open and in-depth interviewing as the most fruitful method to gain valid original data. This means the interviewer guides the interviewee into the general topic but follows the structure of narration as proposed by the interviewee. The interviewer seeks to grasp the topic as interpreted by the interviewee. Proceeding thus may generate original perspectives that go beyond the prior assumptions derived from existing literature.¹² In the eyes of grounded theory proponents ‘all is data’.¹³ Accordingly, the empirical study factored in insights from informal talks and observations into the analysis.

¹¹ Clarke, Adele (2005), *Situational Analysis. Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, p 28.

¹² Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, 14-25.

¹³ Breuer, *Reflexive Grounded Theory*, 60.

The data analysis followed the method of qualitative analytical coding.¹⁴ In a first step, interview data are interpreted and disaggregated into concepts. This means that passages of the text are coded, in other words labelled according to ideas that shape the phrases.¹⁵ A second step pools these concepts into more abstract categories. Some of these categories are derived from theories that have been used as guiding theories. Others emerge from the data.¹⁶ Finally, the analytical framework linked these categories into a coherent framework based on assumptions about their relationship as identified in the data.¹⁷ The next section will now specify this procedure for this thesis by highlighting the case selection, the interview sampling and analysis.

4.3.EMPIRICAL CASE STUDIES

This subchapter first clarifies the case study design and case selection and critically reflects on the explanatory power of the case sample. It then discusses strengths and pitfalls of the interview sample obtained. The last sub-section exemplifies the process of theory building. All three steps will bring aspects that determined the explanatory strength of the data to the reader's attention; namely their outreach, their appropriateness to provide evidence on the phenomenon examined and the data triangulation undertaken.

4.3.1. CASE STUDY DESIGN

The thesis aims to provide an innovative understanding of how the former Soviet republics conceptualise the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. Accordingly, an appropriate case study design was needed in order to generate valid and original empirical data. Questions of representativeness and the depth of the data analysis results guided the decision-making process in this regard. A large sample of cases strengthens the generalisability of the research findings.

¹⁴ The term has been coined by Lyn Richards, but the method builds on analysis strategies developed by the father of grounded theory, Anselm Strauss. See for the description of qualitative analytical coding: **Richards, Lyn** (2005), *Handling Qualitative Data. A Practical Guide*. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 86-88.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁶ **Charmaz**, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, 46.

¹⁷ **Corbin and Strauss**, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 113.

The broader the data pool, the more valid the results.¹⁸ On the other hand, a large-n study requires substantial compromises in the openness and depth of the empirical approach, if time and financial constraints exist. A common strategy is to rely on already aggregated data, e.g. from indices or statistical data bases, or to narrow the research perspective to a small number of pre-defined variables.¹⁹ Both strategies substantially limit the attention to data that build on pre-existing interpretations, which constraints the innovative potential. The thesis therefore took the argument into consideration that an in-depth study of a few cases provides more valid findings than a superficial large-n comparison.²⁰ Accordingly, it preferred a small-n study and analysed two cases.

The intensity, with which small-n samples can be explored, promises to generate original empirical knowledge.²¹ The empirical study undertaken in the thesis has not only the ambition to understand the cases studied. It also intends to develop hypotheses which might shed light on the theoretical puzzle outlined in section 3.1. Such an analysis requires a great deal of theoretical reflection.²² An account of this has been given in chapter 3. As recommended by Harry Eckstein the empirical study does so by exploring the cases seriatim. If the findings of a case study are supported by other cases their plausibility increases.²³ The study therefore treated the case as 'explorative single case' studies. This implies that the analysis has processed the data separately for each country according to their inherent logic. This was done by a so-called 'thick analysis' that made it possible to consider detailed information and to inquire the meaning of human behaviour.²⁴ Compared have been the results of the country-specific analysis.²⁵ To gain deeper knowledge about the cases two within-case studies have been made. The intention was to focus on the same within

¹⁸ **Ragin, Charles C.** (1987), *The Comparative Method. Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p 10.

¹⁹ **George and Bennett**, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 33.

²⁰ **Lijphart, Arend** (1971), *Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method*. *The American Political Science Review*, No. 65, p 685.

²¹ **Thies, Cameron G** (2002), *A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations*. *International Studies Perspectives*, No. 3, p 354.

²² **Rueschemeyer**, *Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?*, 332.

²³ **Eckstein, Harry** (1975), *Case study and theory in political science*. In: Greenstein, Fred and Polsby, Nelso (eds.), *Handbook of political science*. 79-138, p 104.

²⁴ **George and Bennett**, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 249.

²⁵ This decision was inspired by: **Dobson**, *Approaches to Theory Use In Interpretive Case Studies – a Critical Realist Perspective*; **Lijphart**, *Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method*, 692.

cases for the case Azerbaijan and Ukraine in order to facilitate the comparison of the country-specific findings.

Criteria of validity and pragmatic concerns determined the selection of the within cases. Within-cases for this study are regional organisations in the post-Soviet space of which the case countries are members. The literature review pointed to the similarities among the five more robust regional organisations. These, however, vary in their member state constellations and slightly their organisational design. In this light, comparing at least two organisations seems to increase the validity of the findings. Regional organisations as such are still blurry research objects. A clear picture emerges from the analysis of the states' participation in the activities in various issue-areas. But varying dynamics determined the individual issue-areas. A comparison of activities across individual issue-areas will therefore give a broader picture of the states' participation rationales. The study has picked two issue-areas as within-cases: trade and non-traditional security challenges. To trace interaction in these areas the data collection has concentrated on concrete activities. The activities that serve as within-cases have been chosen during the interview sampling process. Only if enough interview data has been collected on the state's involvement in a specific activity can it then serve as a within-case. The case study design can be summarised as follows: it considers two case countries and their engagement in two regional organisations concerning two issue-areas. The research experiences have shown that this design constitutes the minimum for generating data that allow generalising, and a maximum for gaining in-depth data. The following description of the case selection will underscore this statement.

4.3.2. CASE AND WITHIN-CASE SELECTION

The next paragraphs will detail the case selection criteria and selected cases and within-cases, in order to highlight the degree to which the expected data may serve the research interest. The section will discuss the selection of case countries, within-cases and summarise the selected cases and discuss the strength of the sample in a final paragraph.

4.3.2.1. CASE COUNTRIES

As indicated above, the case universe consists of any former Soviet republic that is a member in more than one regional organisation in the post-Soviet space. In 2009, when the empirical research started, eleven states conformed to these criteria.²⁶ The within-case design required the case countries to be members in the same two regional organisations. This criterion divides the former Soviet republics into two groups: Armenia, Belarus, the Central Asian states and Russia as members of the CIS, the Collective Security Organisation (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), and Azerbaijan, Georgia,²⁷ Moldova and Ukraine which gather in the CIS and GUAM. Figure 4 visualises these constellations.

The ambition to enhance the picture of regionalism in this area of the world motivated the decision to select the second group. As the literature review argued, the research so far has mostly considered Russia and the Central Asian states; though with a different analytical angle. Thus it was intriguing to widen the regional perspective to Moldova, Ukraine and the South Caucasus. Except for Armenia, these states have an ambivalent attitude towards regional formats that strongly involve Russia. It is therefore revealing to identify what rationales nevertheless keep them as active members in the CIS. Further, it is enlightening to study how they shape regional interactions in a format without Russia, namely in GUAM. Two final observations led to the selection of Azerbaijan and Ukraine. First, these countries have been the most outspoken advocates of GUAM. In the study period of 2010-2012 they appear to be among the most active GUAM members.²⁸ The second argument refers to the case selection strategy suggested by John Gerring and Jason Seawright. They recommend selecting cases with strong variations on the matter of theoretical interest. The third research question pays interest to the impact of political regime types on the approach towards the regional organisations.²⁹ As chapter 1.5.1 has already outlined, the two countries are the most different in their political regime among the GUAM members. The political regime in the two

²⁶ The Baltic States have never been members in any of these organisations. Turkmenistan is only a member of the CIS, but has suspended its membership several times.

²⁷ Georgia left the CIS in 2010.

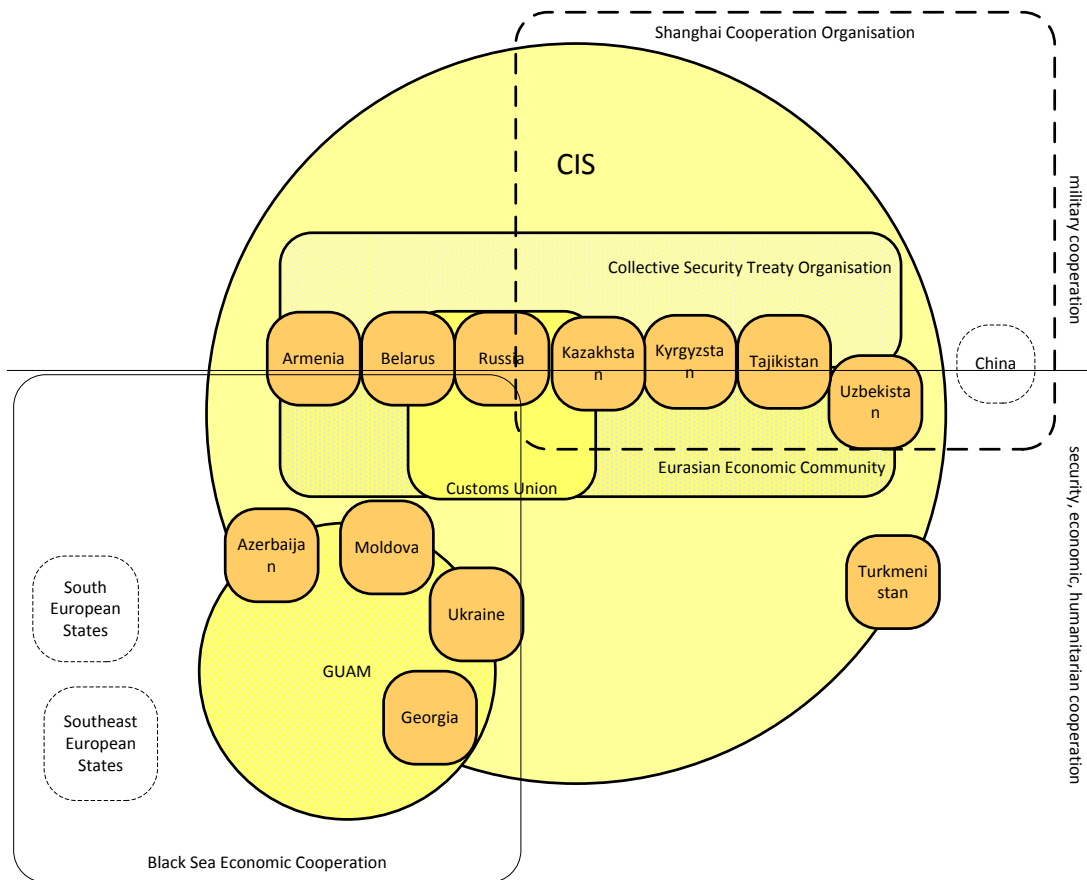
²⁸ See chapter 5, section 5.2 and 5.3 for more details.

²⁹ **Seawright, Jason and John Gerring** (2008), *Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research. A menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options*. Political Research Quarterly, Vo. 61, No. 2, p 296.

countries resembles a hybrid regime.³⁰ However, they vary in their affinity towards authoritarianism and democracy. Ukraine has made significant progress towards democracy in the 2000s and is marked by political pluralism. Nevertheless, many formal institutions of the democratic polity are still undermined and the country is trapped in the struggle between authoritarian and democratically oriented ruling elites. The hybrid regime in Azerbaijan is on the contrary characterised by a relatively stable authoritarian rule. This variation promises thought-provoking insights on the impact of different institutions of the domestic political regime on the states' conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations. The thesis refrains from narrowing down the research focus to specific variables related to the regime types. As chapter 2 has contended, the literature consulted does not suggest convincing hypotheses on which aspects of the political regime to focus primarily. The following open approach was therefore more adequate. The bulk of the data is interview data. The interviews did not contain questions related to characteristics of the regime types as section 4.4.1 will spell out. Instead the question if regime related issues play a role in the interview narratives guided the interpretation of the data. This implies that the thesis cannot give an account of how important regime characteristics are in relation to other factors. It, however, displays how regime characteristics impact the policy in regional organisations in the two cases studied.

³⁰ Constitutive for hybrid regimes is integration of democratic and authoritarian elements. With reference to empirical literature on hybrid regimes in the post-Soviet space and beyond the thesis considers the dominance of informal rule which is non-transparent and alters the function of the formal institutions as a characteristic of hybrid regimes. For a detailed discussion see section 3.4.3.

Figure 4: Overview of Regional Organisations and their Member States in the Post-Soviet Space



4.3.2.2. WITHIN-CASES: ISSUE AREAS IN THE CIS AND GUAM

The selection of case countries also implied which regional organisations were in focus, namely the CIS and GUAM. As has been discussed in chapter 2, both organisations proved to be relatively durable and, on closer inspection, show relatively intense activities.³¹ They also share the majority of fields of activity. According to the agreements adopted, the CIS pursues activities in economy, society and education, military related areas and non-traditional security challenges.³² So does GUAM but without the military dimension. Areas in which both Azerbaijan and Ukraine are most ‘active’ qualify as within-cases. Their degree

³¹ The review of literature on the CIS and GUAM in chapter 2 leads to this conclusion.

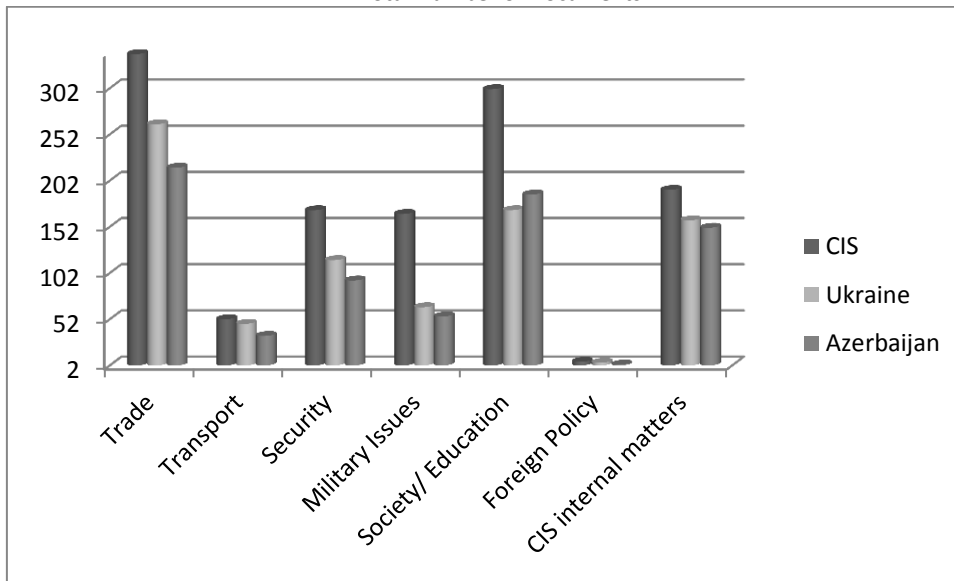
³² The adopted agreements and documents have been summarised into these five issue-areas according to the following criteria: **economy** (trade regulations, tax and customs, production, monetary and currency regulations, transport); **societal matters and education** (social security, higher education, specific social minorities, cultural activities and democracy promotion); **military co-operation** (border forces, peace building, military-industrial complex, military trainings); **‘non-traditional security challenges’** (counter-actions against terrorism, organised crime, especially drug trafficking, irregular migration and human trafficking, information, environment).

of 'activeness' had to be determined in a pre-study by desk-research. Secondary literature and newspapers, even studies on Ukraine, give only a vague picture of the countries' activeness in the CIS and GUAM. The most reliable source to inform the within-case selection has been CIS and GUAM documents. Adopted decisions and reports that count Ukraine and/or Azerbaijan among the signatories indicate at least that the countries take some interest in the documents adopted. The pre-study has taken into account that these documents do not give evidence of the intensity of commitment or the actual intention of this activity. They nevertheless qualified as a starting point for further inquiry. Therefore, the pre-study quantified and compared the number of documents in each issue-area which have been signed by each country. The assessment of the country's 'activeness' factored in the number of documents signed and the question, if the country proactively pursued an agreement. Areas in which the states signed more than 60% of the documents and ideally took initiative are possible within-cases. For Azerbaijan and Ukraine in both GUAM and the CIS these are 'society and education', 'economy' and 'non-traditional security challenges'. Figure 5 gives evidence of the quantitative distribution of Azerbaijan's and Ukraine's activeness in the CIS. A deeper glance at agreements in the field 'society and education' revealed that these mostly relate to projects with limited outreach and hence require low internal and regional policy co-ordination.³³ In that light, activities related to economy and non-traditional security challenges promised a more fertile ground for the analysis. Both are additionally attractive, since scholars argue that these fields increasingly require regional solutions in times of globalisation.³⁴ To intensively study these issue-areas, a concentration on selected activities is necessary.

³³ Various interviewees confirmed this impression. They explained the main activities as short-term or formal activities which qualify in the first place to increase the records of the organisation's activities (UA_MFA_3, GUAM_Official_2).

³⁴ **Farrell et al.**, *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*, 3.

**Figure 5: Total CIS Agreements and Agreements Signed by Azerbaijan and Ukraine;
in Total Number of Documents**



Source: compiled by the author according to information from www.cis.minsk.by, June 2010

4.3.2.3. ACTIVITIES CONCERNING ECONOMY AND SECURITY

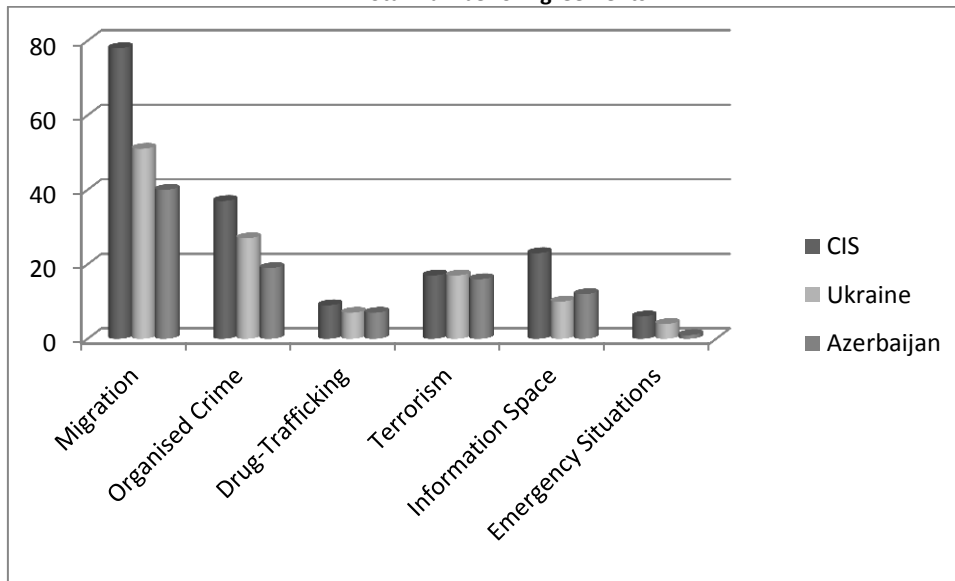
On a closer look, activities in the selected issue-areas split into several activities within various fields of economic and security activities. In order to cope with the given variety, the study concentrates on one field of activity in each issue-area and ideally on one concrete activity of this field. But the study also consulted additional fields and concrete activities for the following reasons. While the diversity of fields of activity and concrete projects in CIS and GUAM interaction is high, the projects are often not deeply elaborated. That means the number of state officials involved is not necessarily high, neither is the number of observable implementation steps. Since it was not possible to arrange interviews with all relevant actors for one direction, some interviews were conducted with state officials involved in other directions. This required opening the focus up for additional fields or activities. The presentation of the findings in this thesis, however, concentrates on only two activities. Figure 7 summarises the case-study design and informs about the presented and the additionally considered within cases.

CIS economic activities cover twelve fields of activity. The spheres in which Azerbaijan and Ukraine are party to more than 60% of general and specific agreements and participate in councils allow for an in-depth analysis. These are 'general economic strategy', customs issues, free trade (and standardisation) and

transport. The general economic strategy includes aspects of all economic directions and will therefore be excluded. The CIS happened to negotiate a new free trade agreement in the period 2009-2011, which was adopted in October 2011. Ukraine and Azerbaijan participated in the negotiations. Hence, this activity presented itself as an economic within-case for the CIS. The number of agreements within GUAM is too low to quantify the economic activities in a meaningful way. However, the free trade agreement is promoted as GUAM's flagship project. Accordingly, the GUAM study is also oriented at free trade. However, two interviews were made with officials from the transport ministry in Ukraine. Additional information were gathered on Azerbaijan's interest in CIS cross-border activities and three GUAM working group meetings on transport, banking and customs issues have been attended. This material helps to compile a more comprehensive picture.

A common information space, anti-terrorism, anti-organised crime, anti-drug trafficking, migration, emergency situations and environmental protection are the pillars of CIS and GUAM initiatives concerning non-traditional security challenges. Figure 6 points out that Azerbaijan and Ukraine signed most CIS agreements on anti-terrorism, organised crime and irregular migration. A lack of data on GUAM activities in this area made it impossible to assess the countries' 'activeness'. Access to state officials from state security bodies in a foreign country is problematic in any case and even harder in a non-democratic environment. The final decision regarding which activities to focus on was therefore made during the field work. Interviews were conducted with actors involved in anti-terrorism, anti-irregular migration and anti-drug trafficking measures in both countries. But most valid data have been collected on the topic of migration in Azerbaijan and anti-drug trafficking in Ukraine. The thesis refers therefore to activities in these areas as security related within-cases. The data collected do not allow presenting congruent security related within-cases for Azerbaijan and Ukraine, but qualify to give valid insights for each country.

**Figure 6: CIS Security Agreements Signed by Ukraine and Azerbaijan,
in Total Number of Agreements**



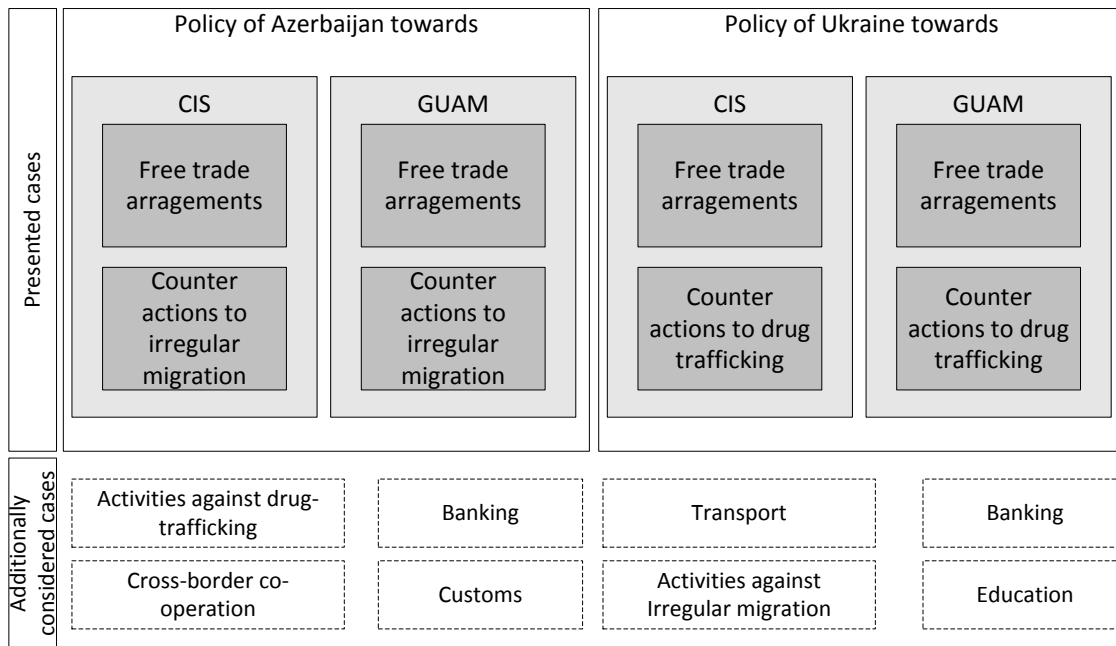
Source: compiled by the author according to information from www.cis.minsk.by, June 2010

4.3.2.4. THE CASE SAMPLE, ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The intention of this section is two-fold. It will first summarise the different levels of the case sample in order to avoid confusion concerning cases and within-cases. A second paragraph will critically reflect on the explanatory power of the case sample.

The empirical study of this thesis explores how state officials in two varying political regimes conceptualise the function of two regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The study focuses on a hybrid political regime with affinity towards authoritarianism, namely Azerbaijan, and a hybrid political regime with a strong political pluralism, namely Ukraine. The analysis concentrates on the state's policy in the CIS and GUAM. To gain deep insights it examines two within-cases of the state's policy in the organisations. These are their policies in two issue areas. First, it will examine their expectations of and engagement in activities concerning free trade agreements. Second, Azerbaijan's engagement in migration and Ukraine's engagement in anti-drug trafficking activities will be analysed. The disparity of the latter within-cases for Ukraine and Azerbaijan is a consequence of the uneven access to interviewees in the two countries.

Figure 7: Overview of the Considered Empirical Cases



The selected cases show that the thesis has opted for a small-N case sample. The need to collect original empirical data in form of elite interviews for the study made it necessary to constrain the sample to two cases and two within-cases. The thesis has, thus, analysed not more than two out of 12 former Soviet republics, in two out five regional organisations and two of six possible issue areas. The part of the case universe covered by the research is too small to produce results that are generally valid for the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The thesis therefore has another agenda. The intention is to explore cases in-depth and develop hypotheses which future research may consider as possible answers to the empirical and theoretical puzzle. To recall, the empirical puzzle asks for the de facto function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space for the members. The theoretical puzzle asks if and how varying political regimes lead to varying policies in regional organisations.

Since hardly any data on the policy of former Soviet republics in the organisations, let alone the issue areas, were available, the research strategy concentrated on the following. It chose two cases with substantial variations in the area of theoretical interest, namely the political regime type. The delivered results should therefore not be mistaken for proofs of the relevance of the variable 'regime type'. They just

suggest how and why political regime types influence the policies studied. The study proceeded on the basis of the decision not to specify variables in the regime types a priori and to test their relevance. The weak knowledge about foreign policy formulation in different political regimes suggested an alternative approach. In the research process data were collected that reflect how policy-makers give meaning to the foreign policy studied. The analysis has then studied if and how political regime aspects are a factor in the data. The absence of measurable variables made a comparative study design problematic. There were no variables to measure and to draw conclusions from their varying manifestations in more than one case. Instead the thesis has undertaken two theoretically oriented single case studies and has compared the result of these studies. This referred to the rationale that evidences derived from one case gain plausibility if another case suggests similar evidences. In neo-positivist terms the validity of the findings is low. However, in the absence of a theory that adequately explains the research puzzle such exploratory research is a necessary first step in search of theoretical explanations. The findings may inspire future research to test their validity by applying them to a broader set of cases. The research findings have to be stripped of empirical details in order to be applicable to other cases. The thesis has done so in formulating the analytical framework and hypotheses in chapter 5 and 9. These hypotheses are thus not generalisation but rather abstractions from the small-N empirical studies the validity of which might be explored in future studies.

Having summarised the case sample and the expectations concerning the validity of the results which the sample can generate the next section goes a step further. It discusses the validity of the gathered interview data. By doing so it makes a statement on the quality of the empirical research.

4.3.3. INTERVIEW SAMPLE

The empirical study builds on four periods of field research, two in each country. A two-week trip to Ukraine in 2010 enabled the conducting of a pre-test interview

series, honed interviewing skills and also narrowed down the analytical focus.³⁵ A six-week stay in Ukraine and one in Azerbaijan in 2011 followed this series. These stays provided the opportunity to conduct interviews primarily with state officials and to collect relevant documents and secondary literature from the countries. A short-term stay in Azerbaijan for ten days in 2012 completed the fieldwork. Overall 40 interviews were conducted in Kyiv and 34 in Azerbaijan. The following paragraphs will consider three details that influence the strength of the interview sample and data. These are: how the field has been defined and interviewees chosen; challenges of the sampling process and the interview situations; and the validity of the interview sample in each country and the congruency of the sample in Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

4.3.3.1. DEFINING THE 'FIELD'

To recapitulate, the research is interested in the states' engagement in CIS and GUAM activities on free trade, irregular migration and drug-trafficking. The ideal sample would cover all state officials who formulate policy in these areas and are directly involved in the respective GUAM and CIS activities. These include staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economics, the Customs Service, the Ministry of Interior, the National Migration Agency, the Ministry of National Security in Azerbaijan, the Security Service in Ukraine, Presidential Administration,³⁶ members of the parliamentary foreign policy committees, and the National Council of Security and Defence in Ukraine.³⁷ In addition, government-related think-tanks, at least according to their brief, contribute to foreign policy-making. In Ukraine these are the National Institute for Strategic Studies³⁸ and the National Institute for Issues of International Security.³⁹ In Azerbaijan this is the Centre for Strategic

³⁵ Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss recommend such a pre-test. See: **Glaser and Strauss**, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 40. The research findings help to critically engage with the sensitising concepts and induce the search for alternative theoretical explanations.

³⁶ Formally the presidential administration in Ukraine is not involved in foreign policy making. However, since the head of the administration often signs CIS agreements, some staff members can be expected to deal with CIS issues.

³⁷ Identified by interviewees as foreign politically relevant body

³⁸ The Ukrainian name: Natsional'nyi institut strategicheskikh doslidzhen'

³⁹ The Ukrainian name: Natsional'nyi institut problem mizhnarodnoyi bezpeky (dissolved in April 2010)

Studies under the President.⁴⁰ In both countries they serve as a mouthpiece for the government rather than having a substantial impact on governmental decisions.⁴¹ It was nevertheless intriguing to explore their line of argument in the subject under study. The aim was to also include non-state actors who deal with transnational economic activities and measures against irregular migration and drug-trafficking, since they may provide an alternative view. These are private economic actors, non-governmental organisations and analysts.

Access to the field was attempted by official bureaucratic means and also through mediating individuals, as recommended for elite interviewing.⁴² These were analysts from independent political and economic think tanks, who in Ukraine are mostly related to political circles. In Azerbaijan the University under the foreign ministry facilitated most meetings. The following paragraph will highlight some challenges of the sampling process.

4.3.3.2. CATALYSTS IN THE SAMPLING PROCESS: MUTUAL BENEFITS AND TRUST

Neither Azerbaijan nor Ukraine government agencies publicly disclose departments, staff and the respective contact details. In consequence, I had to rely on knowledgeable actors in the countries. Arranging interviews with state officials in Ukraine was a highly bureaucratic procedure. The affiliation to a Ukrainian think tank and a basic level of Ukrainian language increased the officials' readiness to accept the interview request. The interviewees took this as a sign of real interest in Ukrainian matters and a readiness to go beyond stereotypical assumptions on Ukrainian policy. They hence regarded the interview as mutually beneficial. This was expressed in questions on whether I would be able to communicate my research results in policy making communities abroad. One interviewee contacted me again, after the interview, to ask for an assessment how the international community might react to a given political statement. By permitting access to a foreign student to the ministries, the state officials also intended to express 'Western standards' in

⁴⁰ The Azerbaijani name: Strateji Arashdirmalar Markazi

⁴¹ Assessment of AZ_Analyst_5, AZ_Analyst_7, UA_NSDC_1, UA_NSDC_2, UA_Analyst_1

⁴² **Odendahl, Teresa and Aileen M Shaw** (2001), *Interviewing Elites*. In: Gubrium, Jaber F and Hostein, James A (eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research. Context and Method*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

the Ukrainian state administration. They often asked whether the access had been easier than would have been the case in the UK. One department asked for concrete co-operation: they needed access to international journal articles. My readiness to have a look for them was answered with: this is how international co-operation actually works.⁴³ Recommendations from 'insiders' played a role, but a minor one. Striking was the reluctance of state officials to arrange meetings with their colleagues, which foiled any significant snow-ball effect.⁴⁴ It conveyed the impression that the trust among the colleagues and between ministries is rather low.

In Azerbaijan an official letter to the secretariat of each minister had to accompany the contact phase. However, it never opened access unless informal ways of making contact were initiated in parallel. The most relevant commodity appeared to be names of state officials and cell-phone numbers. Two 'high-level' insiders to ministerial structures and a section at the foreign ministry arranged most meetings. My influence on the sample in Azerbaijan was hence fairly limited, at least with regard to state agencies. The reciprocity of benefits was also relevant. They generally expected me to function as an advocate of the ruling elite in the West. Most interviewees mentioned that they hardly meet foreign researchers. They blamed foreign researchers for sticking to prejudices rather than engaging in a proper exchange. As the low effect of the formal request showed, the limited presence of foreign researchers might, however, be produced by access barriers rather than by a lack of interest. 'Trust' was the most important catalyst. With a well-integrated and to a certain degree powerful insider arranging meetings, my requests were hardly ever rejected. As soon as I received somebody's cell-phone number and mentioned from whom I obtained it, the interviewees agreed to a meeting even without knowing the details of the research topic. In such situations, a few interviewees inquired with the 'insider' about my trustworthiness. The only official I contacted in the ordinary bureaucratic manner (having received the office

⁴³ Interviewee from the Ministry of Interior (UA_Mol_1)

⁴⁴ Snow-ball sampling describes the collection of contact details and access to interviewees by personal recommendations given by one interviewee to another. **Warren, Carol B** (2001), *Qualitative Interviewing*. In: Gubrium, Jaber F and Hostein, James A (eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, p 87.

number from the general secretariat of the ministry) accused me of espionage and obviously rejected a meeting. However, later this department received a consent letter from the secretariat of the ministry to give me an interview and asked for written questions. They indeed answered these questions and posted them to Birmingham some six weeks after my stay. This is an expression of the bureaucracy in Azerbaijan working well.

As a consequence of this 'trust based' mode of interviewee selection, on which I had only limited influence, it was far harder to meet people from all relevant institutions. The sample is biased, since it includes mostly members of one circle of elites. Due to the lack of transparency in the elite circles, it is hard to assess if the bias is significant. Chances to balance it were provided by alternative information from economic and political analysts from the opposition camp.

4.3.3.3. INTERVIEW SAMPLE AND DATA VALIDITY: UKRAINE

It was possible to speak to the relevant departments of the foreign ministry and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. I met in total seven foreign ministry staff members, of which two were currently members of the diplomatic service. Two interviews with state officials in charge of free trade issues in the CIS and GUAM have been made in the economics ministry. Additionally, two analysts were interviewed who had worked in the ministry until a few months before the meeting. Two officials from the State Service for Technical Regulations which deals with technical aspects of free trade agreed to an interview. Three interviews in the Ministry of Interior covered anti-drug, anti- illegal-migration policy. Apparently due to its fundamental re-organisation the National Migration Service was not available.⁴⁵ Fortunately two interviewees were identified who had formerly worked in the state migration structures; one of them on the CIS. The Ministry of Infrastructure was available for two interviews on CIS and GUAM transportation issues. Two staff members of the National Security and Defence Council were interviewed. In addition, the interview sample includes four analysts from government- affiliated and nine from independent think tanks.

⁴⁵ One interviewee stated that even though the agency was created four years ago the former officials from the Ministry of Interior still do not work in the new National Migration Service. (UA_Analyst_8)

It was hard to discern the actual influence of the interviewees. Some interviewees confirmed that formal hierarchies are not necessarily congruent to *de facto* hierarchies.⁴⁶ I hardly received background information about the interviewees and therefore had to rely on their self-presentation for judging how deeply they are involved in the processes and how deep their knowledge thus is. In total ten state bureaucrats were in a merely executive position. Three analysts had previously been in executive positions at a ministry. Five state officials reported that they had more decision-making competences. One interviewee from the National Council for Security and Defence was dealing with strategy development at a higher and one at a low level. One analyst from a governmental think tank can be considered as involved in strategy development. Three analysts previously functioned as policy advisors with close relation to the president and government. Ukrainian ministries often face a staff re-shuffle or a change of their portfolio. How well informed the interviewees were, therefore, depended on the time they stayed in the relevant position. Fortunately, 15 state officials had held the position for several years and only seven have been in charge for only a few years.

The expertise on GUAM and the CIS is well balanced. 24 policy makers, analysts and private entrepreneurs were knowledgeable regarding the CIS and 23 regarding GUAM issues. But only eight state officials directly participated in GUAM, while 17 had direct experience with the CIS. 18 interviewees had expertise on Ukrainian trade policy in GUAM (seven with direct involvement). Seven interviewees had dealt with Ukraine's participation in security initiatives in GUAM, but only three of them directly. In contrast, of the 18 interviewees with expertise on trade in the CIS, 11 had been directly involved in CIS meetings. Five interviewees had direct experience with security activities in the CIS. This balance is obviously not ideal. However, those interviewees who talked about GUAM and CIS security activities were directly active in one of the regional organisations and held this position for a longer period already. Against this background the sample is still considered as sound. The interview time of 30 to 90 minutes was sufficient to get substantial information and verify details.

⁴⁶ UA_Security_Council_1, UA_Analyst_5

4.3.3.4. INTERVIEW SAMPLE AND DATA VALIDITY: AZERBAIJAN

The governmental agencies in Azerbaijan were as open as those in Ukraine. Eight current and three former foreign ministry staff members, three current and one former economics ministry employee, two employees from the Ministry of Interior, and two officials from the State Migration Service agreed to interviews. Some information concerning Azerbaijan's stance on customs issues in GUAM were collected during a GUAM event in Baku. Two members of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, five government-related and eight independent analysts complete the sample.⁴⁷ A certain imbalance concerning expertise on GUAM and the CIS marks the sample. This mismatch is in large part a result of the 'trust-based' access to the ministries. The two 'insiders' who brokered the appointments had relations primarily with the departments that interacted with GUAM. Attempts to reach foreign ministry officials in charge of CIS issues succeeded only once.

More strongly than in Ukraine some interlocutors stressed the incongruence of formal position and *de facto* influence in the state administration.⁴⁸ A proper understanding of their power beyond executing bureaucratic tasks required insights into the interviewee's relation to crucial decision-making actors in the state administration and government. Objective information was obviously not available. So I asked third parties how they would assess the influence of the interviewees and took notes in case some information on this popped up during the interview. The following picture emerged: Six interviewees are most likely part of the circles that shape foreign policy. Seven individuals appear to be in close contact with influential actors. They have valid information, but limited influence. Seven of the interviewed analysts are in rather distant contact with political elite and, hence, in some cases lack first-hand information on policy-making rationalities. Three of them do not any have constructive contact with members of the wider political elite. These analysts shared meaningful background information on state-society relations.

⁴⁷ The assessment of an expert being close to the government is not only based on formal affiliation but also on the degree to which the expert's activities are in conjunction with state-institutions. 'Independent' means not employed in state-related institutes and being weakly linked to state-institutions.

⁴⁸ See also: **Guliyev**, Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Transition to Sultanistic Semiauthoritarianism? An Attempt at Conceptualization.

Among the interviewees 11 individuals – eight of them state officials - had direct experience with GUAM but only ten were directly engaged with the CIS. Of the latter, only three individuals participated in CIS bodies. The remaining six played an active role in domestic co-ordination of CIS positions. No economic actor was interviewed on the CIS FTA, while three actors related their perception on the GUAM FTA. Their information also referred to general transnational trade practices in the post-Soviet space and therefore informs the study of CIS trade activities as well. About 15 individuals provided information on Azerbaijan's trade policy within CIS and GUAM and about state-business relations in the country. Five individuals were directly concerned with CIS trade policy and three individuals with GUAM trade. In total only five interviews covered the issue of drug-trafficking and four interviews with state bureaucrats and one interviewee at GUAM concerned Azerbaijan's regional migration policy. The number of interviews on these security-related issues is low, but the interviewees had first-hand information. Regarding irregular migration additional first-hand information was added by two experts who had pursued non-governmental activities in this area for several years.

4.3.3.5. ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWS IN THE GUAM SECRETARIAT

GUAM has its headquarters in Kyiv, which facilitated making contact with the organisation itself. The officials permitted me to attend four GUAM trade, transport and customs-related working groups. These facilitated background talks with delegates from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and four private economic actors (two from Ukraine, one from Azerbaijan and one from Georgia). Also, a US official who co-ordinates GUAM-US security programmes was available for an interview. Figure 8 will provide an overview of the adequateness the interview sample.

Figure 8: Interviewees and Their Degree of Knowledge about the Research Topic

Azerbaijan					
Interviewees	(Current or Former) State Officials/Parliamentarians/Government Related Analysts		Non-State Actors		Third Parties
Information	First-hand	Mediated	First-hand	Mediated	
GUAM Strategy	9	1	3	9	4 GUAM officials, 1 Interviewee in Ukraine
CIS Strategy	3	5	0	8	
GUAM Trade Issues	7	3	3	6	2 GUAM officials
GUAM Tourism and Transport	5	3	0	3	1 GUAM official
CIS Trade Issues	5	2	0	7	
CIS Transport	2	3	0	3	
GUAM Security Issues	4	1	2 Migration Policy	0	2 GUAM officials, 1 US interviewee
CIS Security Issues	1	1		0	
Foreign Policy-Making	13		7	5	3 GUAM Officials
State-Business Relations /Foreign Trade	4	0	6	2	
Ukraine					
Interviewees	(Current or Former) State Officials/Parliamentarians/Government Related Analysts		Non-State Actors		Third Parties
Information	First-hand	Mediated	First-hand	Mediated	
GUAM Strategy	11	5	2	3	4 GUAM officials, 1 US interviewee
CIS Strategy	11	8	0	6	
GUAM Trade Issues	2	6	3	5	2 GUAM officials
GUAM Tourism and Transport	3	1	0	0	1 GUAM official
CIS Trade Issues	6	6	1	4	
CIS Transport	3	2	0	0	
GUAM Security Issues	3	2	0	0	2 GUAM officials, 1 US interviewee
CIS Security Issues	3	1		0	
Foreign Policy-Making	12	4	2	6	2 GUAM Officials, 1 US interviewee
State-Business Relations /Foreign Trade	5	2	3	4	

4.3.4. TOWARDS VALID INTERVIEW DATA

The pre-test and the subsequently made interviews relied on different questionnaires. These questionnaires in any case only partially structured the interviews. However, I made sure that all questions were touched upon. Five interviewees asked me to submit the questions in written form before the

interview. The following clusters guided the interviews: open statements on perception of the organisation and the activity in focus; the relevance of membership in the organisation; description of the activities including negotiations; specific questions concerning the framing of impact, success, failure, or problems of co-operation; process of domestic co-ordination of the engagement in organisation, of positions in negotiations and of the implementation of signed documents; direct request on the interviewee's understanding of multilateralism and regional organisations. The questions generated episodic narratives and a framing of relevant ideas. Occasionally, I posed additional questions on the EU multilateral co-operation within the Eastern Partnership, on BSEC and other organisations. This allowed testing if arguments were specific to the CIS and GUAM.

Confidentiality was in both countries important for gaining valuable insights. As recommended for elite interviews I reduced the signs of formal interviewing.⁴⁹ Most interviewees preferred to agree to 'talks' not to research interviews. A 'research interview' implied for them a greater responsibility. Fear of being held accountable for any quotes from the interviews would have made it problematic to request signing a letter of consent before the interview. Such a procedure would most likely have created distrust and reduced the data quality. The ministerial working environment provides some explanation for this reluctance. In an environment where employees are dismissed easily, no state bureaucrat is eager to create written evidence of their conversation with researchers. Not by chance a low level official from the Ministry of Interior who had to report in writing about the meeting hardly shared any relevant information. The research tried to comply with ethical standards of interviewing by asking each interviewee to give explicit oral consent to the talk and the planned use of the interview data.⁵⁰ To increase the likeliness of information beyond the official lines I promised to quote the interviewees only anonymously. Most interviews in the ministries were not taped.⁵¹ The data analysis is grounded on notes during the interviews and a full memo immediately after the meeting. In consequence this thesis cannot disclose precise information on the

⁴⁹ **Odendahl and Shaw**, *Interviewing Elites*, 310.

⁵⁰ Basic standards concerning ethics in qualitative research are for instance presented in: **Flick, Uwe** (2006), *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 36-40.

⁵¹ Both strategies are recommended by: **Warren**, *Qualitative Interviewing*.

position and department of the interviewees. Alternatively appendix 3 provides some information on the expertise of the interviewees according to the following indicators: the hierarchical position, the duration of employment in the current position, direct or indirect contact to CIS and GUAM and interview topics.

Finally, it is necessary to reflect on intercultural dissonances, since they often influence fieldwork.⁵² The interview questions were formulated openly, in order to avoid misapplications of concepts from different cultural backgrounds. Indeed three interviewees framed a positive connotation of 'multilateralism' as culturally specific to Europeans. Discussing this 'intercultural difference' produced valuable results. Certain barriers were created by the interview language. Most interviews were conducted in Russian, some in English. The language was chosen which allowed the interviewee to express him/herself freely. My broad passive and active vocabulary in the research sphere allowed for smooth conversations in Russian. Some difficulties in the understanding of technical terminology created minor obstacles only. After this detailed description of the quality of interview data some insights will follow, which give evidence of the quality of the data analysis.

4.4.DATA ANALYSIS: QUALITATIVE ANALYTICAL CODING AND TRIANGULATION

The study pursued content analysis only and neglected semantics, since most interviewees did not speak in their mother tongue. But the coding took structural narrative elements like repetitions, avoidance of answers or breaks into account.⁵³

4.4.1. FROM DATA TO THEORY: CATEGORIES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

The first coding phase extracted descriptions of the following categories from interview texts and written field observations: expectations of GUAM and the CIS; connotations of other regional organisations; the envisioned structure of GUAM and the CIS; modes of participation; state practices in regional relations. These categories were inspired by preliminary theoretical assumptions but formulated

⁵² See: **Ryen, Anne** (2001), Cross-Cultural Interviewing In: Gubrium, Jaber F and Hostein, James A (eds.), Handbook of Interview Research. Context and Method. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

⁵³ **Bazeley**, Qualitative Data Analysis with NVIVO, 82.

broadly in order not to 'force data into codes'.⁵⁴ The first two categories gathered general perceptions on the CIS and GUAM. Statements on the activities and their co-ordination in the organisations were put into the category 'mode of participation in GUAM and CIS' and 'envisioned structure'. These categories allowed cross-checking the statements on perceptions with information about practical experiences. The category 'governmental practices' collected descriptions of policymaking processes, policy implementation, practices of rule and regime support.

This process in which pre-defined categories served as basis created more specific categories.⁵⁵ These helped to adjust the analytical focus to the most relevant aspects, as suggested in the grounded theory literature.⁵⁶ The following categories arouse attention: relation between ultimate and intermediary goals, the differentiation of the function of activities from their apparent purpose, notions of multilateralism, domestic decision making processes, and the relation between activities in the regional organisations and established domestic practices. The next step set up relationships between the categories to construct a coherent analytical frame. The interviews provided initial assumptions about the relations. Empirical and theoretical literature motivated a final re-consideration of the categories and assumptions and facilitated the transfer of the empirical observations into already established abstract terms. The analytical frame presented in chapter three reflects the results of this process.

4.4.2. TRIANGULATION: TESTING THE DATA VALIDITY

Some words on how triangulation has minimised the risk of misinterpreting the interview narratives will conclude the discussion of the reliability of the data analysis.⁵⁷ Triangulation is an answer to the fact that interview data are constructed in the interaction during the interview and primarily reflect individual

⁵⁴ **Glaser and Strauss**, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 228.

⁵⁵ The procedure has been recommended by Jan Kruse:

⁵⁶ **Charmaz**, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, 46.
Breuer, *Reflexive Grounded Theory*, 74, 92.

⁵⁷ Uwe Flick defines the term as: 'Triangulation means that an issue of research is considered [...] from (at least) two points. Normally, the consideration from two or more points is materialized by using different methodological approaches.' **Flick**, *Managing Quality in Qualitative Research*, 40.

interpretations.⁵⁸ Four strategies triangulated the data. First, the consistency of the content and weight of individual concepts within an interview was checked. Clarifying questions often concluded the interview. In some cases a second interview at a later date served as a basis for comparison.⁵⁹ Second, the position and access to first hand of information of the interviewee was considered. Third, the argumentation of interviewees was checked against the arguments of others. Fourth, the plausibility of statements was tested by comparison with other primary and secondary data. The sources were documents, UN comtrade data, newspapers and secondary literature. Having sketched measures to ensure the data validity, the question emerges as to the extent of their explanatory power.

4.5.EXPLANATORY POWER OF THE DATA

Interpretive research is often criticised for its bold claim to achieve valid insights into the behaviour of groups, in this case ministries and states, by exploring the rationales of only a small number of individuals. The previous reflections stressed that this thesis is aware of the limited explanatory power of the two explorative single case studies and also of the weaknesses of the data sample and potential biases of the collected perspectives. The research has dealt with the limited case number by studying two within-cases for each case. Anyhow, the hypotheses derived from the two cases do therefore not claim to explain the behaviour of all former Soviet republics or hybrid political regimes in regional organisations. They do no more than suggest some factors that influence Azerbaijan's and Ukraine's policy in the CIS and GUAM. Chapter 3 and 9, nevertheless, formulate the findings in an abstract way to make them accessible for researchers who study related cases.

Several triangulation strategies strove to minimise the weaknesses of the data sample and the risk of biased perspectives. At any rate, the data delivered more insights than documents or statistics. Documents are often a policy instrument themselves and do not disclose the actual purpose of an action. Statistics give

⁵⁸ **Breuer**, Reflexive Grounded Theory, 39; **Charmaz**, Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis, 35.

⁵⁹ **Kvale, Steinar** (2007), Doing Interviews. London: Sage Publications, pp. 80-82.

evidence on a status quo, but not on meanings or causality. In this light, interview-based data acquisition is an appropriate way to generate original data.

An ideal sample including all primary actors that would strengthen the transfer from individual perspectives to the group behaviour is impossible to reach, especially in elite interviews. However, the number of interviews is relatively high in both countries and allows for the formulation of strong hypotheses. The number of interviews in Ukraine is higher. In exchange, the experience of the interviewees in a certain position is higher in Azerbaijan. A relatively balanced sample was collected in both case countries. Overall, the thesis can claim to build on sound original data that illuminate the research interest more than other data. It is now the task of the chapters 5 - 8 to present the empirical findings and their theoretical implications.

5. CIS AND GUAM MEMBERSHIP AND SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS

This first empirical chapter devotes its attention to the first research question. It will highlight the aims which Azerbaijan and Ukraine intend to pursue within the CIS and GUAM. The analysis unveils these aims by investigating how Azerbaijan and Ukraine's relations to the former Soviet neighbourhood shape their approach towards the CIS and GUAM. It specifically studies persisting (inter)dependencies. This analytical focus is rooted in the following assumptions based in the relevant literature. Regional organisations are an arena for states to interact and potentially enhance their domestic security. How states participate in an organisation strongly depends on their sovereignty concerns.¹ Perceptions on challenges and remedies for domestic sovereignty stem from domestic considerations about domestic regime stability in the light of regional economic, security and power relations. The importance of persisting (inter)dependencies appears to be particularly strong in the post-Soviet space, due to the recent disintegration of a single polity, namely the USSR.² As this section will show, the empirical data support this line of argument. Policy-makers describe the participation in regional organisations with reference to the regional dimension of the state's sovereignty concerns.

Literature on the post-Soviet space often depicts the sovereignty concerns of the newly independent states as an obstacle to their commitment to regional organisations in the post-Soviet neighbourhood. For consolidating independent statehood the regional organisations are rather unattractive or hostile, so the argument goes.³ While it is evident that the states do not seek integration, the organisations appear to be more attractive than is indicated by this argument.⁴ Azerbaijan and Ukraine did not turn away from, for instance, the CIS and GUAM, but are more active in these organisations than is often assumed.⁵ Apparently, despite

¹ The relevance of sovereignty has been discussed in chapter 3.4.2 and 2.2.2 with reference to inter alia: **Hoffmann**, *Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe*.

² **Vinokurov and Libman**, *Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration*, 12.

³ **Sakwa**, *The CIS: Conflicts of Space and Time*, 300.

⁴ As chapter 2.3.1 discussed, neither the CIS, GUAM nor the CSTO and EurAsEC have thus far achieved integration in 2012.

⁵ The literature generally discusses these two states as reluctant and inactive CIS participants.

the sovereignty concerns, the regional environment also creates incentives for participation in regional organisations. As chapter 2.3 has discussed, the existing literature hardly satisfactorily explains how the domestic interpretation of regional challenges to sovereignty defines the states' aims in the regional organisation.⁶ This chapter will therefore empirically explore this nexus in the case of Azerbaijan and Ukraine. This analytical step will identify primarily what the analytical framework calls the ultimate goals of the case countries and will give first ideas about their intermediary goals.⁷

The chapter argues that Azerbaijan and Ukraine pursue membership in the CIS and GUAM as a response to the regional dimension of sovereign statehood. To provide a differentiated picture, the chapter draws on Stephen Krasner and distinguishes Westphalian, domestic and interdependence sovereignty.⁸ Both states seek primarily support for their Westphalian and domestic sovereignty. Only Ukraine intends to gain support for its interdependence sovereignty. Policy-makers depict the CIS and GUAM as tools for reducing and re-organising existing interdependencies according to domestic security priorities. The following dilemma drives the specific involvement of the states' in organisational bodies and sectoral activities: Westphalian sovereignty demands a reduction of interdependencies, challenges to domestic sovereignty induce to maintain productive interdependencies; finally, controlling cross-border flows calls for intensified interdependencies.

The chapter derives its argument from studying how policy documents and policy-makers frame the country's interest in the organisations. But also how they design their membership in the organisational bodies and their participation in activities on

⁶ The core argument, which has so far been developed in this regard, is that the former Soviet republics seek the protection of the regional hegemon or are forced into an organisation by the hegemon. See: **Allison**, *Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia*; **Libman**, *Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development*.

⁷ The absolute aims reflect to what end the states' engage in the organisations under study. The relative aims indicate interim steps, which the states' accept on their way to the absolute aims. Chapter 3.4 discussed the analytical categories in detail.

⁸ 'Domestic sovereignty' refers to 'the ability of public authorities to exercise effective control within borders of their own polity'. Westphalian sovereignty emphasises the 'exclusion of external actors from authority structures' **Krasner**, *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*, p. 9. For a discussion of the term see chapter 2.

specific issue areas. The thesis will speak about the latter as of sectoral activities. These indicators reflect the rhetorical and the practical dimension of CIS and GUAM policy. Comparing both dimensions allows conclusions to be drawn about the states' ultimate goals. CIS and GUAM documents, Azerbaijani and Ukrainian foreign policy documents, interview narratives with state officials from Azerbaijan and Ukraine and staff members of the GUAM secretariat provided the necessary empirical insights. In addition, statistical background data reflect the strength of interdependencies with other former Soviet republics. The chapter concentrates on the years 2010-2012 but also adds insights from the period 1991-2010 to the analysis, since the long-term perspective provides a more accurate picture. Separate case studies on Azerbaijan and Ukraine will illustrate the arguments presented. The chapter will conclude by comparing the insights from Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

5.1.AZERBAIJAN'S GOALS: CONTAINING AND EXPLOITING INTERDEPENDENCIES

This section analyses Azerbaijan's ultimate goals in the CIS and GUAM. It does so by, first, exploring how Azerbaijani policy-makers perceive the states' regional dimension of sovereignty. A second step will investigate how this perception informs the way in which Azerbaijan designs its membership in the CIS and GUAM. The thesis may speak of 'designing' membership, since both organisations allow the states to choose the intensity of their participation and their individual sectoral profile.

This section sheds light on the puzzling picture of Azerbaijan in the two organisations. The ruling elite has always voiced a rather distanced stance towards the CIS.⁹ Nevertheless, Azerbaijan has never been prepared to leave the organisation. On the contrary, Azerbaijan has gained the reputation of a partner

⁹ The literature often sees Azerbaijan as part of the group of Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan that has been rather sceptical towards the CIS from the very beginning, assumed membership later or did refrain from full membership and often announced to withdraw from the organisation. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan repeatedly withdrew from the CIS informally. In 2012, however, Turkmenistan assumed the CIS presidency. The foreign policy of Moldova shifted from the most distant policy possible toward the CIS until 1997 to far closer relations under president Voronin in 2001-2009. See: **Bremmer, Ian and Alyson Bailes** (1998), *Sub-Regionalism in the Newly Independent States*. International Affairs, Vo. 74, No. 1, p 137.

who is reliable, though reluctant concerning binding agreements. Azerbaijan is a core advocate of GUAM. This does not, however, mean that Azerbaijan engages more intensively in GUAM activities or accepts binding agreements. It is thus interesting to disclose the intentions that drive policy-makers in Azerbaijan to engage in such an ambivalent manner in the CIS and GUAM. The section argues that Azerbaijan intends to strengthen its Westphalian and domestic sovereignty via the CIS and GUAM. The intention is to mitigate persisting dependencies, primarily on Russia and Armenia, and prevent new interdependencies. This fosters ambivalent participation. Azerbaijan's membership pattern appears, however, coherent if contemplated through the lenses of Azerbaijan's sovereignty concerns.

Three steps will spell out this argument empirically. A first sub-section will outline how regional interdependencies inform policy-makers' framing of the states' sovereignty concerns which guide participation in the CIS and GUAM. A second and a third sub-section will discuss how this perception determines membership in the CIS and GUAM.

5.1.1. THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF AZERBAIJAN'S SOVEREIGNTY

Azerbaijani policy-makers depict the state's Westphalian and domestic sovereignty as significantly linked to selected CIS members. In particular, dependencies on Russia and Armenia threaten Azerbaijan's sovereignty. The narratives perceive Azerbaijan as relatively independent from the other CIS countries, but maintaining and intensifying security and economic relations with Georgia, Ukraine and the Central Asian states would impact positively on Azerbaijan's struggle to consolidate its sovereignty. This background constitutes Azerbaijan's interest in CIS and GUAM membership. The ruling elite intends to employ the organisations to monitor and minimise the undesired dependencies and to bind other attractive partners to Azerbaijan. Accordingly, Azerbaijan participates in CIS and GUAM sectoral activities in issue-areas in which dependencies create channels for neighbouring states to interfere in Azerbaijan's affairs or where fruitful dependencies are easy to develop. These are trade, transport and security issues. In order to understand why CIS and GUAM activities in these issue-areas provide opportunities to tackle Azerbaijan's

sovereignty concerns, the next paragraphs will detail Azerbaijan's security and economic dependencies.

5.1.1.1. SECURITY DEPENDENCIES

More than 20 years after independence Azerbaijani policy-makers see the country's Westphalian sovereignty directly threatened by external actors, namely through the secessionist conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The predominant interpretation in Azerbaijan draws the following picture of the conflict: the primarily Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh violated Azerbaijan's international borders since 1991 by claiming national self-determination and independence. With support from Armenia and Russia, Nagorno-Karabakh has established *de facto* independence.¹⁰ Armenia and Russia, thus, pose direct threats to Azerbaijan. Consolidating Azerbaijan's Westphalian sovereignty requires reducing both states' potential for direct interference. An overview of how Armenia and Russia are involved in the conflict should disclose where they have opportunities to interfere.

The question of the territorial belonging of the region of Nagorno-Karabakh started to simmer in the late 1980s and burst into full-scale war between Armenian and Azerbaijan from 1991-1994. Since the 1994 ceasefire, the conflict is stuck in a 'no war no peace' situation.¹¹ A cease-fire agreement stopped the war in 1994, but does not prevent regular casualties at the borderline.¹² The war caused 700,000 internally displaced persons and refugees in Azerbaijan. These refugees are weakly integrated into society; the regular cease-fire breaches, public media and state rhetoric make sure that in 2012 the conflict is still strongly present in daily societal life.¹³ State-actors proclaim that only one solution for the conflict exists: Azerbaijan

¹⁰ In 2012 the claimed territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic comprises 92.5% of the Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Republic and five districts beyond: Agdam, Jabrayil, Fizuli, Kelbajar, Gubadly, Lachyn and Zanghila. Azerbaijani official sources speak of a loss of 20% of Azerbaijani territory. International sources assume a loss of 13.4%. **International Crisis Group** (2005), *Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground*. Europe Report, Vo. 166. For more information on the conflict see: **De Waal, Thomas** (2004), *Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*. New York: New York University Press.

¹¹ **Shahnazarian and Ziemer**, *Young Soldiers' Tales of War in Nagorno-Karabakh*, 1670.

¹² **Blakkisrud, Helge and Pal Kolsto** (2012), *De facto states and democracy: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh*. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vo. 45, p 143.

¹³ For the figures on refugees and IDPs see **Yunusov, Arif** (2007), *Azerbaijan in the Early of the XXI Century: Conflicts and Potential Threats*. Baku: ADILOGLU, p 12., **De Waal**, *Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, 285. An analysis of the government's strategy to integrate

has to restore its territorial integrity by regaining control over Nagorno-Karabakh; if necessary by military means. Armenia is the aggressor in the conflict and Russia an ambiguous player. Russia acts as mediator in an international conflict resolution body, the OSCE Minsk Group.¹⁴ But Russia is also a quasi-direct conflict partner. Russia has supported Azerbaijan and Armenia in the war and became Armenia's core ally in recent years. This ambivalent position raises mistrust in two regards. First, Azerbaijani policy-makers suspect Russia of exploiting its mediator position to distract the interest of the other OSCE Minsk Group members, the US and France. This would allow Russia to adjust the conflict negotiations according to its own regional aims. It would, for instance, imply that Russia can exploit its mediator position as leverage vis-à-vis Azerbaijan in economic matters and has little interest in solving the conflict. Indeed, Azerbaijani policy-makers perceive the US and France as leaving the OSCE Minsk Group to Russia.¹⁵ In case of the US they consider also the strong Armenian lobby as reason for the U.S. reluctance to support Azerbaijan's position in the conflict.¹⁶ Secondly, policy-makers and analysts expect Russia to interfere on behalf of Armenia in any military action in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The conflict setting implies the following regional policy priorities for Azerbaijan. First, given that the conflict is not permanently settled, Azerbaijan is eager to closely monitor Armenia's military capacity. Secondly, the Russian-Armenian partnership requires monitoring. Thirdly, policy-makers are eager to distract Russian interest from Armenia by re-strengthening Russian political, economic and security ties with Azerbaijan. The CIS security-related and economic activities provide an arena for pursuing these three aims, as section 5.1.2 will discuss. A fourth priority is to gain the support of international players for Azerbaijan's position in the conflict.

IDPs and refugees until 2010 is provided by **Kjaernet, Heidi** (2010), *Displacement in a Booming Economy: IDP's in Azerbaijan* In: Overland, Indra, *et al.* (eds.), *Caspian Energy Politics*. London: Routledge.

¹⁴ The OSCE Minsk group has been active since 1995. It is co-chaired by a representative from the US, France and Russia with the objective of providing a framework for conflict-resolution in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh and promoting the peace process. See: <http://www.osce.org/mg/66926>, access: March 2012.

¹⁵ According to ministerial officials who also co-ordinate conflict related activities (AZ_MFA_2, AZ_MFA_1)

¹⁶ **King, David and Miles Pomper** (2006), *Congress, Constituencies, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Caspian*. In: Shaffer, Brenda (ed.), *The Limits of Culture. Islam and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 173-77.

An adequate framework for this is GUAM, which has developed significant co-operation with the US. Chapter 6 and 7 will highlight how this aim informs Azerbaijan's GUAM membership.

Beyond this central conflict theme various non-traditional security challenges link Azerbaijan to its former Soviet neighbours. The example of migration suffices to exemplify how Azerbaijani state officials perceive these links. According to analysts, both regular and irregular migration flows to the former Soviet neighbours significantly support the domestic sovereignty of the political regime in Azerbaijan. In terms of regular, especially labour migration, Russia, Ukraine and Georgia are important target countries for Azerbaijani citizens. As Figure 9 indicates, official statistics indicate that 82% of Azerbaijan's emigrants lived permanently in CIS countries in 2010. This does not include temporary or irregular labour migration, which is also estimated as significant.¹⁷ Factors like the economic underdevelopment of the Azerbaijani periphery and the consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict fuel migration. Labour migrants, most of which are involved in vegetable trading or construction, often work on the verge of illegality in the post-Soviet neighbourhood.¹⁸ Trafficking of inter alia sex-workers is also well-known in the poorer regions.¹⁹ This problem has never provoked strong counteraction by the government.²⁰ These migration flows play into the hands of the ruling elites, since they reduce economic pressure on the regions. Remittance flows support the economic policy of the 2000s, which neglected the regions.²¹ Outwards migration stabilises the domestic socio-economic situation. Hence,

¹⁷ Figures from 2009 estimate there are between 500.000 and 1.100 000 Azerbaijanis in Russia, about 380 000 in Georgia, and 500.000 in Ukraine. See: **Yunusov, Arif** (2009), *Migration Processes in Azerbaijan*. Baku: ADILOGLU, pp. 81-113..

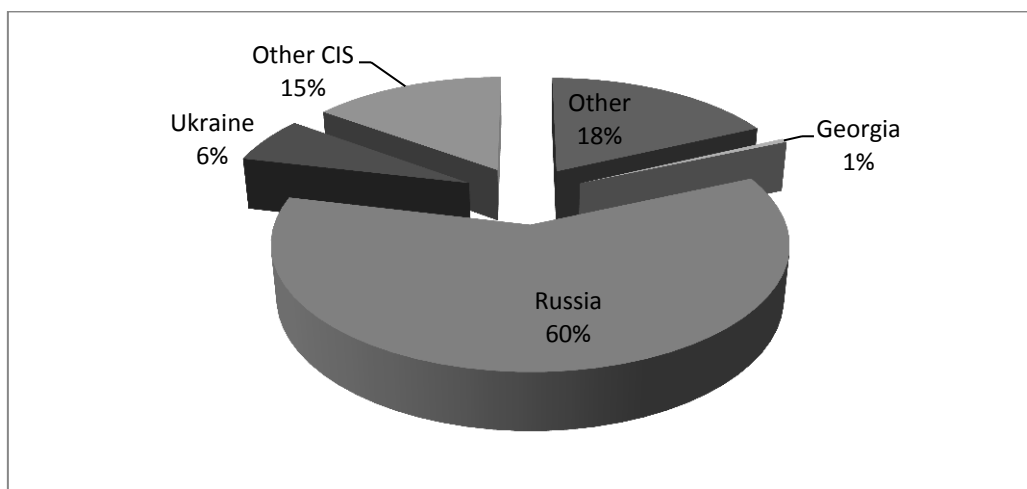
¹⁸ This is primarily a consequence of the restrictive labour migration policy in the target countries. See: *ibid.*.

¹⁹
²⁰ An interviewee from an international organisation that deals with migration in Azerbaijan considered the existing state agencies for problems of trafficking as rather weak (AZ_Analyst_8). Even harsher criticism comes from NGOs. The government is blamed for trivialising this topic (AZ_Analyst_1, AZ_Analyst_4).

²¹ This argument was brought up in the talks with two analysts who work in migration-oriented NGOs. Both individuals hence have first-hand knowledge on the problems of irregular migration and governmental responses to it. Remittances from Russia to Azerbaijan haven been estimated at 2billion U.S.D in 2011.

members of the state administration regard it as supportive of domestic stability.²² The incoming irregular migration from Central and South Asia, which have been increasing since 1996, raises more concern. Azerbaijani officials do not, however, consider it as a substantial challenge to Azerbaijan’s domestic stability.²³ In that light, Azerbaijani officials show interest in CIS and GUAM migration-related activities. The aim is to facilitate migration to Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and other relevant former Soviet republics in order to ease domestic tensions created by the deteriorating socio-economic situation of large parts of the society. At the same time, Azerbaijan has little incentive to discuss incoming labour and irregular migration with the post-Soviet sending states. Since it is not perceived as a challenge to domestic stability, committing to regional arrangements on incoming migration would just create undesired costs. The following paragraphs will show how Azerbaijan’s regional neighbourhood also poses economic challenges and creates opportunities.

Figure 9: International Stock of Azerbaijani Emigrants in 2010



Source: Calculation based on World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix 2010. Data Accessed on 10 April 2013.

5.1.1.2. TRADE INTERDEPENDENCIES

Most vital ties with other former Soviet republics exist in the spheres of energy exports and agriculture. Azerbaijan is excessively reliant on revenues from gas and

²² Interview with official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AZ_MFA_4)

²³ When asked about migration issues in Azerbaijan, the three individuals who worked on migration in the MFA, the MoI and the State Migration Serves first discussed incoming migration. Neither irregular nor regular outgoing migration was considered as problematic for Azerbaijan. (AZ_MFA_3, AZ_ASMS_1, AZ_ASMS_2)

oil exports. Energy exports constituted 95% of Azerbaijan's foreign trade turnover and 55% of its GDP in 2010.²⁴ The economy thus depends on energy markets and transit countries. Here Russia comes in. In the early 1990s Russia thwarted the first international production sharing agreement (PSA) until the Russian firm Lukoil got a share. The PSA was crucial for revitalising the energy industry.²⁵ In the 2000s the relevance of Russia is threefold: Russia is a competitor in gas sales to Western markets, a sales market for gas and transit for oil transport to the Black Sea port at Novorossiisk.²⁶ Russia is thus a vital and potentially destructive player for Azerbaijan's most significant source of income. This fosters the desire to weaken Russia's position and decrease dependency on Russia regarding energy transport routes, other trade and security issues.

As mentioned above, the second trade sector that links Azerbaijan significantly to the former Soviet republic markets is agriculture and the food industry.²⁷ It provides labour for 38% of Azerbaijani employees.²⁸ In particular small and medium-sized businesses in the South rely on agricultural exports.²⁹ 72% of the gains from agriculture exports in 2011 came from trade with CIS members, primarily Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.³⁰ These countries also accounted for 56% of agriculture imports in 2010. Georgia and Ukraine are relevant but still not vital trade partners. Overall, the GUAM countries held a minor share of 4% of exports and 10% of imports in Azerbaijan's agricultural trade in 2010. Figure 10

²⁴ **Center for Economic and Social Development** (2012), *Azerbaijan's Foreign Trade: Comparative Analysis*. [Online].

²⁵ **Nabiyev, Rizvan** (2003), *Erdöl- und Erdgaspolitik in der kaspischen Region. Ressourcen, Verträge, Transportfragen und machtpolitische Interessen [Oil and Gas Policy in the Caspian Region]*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Köster, p 117.

²⁶ **Lussac, Samuel** (2012), *New Regionalization for a New Regional Leader? The Role of Azerbaijan in the Southern Caucasus*. In: Ivan, Ruxandra (ed.), *New Regionalism or No Regionalism? Emerging Regionalism in the Black Sea Area*. Burlington: Ashgate. **Raballand, Gaël and Gente Regis** (2008), *Oil in the Caspian Basin: Facts and Figures*. In: Najman, Boris, *et al.* (eds.), *The Economics and Politics of Oil in the Caspian Basin*. London: Routledge.

²⁷ In 2011 it has produced only 6% of Azerbaijan's GDP though, according to the formal figures. Source: World Development Indicators database. Available at: data.worldbank.org, accessed 20 February 2013

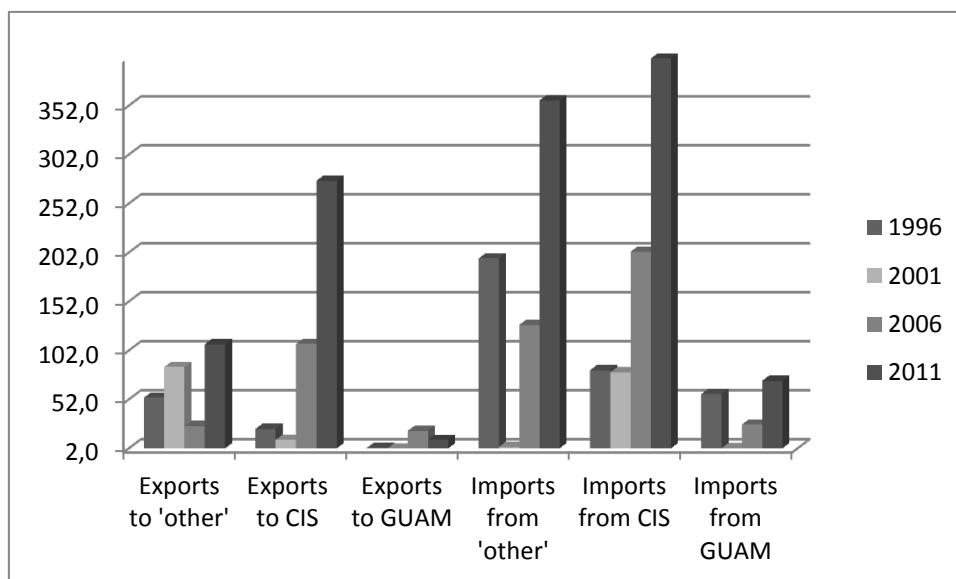
²⁸ These figures are taken from the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan. http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/labour/en/002_1.shtml, retrieved 2 July 2012

²⁹ AZ_Analyst_6

³⁰ Despite its relevance for a large part of the population, the agricultural sector is underdeveloped in Azerbaijan. The lack of technology and the lack of capacity to achieve high production standards, geographic proximity and persisting trade relations from Soviet times render sales markets in the post-Soviet space important. (AZ_Gov_Analyst_2).

displays the agricultural trade developments until 2011. Overall, access to the above-mentioned former Soviet markets is important to ensure income for large parts of society. Since this primarily concerns the impoverished South, stable agricultural trade relations are a matter of domestic stability. At the same time, agriculture and food imports are regulated by monopolies in Azerbaijan.³¹ Such a structure limits the readiness of economic actors to be subordinated to multilateral trade arrangements, especially if these are strongly legalised.³² The economic dependencies described encourage the ruling elite to reduce energy transportation dependencies on Russia. They provide incentives to improve access to the relevant post-Soviet markets. This is, however, primarily attractive if it does not produce new channels for external interference in the domestic economic regime.

Figure 10: Agricultural Exports and Imports of Azerbaijan, in Mio USD



Source: UN Comtrade, commodities 02,04,05,07,08,09,10,12,16,17,19,20,22,52. Data accessed on 19 April 2013

5.1.2. SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS AND CIS MEMBERSHIP

The aim of this sub-section is to trace the degree to which the previously outlined perceived regional dependencies inform Azerbaijan's CIS membership. The findings will provide some evidence that perceptions indeed have practical impact. They will

³¹ Two economic experts describe the economic structures in Azerbaijan in 2011 in the same way as is discussed in the following contribution from 2008: **Ibadoglu, Gubad** (2008), *Current State of Azerbaijan's Economy: Myth and Realities*. Transit Studies Review, Vo. 15, No. 2.

³² Several interviewees pointed to the vested interests of economic and/or political actors as core obstacles to significant free trade commitments in various international formats, including the WTO. (e.g.: AZ_MP_1, AZ_MP-2, AZ_Private_Business_2, AZ_Analyst_2)

further sketch the room for manoeuvre which the CIS offers to tackle sovereignty challenges. As argued above, policy-makers perceive Azerbaijan's Westphalian sovereignty as directly threatened by Armenia and Russia. Armenia occupies Azerbaijan's territory and is a latent source of military aggression. Russia possesses various channels to interfere in Azerbaijan's domestic affairs. These are: the mediator position in the OSCE Nagorno-Karabakh negotiating structure; Russia's support of Armenia in the conflict; the control over energy export pipelines, which constrains Azerbaijan's energy export opportunities; and Azerbaijan's dependence on Russia's labour and sales market. At the same time, trade and migration relations with Russia stabilise the domestic sovereignty under the current political regime in Azerbaijan. The first two aspects advise mitigating dependence on Russia in order to consolidate Azerbaijan's Westphalian sovereignty. At the same time, intensifying relations with Russia potentially re-directs Russia's support from Armenia to Azerbaijan. Also, trade and labour migration relations with Russia have to be maintained or replaced by similarly attractive relations with other former Soviet republics for the sake of Azerbaijan's domestic sovereignty. The section will show that in the eyes of Azerbaijani policy-makers the CIS qualifies as an arena to tackle these issues, since it includes relevant regional players and covers military, trade and migration issues. But the CIS is only attractive if it does not create new channels for Russia's or the organisation's interference in Azerbaijan's affairs. To exemplify this reasoning the following paragraphs will discuss the rationales of Azerbaijan's general membership and its participation in trade and migration related sectoral bodies.

5.1.2.1. CIS MEMBERSHIP

The background outlined above explains that the CIS has attracted the interest of all Azerbaijani presidents. It is also a matter of course that, except for the very first president Mutallibov, the ruling elite always had a distanced attitude towards the CIS.³³ In this light, the CIS 'multi-track and multi-speed' principle described in

³³ President Mutallibov considered in 1991 to accept a reform of the Soviet Union into a new union of independent states. See: **Goltz, Thomas** (1998), *Azerbaijan Diary*. New York: M.E.Shape, 216.

section 1.5.2 came in very useful for Azerbaijan.³⁴ It permitted the ruling elite to design the membership according to the maxim of preventing additional compromises to Azerbaijan's Westphalian sovereignty but also seeking opportunities for managing the persisting negative and fruitful dependencies. As the following paragraphs will highlight, Azerbaijan designed its CIS membership by circumventing even weak supra-national structures, softening the legalisation of multilateral rules, and seeking as many opportunities for interaction as possible.

Azerbaijan has held full CIS membership since 1994. The path to this status was, however, uneven. President Mutallibov led the country into the CIS by signing the 1991 Almaty agreement.³⁵ In 1993 the parliament, *Millis Majlis*, did not, however, ratify the CIS agreement, as necessary for gaining full membership status. The independence movement 'Azerbaijani Popular Front', which formed the parliamentary majority, feared that the CIS might increase Russia's influence.³⁶ But one year, one coup d'état and one president³⁷ later, the *Millis Majlis* ratified the charter. The three succeeding presidents Mutallibov, Elchibay and Aliyev interpreted the opportunities given by the CIS divergently. But the primacy of sovereignty guided all three presidents' CIS policy. Mutallibov was mainly concerned about the country's Westphalian and domestic sovereignty. Given that Azerbaijan was already shaken by the tensions over Nagorno-Karabakh, he saw the integration into a strong CIS as a guarantee for potential protection from Russia and dialogue with Armenia.³⁸ Another rationale concerns the international recognition of the Socialist Soviet Republics as independent states. Commitment to settle

³⁴ The CIS charter stipulates that any CIS member may signal disinterest in any agreement and may abstain from voting without influencing the validity of the agreement. **CIS Council of Heads of States**, *Ustav Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv* [Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States]. The application of this principle led to the creation of a heterogeneous network of CIS sub-groups. See: **Bremmer and Bailes**, *Sub-Regionalism in the Newly Independent States*, 142.

³⁵ The agreement stipulates the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the foundation of the CIS. **CIS Council of Heads of States**, *Alma-Atinskaya Deklaratsiya* [Alma-Ata Declaration].

³⁶ From 1992-1993 the independence movement Popular Front of Azerbaijan was a leading political power in Azerbaijan. President Elchibay was part of the movement. **Cornell**, *Azerbaijan since Independence*, 60.

³⁷ The president Albufaz Elchibay was replaced by Heydar Aliyev in course a coup d'état provoked by army leader Surat Husseinov when the former Soviet, now Russian, army withdrew from Azerbaijani territory. See: *ibid.*, 78.

³⁸ The idea was to limit the room for aggressive manoeuvres by Armenia and other states through the joint membership in an integrative format. The events quickly proved this hope wrong.

conflicting issues by cooperative means was demanded by US and European actors.³⁹ Azerbaijani actors interpreted CIS membership as a fulfilment of these criteria.⁴⁰ Elchibay came to power with the promise to consolidate independent and democratic statehood. His team was, accordingly, alarmed by the increasing integrative rhetoric in the CIS, described in section 1.5.2, but acknowledged the importance of the CIS for resolving urgent military, economic and social issues. To counteract additional domestic instability, which might have arisen from the disruption of the few meaningful relations with other former Soviet republic, Elchibay signed the charter and government representatives attended relevant CIS meetings.⁴¹ Heydar Aliyev opted for more visible CIS commitment by gaining full membership. This step was first of all a communicative act designed to underscore the re-launch of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.⁴² Aliyev replaced the foreign policy of Elchibay, which neglected Russia and concentrated on Turkey and Western players, with a multi-vector approach. Analysts often interpret Aliyev's decision for full CIS membership as imposed by Russian pressure.⁴³ Azerbaijani analysts, in contrast, frame it as a strategic decision with manifold aims. The CIS was seen as a chance for more personal meetings between Aliyev and the Russian president Boris Yel'tsin during and at the sidelines of multilateral meetings.⁴⁴ The need to re-organise economic and security relations with the former Soviet republic was another argument for CIS involvement.⁴⁵ Initially, policy-makers hoped to directly influence developments concerning the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh through the CIS. This ambition has soon been moderated to exerting some indirect influence on Russia

³⁹ **Warbrick, Colin** (1992), *Recognition of States*. The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, Vo. 41, No. 2, p 482.

⁴⁰ This debate was memorised by an interviewee who at that time was part of the opposition movement of the 1980-90s the Azerbaijani Popular Front. The interviewee explains that this argument created support for CIS membership even among members of the Azerbaijani Popular Front. (AZ_MP_1)

⁴¹ Interviewee, who was member of the government in the Elchibay period (AZ_Analyst_2)

⁴² The case of Ukraine shows that formal membership status does not have any impact on constraints and opportunities of action within CIS.

⁴³ **Pataria, Georgia & the CIS Security System**. 57. **Kuzio, Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM**, 82.

⁴⁴ Reportedly, the personal relations were that problematic that it was hard to arrange personal meetings between Yel'tsin and Heydar Aliyev and other high-level state officials. This also affected the vital bilateral cooperation with the Russian government at lower levels. (AZ_MP_1; AZ_Analyst_3)

⁴⁵ **Alieva, Leila** (2000), *Cooperation in the Caucasus: Model versus Reality*. Contemporary Caucasus Newsletter, No. 10, p 23.

and Armenia, as chapter 6 will highlight. President Ilham Aliyev continues his father's CIS policy but has opted for more active involvement in CIS bodies.

5.1.2.2. PARTICIPATION IN SECTORAL ACTIVITIES

Participation in the CIS decision-making and sectoral bodies builds on the ambition to create new opportunities for interacting with relevant neighbours, but avoids new channels for external interference in Azerbaijan's affairs. Azerbaijan has avoided supra-national structures, but is involved in all areas of CIS activity, namely economic, societal and security matters. As a full member Azerbaijan participates in the three decision-making councils on presidential, prime-ministerial and foreign minister level.⁴⁶ As discussed in section 1.5.2, these bodies do not have any supra-national competences. Azerbaijani officials reject any arbitration regulations and, thus, do not recognise the Economic Court. This reluctance towards potentially binding rules does not, apparently, constrain the interest in the wide range of CIS sectoral bodies that have developed since 1991.

Azerbaijan is a member in 36 of the 68 sectoral bodies which cover economic, social and non-military security topics and leads five of them.⁴⁷ The literature widely ignores these sectoral bodies since they hardly have any integrative effect, and refers to the CIS as merely a 'presidential club'.⁴⁸ But already this relatively high percentage of such bodies in which CIS-critical Azerbaijan is member calls for consideration of them. Azerbaijani state officials indeed argue that they take advantage from these bodies. Officials from various ministries framed it as a priority of CIS policy to attend meetings of all councils relevant for Azerbaijan.⁴⁹ Even if a department has declined formal membership, representatives of this department

⁴⁶ See appendix 1 for detailed information on the competences of the CIS bodies.

⁴⁷ The following councils have their secretariat in Baku: the Co-ordinating Council for Heads of Taxation Agencies, the Interstate Council for Publishing Houses, the Interstate Council for Cooperation in Construction Business, the Council of Ministers of Interior and the Council for Youth-related Activities.

⁴⁸ **Sakwa**, The CIS: Conflicts of Space and Time. Most articles on the sectoral activities of CIS are published by CIS members or in CIS supportive formats, e.g. the Eurasian Integration Yearbook. **Vinokurov**, Mutual Investments in the CIS Banking Sector. **Shishkov**, Cooperation in the CIS Machine-Building Sector: Decreasing rather than Increasing.

⁴⁹ A frequent reason for the rejection of formal membership is that a department disapproves the body's statute. Ministerial officials who represent Azerbaijan in CIS activities and who delegate employees to CIS meetings named attendance of sectoral bodies among the policy priorities. They have not been asked directly for this. (AZ_MFA_7, AZ_MED_1, AZ_MED_2, AZ_ASMS_1, AZ_ASMS_2)

usually nevertheless regularly participate in the body upon invitation.⁵⁰ Azerbaijan's interest in sectoral activities is also reflected in the CIS agreements adopted. 73% of agreements of the highest decision-making bodies are signed by Azerbaijan. About 20% of them are adopted with reservations, in order to prevent undesired consequences for national legislation.⁵¹ At the same time, officials hardly consider the content of CIS agreements legally relevant.⁵²

Azerbaijan's profile in economic and security related activities complies with the perceptions of the trade and security relations with former Soviet neighbour outlined in section 5.1. The interest in Russia's energy transport grid and Azerbaijan's reliance on labour and sales markets in former Soviet republics triggers strong interest in CIS trade activities. But Azerbaijan avoids new dependencies on CIS members by not signing potentially binding trade agreements. Accordingly, Azerbaijan is present in the Economic Council and all agriculture- and trade-related councils. It signs trade-related agreements, which generally guide CIS activities, but do not stipulate legalised multilateral rules. Section 1.5.2 indicated that the Economic Council has been driven by the desire to establish supra-national structures. In line with the primacy of Westphalian sovereignty, Azerbaijan is only an observer in this council. Azerbaijan also participated in the negotiations of the 2011 free trade agreement, but without signing it.

The Azerbaijani leadership has always rejected military activities within the CIS.⁵³ Nevertheless, Azerbaijan is a member of the Council of Defence Ministers. This council, so the argument allows, monitors potentially relevant developments in

⁵⁰ An interviewee who deals with migration issues explicitly stressed that their department is represented in nearly all meetings of the Council of Migration Services, even though Azerbaijan is not a member of this council. A meeting of this council was even hosted in Baku in 2010. A representative from the foreign ministry confirmed this practice as common in other sectors as well. (AZ_ASMS_1, AZ_MFA_7)

⁵¹ The possibility to sign international agreements with reservations is stipulated in the Convention of Vienna. For a discussion on the extent of its usage by Azerbaijan and related consequences see chapter 6. The ratio of agreements signed with reservation or special opinion is calculated according to agreements published at www.cis.minsk.by in 2010.

⁵² All interviewees from state agencies agreed on this. Some relevance was given to CIS frameworks on education.

⁵³ At least two officials from the MFA interfered in the author's sentence 'Azerbaijan is CIS member' by adding 'excluding military cooperation' (AZ_MFA_1, AZ_MFA_8). Similar reaction was given at other ministries and by analysts. However, from 1994-1999 Azerbaijan has been a member of a CIS related military structure, namely the CSTO.

Russian-Armenian military relations.⁵⁴ In the light of Azerbaijan's reliance on labour markets in the region, state officials participate in all migration related CIS councils. But they declined formal membership in the committee on irregular migration.⁵⁵ This reflects the fact that the ruling elite is still weakly concerned about the effects of incoming irregular migration and is not willing to take measures against outgoing irregular migration. As argued above, outgoing irregular migration has rather stabilised the country's domestic situation for the time being and incoming migration does not provide serious challenges. Azerbaijan has again adopted the core migration relevant documents, except for an agreement on a concerted migration policy that has not been signed though.⁵⁶ This decision reflects the desire to have the opportunity to manage the respective interdependencies with CIS states but to prevent domestic interference through multilateral legalised rules.

In a nutshell, the CIS organisational design permits Azerbaijan to be present in all decision-making councils and to be involved in all sectoral activities which concern Azerbaijan's regional priorities, without demanding any sub-ordination to CIS structures. In addition, the CIS paves the way for more meetings with Azerbaijan's most relevant former Soviet neighbours. Chapter 6 will analyse which concrete aims Azerbaijan strives to achieve in the CIS in order to consolidate its sovereignty concerns. Yet prior to this the next section will show how GUAM offers a similarly attractive organisational structure. Its member state constellation, however, induces Azerbaijan to consider the GUAM as an arena to indirectly tackle its sovereignty concerns.

5.1.3. SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS AND GUAM MEMBERSHIP

The overview of Azerbaijan's economic and security interdependencies with its post-Soviet neighbourhood has indicated that the country is only weakly dependent on GUAM countries. There is, however, a sovereignty concern that makes these

⁵⁴ The more relevant regional body for Russian-Armenian military relations is the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Azerbaijan has been member of this organisation until 1999.

⁵⁵ **CIS Council of Heads of Governments**, 6 March 1998, Reshenie o Sovmestnoi komissii SNG v bor'be s nezakonnoi migratsiei [Decision on a Joint CIS Committee on the Fight against Irregular Migration].

⁵⁶ **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 5 October 2007, Reshenie o Predlozheniyakh soglasovannoi migratsionnoi politike SNG [Decision on the Proposals for a Common Migration Policy of the CIS Member States].

three countries attractive partners; namely the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Section 1.5.3 already mentioned that all three countries face existing or potential secessionist threats on their territory. This has induced Azerbaijan to pool these states together into a regional organisation. As the following paragraphs will show, Azerbaijani officials strongly contributed to designing the GUAM structure according to their needs. This means setting up stable, exclusively intergovernmental bodies that produce primarily non-binding results. Given that Azerbaijan considers the dependencies with GUAM states as weak, the country's activity in the GUAM sectoral bodies is not driven by immediate security concerns. State officials rather depict these bodies as framework binding the partners to Azerbaijan.

5.1.3.1. GUAM MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.5.3 has presented GUAM as an organisation which bears the hallmarks of Azerbaijani policy priorities. Indeed, the administration under Heydar Aliyev and under Ilham Aliyev enshrined their rejection of supra-national bodies and multilateral legalised agreements in GUAM's structure. Azerbaijan is therefore represented in all GUAM decision-making and sectoral councils.⁵⁷ According to the interview narratives, Azerbaijani officials did not perceive the re-launch of GUAM as necessary for strengthening interaction within GUAM. The Azerbaijani side has, however, been eager to keep GUAM alive and supported the re-launch. In 2011 the GUAM secretariat proposed to expand the secretariat with additional co-ordinating committees. The Azerbaijani side, however, prefers to constrain GUAM's administrative structure. Any enlargement is, first and formerly, perceived as letting the bureaucracy hypertrophy without improving the attractiveness of GUAM as an interaction platform.⁵⁸ The argument mirrors the desire to prevent the secretary from formulating demands vis-à-vis the GUAM states. Azerbaijan has signed and ratified all GUAM agreements. These agreements do not constrain Azerbaijan's domestic policy in any regard since they are weakly legalised. The only more binding rule in GUAM, which, as discussed in section 1.5.3, is in any case interpreted

⁵⁷ See appendix 2 for more information on the structure of GUAM and competences of its bodies.

⁵⁸ Officials in Azerbaijan share the opinion that over-bureaucratisation involves the risk of ruining the regional format. Their argument invokes the experience of the Soviet Union. The extensive bureaucracy of the Soviet Union has not been able to adequately respond to its domestic and international needs. An official predicted the same fate for the EU. (AZ_MFA_1)

flexibly, stipulates that GUAM may only assume activities to which all members agree. Azerbaijan accepts this rule, since it does not impinge upon its sovereignty.

5.1.3.2. PARTICIPATION IN SECTORAL ACTIVITIES

As section 1.5.3 indicated, Azerbaijani officials primarily promote GUAM as a tool in the resolution of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. It is, thus, envisioned to contribute to Azerbaijan's Westphalian sovereignty. However, there is only one type of activity that directly concerns the conflict: the earlier described presentations and draft resolutions in the UN General Assembly. Azerbaijani officials nevertheless actively and reliably participate in all GUAM trade and security related activities. They depict their engagement in both areas rather as opportunity than as necessity. In terms of trade, Azerbaijan is interested in intensifying the turnover with Ukraine and Georgia. In particular, the officials intend to bind Ukraine and Georgia closer to Azerbaijan without making commitments that potentially constrain Azerbaijan's domestic policy. Trade-related activities within GUAM provide a fruitful ground for this since Azerbaijan's economic performance is, due to the petro revenues, far stronger than that of Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova. Intensifying the economic relations with these countries would help to re-organise Azerbaijan's neighbourhood according to its needs. It potentially diversifies the GUAM countries trade relations and reduces the impact of Russia as a trade partner of GUAM members. Both aspects contribute to Azerbaijan's Westphalian and domestic sovereignty. In that light, the delegate of Azerbaijan to the GUAM secretariat is responsible for promoting and monitoring trade and transport related activities. Representatives from Azerbaijan regularly attend meetings of the groups on transport, trade, energy and tourism. Despite the fact that Azerbaijan avoids binding agreements, it signed and ratified the GUAM FTA. This document is formulated as multilateral legalised rule, but does not have practical relevance. This situation obviously plays into the hand of Azerbaijani officials.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ **GUUAM**, 20 July 2002, Agreement on the Establishment of Free Trade among the GUUAM Participating States. Both officials at the foreign ministry and at the economics ministry interviewees were pessimistic about the application of this agreement and stated that trade with GUAM countries is regulated by other means. (AZ_MED_1, AZ_MFA_2)

Azerbaijan appears to be equally committed to activities against non-traditional security challenges. Representatives of the country reliably attend all meetings of the security working groups and sub-groups. At the same time, other GUAM actors describe Azerbaijan as being more open to new activities than for deepening activities by strengthened obligations.⁶⁰ In this manner, GUAM activities are supportive of Azerbaijan's domestic sovereignty, but do not challenge the country's sovereignty in handling security challenges. Additionally, state officials present their engagement in these GUAM activities as a contribution to Azerbaijan's Westphalian sovereignty. Chapter 6 will detail how Azerbaijan intends to pursue this aim.

5.1.4. CONCLUSION: HANDLING AND RE-ORGANISING INTERDEPENDENCIES OF AZERBAIJAN

According to the tenor of the previous three sub-sections, concerns over its Westphalian and domestic sovereignty drive Azerbaijan's state officials to maintain membership in the CIS and GUAM. In both organisations Azerbaijani officials avoid new obligations, in order to not constrain Azerbaijan's ability to act independently. GUAM's organisational structure is more suitable for this aim than the CIS. The general aim is to reduce existing dependencies and to increase the dependency of other member states on Azerbaijan. Among the CIS are member states on which Azerbaijan is dependent in economic and security matters. Within GUAM, Azerbaijan interacts with at least two states that are interesting but not vital partners. Therefore, the CIS serves primarily to manage and reduce existing interdependencies. GUAM has the potential to contribute to re-organising (inter)dependencies according to Azerbaijan's needs. Both dimensions are hoped to impact positively on Azerbaijan's Westphalian and domestic sovereignty.

5.2. UKRAINE'S AIMS: MANAGING INTERDEPENDENCIES

The following empirical study introduces the comparative case of Ukraine. The comparison is intriguing for at least two reasons. Ukraine is, like Azerbaijan, known as an opponent to Russia's aspirations to re-integrate its neighbourhood. But various interdependencies tie Ukraine more strongly to Russia and other former

⁶⁰ An interviewee from Ukraine, the representative of the US Embassy in Kyiv but also GUAM officials delivered such a picture of Azerbaijan.

Soviet republics than Azerbaijan. Accordingly, Ukraine is more sensitive to regional sovereignty challenges. The analysis will spell out how the more strongly perceived (inter)dependencies define Ukraine's interest in CIS sectoral activities. It will highlight that Ukraine's ultimate goals, nevertheless, are marked by the desire to pursue its interdependence sovereignty within the CIS and GUAM more than Azerbaijan's. By tracing Ukraine's ultimate goals as formulated by policy-makers and reflected in the *de facto* membership, the section will also indicate that Ukraine actively employs the CIS and GUAM for its regional policy. Ukrainian policy-makers do not only endure the CIS as a Russian instrument of power, as analysts often argue.⁶¹

It will be argued that Ukraine has a similar take on the CIS to Azerbaijan, but is less straightforward in its policy. It will highlight that Ukraine's interest in the CIS is determined by strong economic and security (inter)dependencies with selected CIS members. Central is again Russia, but also Belarus, Moldova and the Central Asian states. Ukrainian officials purposefully employ the CIS to strengthen the country's sovereignty. Ukraine's policy-makers primarily strive to decrease dependencies on Russia via the CIS. The CIS is also welcome as arena for improving trade relations with relevant former Soviet neighbours as a means to consolidate its domestic sovereignty. In addition, Ukraine seeks to improve its control over cross-border flows via the CIS, which would strengthen its interdependence sovereignty. Within GUAM state officials primarily seek to establish new interdependencies for the consolidation of Ukraine's Westphalian, domestic and interdependence sovereignty. Ukraine, however, responded sensitively to Russian hostilities vis-à-vis GUAM. Since 2007 therefore only ministerial representatives participate in GUAM.

Three sub-sections will, first, discuss the core patterns of Ukraine's interdependencies with CIS and GUAM partners. Secondly, they will discuss, how these interdependencies and the resulting sovereignty concerns inform Ukraine's membership in the two organisations.

⁶¹ Stated in 2011 by UA_Gov_Analyst_4, UA_Analyst_1. See also: **Lupiy, Bohdan** (1996), *Ukraine and European Security. International Mechanism as Non-Military Options for National Security of Ukraine*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, p 173.

5.2.1. THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF UKRAINE'S SOVEREIGNTY

Concerns over the country's Westphalian sovereignty have determined Ukraine's regional and international policy since 1991. Even in 2012 policy analysts and practitioners see Ukraine's sovereignty as threatened by the country's multifaceted ties to the powerful neighbour Russia. The sub-section will elaborate that these concerns rest on economic but also security dependencies. Ukraine maintains already significant economic relations with other CIS countries and is anxious to intensify these. This would reduce Ukraine's dependencies on Russia and support the country's economic performance at least in a medium-term perspective. Ukrainian state officials also perceive incoming organised criminal activities from or through the former Soviet neighbourhood as destabilising. They thus express the desire to counteract these challenges inter alia via interactions with their neighbourhood. The following paragraphs will outline the core interdependencies in economic and security matters. They will provide the necessary background information for grasping how Ukrainian officials have designed CIS and GUAM membership according to these interdependencies. The sub-section will start with economic aspects, since they are especially relevant for Ukraine's Westphalian and domestic sovereignty.

5.2.1.1. ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCIES

In economic terms Ukraine is trapped between sovereignty-threatening and productive (inter)dependencies with its former Soviet neighbourhood. More concretely, Ukraine is dependent on Russia, but maintains more balanced interdependencies with other CIS and GUAM members. Central trade flows from and to other former Soviet republic concern energy, heavy industry and agriculture. The Achilles heel of Ukraine's economy is its almost complete dependency on imports and the transit of energy fuels. Electricity is the only energy source where Ukraine is a net exporter and has the capacity to expand these exports.⁶² Oil and gas resources on Ukrainian soil were almost entirely depleted under the Soviet Union.⁶³

⁶² Ukraine mainly exports to Russia, Belarus and Moldova but also to Romania, Slovakia and Poland.

⁶³ In the 1970s the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic provided 30% of the gas supply of the USSR. In consequence only 15-20% of domestic gas and oil consumption can be covered from domestic

Ukraine strongly depends on Russia's energy supply. This economic leverage provides Russia with a forceful instrument of power vis-à-vis Ukraine. Ukraine possesses gas transit pipelines, which are still crucial for Russia's gas transport to EU countries. These are a crucial but not reliable tool for Ukraine in the gas price negotiations with Russia.⁶⁴ The transit pipelines are an argument to haggle the price for gas imports from Russia. How long this trump remains in the hands of Ukraine is questionable though. Russia has developed two strategies to mitigate its dependence on these pipelines. The Russian gas monopolist Gazprom seeks control over Ukraine's transit pipelines.⁶⁵ Russia also is eager to build the South Stream Pipeline, which would circumvent Ukraine as transit country.⁶⁶ In the last twenty years Russia has successively foiled Ukraine's attempts to diversity its energy suppliers. Only after 2010 has substantial progress been made due to support from Azerbaijan and Venezuela, and improved technologies concerning liquefied natural gas and shale gas.⁶⁷ But Russia seems to lose no opportunity to show that it still has leverage on Ukraine.⁶⁸

Apart from this, former Soviet republic markets are still significant for Ukrainian export and import of agricultural, food, chemical and heavy industrial goods. In 2011 about 33% of export and 79% of import revenues are generated by trade with the CIS, primarily Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Figure 11 visualises the CIS and GUAM ratio in Ukraine's trade profile

sources. **Melnyk, Lew Z** (2007), *Ukraine within the USSR: An Economic Perspective, 1928/29-32 and 1959-80*. Nationalities Papers, Vo. 35, No. 1, p 164.. The share will increase, if shale gas is extracted.

⁶⁴ **Krasnov, Gregory V and Josef C Brada** (1997), *Implicit Subsidies in Russian-Ukrainian Energy Trade*. Europe-Asia Studies, Vo. 49, No. 5, p 827; **Balmaceda, Margarita** (2009), *Background to the Russia-Ukrainian Gas Crisis: Clarifying Central Issues and Concepts*. Russian Analytical Digest, No. 53, p 23.

⁶⁵ In April 2013 Ukraine agreed not to sell the national gas transport system to Russia, but to give Gazprom a share of 50% in a consortium that will manage the system. See: **Alic, Jen**, *Ukraine and Russia Gamble over Europe's Gas Supply*. OilPrice, 19 December 2012; **Gavrish, Oleg and Mikhail Serov**, *Truba Zazvuchala*. Kommerstant", 28 May 2013.

⁶⁶ **Socor, Vladimir** (5 April 2005), *Putin, Miller Unveil Pipeline Project to Bypass Ukraine via Poland*. Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume [Online], Vo. 10, No. 64.

⁶⁷ **Honchar, Mikhail**, *Trubnyi Zapakh Energoreform [The Pipe Smell of Energy Reforms]*. Zerkalo Nedeli Ukraina, 22 August 2012. **Elliott, Stuart et al.** (16 November 2012), *Ukraine Makes Multi-pronged Bid for Energy Independence*. Platts [Online].

⁶⁸ In January 2013 the Russia gas monopolist Gazprom claimed about 7 billion US dollars from the Ukrainian firm Naftohaz as compensation for having bought less gas from Russia in 2012 than agreed in the latest gas contract. Such an amount significantly harms Ukraine's economy. See: **Serov, Mikhail and Oleg Gavrish**, *"Gazprom" Vypisal Ukraine Shtraf. ["Gazprom" Penalises Ukraine]*. Kommersant, 28 January 2013.

in the mentioned areas. These markets are less attractive for the modernisation of Ukraine's economy.⁶⁹ But due to the low production standards and costs which prevail in these countries, the former Soviet import and export markets are in 2012 still a welcome alternative to EU or other global markets. They allow Ukrainian companies, which still produce according to GOST standards, to refrain from cost-intensive technology modernisation, which would be necessary to compete globally. Favourable access to the former Soviet import and export markets thus reduces the pressure on especially middle-size companies in the agricultural sector but also on large-scale chemical and heavy industry. Large firms have, however, more resources at hand to adjust their production to the higher standards in other parts of the world.⁷⁰ Two priorities emerge from this situation: to reduce the energy and other trade dependency on Russia, but to placate Russia at the same time; and secondly, to maintain productive trade relations with Russia and other former Soviet republics. The conflicting nature of these priorities calls for a complex tactical proceeding. This strongly shapes Ukraine's membership pattern in the CIS and GUAM. Figure 11 also indicates that GUAM member states comprise only minor trade partners for Ukraine. In 1996 the share of GUAM in Ukraine's world trade in agriculture, chemical and heavy industry and mineral fuels was 2% for exports and only 0.5% for imports. The export share levelled off at 7% until 2011 and imports increased up to 2%.⁷¹ Ukraine is the biggest GUAM market and has limited interest in the markets of other GUAM states. However, together with Azerbaijan, GUAM includes a potent alternative oil and gas supplier and with Georgia a crucial transit country for energy resources from Azerbaijan. Ukrainian policy-makers have

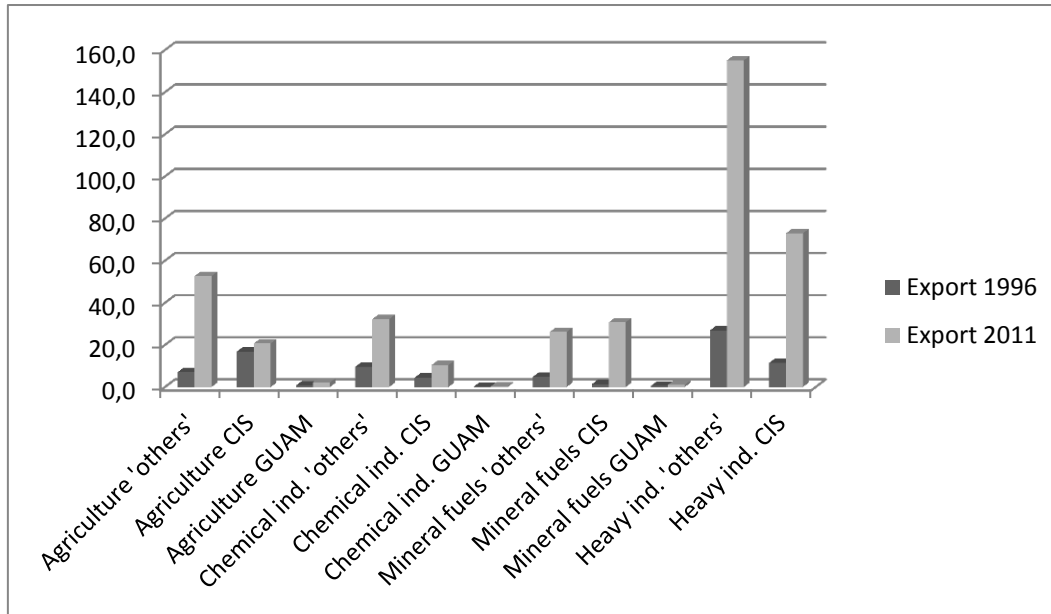
⁶⁹ **Burakovsky, Igor** (2007), *Ukraine: Comments to the Discussion on WTO, EU and SES*. National Security & Defence, Vo. 91, No. 7; **Gucci, Ricardo** (2010), *Freihandelsabkommen mit der EU oder Zollunion mit Russland? [Free Trade Agreement with the EU or Customs Union with Russia?]*. Deutsche Beratergruppe, Newsletter, No. 20.

⁷⁰ **Komikov, N I** (2010), *Sostoyanie i perspektivy innovatsionno-tekhnologicheskogo sotrudnichestva predpriyaty Rossii i Ukrainy [Status and Prospects of the Innovative-Technological Co-operation of Russia and Ukrainian Enterprises]*. Evraziyskaya Ekonomicheskaya Integratsiya, Vo. 7, No. 2; **Puglisi**, A Window to the World? Oligarchs and Foreign Policy in Ukraine, 69-72; **Razumkov, Centre** (2002), *Ukraine and the Eurasian Economic Community: Integration or Co-operation?* National Security & Defence, Vo. 12, No. 36.

⁷¹ The author's calculation based on UN comtrade data from 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011. The following commodities have been considered: UN Comtrade Data, Commodities 02,04,05,07,08,09, 16,17,19,20,22,37, 28,29,52, 89, 88, 86, 83, 72. Data accessed on 19 April 2013

therefore in the 1990s and early 2000s hoped to establish GUAM as framework for diversifying the country's energy supply.

Figure 11: Ukrainian Exports in Agriculture, Chemical Industry, Mineral Fuels and Heavy Industry in 1996 and 2011, in 100Mio USD



Source: UN Comtrade Data, commodities 02,04,05,07,08,09, 16,17,19,20,22,37, 28,29,52, 89, 88, 86, 83, 72. Data accessed on 19 April 2013

5.2.1.2. SECURITY DEPENDENCIES

With regard to security, Ukraine faces two potential threats from Russia. First of all, the threat of Russian military interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs is even in 2012 a vital topic for some analysts.⁷² The prime cause of concern is the Russian Black Sea Fleet which is planned to remain in Ukraine at least until 2040. This Russian military asset on Ukraine's soil potentially compromises Westphalian sovereignty.⁷³ While Russia probably will not use this basis to directly intervene in Ukraine, analysts see two other negative externalities of this base. First, it is a potential obstacle to NATO membership of Ukraine envisioned by some domestic forces. Secondly, it will involve Ukraine indirectly in any military operation, for which Russia deploys the base. Given Russian military on its territory, Ukraine is

⁷² **Melnyk, Oleksiy** (2008), *Ukraine in the Regional and Global Security Structure*. National Security & Defence, Vo. 103, No. 9, p 5; **Razumkov Centre** (2009), *State and Prospects of Ukrainian-Russian Cooperation in the Military Sector*. National Security & Defence, Vo. 108, No. 4, p 50.

⁷³ **Cooley, Alexander** (2000), *Imperial Wreckage. Property Rights, Sovereignty, and Security in the Post-Soviet Space*. International Security, Vo. 25, No. 3.

eager to maintain channels of communication on military concerns but to avoid intensified interaction or new military dependencies.

The second concern has been less topical in the study period, but is by some analysts perceived as a latent conflict: the secessionist ambitions in Crimea. In the early 1990s the Crimean elite claimed unification with Russia. This secessionist movement had, however, already been accommodated in 1996.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the risk of Crimean secessionism is still from time to time a topic in Ukrainian politics.⁷⁵ This latent challenge triggers Ukraine's attention of the phenomenon of secessionism in the post-Soviet space.

A minor but, nevertheless, perceived source of concern for some officials is transnational organised crime. It suffices to sketch the situation concerning drug-trafficking. Ukrainian bureaucrats consider the country mainly as a transit country for drug-trafficking to Russia and Europe. Other sources argue that a large share of the 20m tonnes of opiates that annually enter Ukraine are, however, processed and sold in Ukraine.⁷⁶ State officials see regional networks with actors from Belarus, Russian and Moldova as especially alarming. These networks make profit from price differences and diverging penal legislation in these countries.⁷⁷ Accordingly, drug-trafficking ranks as a security challenge that makes Ukraine interdependent with the policy of its former Soviet neighbours. The next section will highlight how these various concerns over Westphalian, domestic and interdependence sovereignty are reflected in Ukraine's membership in the CIS and GUAM.

5.2.2. SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS AND CIS MEMBERSHIP

This section analyses how Ukrainian policy-makers have since 1991 designed the country's CIS membership according to the perceived regional sovereignty challenges. To recall, according to Ukrainian officials, the existing energy and security dependencies on Russia make the country vulnerable to Russian interference. Accordingly, Ukraine seeks opportunities for managing and ideally

⁷⁴ **Sasse, Gwendolyn** (2007), *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute

⁷⁵ See for example: **Kuzio, Taras** (2010), *The Crimea: Europe's Next Flashpoint?* [Online].

⁷⁶ **UNODC** (2011), *World Drug Report 2011*. [Online].

⁷⁷ A ministerial practitioner argued that these transnational networks are becoming stronger and need transnational observation. (UA_MoI_2)

reducing these dependencies. A constitutive condition is that these opportunities do not create additional channels for interference from Russia. Intensifying especially energy and other trade relations with other former Soviet republics also potentially weakens Russia's leverage. In addition, transnational security challenges constrain Ukraine's ability to control flows across its borders. Strengthened security relations might therefore contribute to consolidating Ukraine's interdependence sovereignty. This setting, thus, creates incentives to balance between reducing and intensifying Ukraine's regional (inter)dependencies. In this light, Ukrainian policy-makers can be expected to primarily seek an uncompromised Westphalian sovereignty by reducing existing dependencies, and only secondly to strive consolidating the domestic and interdependence sovereignty. Indeed, as the following paragraphs will outline, the Ukrainian leadership has since 1991 opted for membership in the core sectoral bodies but has never accepted any commitment that would bind Ukraine to CIS regulations.

5.2.2.1. CIS MEMBERSHIP

Ukraine's CIS policy since 1991 appears at first glance to have been shifting between integration ambitions and indifference. The governments' diverging rhetoric conveys this impression. However, a closer look reveals that the individual presidents have pursued similar priorities. They all rejected any moves towards supra-national structures and integration measures within the CIS. But they have found diverging answers to the question of where integration starts. This led to an ambivalent member status as this paragraph will outline. In 1990 the foundation of the CIS appeared to be a feasible alternative to the more intrusive new union treaty, which had been under discussion.⁷⁸ Accordingly, president Leonid Kravchuk signed the CIS founding documents. The initial agreement stressed the sovereignty of CIS member states and was formulated with weak legal substance.⁷⁹ It rendered the CIS a promising framework for re-organising Ukraine's relations with the post-

⁷⁸ Mikhail Gorbachev, then president of the Soviet Union, hoped until summer 1991 to be able to reform the USSR into a 'Union of Sovereign Republics'. On 17 March 1991 the majority of Ukrainian voters supported membership in such a union treaty, if sovereignty would be granted. **Sakwa and Webber**, *The Commonwealth of Independent States, 1991-1998: Stagnation and Survival*, 380.

⁷⁹ **Voitovich, Sergei** (1993), *The Commonwealth of Independent States: An Emerging Institutional Model*. *European Journal of International Law*, No. 4, p 404.

Soviet neighbourhood without jeopardising the newly gained sovereignty. However, the Ukrainian parliament, Verkhovna Rada, nevertheless perceived the CIS as potentially compromising Ukraine's independence. Accordingly, the parliament has never ratified the CIS charter. Formally, Ukraine is thus only an associated CIS member. This is a formal nuance without any impact on the eligibility to vote, to assume leading positions in CIS bodies or on the financial contribution Ukraine is obliged to make.⁸⁰ Therefore, the absence of a legal gradation according to the member-status in the CIS plays into the hands of Ukraine's leadership. The associated membership allowed officials to pursue a self-paced policy in the CIS without stirring conflict with Russia. Additionally, a flexible interpretation of the Ukrainian-CIS relationship served as a rhetorical tool for voicing distance from and proximity towards Russia.⁸¹ For instance, in 2010 the ruling Party of the Regions discussed belatedly ratifying the CIS Charter.⁸² In the absence of any legal necessity for ratification this short debate has to be understood as a step to restore constructive relations with Russia.

Despite their varying political rhetoric, all four presidents pursued a relatively stable CIS policy until 2012. None of the presidents launched measures to leave the CIS.⁸³ Neither has any leadership sympathised with subordinating Ukrainian domestic policy to CIS bodies and agreements. Uncompromised sovereignty has always been the maxim. Though, president Kuchma in his second term (1999-2004) and president Yanukovich (since 2010) were less rigid in judging which membership commitments were intolerable. In 2000 Kuchma took over the CIS presidency and actively pushed for the enhancement of CIS structures and even formally led the country into an economic integration oriented sub-format of the CIS, the Single

⁸⁰ **CIS Council of Heads of States**, *Ustav Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv* [Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States].

⁸¹ The political rhetoric varied in the period 1991-2012 from being a full member, being at best an observer, to representing CIS and call for closer cooperation to announcing intentions to withdraw from CIS. **RFE/RL**, *Poland, Belarus & Ukraine Report*. 4 February 2003; **Newsline**, **RFE/RL**. 25 February 1998.

⁸² **Interfax-Ukraine**. 19 May 2010; **UNIAN news agency**, *MID: Ukraina v budushchem mozhet ratifitsirovat' ustav SNG* [MFA: Ukraine Might Ratify the CIS Charter in the Future]. 19 May 2010.

⁸³ An interviewee who has represented Ukraine for 18 years in the CIS explained that state officials in Ukraine have never been assigned to evaluate the legal and economic consequences of a potential withdraw from Ukraine as was done in Georgia in a lengthy procedure before Georgia's decision to leave the CIS in 2009. (UA_MFA_4)

Economic Space.⁸⁴ However, Kuchma never voiced interest in more than a free trade zone.⁸⁵ His successor, Victor Yushchenko, revised this CIS rapprochement as a statement in support of his EU-integration oriented foreign policy. Since 2010 president Yanukovich has repeatedly divided opinions with deliberations on entering the new Russian-led integration initiative, the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia.⁸⁶ Interviews with ministerial officials who in 2011 tried to promote CU membership testified that they did not aspire to full subordination to the CU rules. But they considered a selective involvement in beneficial processes without actual integration attractive.⁸⁷ Regardless of this rhetorical wavering between CIS approval and disapproval in the period of 1991-2012 Ukrainian ministerial structures continued to participate in a broad range of CIS bodies.

5.2.2.2. PARTICIPATION IN SECTORAL ACTIVITIES

Ukraine's membership in CIS bodies gives an excellent example of how to elude legal consequences for domestic policies when opting for broad involvement in a regional organisation. The country is represented in all relevant CIS decision-making

⁸⁴ He led the country into the Single Economic Space (SES). Russia promoted this sub-format in 2003 to urge the core partners into deeper integration under Russian leadership. It soon turned out to be a rather short-lived format. See for example: **Smbatian**, Common Economic Space and Some Thoughts on Protection of the Russian Market against Unfair Trade, 940-43.

⁸⁵ An interviewee from one of the governmental think-tanks in Ukraine remembered that his department was assigned to develop Ukraine's position in and contribution to the Single Economic Space. They developed a detailed strategy on how to shape the country's commitment to the SES in a favourable way. Integration was never considered as primary aim. Instead the hope was that the SES would promote economic relations with Russia. (UA_Gov_Analyst_1). See also: **Bukkvoll**, Private Interest, Public Policy. Ukraine and the Common Economic Space Agreement, 19.

⁸⁶ In June 2013 Ukraine received a positive answer to its request for becoming an observer to the CU. See: **Sokolovskaya, Yanina**, *Ukraina Vybrala Svoi Soyuz*. Izvestiya, 03 June 2013.. This puts Ukraine in the favourable position to be able to closely monitor the developments of the CU without being a member. A CU membership would foil the opportunity to sign an Association and Deep Free Trade Agreement with the European Union. Therefore the Ukrainian opposition and international analysts have been alarmed by the government's membership intentions. See: **Gucci**, Freihandelsabkommen mit der EU oder Zollunion mit Russland? [Free Trade Agreement with the EU or Customs Union with Russia?]. **Dragneva, Rilka and Kataryna Wolczuk** (2012), *Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?* Chatam House, Russia and Eurasia Programme Briefing Paper, No. 1.

⁸⁷ An interviewee indicated that an evaluation of potential CU membership was undertaken in the economics ministry. The interviewee stressed that there would be a number of beneficial outcomes from membership. Membership was distinguished from full compliance with all CU regulations, which were not expected to be necessary. (UA_MED_1) This opinion was supported in the foreign ministry. There, however, interviewees were anxious not to create the impression that the Ukrainian government would take concrete actions to evaluate and prepare for CU membership. (UA_MFA_2 and UA_MFA_3)

bodies. In line with the principle of not subordinating to supra-national structures, Ukraine does not accept the Economic Court as an arbitrage structure. Ukraine, more than Azerbaijan, inclines to formally commit to the CIS sectoral bodies. The country is a member in 46 of the 68 sectoral formats and hosts the secretariat of four councils in Kyiv.⁸⁸ Even in the Yushchenko period, where foreign policy statements expressed the utmost distance to the CIS, Ukraine became a member of new CIS councils. Officials explain that Ukraine is generally eager to attend all CIS sectoral bodies. If these, however, only duplicate existing structures or present an additional financial burden Ukraine refrains from formal membership.⁸⁹ Regardless of the shifting foreign policy rhetoric, Ukraine continued to delegate officials to CIS meetings at different ministerial levels. Even when relations with Russia touched rock bottom in 2007 and president Yushchenko stopped attending CIS summits Ukraine was represented by the head of the National Security and Defence Council.⁹⁰ Since 2010 Viktor Yanukovych has stressed Ukraine's closeness to the CIS. This did not, however, according to statements of ministerial officials, provoke a noticeable intensification of the CIS related work in Ukrainian ministries. In general terms, the presidential CIS rhetoric has been rather detached from Ukraine's CIS policy on ministerial level. It has rather been a yard stick for the quality of Ukraine's relations with Russia and the EU. According to a Ukrainian official who has been working on CIS matters for several years, the high-political rhetoric did not influence the intensity with which Ukrainian delegates attended CIS sectoral bodies. They described the attendance of CIS meetings as a priority. Some interviewees depicted this priority as an order from above. However, officials involved in sectoral bodies often considered attendance as a beneficial contribution to their work.⁹¹ It is hence worth disclosing Ukraine's profile in the sectoral activities.

⁸⁸ These are the councils for co-ordination tax policy, for industrial security, agricultural industry and the council of judges. See: <http://www.cis.minsk.by/page.php?id=2374>, access: 11 November 2012.

⁸⁹ Representatives of the Ministry of Interior explained in this manner the decision of Ukraine not to formally participate in all councils related to non-traditional security challenges and law enforcement bodies. (UA_MoI_1 and UA_MoI_2)

⁹⁰ The National Security and Defence Council is a body composed of representative of the government, the parliament, various security agencies and also analysts. It is in charge of security-related domestic and foreign policy. <http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/>, accessed, 20 November 2012

⁹¹ Two officials who were either only sporadically assigned to CIS meetings or part of the delegation to the CIS statutory bodies described such meetings as an obligation which they had to fulfil.

According to CIS agreements, Ukrainian policy-makers opted to become involved mostly in transport, trade and non-military security agreements. Between 70 and 80% of agreements in these fields are adopted and, if it was required, ratified. State officials explained decisions regarding which CIS activities to engage with, with reference to interdependencies in the post-Soviet space and their impact on Ukraine's sovereignty. In line with Ukraine's problematic energy dependencies on Russia but also its fruitful trade relations with Russia and other former Soviet republics that offer big sales and import markets, Ukraine has always prioritised CIS trade activities. As the within-case on the free trade agreement will detail in chapters 6 and 7, all presidents lobbied for or tacitly supported free trade arrangements in the CIS. Regardless of the degree to which president Yushchenko distanced himself vis-à-vis the CIS, this also applies to his presidency.⁹² At the same time any deeper integration was ruled out. Nearly all trade-related agreements were signed with the reservation that implementation is only considered, if it does not conflict with domestic law. Ukraine obviously manoeuvred between opportunities to improve trade relations with core CIS partners and to protect against domestic interference from the CIS or its member states.

With regard to CIS security activities Ukraine was always more selective, but it attends all councils and agreements concerning non-traditional security challenges. After 1992 Ukraine abstained from military CIS activities. Only passive and low-cost measures, as the Collective Air Defence System, were continued for the sake of military-industrial co-operation.⁹³ Military activities in the CIS are dominated by Russia. In light of the perceived threat of Russian military interference in Ukraine discussed in section 5.2.1.2, these activities are thus perceived as critical. Less problematic are non-military security activities. Ukraine is a member of the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre and has adopted agreements on organised crime, except those on

(UA_MFA_7 and UA_MFA_4) Officials who regularly participate in security and economy related sectoral bodies to the contrary mentioned that their interest in attending CIS meetings is sometimes stronger than the interest of their superiors (UA_MoI_1, UA_MoI_3 and UA_MFA_2)

⁹² Under Yushchenko Ukraine agreed in 2007 to re-negotiate the free trade agreement. For more details see chapter 6.3.1.

⁹³ **Chudowsky, Victor** (2002), *The Limits of Realism: Ukrainian Policy toward the CIS*. In: Moronez, Jennifer, *et al.* (eds.), *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy*. London: Praeger, p 27; **Haran, Olexiy** (1998), *Between Russia and the West. Prospects for Ukrainian Policy Choices*. Final Report Prepared in the Framework of NATO 'Democratic Institutions Fellowships' [Online].

joint policy development.⁹⁴ As previously indicated, Ukrainian officials consider phenomena like drug-trafficking as threats with a regional dimension. Ukraine has therefore signed the CIS anti-drug trafficking programmes since 2002 and is present in all drug-trafficking related bodies. The security agencies only rejected formal membership an additional body for the heads of all security agencies in charge of drug-trafficking issues, since this body would have duplicated existing structures. Its benefit was advertised as strengthening the hierarchies among the existing CIS bodies. In line with the already mentioned preference to keep CIS bodies weak the relevant Ukrainian officials did not welcome such body.⁹⁵ However, Ukrainian officials attend this body upon invitation.⁹⁶ Chapter 6 will analyse which aims the Ukrainian officials intend to achieve with participation in these bodies and agreements. The following section will demonstrate that Ukraine's approach to GUAM differs substantially from Ukraine's CIS policy, but is driven by similar rationales.

5.2.3. SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS AND GUAM MEMBERSHIP

The brief overview of Ukraine's core interdependencies in section 5.2.1 indicated that GUAM offers Ukraine an arena to interact with states on which Ukraine is not dependent. Two of them are attractive economic partners, namely the energy exporting Azerbaijan and Georgia as energy transit. The relations to Moldova are also relevant, since it is Ukraine's immediate neighbour. Against this background the Ukrainian presidents have tried to take advantage of GUAM. Ukraine's commitment has, however, not been as strong as to risk negative externalities for Ukraine's regional policy.

⁹⁴ See for instance: **CIS Council of Heads of States**, 5 October 2007, Reshenie o Programme v bor'be s terrorizmom i inymi nasil'stvennymi proyavleniyami ekstremizma na 2008-2010 gody [Decision about the Program on fight against terrorism and other manifestations of extremism for the period 2008 - 2010]. This calculation includes documents on organized crime in general and on drug-trafficking in particular in the period 1992-2011. The former often included measures against drug-trafficking.

⁹⁵ An official at decision-making level in the Ministry of Interior explained the decision in this way. The body, however, has not materialised in February 2013. See the proposal: **CIS Council of Foreign Ministers**, 8 October 2009, Reshenie o proekte Soglasheniya ob obrazovanii Soveta rukovoditelei organov po kontrolyu za oborotom narkoticheskikh sredstv, psikhotropnykh veshchestv i ikh prekursor, a takzhe bor'be s ikh nezakonnym oborotom [Decision on the Draft Agreement on the Foundation of a Council of the Heads of State Bodies in Charge of Controlling Drug-Trafficking].

⁹⁶ UA_MoI_1 argues that the CIS council on drug-trafficking was not worth formal membership, since it duplicated existing formats. However, Ukrainian representatives nevertheless take part in it on a regular basis, if the staff capacity allow for it.

5.2.3.1. GUAM MEMBERSHIP

As will be highlighted in this paragraph Kuchma and Yushchenko have been eager to promote GUAM. But like Yanukovich they tuned their policy according to Russia's hostility towards the organisation. Unlike in the case of the CIS, this did not result in an ambiguous membership status, but strongly determined the intensity of GUAM activities. After Azerbaijan gave the impetus for GUAM, Ukraine soon became anxious to take over leadership. The administrations of Kuchma and Yushchenko both saw in expanding GUAM structures a chance to take the lead. In 1997, Kuchma proposed to expand GUAM with a joint military structure. This enterprise was rather provocative, since it challenged the Russian claim to act as single regional security provider in the post-Soviet space. Accordingly, GUAM hardly seized on it and Ukraine concentrated on developing the economic structures. In the late 1990s the Ukrainian sides became reticent concerning GUAM. But in 2002 Kuchma pursued the re-organisation of the consultative forum into the Union GUAM. From 2003 until 2005 the Ukrainian leadership again hardly took notice of GUAM. But after the 'Orange Revolution' President Yushchenko employed the organisation for his foreign policy agenda. Ukraine gave the impetus to establishing the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM. In the foreign policy paradigm of Ukraine this step was intended to emphasise the foreign policy re-orientation of Ukraine towards the West and to support Ukraine's economic independence.⁹⁷ At this stage the Ukrainian foreign ministry was eager to create sophisticated administrative structures in GUAM.⁹⁸ It was the Ukrainian representative in the secretariat who substantially contributed to developing the GUAM sectoral bodies. Towards the end of his presidency President Yushchenko mentioned GUAM less in public statements.⁹⁹ The presidential change in 2010 visibly created concerns over

⁹⁷ **President of Ukraine**, 02 February 2006, Poslyannya do Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy "Pro vnutrishne i zovnishne stanovishche Ukrainy u 2005 rotsi" [Adress to the Parliament of Ukraine 'On the Domestic and Foreign Political Situation of Ukraine in the Year 2005'].

⁹⁸ According to an interviewee from GUAM Borys Tarasyuk, then foreign minister, was strongly committed to the extension of the GUAM structures in 2005-2007. In personal meetings with the delegate from Ukraine he ensured that the developments took the direction he supported. (GUAM_Official_2)

⁹⁹ According to the official tune of the GUAM officials, who have been interviewed in 2010 just few days before the inauguration of Yanukovich as president, a continuation of Ukraine in GUAM was not considered to be in question. However, one interviewee stressed that many things within GUAM

Ukraine's future in GUAM in the secretariat. President Yanukovich's firmly Russia-oriented foreign policy programme cast doubts about how the allegedly anti-Russian organisation GUAM would fit into his agenda. Indeed Yanukovich expressed discontent with the 'romantic policy of GUAM' but confirmed Ukraine's willingness to remain a member.¹⁰⁰ At least until 2012, Ukraine continued to regularly participate in all GUAM meetings.

Ukraine accepted membership in GUAM bodies, especially in the periods where little backing from the president was given, only if these bodies abnegated powerful decision-making structures.¹⁰¹ As argued in section 1.5.3, the member states designed the GUAM rules of procedure in a way that would not cause concern about supra-national institutions. Ukraine is, hence, a full member of GUAM and all councils. Until 2008 this membership was legally ambiguous, since the parliament had not ratified the 2006 GUAM charter. This went, however, without any *de facto* relevance. Ukraine's membership in the GUAM Council of Heads of State became merely theoretical in recent years. President Yushchenko and his successor have not agreed to attend GUAM summits after 2009.¹⁰² Accordingly, the GUAM summits have stalled in the period 2009-2012.¹⁰³ In the three other councils, Ukrainian ministers and delegates continued their activity. The Verkhovna Rada is also present in the Interparliamentary Assembly. Ukraine is party to all GUAM sectoral bodies.

5.2.3.2. PARTICIPATION IN SECTORAL ACTIVITIES

The section will argue that Ukrainian officials are reliable partners in all GUAM sectoral bodies, but describe the bodies' relevance less enthusiastically than that of CIS sectoral councils. This is driven by the fact that in both trade and security matters mutual interdependencies play a minor role. Of the examples given, the

would depend on the question if GUAM will again be taken into the state budget. (GUAM_Official_1, GUAM_Official_2)

¹⁰⁰ "Kommersant", *Yanukovich stavit uslovie chlenstva Ukrainy v GUAM [Yanukovich sets conditions for Ukraine's GUAM membership]*. 27 April 2010.

¹⁰¹ Both GUAM officials and interviewees from Ukrainian ministries explained that this principle has been applied in the past but is still valid for decisions on future bodies, as an additional body for coordinating the FTA. (GUAM_Official_2, UA_MED_2, UA_MFA_1)

¹⁰² The role of Ukraine was stressed by an interviewee at the foreign ministry of Azerbaijan who is involved in GUAM. (AZ_MFA_1) Ukrainian officials in the foreign ministry confirmed that there is little interest in a GUAM summit of heads of state. (UA_MFA_1)

¹⁰³ This argument relies on a statement by AZ_MFA_1 and AZ_MFA_2

officials associate only anti-drug trafficking initiatives with an opportunity to strengthen interdependence sovereignty. Otherwise they depict GUAM sectoral activities as potential means to strengthen Ukraine's Westphalian sovereignty.

At first glance, Ukraine's practical involvement in GUAM bodies appears to be similar to the policy towards the CIS: since the creation of the first sectoral bodies in the early 2000s, Ukraine was continuously represented in these formats. Commitment to sectoral activities is again largely independent of political support on the presidential level. Indeed, delegates to GUAM security and economic bodies regard the shifting GUAM rhetoric, described in the previous section, as hardly noticeable in their work. However, the permanent delegates to the GUAM secretariat complained about difficulties in the period of 2009-2010 to convince Ukrainian ministries to commit to newly established GUAM activities, for instance concerning transport and tourism.¹⁰⁴ Generally, officials who are delegated to both CIS and GUAM sectoral bodies tended to be less satisfied with their assignment in GUAM than in the CIS. Staff from the Ministry of Interior hoped for broadened GUAM interaction, but ministerial economic experts reported to vote rather against enhanced GUAM trade structures. Nevertheless, they do not consider withdrawing attendance from the existing GUAM economic bodies.¹⁰⁵ The discrepancy between the assessment of GUAM economic activities by experts on the ground and the assignments from the superior level is noteworthy. It indicates that economic rationale is not necessarily the driving factor of this policy.

Ukraine has only selectively adopted GUAM agreements, even though these documents express only fundamental guidelines for GUAM activities. It did not sign

¹⁰⁴ An interviewee involved in the development of a GUAM concept on transport and security expressed disappointment concerning the decline of support from ministerial and presidential administration structures. (UA_NSDC_2) A GUAM official supported this statement. (GUAM_Official_2) After 2010 the general openness of the ministries is not described as higher but the GUAM secretariat and the Ukrainian delegates are argued to be in a better position to convince ministries to get involved. Ukraine afterwards became after a party to new initiatives on emergency situations and the trafficking of nuclear substances, for instance. The origins of this improved standing will be elaborated in chapter 8.

¹⁰⁵ From a law-enforcement perspective the GUAM structures as they were in 2012 offered some advantages, which will be highlighted in chapter 7, but significant enhancement would be necessary to make a vital format. (UA_MoI_1) Little prospects are seen for GUAM free trade activities. Attending respective meetings is framed as 'unfortunately my duty and I attend all of them'. (UA_MED_1)

or ratify 6 of the 25 GUAM agreements.¹⁰⁶ Analysts and ministerial officials explain this rather as a result of the absence of high-level officials at GUAM meetings in the late 1990s or as a general problem of getting the Verkhovna Rada to ratify treaties.¹⁰⁷ They do not interpret it as absence of *de facto* interest in GUAM activities. As already mentioned, Ukraine in any case attends all existing branch bodies. Ukrainian officials often made proposals for new GUAM projects. However, these can often less directly be linked to Ukraine's economic and security relations with GUAM partners, as the next paragraph will show.

In the 1990s Ukraine made primarily initiatives in the field of energy and free trade. The focus did not shift much until 2008; only the proposals became more sophisticated. Since 2010 Ukraine has been most pro-active in security-related programmes. Among these initiatives two energy-related projects can be most directly explained by Ukraine's regional dependencies. The first is the Odessa-Brody Pipeline described in section 1.5.3. In the late 1990s Ukraine started to construct the Odessa-Brody pipeline in order to diversify the country's energy supply and transit capacity. Until 2003 Ukrainian officials were anxious to promote this pipeline as a GUAM project. Ukraine aimed for an oil supply contract with Azerbaijan to fill this pipeline. However, Azerbaijan did not agree to such a deal.¹⁰⁸ The reduction of energy dependence on Russia was the driver behind Ukraine's proactive engagement. The second is the 'Trans-Danubian Energy and Transport Bridge'. Various governmental think tanks and ministries formulated the project proposal with the hope of significantly expanding Ukraine's electricity export.¹⁰⁹ Rents from electricity export would have contributed to stabilising Ukraine's economy. These initiatives tell that Ukrainian officials attempted to employ GUAM as format to

¹⁰⁶ These concern education, health-insurances and chambers of commerce. **GUAM**, Compilation of the GUAM Documents, 9-12.

¹⁰⁷ Strong rivalries between the parliament, the government and the president have been characteristic for the political processes in Ukraine since the early 2000s. They are a widely acknowledged core constraint on political processes. An interviewee, hence, said in 2010 that it is no wonder that GUAM agreements have not been ratified. 'In our country it is worth celebrating, if they managed to ratify any agreement.' (UA_NSDC_2)

¹⁰⁸ A deal with Russia was made to ship Russian oil to the Black Sea. **Balmaceda**, Ukraine's Persistent Energy Crisis.

¹⁰⁹ **Rada Natsional'noi bezpeky i oborony Ukrainy**, Ekonomichnyi proekt GUAM 'Pridynaiskyi Energo-Transportnyi Mist' Initsiatyvy Ukrainy [Economic Project GUAM the 'Trans-Danubian Energy- and Transport Bridge].

constitute new regional relations to reduce existing dependencies. However, neither project ever materialised in the envisioned way. Until 2012 no new energy projects have been proposed by Ukraine. Already in the 1990s Ukraine has been an advocate of free trade regulations within GUAM, even though the GUAM markets play still in 2011 only a limited role for Ukraine's trade. From the very beginning president Kuchma was an advocate of free trade arrangements within GUAM. Ukraine also became a party to the GUAM FTA and attends the respective councils on a regular basis. However, the country's continuing interest in free trade can be less easily explained by economic interests, in particular since the GUAM free trade activities for about ten years have led to modest increase of the trade turnover with the GUAM states.

Compared to the economic activities, interest in GUAM initiatives on non-traditional security challenges are more strongly driven by the idea to interact with already interdependent states. As discussed above, Ukrainian officials understand phenomena such as drug-trafficking as security threats with a regional dimension. Hence, they consider related GUAM activities supportive for Ukraine's interdependence sovereignty. Ukraine shows interest in GUAM security activities even though these do not involved the neighbours that matter most for Ukraine in this regard.¹¹⁰ These are Russia, Belarus and the Central Asian states. Ukraine accordingly participates in GUAM's anti-organised crime structure VLEC and also in the working groups on drug-trafficking. Since 2011 Ukraine has also initiated activities in two other fields of non-traditional security challenges; concerning the illicit trafficking of nuclear substances and emergency situations. The interest is, however, not primarily driven by the necessity to co-ordinate these matters with the GUAM states.

The analysis has shown that Ukraine's noticeable proactive role in GUAM is not, unlike in the CIS, immediately related to the country's regional priorities. Accordingly, the main lines of political rhetoric concerning GUAM never emphasised the potential effects of GUAM's sectoral activities. A quote of the former deputy

¹¹⁰ The same ministerial officials represent Ukraine in GUAM and CIS anti-trafficking activities. The activities of both organisations were argued to be complementary. (UA_MoI_1, UA_MoI_2)

foreign minister, Andrey Veselovsky, exemplifies the core framing of the organisation: GUAM is a 'symbol for the freedom we have to choose our future development according to our political will'.¹¹¹ Improving Ukraine's Westphalian sovereignty, which practitioners and analysts in Ukraine still perceive as challenged by Russia's economic and military leverages, is central to Ukraine's GUAM policy.¹¹² As chapter 6 will pinpoint, this explains Kuchma and Yushchenko's interest in developing GUAM into a more visible structure, which appears to be quite excessive compared to the interest in sectoral activities.

5.3.CONCLUSION: AZERBAIJAN'S AND UKRAINE'S ULTIMATE GOALS

This chapter has analysed the aims with which the two former Soviet republics approach the CIS and GUAM in general. These ultimate goals were traced back with reference to narratives of state officials on the membership ambitions. In both cases state officials strongly linked CIS and GUAM membership to the republics' sovereignty concerns. The chapter substantiated this proclaimed nexus by studying persisting regional dependencies and interdependencies and how these are reflected in the state's membership profile in the CIS and GUAM. The findings revealed that both Azerbaijan and Ukraine aim to employ the CIS and GUAM primarily to strengthen the state's Westphalian sovereignty. Both states see their Westphalian sovereignty as threatened by security and economic channels of interference, primarily from Russia. Azerbaijan strives therefore to reduce its dependence on Russia by economic and security related activities in the CIS and in GUAM. Ukraine primarily pays attention to trade-related activities to do so. In addition, Azerbaijan and Ukraine devote attention to security and trade activities with CIS members in particular in order to strengthen their domestic sovereignty. The intention is to maintain or strengthen trade and migration flows to core former Soviet partners in order to improve domestic societal and economic stability. This will enable the ruling elites to efficiently exert domestic authority. Azerbaijani officials, in the first place, aim to bind other former Soviet republics to Azerbaijan

¹¹¹ **Veselovskii, Andrej**, *GUAM - Most iz proshlogo v budushchee [GUAM - The bridge from the Past to the Future]*. Ezhenedel'nik 2000 - Forum, 9 November 2006.

¹¹² **Kuzio, Taras** GUAM as a Regional and Security Organisation. Paper presented at the National Security and Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan Conference, 28 March 2008 In: St Michael's College, University of Toronto.

without creating mutual interdependence. Lacking the potential to do likewise, Ukraine appears to be eager to involve the other states in mutual ties which rather resemble interdependencies. Only Ukrainian officials considered it important to improve the state's control over transnational flows such as drug-traffic via the CIS and GUAM. Accordingly, intensifying co-operation with its neighbourhood in these matters is acknowledged as desirable. Azerbaijan does not share this interest and defines undesired incoming flows as a matter to be handled domestically.

These sovereignty concerns influence the state's membership pattern in the CIS and GUAM in the following way. Azerbaijan consequently stays out from any structure that might gain supra-national competences and signs legalised agreements only if these cannot have binding effects. It, nevertheless, tries to participate in most CIS bodies in economic and non-military security areas. GUAM provides a more adequate structure in this regard, since it never discussed supra-national ideas and engages less in the formulation of multilateral legalised rules. Ukraine turned out more ready to accept formal membership in CIS councils but in general follows Azerbaijan's membership pattern. The CIS involves more relevant former Soviet partners for Ukraine and Azerbaijan than GUAM does. Therefore the CIS provides for both states a better arena to directly tackle their sovereignty concerns. GUAM opens more indirect channels.

A glance at theories of regionalism discloses that Azerbaijan and Ukraine define their ultimate goals in the CIS and GUAM in a ways other than those assumed by the theory. Integration theory assumes that states co-operate in regional organisations in order to enhance their domestic security and welfare. This touches aspects of the states' domestic and interdependence sovereignty. In order to do so, they are ready to compromise their Westphalian sovereignty by accepting supra-national structures and legalised multilateral institutions. Not so Azerbaijan and Ukraine. It has been argued that these states have designed their CIS and GUAM membership by circumventing such elements. Neither do they prioritise the strengthening of their interdependence sovereignty through regional activities. New regionalism authors suggest that gaining control over cross-border flows via regional co-operation is the core driver of regionalism in recent decades. However,

in Ukraine this aspect ranks as third priority and Azerbaijan hardly consider it. So far integration and new regionalism theories have developed the most sophisticated concepts of what concrete aims states pursue in regional organisations in order to achieve their ultimate goals. Since Ukraine's and Azerbaijan's ultimate goals differ from what these theories expect, the intriguing question for this thesis is: by which intermediary goals Azerbaijan and Ukraine intend to achieve the above mentioned aims to strengthen their Westphalian, domestic and only thirdly interdependence sovereignty. The next chapter will therefore devote attention to this question.

6. GOALS PURSUED IN TRADE AND SECURITY ACTIVITIES

The previous chapter identified some initial insights into how policy-makers in the case countries conceptualise the organisations under study. It has been argued that they participate in the CIS and GUAM with the following aims: primarily to strengthen the state's Westphalian sovereignty and, secondly, to consolidate domestic sovereignty. Ukraine additionally strives to improve its interdependence sovereignty. The empirical findings also gave first ideas about how the states intend to realise these aims. They intend to reduce existing negative dependencies. In addition, Azerbaijani envisions to newly bind other member states to Azerbaijan, but avoids getting involved in new interdependencies. Ukraine, by contrast, is open to establishing new fruitful and balanced interdependencies. The focus will now study these strategies more deeply. The guiding question is: how do Azerbaijan and Ukraine contemplate re-organising the persisting interdependencies to mitigate their sovereignty concerns? In the words of the analytical framework, the question enquires after the states' intermediary goals. The answer to this question will tell us about the opportunities offered by the organisations. It will also give evidence about why the organisations qualify as a regional policy tool. These insights are thus crucial for gaining an appropriate idea of the states' conceptualisation of the regional organisations. This chapter will therefore dig deeper into the intermediary goals of Azerbaijan and Ukraine in the CIS and GUAM.

In order to do so, the analysis focuses on two issue-areas: free trade for both countries, and drug-trafficking for Ukraine and migration for Azerbaijan. The focus on two within-cases per country provides a clearer picture of how the states act in the sectoral activities. The in-depth study helps identify action patterns, as well as investigating which expectations the policy-makers have about these actions. This allows the analysis to directly link observable actions to their intended meaning and, thus, to unveil the intermediary goals. The analysis considered the following factors as indicators of how the states act in the CIS and GUAM. It, first, draws on the description given in chapter 5 of the states' formal membership in the relevant councils and participation in relevant agreements. More important is, however,

how intensively the states use the multilateral arenas. To gain this insight, this study has examined whether state officials attend the sectoral bodies regularly, try to set the councils' agenda, submit proposals concerning the issues under negotiation and passively or actively participate in discussions. This information is derived from expert interviews in the ministries of foreign affairs, economics and interior in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, the state migration service in Azerbaijan, and the GUAM secretariat.

The chapter develops the following argument. Azerbaijan and Ukraine promote their intermediary goals in the CIS by a pro-active engagement in the sectoral councils. Within GUAM, Ukraine is a less pro-active but still relatively reliable partner. This involvement is informed by three goals: First of all, both states wish to increase their capacity to single-handedly respond to economic and security developments in their neighbourhood. They hence exploit the organisations in order to make their independent and mainly bilateral foreign policy more efficient. By means of this strategy, they may consolidate their domestic, Westphalian and interdependence sovereignty without creating new channels for external interference. Secondly, in support of their Westphalian sovereignty the states strive to improve their leverage in the region and the international arena. This enhances their freedom of manoeuvre vis-à-vis powerful regional players. Thirdly, both countries commit to certain activities just to maintain the organisation as a regional forum. The CIS serves to strengthen their regional leverage and enhances their impact on regional developments. Azerbaijan in particular considers GUAM as a tool to improve its international leverage. Ukraine pursues a fourth aim in the CIS and GUAM. It intends to build co-operation structures with the neighbourhood for the sake of its interdependence sovereignty. Two consecutive sections on Azerbaijan and Ukraine will illustrate the states' intermediary goals, first with reference to CIS and GUAM trade and, secondly, concerning security activities. The conclusion compares the country-specific findings.

6.1.AZERBAIJAN: IMPROVING THE COUNTRY'S POLICY CAPACITY

By studying Azerbaijan this chapter first considers a former Soviet republic which, as chapter 5 spelt out, consistently rejects the creation of legalised multilateral rules but nevertheless pro-actively participates in the CIS and GUAM. The section will consider what Azerbaijan intends to gain from its pro-active participation in the sectoral activities of the CIS and GUAM. The analysis will also highlight that policy-makers conceptualise the potential of CIS and GUAM activities differently. This is driven by the fact that, as mentioned in chapter 5, Azerbaijan's relations to some CIS members rest on stronger dependencies than the relations with GUAM states. Therefore the organisations' sectoral activities serve different aims. The section argues that Azerbaijan employs CIS activities with a strong focus on players in the region. Thus the results of trade and migration activities are considered relevant for Azerbaijan's economic and trade policy. GUAM activities have a more instrumental character. The results are strongly directed at an international audience. Accordingly, officials depict CIS trade and migration activities as contributing an efficient and independent domestic and foreign policy. They expect the activities to also produce additional leverage vis-à-vis Russia and Armenia. Activities in GUAM primarily aim to increase Azerbaijan's international recognition. Neither the CIS nor GUAM is the main arena for tackling trade and migration issues. Since the organisations nevertheless support Azerbaijan's policy in these issue-areas and beyond, Azerbaijan is eager to maintain its membership in the organisations. Empirical insights into expectations first vis-à-vis trade and secondly regarding migration activities will illustrate these arguments.

6.1.1. CIS AND GUAM FREE TRADE ACTIVITIES

A comparative study of free trade activities in the CIS and GUAM will highlight the following aspects. The CIS free trade negotiations attracted the intense scrutiny of policy-makers in the Ministry of Economics and Foreign Affairs. The negotiations provided opportunities to improve trade relations with core CIS partners and to strengthen Azerbaijan's negotiating position concerning trade with Russia. From the very beginning Azerbaijani officials have considered it more important to participate in the negotiations than to sign the resulting FTA. As regards GUAM, Azerbaijan

committed to the FTA, above all, in response to the interests of the other member states. The aim was to ensure these states' support in more GUAM activities that are more vital for Azerbaijan. Additionally, an agreed FTA is a sign of an organisation's success and therefore, in the eyes of Azerbaijani officials, important for GUAM. The sub-section will commence with a comparative summary of how intensively the ministries in Azerbaijan participated in the FTA negotiations in the two organisations. It will then separately discuss the expectations towards the CIS and GUAM FTA.

Chapter 5 has already invoked two crucial parameters for Azerbaijan's engagement in the FTA negotiations that apply to the CIS and GUAM. The ministerial officials attended all relevant working groups and rounds of negotiations. In contrast to the 2011 CIS FTA, in 2002 Azerbaijan signed the GUAM FTA. The document does not envision powerful enforcement mechanisms. Being party to the FTA does not, thus, necessarily imply strong commitments. It is therefore does not tie Azerbaijan in to new interdependencies. Azerbaijan was able to get involved in the CIS FTA negotiations, since the CIS offered enough opportunities to protect the state from undesired consequences of the agreement. The Prime Minister signed, for example, the CIS Economic Strategy in 2008, which paved the way for the FTA negotiations, with the notification that Azerbaijan will only implement aspects that do not demand harmonisation with domestic policy.¹ To signal that Azerbaijan is cautious with regard to regionally harmonised trade relations, the country entered the negotiations with another reservation. Azerbaijan declared that it would withhold the decision on whether or not to participate until the final draft was adopted.² In autumn 2011 president Aliyev finally did not sign the agreement. A high-ranking ministerial official, who anticipated this decision already in 2011, emphasised, however, that the FTA negotiations were nevertheless not in vain for Azerbaijan. This assessment requires further explanation. Also, with regard to the GUAM FTA, ministerial officials, economic actors and analysts give an assessment that is, at first

¹ **CIS Council of Heads of Governments**, Reshenie o Strategii ekonomisheskogo razvitiya SNG na period do 2020 goda. [Decision on the Strategy of Economic Development of the CIS until 2020]

² This reservation allowed the country to have a full say in the negotiations but to withdraw from negotiating details for their country. These include the discussion of quotas that should be abolished or the question which of Azerbaijan's bilateral agreements will lose power with the FTA. (AZ_MED_1)

glance, puzzling. They agree that the FTA lacks practical impact.³ A high-level actor from the foreign ministry presents the GUAM FTA as a relevant step, but does not support the idea of improving the FTA's impact by additional monitoring structures. The following paragraphs will explain which relevance the CIS FTA negotiations had even though the FTA has not been adopted and why the inefficient GUAM FTA is relevant.

6.1.1.1. CIS FTA

If from the very beginning there was a consensus in the government concerning the FTA, it was to send Azerbaijani delegates to all working groups. Despite the previously mentioned reservations concerning Azerbaijan's ultimate participation in the FTA, the delegates submitted several proposals for the FTA draft and for action plans. They also touched upon several conflicting issues in the negotiations. According to interviewees who attended the negotiations, they succeeded in transforming the draft into a text which would not cause harm to Azerbaijan. In spite of this engagement and success, two of the three interviewees involved never saw a reason to actually shift the trade regulations from a bilateral FTA to a multilateral one.⁴ They rather frame Azerbaijan's pro-activeness as driven by other intentions than establishing the same liberal trade regulations with all CIS partners. The ambition of the Azerbaijani delegation was rather to ensure that Azerbaijani producers maintain favourable access to the core CIS markets: Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and the Central Asian states. These sales markets are attractive for companies which still produce according to the relatively low GOST standards. The export profile discussed in section 5.1.1.2 has shown that the agricultural and food industry rests strongly on the former Soviet markets. Against this background, an official from the ministry of economics saw no other way but to participate in CIS trade activities, even if the proclaimed aim of integration is incompatible with Azerbaijan's concepts.⁵ The interview narratives highlighted that Azerbaijan can exploit such negotiations through the following two strategies.

³ Except for GUAM_Official_1, GUAM_Official_3 and AZ_MFA_7 all interviewees who discussed the FTA agreed to this assessment.

⁴ Primarily AZ_MED_1 elaborated on this fact but also AZ_MED_3 stated this understanding.

⁵ AZ_MED_2

A first set of activities is oriented at improving the foundations for the bilateral trade with core CIS countries.⁶ In concrete terms, Azerbaijan intended to convince CIS partners to exempt fewer goods from free trade than the existing bilateral free trade agreements do. It suffices to mention the most prominent example: to convince Russia to include energy transit in the free trade regulations. To be able to export Azerbaijani gas through Russia without duty fees or according to reduced and stable fees would support the main pillar of Azerbaijan's economy. Success in this sphere would have increased Azerbaijan's readiness to sign the FTA, since it would have allowed the officials to more directly use this stipulation. This would still not have implied that Azerbaijan would have been ready to comprehensively apply the agreement. The idea was rather to primarily refer to this provision in the bilateral negotiations with Russia.⁷ However, this endeavour failed. But, according to an official, Azerbaijan succeeded in persuading other trade partners to subordinate additional goods to the free trade regime. Azerbaijan hopes that their stipulation in the multilateral FTA will likewise pave the way for a re-negotiation of the exemptions in the existing bilateral FTAs.⁸ Another ambition was to shape the CIS trade environment according to Azerbaijan's preferences. A crucial debate in this regard, which was touched upon on the margins of the FTA negotiation, concerned the production standards in the CIS area. The CIS Council for Standardisation agrees such technical production standards. Azerbaijan is not eager to follow these standards, but intends to steer the development of these standards in a way compatible with the Azerbaijan's agricultural and industrial production. Influencing the development helps Azerbaijani companies to produce according to standards that prevail in many former Soviet republics and prevents new technical trade barriers.⁹

A second strategy was to increase Azerbaijan's leverage as a trade partner in the neighbourhood. Two ways of doing so will be presented. Azerbaijan pushed some

⁶ According to AZ_MED_2 such ambitions informed not only the FTA negotiations but also discussions on anti-monopoly legislation and on production standards in the CIS countries.

⁷ This was explained by AZ_MED_1, who has been involved in the preparation of Azerbaijan's proposals to the FTA negotiations.

⁸ AZ_MED_1 gave an examples concerning trade with Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, but did not mention the commodities.

⁹ This argument builds on narratives from: AZ_MP_1 and 2, AZ_Gov_Analyst_2, AZ_Analyst_3.

issues in the negotiations which have also been of interest to other CIS states. This applies not only to the previously mentioned demand to include energy transit fees into the FTA. Another example concerns the attempt of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia to additionally consolidate the Customs Union through the FTA. The three states intended to enforce the demand that the CU is treated as single customs space. This requires that third-party trade partners consent to regulate their trade regime with all three countries in the same manner. Due to the strongly diverging economic power of, for instance, Belarus and Russia, levelling the customs regimes is no option for Azerbaijan and other CIS members.¹⁰ Azerbaijani officials accordingly strongly opposed claims made in this regard by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. They presented their open engagement in these matters as a success in the following regard. It enabled Azerbaijan to present itself as a strong and reliable partner in CIS trade negotiations. As a relatively strong economic power, so it was argued, Azerbaijan had the courage to oppose Russia and the potential to facilitate compromises from which weaker CIS partners might benefit. Such an image might boost Azerbaijan's attractiveness as trade partner in the eyes of individual CIS states.¹¹ Another strategy was to use FTA-related councils for raising conflictual issues. The officials depict the CIS councils as additional and not as a primary platform for solving trade problems. The multilateral bodies basically enable Azerbaijan to increase the pressure on the conflict partner.¹²

These narratives reflect little sense of interest in any collective solutions for trade issues. Only two officials hoped to facilitate trade relations with CIS partners in the course of the CIS activities on free trade. They tried to establish durable mechanisms for intergovernmental collaboration. The idea was to improve the

¹⁰ The bilateral free trade agreements with Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus stipulate varying exemptions and quotas for all three countries. In the FTA the exemptions and quotas for all parties have been again negotiated. The CU countries tried to ensure through the FTA that all FTA parties would accept the same exemptions and quotas for all three countries. (AZ_MED_1 and 2)

¹¹ AZ_MED_1 and AZ_MFA_8 stated that many states such as Ukraine expressed their gratitude for Azerbaijan taking a strong lead in several aspects and stressed that this would support the countries leverage vis-à-vis the core partner Russia but also potentially more important partners like Ukraine.

¹² The question of conflict resolution in the CIS was raised by the interviewer, but the answer of the interviewees has been substantiated by some examples and detailed explanations. They were, hence, considered as trustworthy. AZ_MED_1 stated that Azerbaijani officials usually do not raise problematic issues at CIS meetings without having notified the affected party in advance. They expect supportive effects for the conflict resolution but share the opinion that the CIS is not the format to negotiate these solutions. (AZ_MED_1 and 2)

trade conditions in Azerbaijan's border regions, especially with Russia. Reportedly, their superiors did not share this interest and, hence, did not pursue it in CIS activities.¹³ The following paragraphs will discuss how Azerbaijan also strives to improve the country's regional leverage within GUAM, with a different strategy.

6.1.1.2. GUAM FTA

As indicated above, Azerbaijan has continuously supported GUAM activities on free trade in an undiluted manner, in spite of the fact that ministerial officials frankly consider GUAM free trade as economically irrelevant for Azerbaijan. Since 2010 it is the Azerbaijani delegate to the GUAM secretariat who initiates and co-ordinates the trade activities. The mismatch between economic interests and a nevertheless relatively stable commitment to free trade activities becomes less puzzling if we disclose the underlying intentions that drive Azerbaijan. The core argument for Azerbaijan's pro-active engagement in this field is to tie GUAM members to Azerbaijan. This intends to improve the ability to use GUAM for strengthening Azerbaijan's regional and international leverage.

The interview narratives describe Azerbaijan's opportunities to enhance its reputation as regional power through the GUAM FTA in two ways. The FTA negotiations have been opened in the 1990s upon Ukraine's suggestion. Accordingly, Azerbaijani officials frame the FTA, like other primarily energy trade related projects, as a response to Ukraine's and Georgia's GUAM policy. Azerbaijan has ratified the FTA without delay. It also agreed to make the negotiations about Azerbaijani oil sales to Ukraine via the Odessa-Brody pipelines a topic within GUAM. In exchange for accommodating Ukraine's trade interests the officials hoped to gain Ukraine's support in security matters that are more relevant for Azerbaijan. As economically far stronger player, Azerbaijan did not risk anything by promoting GUAM trade projects. A ministerial official even emphasised that GUAM never served as actual forum for negotiating oil sales to Ukraine.¹⁴ As chapter 1.5.3 discussed, these negotiations have been on the GUAM agenda in the early 2000s. But in the eyes of Azerbaijan they fulfilled the instrumental function to tie Ukraine

¹³The argument refers to relations with the autonomous North Caucasus republic of the Russia Federation Dagestan.

¹⁴ Stated by AZ_MFA_5

to Azerbaijan and GUAM.¹⁵ Indeed, in certain periods this strategy has been worthwhile. In the early 2000s, for instance, the prospects of a successful oil deal with Azerbaijan prompted Kuchma, as president of Ukraine, to publicly support Azerbaijan's position regarding Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁶ Later Azerbaijan accelerated Ukraine's efforts to re-launch GUAM as fully-fledged regional organisation in 2006 by supporting Ukraine's main ambitions in GUAM. Four years later ministerial officials depict it as crucial to maintain and expand trade projects, in order to ensure that Ukraine remains in GUAM. As section 5.2.3 has indicated, president Yanukovich, stressed that Ukraine's participation in GUAM should concentrate on economic initiatives.

Thus in the last years Azerbaijan's opportunities to build on Ukraine as a partner shifted from winning over the country as an outspoken supporter in matters vital to Azerbaijan's security to ensuring that Ukraine stays within GUAM. For Azerbaijan's reputation and freedom to promote a conflict resolution according to its preferences it is obviously more helpful to gain the explicit support of a large neighbour such as Ukraine. However, it is still supportive to simply keep GUAM as regional organisation alive. In GUAM Azerbaijan can appear as regional actor. Officials argue that the international visibility of a state increases, if the state is willing and able to assume regional responsibility. Especially for a small country like Azerbaijan, that only two decades ago has re-gained independent statehood, it is crucial to substantiate its international recognition inter alia by such a strategy.¹⁷ Being recognised as mature international player may widen the scope for Azerbaijan to put across its stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Therefore Azerbaijan took in recent years some efforts to keep GUAM alive and active by new economic projects similar to the tourism project briefly described chapter 1.5.3.¹⁸ The discussion has outlined that Azerbaijan's engagement in GUAM trade activities

¹⁵ The first aspect relies on the explanations of an official who for several years has dealt with Azerbaijan's energy trade (AZ_MFA_5).

¹⁶ Given as one example of success by AZ_MP_2

¹⁷ This position is supported by the literature on international relations. The need to consolidate a country's international recognition in practice has been discussed as a theoretical assumption in section 3.4.4.

¹⁸ An already more advanced project concerns collaboration in wine-growing and exporting. A GUAM official promoted these projects inter alia in the GUAM business council, which the author attended. (GUAM_Official_3)

follows, like in the CIS, the aim of improving the country's regional and international leverage. However, only from the CIS can Azerbaijan gain direct benefits for its trade with the neighbourhood. It may establish a better foundation for the bilateral trade with CIS countries. The next section will deliver a similar picture for the migration-related activities.

6.1.2. CIS AND GUAM ACTIVITIES ON MIGRATION

This second within-case study revealed that, as with trade, the CIS and GUAM migration activities are stepping stones for improving the country's capacity to independently respond to migration challenges and for elevating Azerbaijan's regional and international leverage. Again, due to its member state constellation, the CIS is better qualified than GUAM to strengthen Azerbaijan's migration policy. Policy-makers utilise the CIS to shape the CIS members' migration policy according to Azerbaijan's needs.¹⁹ They also use the CIS as an additional arena for discussing current migration conflicts.²⁰ These strategies have basically been already spelled out in the example of the CIS trade activities given section 6.1.1.1. Therefore, they will not be repeated here. Instead the sub-section will explore more deeply the second intermediary goal: strengthening the country's regional and international leverage. The following sub-sections will present the argument that Azerbaijan tries, in the framework of both the CIS and GUAM, to increase international awareness of the way in which the protracted Nagorno-Karabakh conflict challenges the stability of the region. By doing so, policy-makers envision widening their leverage in the conflict resolution. They again approach the CIS and GUAM with different strategies.

¹⁹ Azerbaijani officials interpret the multilateral interactions in the council and working groups as a basis for preparing the national security agencies for emerging hot spots regarding migration. These may be situations where CIS members play a lone hand in changing the visa-regulations. In this regard the officials especially watch developments in Russia to which, as discussed in chapter five, Azerbaijan sends strong labour migration flows. According to AZ_SMS_1

²⁰ The argument builds on an example provided by AZ_SMS_1, who himself discussed a minor conflict of changes in the Russia visa-regulation in the CIS Council of Heads of Migration Agencies. It is supported by the description in other interviews of conflictive incidents and the CIS' potential role in their resolution. (AZ_MFA_3, AZ_SMS_2)

6.1.2.1. CIS MIGRATION ACTIVITIES

Chapter 5 has already indicated that Azerbaijan is open to the core CIS councils on regular and irregular migration as well as the basic migration related agreements. It is at the same time evident that the country is not interested in establishing the CIS as a powerful player in migration matters. Azerbaijan has, for instance, never signed agreements that entitle the CIS to develop integrated migration approaches. Among the various councils that discuss labour and irregular migration, officials from the foreign ministry and the Migration Service value primarily the Council of Heads of Migration Agencies. The council deals in the first place with matters of visa regulation and labour migration, but considers irregular migration only marginally. As section 5.1.1.1 discussed, the ruling elite does anyways not prioritise irregular migration issues.²¹ But the council can be exploited for improving Azerbaijan's own labour migration policy. However, the officials who participate in it present themselves as not necessarily pro-active in the council. They attend this and related councils regularly, but define the council's agenda only sporadically.²² It is worth mentioning that the council's results are hardly tangible for departments that are concerned with migration but are not in contact with the CIS. This indicates that the State Migration Service has limited interest in direct migration-related gains from the council.²³ Indeed, another rationale prevails in the description of the value-added benefit of this council.

Azerbaijani officials rather use the council to present the protracted solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a topical security issue for the entire post-Soviet space. The topic of migration flows and the discussion of alleged efforts to

²¹ Officials from all ministries agree that irregular migration is a minor issue for Azerbaijan. Officials from the State Migration Service nevertheless see it as important to be part of CIS activities in this sphere. (AZ_SMS_1)

²² Evidence for this argument is taken from a lengthy description of the agenda setting processes in the council and Azerbaijan's interests to shape the agenda. Two officials stated that the priority is to execute the directions decided in the Economic Council or the Council of Heads of Government. The fact that there is also a mechanism in the council whereby experts try to find a joint agenda was not mentioned until I directly inquired about this. This implies the importance accredited to the two mechanisms. (AZ_SMS_1, AZ_SMS_2)

²³ The officials from the Ministry of Interior who work on irregular migration issues in the frame of GUAM but also an official concerned with this topic in a broader context had problems to specify the relevance of the CIS activities. They knew that Azerbaijan takes part in them on a regular basis but did not find some specific outcomes or initiatives to report. (AZ_Mol_1, AZ_Mol_2 and also AZ_MP_1).

regionally co-ordinate migration issues help making such statements in the following way. Azerbaijan participates in negotiations on joint CIS migration regulations, even though it is not interested in signing them. The participation provides the opportunity to argue that Azerbaijan is not capable of actually committing to potential multilateral migration institutions until the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is settled. First of all, Azerbaijan cannot accept security regulations that include, in the form of Armenia, a state that violates Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Secondly, due to the conflict, Azerbaijan is not able to control about 20% of its territory. It cannot therefore guarantee that border controls and visa regulations are respected in this territory. In the current situation, they argue, Azerbaijan cannot ensure the comprehensive implementation of multilateral migration regulations.²⁴ As described above, Azerbaijani officials in any case reject the notion of 'co-ordinating any aspects of their migration policy with anybody'.²⁵ Thus, the argument employed is merely instrumental. The council provides an arena to persuade regional actors that the conflict is not a 'frozen' one and cannot be ignored, but has an impact on the everyday security matters of the entire region. Furthermore, given that Armenia and Russia sit at the negotiation table, it is one of many tools to exert pressure on the country's approach to the conflict. A brief discussion of GUAM migration activities in the next sub-section will stress that migration activities within GUAM are even less directed at Azerbaijan's migration policy.

6.1.2.2. GUAM IRREGULAR MIGRATION ACTIVITIES

GUAM explicitly focuses on matters of irregular, not regular migration. The CIS already covers mutual visa issues and the GUAM members depict core visa and migration topics in any case as a domestic affair. Hence, there is no reason to discuss such topics in GUAM. At the same time, as chapter 5.1.1.1 has pinpointed, Azerbaijani officials do not necessarily treat irregular migration as relevant. At least

²⁴ Both AZ_SMS_1 and AZ_MFA_3 elaborated this argument in length when asked about multilateral agreements. AZ_MFA_3 did not only refer to CIS agreements but also to similar acts within the cooperation with the EU.

²⁵ This point was stressed by all interviewees in charge of migration issues, including AZ_SMS_1 and AZ_MFA_3 who made the statement concerning the conflict. This narrative is not only employed in migration matters. AZ_MED_1 provided the same line of argument concerning the FTA.

until 2011 Azerbaijan had no problem handling incoming migration independently. Outgoing irregular migration hardly caused any disturbance.²⁶ In this light, representatives from various migration-oriented departments are not enthusiastic about the GUAM activities, but nevertheless actively engage in them. The introduction into GUAM's structures in chapter 1 has indicated that GUAM possesses three instruments in the field of irregular migration: a working group, the VLEC information exchange structure, and joint operations for detecting trafficking routes. Two officials involved in the GUAM activities presented themselves as quite active in this sphere. One staff member is most of the time on duty in VLEC and ready to receive and process migration-related requests from GUAM partners. Another official from the ministry of interior prepares the agenda of the working group meetings. Azerbaijan also devotes resources to the joint operations. At the same time, the officials had problems explaining the benefit of these activities for Azerbaijan's policy against irregular migration. They explained the activities' impact by referring to the following two aspects.

Firstly, they presented engagement in multilateral measures against irregular migration as a must for the sake of regional and global security. They employed the argument spread by international actors like the UN that global flows of irregular migration challenge global security inter alia by supporting international terrorism. The officials drew on the assumption that human trafficking is an income source for international terrorist networks and that uncontrolled migration assists terrorist activities.²⁷ They argued that a state like Azerbaijan that supports the US in the fight against terrorism is therefore obliged to fight global irregular migration flows. They presented it as a specific responsibility of Azerbaijan, since Azerbaijan potentially serves as a transit route for individuals with extremist background from Iran or Afghanistan.²⁸ By appearing as a reliable partner in the fight against irregular migration Azerbaijan hopes to present itself internationally as responsible regional

²⁶ This has been stated by AZ_MoI_1 and AZ_MoI_2 but also by AZ_SMS_1.

²⁷ On Azerbaijan's support for the US: **Oren, Ido and Robert Kaufmann** (2006), *Culture and Alliances: U.S. Portrayals of Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan Before and After September 11, 2001*. In: Shaffer, Brenda (ed.), *The Limits of Culture. Islam and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p 142.

²⁸ Azerbaijan's strategic geographic position is also emphasised by the following analysts from Azerbaijan: AZ_Analyst_1, AZ_Analyst_8. See also:

and global security player. The strategy also adds some substance to Azerbaijan's stated commitment to the US fight against terrorism. After the 9/11 attacks Azerbaijan hoped to improve its relations with the US by voicing this support.²⁹ The background is that until 2002 the US had not been willing to support Azerbaijan with governmental humanitarian and economic aid. Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act prohibited giving such aid to Azerbaijan due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan's stated commitment to the fight against terrorism indeed paid off. In 2002 the prohibition was voided and the US-Azerbaijani relations have substantially improved.

Secondly, officials refer to the link between irregular migration and international terrorism for making the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict a matter of international relevance. This builds on the argument which has already been discussed in the section on CIS migration activities. The secessionist conflict hinders Azerbaijan's control over its territory and, thus, compromises the state's ability to efficiently counteract irregular migration. Within GUAM this inability can, however, be framed as impacting not only on the regional but also global security. As long as Azerbaijan does not have control over Nagorno-Karabakh it cannot ensure that this enclave does not become a cradle of illicit activities that support international terrorism.³⁰ Via GUAM this message can be directly sent to the US, which is a core partner of GUAM and the main sponsor of the VLEC structures.³¹ In addition, GUAM is a channel to communicate this perception to the wider international community. Various statements on behalf of GUAM in the UN General Assembly since 2003 have presented this argument.³²

²⁹ **RFE/RL**, *Azerbaijan Report*. 25 September 2001.

³⁰ This narrative was developed by AZ_MoI_1, AZ_MoI_2, AZ_MFA_3 and AZ_MFA_7.

³¹ Statements of AZ_MFA_1 and AZ_MFA_2 support the link between VLEC and the intention to influence the U.S. to support Azerbaijan in the conflict matters.

³² **U.N. General Assembly, 58th Session**, 24 October 2003, (A/C.2/58/SR.18) Agenda item 94: Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; **U.N. General Assembly, 58th Session**, 13 October 2003, (A/58/PV.28) Agenda item 11 Report of the Security Council (A/58/2). See for more information on the GUAM statements in the UN General Assembly also: APPENDIX 2: GUAM STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1.3. CONCLUSION

The examples presented in this section lead to the conclusion that it is worthwhile for Azerbaijan to participate in CIS and GUAM sectoral activities, even though the country has no ambitions to promote regional multilateral governance. The expected function of this participation is not necessarily linked to Azerbaijan's concerns in the issue-area under discussion. If Azerbaijani officials are interested in the issue-area they strive to exploit the activities for influencing the other states' policy according to Azerbaijan's preferences. Another ambition is to improve Azerbaijan's negotiation leverage vis-à-vis crucial partners such as Russia in trade and migration matters. In case the sectoral activities are not a matter of interest to Azerbaijan, state officials support these activities in order to promote Azerbaijan's visibility as a regional actor. This is intended to strengthen Azerbaijan's international reputation and to increase its capacity to pursue its own security strategy, in particular regarding Nagorno-Karabakh. It will be the task of the following section to highlight that Ukraine is more interested in results that directly impact on the state's trade and security capacity. But Ukraine also strives for achievements that are more generally linked to its regional and international position.

6.2. UKRAINE: ENLARGING THE POLICY TOOLKIT

Ukraine is a country that seems to ascribe more relevance to multilateral legalised rules within the CIS. As chapter 5 has outlined, Ukraine is at least more ready to sign agreements such as the CIS FTA. But regardless of what policy-makers formally agree to, the state consequently rejects any idea of supra-nationality within the CIS and GUAM. Chapter 5 has also argued that this approach is driven by the (inter)dependencies that tie Ukraine to its post-Soviet neighbourhood. The perception of a destructive dependence on Russia and relevant interdependencies with other former Soviet republics induce Ukrainian policy-makers to seek active participation in both the CIS and GUAM. This section aims at substantiating this identified nexus by exploring what aims Ukrainian state officials ascribe to CIS and GUAM activities. It will be argued that, in contrast to Azerbaijan, Ukraine is determined to achieve benefits that directly improve its trade and security policy. This applies to both the CIS and GUAM. In particular activities on non-traditional

security challenges arouse more positive attention among Ukrainian state security bodies. According to Ukrainian officials, GUAM produces less tangible results for Ukraine's regional policy than the CIS. They, therefore, approach the organisation less enthusiastically. The desire to maintain the organisation as an instrument in Ukraine's regional policy exists, but is less pronounced than in Azerbaijan. Similar to section 6.1, the study on Ukraine will first dwell on trade and then on measures against drug-trafficking.

6.2.1. CIS AND GUAM TRADE ACTIVITIES

The intensity with which Ukraine participates in free trade activities and the framing of the expected results reveals the same set of intermediary goals as in the case of Azerbaijan. The CIS and GUAM FTA should increase leverage vis-à-vis regional and international actors and provide additional tools for successfully shaping Ukraine's bilateral trade relations. Since 2010 trade activities in GUAM have been above all a means to stay in the organisation. This section will, however, highlight that Ukrainian officials associate different strategies with these intermediary goals from Azerbaijan. Regarding the CIS it has been more important to become a party to the FTA and to introduce international regulations to which Ukraine has committed in the agreement. In GUAM policy-makers have struggled to effectively improve Ukraine's trade relations. In the 2000s, some policy-makers intended to employ the FTA as a means of establishing a link with the EU.

Chapter 5 has indicated that since the 1990s the Ukrainian leadership has been an advocate of free trade arrangements in the CIS and GUAM. In the course of the 1990s, the country has signed bilateral FTAs with all former Soviet republics, but nevertheless promoted additional multilateral FTAs in these two organisations. With this aim Leonid Kuchma even took a step that conveyed the impression of agreeing to integrate into CIS structures. He signed the treaty on the Single Economic Space.³³ Interestingly enough, the endeavour of a CIS FTA was continuously promoted by high-level policy-makers, including the presidents, their administration and prime ministers. It also gained strong support from ministerial

³³ **Zhalilo, Yaroslav** (2007), *Ukraine in the Single Economic Space: Benefits of Institutionalisation of Trade Relations*. National Security & Defence, Vo. 91, No. 7; **Bukkvoll**, Private Interest, Public Policy. Ukraine and the Common Economic Space Agreement.

experts. Only in public has high-level support not always been pronounced. The endeavour of the GUAM FTA was, in contrast, primarily promoted by the presidents, specifically Kuchma and Yushchenko. According to an official from the ministry of economics, GUAM has produced a legal text far better than that of the CIS FTA. But the text itself does not fulfil any function in Ukraine's trade policy. It is also not intended to do so in the future.³⁴ Nevertheless, Ukraine actively participates in FTA-related activities in both the CIS and GUAM. But none of the agreements is meant to entirely replace the existing bilateral FTAs.³⁵ The following paragraphs will discuss the rationale of this pro-active approach in the FTA negotiations that does not aim to establish multilateral trade institutions.

6.2.1.1. CIS FTA

Since 2007 the Ukrainian government has not spared efforts to substantially influence the CIS FTA negotiations. Two officials recounted that Ukraine has been pushing to re-negotiate the FTA which materialised in 2007, but only with Russian approval.³⁶ Anxious to tailor the FTA according to Ukraine's needs, a strong delegation from all ministries potentially affected participated in the negotiation and submitted several counter proposals to the initial draft.³⁷ Thanks to successful negotiations the agreement was signed in 2011 and ratified in summer 2012.³⁸ The narrative of three officials who prepared Ukraine's negotiation strategy discloses that the endeavour intended to get the FTA signed by Ukraine and other core CIS partners, above all Russia, but not to comprehensively implement the newly agreed

³⁴ Some ministerial officials interviewed who were involved in Ukraine's trade did not even know about the GUAM FTA.(UA_MFA_1, UA_MFA_2) Since the FTA lacks any function, Ukraine also tries to divert GUAM from establishing structures for implementing the FTA. (UA_MED_1)

³⁵ The core delegates to the negotiations from the foreign ministry were less outspoken about this fact. They, however, emphasised the means available to avoid unintended effects of the FTA on Ukraine and the relevance of the bilateral FTAs with CIS members. A staff member from the economics ministry made this point most directly. The interviewee explained how a partial application of the multilateral FTA may be feasible and how Ukraine may ensure that the bilateral FTAs remain in place at least for some time. (UA_MFA_1 but also UA_MFA_2)

³⁶ This narrative stems from interviews with officials at expert and decision making level from the foreign ministry and economics ministry. (UA_MFA_3, UA_MFA_2 and UA_MED_1)

³⁷ Officials from the following agencies were involved: the Ministry of Economics, finance, foreign affairs and customs agencies. The Ukrainian contributions concerned for instance conflict resolution matters, remaining exemptions, the definition of quotas and procedures concerning the defeasance of bilateral agreements affected by the FTA. This incomplete overview was reported by staff from the Ministry of Economics, foreign affairs and the State Service for Technical Regulation.(UA_MFA_2, UA_MED_1, UA_SSTR_1)

³⁸ **RIA Novosti**, *Ukraine Ratifies Free Trade Agreement with CIS*. 30 July 2012.

FTA. They presented the CIS FTA as an addition to the existing bilateral FTAs, which should be employed in some points of conflict only.³⁹ This assessment contradicts the official CIS line of argument according to which the FTA should replace all bilateral FTAs. In order to serve as an additional trade policy tool, Ukraine tried to integrate as many beneficial provisions as possible into the legal text, and to reduce potential harm to Ukraine's independent domestic legislation. The following two ambitions guided Ukraine's strategy.

First, Ukraine intended to maximise its flexibility to respond to trade conflicts with selected CIS members. This is geared towards important partners like Kazakhstan, Belarus or Turkmenistan, and most decisively towards Russia. Similar to Azerbaijan, Ukraine has in this regard been eager to re-negotiate the number of commodities stipulated in the existing bilateral FTAs by individual trade partners. Again, the most crucial aim was to urge Russia to regulate energy export and transit fees via the FTA. Ukrainian officials depict the failure of this attempt as the strongest repercussion in the otherwise successful negotiations.⁴⁰ However, inter alia Ukraine successfully insisted on a provision that permits gas and oil trading countries free access to the pipeline-grid in the signatory countries. Since the end of 2012, Ukraine has, so far unsuccessfully, tried to use this provision for convincing energy-rich CIS partners such as Kazakhstan to send oil via Ukraine to Europe.⁴¹ Further, the Ukrainian negotiators were eager to include provisions in the FTA that covered issues of current trade conflicts with inter alia Russia. To name just one instance, Ukraine urged the member states to negotiate the topic of sanitary-veterinary

³⁹ The core delegates to the negotiations from the foreign ministry were less outspoken about this fact. However, they emphasised the means available to avoid the unintended effects of the FTA on Ukraine and the relevance of the bilateral FTAs with CIS members. A staff member from the economics ministry made this point most directly. The interviewee explained how a partial application of the multilateral FTA may be feasible and how Ukraine may ensure that the bilateral FTAs remain in place at least for some time. (UA_MFA_1 but also UA_MFA_2)

⁴⁰ At the same time the officials from the foreign ministry and of economy stated that they had never had very high expectations in this regard. (UA_MFA_2, UA_MED_2)

⁴¹ Ukraine proposes Kazakhstan to ship oil from Kazakhstan through the Druzhba Pipeline to Odessa and from Odessa to Brody through Ukraine. The Druzhba Pipeline transits Russia and needs therefore Russia to approve the deal. As mentioned in chapter 5.2.1.1 so far Russia has thwarted similar deals. With this CIS FTA provision Ukrainian policy-makers hope to have a new instrument for achieving such agreements with the Central Asian and South Caucasus states. However, the provision is written in a very fuzzy way which raises questions about its efficiency. See: **Ivzhenko, Tat'yana**, *Ukraina Prosit Nefti i Gaz u Kazakhstana*. Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 04 April 2013.

standards for food production. In the years 2006-2010 Russia repeatedly banned Ukrainian meat and dairy products with formal reference to breaches of sanitary-veterinary or other production standards.⁴² The basic idea was to create another legal definition of these standards. These endeavours thus aimed to elevate Ukraine's leverage in trade negotiations with its core trade partners.

A second ambition was to spread certain trade regulations and production standards, which Ukraine has adopted from international actors such as the WTO and the EU, in the neighbourhood. In 2008 Ukraine became a member of the WTO. Since 2008 Ukraine has also negotiated a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the European Union. The question of its adoption is still pending in 2013. These two international commitments require an adjustment of the bilateral trade regulations with the former Soviet republics. According to state officials, the CIS provides an environment to accelerate this process. The intention is to persuade member states to adjust the CIS regulations entirely or partially to these standards. This permits Ukraine to refer to the agreed provisions when re-negotiating existing bilateral trade agreements. The FTA does not lose this function, even if it is not fully implemented. The most crucial question concerned production standards. The EU demands production standards that are substantially higher than CIS standards. An adjustment to EU criteria might endanger Ukraine's competitiveness on the CIS markets, since production according to EU standards implies higher costs. Ukraine thus proposed some changes to the CIS FTA in order to maintain good access to the CIS markets. An official from the State Service for Technical Regulation assessed the process as relatively successful.⁴³ By this strategy Ukraine strove to pave the way for

⁴² Since 2006 Russia has repeatedly banned meat and dairy imports from Ukraine. A most recent conflict, the so-called 'cheese war' has started in spring 2012. Russia has banned cheese products with the argument that Ukrainian producers would use palm oil instead of milk for its production. However, analysts often interpret this step as a measure to drag Ukraine into the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. See: **Ivzhenko, Tat'yana**, *Kievu Ob'yasnili Pravila Torgovli*. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 March 2012; **Berezneva, Elena**, *Molochnye Reki Potekli Vspyat'*. *Trud*, 24 January 2006.

⁴³ UA_SSTR_1 showed the list of interventions made by Ukraine and indicated that most of the issues have been adopted in more or less the format proposed by Ukraine. With regard to the WTO regulations the process has been facilitated by the fact that Russia's accession negotiations with the WTO were coming close to an end in the period of the CIS FTA negotiations. The Russian officials have, apparently already in the period 2008-2011 been determined to accelerate the WTO accession. At least officials from Ukraine and Azerbaijan described them as open to WTO related changes in the CIS FTA draft. (AZ_MED_1, UA_MED_1, UA_MED_2)

vital changes in its bilateral relations with CIS partners. The following section will underscore that Ukraine has long pursued concrete aims in the GUAM FTA, are which oriented more at future trade relations rather than managing existing ones.

6.2.1.2. GUAM FTA

The introductory notes to the study of CIS and GUAM trade activities have already proposed that Ukraine never participated in the GUAM FTA for the sake of free trade regulations. The president's eagerness to achieve a FTA stemmed rather from the desire to lay the foundations for selected large-scale trade projects and to express Ukraine's regional and international ambitions. As was already indicated in chapter 5.2.3, GUAM is most attractive for Ukraine in economic terms. The organisation brings Azerbaijan and Georgia closer to Ukraine. Both states are potential partners in the diversification of Ukraine's energy imports. Therefore, whenever Ukraine decided to push GUAM it referred to trade projects. For instance, Ukraine prepared the first draft of the GUAM FTA in 2001.⁴⁴ In 2006, President Yushchenko provided the impetus to finalise the first protocol on the joint rules on the origins of goods, in order to provide the FTA with more substance.⁴⁵ Two aims can explain this pro-active stance.

First and foremost, the FTA should lay the groundwork for intensified trade relations with the South Caucasian members of GUAM. It provided the opportunity to establish working bodies on several trade issues through which Ukraine could promote its trade priorities more efficiently. As has been indicated in section 6.1.1.2, Ukraine's call for intensified free trade in the 1990s coincided with the country's attempts to arrange the transport of oil from Baku via Supsa, a port in Georgia, through the Black Sea to the Odessa-Brody pipeline in Ukraine.⁴⁶ Ukraine also raised this issue again in 2007, shortly after GUAM was revitalised as

⁴⁴ **Newsline RFERL**, *Ukrainian Premier Visits Georgia*; **RFE/RL Newsline**, *Azerbaijan and Ukraine Sign New Cooperation Agreements*. 17 March 2000; *ibid*.

⁴⁵ See the protocol: **GUAM** (22 May 2006), Protocol on Temporary Rules of Determination of the Country of Origin of Goods of GUAM Participating States. In: GUAM (ed.), *Compilation of the GUAM Documents*. Baku: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

⁴⁶ **Pryozhkov, S and G Kurt** (eds.), (2001), *GUUAM yak mizhnarodna organizatsiya: proekt chi real'nict'?: Materialy Kruglovo Stolu [GUUAM as International Organisation: Plan or Reality?: Round Table Results]*. Kyiv: NIPMB, p 9; **RFE/RL Feature**. 25 April 2005.

organisation for inter alia economic development.⁴⁷ The pipeline project is, however, not the only initiative that Ukraine presented in the framework of the GUAM FTA. The most prominent example is the in section 1.5.3 presented Trans-Danubian Energy and Transport Bridge, which was intended to substantially improve Ukraine's electricity trade.⁴⁸ Ukraine's plans to trigger meaningful trade projects did not work out. Only parts of the Trans-Danubian Energy and Transport Bridge are in the process of being implemented, but not within GUAM.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, under Yushchenko Ukrainian policy-makers did not consider the GUAM FTA as entirely in vain, as the next paragraph will show.

The second rationale in the period 2004-2008 was to raise European awareness of Ukraine's ambitions to integrate into EU structures. In this period, Ukrainian officials were dissatisfied with the EU's reluctance to offer Ukraine EU integration prospects. Ukraine therefore searched for a tool to underscore the fact that it is committed to adjusting to EU standards, and to promote EU regulations in the post-Soviet neighbourhood. GUAM appeared to provide an adequate platform for this. Foreign policy-makers advertised GUAM as an arena for the member states to mutually support each other in the implementation of EU best practice and model laws.⁵⁰ This ambition has never been realised in practice, since such details have not been discussed within GUAM. Also, the negotiations on the EU Association Agreement that have started in 2008 have rendered Ukraine's strategy less relevant. However, GUAM still employs this argument with Ukraine's support in order to promote GUAM as a regional player.⁵¹

⁴⁷ **RFE/RL Report**. 24 September 2002; **Nezavisimaya Gazeta**. 10 May 2007.

⁴⁸ **Rada Natsional'noi bezpeky i oborony Ukrainy**, Ekonomichniy proekt GUAM 'Pridnaiskyi Energo-Transportnyi Mist' Initsiatyvy Ukrainy [Economic Project GUAM the 'Trans-Danubian Energy- and Transport Bridge]. **RFE/RL Newslines**, *Ukrainian Foreign Minister Meets with Georgian Leadership*. 1 July 2005; **RFE/RL Feature**.

⁴⁹ According to UA_Analyst_3

⁵⁰ **Kornilov**, Konsolidatsiya usilii stran GUAM na proektakh i programmakh vostochnoi politiki ES [Consolidation of the Efforts of GUAM Countries in the Projects of the Programm of the EU Eastern Policy]; **Nazarov, Grigori** (2008), *Prioritetnye sfery i osnovnye izmereniya sotrudnichestva stran GUAM s Evrosoyuzom*. [Priority Areas and Basic Dimension of the Co-operation between GUAM Countries and the EU]. In: Kornilov, Igor', *et al.* (eds.), 'Skhidnii Vymir' polityky ES: Materialy 'kruglogo stolu' [Eastern Dimension of the EU Policy: Round Table Statements]. Kyiv: NIPMB. See also: **Gamova, Svetlana**, *Tranzitom Cherez GUAM*. **Nezavisimaya Gazeta**, 29 May 2006.

⁵¹ In a joint communiqué at the side-line of the Eastern Partnership Summit in 2011 the GUAM Council of Foreign Ministers promoted GUAM as vehicle to spread European values and to facilitate

Particularly since 2010 a third ambition triggers Ukraine's continuing support for GUAM trade activities. Officials in the current Yanukovich administration decided to remain a member of GUAM in order to maintain the organisation as a potential tool in Ukraine's regional policy toolbox. The GUAM headquarters in Kyiv may provide additional opportunities to present Ukraine as strong player in the region.⁵² However, since Russia has always been rather hostile to the organisation, a pro-active involvement in GUAM may cause problems in the Russia-Ukrainian relations. Therefore, Ukraine decided to focus on an 'innocent' issue-area, namely trade.⁵³ Accordingly, officials from the Ministry of Economics are advised to attend the respective GUAM meetings and to co-ordinate Ukraine's GUAM participation in general. The primary idea is, thus, to keep GUAM alive through Ukraine's participation. The following section will show that Ukrainian officials have in the field of security sought, even in the period 2010-2012, more concrete results not only in CIS but also in GUAM activities.

6.2.2. CIS AND GUAM SECURITY ACTIVITIES

In the field of security, Ukraine pursues the same aims in the CIS and GUAM, as the example of anti-drug trafficking measures will highlight. The idea of strengthening the state's capacity to fight drug-trafficking through Ukrainian territory dominates the narratives. In addition, state officials depict the activities as proof of Ukraine's capability to act as a regional security player. These ambitions require Ukraine to participate reliably in CIS and GUAM activities. This explains the pattern of participation described in chapter 5. The Ministry of Interior and the secret service (SBU) follow developments in both organisations. Ukraine is a party to all CIS agreements that are necessary for participating in ad-hoc working groups, which

the European Integration of the GUAM states. See: **GUAM Council of Foreign Ministers**, 29 September 2011, Varshavskoe zayavlenie SMID GUAM o perspektivakh sotrudnichestva i evropeiskoi integratsii [Warsaw declaration of the Council of Foreign Ministers on Perspectives of Co-operation and European Integration].

⁵² UA_MFA_7, UA_NSDC_1, GUAM_Official_2 declared that they have actively used this argument in conversations with the Ukrainian foreign ministry to convince the new administration of GUAM.

⁵³ This was reported by an official from the foreign ministry as well as by two GUAM officials. The former interviewee employed this line of argument in communication with state bodies. The GUAM officials reported that this had been discussed with then Foreign Minister Hryshchenko in 2010. (UA_MFA_6, GUAM_Official_1, GUAM_Official_3). UA_MFA_5 stated that it would have been less attractive for Ukraine to quit GUAM security cooperation.

develop joint activities and legislation.⁵⁴ The situation is similar in GUAM. Here, Ukraine stood out as being the second state after Azerbaijan that established the VLEC structures.⁵⁵ Compared to their activities in the CIS, Ukrainian officials are more reluctant to propose new drug-trafficking related activities in GUAM.⁵⁶ This reluctance, however, is less rooted in a lack of interest than in the experience that GUAM practices often do not materialise into the envisioned results. The following two sub-sections will specify Ukraine's core aims.

6.2.2.1. CIS MEASURES AGAINST DRUG-TRAFFICKING

In the eyes of officials from the Ministry of Interior CIS activities on drug-trafficking substantially support Ukraine's anti-drug trafficking policy. The following paragraphs will detail that three opportunities make the CIS attractive. First of all, interactions in the CIS intensify Ukraine's working relations with the relevant state security bodies in its neighbourhood. This fosters collaboration in the detection and apprehension of criminal organisations operating across borders. Mutual support is particularly welcome for uncovering drug laboratories, tracing the origins of the chemical substances in drugs seized and for identifying sales markets and distribution networks. Chapter 5 has already indicated that Belarus, Russia, Moldova as well as the Central Asian states are in Ukraine's focus in this regard.⁵⁷

Secondly, Ukraine intends to influence legislation on drug-trafficking in its neighbouring states. The officials, however, do not hope to achieve shared legalised rules in the CIS. According to their arguments, policy harmonisation in some areas would indeed be beneficial. An example is penal legislation on drug-trafficking. The severity of penal sanctions for drug-trafficking offences varies significantly across

⁵⁴ Two officials from the Ministry of Interior, one on expert and one on decision-making level, describe the priorities like this. According to them, Ukraine is an independent state that defines its laws individually and rather orients itself towards UN legal models, if necessary. However, it is beneficial to be actively involved in all CIS interactions on drug-trafficking. The reasons for this will be specified in the following subsection and also discussed in chapter seven. (UA_MoI_1, UA_MoI_2) The same is argued with regard to another non-traditional security challenge, namely cyber-crime and irregular migration (UA_MoI_3). The exclusion of legal harmonisation and unified customs methods are stipulated in the reservations Ukraine put in the documents.

⁵⁵ This information has been given by GUAM_Official_1 and the representative of the foreign ministry UA_MFA_5.

⁵⁶ According to GUAM_Official_3 it is, however, rather hard to convince the Ukrainian side to strongly commit to the security activities.

⁵⁷ UA_MoI_2, who in the study period was concerned with improving methods for detecting drug laboratories, described this aspect at length.

the post-Soviet space. This allows criminals to avoid harsher sentences by settling in the former Soviet republic with shorter sentences if they suspect they have been detected. However, hoping for such legal harmonisation is a utopia. Therefore, Ukraine tries to influence the domestic legislation of core CIS states primarily through discursive means. For example, they advertise their own legislation as best practices in the councils.⁵⁸

A third objective of Ukraine's commitment to the CIS councils on drug-trafficking is to improve the country's recognition as a responsible actor in the international fight against drug-trafficking. A strong image in this regard is expected to boost Ukraine's international standing in general. Like their Azerbaijani counterparts, officials refer to drug-trafficking as a financial source for international drug-trafficking and argue that their regional efforts in this sphere make Ukraine an internationally visible security player. Ukraine is involved, more strongly than other CIS members, in international formats on drug-trafficking issues. This puts the country in the position to promote, for instance, model laws of UN agencies in the region. In this regard, Ukraine presents itself as bridge between international practices and forums and the CIS member states. Improving Ukraine's image as security player not only has an international impact. It is also said to strengthen Ukraine's leverage vis-à-vis Russia in security matters and beyond.⁵⁹ A look at Ukraine's assessment of GUAM activities in the very same area will show that the GUAM activities conform to Ukraine's ambitions, but they do not produce the expected results.

6.2.2.2. GUAM MEASURES AGAINST DRUG-TRAFFICKING

Ever since GUAM developed working groups on non-traditional security Ukraine has delegated representatives to these bodies. Nevertheless, officials from the GUAM secretariat reported difficulties in convincing the relevant ministerial departments

⁵⁸ UA_MoI_1 gave this as an answer to the question of how CIS drug-trafficking co-operation should ideally look. UA_MoI_2 and an official from the foreign ministry in charge of issues related to organised crime supported the desire to influence the neighbours in this regard (UA_MFA_7)

⁵⁹ UA_MoI_2 discussed at length Ukraine's commitment to UN anti-drug-trafficking efforts and how Ukraine reports and advertises this commitment in the CIS. Other CIS members, e.g. Russia, are also involved in these efforts but Ukraine is presented as the most outspoken advocate for the international activities and legal models. UA_MFA_7 described how it was the interviewee's strategy during a CIS council on organised crime to stress that Ukraine may act as a role model with regard to security practices. The strategy has apparently had some positive effect on the Central Asian participants.

and security agencies to intensify their involvement.⁶⁰ The SBU, for example, became more open to GUAM only when a project concerning an exchange of encrypted information between the GUAM states came closer to realisation. This development shows that Ukraine's participation in GUAM security structures was not born of the perception that GUAM necessarily provides an ideal forum for tackling drug trafficking matters. In 2005, the decision to establish these activities was rather pragmatic. Ukraine wanted to revitalise GUAM as regional organisation, not at least due to Ukraine's economic concerns. The country needed to build a common ground for co-operation that attracted all members. Azerbaijan, Ukraine's most important trade partner in GUAM, demanded a strong security dimension in GUAM. In order to keep Azerbaijan in favour of GUAM, Ukraine committed to the security structures.⁶¹ Initially, the security activities, thus, served merely to consolidate GUAM. Over the course of the years the Ukrainian officials involved identified the following additional functions.

As with the CIS, some officials strive to strengthen Ukraine's reputation as a regional security player through GUAM. One interviewee presented Ukraine's success in persuading Azerbaijan and Moldova to participate in a larger international framework on non-traditional security challenges as a success of Ukraine in GUAM. Through such initiatives the official also hoped to substantiate its relations with individual GUAM members to Ukraine.⁶² Additionally, Ukraine has via GUAM tried to improve the ties with international security players such as NATO or the EU. The idea was to gain funding for GUAM security projects from these actors. This, however, only worked out in the case of the UN and the US.⁶³

⁶⁰ Reported by GUAM_Official_2, GUAM_Official_3

⁶¹ UA_MFA_6 reports that the establishment of these security structures was part of Ukraine's plan to enhance GUAM in 2005. Also, another official from the foreign ministry and from the National Security and Defence Council and a policy advisor at this time concerned with GUAM identified the secessionist conflicts as crucial moment for consolidating GUAM. (UA_MFA_1, UA_NSDC_1, UA_Analyst_1)

⁶² The interview talked about the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism launched in 2006 by Russia and the US. The interviewee proudly emphasised that Russia and the US had not managed to get Azerbaijan and Moldova involved. It was presented as an example of how Ukraine may act as a hub between regional and global security initiatives. (UA_MFA_5)

⁶³ An individual from the Ukrainian delegation involved in the GUAM strategy development, related this strategy (UA_NSDC_1).

Finally, in recent years state officials saw GUAM also as source for improving Ukraine's own policy substantially through the intergovernmental relations. They are especially positive about the rather practical approach which GUAM takes in security activities. Instead of discussing legal issues in vain, the working groups deal mainly with the joint anti-drug trafficking operations. Officials explain that these operations help identify emerging hot-spots in Ukraine's neighbourhood. With this knowledge Ukraine could formulate adequate responses.⁶⁴ Also, VLEC would ideally become an operative instrument. A specific incentive to commit to VLEC has been that GUAM agreed to use an encryption device that was produced in Ukraine. Ukrainian security agencies can, according to the domestic legislation, use such a device only if it is produced in Ukraine. The VLEC initiative has put Ukraine in the comfortable position to get a new and externally funded device and to sell the device to the other GUAM states. Plans exist to widen VLEC structures from the GUAM capitals to various regions. This would imply more orders for the Ukrainian producer. It is important that Ukraine is entitled to use VLEC for purposes beyond GUAM. In 2011, Ukraine planned to additionally use VLEC for security communication with Poland during the European Football Championship in 2012. However, until summer 2012 Ukrainian officials rarely exchanged information on drug-trafficking issues with the GUAM states via VLEC.⁶⁵ This is puzzling, since the officials expressed their desire to intensify not only the information exchange but also collaboration in operative matters with the GUAM states. They explained not to rely on VLEC for two reasons. They have had the experience that VLEC is not always accessible in the other GUAM countries. At the same time, some Ukrainian officials have only insufficient information about the progress made in establishing VLEC in all GUAM states.⁶⁶

This study on Ukraine can be summarised by stating that Ukraine employs the CIS and GUAM activities examined as complementary tools for Ukraine's trade and

⁶⁴ Interview with UA_MoI_1 who has represented Ukraine in this GUAM body for several years

⁶⁵ The idea is to establish a decentralized VLEC structure in several provinces of the GUAM countries in order facilitate a quick communication between the police and other security bodies at regional level in the GUAM countries. (GUAM_Official_3)

⁶⁶ Interview with UA_MoI_1. The staff member of the Ministry of Interior, who also deals with drug-trafficking matters, had only basic knowledge about GUAM and was not aware of the latest developments. (UA_MoI_2)

security policy. The CIS offers a better arena for this than GUAM, even though GUAM has developed activities that are more in line with Ukraine's intentions. The CIS often focusses too much on adopting agreements. Ukraine tries to develop instruments to directly influence core partners according to its needs. On the other hand, state officials intend to boost Ukraine's image as a relevant regional player.

6.3.INTERMEDIARY GOALS IN THE SECTORAL ACTIVITIES

This section will draw some comparative conclusions. The chapter started from the finding that Azerbaijani officials associate the country's membership in the CIS and GUAM with the objective of consolidating Westphalian and domestic sovereignty. They depict the two organisations as arenas for mitigating dependencies on individual former Soviet republics such as Russia or Armenia, in order to weaken their ability to interfere in Azerbaijan's domestic affairs. Further, they expect membership in these organisations to create new dependencies which vitalise certain sectors of Azerbaijan's economy and stabilise the socio-economic situation in the country. This would impact positively on the country's domestic sovereignty. Ukrainian officials depicted the function of the organisations likewise, but additionally see it as an instrument to improve the country's control over challenging cross-border flows. The CIS and GUAM, so the argument goes, might intensify interaction with crucial countries in the neighbourhood. Against this background, this chapter asked what aims Azerbaijan and Ukraine want to achieve as interim stages for consolidating their sovereignty? The thesis aimed to come closer to a comprehensive picture of how the function of the CIS and GUAM is conceptualised by disclosing function of the sectoral activities. Particularly intriguing was the question of how the states improve their sovereignty concerns through activities that could potentially create new channels for external interference in domestic affairs. From which perspective do they consider the negotiations, agreements and joint activities in the organisations as useful?

The analysis revealed that both Azerbaijan and Ukraine indeed employ the sectoral activities for achieving concrete advantages for their trade and security policy in the region and beyond. Azerbaijan and Ukraine strive for the same three outcomes. First, they hope to improve the respective state capacity to respond to economic

and security challenges from the region. Secondly, they aim to improve the states' leverage in the region and internationally. It is crucial that they seek doing so without binding the states to the multilateral context of the organisations. Azerbaijani and Ukrainian, however, promote varying interim steps as expedient. Azerbaijani actors value the process of concluding negotiations more than the outcome, as the framing of the FTA negotiations and interactions in the migration council have shown. Azerbaijan also appears more open to pro-actively participating in activities in the pursuit of goals that only secondarily relate to the issue under discussion. They heavily employ CIS migration and GUAM activities as stepping stones towards obtaining more leeway in solving the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Ukraine, in contrast, values not only the negotiation but also the adoption of agreements. Officials also strive towards outcomes that rely on mutual support and collaboration, especially in the field of drug-trafficking. A third aim of both states is to maintain the organisations as arena for regional interaction and as a symbol for the states' ambitions to act as regional security player. Azerbaijan is willing to commit more resources to this aim than Ukraine. The proclaimed aims of the CIS and GUAM appear not to conform to these intermediary goals. This conveys the impression of an incoherence that may hinder productive work within the organisations. According to the analysis, however, Azerbaijan and Ukraine appear to have relatively compatible ideas about the intermediary goals to which they employ the two organisations. This shared understanding may improve opportunities to efficiently exploit GUAM and the CIS. These insights suggest that the sectoral activities of the CIS and GUAM are more substantial than the literature often assumes.⁶⁷

The findings raise additional questions concerning the function of the organisations. They have revealed that the states avoid being bound to the multilateral environment when they employ results such as agreements, knowledge, technology or an improved reputation in their bilateral policy. But they rely on the multilateral environment offered by the regional organisations to produce these results. The

⁶⁷ Hardly any contribution discusses the sectoral activities of these organisations. One of the few exceptions for the CIS are the publications in the Eurasian Integration Yearbook, which aim at advertising the CIS. See for instance **Shishkov**, Cooperation in the CIS Machine-Building Sector: Decreasing rather than Increasing; **Vinokurov**, The CIS Common Electric Power Market.

crucial question is what is the advantage of the multilateral environment as compared to bilateral interactions for achieving these results? Chapter 7 will investigate this question and will complete the picture of the function of negotiations, agreements or joint practices of the CIS and GUAM.

7. INTENSITY OF CO-ORDINATION IN THE CIS AND GUAM ACTIVITIES

This chapter will dig deeper into the activities that policy-makers in Azerbaijan and Ukraine prefer for achieving their intermediary goals identified in chapter 6. The analysis will outline which mechanisms the actors intend to use for achieving their aims. It asks how policy-makers take advantage of the multilateral environment. The results of chapter 6 have triggered the interest in this question. They revealed that the states strive to obtain benefits which they can employ independently of the organisation and its members. These benefits are rooted in multilateral interaction in the CIS and GUAM. The findings, however, provide only a blurry picture of the role of this multilateral environment. Since the multilateral environment is a constitutive feature of a regional organisation, it is crucial to explore its relevance. Otherwise it remains unclear why states consider regional organisations at all as an additional instrument to their bilateral foreign policy. When we look at the findings of chapter 6 through a theoretical lens, the question of co-operative behaviour pops up. According to authors such as Keohane, multilateral arrangements build a basis for states to co-operate.¹ The analytical framework has disaggregated the term co-operation into varying intensities of co-ordination. This guides the chapter to analyse what patterns of co-ordination are observable in CIS and GUAM interaction.

For this purpose the chapter investigates how policy-makers argue that benefits are derived from selected activities in the CIS. The analysis will concentrate on the activities that the interviewees presented as most significant. These are council meetings, the negotiation and adoption of agreements, joint operations, presentations at international forums and bureaucratic procedures. Especially interesting is the multilateral impact on the negotiation of agreements, since Azerbaijan and Ukraine shape these agreements even though do not intend their comprehensive implementation. Which mechanisms in council meetings allow the states to influence other countries' policy? And also, what produces the benefit of

¹ They provide the organisational and institutional background for multilateralism. Multilateralism is the 'practice of co-ordinating national policies in groups of three or more states.' **Keohane, Robert** (1990), *Multilateralism: an Agenda for Research*. International Journal, Vo. 45, No. Autumn, p 731.

joint activities for the individual policy? Tracing the most valued mechanisms in these activities will disclose many facets of co-ordination. Therefore the analysis will conclude by clustering these activities according to the intensity of co-ordination they require. This will enable the reader to infer how the multilateral environment constitutes the activities in the regional organisations. By analysing the desired mechanisms of co-ordination the chapter makes an original contribution to the literature. As chapter 2.3 argued, the literature on the post-Soviet space does not explore interaction in the regional organisations.

The chapter will argue that both Azerbaijan and Ukraine build their strategies in the CIS and GUAM on activities that require temporary or no co-ordination. The following categories roughly describe the essence of temporarily co-ordinated activities: ad hoc coalition building, diffusing model laws or best practices and bandwagoning with the reputation of other member states. No co-ordination is required when using (potential) investments, development monitoring and bureaucratic procedures. Ukraine additionally strives for more durable structures that can be activated for ad hoc co-ordination. Personalised interactions with state officials from core partner countries should create such structures. The multilateral environment in the CIS provides similar benefits for trade as for security matters but has other advantages than the GUAM environment. Therefore, the separate studies on Azerbaijan and Ukraine will first characterise the benefits of CIS and then of GUAM activities.

7.1.AZERBAIJAN: MINIMISING CO-ORDINATION

Azerbaijani state officials and government-affiliated analysts present Azerbaijan as a self-sufficient and in all dimensions an independent country.² This statement obviously does not mirror Azerbaijan's links to its neighbourhood, as has been highlighted in chapter 5.1.1. But it describes the basis of Azerbaijan's approach to multilateral interaction in the CIS and GUAM. Azerbaijan's commitment to CIS and GUAM activities conveys the impression that the country strives to minimise its co-

² The most pronounced advocate of this stance was an analyst from a governmental think tank (AZ_Gov_Analyst_1). Similar statements were made by the majority of state officials not only regarding the CIS, but also concerning the World Trade Organisation, the EU or the OSCE.

ordination with other member states, which only an independent state is able to do. The way in which state officials explain the benefits of the varying activities in the organisations sustains this picture. However, the narratives also show that Azerbaijan's policy in the CIS and GUAM relies on the other members' support. The section will illustrate this with a spectrum of empirical examples. According to policy-makers, in the following three forms a multilateral environment has the most supportive effect. First, multilateral constellations have the potential to alter power relations between the members at least temporarily. They, secondly, reduce the costs of producing crucial knowledge about regional developments and of influencing them. Finally, they provide alternative strategies for communicating with international players. Azerbaijan takes advantage of all three forms. However, to trigger this support the country opts for the path that demands the least durable commitment. Policy-makers prefer to induce other states to support Azerbaijan's position without asking for explicit coalitions. Only in some cases Azerbaijan explicitly forms a short-term coalition. In this regard coalitions are arrangements between states to jointly pursue a specific agenda item. Policy-makers also have developed channels to influence other states without getting involved in long-term interactions. Azerbaijan promotes initiatives that may bind other states to it, but employs only a repertoire of tools that weaken compromises made by Azerbaijan. Further, in international communications the state prefers instruments that only emulate commitment to co-ordination. Only selected players value interactions that require commitment to co-ordination. Two sub-sections, the first on the CIS and the second on GUAM, will spell out this argument. They will more deeply investigate the rationales behind the trade and security activities discussed in chapter 6.

7.1.1. CIS ACTIVITIES

The CIS is, in the eyes of Azerbaijani officials, an arena that offers various opportunities to gain the support of other members in matters that are crucial for Azerbaijan. There are several opportunities to gain the support of other states without arranging coalitions in advance. The thesis will speak of implicit coalition-building in this case. Forming explicit temporary coalitions are rarely necessary. Both ways of coalition-building help especially to improve Azerbaijan's tools in

bilateral relations with core partners and to shape the neighbourhood according to Azerbaijan's needs. The following three paragraphs will explain this rationale.

Examples from the FTA negotiations and from discussions in the migration council indicate how Azerbaijani officials draw on implicit and explicit coalitions in their CIS policy. Chapter 6 has argued that Azerbaijani officials planned to convince trade partners to regulate the trade of more commodities by the new CIS FTA than is the case under the existing bilateral FTAs. In advance of the negotiations, officials from the Ministry of Economics also analysed previous trade conflicts with the CIS members who committed themselves to the FTA. In the course of negotiations they tried to stipulate provisions in the FTA legal text that would formally proscribe the states from applying this action.³ It is noteworthy that the officials did not expect these provisions to have binding effects through the FTA. Taking their own stance as a starting point, the officials anticipated that other CIS states would also never accept such a document as legally binding.⁴ Nevertheless, even without being party to the FTA, Azerbaijan intended to use the adopted FTA as a reference point when negotiating bilateral trade arrangements. On the one hand, Azerbaijan could refer to concessions which its counterpart had just recently made in order to demand similar concessions in bilateral relations. On the other hand, the already agreed provision could be adopted in a bilateral protocol which would ease up the negotiation process.⁵ The question is now what the advantage is to have the matter 'pre-negotiated' in the CIS.

First, the multilateral constellation alters the rational of core trade partners. The countries have to find a compromise that also respects trade relations with CIS

³ An official from the Ministry of Economics gave an example concerning the trade relations with Tajikistan. The official did not mention the commodity, but explained that Tajikistan repeatedly omitted to deliver a certain commodity in accordance with the agreed conditions. Azerbaijan formulated a provision that would provide good foundations for monitoring and sanctioning such behaviour. (AZ_MED_1)

⁴ Several officials mentioned that Azerbaijan was sure that it would not sign the FTA without a reservation in order to mitigate the potentially binding effects of the agreement. They also accepted that trade issues are a matter for individual states and that the CIS states often protect their markets *inter alia* by withdrawing from unfavourable trade deals. (AZ_MED_1, AZ_MED_2 and AZ_MFA_8)

⁵ This effect was mentioned by AZ_MED_1. The interviewee as well as an analyst described the potential employment of CIS legislation as presented above. Trade agreements are always stipulated bilaterally, but multilateral agreements may serve as model in the negotiations. (AZ_MED_1, AZ_Gov_Analyst_1, AZ_Analyst_3)

members on which they depend. Hence, this consideration mitigates their eagerness to exploit the fact that other states depend economically on them by offering unfavourable trade regulations. In CIS negotiations it is not necessary to arrange explicit coalitions in advance when Azerbaijan wants to urge a state to some trade-offs that Azerbaijan would never achieve bilaterally. If Azerbaijan puts a particular item on the agenda it naturally triggers the individual, affected countries to demand a compromise from the state in focus. State officials report that they address conflictual issues in the CIS migration council with similar expectations. In particular, if Russia unilaterally were to change its migration policy to the detriment of Azerbaijan, it would be fruitful to turn to the CIS at an early stage. As indicated in chapter 6, Azerbaijan is rather dependent on Russia in migration issues, while Azerbaijan is not a vital trade-migration receiving country for Russia. In order to gain more weight in the negotiations, Azerbaijani officials reckon on the support of other CIS members affected. The pressure on Russia is multiplied by this. Also, better than in bilateral negotiations, Azerbaijan may refer to the more beneficial regulations Russia has agreed with, for instance, Ukraine and demand Russia to offer similar conditions to Azerbaijan. In both cases, state officials make use of the following fact: in multilateral negotiations a state cannot build its negotiation weight on the dependence or independence from Azerbaijan only, but has to factor in its relations with other CIS members. By the same logic Azerbaijan would never directly regulate these issues in a multilateral context. State officials are not willing to compromise their positions due to the demands of other CIS member states.⁶ Accordingly, here the possibility of bringing a comparison of Russia's policy across countries to the debate and to gain support from other countries are the most crucial advantages of the multilateral setting.

In some cases, Azerbaijani officials explicitly arrange coalitions with other states. As already mentioned Azerbaijan endeavoured to push Russia to subordinate the matter of energy export and transit to the FTA. In this case the officials co-ordinated their strategy with the Ukrainian colleagues. Azerbaijan's idea was to get with Ukraine a, for Russia, economically important CIS member on board. Due to

⁶ Both AZ_ASMS_1 and AZ_ASMS_2 gave examples for this rationale. However, both remained rather general when it came to giving concrete examples of success.

Ukraine's relevant position as sales market for Russia Azerbaijan expected Ukraine to be able to exert more pressure on Russia in the CIS FTA negotiations.⁷ In this regard Azerbaijani officials assumed that Azerbaijan can more easily pursue its interest vis-à-vis Russia if it acts in concert with other CIS members. In the bilateral context Russia has always the chance to refer to issues where Azerbaijan is vulnerable and depending on Russia. This weakens Azerbaijan's power in the bilateral relations.⁸ The strategy is, hence, similar to the implicit coalition-building. But explicit coalition-building allows Azerbaijan to control the dynamics better.

In other cases Azerbaijani officials aim at increasing increase pressure on a state to introduce or change a certain policy by raising awareness among other CIS states on this matter. An official from the State Migration Service explained that the exchange of information in the CIS migration council provides a good opportunity to gain insights on critical developments, for example, on irregular migration in Azerbaijan's neighbourhood. A constant pillar in the council is the presentation of national statistics, which, however, provide an imperfect picture, since most countries do not want to share sensitive information.⁹ But informal talks with representatives from the individual countries generate more detailed information and compensate for this. If the information obtained triggers Azerbaijan's concern officials make it a matter of discussion in the council. In cases where other countries share Azerbaijan's concerns, they will step in with demands and recommendations for the state in question. An official argued to have used this strategy especially with regard to irregular migration developments in the Central Asian states with which Azerbaijan has less intensive relations. Chapter 6.1.2 has also indicated that officials use this logic to increase pressure on Armenia and Russia to alter their policies on Nagorno-Karabakh.

CIS negotiations in the field of trade and migration also offer channels of influencing the neighbourhood according to Azerbaijan's needs without specific co-ordination.

⁷ On Russia's interest on Ukraine see for example: **Pifer, Steve** (2009), *Ukraine's Geopolitical Choice*. Eurasian Geography and Economics, Vo. 50, No. 4, p 396; **Wolczuk**, Ukraine- A Partial, but Reluctant CIS Member, 134.

⁸ AZ_MED_1 mentioned this example as one of the very rare cases where multilateralism has advantages.

⁹ As an official at the end of the interview indicated, the State Migration Service itself also hardly shares sensitive information in this format (AZ_ASMS_2).

Even if Azerbaijan is not interested in co-ordinating policies on a specific topic within the CIS, Azerbaijani officials are mostly interested in attending and actively influencing the negotiations. It allows them to monitor crucial developments in the neighbourhood which might affect Azerbaijan's trade or migration relations with these states. According to state officials, negotiations often reveal emerging hot spots in the neighbourhood or planned alterations to the domestic policy of individual member-states that would otherwise have remain undisclosed to Azerbaijan. In particular, if Azerbaijan has less intensive bilateral relations with a given CIS member, the CIS provides an arena for nevertheless monitoring the state's domestic developments. Such multilateral councils also permit Azerbaijan to benefit from intelligence gained and discussed in the council by other CIS members. As already mentioned, informal encounters during the meetings improve the chances of getting reliable information. In a nutshell, the meetings reduce the costs associated with gaining crucial information about the neighbourhood. This information helps to adjust Azerbaijan's policy to economic and migration-related changes in core partner states in a timely manner or to take measures to re-negotiate certain aspects bilaterally.¹⁰

A Second advantage of having matters 'pre-negotiated' in the CIS is the following. Azerbaijan takes such negotiations as an opportunity to install its domestic best practices in the legislation of CIS countries. It was mentioned in chapter 6.1 that Azerbaijan is eager to keep production standards in the CIS countries low in order to ensure that Azerbaijan's less developed sectors, agriculture and food industry can access the markets. The country is also interested that the CIS countries have anti-monopoly legislation that facilitates the access of Azerbaijani companies to their markets. In support of these ambitions, state officials develop legislative drafts on these matters and submit these in the negotiations.¹¹ During the negotiations Azerbaijan has the chance to convince the CIS states to integrate the provisions into

¹⁰ The official from the foreign ministry indicated that it is a priority to monitor developments in these countries, since they may affect migration flows to Azerbaijan. (AZ_MFA_3). AZ_ASMS_1, AZ_ASMS_2 specified how they intend to monitor and influence the developments.

¹¹ This example was presented by an official who is also part of the 'anti-monopoly' working body but is not an expert on the legislation. Therefore no detailed description of the specific moments that the Azerbaijani side wishes to see in the CIS members' legislation was given. (AZ_MED_2)

the agreement.¹² This might have two effects. As already indicated these provisions may serve as a basis to demand an alteration of the bilateral agreements. Another idea is to convince the CIS states to adopt a certain regulation in their domestic legislation.¹³ Azerbaijan is also willing to create synergy effects between its domestic best practices and those of the CIS members. In the CIS migration council state officials, for instance, promote the Azerbaijani data base for outgoing and incoming migration as a technical solution for the envisioned joint migration monitoring system in the CIS. The interviewees report Russia to be interested in the Azerbaijani model and are therefore sure that the joint database, once it is introduced, will be largely compatible to Azerbaijan's data base. This compatibility would, even if Azerbaijan were not to adopt the shared database, facilitate the exchange of data through this system.¹⁴ The overall logic is to mainstream Azerbaijani solutions in order to shape the legislation of neighbouring states in a way that is favourable for Azerbaijan, without adjusting domestic legislation to any CIS suggestions.

A third strategy that does not require any multilateral co-ordination is to exploit the format to advertise Azerbaijan's capacity as economic and security player. Azerbaijan is interested in attracting foreign direct investment from powerful CIS members and in directing Azerbaijani money flows to promising CIS markets. The former strengthens its economy without creating costs for Azerbaijan and the latter is a means of preventing high inflation in the form of 'Dutch disease' effects. Negotiations in the CIS format provide a large audience to advertise the assets of Azerbaijan's economy and its strength as potential opponent of the most powerful player, Russia. Azerbaijan intends to make use of other CIS members' persisting dependencies on Russia, in order to advertise itself as attractive alternative

¹² Several state officials and analysts saw it as necessary to monitor and influence the changes. References to production standards were made by an official from the Ministry of Economics and by an analyst from a governmental think tank. (AZ_Analyst_3, AZ_MED_1, AZ_Private_Business_1, AZ_Gov_Analyst_2, AZ_MED_3)

¹³ Several state officials and analysts saw it as necessary to monitor the changes. References to production standards were made by an official from the Ministry of Economics and by an analyst from the think tank affiliated to the president. (AZ_Analyst_3, AZ_MED_1, AZ_Private_Business_1, AZ_Gov_Analyst_2, AZ_MED_3)

¹⁴ This example was provided in the State Migration Service (AZ_ASMS_1).

economic and security player.¹⁵ Furthermore, it is, according to an official, always beneficial to make the Russian side interested in Azerbaijan's economic capacity, as it can be used as a trump card in conflict matters.¹⁶

The last paragraph of this sub-section will finally mention a strategy desired by interviewees at lower ministerial level that has so far gained little significance in Azerbaijan's CIS activities. The interviewees refer to ad hoc working groups that are set up in the course of negotiating a larger project within the CIS. An example is the cross-border working group that was founded in relation to the CIS economic strategy in 2007. The working group primarily provides facilitates meetings with officials from Azerbaijan and its neighbouring states. These meetings involve not primarily officials from the central state level but from the level of region or city administration. The meetings bring together not only high-level officials but representatives from minor administrative units in the bordering regions that are directly in charge of the discussed matters. These officials can establish reliable ties and identify shared problems and potential solutions. The efficiency of these meetings rests on building personalised ties. These may undermine barriers that exist in the central politics of the states and may mitigate intergovernmental bureaucratic barriers. One interviewee framed this as especially relevant with regard to the border to the North Caucasus Republic of the Russian Federation Dagestan.¹⁷ Making these relations work would require Azerbaijan's commitment to mutually co-ordinate these meetings and the initiatives that emerge from the exchange. In sum, however, the majority of officials prefer the strategies that require only temporary or no co-ordination. The case of GUAM will show that Azerbaijan takes the same approach, but is forced to provide more resources to gain the support of GUAM members.

¹⁵ A government related analyst developed this rationale. The interviewee mentioned Russia as an especially attractive market, and other interviewees added Ukraine to the list. In both states Azerbaijan tries to invest in the banking sector. (AZ_Gov_Analyst_1, AZ_Private_Business_1)

¹⁶ AZ_ASMS_1

¹⁷ The official of the economics ministry, who is represented on the respective committee, reports that the ties between officials at expert level from Dagestan have improved due to the programme. They know each other and are open to discuss emerging problems of the region. The ideas developed to foster the economic viability of the border regions include small, concrete projects, like opening joint markets in the centres of the region. (AZ_MED_2)

7.1.2. GUAM ACTIVITIES

Azerbaijani officials take advantage of the multilateral environment of GUAM by various uncoordinated activities similar to that presented in the preceding discussion of the CIS. Compared to the CIS, however, the GUAM drug-trafficking activities allow Azerbaijani officials to gain more benefits for two reasons. First, the VLEC technology reduces the costs to Azerbaijan associated with attending all relevant meetings, since the meetings take place in the form of video conferences. These meetings are attractive, since the fact they are attended by only four parties gives them a relatively informal atmosphere. The annual operations to counter human-trafficking, 'Perekhvat', unveil various investigation methods used by the member states. This produces valuable knowledge which Azerbaijani officials consider in their domestic policy formulation.¹⁸ Accordingly, Azerbaijan is satisfied with these activities and does not support the GUAM secretariat in pushing for more intensively co-ordinated operative measures.¹⁹ Given that the GUAM states are less crucial trade partners for Azerbaijan, similar effects cannot be observed in the economic activities.

The activities most relevant for Azerbaijan require a fair amount of co-ordination, but Azerbaijani officials ensure that no long-term co-ordination develops through these activities. The activities rely on other rationales than the co-ordinated activities in the CIS. Three examples will illustrate the variance. Chapter 6.1.1 stated that Azerbaijan participates in GUAM FTA-related activities mainly with the aim of binding the three member states to GUAM and Azerbaijan. With this aim in mind, Azerbaijan agreed to discuss core projects such as the Odessa-Brody-Pipeline in the GUAM framework. As previously mentioned, Azerbaijan, however, has refrained from realising the project. Hence, Azerbaijan committed to co-ordinate the negotiations within GUAM but declined to get involved in the long-term co-ordination that such a project would require. There are nevertheless some

¹⁸ Again, the two officials involved in these joint operations served as base for the analysis. (AZ_Mol_1, AZ_Mol_2).

¹⁹ The GUAM secretariat pushes the members to harmonise the operative methods in the field of drug-trafficking. It also proposes the use of the VLEC encryption device for on-going domestic anti-drug-trafficking operations if individuals from the GUAM states are suspected to be involved. Azerbaijan rejects both initiatives. This was stated by AZ_Mol_1, who is involved in the strategic planning of Azerbaijan's contribution to GUAM activities.

examples where Azerbaijan agreed to respond positively to Ukraine and Georgia's desire for intensified energy trade. One example is oil shipments from Azerbaijan to Ukraine via Supsa-Odessa-Brody, which were settled in 2011.²⁰ Another is gas supply from Azerbaijan to Georgia.²¹ These are promoted on the GUAM web-site as GUAM projects even though they are of bilateral nature. Moreover, an Azerbaijani official stated that these projects have been discussed but never seriously negotiated within GUAM. Any notes made in this regard by Azerbaijan in GUAM are part of a spaghetti-bowl of documents with a mainly communicative purpose.²² Azerbaijan's initiatives and power to attract GUAM members via economic projects rests, thus, rather on the country's reputation as an economically potent player, rather than on its readiness to indeed pursue trade cooperation within GUAM.

Another priority of Azerbaijan, which was previously discussed in chapter 6.1, is to communicate GUAM's vitality to primarily Western international actors as the US or the EU. For doing so GUAM needs to produce visible results. According to Azerbaijani officials there is one way of ensuring such vitality without any co-ordination with other GUAM states. This is to simply respond to the bureaucratic processes that have been set up by the GUAM secretariat. GUAM's bureaucracy is slim so that these processes are not time consuming.²³ However, bureaucratic activity does not necessarily convince Western international actors of GUAM's capacity. This takes more tangible results which entail more co-ordination. Accordingly, Azerbaijan initiates and commits to flag-ship projects, like the already mentioned 'Turprodukt GUAM' in the tourism sphere. Azerbaijani officials also commit to transmitting information on irregular migration through VLEC upon request. As the following two paragraphs will illustrate, they, nevertheless, take the path of least co-ordination in both cases.

²⁰ **Mansfield, Edward D. and Helen V. Milner** (1997), *The political economy of regionalism*. New York ; Chichester: Columbia University Press; **Grieco, Joseph M.** (1997), *Systemic Sources of Variation in Regional Institutionalization in Western Europe, East Asia, and the Andens*. In: Mansfield, Edward D.; Milner, Helen V. (ed.), *The Political Economy of Regionalism*. New York.

²¹ See: <http://guam-organization.org/node/1288>, access: 20 February 2013.

²² The official from the foreign ministry attends relevant meetings concerning Azerbaijan's energy export and is hence a reliable source on the question of how GUAM impacts decision-making on energy exports. (AZ_MFA_5)

²³ An official from the Ministry of Economics in charge of co-ordinating GUAM economic activities in Azerbaijan described answering to the bureaucracy as a core task. The aim is to show that Azerbaijan is active in GUAM, but not to achieve any additional gains. (AZ_MED_1)

An official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Azerbaijani delegate to the GUAM secretariat are the core masterminds of the tourist initiative within GUAM. Their description implies that two questions informed the design of the project: How to most quickly materialise the project idea into tangible results? How to avoid any long-term commitment of the GUAM states'? In this light, the project was designed to widely circumvent the states' ministerial structures. They considered it more feasible to realise the project on time when the responsible ministries of the four states are not involved. The project also avoids discussing intergovernmental legalised agreements that potentially would bind the GUAM states. The project was realised initially by the GUAM secretariat and four private tourism companies from the GUAM states.²⁴ In the course of its development, the participating companies and GUAM officials identified a set of problems that concern the national tourism policies and interstate co-operation. They argue that Azerbaijan has, for example, a deficit of hotels for middle-class tourists. A representative of the GUAM secretariat depicted this aspect as a matter to be discussed in the country's tourism-related ministries. The problem could be solved by creating legal incentives for entrepreneurs to improve the tourism infrastructure. But the Azerbaijani side did not involve the tourism ministry or develop a domestic law that would incite a diversification of Azerbaijan's tourism infrastructure. An official from the foreign ministry announced that one of the Azerbaijani entrepreneurs in this sector would be charged with building the desired infrastructure. This strategy allows Azerbaijan without intensive co-ordination with the GUAM states to present GUAM as active and constructive.

A similar strategy is observable in the security sphere. Azerbaijan's intermediary goals imply that the country has to be active in VLEC for two reasons. It helps keep the US interested in GUAM and stabilises communication with the US about security matters. But the US representatives want to see VLEC as a law enforcement

²⁴ The summary rests on the narratives of an official from the foreign ministry, who described the development and aims of the tourism project and related information about a GUAM project planned in the field of transport infrastructure outside the GUAM area. Another official from the foreign ministry and also a GUAM official described the tourism project in the same way. They mentioned a wine commerce project, which they planned to develop by the same logics. (AZ_MFA_1, AZ_MFA_7, GUAM_Official_1)

structure.²⁵ In their view GUAM partners should commit to close co-operation in operations on irregular migration and other non-traditional security challenges. Azerbaijan, instead, commits to these activities in a way that signals its relatively reliable participation, but does not demand the co-ordination of investigations and detection Azerbaijani security agencies with GUAM partners. The interviews in the Azerbaijani VLEC branch revealed the following strategy. The VLEC employees are ready to support the operative investigations of GUAM members by sharing relevant information. This means that they keep the VLEC communication channel open most of the time. If they receive a request they try answering it in a short amount of time. In many cases they manage to do so by circumventing the bureaucratic barriers within the security agencies in Azerbaijan. One VLEC official explained how s/he often just contacted former colleagues or acquaintances from various security bodies directly to smooth the process. In the course of his/her professional career the official had established plenty of contacts. An example of success via VLEC is provided by a case from the drug-trafficking field. In response to a Moldovan request, the Azerbaijani side delivered intelligence that enabled the Moldovan forces to detect a drug-laboratory and detain the Azerbaijani instigator.²⁶ The Azerbaijani VLEC branch managed to fill document files with similar requests. At the same time, officials report that they only to react to such requests from GUAM states but not to employ VLEC for investigations made by Azerbaijan's security agencies. By using VLEC only in one direction and only for exchanging information, Azerbaijan avoids more substantial co-ordination with other GUAM states.²⁷

As chapter 6.1.2 argued, Azerbaijan aims above all to improve its international leverage via GUAM. The Azerbaijani ministerial department in charge of GUAM intends to use this leverage primarily to gain international support for Azerbaijan's position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The department explains two ways of achieving this aim. One way is to simply maintain GUAM as an active body that works on globally relevant security matters such as human trafficking, international

²⁵ Interview with an official from the US Embassy in Kyiv who is responsible for US-GUAM collaboration (US Embassy)

²⁶ The official at VLEC explained the procedure in case of a request on the basis of this example. (AZ_Mol_2)

²⁷ This applies to the staff from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs likewise.

terrorism and drug-trafficking. The idea is to link into with two discourses that prevail in the rhetoric of international actors like the UN: first, that these global challenges require regional rather than merely national remedies; second, that regional organisations are adequate formats for addressing such challenges. States that are active in regional organisations can therefore expect rewards from Western actors that also promote these ideas. Maintaining GUAM requires Azerbaijan mainly to attend GUAM meetings and to ensure that these meetings are communicated with strong outreach. Most co-ordination is necessary at the early stage of these meetings when Azerbaijan needs to ensure the participation of all GUAM states. This degree of co-ordination is acceptable for Azerbaijan.

More efficient, however, are the GUAM activities within the UN General Assembly. As mentioned in chapter 6.2.2, in communiques on behalf of GUAM but also by a draft resolution submitted in 2006, the organisation tries to raise international awareness of Nagorno-Karabakh and other protracted conflicts in the GUAM area. With these statements and resolutions Azerbaijan primarily seeks to obtain international statements which support Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Azerbaijan might refer to these statements if Nagorno-Karabakh were to make progress in gaining international recognition as an independent state.²⁸ Azerbaijan relies for the following reasons heavily on the lead of the GUAM partners in this regard. First, promoting the conflict topic on behalf of GUAM amplifies Azerbaijan's international voice. Azerbaijan expects groups of states gain more attention than a single state alone. Secondly, the choice of advocates is important. Ukraine made more statements on behalf of GUAM than any other member.²⁹ Since Ukraine is an

²⁸ This was stated by AZ_Analyst_6. The UN background offers the following possibilities: A UN resolution might inter alia be of value if Nagorno-Karabakh were to apply for membership of UN bodies as an independent entity. The UN charter stipulates the possibility for de facto states to apply for member status in UN bodies. This decision has to be taken by a vote in the General Assembly. Hence a prior resolution of the GA on the territorial integrity of the states concerned might help prevent a positive vote for UN member status of the secessionist territories. The GA has to adopt the application with a 2/3 majority and the proposition could, in any case, be vetoed by one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. See Rule 136 of the UN General Assembly. **U.N. General Assembly**, 2008, (A/520/Rev.17) Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

²⁹ In the period 2003-2006 Ukraine made 11 statements on behalf of GUAM in the General Assembly. These statements touch primarily on the protracted conflicts in the GUAM area: international terrorism, poverty reduction and GUAM-UN co-operation. See appendix 2 for an overview of the activities at UN level. See the statements in: **U.N. General Assembly, 59st Session, 38 Plenary**

important regional player which is not confronted with actual threats of secessionism, statements made by this country are hoped to receive more attention. Another crucial player is Georgia, the country that has ensured that the joint GUAM resolution draft has remained on the agenda of the UN General Assembly. Georgia submits resolutions about the situation in Georgia that include the demand to discuss the pending GUAM resolution draft in the following session of the Assembly.³⁰ The Azerbaijani officials interviewed emphasised an additional aspect that makes it attractive to convince Georgia and Ukraine to lobby for Azerbaijan's position the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. They both have a very good international image due to their democratisation efforts and, at least in the mid-2000s, their pronounced pro-Western foreign policy. Bandwagoning on this reputation, it is hoped, will eclipse international criticism of Azerbaijan's human rights situation and authoritarian regime.³¹ This dependence on the voices of Ukraine and Georgia encourages Azerbaijan to co-ordinate GUAM activities in a way that keeps its GUAM partners favourably disposed to these activities shortly before UN General Assemblies. However, Azerbaijani officials have made sure that GUAM does not develop more direct conflict resolution activities that would require the actual co-ordination of Azerbaijan's conflict policy with GUAM.³²

An example of indirect co-ordination from which Azerbaijan profits substantially will round off this sub-section. Chapter 1.5.3 highlighted that GUAM established one binding rule on its interaction, namely to pursue only projects in which all four

Session, 21 October 2004, (A/59/PV38) Agenda Item 56: Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and Other Organizations.

³⁰ See: **U.N. General Assembly, 66st Session**, 12 July 2012, (A/RES/66/283) Status of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia.

³¹ Such statements have been made in the foreign ministry and the Ministry of Interior. All interviewees also considered Georgia's good reputation as inadequate and unfair vis-à-vis Azerbaijan. They claimed Georgia to be less democratic and Azerbaijan more democratic and just than is internationally perceived. However, the ability to take advantage of Georgia's good reputation has decreased after the Russo-Georgian war when Georgia was deemed as the aggressor. (AZ_MFA_1, AZ_MFA_2, AZ_MoI_1, AZ_MoI_2, AZ_Gov_Analyst_1, AZ_Analyst_6) See on Georgia's reputation: **Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia**, *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia*; **Traynor, Ian**, *Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili Blamed for Starting Russian War*. The Guardian, 30 September 2009..

³² The officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an analyst argue that they had never considered any international forum as able to actually resolve the conflict. (AZ_MFA_1, AZ_MFA_2, AZ_Analyst_6)

parties are involved. While Azerbaijan categorically rejects binding rules, it is able to benefit from this in material terms. Azerbaijan's increasingly bad human right records prevent the country from obtaining US aid in all security-related matters. Since 1997 the so-called Leahy Law has restricted security co-operation with states that breach human rights. This means that the country is eligible to receive neither security equipment nor training, in order to prevent both from being used against the country's own citizens.³³ Due to the fact that the US is eager to make GUAM work as even a weak security player in the region, the individual from the US responsible for GUAM is willing to establish productive infrastructure and projects for security matters within GUAM. The GUAM formula *all or nobody* makes it necessary to seek ways to widely interpret the Leahy Law in order to be able to include Azerbaijan in the projects funded.³⁴ In this case, Azerbaijan's GUAM membership thus comes with technological and methodological benefits. The VLEC equipment is only one example of this. At the same time, Azerbaijan persists in its resistance to international co-ordination and is more willing to receive technological equipment than attend training sessions run by international actors on how to employ the equipment.³⁵

7.1.3. CONCLUSION

The two previous sections have disclosed that Azerbaijani officials accept the multilateral environments of GUAM and CIS as supportive of the country's regional and international policy as long as the activities are not based on durable co-ordination between the member states. As a rule, Azerbaijan does not co-ordinate its domestic policy with other CIS or GUAM members. But the country has agreed to temporarily co-ordinate its position with other member states and to make temporary commitments in favour of these states. Doing so permits the country to maximise the advantages gleaned from the multilateral constellation. Only a few officials perceive it as beneficial to co-ordinate Azerbaijan's policy in certain areas

³³ 'The Leahy Law prohibits US military assistance to foreign military units that violate human rights with impunity.' <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-106publ429/html/PLAW-106publ429.htm> (accessed 20 November 2012) According to the representative from the US Embassy, the law also applies to support for border guards and other security forces. (US_Embassy_1)

³⁴ The room for manoeuvre of US delegates is in any case very limited. Ultimately the rule provides strong constraints on US support of GUAM security cooperation. (US_Embassy_1)

³⁵ The interviewee from the US Embassy in Kyiv advanced this argument.

with colleagues from other states. Even though this idea does not require any commitment to multilateral legalised rules, as the case of cross-border co-operation has argued, this idea does not fit with the general lines of Azerbaijan's CIS policy. The following section will discuss how Ukraine also primarily benefits from weakly co-ordinated activities, but wants also to set up more durable channels for co-ordination.

7.2.UKRAINE: SEEKING TEMPORARY CO-ORDINATION

This section explores how Ukrainian officials make the most of CIS and GUAM activities. The analysis will highlight that the policy-makers, similar to their Azerbaijani colleagues, do not support these activities in order to gain a multilateral outcome. In fact, they try to derive beneficial outcomes from the fact that multiple regional players gather together. This allows them to intensify and improve Ukraine's relations with core partners, to evaluate domestic practices in comparison with solutions established in other CIS states and to enhance the state's international recognition as a crucial regional player. Ukraine, unlike Azerbaijan, is also eager to lay a more permanent foundation that enables Ukraine to temporarily co-ordinate activities with other former Soviet republics on an ad hoc basis. This foundation is rooted in selectively applicable agreements but, more importantly, personalised ties with officials from other member states. The example of the CIS and GUAM analysed in the following two sub-sections will show that Ukrainian officials seek the same advantages from the CIS and GUAM, but are more successful within the CIS.

7.2.1. CIS ACTIVITIES

As in Azerbaijan, state officials from the trade and security-oriented ministries in Ukraine have identified several ways to exploit the multilateral environment of the CIS for domestic, regional and international policy ends. These mechanisms mostly require the temporary co-ordination of Ukraine's policy with other CIS members. However, Ukrainian officials have also described a number of strategies for using the CIS multilateral environment independently of other CIS countries. These build

on basically the same mechanisms that section 7.1.1 discussed in relation to Azerbaijan. They will therefore only briefly be recalled for the case of Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials share with their Azerbaijani colleagues the perception that the CIS gathers enough relevant states to significantly enhance knowledge of trade and drug-trafficking related developments in the neighbourhood. Negotiations and council meetings allow Ukrainian actors to discuss specific issues with the representatives from other countries both in the official discussions and bilaterally on the fringes of the meetings.³⁶ To a greater extent than their Azerbaijani colleagues, the Ukrainian officials draw advantages from the CIS debates on a common legislation. Knowledge about changes in the economy-related legislation of core trade partners may, for instance, induce Ukraine to alter its bilateral policy vis-à-vis these states. Examples from the anti-drug-trafficking council sustain this idea. The CIS action plan concerning counter drug-trafficking measures reportedly served as a template for Ukraine's national programme against drug-trafficking.³⁷ In addition the councils in this field offer the opportunity to exchange opinions about the best practices of counteracting drug-trafficking in each country. As the technologically most capable country, Russia attracts most interest on the part of Ukraine in this regard.³⁸ These strategies primarily support Ukraine's capacity to independently handle domestic and regional trade and security issues.

Additionally, Ukrainian officials intend to gain the reputation as an influential regional player on the basis of activities in the CIS that do not need to be co-ordinated with other members. This applies to the security area in the following regard. Officials from the Ministry of Interior occasionally put the discussion of international model laws or best practice on the agenda of the councils that work on drug-trafficking. They seek to discuss how best to incorporate into domestic legislation and implement the international provisions to which Ukraine has committed itself in UN or other international forums. The officials are cautious

³⁶ An official from the Ministry of Interior and one from the foreign ministry share this assessment. (UA_MoI_1, UA_MFA_5)

³⁷ An official from the Ministry of Interior reported that the CIS document served among others as template for Ukraine's national strategy. (UA_MoI_2)

³⁸ The explanation refers to the council meetings but also to the CSTO operation 'Kanal' as source of inspiration regarding the best practice. (UA_MoI_2, UA_MoI_1) See section 1.5.2 for details about the operation.

about adopting international provisions without adjusting them to the domestic situation. If other CIS members have already implemented them, Ukraine can derive valuable conclusions from experiences of these states. The CIS neighbourhood is a particularly fertile ground for this since the societies, legal systems and political regimes share a number of features.³⁹ Discussing these matters in the CIS helps Ukraine to fulfil its international obligations. At the same time, Ukraine can take such discussions as an opportunity to diffuse in the CIS the model laws and practices promoted by Western actors. By doing so, officials hope that Ukraine will be recognised as a country with some influence on its neighbourhood, in order to raise the country's international visibility. Advertising Ukraine's security practices as solutions for other CIS partners also fulfils another function. It is hoped to diverting the picture that Russia is the only country with security capacity in the post-Soviet space and present Ukraine as strong security player. This effect builds on the ambiguous relations that most CIS countries have with Russia. On the one hand, Russia is seen as a protective power willing to materially support the other states' security forces. On the other hand, most states strongly suspect that Russia might interfere in domestic affairs. In this light, officials report to successfully attract the attention of players, for instance from Central Asia, if they discuss alternative sources of funding for security equipment or offer pass on some knowledge about specific methodologies. An official described with particular satisfaction the displeasure of the Russian delegation when the interviewee advertised Ukraine's new security equipment that had been provided by the GUAM secretariat.⁴⁰

As chapter 6.2.1 has outlined, Ukraine also intends to develop additional multilateral agreements that may enable Ukraine to stipulate some trade regulations in a more favourable way than Ukraine can achieve in bilateral negotiations, in particular with Russia. Like their Azerbaijani colleagues they see ad hoc coalitions as a possibility to achieve this aim. The interviewees mentioned

³⁹ All three interviewees from the Ministry of Interior emphasise this opportunity. A concrete example in the sphere of drug-trafficking is the programme on providing drug addicts with substitute drugs such as methadone. The Ukrainian side is sceptical towards the European experience and welcomed insights from Russia's experience in this field. (UA_MoI_1, UA_MoI_2, UA_MoI_3)

⁴⁰ After the council meeting the official discussed the possibilities to link the Central Asian states, especially Kyrgyzstan, to the GUAM VLEC communication network. (UA_MFA_5)

another rationale in addition to those invoked by Azerbaijani officials. They argue that it is important for Ukraine to present itself as majority-changing actor in the negotiations of initiatives like the FTA. Within the CIS the Ukrainian consumer and production market is considered as important. Accordingly, Ukraine carries more weight than several other CIS states. Regional agreements which lack the signature of Ukraine often lack weight for Russia.⁴¹ Two consequences emerge from this. First, Russia is desperate to gain Ukraine's support for initiatives, such as the FTA, in order to make the Russian regional projects more convincing. Second, the smaller CIS members welcome the Ukrainian delegation as a leader in opposing Russian proposals. If Ukraine does not support a proposal, according to the Ukrainian officials, at a minimum half of the CIS members would take the opportunity to also oppose it. This gives Russia less power to ignore Ukraine's interests and to insist on its proposals. Officials hence argue for Ukraine's ability to reduce the relevance of Ukraine's strong economic dependence on Russia through the country's ability to influence other CIS members' decisions. By openly opposing Russia and submitting alternative proposals the officials, of course, also hope to strengthen Ukraine's attractiveness as a partner in bilateral trade relations to other capable CIS countries. In this regard, the hope rests on energy-rich Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which are also anxious to withstand Russia's attempts to force unfavourable regulations upon them.⁴²

Ukrainian officials intend to establish more durable intergovernmental channels that can be employed to temporarily co-ordinate activities with other CIS states. Two examples, one from the sphere of trade and one from security-related activities, will illustrate two varying mechanisms for this. In the field of trade, the instrument is the FTA itself. As chapter 6.2.1 argued, already during the

⁴¹ This was observable in Russia's eagerness to get Ukraine to enter the Single Economic Space in 2002. It is since 2011 visible in Russia's pressure on Ukraine to become a member of the Customs Union. Ukraine is an important market for the CU. **Souza, Lúcio Vinhas de** (2011), *An Initial Estimation of the Economic Effects of the Creation of the EurAsEC Customs Union on Its Members*. Economic Premise [Online], p 5; **Dragneva and Wolczuk**, Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?, 2.

⁴² On the one hand this is described as the general capacity of Ukraine in the CIS format by a Ukrainian official who has participated at expert level in all basic CIS councils since the early 1990s (UA_MFA_4). When asked about Ukraine's negotiating strength, a staff member from the foreign ministry and two from the economics ministry responded with this narrative. (UA_MED_1, UA_MFA_2, UA_MED_2)

negotiations Ukraine did not plan to fully implement the CIS FTA. In contrast to Azerbaijan, however, the officials considered it important to sign the agreement for the following reasons. During the negotiations Ukraine successfully accelerated the diffusion of the WTO regulations to which it agreed in the 2008 trade agreements with core CIS partners. The most relevant WTO regulations were incorporated in the legal text of the FTA. The FTA provided an ideal opportunity to harmonise the regulations with several CIS members at once instead of reformulating the many bilateral FTAs according to Ukraine's new obligations. Being a party to the FTA permits Ukraine to monitor their implementation or to demand changes in cases where the established provisions appear insufficient.⁴³ In this case the agreement allows Ukraine to temporarily call for co-ordination of the domestic policies according to the FTA, in order to induce other states to comply with provisions that are relevant for Ukraine. However, the Ukrainian officials agree that the best option is to use the FTA as a reference point for re-negotiating bilateral agreements without co-ordinating the negotiation with all parties of the FTA.

In the security-related councils Ukrainian officials identify another permanent channel that is temporarily intended to trigger intergovernmental co-ordination. They argue that they often need information or other operational support from CIS partners, especially Russia, Belarus and Moldova, but also from Central Asia and the South Caucasus in their fight against regional drug-trafficking networks.⁴⁴ According to the interviewees, the formally established communication routines between the Ukrainian and other CIS governmental agencies do not suffice. Bureaucratic barriers delay the exchange of information, retard mutual assistance and, thus, foil a smooth investigation. High-level officials often refuse to exchange intelligence. But direct collaboration with colleagues at expert level in the neighbouring countries is hardly envisioned in the established formal communication channels. In this light Ukrainian practitioners see direct personal relations with the delegates from other CIS countries as a remedy. Such relations provide information on who is the

⁴³ This was especially stressed by the official from the State Service for Technical Regulation in Ukraine, but also by the officials from the Ministry of Economics and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who attended the negotiations. (UA_SSTR_1, UA_MED_1, UA_MED_2, UA_MFA_1, UA_MFA_2).

⁴⁴ The extent to which the officials perceive drug-trafficking as a phenomenon calling for multilateral responses has been discussed in 5.2.1.2.

individual in charge of a certain matter in the partner country. If enough trust is built, they facilitate making contact with these individuals in the course of an investigation and increase the probability of a meaningful exchange of intelligence. The most relevant tools are, accordingly, the names and personal contact details of the staff members of the security agencies in the CIS.⁴⁵ These rationales explain why the interviewees are interested in discussing anti-drug-trafficking issues in several councils and not in a single co-ordination body. It would reduce the potential number of contacts to make in course of the meetings, the main function of the councils. With these personalised networks, Ukraine is able to create a durable instrument that can be activated for bilaterally or multilaterally co-ordinated activities.

According to the interview narratives, state officials from time to time form short-term coalitions in the CIS councils and negotiations for two reasons. The first is similar to an example discussed for Azerbaijan. Ukraine uses the CIS councils as a platform to more efficiently pressure CIS states into adopting policies that strengthen Ukraine's domestic security. An example was given in the field of drug-trafficking. In cases where Ukraine suspects that the Central Asian states, e.g. Tajikistan, have problems controlling incoming drug-flows, the Ukrainian side tries to discuss how to improve their capacity with the states affected. The officials seek get several CIS members to collectively advocate potential solutions in order to urge the states in question to take appropriate measures. Ukraine has not developed specific programmes to support the country's neighbourhood in relation to these aspects. It leaves the adoption of Ukraine's best practices to the individual states.⁴⁶

Finally, multilateral agreements adopted in the CIS may help Ukraine to 'break free' from bilateral conflicts with mainly, Russia. Chapter 6 has already discussed that

⁴⁵ This narrative is provided by the officials involved in drug-trafficking measures, but also by the official in charge of cybercrime measures. (UA_MoI_1, UA_MoI_2, UA_MoI_3)

⁴⁶ This is reported by all interviewees, who had attended these councils at least once. (UA_MoI_2, UA_MoI_1, UA_MFA_1) The same strategies were reported with regard to anti-irregular migration activities in the CIS. Especially in 2006, when the Ukrainian economic situation substantially improved, an official remembered that the incoming irregular migration overstrained Ukraine's security forces. In response the official activated Ukraine's engagement in some pre-emptive measures. This included suggesting some solutions in the control of outgoing migration flows to Central Asian states, especially Uzbekistan. (UA_Analyst_8: a former official of the Ministry of Interior).

Ukraine is eager to stipulate newly negotiated veterinary-sanitary standards in the FTA. According to an official from the Ukrainian Ministry of Economics, Russia's motivation for this conflict does not originate in concerns over deficient production standards, but in other political and economic considerations.⁴⁷ Russia is therefore hardly prepared to compromise when re-negotiating the standards bilaterally. The multilateral FTA is an opportunity for Ukraine to lay new and stronger foundations for solving this conflict. The new veterinary-sanitary standards were negotiated after Russia had provoked the conflict with Ukraine. Ukraine is thus able to refer to a recent provision that bears the signature of both Russia and Ukraine. This ideally should strengthen Ukraine's arguments vis-à-vis Russia.⁴⁸ Another official described it as a lengthy and undesirable procedure to fight over juridical specifics of trade contracts to solve a conflict with CIS partners. It is often easier to create a new legal basis that may redefine the conditions from which the conflict emerged.⁴⁹ The tactic obviously rests on several weakly enforced legal frameworks more than on the strict enforcement of legal instruments. In this light, it becomes rational to create the often quoted 'spaghetti bowl' of agreements.⁵⁰ The condition for this practice is, however, to ensure that the number of provisions which are unfavourable to Ukraine is low, or else they will not be fully enforced. According to an official, the CIS members therefore negotiate agreements in a *Slavonic style*. The term *Slavonic style* specifies that agreements do not go into detail and in large parts simply state the intention to develop the application of a certain provision, rather than present commitments to precisely defined rules. The *Slavonic style* is explicitly seen as more favourable than the EU style that requires a more precise negotiation of all details.⁵¹

⁴⁷ UA_MED_2 has made this statement. The assessment is representative for the opinion of many analysts. See for example: **Hettne et al.**, Globalism and the New Regionalism.

⁴⁸ Related by UA_MED_2

⁴⁹ Related by UA_MED_1

⁵⁰ The question of why states in environments where the principle of rule of law is weakly consolidated tend to create overlapping international agreements has been raised by several authors and so far widely remains unanswered. These insights into practices in Ukraine provide an answer to this question and also the question, why the CIS states tend to create overlapping bilateral and multilateral agreements. See: **Börzel**, Comparative Regionalism. A New Research Agenda, 12; **Shadikhodjaev**, Trade Integration in the CIS Region: A Thorny Path Towards a Customs Union, 2-5.

⁵¹ The interviewee, however, also saw enough leeway for non-compliance in EU style agreements. The argument here is the more legal text exists, the more possibilities exist to discuss the interpretation of legal provisions. In case Ukraine does not want to comply with a certain regulation in a certain period, it can refer to a specific interpretation. It will take a longer period to agree on a

It permits the flexible interpretation of legal provisions according to Ukraine's needs.⁵²

Overall, this section has outlined how Ukraine seeks to create more durable structures for smoothly co-ordinating activities in cases where the need arise by means of agreements and personalised intergovernmental networks. But Ukraine rejects the permanent co-ordination that a multilateral legalised institution would require. As the study on GUAM will show, Ukrainian officials and private economic actors have identified possibilities to set up similar permanent structures in Ukraine. But these have not been established so far.

7.2.2. GUAM ACTIVITIES

The previous chapters have already indicated that until 2010 it was primarily actors at presidential and governmental level who were pushing for Ukraine's participation in GUAM. Ministerial experts working on Ukraine's trade and security relations with the neighbouring states initially hardly took any interest in GUAM. Their interview narrations mirror the fact that they hardly expect substantial benefits from GUAM activities. In particular, regarding trade state officials and analysts share the perception that the organisation is primarily a tool for emulating a commitment to a European style of multilateralism. In line with the low interest in GUAM trade activities state officials concerned Ukraine general foreign policy and experts from the Ministry of Economics prefer GUAM activities that do not require co-ordination with other GUAM states. Ideally, they do not even make co-ordination within Ukraine's state structures necessary.⁵³ An official explained that Ukraine lobbies for trade activities with reference to the internationally promoted idea of regional integration. European states, for instance, often invoke the functionalist argument

common interpretation. In the meanwhile, Ukraine may continue the chosen practices often until the conditions according to which Ukraine has not been able to fulfil the agreement have disappeared. (UA_MED_1) A substantial difference in the style of formulating international agreements in the EU and post-Soviet context is confirmed by another official from the economics ministry. (UA_MED_2)

⁵² The interviewee refers inter alia to the relationship between the existing bilateral and the new multilateral FTA. Some actors pushed for an annulment of all conflicting bilateral agreements when the multilateral FTA comes into effect. Ukraine has been rather satisfied with the formulation that the states will discuss the annulment of the specified bilateral agreements when the new FTA comes into force. Such discussion may be a lengthy process and allows them to keep the relevant bilateral agreements in place. (UA_MED_2)

⁵³ UA_MFA_1

of free trade as a first step towards successful integration. In this light, initiating a multilateral FTA promises rewards from these international actors, and attention on the states involved. The economic effect of the agreements is of secondary relevance.⁵⁴ It is therefore reasonable that Ukraine has adopted the FTA but never committed to permanently co-ordinating trade activities through this legal framework. Beyond the negotiations in which Ukraine had to co-ordinate its position with the GUAM states, Ukraine hardly commits to co-ordinated activities in the economic sphere. Ukraine attends the meetings and is engaged with GUAM's bureaucracy. The latter means processing the rare inquiries of the GUAM secretariat on changes in Ukraine's trade policy.⁵⁵ This helps to strengthen GUAM's international recognition and to maintain GUAM as a policy tool.

The interviews reveal two ways in which the security activities produce benefits by weakly co-ordinated activities. First of all, GUAM's international support is appreciated as a gateway to training on law enforcement methods. Such training is often initiated by the secretariat and receives financial support from the US or Japan. The basis of this support is GUAM's existence as a regional grouping and the participation of all states. Ukrainian officials report that it is sometimes necessary to convince other members to participate. But beyond this no other joint efforts are necessary. The multilateral context is in this regard a stepping stone to training opportunities for Ukraine's security forces.⁵⁶ Secondly, the GUAM working group against drug-trafficking is seen as producing valuable intelligence concerning drug-trafficking developments and investigation methods. The low number of states involved creates an atmosphere of trust that allows the participants to share more sensitive data. A participant of the GUAM council argued that most benefits were gleaned from the exchange of investigation methods concerning, for example, the

⁵⁴ This narrative was presented by several analysts and two officials from the foreign ministry. (UA_MFA_1, UA_MFA_6, UA_NSDC_2, UA_Gov_Analyst_1)

⁵⁵ UA_MED_1

⁵⁶ Even here GUAM is not a necessarily reliable context, as the following instance indicates. The funding is usually provided on the condition that all GUAM members participate. But some states, for example, Georgia do not always send the individuals with the required knowledge or do not complete the necessary paper work. In consequence it already happened that the funding commitment was withdrawn. (UA_MoI_1)

detection of drug-processing laboratories.⁵⁷ The annual joint drug-trafficking operations, Narcostop, provide occasions to deal with these topics.⁵⁸ Both activities primarily strengthen the individual capacities of Ukraine's security forces.

Ukraine has, however, always been eager to lay the foundations for a more durable policy co-ordination between the GUAM member states. The intention has less been to develop a joint policy in a certain issue-area than to support each state in its individual sensitive issues. Chapter 6 has mentioned the example of Ukraine's support for Azerbaijan's conflict issues in exchange for energy supplies from Azerbaijan. GUAM functions as framework for expressing that Azerbaijan's and Georgia's economic support for Ukraine may positively impinge on Ukraine's readiness to internationally discuss the country's secessionist problems. GUAM is, however, not the main stage for negotiating economically beneficial projects with the GUAM states. These are bilaterally negotiated.⁵⁹ From this perspective, permanent but still weak co-ordination would produce benefits for all GUAM states. However, as previously mentioned, Ukraine has hardly succeeded in luring Azerbaijan into permanent co-ordination.

Ukrainian representatives from the Ministry of Interior are willing to gain permanent structures for temporary co-ordination through the GUAM measures against drug-trafficking as well as the respective CIS activities. An official depicts GUAM's Narcostop operations as a positive step in this direction. Narcostop has not developed joint activities but consists of operations that simultaneously take place in all four GUAM countries. They more or less follow a previously agreed strategy. While the countries exchange information, they do not, however, provide mutual support during the operations.⁶⁰ According to a Ukrainian official, these operations

⁵⁷ This statement was made by the official who attends the council meetings. (UA_MoI_1) The other interviewee from the security agencies confirms that this is generally an issue where Ukraine seeks support. (UA_MoI_2) In particular, knowledge about detection methods is also crucial in the council on emergency situations and trafficking of nuclear material. (UA_MFA_5)

⁵⁸ 'Narcostop' was initiated in 2007 and has since then taken place annually. See for example: **GUAM**, 8th Meeting of Working Sub-Group on Combating Drug Trafficking

⁵⁹ An official from the department of the foreign ministry concerned with the general foreign policy orientations emphasised the importance of keeping Azerbaijan as a partner. Officials from the foreign ministry who interacted with GUAM from 2005-2010 dwelled more explicitly on this aspect. (UA_MFA_1, UA_MFA_6)

⁶⁰ This was explained by GUAM Official 2 and 3.

result nevertheless in some mutual support. It happens that an investigation starts in one country and is followed up in another country with successful detention. However, in the study period such operative outcomes were rather rare.⁶¹ More important, therefore, has been the creation of an environment for co-operative support beyond these operations. The core instrument for this ambition is the same as in the CIS: a trust-based personalised network between officials from the individual security agencies. The interviewees also acknowledge the potential power of VLEC to reduce the intergovernmental bureaucratic thresholds described in chapter 7.2.1. They, however, they did not regard VLEC as an efficient tool for this, since they perceive VLEC as working unreliably and not being equipped to transmit confidential data. The official who works with GUAM reported that VLEC has only a 50/50 chance of being able to successfully establish a connection to the VLEC branches in other countries. It is therefore not worth the still substantial effort to interpolate VLEC.⁶² Two colleagues were not even aware that VLEC will soon enable the exchange of confidential, even top-secret data.⁶³ Only the Ukrainian delegate to the GUAM secretariat reported a successful deployment of VLEC in 2011. An officer from the Ukrainian police contacted the delegate and enquired how to get in touch with the Moldovan security agencies. The officer needed help in a human trafficking investigation. Since the bureaucratic hurdles in Ukraine for accessing the VLEC structures that are placed in the Ukrainian Security Service are still high, the delegate to GUAM decided to use the VLEC equipment of the GUAM secretariat.⁶⁴ This exemplifies the way that the GUAM VLEC structures in Ukraine are not capable of facilitating interstate co-operation so long as they are not accessible to the staff of all Ukrainian law enforcement actors.

⁶¹ The second interviewee from the Ministry of Interior was informed about Narcostop, but did not take part in the preparations. The interviewee generally viewed the operation as good attempts, but emphasised that there is a lot more potential in them than has presently been realised.

⁶² This was reported by the official who is mainly involved in GUAM. The assessment refers to Azerbaijan's frequent shut-down of VLEC, but also indicates that the process of contacting the VLEC structures in Ukraine. (UA_MoI_1)

⁶³ One of them even did not know about VLEC's existence, even though the individual has to send regularly information requests to inter alia GUAM states. (UA_MoI_3)

⁶⁴ An interviewee from the GUAM secretariat was happy to be able to provide the author with this information several days after the first interview was conducted. (GUAM_Official_3)

A few private economic actors likewise depicted GUAM as a promising instrument for fuelling trade relations that, however, did not realise its potential in 2011. They see GUAM as a potential support for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) that seek trade with the GUAM states. Participant observation and background talks in the GUAM business council conveyed the idea that Ukrainian businesses do not see the FTA as helpful as at all. But they see a steering committee for free trade matters as potentially promising. If such a committee were able to overcome bureaucratic and other hurdles and to broker business deals, GUAM would become an attractive player for Ukraine's SMEs. These businesses need substantial support to cope with customs procedures for exporting their products. The interplay of unfavourable formal rules and subversive informal rules creates significant barriers to trade with GUAM partners.⁶⁵ The core tool of the committee would be direct contacts to individuals from all relevant state agencies in the member states. These trust-based personal contacts would as a first step bridge the still weak connections between GUAM and the national state bodies. The GUAM committee would then be capable to establish contacts between the domestic agencies and SMEs from the GUAM countries. So far, however, even the business actors who interact with GUAM do not trust that GUAM possesses the necessary contacts to the governments.⁶⁶

7.2.3. CONCLUSION

Ukraine's strategy within the CIS and GUAM activities is driven by the desire to benefit from weakly co-ordinated activities and to build networks that, on selected occasions, facilitate co-ordination with the neighbouring states. The officials prefer activities that offer, firstly, to mobilise the support of other countries to negotiate more favourable security and trade relations with core partners, primarily Russia; secondly, to establish productive non-formalised contacts to relevant bodies of the state administration in the neighbouring countries; thirdly, to establish favourable economic deals and to enhance Ukraine's domestic security capacities through

⁶⁵ This public statement was made by a Ukrainian entrepreneur during the GUAM Business Council and received support from other participants.

⁶⁶ This is stated by the two business actors from Ukraine and the one from Georgia with whom the author conducted some background talks after the GUAM business council. (UA_Private_Business_2, UA_Private_Business_3)

technology or methodological trainings; and, fourthly, to emulate Ukraine's compliance with the idea of regional integration to elevate the country's international reputation. The CIS is more applicable in the case of achieving the first three aims. GUAM comes with more international funding and support and therefore supports aims three and four.

7.3. CONCLUSION: A SPECIFIC NOTION OF MULTILATERALISM

This chapter has examined the impact of the most distinctive features of a regional organisation, namely the multilateral environment. The analysis tried to identify how policy-makers in Azerbaijan and Ukraine frame the advantage of the multilateral context of the CIS and GUAM. It sought to identify the mechanisms they use to achieve their intermediary goals. The chapter can infer that neither Azerbaijan nor Ukraine strive for a variant of multilateralism as defined by Keohane. They hardly commit to the 'practice of co-ordinating national policies'.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, they significantly exploit the multilateral environment. The states promote activities that strengthen their capacities to handle economic and security issues single-handedly and build on no or temporary co-ordination between the member states. The chapter has found the following 11 mechanisms that make uncoordinated and temporarily co-ordinated activities in the multilateral context attractive.

In at least three ways the CIS and GUAM improve Azerbaijan's and Ukraine's capacities without co-ordinating their policy with the other member states. First, mere participation in the organisations and in the bureaucratic procedures provides the opportunity to emulate commitment to regional co-operation and integration. GUAM serves to signal to Western players that Azerbaijan and Ukraine support the idea of regional governance and integration. Through the CIS they reply to Russia's idea of regional governance. Secondly, in more pragmatic terms, the CIS and GUAM create access to crucial information on changes in the domestic laws or security situation in the neighbourhood. This helps Azerbaijan and Ukraine to take these changes into account when formulating their domestic and foreign policy. Thirdly,

⁶⁷ Keohane, *Multilateralism: an Agenda for Research*, 731.

both states use the CIS as forum to ensure that the neighbourhood does not diverge too strongly from their domestic policy. Neither Azerbaijan nor Ukraine is eager to adjust to a common CIS policy, but they try to influence the other states' policy by diffusing model laws and best practices.

Temporarily co-ordinated activities are beneficial through 6 mechanisms. Both Azerbaijan and Ukraine use the interplay of different states which have varying power-relations to build a basis for negotiating better conditions with core partners. They make use of the fact that powerful partners enter into negotiations with other rationales if they have to consider not only their relation with Azerbaijan or Ukraine, but have to factor in other states. Azerbaijan seeks to make use of joint CIS agreements by referring to them in bilateral negotiations without being party to them. Ukraine prefers to sign, but only selectively apply them. Within GUAM Ukraine tries to alter for instance Azerbaijan's rationales by supporting Azerbaijan's needs in security matters. Second, both states rely on the fact that the multilateral environment changes power-dynamics. Taking leadership in opposing a core regional player such as Russia gives the states more leverage vis-à-vis Russia. It also encourages less powerful states to intensify the relations with Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Raising problematic issues in the multilateral environment also permit the states' to easily pressure other states' to alter their policy if necessary. For these activities the CIS is the better playground. Third, GUAM in particular paves the way for additional external funding of security technology and methods' trainings. The domestic security agencies benefit from this without co-ordinating more than the collective participation in these activities. Fourth, Azerbaijan intends to persuade GUAM members to act jointly on international level, in order to increase Azerbaijan's room for manoeuvre in matters of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The state relies on the improved international reputation of the members that might fuel the readiness of international actors to give more thought to this conflict. Fifth, Ukraine uses the CIS in particular as a platform to diffuse crucial international laws and practices in its neighbourhood. Doing so requires Ukraine to accept CIS agreements as tools for temporary policy co-ordination. The strategy enables Ukraine to fully implement these international laws. It permits Ukraine to reconcile

its international and regional policy. Sixth, Ukraine uses the CIS and GUAM as an arena for evaluating the potential domestic impact of international laws and best practices with the same aim. It steers the exchange of experiences made by other members with their implementation. The officials only co-ordinate the discussion. Finally, Ukrainian officials are anxious to set up personalised networks with their colleagues from other CIS states. The idea is to activate these for a smooth bilateral or multilateral co-ordination of activities if the case arises. The analysed interpretation of advantages of the multilateral framework conveys the impression of a *multilateralism light*.

Two aspects in these findings call for explanations. According to the chapter it is rational for Azerbaijan and Ukraine to participate in sectoral activities particularly in GUAM, even though the ministerial officials involved do not see any immediate benefit of these activities. At the same time, both in Ukraine and Azerbaijan some ministerial officials identify productive ways of temporarily co-ordinating policies with CIS and GUAM members. If this requires more intensive co-ordination they have, however, little chance to establish these mechanisms. An example from Azerbaijan is the idea to intensify CIS cross-border activities. An example from Ukraine is the hope to accelerate transnational collaboration in non-traditional security matters. This picture poses the question of how Azerbaijan and Ukraine are able to continue this shallow commitment to GUAM activities. Also, why are the policy-makers not able to exploit the multilateral framework more substantially, if they see strategies to do so? The chapter also substantiated the observation discussed in chapter 5 that neither Azerbaijan nor Ukraine is interested in establishing multilateral legalised institutions. The adopted agreements have a primarily instrumental function. Ukraine instead strives to establish personalised intergovernmental networks for temporarily co-ordinating its policy with the region. Chapter 5 has argued that Azerbaijan and Ukraine do not want to increase their interdependencies with other former Soviet republics via multilateral agreements that become institutions. But why do they not make the effort to negotiate favourable agreements that weaken unfavourable dependencies? Why do they

prefer less stable mechanisms such as personalised ties? The final empirical chapter will present some answers to these questions.

8. DOMESTIC ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE CIS AND GUAM

Chapters 5 to 7 analysed two elements that constitute ways in which policy-makers in the case country conceptualise the CIS and GUAM: the aims of participation and the preferred type of activities. The aim of this chapter is to discuss why policy-makers in Azerbaijan and Ukraine conceptualise the organisations in this specific way. Understanding this background will permit an evaluation of the possibilities that the officials will in the future conceptualise the CIS and GUAM as tool for more intensive co-operation.

State officials from Azerbaijan and Ukraine conceptualise the CIS and GUAM as follows. The multilateral framework of the organisations generates tools that improve the states' bilateral policy with the neighbourhood and other international actors. The tools also strengthen the states' domestic capacities to unilaterally solve trade and security issues. These intentions rest on the perception that Azerbaijan and Ukraine are dependent from or interdependent with some former Soviet republics. Given these mutual relations the neighbouring states are perceived as a source for gaining support in solving domestic issues that have a regional dimension. It is noteworthy that the case countries did not develop the idea to be collectively responsible for developments in the region. These underlying ideas influence which activities the officials prefer. Azerbaijani and Ukrainian actors prefer activities that do not at all or only temporarily are co-ordinated with other former Soviet republics. Ukraine is more in favour of durable co-ordination tools, if they can be applied occasionally. The states re-interpret the function of established CIS and GUAM activities according to their interest to avoid any permanent co-ordination. This produces a gap between the aims sought by the states and those proclaimed by the organisations. In consequence, the states participate in some activities for *instrumental* purposes that are not related to the matter under discussion in the activities. Nevertheless, officials who participate in these activities have found ways in which the activities may be beneficial. However, in Azerbaijan especially these officials have little chance to materialise their ideas.

In this light the questions emerges as to how the ruling elites in Azerbaijan and Ukraine manage this *instrumental participation*? Why do they not exploit the opportunities provided in the CIS and GUAM more intensively? Finally, the analysis summarised above raises interest in the question why the policy-makers reject permanently co-ordinated solutions. The literature discussed in chapter 2 draws attention to various potentially explanatory factors in the domestic political regimes such as domestic veto players, informal rule or the impact of non-elite actors.¹ This chapter will draw on these suggestions and will substantiate the nexus between the political regimes and the analysed conceptualisations.

The chapter will argue as follows. The ruling elite's ability to pursue *instrumental participation* in the organisations depends on its power to formulate CIS and GUAM policy in a top-down manner. The degree to which the policy-makers can efficiently exploit CIS and GUAM activities for the state's trade and security policy depends on the horizontal communication between the ministries involved. An element of the domestic political regime that shapes the conceptualisation of the regional organisations is, hence, the process of policy-making. Another element is practices which the political regime has established for dealing with international trade and with security challenges. Such practices are oriented towards what a regime needs to survive and shape the type of multilateral activities preferred by the states concerned. The cases of Azerbaijan and Ukraine will show that variances in the political regimes lead to varying conceptualisations of the function of regional organisations.

The chapter will illustrate the argument and highlight the differences between Azerbaijan and Ukraine with reference to the secondary literature, interviews with primary policy actors, analysts and private economic actors from the countries. It will first explore the case of Azerbaijan and then turn to Ukraine.

¹ **Collins**, Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Central Asia; **Torjesen**, Understanding Regional Co-operation in Central Asia, 1991-2004, 316; **Mansfield, Edward D. ; Milner, Helen V.; Rosendorff, B. Peter** (2002), *Why Democracies Cooperate More: Electoral Control and International Trade Agreements*. International Organization, Vo. 56, No. 3.

8.1.AZERBAIJAN: POLICY-MAKING AND ESTABLISHED PRACTICES

This section will show how the arguments sketched above manifest themselves in the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan. The discussion intends to explain the following puzzling observations of the previous chapters. The first observation is that most state officials actively engage in CIS and GUAM sectoral activities with the purpose of generating additional tools for Azerbaijan's domestic, regional and international policy. But they refrain from engaging in more intensively co-ordinated activities, even if these would, according to some officials, be supportive of Azerbaijan's policy. Chapter 6.1.1.1 mentioned the following example of this. An official sought to intensify relations between state officials from Russia and Azerbaijan in the border region in order to fuel improved co-ordination that would promote the development of this region. Another example is GUAM security activities. Azerbaijani security agencies attend them, but do not use them for exchanging information or gaining operative support. The section will ask why the state officials do not exploit the opportunities of the CIS and GUAM more intensively. The second observation in focus is that even officials from lower level of the ministries seek achievements that allow the state administration to independently adjust its policy. They also accept to temporarily co-ordinate their policy with other members. But no official strives for collective solutions. What makes permanently co-ordinated activities unattractive?

The following sub-section will first highlight that it is the nearly exclusively top-down approach to decision-making in Azerbaijan that overrides the intentions of low-level officials to derive greater advantage from the CIS and GUAM. Also, the policy in CIS and GUAM sectoral activities is only weakly co-ordinated with other state bodies that work on the same issues. Two sub-sections will discuss that the practices which are established to deal with regional trade and security matters stabilise the domestic sovereignty of the current political regime. Permanently co-ordinated activities in the CIS and GUAM would rather challenge it. This will explain why the ruling elite seeks other advantages from the organisations.

8.1.1. THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE CIS AND GUAM POLICY

The interviews in the ministries have revealed four practices in the co-ordination of the CIS and GUAM policy that significantly determine the extent to which Azerbaijan uses the opportunities provided in the organisations. These practices become apparent in the decisions which officials delegate to the CIS and GUAM councils, in the mandate of these delegates and their influence on the implementation of the agreed sectoral activities. The paragraphs below will illustrate these four practices. First, decision-making builds on strong hierarchies that allow high-level officials to put across their priorities without considering the preferences of lower ranking officials. Second, decisions are taken without informing the officials that attend the CIS and GUAM bodies and only weakly influence their work in the sectoral bodies. Third, the approach to sectoral activities is not necessarily developed by the ministerial departments that primarily deal with the sectoral activities under discussion. Fourth, the *rubber stamp* parliament facilitates intensive participation in the CIS and GUAM in absence of any interest in multilaterally co-ordinated policies.

8.1.1.1. TOP-DOWN POLICY-MAKING

Policy co-ordination towards the CIS and GUAM is constituted by patterns that are generally characteristic for the co-ordination of Azerbaijan's domestic and foreign policy. A strong top-down approach guides policy formulation and decision-making. Azerbaijan's constitution paves the way for such foreign policy-making. Foreign policy lies almost entirely in the hands of the president.² Analysts and policy-makers agree that meaningful decisions are taken by Ilham Aliyev, while the ministries and the presidential administrations are in charge of little more than the PR for the presidential agenda abroad and at home.³ These bodies have, however, some

² According to the constitution the president represents the country in foreign affairs and assumes the main executive power. **Republic of Azerbaijan**, 1995, The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

³ The description of ministerial activities as PR is taken from an interview with an analyst. However, not only analysts but also state officials agree that the decision-making competences of high-level officials like the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs are limited. (AZ_Analyst_5, AZ_Analyst_2, AZ_Private_Business_2, AZ_MP_1, AZ_MP_2, AZ_Gov_Analyst_4, AZ_Gov_3, AZ_MED_1, AZ_MFA_4) See also the following article that argues that already Heydar Aliyev reduced the foreign policy-making to a small group of individuals. **Alieva, Leila** (2000), *Reshaping Eurasia*:

leeway in shaping the details of the varying policy directions. However, the official position and portfolio of policy-makers does not necessarily reflect their actual competences in doing so and their power to influence the decisions.⁴ Accordingly, it is characteristic for Azerbaijan that decision-making and the specific design of a policy are rather detached from each other. Two examples from the CIS and one from GUAM illustrate how these patterns shape the co-ordination of policies towards the CIS and GUAM.

Some insights into the co-ordination of Azerbaijan's commitment to CIS migration activities underscore how the top-down approach creates a policy that is only in parts driven by Azerbaijan's migration-related needs. Responsibility for the co-ordination of Azerbaijan's migration policy rests to a large degree with the State Migration Service (ASMS). The ASMS officials also specify and implement Azerbaijan's policies towards participation in CIS migration activities, but they are not the actors that define the core agenda. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Cabinet of Ministers negotiate the CIS agreements that determine the main parameters of Azerbaijan's involvement in the migration activities. Only after these are adopted the ASMS is contacted and asked to specify priorities and acceptable activities in the CIS councils. The core interest of the ministries is to activate the agreement, hence, to provide some substance to it. They pay less attention to the question of how Azerbaijan can exploit these activities for its migration policy. Accordingly, state officials who directly work on migration issues hardly have the opportunity to influence the decisions which agreements to sign. This leads in some cases to a mismatch between the interest of the ASMS and the CIS participation stipulated from above. ASMS officials do not consider this mismatch as problematic, since the agreements do not contain any binding provisions. The ASMS can, as presented in chapters 6.1.2 and 7.1, identify helpful CIS activities within the framework defined from above, but also participate in some activities only for the

Foreign Policy Strategies and Leadership Assets in Post-Soviet South Caucasus. Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, No. 1, p 25.

⁴ Guliyev makes the general observation that formal positions hardly mirror the *de facto* competences of the position holders. **Guliyev**, *Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Transition to Sultanistic Semiauthoritarianism? An Attempt at Conceptualization*.

sake of fulfilling their duty.⁵ This top-down agenda-setting foils a CIS policy that is primarily directed towards migration-related priorities.

A similar procedure has determined Azerbaijan's priorities in the CIS economic strategy and the FTA negotiations. Participation in both has been decided by higher officials in the Ministry of Economics and by the Prime Minister. But low-level officials who work as experts in the ministries influence the form of concrete participation. The pivotal point is that these officials have neither meaningful competences to take decisions, nor are they in regular communication with the involved superiors. To be more precise, the officials report back to their superiors, but receive hardly feedback from them and are not involved in the decision-making process. This has two consequences. On the one hand, officials design Azerbaijan's participation in the bodies and negotiations based on the aims defined in the agreements. In the case of the FTA, they indeed ensured that Azerbaijan could sign the FTA without any negative externalities. In other activities of the economic strategy such as the already mentioned cross-border co-operation, they try to establish initiatives that indeed encourage intensified policy co-ordination with Russian counterparts. On the other hand, as chapter 7.1.1 has already indicated, these officials lack the capacity to push through their priorities. Some officials who negotiated the CIS FTA were not included in the decision of whether to sign the agreement and had no chance to promote the benefits of the FTA.⁶ After the decision has been taken, an official who participated in the CIS was puzzled by the president's rejection of the FTA. Even the interviewee's colleagues were apparently not able to disclose the rationality of this decision.⁷ In the case of cross-border co-ordination the officials did not receive the necessary support from above to pursue activities that would indeed strengthen the personal ties between Azerbaijani and Russian officials in the border region. Hence, the desired effects on the prosperity of

⁵ This narrative is provided by two officials from the State Migration Service, who are involved in the CIS council. As already discussed in chapter six, they do not see the council as a chance to pursue their agenda but engage in many migration-related activities due to the order from above. (AZ_ASMS_1, AZ_ASMS_2).

⁶ None of the interviewees, neither analysts nor the staff of the Ministry of Economics, felt capable of giving reliable information on the *de facto* power of the prime minister and the relation between the Cabinet of Ministers, the prime minister and the president.

⁷ This is stated by an expert from the foreign ministry, who apparently has discussed this question with colleagues. (AZ_MFA_8)

the region remains weakly realised, despite the fact that opportunities for increasing it are available.⁸ The describe mechanisms detach the formulation and realisation of a policy in the CIS from the final decisions on CIS and GUAM related matters. It is noteworthy that the lack of influence does not create discontent among the ministerial experts. The officials see their primary duty in accomplishing their assigned tasks. They voice trust in the decisions taken at higher level, even though they are not informed about the basis of decision-making.⁹ The officials thus accept that the decision-making is almost entirely detached from the CIS pursued by ministerial experts. This permits Azerbaijan to pretend strong interest in the CIS by intensively participating without the actually supporting of the aims proclaimed by the CIS. This is, thus, a crucial mechanism for *instrumental participation*.

The following GUAM example highlights that due to the top-down approach even ministries that are entirely uninterested in certain sectoral initiatives steadily and actively participate. They even send high-level officials to these initiatives. The responsibility for Azerbaijan's GUAM policy resides with the section of the foreign ministry in charge of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and of Azerbaijan's representation in international organisations. The head of the department ranks as the figure in the ministry with most influence on Azerbaijan's foreign policy.¹⁰ His influential position ensures that high-level policy-makers support GUAM enough to maintain and advance the organisation. Most likely it is via his mediation that GUAM receives the support from the president of Azerbaijan, if necessary. It is

⁸ The interviewee was able to provide a number of arguments as to why and how the CIS programme on cross-border co-operation may be helpful for Azerbaijan. The agenda has been developed in exchange with representatives from the target country, Russia. Nevertheless, the willingness of high-level officials to commit to the agenda is weak. Being asked for the reasons, the interviewee has not been able to name them. The interviewee also stated he was not invited as consultant to the meetings where such support is decided at higher level. The decisions are made based on written reports. (AZ_MED_2)

⁹ This impression is confirmed by an economist who had previously organised training with individual departments of the economics ministry. The interviewee gave some examples from this training that illustrated the predominant orientation of the officials to the agenda defined in higher ranks. Their interest in individually finding and presenting solutions to existing problems was low. (AZ_Private_Business_2)

¹⁰ To the question of who is the strongest player in foreign policy formulation, most of the analysts close to the political circles gave his name. The argument was that he is the most creative head in the foreign ministry and has the best resources at hand. The individual confirmed this assessment in the interview. (AZ_Private_Business_2, AZ_MP_1, AZ_Analyst_5, AZ_Gov_Analyst_3, AZ_Gov_Analyst_4) According to Thomas Goltz, the head of department has belonged to the ministerial staff since the early 1990s. See: **Goltz**, Azerbaijan Diary, 65.

obvious that the department is able to find enough material and ideational resources for GUAM's development. At least the department is ready to fund GUAM meetings in very representative settings in Baku.¹¹ In ideational terms, this head of department is eager to develop GUAM's flagship projects and takes most decisions concerning their implementation. Despite the fact that he does not work on economic issues, for instance, the decision on a new co-ordination committee for implementing the GUAM FTA rests in his hands.¹² The decision is therefore not primarily taken according to trade considerations. Decisive is the idea that GUAM should serve as an additional tool for Azerbaijan's international diplomacy concerning Nagorno-Karabakh.¹³ Given that the trade-related departments are not involved in such decisions, it is scarcely surprising that the Ministry of Economics widely disregards the GUAM trade activities.¹⁴ Nevertheless, a relatively high-ranking official from the Ministry of Economics attends the GUAM working group on trade. The readiness to attend the meetings is most likely triggered by the strong personal relationship between the official and the head of the GUAM co-ordinating department.¹⁵ Generally, officials from the foreign ministry report that their personal relations with the individuals who attend the GUAM bodies are crucial. They are a core resource for ensuring that all ministries stay involved in GUAM and indeed send delegates to the working groups.¹⁶ In a nutshell, Azerbaijan's active participation in GUAM strongly depends on the power of one ministerial department and personal ties to other departments that have to attend GUAM's sectoral activities. The next sub-section will show that also the horizontal co-ordination of the CIS and GUAM policy between the ministries and departments in charge of certain issue-areas influences how strongly the organisations are exploited for benefits in a specific issue-area.

¹¹ Taken from the author's observation at a GUAM event in Azerbaijan. Also, a GUAM official reported that Azerbaijan is always rather eager to host GUAM meetings in Azerbaijan and pay for the event rather than send the officials to the GUAM headquarter in Ukraine. (GUAM_Official_2)

¹² This was reported by AZ_MFA_1, AZ_MFA_2 and AZ_MFA_6.

¹³ In this way the head of the department represents GUAM vis-à-vis analysts in Azerbaijan. It was also the predominant framing in the interview in 2011. (AZ_MP_1, AZ_Gov_Analyst_4, AZ_MFA_1)

¹⁴ This has been stated by AZ_MED_1.

¹⁵ Several background talks confirmed the close relation between the mentioned individuals.

¹⁶ One official from the foreign ministry described this process in detail. The interview of another official roughly confirmed this narrative. (AZ_MFA_2, AZ_MFA_6)

8.1.1.2. HORIZONTAL CO-ORDINATION

This sub-section argues that is crucial how intensively Azerbaijan's co-ordinates its participation in the CIS sectoral activities with other state bodies that work on the issue-areas discussed in the CIS. Chapter 6 has already indicated that the intention to exploit a sectoral activity for some general gains in foreign policy or for specific sector-related gains varies across the organisations and sectors. So does the horizontal co-ordination of these activities. An example of intensive horizontal co-ordination in the CIS is the FTA negotiation. The Ministry of Economics co-ordinated participation in the CIS negotiations. It included all trade-relevant departments in other ministries. Also, high-ranking officials with decision-making powers in the respective ministries represented Azerbaijan in the core negotiations.¹⁷ Thus, officials who strongly shape Azerbaijan's trade policy defined the parameters of Azerbaijan's position in the FTA negotiations. As the preceding section outlined, this does not mean that the negotiations are carried out with the aim of employing the resulting FTA as a multilateral tool for regulation trade. But it ensured that the negotiations were approached with a plan how to take the optimal advantage of the FTA for Azerbaijan's trade. The opposite is the case in CIS migration activities. A department that does not work on migration issues co-ordinates Azerbaijan's attendance in CIS migration councils. It primarily communicates with the Azerbaijani States Migration Service. Other departments of the foreign ministry that also deal with migration issues hardly receive any information about the activities in the CIS.¹⁸ The Azerbaijani State Migrations Service (ASMS) functions as second body in charge of specifying the participation in CIS migration activities. When specifying the forms and priorities of participation in the CIS bodies, the ASMS, however, also defines the programme concerning irregular migration matters. They hardly invite the Ministry of Interior and the security agencies to define the agenda according to priorities in the field of irregular migration.¹⁹ This shows that Azerbaijan's involvement in CIS migration activities runs in parallel with policy-making in crucial

¹⁷ These officials assume other relevant tasks like the WTO negotiations. (AZ_MED_1)

¹⁸ The official even received the core interview questions in advance and obviously took some time to prepare the answers. But the official stated that he was not able to give any information about CIS migration activities. (AZ_MFA_3)

¹⁹ AZ_ASMS_1

areas of migration policy. It has few intersections with the main policy on irregular migration and also with the migration regulations that are negotiated with other partners such as the EU. Only labour migration aspects are defined by the ASMS which is primarily responsible for these matters.

An even lower degree of horizontal co-ordination marks participation in GUAM, as an example from the trade activities will show. The previous sub-section has already indicated that the GUAM co-ordination hub in the foreign ministry takes most decisions concerning GUAM trade-related activities. The interviews with officials from this and related ministries present agenda-setting in GUAM as a 'one man show'. An official from the foreign ministry appears to be the single driving force behind the FTA.²⁰ The official sees it as sufficient that the FTA was adopted. Accordingly, the official was not eager to discuss the problems concerning the FTA implementation with the colleagues from the Ministry of Economics. The GUAM tourism project provides another example for the tendency to keep the involvement of other ministries to a minimum.²¹ Until 2011 the project included the foreign ministry and an Azerbaijani tourism company. Chapter 7.1 has already discussed that the project disclosed some problems in Azerbaijan's tourism infrastructure. The foreign ministry declined to discuss these problems with the ministerial structures that work on tourism. An official suggested solving with the help of individual business-men and individual officials from the relevant ministries. This decision reflects that the official aims at the most workable solutions and not at improving Azerbaijan's regional tourism co-operation in general terms.²² Thanks to the power and resources of the department in charge of GUAM it is easier to

²⁰ The official depicted himself as the sole individual who has done something for the FTA. It would now be time that other ministries also did something for the FTA. However, there is little intention to indeed get other ministries involved. This report was confirmed by other interviewees. (AZ_MFA_1, AZ_MFA_2, AZ_MED_1)

²¹ Similar mechanisms apply to the GUAM VLEC activities against irregular migration. All GUAM security activities are more constructively integrated into Azerbaijan's security, mainly Nagorno-Karabakh related agenda, since the GUAM co-ordinators in the foreign ministry are in charge of conflict resolution. The VLEC structures, however, only weakly co-operate with other branches of the Ministry of Interior or state agencies that deal with irregular migration. The interviewees from the state migration service and an interviewee from the foreign ministry were not able to describe VLEC capacities. (AZ_MFA_3, AZ_ASMS_1, AZ_SMS_2) There are hardly any requests from the Azerbaijani side to use VLEC. This was reported by the official who works in VLEC. The interviewee reported that he informs other colleagues about VLEC from time to time and raises their interest. (AZ_Mol_2)

²² All examples are given by AZ_MFA_1.

implement the project without much co-ordination instead of co-ordinating it with other state structures.

Overall, CIS and GUAM activities are only intensively horizontally co-ordinated if they support Azerbaijan's trade or security policy directly. The CIS trade activities include the most relevant trade partners in the post-Soviet space and therefore attract most attention. Often, however, the sectoral activities are only weakly co-ordinated with the ministries that are primarily in charge of the issue-area in focus. This explains why participation in these activities does not generate more substantial policy co-ordination. If a department that is most informed about Azerbaijan's needs in an issue-area is not involved in the activities, it cannot exploit the CIS and GUAM activities for Azerbaijan's policy.

8.1.1.3. CO-ORDINATION WITH THE PARLIAMENT

A crucial foundation for Azerbaijan's often instrumental CIS and GUAM policy is the co-ordination with the parliament, Millis Majlis. Chapter 5 has mentioned that primarily the CIS but also GUAM works with multilateral legalised agreements. Some of these have to be ratified by the national parliaments. Azerbaijan's leadership thus needed to get the support of the parliament for CIS and GUAM membership. They also needed to ensure that the CIS and GUAM agreements are ratified so that they could pave the way for Azerbaijan's participation in the organisations' activities. The fact that since 1994 the Millis Majlis has been barely more than a *rubber stamp parliament* facilitates this.²³ The parliament lacks a strong opposition. A former Member of Parliament stated that it was already rare to reject laws submitted under Heydar Aliyev and that this is impossible under Ilham Aliyev.²⁴ An opposition delegate relates that in foreign policy matters the opposition apparently tends to trust the presidents' decisions. The argument is that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and other dependencies on former Soviet republics make it hard to develop an appropriate strategy. In some cases it is therefore better to agree to the ratification of an agreement that principally does not reflect the delegates' foreign policy orientation, since such agreements may have some

²³ Ergun, Ayça (2009), *The Presidential Election in Azerbaijan, October 2008*. Electoral Studies, No. 28.

²⁴ The interviewee is still in contact with current delegates. (AZ_Private_Business_2)

positive strategic effects for the resolution of the conflict. With this argument the delegate who generally rejects any rapprochement with the CIS is ready to ratify a CIS agreement if this increases Russia's support in matters related to Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁵ This readiness is built on the assumption that international agreements function as a communication tool and have limited domestic impact.²⁶ Thus, the majority of pro-Aliyev parties in the parliament and the high level of trust among opposition delegates concerning the foreign policy of the president limit the possibility of an agreement being rejected, if its content is not supported by the delegates.

Analysis of the core mechanisms in the domestic co-ordination of CIS and GUAM activities disclosed the basic conditions for pursuing intensive participation that is only partially driven by the desire to improve Azerbaijan's policy in the issue-areas discussed in the organisations. The following two sub-sections will highlight why policy-makers prefer no or only weakly co-ordinated activities in the areas of trade and security.

8.1.2. ESTABLISHED TRADE PRACTICES WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

This sub-section presents selected practices that dominate Azerbaijan's trade with neighbouring countries and spotlights two aspects: why the ruling elite does not desire multilateral legalised institutions and why private business actors also do not push for establishing such institutions in the CIS and GUAM. The following paragraphs will develop the core argument that Azerbaijan's ruling elite needs to be able to flexibly introduce measures to protect the domestic market in order to stabilise the current political regime. The strongest form for the co-ordination of trade policies that is discussed in the CIS and GUAM, namely the potential trade institutions discussed in the FTA, would challenge this flexibility. Entrepreneurs who

²⁵ A current Member of Parliament, who is also represented in the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, elaborated this narrative. It was in large part supported by another current and a former Member of Parliament. (AZ_MP_1, AZ_MP_2, AZ_Private_Business_2)

²⁶ In terms of practice, international agreements are often simply not considered in the policy processes. Domestic forces who claim their comprehensive implementation are generally weak. Additionally, a legal mechanism exists that renders international agreements harmless. In case of conflict with domestic legislation, international agreements do not have primacy over domestic law. See: **Abdullahzade**, *The Status of International Treaties in the Legal System of Azerbaijan*, 242.

desire to overcome the negative effects of the protectionist measures do not view a multilateral FTA as an efficient tool.

Chapter 5.1.1.2 has already noted that the current economic regime in Azerbaijan builds strongly on import monopolies.²⁷ These monopolies are a vital tool for the ruling elite to stabilise the elite's authority and, hence, to consolidate domestic sovereignty. The monopolies help political actors to establish bonds to potential veto-players. Expressed in simplified terms, the ruling elite rewards the loyalty of individual potentially powerful veto-players with monopolies on the import of specified commodities. A potential veto-player is allowed to control the import of a certain commodity, if the player supports crucial figures in the ruling elite.²⁸ Accordingly, the leadership needs to be able to maintain the monopolies and to flexibly distribute them among influential individuals in Azerbaijan's elite. Further, it needs to protect these monopolies by preventing producers from abroad from entering the Azerbaijani market in an uncontrolled way. Rigidly legalised FTAs, especially of a multilateral nature, are rather hostile to such a protectionist approach. Multilateral FTA negotiations make it more difficult, compared to bilateral ones, to put across the necessary exemptions of certain commodities from free trade.²⁹ Moreover, if FTA provisions that allow sanctioning excessive protectionist measures indeed become an institution, such provisions challenge Azerbaijan's flexibility. It complies more with the needs of Azerbaijan's ruling elite to resolve trade conflicts in bilateral consultations than through international arbitration institutions. The latter are addressed only in rare cases.³⁰ Not only

²⁷ Related by AZ_Analyst_6, AZ_Analyst_1. See also: **Ibadoglu**, Current State of Azerbaijan's Economy: Myth and Realities, 429.

²⁸ Several independent analysts explained this linkage as presented above. (AZ_Private_Business_1, AZ_Private_Business_2, AZ_Analyst_2, AZ_Analyst_6) This principle is also indicated in: **Radnitz**, Oil in the Family: Managing Presidential Succession in Azerbaijan.

²⁹ The argument that multilateral negotiations are generally disadvantageous for Azerbaijan's trade priorities was also emphasised by interviewees from the economics ministry. The link to the non-formal structures of the Azerbaijani economy is explicated by independent analysts, who have economic competence and are in contact with political and economic actors. They also claim this structure also as decisive for Azerbaijan's delay in the WTO negotiations. (AZ_MED_1, AZ_Gov_Analyst_2, AZ_MP_1, AZ_Private_Business_2, AZ_Analyst_2)

³⁰ This again complies with the unambiguous rejection of strong international arbitrary mechanisms by an official from the economics ministry and the foreign ministry. The former describes the most considered mechanism to solve trade conflict with former Soviet republics as bilateral consultation. Only in rare cases does the government turn to judicial authorities. (AZ_MED_1) The background is reasoned by independent analysts.

Azerbaijan but also core partners in the post-Soviet space tend to introduce ad-hoc protectionist measures beyond internationally accepted extent.³¹ These are often established via technical or quality standards. Especially the agriculture and food production sectors in Azerbaijan need good access to sales markets in the former Soviet republics, as chapter 5 has pinpointed. In order to stabilise these sectors, Azerbaijan's leadership has an interest in influencing changes in these standards which inter alia may be induced through regional FTAs. This interest creates incentives for Azerbaijan to shape the FTA negotiations. But the required flexibility concerning protectionist measures rules out that the ruling elite fully implements and enforces the FTA.

Given that the ruling elite has no interest in comprehensively implementing the multilateral FTAs, even entrepreneurs that need access to the markets in former Soviet republics do not perceive legalised multilateral FTAs as an adequate instrument. Primarily big business and only a minor part of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) have the capacities to engage in transnational trade. Their main obstacles in the trade with former Soviet republics are the frequently changing protectionist measures and corruption. According to the entrepreneurs, at least two phenomena reduce the capacity of an FTA to reduce these barriers. Firstly, insiders from the ministries rule out that the countries would indeed give up control of domestic custom regulations, which would be necessary. They assume that the ruling elite prevents such initiatives for the sake of its vested interests. The agreements, if negotiated among the former Soviet republics, provide only vague legal instruments for solving trade conflicts. These can easily be undermined in the post-Soviet environment where the rule of law is weakly consolidated.³² In this situation the most reliable tools to foster transnational trade are contacts with entrepreneurs and governments in the target countries. Big business has access to the domestic government which may establish links to the counterparts in the former Soviet republics. But SMEs lack such channels. Thus, the vague ambitions developed within GUAM to act as a hub between businesses and the members'

³¹ **Dragneva**, *Is 'Soft' Beautiful? Another Perspective on Law, Institutions, and Integration in the CIS*, 294.

³² An entrepreneur argues that not even WTO instruments are trusted in the post-Soviet context. (GE_Private_Business)

state agencies would play more in the hands of entrepreneurs. However, most SMEs in Azerbaijan are not informed about such GUAM intentions and would not contact the organisation, since the government hardly advertises it.³³ The established practices hence induce both state and private actors to employ the multilateral frameworks to improve their bilateral trade relations, but not to establish multilateral legalised institutions.

8.1.3. ESTABLISHED PRACTICES TO REGULATE MIGRATION

This sub-section will subsequently discuss three factors that prevent state structures in Azerbaijan from seeking more transnational co-ordination of migration policies in the multilateral contexts of the CIS and GUAM. First, Azerbaijani policy-makers define migration issues as a matter for domestic security forces that does not need to be co-ordinated transnationally. Secondly, efficient solutions exist for the few aspects that require co-ordination with other states. Finally, the affected population can build on societal linkages for dealing with migration problems in the post-Soviet space. This reduces the pressure on the government to protect society in these regards.

Azerbaijan's migration policy has so far concentrated on incoming labour and irregular migration, since these are most challenging for the domestic stability of the country. As already mentioned in chapter 5.1.1.1, outgoing migration rather contributes to Azerbaijan's stability and strengthens the domestic sovereignty of the ruling elite. The strongest irregular migration flows emerge from Azerbaijan's underdeveloped regions. They relieve demand for employment, ease the economic pressure in these regions through incoming remittances and thus support domestic stability. There are hence few incentives for Azerbaijan's leadership to invest money in preventing outgoing migration.³⁴ Generally, Azerbaijan wants to open emigration opportunities to the few target countries in the post-Soviet space, but reduce incoming labour migration. This is easier to implement in bilateral negotiations with

³³ Stated by AZ_Private_Business_3, who demanded a better advertisement in Azerbaijan

³⁴ This was emphasised by an analyst, who is in contact with NGO's that work on migration. A representative from the International Migration Organisation gave a similar picture. The state agencies are open to discuss the prevention of irregular migration and human trafficking with international partners and implement certain activities. But they are generally rather inert and not pro-active. (AZ_Analyst_1, AZ_Analyst_8)

the core emigration target countries. Multilateral formats may produce more pressure on Azerbaijan to open for incoming migration. Countries that are not important for Azerbaijan have, for instance, better chances to demand that Azerbaijan open its labour market for their migrants to the same degree as for migrants from Azerbaijan's core migration partners.³⁵ The general interest of Azerbaijan is thus to reduce the multilateral co-ordination of migration issues. It is rather depicted as crucial to strengthen Azerbaijan's security forces. These are said not to be reliant upon wider regional co-operation.³⁶

According to the concepts of Azerbaijan's state bodies that work on migration, there is little need for transnationally co-ordinating migration. Azerbaijan has only to co-ordinate the re-admission of detained irregular migrants with the former Soviet republics and other states. The interviewees described these undertakings as unproblematic, especially concerning Russia, the Central Asian states and China. In their eyes, the established bilateral ties with the security agencies in these countries permit the smooth transfer of detainees. The officials therefore do not desire any bilateral or multilateral agreements for their re-admission. On the contrary, re-admission agreements according to international standards would require additional expenditures from Azerbaijan.³⁷ They might oblige Azerbaijan to support other states in their migration policy and to spend more money on the repatriation of emigrants and on the sustenance of detainees. The migration agencies consider these measures as unnecessary and therefore prevent such arrangements. It appears to be a common attitude to argue that a country has no grounds to care about citizens who left the country, or about individuals who trespass in Azerbaijan.³⁸

Apparently, the officials do not consider the potentially bad labour conditions or violence that irregularly emigrating Azerbaijani citizens may experience as a

³⁵ Two officials who deal with migration issues made respective statements. (AZ_MFA_3, AZ_ASMS_1)

³⁶ At least, this is the reasoning of all interviewed officials with knowledge about migration. Some caution with regard to the capacities of the security forces may be recommended. These statements nevertheless reflect the fact that the national security forces do not seek a more co-operative approach.

³⁷ The official referred to EU standards in the example (AZ_MFA_3)

³⁸ This statement is taken from the interview with an official from the foreign ministry. (AZ_MFA_3)

challenge for Azerbaijan. The society only weakly presses the ruling elite to protect Azerbaijani emigrants from abuse abroad. The following two factors may explain this. Several non-governmental organisations in Azerbaijan work on migration and human trafficking, since it is a pressing topic in the regions. However, they lack efficient communication channels with government structures and often also with the affected population.³⁹ Therefore, the societal groups affected try to solve migration-related problems without appealing to state authorities. One incident exemplifies the opportunities. In 2006 Russia imposed a ban on workers from the Caucasus at Russian produce markets.⁴⁰ Selling their goods at these markets is the main source of income for most Azerbaijani migrants to Russia.⁴¹ Consequently, the ban strongly affected the Azerbaijani community. Since the government was reluctant to solve the issue immediately in CIS or bilateral consultations, the affected individuals found some non-formal solutions to this situation.⁴² One strategy was to employ workers from Ukraine as *straw men*, in order to continue the business. Other families sent the wives to the markets with the expectation that the Russian authorities would treat women less severely than men.⁴³ Likewise families affected by human trafficking hardly appeal to any state authorities and often not even to NGOs. Social, often religiously inspired, norms might lead to the social isolation of families with a human trafficking victim. This induces individuals affected to keep silent about their experiences.⁴⁴ Given the weak societal pressure,

³⁹ Since the early 2000s a limited pluralism can be observed in Azerbaijan, which led to the foundation of several NGOs. These, however, lack formalised lobbying channels. Their influence depends on the personal ties of the leadership to stakeholders in the state apparatus. See: **Valiyev**, Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan. A Failed Revolution, 22; **Rasizade**, Azerbaijan in Transition to the “New Age of Democracy”, 353.

⁴⁰ See: **Ergosheva, Nina**, *Proshchanie s Migrantom [Farewell from Migrants]*. Rossiiskaya Gazeta, 24 March 2007; **RFERL Newslines**, *New Law Banning Foreign Sales People on Russian Markets Takes Effect*.

⁴¹ **Yunusov**, Migration Processes in Azerbaijan, 89-90.

⁴² An official from the economics ministry reported that no specific measures have been undertaken. The issue was just raised in some ordinary intergovernmental consultations, but was considered to be of temporary character anyway. (AZ_MED_1)

⁴³ The first strategy was recounted by an analyst working on migration to Russia. The second strategy was reported by an analyst, who claimed to have heard of such strategies from several small businesses. (AZ_Analyst_4, AZ_Private_Business_2) The dominance of informal practices in response to Russian activities against this group of migrants is discussed also in: **Yunusov**, Migration Processes in Azerbaijan, 90-2.

⁴⁴ AZ_Analyst_1, working with migration NGOs gave several examples whereby border guards or police officers appear to be involved in organising the trafficking. The interviewee also described

state officials rather concentrate on domestic policies in order to avoid the additional burden described above that multilateral co-ordination could potentially impose.

8.1.4. CONCLUSION

In sum, three aspects permit the Azerbaijani leadership to pursue aims within the CIS and GUAM that are not immediately link to the issue-areas in focus. These are, first, the ability to decide on the participation in CIS and GUAM sectoral activities from above, second, to get the parliament to ratify nearly any international agreement submitted, and, third, to give officials in relevant ministries the mandate to specify how Azerbaijan participates in the sectoral activities. Two factors prevent Azerbaijani officials who participate in CIS and GUAM activities from being socialised into a more positive attitude towards regional policy co-ordination. These are the possibilities to exclude these officials from the decision-making and to exclude ministries that deal with a certain issue area from defining the CIS and GUAM policy in this area. Thus, the organisations are only exploited for Azerbaijan's policy in specific issue areas to the degree to which high-level officials in Azerbaijan agree to it. Much of the organisations' potential remains therefore unused.

The state is, nevertheless, eager to ensure favourable trade conditions and that the domestic stability is not challenged by incoming migration. The domestic practices for regulating trade that prevail in Azerbaijan and other post-Soviet countries direct the attention of state officials and private business to bilateral relations with stakeholders in the CIS and GUAM countries. As discussed in chapter 7, these can be fuelled by various effects of the multilateral environment of the CIS and GUAM. When it comes to migration issues, state officials see multilateral regulations as producing an unnecessary burden. Since the pressure from society for more efficient prevention of irregular migration and protection of outgoing and incoming migrants is low, there is little incentive to accept this burden. The following section will highlight what priorities the political regime in Ukraine produces.

social norms as a core problem. The main line of argument was supported by the other migration specialist interviewed. (AZ_Analyst_4)

8.2. UKRAINE: POLICY-MAKING AND ESTABLISHED PRACTICES

The case of Ukraine brings a political regime into the discussion that is, as mentioned in chapter 1.5.1, marked by a strong pluralism and features of democratic rule, but has not consolidated democracy. Characteristics of hybrid regimes shape Ukrainian politics. These are the limited impact of the formal rules of the polity, and the strong relevance of non-formalised institutions in the policy processes.⁴⁵ This section will analyse how this political regime influences the way in which Ukrainian policy-makers conceptualise the function of the CIS and GUAM. It will disclose that the prevalence of informal institutions in the more authoritarian Azerbaijan and in the pluralist Ukraine have similar effects. Both lay the foundations for a CIS and GUAM policy that is strongly instrumental and only incomprehensively exploits the opportunities provided. While in Azerbaijan most policy-makers intend this effect, it is often an unintended one in Ukraine. Ukrainian policy-makers have to consider the rationales of non-elite actors in society more strongly. Therefore Ukrainian policy-makers are open for more intensively co-ordinated activities in the CIS and GUAM. But weak policy co-ordination at domestic level and competition between individual state bodies often prevent the officials from optimally using the opportunities for co-ordinated activities. The same factors, however, also permit interested officials to continue an active CIS and GUAM policy in times where the president did not support the organisations. Finally, this section will discuss why Ukrainian officials support temporarily co-ordinated activities but reject permanent co-ordination via multilateral legalised rules. It will argue that this, similar to the Azerbaijan case, is a consequence of economic protectionism and the weak application of the rule of law in Ukraine and the post-Soviet space. The section will proceed in a similar way to the study on Azerbaijan. A sub-section will first highlight crucial aspects of domestic policy co-ordination. The second sub-section will reflect on common practices for regulating trade and security issues.

⁴⁵ Puglisi, Rosaria (2003), *Clashing Agendas? Economic Interests, Elite Coalitions and Prospects for Co-operation between Russia and Ukraine*. Europe-Asia Studies, Vo. 55, No. 6; Malygina, Ukraine as a Neo-patrimonial State: Understanding Political Change in Ukraine in 2005-2010.

8.2.1. THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE CIS AND GUAM POLICY

Chapter 5.1.2 revealed that Ukrainian officials have steadily participated in the CIS and GUAM. Even if the presidents have radically revoked support for the CIS or GUAM, participation has continued. This sub-section argues that several mechanisms account for this continuity. First, support – if not necessarily from the president then from high-level officials in the ministries – has allowed interested officials to meaningfully exploit the organisations. In the absence of such support, policy-makers may use personal ties with other actors in the government to ensure Ukraine’s continuing active participation. These ties also help to induce state officials to take advantage of the organisations’ opportunities in their daily work. Nevertheless, as chapter 7.2 has pinpointed, the officials do not exploit all opportunities, especially in GUAM. This section will argue that bureaucratic barriers between Ukraine’s state bodies impede the smooth co-ordination of CIS and GUAM activities. Since several state bodies are involved in certain activities the lack of co-ordination reduces the chances to consistently use the opportunities. Finally, the CIS and GUAM policy is weakly co-ordinated with other areas of Ukrainian policy. This primarily produces problems when it comes to the ratification of relevant multilateral agreements. In Ukraine the parliament is often a veto-player that makes the adoption of agreements more problematic. Three sub-sections will illustrate these mechanisms.

8.2.1.1. TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP POLICY-MAKING

Ukraine’s policy in the CIS and GUAM both benefits from and is negatively affected by the fact that Ukraine’s foreign policy-making is generally weakly co-ordinated. This creates obstacles to the smooth implementation of the policy agenda.⁴⁶ An example from the CIS and one from GUAM activities will highlight how this feature impinges on CIS and GUAM policy in two ways. It provides some guarantees that participation in both organisations continues in times where the leadership neglects

⁴⁶ See for example: **Wolczuk, Kataryna** (2009), *Implementation without Coordination: The Impact of EU Conditionality on Ukraine under the European Neighborhood Policy*. Europe Asia Studies, Vo. 61, No. 2, pp. 199-207; **Fischer, Sabine** (2006), *Integrationsprozesse im post-sowjetischen Raum: Voraussetzungen, Erwartungen und Potenziale [Processes of Integration in the Post-Soviet Space: Suppositions, Expectations and Potentials*. Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft, No. 1, pp. 121-25; **D’Anieri et al.**, *Politics and Society in Ukraine*, 207.

the organisations. But it limits the scope to use the organisations efficiently for Ukraine's foreign policy.

Chapter 5.1.2 briefly mentioned that the CIS was a non-topic in foreign policy discussions in Ukraine in the late 1990s when President Kuchma promoted GUAM and between 2004 and 2010 under President Yushchenko. During these periods the Ukrainian leadership did not entirely relinquish participation in the CIS, but it reportedly paid significantly less interest in co-ordinating Ukraine's participation in the individual CIS bodies. This, however, only slightly slowed down Ukraine's involvement in CIS activities. The division in the foreign ministry, which since 1991 has been responsible for Ukraine's CIS policy, was able to continue its work. It belongs to the department for the bilateral relations with the former Soviet republics. This department is of utmost relevance regardless of whether the foreign policy compass points eastwards or westwards. Therefore the division did not experience significant cuts in resources in the periods where the CIS activities were not supported by the president. Representatives of this division explained that they are independent enough from the president and from the highest department in the foreign ministry, the section for foreign policy planning, to continue their daily work when the presidents were largely ignorant of the CIS.⁴⁷ Their room for manoeuvre allowed them to make sure that delegates from various ministries and state bodies regularly attend all CIS councils. It was primarily this that paved the way for state officials working as experts in the various ministries to take advantage of the basic CIS activities, namely the council meetings and working groups. As chapter 6.2 and 7.2 have highlighted, these activities provide several benefits for the officials even without committing to any co-ordination with CIS members. The latter would have required a stronger degree of support from the government. In this period, it was the first priority of the CIS co-ordinating division that representatives from Ukraine attend the CIS councils. In case a department lacked

⁴⁷ This was stated by an official who has worked in this department since the early 1990s. The interviewee explained that not only did the activities not stall under President Yushchenko, they were also not necessarily intensified under Yanukovich or in earlier periods. (UA_MFA_4)

interest in a council, the CIS co-ordination hub often sent delegates who had no expertise in the topics under discussion in the meetings.⁴⁸

As this indicates, the CIS co-ordination hub had little power to ensure that individual CIS activities were the object of intensive engagement. It required the backing of high-level officials to exploit the CIS activities more purposefully. The participation in the FTA negotiations exemplifies this. President Yushchenko and the government were, according to some officials, initially reluctant towards the Russian proposal to negotiate a new CIS FTA. But the CIS FTA attracted the attention of powerful officials in the Ministry of Economics even in this 'orange period'. The ministry was therefore also able to pro-actively prepare the CIS FTA negotiations under Yushchenko in 2008. The intensity of participation in the negotiations continued unchanged under president Yanukovich. Hence, the outspoken pro-Russian stance of Yanukovich did not induce more commitments to the negotiations.⁴⁹ The interviews revealed that the officials from the Ministry of Economics who attended the CIS negotiations have more influence on decision-making than their Azerbaijani colleagues. They appeared to be relatively confident of being able to influence the final decision to adopt the FTA. They admit that it is easier to publicly discuss the CIS FTA under Yanukovich, but are sure that a way of adopting the CIS FTA would also have been found under Yushchenko. The confidence rests on the understanding that the CIS FTA was never planned as a direct multilateral tool for regulating the trade with the CIS countries.⁵⁰

GUAM similarly experienced the way that strong backing from top officials strengthens the intensity of Ukraine's commitment. It is, however, crucial which state body provides the support. Whenever the support of powerful political actors faded away, the officials involved in GUAM used their mandate and their personal ties to keep the Ukrainian ministries in favour of GUAM. The central co-ordination

⁴⁸ This was reported by an official from the foreign ministry, who had on one occasion to attend a CIS council. The interviewee declared that it was common practice to send people to the security councils who were not necessarily experts in the given field. (UA_MFA_7)

⁴⁹ These include, according to the statements of several interviewees, amongst other the legal and economic experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economics, the Customs Service and the State Service for Technical Regulation. (UA_MFA_2, UA_MFA_3, UA_MED_1, UA_MED_2, UA_SSTR_1, UA_MFA_4)

⁵⁰ An official from the Ministry of Economics and one from the foreign ministries argued in this way. (UA_MED_1, UA_MFA_2)

of Ukraine's GUAM activities has been less stable than that of the CIS. It strongly depended on the attitude of individual high-level officials. Until GUAM developed permanent organisational structures in the 2000s there was no specific GUAM division in the foreign ministry. In 2005 then foreign minister Borys Tarasyuk established a GUAM department in the foreign ministry. This department was assigned the task of enhancing GUAM activity and developing Ukrainian projects for GUAM. With these steps Tarasyuk planned to activate the organisations as a tool in Ukraine's foreign policy. After Tarasyuk resigned in 2007, the permanent delegate reported losing the direct contact to higher-ranking officials in the foreign ministry. This significantly weakened the delegate's capacity to develop GUAM. It has ever since been the task of the Ukrainian officials involved in GUAM to convince the ministry of GUAM's advantages. They strongly draw on their own and other GUAM participants' personal relations with influential Ukrainian officials.⁵¹ Therefore the situation even eased when Yanukovich came to power. Yanukovich came with an anti-GUAM attitude but brought Konstyantyn Hryshchenko to the government. Hryshchenko was foreign minister from 2010-12 and since 2012 has been a vice prime minister. Since 2010 he has been a core guarantor of Ukraine's continued GUAM membership for the following reasons. Hryshchenko attended the conference on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe in 1996 and supported the first joint statement of GUAM. He then lobbied for GUAM in the 1990s.⁵² According to several interviewees his former link with GUAM and his good relations with the GUAM secretary and the Azerbaijani key driver of GUAM increase his readiness to keep a place for GUAM in Ukraine's policy.⁵³ Primarily strategic rationales informed his efforts, while GUAM's impact on Ukraine's policy in specific issues areas was of secondary relevance. Hryshchenko did not prevent the shifting of responsibility for GUAM to the economics ministry in the course of the comprehensive administrative reforms in 2011. Thus, since 2011 a ministry has been in charge of GUAM that has little interest in GUAM as strategic foreign policy

⁵¹ Reported by GUAM_Official_1 and UA_MFA_6

⁵² Reported by GUAM_Official_1 and AZ_MFA_1

⁵³ An official from GUAM and one from Azerbaijan stated with relief that Hryshchenko is the 'buddy' of the secretary general and of the 'godfather of GUAM' in Azerbaijan, so it will be easy to convince him that it is not the time to leave GUAM. Indeed, Hryshchenko paid the GUAM secretariat several visits between 2010 and 2012.

tool. As the previous chapters have shown, the economics ministry sees least benefits in the organisation. It will according to its mandate send officials to the GUAM meetings. However, the GUAM officials, who are eager to see GUAM progressing, doubt that the economics ministry would support new projects. Again they argue that they will employ their personal ties to ensure Ukraine's participation in GUAM.

These personal ties may even trigger interest in GUAM's sectoral activities and allow state officials to exploit the activities more beneficially. Since 2008 the Ukrainian delegates to GUAM have preferred to directly interact with the individual ministries instead of interacting with Ukraine's GUAM co-ordination hub. In the eyes of the interviewees their network to state officials which the delegates established during their career is a core source for triggering interest in GUAM's activities. It is hoped that more interest in the sectoral activities will better embed GUAM in Ukraine's foreign policy. Since 2011 the strongest ties exist to sections of the Security Service and the Ministry for Emergency Situations. These bodies are therefore envisioned as core partners for new GUAM projects. The Ukrainian delegate to GUAM pro-actively approaches acquaintances in these bodies and advertises GUAM as a framework in which projects can be implemented with external funding. Together with these colleagues they develop feasible projects for GUAM. This procedure thus fosters a commitment to GUAM in order to achieve outcomes that indeed support Ukraine's security capacity.

The examples given demonstrate that state officials in Ukraine possess enough scope to pursue participation in specific CIS and GUAM activities, if the Ukrainian leadership disregards the organisations. This leeway allows the departments to concentrate on strategic priorities. These are inter alia to send officials to the meetings simply to indicate the country's interest, or to develop projects which primarily should add some substance to the organisation. In case the ministerial officials show interest in a specific sectoral activity such as the CIS FTA or GUAM security initiatives, the freedom of officials to lobby for these projects allows them to exploit the activities more substantially. However, as the following sub-section

will show, barriers in the horizontal co-ordination of the activities constrain their ability to derive optimal benefits from the organisations.

8.2.1.2. HORIZONTAL CO-ORDINATION

Three examples will illustrate the impact of the generally weak horizontal co-ordination of Ukraine's CIS and GUAM policy. A first example from GUAM will highlight that the power of individual departments to push through a project without involving the relevant ministries makes this project vulnerable to personnel changes in this department. The Trans-Danubian Energy and Transport Bridge described in chapter 1.5.3 highlights this. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the development of this trade and energy related project. The necessary economic and energy expertise was primarily delivered by a governmental think-tank and selected departments of the energy ministry in Ukraine. However, an official recalls that the implementation of this project was weakly co-ordinated with core officials from the energy, transport and also the economics ministry. Hence, the project never gained strong support from the ministries that are primarily in charge of Ukraine's energy and trade policy. As long as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-ordinated the implementation of the project, the interested officials from the energy ministry were able to promote their ideas in the project.⁵⁴ When the ministry lost interest in GUAM with Tarasyuk's resignation, the project fell into oblivion.⁵⁵ Hence, on the one hand an individual ministerial department has the resources to start implementing a project without including the ministries that primarily deal with the matter under discussion. This helps to give the impression that an organisation like GUAM develops prosperous economic initiatives. This impression has, however, little chance of continuing if this department re-considers its strategy. The lack of co-ordination prevents the implementation of projects that more substantially reflect the interests of the sectoral ministries.

⁵⁴ Related by UA_Analyst_3 who was involved in the project

⁵⁵ The same happened to the GUAM free trade agenda. The idea to employ GUAM as a mean to facilitate Ukraine's adjustment to EU trade regulations bears the hallmark of the foreign ministry. The Ministry of Economics was barely consulted. Accordingly, the relevant officials from the economics ministry never took this idea into account. However, an official attends reliably the GUAM trade working groups. This shows that the foreign ministry has at least the power to make an official from another ministry attend the GUAM sectoral body, even though the ministry lacks interest in it.

However, even in cases where officials from a ministry intend to use CIS and GUAM activities to improve their daily work, it is not a given that they will be able to do so. A glance at the domestic co-ordination of security activities reveals that domestic bureaucratic barriers prevent interested officials from taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the organisations. The previous chapters argued that officials from the Ministry of Interior are indeed interested in the drug-trafficking related CIS and GUAM activities. They report being able to influence Ukraine's contributions to the agenda of the CIS councils on drug-trafficking. But they can hardly influence who will be sent to the respective meetings. The decision is taken by the officials' superiors usually without consulting the officials who have regularly attended the council.⁵⁶ Often not always the most interested and most qualified individuals attend the meetings. This hampers the efforts of interested officials to optimally use the council meetings to inter alia strengthen personal ties with staff from the security agencies in CIS countries. Such ties are, however, relevant when the officials want to co-ordinate activities with the neighbouring countries, as the following statement indicates. The interviewees reveal that their ability to address other Ukrainian security agencies such as the Prosecutor's Office or the Security Service is low. Strong contacts with these agencies are, however, necessary to transmit relevant information to other countries. According to one official, it is a lengthy process to submit a request to Interpol, since this can be done only via the Prosecutor's Office. The time that it takes to get a high-level official from the Ministry of Interior to transmit the request to the Prosecutor's Office and eventually receive an answer makes it inefficient to appeal to Interpol in minor cases.⁵⁷ The officials therefore not only welcome direct ties to the security agencies abroad and the GUAM VLEC structures that directly exchange information with GUAM states. However, the Ukrainian branch of VLEC is incorporated into the Ukrainian Security Service. Therefore the interviewees from the Ministry of Interior have no direct access to VLEC. They do not even have sufficient information about VLEC

⁵⁶ This is taken from the interviews with three officials from the Ministry of Interior. UA_MoI_1, UA_MoI_2, UA_MoI_3

⁵⁷ Reported by UA_MoI_3 and confirmed by UA_MoI_2

capacities.⁵⁸ The interviewees argue that there is strong competition between the staff of the Ministry of Interior and the Security Service which complicates any interaction.⁵⁹ Apparently, this competition creates strong barriers for officials from the ministry of interior to employ VLEC structures. Chapter 7.2.2 related that the Ukrainian delegate to GUAM received a request to use VLEC to establish a contact to security forces from Moldova. Even this delegate perceived it as too difficult to arrange this via the Ukrainian VLEC branch and instead set up the connection via the VLEC technology in the GUAM secretariat in Kyiv. This example highlights the barriers that exist between state bodies in Ukraine for co-ordinating their GUAM activities. The insufficient co-ordination of the policy priorities and activities with other relevant state bodies thus weakens the extent to which CIS and GUAM activities are optimally utilised.

A final example will, however, show that the absence of comprehensive horizontal co-ordination may also support the viability of a project. The preceding section has indicated that officials from the Ministry of Economics managed to co-ordinate the CIS FTA negotiations relatively well with all potentially affected ministries.⁶⁰ This ensured that the relevant structures could make the best of the negotiations and the agreement. However, the CIS FTA activities have been strikingly weakly co-ordinated with the departments in charge of another strand of foreign trade policy, namely the departments that are involved in the negotiation of the EU Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). Even in 2011, just six months before the CIS FTA was adopted, a leading representative from the department of the foreign ministry that is in charge of the foreign policy planning was not able to

⁵⁸ An official who investigates transnational crime stated that he had no direct contact with the SBU and, accordingly, did not have the chance to hear about VLEC. The other official asked after the interview, if I would pass some information on VLEC, if I were to get more details in the GUAM headquarter. (UA_MoI_3, UA_MoI_2)

⁵⁹ All three officials from the Ministry of Interior relate to this phenomenon. One of them expressed the desire for stronger exchange in order to be able to intensify the operative capacities. The Security Service takes part in some CIS activities but does not report back on the results, which is unsatisfying. This is confirmed by an official from the foreign ministry. (UA_MFA_6)

⁶⁰ These include, according to the statements of several interviewees, amongst other the legal and economic experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economics, the Customs Service and the State Service for Technical Regulation. (UA_MFA_2, UA_MFA_3, UA_MED_1, UA_MED_2, UA_SSTR_1, UA_MFA_4)

give information about the FTA. The official was only informed about the DCFTA.⁶¹ At the same time, the officials interviewed involved in the CIS FTA negotiations were not up-to-date regarding the DCFTA.⁶² This lack of co-ordination does not create substantial problems for the two negotiations. Both projects do not mutually interfere with one another, especially since the CIS FTA was never perceived as strongly legalised trade regulation tool. Two officials implicitly state that the low degree of co-ordination with departments in charge of the DCFTA negotiations rather contributed to the CIS FTA negotiations. They report the departments to be rather ignorant concerning the CIS and unsupportive with regard to the FTA. Interference from this side would have most likely generated difficulties in the CIS negotiation process.⁶³ The next sub-section will highlight a more negative outcome of the missing horizontal co-ordination of the CIS FTA.

8.2.1.3. CO-ORDINATION WITH THE PARLIAMENT

The fact that the CIS FTA negotiations and the DCFTA negotiations were carried out in parallel prevented the CIS FTA from being constructively integrated into the public presentation of Ukraine's foreign economic policy. The public rhetoric has since 2004 been dominated by a strong pro-EU orientation. During this period the CIS has often been depicted as contradictory to Ukraine's EU ambitions. With Yanukovich the focus shifted in 2010 more towards Russia, but the new leadership has hardly undertaken measures to conciliate the EU and the CIS-oriented policy in public statements. In consequence, actors from the pro-EU camp in the government and parliament reacted with hostility to the adoption of the CIS FTA. They framed it as a contradiction to Ukraine's EU policy. This debate jeopardised the ratification of the CIS FTA agreement in 2012.⁶⁴ State officials argued that they intended to avoid a debate in parliament and in the public arena that would complicate the FTA negotiations. They therefore presented the CIS FTA in the Verkhovna Rada only

⁶¹ Interview with UA_MFA_1

⁶² Only one interviewee from the economics ministry was involved in the DCFTA negotiations but not centrally. The interviewee was able to relate a differentiated opinion about both processes not to give details on the status quo. (AZ_MFA_2, AZ_MFA_3, AZ_MED_1)

⁶³ UA_MED_1, UA_MED_3

⁶⁴ **Ukrainska Pravda** (25 July 2012), *Ratifikatsiya soglasheniya o zone s SNG potrebuat ot Ukrainy ob'yasnenii [The Ratification of the Agreement on the CIS Demands Explanations from Ukraine]*; **RIA Novosti**, *Ukraine Ratifies Free Trade Agreement with CIS*.

after the last round of negotiations.⁶⁵ By doing so they, however, risked a rejection of the FTA by the parliament. This would have nullified some of the efforts put into the FTA negotiations. The example shows that the Verkhovna Rada is potentially a strong veto-player that makes it harder to participate in agreements for primarily instrumental purposes.

This section detailed that *instrumental participation* is primarily facilitated by the fact that Ukraine's policy towards the CIS and GUAM is often weakly co-ordinated with the main lines of Ukraine's foreign policy, with ministries that formulate Ukraine's policy in the individual issue areas and with the officials who attend the sectoral councils. Such an approach neglects the opportunities for Ukraine's policy that lie in the sectoral activities. However, the same structures allow officials that are interested in the sectoral activities to nevertheless shape their policy within the CIS and GUAM in a beneficial way. The following sub-sections complete the picture of the constraints and opportunities for Ukraine's officials by exploring why they prefer no or temporarily co-ordinated over permanently co-ordinated activities.

8.2.2. ESTABLISHED TRADE PRACTICES

This sub-section will give an overview of why state officials and private actors in Ukraine are eager to improve their trade policy with the former Soviet republics through the previously analysed instruments: selectively applicable multilateral trade agreements and intensified ties with trade related state bodies in the neighbourhood. It will argue that the core reason is the prevalence of protectionist measures in Ukraine and the post-Soviet neighbourhood. The fact that multilateral trade agreements are not a reliable legal tool induces state actors to resolve trade conflicts through bilateral negotiations and to use multilateral agreements selectively in these negotiations. It induces private economic actors to strive for direct contacts with officials in the trade-related ministries of the former Soviet republics.

⁶⁵ Shortly after the interview period the officials had a hearing in the Parliament scheduled. An interviewee from the MFA was not very optimistic about the outcome, since it would be hard to convince opposition delegates especially of the fact that the CIS FTA is harmless and even beneficial for Ukraine. (UA_MFA_2)

For Ukraine's ruling elite it is crucial to be able to flexibly impose economic protectionist measures. The current political and economic regime in Ukraine shows features of a liberal market democracy. But the ruling elite is, nevertheless, substantially dependent on the loyalty of big business actors. Political and business actors are mutually dependent. These relations tend to undermine the rule of law. In the early 1990s Ukraine's rather authoritarian regime was strongly shaped by oligarchs who assumed political functions or substantially influenced the decisions of the government. In the early 2000s the capacity of the oligarchs to control political processes was weakened. Economic reforms led to more pluralism and replaced the predominant power of a single oligarch with competition between the oligarchs.⁶⁶ With Viktor Yanukovich's seizure of power analysts again observe a concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a small group of oligarchs.⁶⁷ It is therefore important for especially high-level politicians to ensure the loyalty of the oligarchs by shaping economic conditions in a way that is favourable to the oligarchs' businesses. As discussed in chapter 5.1.2, many of these businesses, especially in the heavy and chemical industry, still rely on trade with Russia or other former Soviet republics. It is, accordingly, crucial for the Ukrainian leadership to maintain a good access to these sales markets. At the same time it needs to support the competitiveness of the big businesses. This is often done via protectionist measures such as suspending export deliveries due to domestic considerations. According to an official from the economics ministry, Ukraine avoids international legal commitments that efficiently constrain such unilateral measures but which often breach agreed trade arrangements. In this light also the WTO arbitration mechanisms to which Ukraine had to commit when it became a member are problematic and require a strategy to be circumvented.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ **Aslund**, *The Ancien Regime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs*, 23-5; **Aslund, Anders** (2009), *How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy*. Washington DC: Peterson Institute Press; **Puglisi**, *A Window to the World? Oligarchs and Foreign Policy in Ukraine*.

⁶⁷ **Malygina, Katharina** (2013), *Die Oligarchisierung des ukrainischen Energiesektors unter Wiktor Janukowytsch 2010–2012 [The Oligarchisation of the Ukrainian Energy Sector under Victor Yanukovych 2010-2012]*. *Ukraine Analysen*, No. 112; **Pardo, Enrico** (2011), *Yanukovich's Ukraine after the Orange Revolution: Mere Parenthesis or on its Way Back to Normalcy?*. UNISCI Discussion Papers [Online], No. 27, p 277.

⁶⁸ Two officials explained that there is, however, a characteristic element that mitigates the negative impact of these arbitration mechanisms. It takes them a long time to come to a resolution in a conflict

Given this attitude, Ukrainian officials prefer to resolve trade conflicts with former Soviet republics exclusively in bilateral consultations. The necessary instruments for these consultations are primarily bilateral agreements, as well as multilateral agreements that are selectively employed according to the logic described in chapter 7.2. The idea is to avoid legal measures for the following reasons. It usually takes more time than consultations. Also, economically weaker partners will not necessarily comply with the verdict of an international arbitration body, especially if they lack the economic capacity to do so and if the rule of law is in general weak in the country. In relations with powerful partners such as Russia appealing to such arbitration bodies may lead to a confrontation that develops wider political implications.⁶⁹ Since Ukraine strongly depends on imports and exports from the neighbourhood, the country needs a sophisticated tool box to protect against ad hoc protectionist measures in other former Soviet countries. Under these conditions it is rational to aim for multilateral agreements as additional instruments, but to avoid strong enforcement mechanisms.

Due to the relevance of the CIS markets private economic actors from agriculture and heavy industry expressed their general interest in the new CIS FTA. The interest is limited, however, since they do not trust the FTA's immediate effect for Ukrainian companies. They do not expect the agreement to become an instrument to which SMEs can effectively refer in conflict situations, since such intergovernmental agreements are weakly enforceable in the post-Soviet space. In addition, they argue that the existing bilateral agreements have actually already formally abolished trade barriers. Mainly technical barriers exist and are often newly raised according to the trade developments in the CIS countries.⁷⁰ The SMEs do not credit the new multilateral FTA with the power to reduce these technical barriers and prevent the open and hidden protectionist measures that are frequently imposed. For reliable

case. This often leaves Ukraine enough time to continue with the economic practice in focus as long as it is necessary or to solve the problem by other means. An official from the economics ministry and an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explicitly stress the weak enforcement of international law as the characteristic that allows Ukraine to commit to it. (UA_MFA_2, UA_MED_1)

⁶⁹ Stated by officials from the economics ministry (UA_MED_1, UA_MED_2, UA_Analyst_6)

⁷⁰ See also: **Smallbone, David et al.** (2010), *Government and Entrepreneurship in Transition Economies: the Case of Small Firms in Business Services in Ukraine*. The Service Industries Journal Vo. 30, No. 5, p 659.

access to CIS markets on stable trade conditions good contacts to state officials in Ukraine and the CIS countries are more promising. Some SMEs have already problems gaining access to the relevant governmental structures in Ukraine, since there are only a few formalised channels for it.⁷¹ Hence, for the time being the SMEs seek better channels to influential players in the government and the business community in Ukraine and the former Soviet republics rather than multilateral legalised agreements. Accordingly, the Ukrainian private business actors who attended the GUAM economic council responded rather positively to the suggestion to introduce an FTA committee. The committee is welcome if it is capable of establishing direct contacts with the officials responsible in the GUAM states in case a business intends to export to the country. They primarily demand the appointment of a contact person in the GUAM secretariat to whom SMEs can appeal if they need support in brokering a trade deal. This requires that the GUAM secretariat have strong trust-based ties to the ruling elites in the GUAM countries.⁷² Both state and private actors, hence, prefer bilateral and non-legalised instruments in the trade relations with the former Soviet republics.

8.2.3. ESTABLISHED PRACTICES AGAINST DRUG-TRAFFICKING

The analysis practices to handle drug-trafficking will highlight that Ukrainian officials perceive it as necessary to improve the opportunities to co-ordinate their investigative and operative policies with the neighbouring countries. This priority originates in the fact that preventing and eliminating drug-trafficking in the long-term perspective is part of their agenda against drug-trafficking. It has already been mentioned in chapter 5.2.1.2 that the officials interviewed perceive drug-trafficking as a phenomenon that potentially affects global, regional and domestic security. The most problematic aspect is, in their eyes, the transit of drugs through Ukraine. This transit may destabilise other drug-consuming societies and fuel international crime. Accordingly, it is their duty not only to protect the domestic society but to fight against drug-transit. Acting only against drug-trafficking when it relates to

⁷¹ This complies with the findings of a survey among Ukrainian entrepreneurs. Ibid.,663.

⁷² This revealed the participant observation at the GUAM Business Council where GUAM_Official_3 invited entrepreneurs to discuss how GUAM may support private businesses when they face trade problems with GUAM states.

activities within Ukraine's borders is not satisfactory. The idea is to derail the entire trafficking network rather than only detaining selected individuals involved. Ukraine lacks the technical and legal capacities to do so independently. The officials are therefore eager to intensify interaction with the corresponding security structures in the post-Soviet neighbourhood.

The interviewees see the following three deficits in interaction with former Soviet republics. First, it is hard to gain information regarding who is responsible for concrete tasks in a state security organisation. Most former Soviet republics, including Ukraine, do not publish an internal structure of such state bodies or the contact details of the staff members. This lack of information forces Ukrainian officials to rely entirely on the readiness of the central contact in this agency to indeed transfer a request to the individual responsible. The often prevailing bureaucratic inertia in these agencies decreases the likeliness of a timely and efficient information exchange.⁷³ The exchange of information is, secondly, hampered by the fact that the national security agencies conceal internally gained information. An international expert who works on security co-operation with the former Soviet republics described this attitude as 'old Soviet style'.⁷⁴ The main problem is the diverging benchmarks for classifying information as confidential and top-secret. In many former Soviet republics, including Azerbaijan, information is said to be top-secret and therefore not exchangeable which in Ukraine would simply be confidential.⁷⁵ The third obstacle are the bureaucratic barriers described in chapter 8.2.1 that stand between Ukraine and its neighbours. They make it difficult to involve the security agencies in the neighbourhood in the detention of criminals if these operate outside of Ukraine's borders.

Shared legalised regulations would, according to the officials, not mitigate these problems. They see particularly the security related legislation as an exclusively domestic matter and do not expect any former Soviet republic to harmonise

⁷³ Reported as core difficulty by UA_MoI_3

⁷⁴ Taken from the interview with an official from the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv (U.S._Embassy_1)

⁷⁵ An official from the Ministry of Interior describes it as very unsatisfying that especially in the exchange with the authoritarian states in the region the answer of a request is: this is a state secret. (UA_MoI_2)

legislation with its neighbours.⁷⁶ To lower bureaucratic barriers and stimulate the smooth exchange of information Ukrainian officials aim to create trust. This is done by the instrument identified in chapter 7.2: personalised transnational networks to actors from the state security bodies in the neighbourhood. Hence, personalised networks qualify as a permanent mechanism that can be activated for the temporary co-ordination of investigations and detentions.

8.2.4. CONCLUSION

The previous analysis has revealed that the interplay of three factors defines how state officials in Ukraine make use of CIS and GUAM sectoral activities. Economic dependence on other former Soviet republics and the prevailing protectionism in Ukraine and its neighbourhood shape the attractiveness of multilateral agreements. Such agreements are a welcome tool if they can be selectively applied. But strongly legalised and enforceable agreements would rather harm the incumbent regime. Ukrainian officials strive to co-ordinate the fight against transnational criminal flows such as drug-trafficking with the post-Soviet neighbours. However, regulating such co-ordination permanently via multilateral agreements would contradict Ukraine's and the other CIS states' understanding of sovereignty. Given that in most of its neighbouring states the rule of law is weakly applied, legal instruments, especially international law, has limited power anyway. Trust-based personalised networks are therefore more efficient. The degree to which these tools can be achieved within the CIS and GUAM depends on the scope of the interested officials to influence domestic policy vis-à-vis the organisations. Weak co-ordination with the superiors and with other relevant state bodies often limits their capacity to realise the priorities. The possibility to loosely co-ordinate a policy with other foreign policy strands paves the way for endeavours that aim at achievements detached from the declared aims of a given project.

⁷⁶ If Ukraine is oriented at external players in this regard, it is rather the UN than any former Soviet country. Even here the interviewees were reluctant to incorporate model laws into Ukraine's legislation. As discussed in chapter seven, they therefore seek exchange with other former Soviet republics, which have already adopted a certain law. (UA_MoI_2, UA_MoI_3)

8.3. CONCLUSION

This chapter intended to explain why policy-makers in Azerbaijan and Ukraine conceptualise the function of the CIS and GUAM as the introduction to this chapter described it. Three questions were foregrounded. First, how do both states manage to intensively participate in activities which declare aims that do not comply with the states' intentions? This practice, which the thesis called *instrumental participation*, is the basis for exploiting CIS and GUAM activities for alternative purposes. It is therefore crucial to understand how the ruling elite manages *instrumental participation* without triggering conflicts with domestic societal actors. The second question posed, namely concerning the reasons as to why some policy-makers are not able to take optimal advantage of the sectoral activities. Finally, the chapter investigated why the states avoid permanently co-ordinated activities.

The origins of these approaches to the CIS and GUAM are rooted in two dimensions of the political regimes in Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Patterns in which the ruling elite co-ordinates CIS and GUAM policy explain the first two questions. In both countries primarily low-level ministerial experts develop an agenda for employing the sectoral activities for the domestic approach to issues in these sectors. In Azerbaijan high-level officials have the power to instruct their subordinates to pursue Azerbaijan's intensive engagement in the organisations' activities without involving these executing officials in the decision-making process. Accordingly, the experts do not have the chance to influence the state's CIS and GUAM policy. Azerbaijan's ruling elite is assertive enough to ensure that its top-down model of rule is not questioned by less powerful ministerial employees. Ukraine's instrumental CIS and GUAM participation rests in the ruling elites' weak capability to formulate and implement foreign policy in a top-down manner. Powerful state officials have the scope to circumvent formal hierarchies in policy-making by avoiding co-ordinating a policy with them. Another possibility is to influence them by activating personal networks. This gives some state officials leeway to pursue activities that appear, according to their declared aims, not to comply with Ukraine's foreign policy priorities and produce seemingly little results. At the same time, the often weak co-ordination between state officials in varying hierarchical positions and with other state bodies

decreases the possibility for an official to exploit the CIS and GUAM activities optimally.

The domestic political regimes in Azerbaijan and Ukraine strongly diverge, but similar characteristics induce the state actors to prefer temporarily co-ordinated activities. The ruling elites need to be able to flexibly impose measures to protect the country's economic actors in international trade. The regime in Azerbaijan with its strong informal institutions and loyalty based on personalised relations and economic or power rewards is far more dependent on this ability. It, however, also plays a role in Ukraine. The relevance of protectionism motivates policy-makers to use multilateral legalised agreements only indirectly and selectively, and to reject transforming them into legalised institutions. Due to a similar logic neither Azerbaijan nor Ukraine wants to be bound by multilateral legalised institutions in security matters. In authoritarian Azerbaijan it is feasible to fight against security challenges only in Azerbaijan and to neglect the wider regional dimension. Pluralist Ukraine cares more about the regional dimension of the phenomenon and is ready to co-ordinate its policy with its neighbours. The better instruments for intensifying co-ordination between states that weakly apply the rule of law are informal personalised relations instead of legalised agreements. In Azerbaijan non-elite societal actors hardly have the power to press the ruling elite to activate regional co-ordination. Their impact is higher in Ukraine. Especially in the field of trade, private actors also demand that the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space shift the focus from multilateral legalised agreements to establishing direct contacts with state and business structures in the neighbourhood.

The chapter revealed similarities in the impact of the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan and the pluralist regime in Ukraine on the country's conceptualisation of the CIS and GUAM. A pluralist society in which a wider range of societal actors influence policy-making is, hence, not necessarily more capable of extensively co-ordinating its policy with other regional players.⁷⁷ Azerbaijan's efficient top-down

⁷⁷ Some authors assume a link between the readiness of ruling elites to engage in regional integration and the capacity of the society to pressure the ruling elite by calling for more welfare. **Mansfield**, *Why Democracies Cooperate More: Electoral Control and International Trade Agreements*.

approach towards foreign policy-making and the ability of policy-makers' to pursue policies that deviate from the grand strategy due to the fact that the policy-making process is not efficiently controlled top-down explain the similarities. To understand how a political regime shapes a state's conceptualisation of a regional organisation it is therefore necessary not to refer to the categories authoritarian and democratic, but to investigate the state's domestic policy co-ordination and the *de facto* influence and preferences of societal actors according to the prevailing state-society relations. It is important to consider not only the domestic political regime but also the regimes in the neighbourhood.

9. CONCLUSION: A POST-SOVIET VARIETY OF REGIONALISM

To round off the analysis this chapter draws together the theoretical discussion and empirical findings. It will establish the link between the explorative study undertaken and the debates on regionalism in the post-Soviet space and beyond. This is done in the manner of Grounded Theory methodology by first clarifying the findings for the previously empirical study. Then some hypotheses will be deduced from the case studies that propose a focus for studying regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and beyond. By doing so the thesis acknowledges that the results are not generalisable to a broader case universe. With the hypotheses that are grounded in empirical data the thesis nevertheless intends to contribute to the theoretical and empirical debates on regionalism. They offer theoretical considerations the validity of which can be explored in future research. The chapter will proceed in four steps.

The first section will specify how the empirical findings are reflected in the framework that chapter 3.5. It will then deduce some hypotheses from the case studies that propose how different political regimes imply varying conceptualisations of regionalism. A second section will clarify what the thesis can add to the existing literature on regionalism in a post-Soviet and comparative perspective. The discussion concentrates on the nexus between regionalism and political regimes. Section three will discuss how the findings may inform policy debates on the implications of regional organisations for the post-Soviet space but also for global developments of regionalism. The last section will critically reflect on the future research that is needed to enhance the validity of the research findings.

As the literature review specified, this thesis is primarily interested in the question of how regional organisations in the post-Soviet space align with the diverse conceptualisations of regional organisations that exist in the world. The research also intended to contribute to the comparative regionalism literature by substantiating the nexus between political regimes and varieties of regionalism. Therefore, the presented study has, first, explored how policy-makers in a hybrid

regime with characteristics of authoritarianism and a hybrid regime with strong political pluralism conceptualise the function of two regional organisations. Second, it has shed light on the impact of political regime features on the identified conceptualisation. The research findings support the argument that the cases studied in the post-Soviet space add new variety to the concepts of regional organisations. It is not the organisational structure and the types of activities which are new. These are well-known from inter alia Western European organisations. New is their function. The member states studied have altered the function of these activities according to the needs of their domestic political regimes. In some regards the former Soviet republics re-interpret the function of the regional organisations in a way known from regional organisations beyond Europe and Northern America. In other regards the post-Soviet conceptualisation appears to be unique. The theoretically oriented in-depth analysis has generated some new insights which cannot be considered to hold true for other cases. They can, however, serve as orientation in terms of where to focus when studying the function of a regional organisation. The findings imply that it is important to investigate the notions and practices of regime survival that exist in the varying political regimes. These determine which aims a state pursues and how it does so. Another relevant aspect is the co-ordination of policy-making. It influences how ruling elites manage pursuing a policy in these organisations that complies with their specific conceptualisation of regional organisations. The following section will detail these findings through a discussion of the analytical implications of the empirical research.

9.1. EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL FINDINGS

The endeavour of the PhD research presented here has been to gain additional knowledge about the function of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The review of empirical and theoretical literature in chapter 2 and 3 has concluded that the existing deliberations do not convincingly explain the regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The thesis has therefore adopted an inductive strategy. It has studied the policy of Azerbaijan and Ukraine in the CIS and GUAM to highlight how the policy-makers in these states conceptualise

these organisations and why they do so. The findings pose the question of how the specifics which manifest themselves in the post-Soviet space vary from what the literature depicts as characteristic for regionalism in other areas of the world. This question can be answered more precisely if the empirical findings for Azerbaijan and Ukraine are translated into abstract terms. With regard to the comparative regionalism debate the research results also ask if there are other states with similar characteristics that have developed a grasp of regional organisations. The interpretivist approach adopted by this thesis dismisses generalisations of empirical findings. The thesis can, thus, not answer this question. It has, however, developed findings which have not yet been considered to this extent in the debate. As contribution to the empirical and theoretical discussion the thesis therefore develops an analytical model from the empirical cases which can be used for further empirical studies.¹ Evidences from other cases will either strengthen or weaken the plausibility of the hypotheses. The following sections will show that the research findings can contribute to systematise the study of varying functions of regional organisations.

The findings imply two aspects to give insights of the expected function: the goals actors pursue and the activities they prefer to employ for achieving these goals. It can be hypothesised that both the aims and the preferred activities depend on the state's domestic background, against which the ruling elites formulate and implement foreign policy. The next paragraphs will pinpoint the analysed function of the regional organisations and its domestic origins in the following steps. They will first express in abstract terms how Azerbaijan and Ukraine define the aims and preferred activities they pursue in regional organisations in the post-Soviet space according to their domestic political regime. A final subsection will take another step of abstraction and formulate the findings in a parsimonious way that facilitates their enhancement or testing in future studies.

¹ The thesis follows here the approach of Grounded theory and is also oriented at Max Weber **Weber, Max** (1922), Die "Objectivität" sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis. In: Weber, Max (ed.), *Gesammelt Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Tübingen, pp. 189-93; **Burger, Thomas** (1976), *Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation... History, Laws, and Ideal Types*. Durham; **Corbin and Strauss**, *Basics of Qualitative Research*.

9.1.1. AIMS AND DOMESTIC ORIGINS

Two empirical observations inspired the thesis to distinguish two categories of policy goals: *ultimate* and *intermediary goals*. Ultimate goals describe in our case what the states generally hope to achieve through the regional organisations. Intermediary goals are the means or steps by which the states intend to approach the ultimate aims. This differentiation originated in the following. First, Azerbaijan's and Ukraine's foreign policy rhetoric invokes self-reliance and independence. It objects to integration in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, the states engage in activities that purport to indicate interest in some degree of integration, but they do not employ them to this end. Hence, the declared policy aims of Azerbaijan and Ukraine and their commitment to activities, which are declared to serve integration, do, at first glance, not point in the same direction. Instead the states appear to waver between non-integration and potentially integrative activities. Differentiating between the ultimate and intermediary goals permits to explain how the participation in integration-oriented CIS and GUAM activities is in line with the rejection of integration.

In order to grasp the ultimate goals the analysis turned to the notions of sovereignty which determine policy-making. The decision was, as stated in chapter 3.3.7, inspired by the interview narratives and authors who argue that a state's reluctance to surrender sovereignty is a crucial intervening variable in the conceptualisation of regionalism.² The study employed Krasner's three notions of sovereignty. He argues that states in a globalised world consider the strength of their domestic, Westphalian and interdependence sovereignty when making foreign policy choices. This disaggregation of sovereignty concerns helped to disentangle what sovereignty notions predominate in the case countries. Some characteristics of the post-Soviet situation in Azerbaijan and Ukraine give insights into core sovereignty concerns. The ruling elites have only recently, namely with the states' independence in 1991, gained the chance to establish Westphalian sovereignty. They have to consolidate their ability to exert authority, hence their domestic sovereignty, according to the domestically established political

² **Krasner**, *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*, 3-4; **Krasner**, *Power, the State, and Sovereignty*, 232.

regimes. As with all states in this era of globalisation, they also face challenging cross-border flows that are difficult to control. These flows require strong control, and hence strong interdependence sovereignty.

As the study revealed, the ruling elites in Azerbaijan and Ukraine prioritise the three notions of sovereignty as follows. The primary ambition of the leadership in Azerbaijan and Ukraine is to consolidate the domestic sovereignty. To this end both states concentrate on achieving uncompromised Westphalian sovereignty. Uncompromised Westphalian sovereignty helps consolidate their domestic sovereignty due to two factors. First, remaining interdependencies between the newly independent states create undesired channels for external interference into domestic affairs. Secondly, the hybrid regimes are vulnerable to external interference, since the leadership is strongly accountable to selected powerful domestic economic and political players. The ruling elites have to primarily serve the vested interests of these domestic players. Committing to regional institutions that grant external players a say in the domestic and foreign policy might challenge the ruling elites' capacity to do so.³

The prioritisation of interdependence sovereignty varies in Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Azerbaijan's ruling elite perceives its domestic sovereignty as only weakly dependent on trade and other societal flows between Azerbaijan and the other former Soviet republics. In addition, the ruling elite faces little pressure to improve their way to cope with transnational flows from elites and other societal actors. It is therefore not interested in further strengthening its interdependence sovereignty. Ukrainian policy-makers assess Ukraine's ability to independently settle transnational challenges as weak and deem it necessary to protect the domestic and international society from harmful transnational flows. Ukrainian society is perceived to be more reliant upon other former Soviet republics in its economic welfare and security. Therefore Ukrainian officials also intend to

³ The literature on hybrid regimes give a helpful account of these dynamics as chapter 4.3.3 has expounded. See for example: **Karl**, *The Hybrid Regimes of Central America*. **Hale**, *Democracy or Autocracy on the march? The colour revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism*. **Guliyev**, *Measuring Hybrid Regimes: An Alternative Measurement Method and Classification of Post-Soviet Regimes*. **Levitsky and Way**, *Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*.

strengthen the interdependence sovereignty through the regional organisations. This aspect, nevertheless, ranks last among Ukraine’s priorities. Figure 12 visualises the sovereignty priorities of Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

Figure 12: Ranking of Sovereignty Priorities Pursued in Regional Organisations

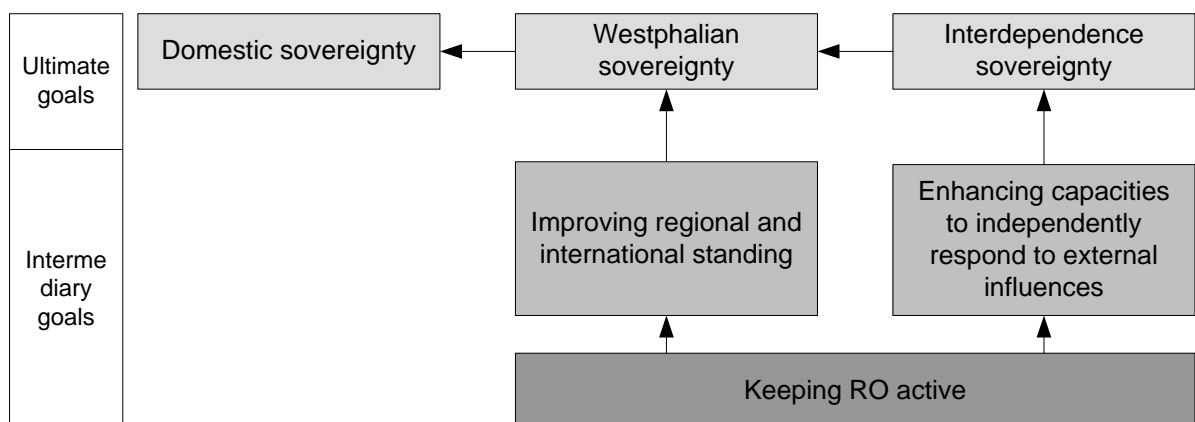
Political Regimes	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Hybrid regime with affinity towards democracy (Ukraine)	Domestic Sovereignty	Westphalian Sovereignty	Interdependence Sovereignty (weak)
Hybrid regime with affinity towards authoritarianism (Azerbaijan)	Domestic Sovereignty	Westphalian Sovereignty	Interdependence Sovereignty (nearly absent)

The priority-setting described informs the intermediary goals, that is the aims pursued in the various sectoral activities of the regional organisations. The ambition to improve the sovereignty concern which is most important for regime survival guides the ruling elites' interpretation of the aims of established activities in the organisations. In our case it is the domestic and Westphalian sovereignty. The specific post-Soviet environment, which as outlined in chapter 5 is characterised by persisting perilous dependencies as well as productive interdependencies, and the international promotion of regionalism prompt the two former Soviet republics to pursue the following three intermediary goals. The first is to enhance the states’ capacity to independently cope with domestic and regional challenges. A second intention is to improve the states’ regional and international leverage. The final ambition is sub-ordinated to the others, namely the effort to maintain the organisations as a vehicle for promoting the first two intermediary goals. The next paragraph will spell out how the state officials in Azerbaijan and Ukraine link the identified intermediary and ultimate goals.

The above mentioned aim to gain stronger capacities on the part of domestic policy-makers to unilaterally handle challenges linked to the neighbourhood has the following implications. Strong state capacities reduce interdependencies from the neighbouring states and consolidate Westphalian sovereignty as examples from the security and trade sector show. Efficient national security

forces diminish the necessity of co-operating permanently with the neighbouring countries and decrease dependencies on the others' security policy. In the field of trade it is helpful to improve the chances for favourable bilateral trade negotiations. This helps manage productive economic interdependencies. It also weakens the preponderant weight of some core trade partners like Russia, may result in better trade conditions and, hence, reduces dependence. Both measures stabilise domestic sovereignty by improving the states' economic situation without compromising Westphalian sovereignty. The, as above mentioned, envisioned improved regional and international leverage supports the states' ability to make their weight felt vis-à-vis powerful regional players, such as Russia. It diminishes their vulnerability to interference by the neighbours. The third intention, to keep the regional organisations alive, is a necessary condition for achieving the previously mentioned aims. First, the opportunities for strengthened capacities and international leverage emerge from the multilateral interaction in these organisations. Secondly, states that commit *de facto* or allegedly to regional organisations gain international credibility, since international players like the UN, the US or the EU diffuse the idea of regionalism internationally as best practice. The higher a state's international credibility, the stronger its scope to advance domestic and regional matters internationally and to diminish the power of regional opponents. Figure 13 visualises the relationship between the ultimate and intermediary goals.

Figure 13: Relation of Ultimate and Intermediary Goals



9.1.2. PREFERRED ACTIVITIES AND DOMESTIC ORIGINS

The CIS and GUAM have not established unique forms of activities but draw on the repertoire of most regional organisations: bureaucratic procedures, multilateral negotiations, intergovernmental agreements and co-ordinated activities. But Azerbaijan and Ukraine define the expected function of these instruments in a specific way that is distinct from, for instance, European concepts. The analysis identified a number of mechanisms with which policy-makers in Ukraine and Azerbaijan expect to pursue their intermediary goals through these activities. Characteristic of these mechanisms is that they require the states to co-ordinate their activities with other member states to varying degrees. The activities can be clustered into the following two groups of activities with varying degrees of co-ordination.

The first cluster includes activities that require no multilateral co-ordination. Such activities are to follow bureaucratic procedures and to participate in councils. The support of bureaucratic practices includes the response to requests from the organisations and suggestions for a joint agenda. Supporting these practices enables the states to keep both membership and the organisation as such alive without intensive multilateral interaction. Such activities rely on the state's individual decision to contribute and do not require any a priori multilateral co-ordination. The same applies to participation in council meetings. Attending council meetings enables delegates to monitor developments in the neighbourhood states. Such monitoring does not require multilateral co-ordination. The intelligence gained may inform the domestic policy of Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

The second cluster covers activities that rest on temporary multilateral co-ordination; a degree of intensity that is still acceptable to both Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Such activities are attempts to influence the negotiation of agreements with the support of other member states. This support can be enlisted in the negotiations without prior arrangements, but may also be directly steered through temporary coalitions. Another option is to co-ordinate activities in joint operations. In these activities the delegates try to co-ordinate the expression of

their preferences with other states in order to influence an agreement or an operation in line with the domestic interests of their respective states. They use the multilateral environment to increase their leverage vis-à-vis powerful counterparts by the support of other states. They promote a joint agenda vis-à-vis international actors in order to gain more ideational or material support from these actors. But the states do not commit to any permanent form of co-ordination. It is noteworthy that the co-ordination refers to the negotiations in the multilateral context only. Neither Azerbaijan nor Ukraine intends to co-ordinate their domestic policy in the discussed matters with the other member states. The states agree, for instance, to co-ordinate their negotiation position with other states but not to co-ordinate their policy according to the negotiated agreements.

Only some Ukrainian officials strive to establish permanent mechanisms that allow the co-ordination of Ukraine's trade and security policy temporarily with other former Soviet republics. They intend to activate these permanent mechanisms in selected cases only. The co-ordination thus remains temporary. Such commitment has been observed in the trade and security matters. In the field of trade Ukraine has ratified the CIS FTA, which potentially requires co-ordination in its implementation. Ratification permits, for example, state officials to appeal to other signatories' for support in urging another state to act according to certain FTA provisions. To continue to multilaterally negotiate the FTA's implementation is also crucial in order to underscore the credibility of the agreement. Only if the agreement is tangible Ukraine can employ it as a strong tool in the negotiation of bilateral trade deals or conflicts. This multilateral co-ordination is, however, not permanent, since Ukraine employs the FTA primarily to improve its bilateral trade policy. The intention is not to comprehensively subordinate Ukraine's trade with the neighbourhood to this multilateral agreement. Ukraine ensured that the domestic impact of the FTA remained limited by not committing to any strong monitoring mechanisms. In the security sphere, Ukrainian officials aim to establish a permanent network to officials from the security forces in the neighbouring states. The idea is to temporarily activate

this network, if a domestic investigation or operation requires operative support from the neighbouring countries.

The fact that the ruling elites prefer less intensive multilateral co-ordination roots in at least three factors of the domestic political regimes. First, as mentioned above, the ruling elites especially in Azerbaijan are strongly accountable to powerful political and economic elites in the state apparatus and beyond. Accordingly, the policy hardly follows the formally defined rules, but is characterised by non-formalised power relations. This undermines formal domestic and international rules. It weakens the application of the rule of law. Similar processes are in place in Ukraine, though the rule of law and formal policy-making procedures are stronger. Under these circumstances any official who intends to co-operate with the neighbourhood on a long-term basis would prefer a form that does not imply permanent co-ordination as would be the case with multilateral legalised institutions. Transnational personalised networks are more helpful. Secondly, it is crucial how strongly state officials from the lower expert levels can influence the policy. High-level officials who are part of or closer to the centre of the ruling elite tend to avoid any co-ordinated activities. According to the logic of regime survival they do not at all consider co-ordination with external players as helpful. Low-level officials, in contrast, primarily aim at fulfilling their assignment defined by their superiors. They may recognise the potential that rests with co-operative approaches to fulfilling their duty. The degree to which these officials may realise their co-operative ambitions strongly depends on their power to influence policy formulation. In authoritarian Azerbaijan the scope to do so is narrow since the ruling elite is able to put across its policy in a top-down fashion. In Ukraine, the domestic policy-making is weakly co-ordinated and low-level officials have more influence on the policy formulation. Accordingly, these actors can better pursue activities that require a temporary policy co-ordination beyond the GUAM and CIS councils. It is noteworthy that not only the domestic political regime but also the political regimes of the other member states' play a role. The empirical findings showed that the states conceptualise the organisations as a tool to improve the states'

sovereignty in the interplay with the other members. They consider patterns according to which other member states commonly act when defining the goals and preferred activities in regional organisations. Most relevant is the prevalence of authoritarianism and informal practices in the politics of many former Soviet republics.

9.1.3. A MODEL FOR ANALYSING CONCEPTS OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Based on the previous deliberations on the cases of Azerbaijan and Ukraine this section can formulate more abstract hypotheses. The thesis argues that these hypotheses are valid for the cases studied. The empirical findings are further abstracted to introduce them to the theoretical debate. How strong their validity is beyond the case sample needs to be examined in additional studies. In focus are hypotheses that propose how political regime characteristics influence the conceptualisation of the function of regional organisations. The hypotheses are visualised in the matrix below (Figure 14). The thesis consulted the empirical findings about the hybrid regime with authoritarian face in Azerbaijan and the hybrid but strongly pluralistic regime in Ukraine. In order to add insights of the most researched cases, namely the conceptualisation of regional organisations by democracies, the matrix includes assumptions of the old regionalism. The matrix does not reproduce the above outlined ultimate and intermediary goals and the preferred activities, since these are specific for the post-Soviet space. Instead it concentrates on three categories that more generally inform the regimes' conceptualisation of the regional organisations. The matrix seeks to indicate under which conditions states tend to commit to multilateral interactions of different intensities. The influencing factors are linked to political regime types. To provide a more precise analytical focus they concentrate, however, on specific elements of these political regimes. The first category is how the regimes prioritise the three notions of sovereignty: domestic, Westphalian and interdependence sovereignty. The second category refers to domestic policy-making practices. It varies between top-down and integrative approaches. Integrative approaches build on the bottom-up accumulation of

preferences, as is ideal-typically characteristic for democracies.⁴ The third category is the application of the rule of law, which is assumed to be strong in democracies and weak in authoritarian states and also in hybrid regimes as section 3.4.3 has outlined. Reading the matrix leads to three hypotheses.

- 1) States which prioritise the protection of their Westphalian sovereignty over enhanced interdependence sovereignty aim for low intensity in their multilateral interactions, which rests exclusively on non-co-ordinated or temporarily co-ordinated activities. Strong top-down policy-making reduces the likelihood of a turn towards co-ordinated activities. Weak rule of law in these states decreases the attractiveness of permanently co-ordinated activities.
- 2) If the policy-making allows sufficient leeway for bottom-up influences states which prioritise the protection of their Westphalian sovereignty over enhanced interdependence sovereignty tend towards long-term but not permanently co-ordinated multilateral interactions. Weak rule of law in these states decreases the attractiveness of permanently co-ordinated activities.
- 3) States which are ready to compromise their Westphalian sovereignty for the sake of interdependence sovereignty and have an integrative approach to foreign policy-making and strong rule of law, tend to opt for intensive permanently multilaterally co-ordinated activities.

These hypotheses intend to stimulate the research focus of studies on regional organisations in areas of the world in which different political regime types dominate. In order to investigate intermediary goals, preferred activities and underlying rationales of states that fit into the first and second hypothesis, future research may consult the more detailed findings for Azerbaijan and Ukraine. These have been detailed above and are visualised in Figure 2.

⁴ This assumption builds on the general concept of legalised bureaucratic rule. Authors like Graham Allison incorporated in the institutionalist approaches of foreign policy-making. See: **Weber**, *Economy and Society*, 215; Allison, Graham T and Philip Zelikow (1999), **Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis**. New York: Longman.

Figure 14: Domestic Factors and Preferred Intensity of Interaction

Intensity of multilateral interaction	Priorised notion of sovereignty	Application of rule of law	Co-ordination of foreign policy-making
Temporary co-ordination	Westphalian sovereignty	weak	top-down
Long-term ad hoc co-ordination	Westphalian and weak interdependence sovereignty	weak	top-down, weakly bottom-up
Permanent co-ordination/integration	Strong interdependence sovereignty	strong	top-down, integrated

9.2.CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LITERATURE

With the summarised research results the thesis intends to contribute to area-specific and comparative regionalism research. The research is driven by the ambition to provide additional knowledge about the varieties of regionalism with an analysis of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. Another aim was to contribute to the debate on the domestic conditions that foster the varying conceptualisations of regional organisations. This sub-section will now clarify whether and how the thesis kept these promises. It will proceed in two steps: firstly the section will discuss additional insights concerning varying outcomes of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and beyond. Secondly, it will discuss how the findings enhance knowledge about the impact of political regime characteristics on regionalism.

9.2.1. FUNCTION OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

In chapter 2.4 the study promised to enhance the literature on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space by changing the analytical perspective. The analysis deflected the focus from the organisations' failure to produce integration which most articles have thus far discussed. The presented study asked instead what function the member states expect the organisations to assume. It was hoped that this would explain why most member states do not stop participating in organisations like the CIS and GUAM. The research question

chosen has, as argued in chapter 2.3, so far hardly triggered the attention of scholars who work on the post-Soviet space. Therefore the thesis consulted literature on regional organisations in Asia and South America for guidance. These studies advised to reconsider factors that the old regionalism literature has identified as obstacles to integration. The factors might not be weaknesses but rather constitutive features of the regional organisations that contribute to the viability of the organisations. The discussion includes the hollowness of multilateral agreements or the states' unwillingness to cede sovereignty.⁵ Indeed, the function of the organisations comes into sharper relief when using the factors mentioned as a yardstick of the analysis.

The theoretically informed but strongly inductively driven case studies have unveiled a number of functions that have so far not been reflected in the literature. The findings permit the argument that organisations like the CIS and GUAM are relatively robust, since they offer a variety of benefits for the members' domestic and foreign policy. The preceding section has already given a full account of the organisations' perceived function and its origins. This subsection will therefore present only three aspects that underscore where the findings may most significantly add to the debate. First of all, the findings show that primacy of the states' eagerness to consolidate their Westphalian sovereignty does not detract from interest in the regional organisations.⁶ According to policy-makers in the case countries, the CIS and GUAM help consolidate domestic and Westphalian sovereignty. The organisations offer a variety of activities which the members can exploit to this end. These include ideational effects such as an improved regional and international reputation. This permits the states to develop their policies more independently from the regional hegemon Russia. The sectoral activities also generate new instruments such as agreements, technology and enhanced knowledge. The instruments help the ruling elites to independently protect themselves against external interferences and challenges to their domestic authority.

⁵ **Carranza**, Can Mercosur Survive? Domestic and International Constraints on Mercosur, 77; **Nesadurai**, Globalisation, Domestic Politics and Regionalism, 40. **Dent**, Taiwan and the New Regional Political Economy of East Asia, 388.

⁶ As assumed inter alia by **Sakwa**, The CIS: Conflicts of Space and Time.

Secondly, the results highlight that participating in the negotiation of multilateral legalised rules is not a merely communicative act or an action without purpose.⁷ The results indicate that the member states benefit from such negotiations even without being interested in implementing the resulting agreement. The agreement may instead be an instrument for influencing the other members' domestic legislation. States can, for example, take the negotiations as occasion to diffuse their domestic legislation as a model law in the region. They also can benefit from the fact that partner states which are more powerful when it comes to bilateral negotiations may be ready to make concessions in the multilateral agreement. In this case, the states sign and selectively implement the multilateral agreement. Alternatively they refer to the provisions agreed as model law in future bilateral negotiations without being a party to the agreement.

Thirdly, it became evident that the states take advantage of the organisations' multilateral environment even though they are not interested in multilateralism and shape relations with their neighbours predominantly bilaterally.⁸ The multilateral constellation provides the necessary knowledge about developments in the region. It reduces the costs that influencing core developments in the region would imply when undertaken merely bilaterally. It allows a country to increase its leverage vis-à-vis core partners from the region by forming temporary coalitions. The last mentioned aspect complies with the neo-realist idea of power-balancing. The thesis agrees with the authors who see this as a core aim in the CIS and GUAM. The existing literature often plays down the opportunities for doing so to gaining membership in an organisation or to benefit from bilateral incentives given by a regional hegemon when agreeing to further

⁷ The interpretation of inter alia the following authors goes in this direction: **Moroney and Konoplyov**, Ukraine, GUUAM, and Western Support for Subregional Cooperation in Europe's Gray Zone, 180; **Willerton and Beznosov**, Russia's Pursuit of its Eurasian Security Interests: Weighing the CIS and Alternative Bilateral-Multilateral Arrangements, 50; **Libman**, Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development, 416.

⁸ The lack of multilateralism has inter alia been observed by **Cooper**, Russia's Trade Relations within the Commonwealth of Independent States, 179; **Willerton and Beznosov**, Russia's Pursuit of its Eurasian Security Interests: Weighing the CIS and Alternative Bilateral-Multilateral Arrangements, 50.

develop the organisation.⁹ The findings, however, revealed that the mechanism also determines more substantial interactions. Finally, as the last three statements indicated the organisations are more than *talking shops* or *presidential clubs*.¹⁰ They produce tangible results even if these do not comply with the declared aims of the organisations. It needs, however, to be admitted that especially Ukraine cannot take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the CIS and GUAM. The following paragraphs will discuss what makes the findings insightful for the study of comparative regionalism.

9.2.2. GLOBAL VARIETIES OF REGIONALISM

The ambition to also contribute to the comparative regionalism research agenda builds on the call to improve knowledge about the functionality of regional organisations in different areas of the world.¹¹ Hardly any empirical study on regional organisations has so far informed this debate. The empirical study undertaken encourages the depiction of the post-Soviet space as yet another work area where states emulate the European model of regional organisations, but do not aim to integrate into multilateral legalised institutions. This observation strengthens the argument that integration is rather the exception than the rule in regional organisations.

The insights gained in this thesis provide constraints for the following assumption of the new regionalism. Authors of new regionalism have argued that social flows which are induced by globalisation and are increasingly uncontrollable would urge the states of a region to find collective solutions for

⁹ See inter alia: **Muzaffarli**, Politico-Economic Complementarity and Compability between GUAM Member States, 16; **Godzimirski**, Russia and the CIS: Spaces, Paradigms and Patterns, 36; **Flikke**, Balancing Acts: Russian–Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO.

¹⁰ See inter alia: **Godienko, Anatoly**, *Poslednyi karnaval SNG [The last carnival of the CIS]*. Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 26 August 2005; **Flikke**, Balancing Acts: Russian–Chinese Relations and Developments in the SCO and CSTO, 6; **Kembayev**, Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area, 90-1; **Olcott et al.**, Getting it Wrong : Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

¹¹ This is part of the research agenda proposed by Alex Warleigh-Lack and Ben Rosamond and also Tanja Börzel. For a more detailed discussion of the research agenda see chapter 2.2.2.

¹¹ **Marchand et al.**, The Political Economy of New Regionalism, 898; **Fawcett**, Regionalism in World Politics: Past and Present, 24.

controlling them.¹² The cases studied highlighted that these flows do not necessarily prompt states to take collective measures. The readiness to do so depends on the ruling elite's necessity to improve the state's capacities to prevent negative externalities from the flows. It is also crucial, whether policy-makers depict the transnational flows as an issue of regional or only domestic concern.

The analysis also generated additional insights into how states may employ an organisation to strengthen state sovereignty. Analysts of Asian regionalism in particular claim this function to be constitutive for ASEAN or the SCO. They view the ASEAN consultations as preventing intergovernmental conflicts.¹³ According to Aris, the SCO empowers in particular the Central Asian members' independent foreign policy.¹⁴ The thesis rather supports Aris' interpretation and can substantiate this perspective by naming some mechanisms that lead to such empowerment. These are the above defined mechanisms inherent to the multilateral activities. The core ones are implicit or direct coalition-building, enhanced channels to influence regional developments or agreements that may inform the states' bilateral policy. Knowing more about the most preferred mechanisms allows us to hypothesise what forms of policy co-ordination an organisation will develop. It may serve as yardstick for deducing from the observable activities some conclusions about an organisation's efficiency. This may supersede the reflex, still particularly common with regard to the post-Soviet space, to see unenforced agreements as an indicator of the organisations' failure.

Finally, the research results elucidate a phenomenon which is often observed in African and Asian regional organisations. The states adopt agreements which overlap, are often contradictory but anyways hardly implemented and produce the so-called 'spaghetti bowl of agreements'. The literature rarely explains this

¹² **Marchand et al.**, *The Political Economy of New Regionalism*, 898; **Fawcett**, *Regionalism in World Politics: Past and Present*, 24.

¹³ Nesadurai, 2009 #807@98} **Arase**, *Non-Traditional Security in China-ASEAN Cooperation: The Institutionalization of Regional Security Cooperation and the Evolution of East Asian Regionalism*, 834; **Acharya**, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, 64.

¹⁴ **Aris**, *Eurasian Regionalism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*, 179.

behaviour.¹⁵ However, the empirical study undertaken suggests three rationales as instructive. First, agreements may simply serve as communication tools directed at regional or international players. Committing to an agreement may induce the initiator to reward this loyalty. It may also emulate commitment to the globally diffused idea of regional governance. In this case the function of the agreement is entirely detached from its legal text. A second strategy builds more on the legal text. A state may claim that multilaterally agreed conditions should be incorporated into bilateral agreements. Individual provisions of the agreement may also function as a point of reference in the resolution of bilateral conflicts. Thirdly, the agreements may be a ticket for a state's participation in all relevant negotiations in the regional organisation. As argued above, mere participation may offer benefits. Such a selective use presupposes that the agreements are *de facto* weakly legalised and that societal actors in the member states' are not able to urge the ruling elite to comprehensively implement them. Both conditions are given in political regimes which weakly commit to the rule of law. This argument already refers to insights about the nexus between the conceptualisation of regionalism and the domestic political regime. The following sub-section will dwell on this aspect.

9.2.3. POLITICAL REGIMES AND APPROACHES TO REGIONALISM

The thesis announced its intention to explore the nexus between political regimes types and the ruling elites' conceptualisation of regional organisations. The research findings provide an alternative perspective on two prevailing concepts. First, the literature on regionalism still often invokes the assumption that when ruling elites intend in times of globalisation to strengthen societal

¹⁵ A strand of literature argues that the 'spaghetti bowl' is a phenomenon produced by the interplay of global and regional integration. Some authors argue the spaghetti bowl to produce obstacles to integration. Other scholars see it as potential progress for deeper regional integration. Most scholars, however, just note its existence. See: **Petri, Peter A** (2008), *Multitrack Integration in East Asian Trade: Noodle Bowl or Matrix?* Asia Pacific Issues. Analysis from the East-West Center No. 86; **Abugattas, Luis** (2004), *Swimming in the Spaghetti Bowl: Challenges for Developing Countries under the 'New Regionalism'*. Policy Issues in International Trade and Commodities Study Series [Online], No. 27; **Lloyd, Peter** (2002), *New Bilateralism in the Asia-Pacific*. The World Economy, Vo. 25, No. 9, p 1287.

welfare they would opt for regional integration.¹⁶ The empirical study has, however, provided two examples where ruling elites have an interest in improving societal welfare, but prefer other forms of regional interaction. In Azerbaijan to a lesser extent than in Ukraine societal welfare is an aspect of domestic stability. The Azerbaijani leadership tries to improve its capacity to single-handedly ensure the necessary degree of welfare via the organisations studied. Ukraine intends to develop structures that permit the temporarily co-ordination of the respective policies with its neighbours. Obviously the two do not aim for integration. In line with authors like David Arase, this thesis therefore considers this link between welfare and integration as an unsatisfying short cut. More instructive for the question of why states opt for or reject integration are the following two factors. The first aspect is the flexibility of the ruling elites to sub-ordinate to multilateral institutions that are monitored by multiple external players. The more the survival of a regime depends on the loyalty of a non-formalised network of elites, the more freedom the leadership needs to alter domestic policy in favour of these elites. Under such conditions it is rather harmful for the ruling elites to make themselves also accountable to external players through a commitment to policy co-ordination. Secondly, integration is often depicted as building on legalised agreements. As discussed above, the domestic and regional environment, however, decides whether legalised multilateral institutions are a feasible tool in regional relations. If the practices established for regional interaction do not rely on legalised rules, multilateral legalised agreements will hardly contribute to stabilising the interaction. Personalised ties that help to bridge intergovernmental bureaucratic barriers may be more adequate in this situation. In general, a deeper understanding of the practices that prevail in intergovernmental interaction in a specific region helps to discern the form and potential for multilateral policy co-ordination.

The thesis, secondly, claimed to build on the concept of *virtual regionalism* proposed by Roy Allison to describe regional organisations in Central Asia. The

¹⁶ Mansfield, Edward D.; Milner, Helen V., Pevehouse, Jon C. (2008), *Democracy, Veto Players and the Depth of Regional Integration*. World Economy, Vo. 31, No. 1, p 70.. Also discussed by: Arase, Non-Traditional Security in China-ASEAN Cooperation: The Institutionalization of Regional Security Cooperation and the Evolution of East Asian Regionalism, 811.

findings first suggest a slight re-formulation of the function and mechanisms of *virtual regionalism* when applying it to the CIS and GUAM. The concept roughly denotes engagement in a regional organisation for merely instrumental purposes. The argument remains on a relatively superficial level and declares that membership in the organisation serves the aim of balancing or bandwagoning with the regional hegemon. Participation in the organisations' sectoral activities is primarily seen as means to emulate the membership's substance.¹⁷ The thesis revealed that these rationales are part of the *virtual* approach that Azerbaijan and Ukraine take towards the organisations. However, as section 9.1 has argued, participation in the various councils produces more substantial results than depicted by *virtual regionalism*. The states do not seek for multilateralism in the sense of co-ordinating national policies but benefit in various ways from the multilateral environment in the organisations.¹⁸ The *virtual* commitment is often necessary, since the organisations' rhetoric and activities formally aim at multilateralism. In order to take, nevertheless, advantage of the multilateral environment the policy-makers but also non-state actors desire to *instrumentally participate* in the organisations' activities. It is a meaningful way to adjust multilateral interactions to the established domestic and regional practices. In this light, the thesis agrees with Stina Torjesen's argument that *virtual regionalism* is influenced by informal practices of rule which allow veto-players to interfere in integration. However, the thesis argues that virtual behaviour is rather a strategy of most actors than an undesired triumph of selected veto-players. The strategy can successfully be applied, if the ruling elite is able to downgrade the parliament into a *rubber stamp* body that ratifies international agreements regardless of their content.

The thesis suggests future analyses to distinguish *virtual participation* from participation without substantial results. *Virtual* or *instrumental participation* is a strategy of actors from different societal levels. But in neither Azerbaijan nor Ukraine ministerial officials at expert level and also private business actors are

¹⁷ Allison, Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia.

¹⁸ According to Keohane multilateralism is a 'practice of co-ordinating national policies'. Keohane, Multilateralism: an Agenda for Research, 731.

satisfied if this *instrumental participation* has little tangible results. As discussed above, they especially aim at permanent mechanism that can be temporarily used for co-ordinated activities. The officials' room for exploiting the organisations' activities to these ends depends on the degree to which policy-making is co-ordinated in a top-down manner. It is constrained if they lack the power to put across that they regularly attend the council meetings and have no influence on relevant decision-making, and if they are not able to co-ordinate their activities with other actors in the state administration. This is decisive for the ability of interested actors to optimally employ *virtual participation*. In the following sub-section the focus will shift from academic relevance to the policy implications of the research findings.

9.3.IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY DEBATES

The research was not only inspired by academic considerations but also takes an interest in policy debates on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space and beyond. This section will consider the implications of the findings for the following three debates. The first discusses the assessment of regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. A second sub-section concentrates on the prospects of global governance through regional organisations. Finally, the prospects of the external promotion of regionalism receive some attention.

9.3.1. THE IMPACT OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

Regional organisations have ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union been a sensitive issue for the former Soviet republics, since their rhetoric always includes the notion of integration. Integration bears the connotation of losing newly gained independence, of succumbing to re-integrative ambitions of Russia, and of a thwarted rapprochement with the EU. Such developments would, of course, be grave for all former Soviet republics except Russia. The anxieties that emerge from such a scenario induce policy analysts and practitioners in the former Soviet republics and beyond to depict developments in the CIS such as the multilateral FTA or the emergence of new regional organisations as alarming. In this light, CIS and EU oriented activities are often viewed as a zero-sum game.

Particularly in the case of Ukraine, public debates of its observer status or membership in the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan (CU) cause apprehension. Indeed, formal membership in the CU would, according to EU regulations, erase Ukraine's chance to sign an EU Association Agreement. The gained observer status does not formally conflict with Ukraine's EU ambitions.¹⁹ Another consequence of the integration concerns is that in times when the organisations do not produce startling results policy analysts almost entirely ignore them. Thus the public debate tends to overestimate the impact of the regional organisations or to ignore them entirely. The following paragraphs will argue that a more balanced discussion of the organisations would be more constructive.

The empirical study gave the example of a former Soviet republic that claims to be rather independent from the post-Soviet space, Azerbaijan, and of a republic that is well-known for its strong dependence on Russia, Ukraine. Both states, however, admit that they have no choice but to co-ordinate trade and security aspects with the post-Soviet neighbours. Hence, the ruling elites search for adequate tools to handle relations in the post-Soviet space which are, as outlined in chapter 5, characterised by an uneven distribution of power, economic resources and persisting (inter)dependencies. As the thesis has revealed the CIS and GUAM assume the function of additional instruments in Azerbaijan and Ukraine's tool box for handling neighbourhood relations. It is hence crucial to take the processes within these organisations into account when discussing the states' regional policy. For the same reason it is necessary to discuss full or associated membership in regional organisations in the post-Soviet space as complementary not contradictory to the republics' independence and their EU-oriented policy. The findings of the thesis may stimulate the mitigation of the perceived contradiction. Most important is the conclusion that the former

¹⁹ See for example **Gucci**, *Freihandelsabkommen mit der EU oder Zollunion mit Russland?* [Free Trade Agreement with the EU or Customs Union with Russia?]. The problem is also discussed by: **Pryce, Paul** (07 June 2006), *Ukraine: Wagons West?* [Online]. The following analysis makes a step towards a more balanced perspective, but neglect Ukraine's economic interest behind the CU observer status. **Iwanski, Tadeusz and Szymon Kardas** (05 June 2013), *Ukraine closer to the Customs Union?* *Eastweak* [Online], Vo. 19, No. 337.

Soviet republics studied have never employed the organisations for the purpose of integration. The political regime characteristics that prevail in the former Soviet republics have so far rendered integration into multilateral legalised agreements unattractive. The former Soviet republics have altered the aims of their participation in the organisations according to the needs of their domestic political regime. They have introduced mechanisms in the organisations and in the bilateral communication with the former Soviet republics which have transformed multilateral legalised agreements into hardly legalised and selectively applicable instruments. Accordingly, the dynamics in the organisations by no means compete with EU associations and integration ambitions. Rather, they may facilitate this process when enabling the states to diffuse internationally adopted best practices in the region, to monitor and influence the regional developments and to integrate their post-Soviet and European foreign policy. A Ukrainian official argued that it would be helpful for Ukraine's EU policy if European actors understood that organisations like the CU employ legalised institutions differently than the EU does. They could then accept a CU membership, according to Ukraine's conditions, without losing the chance to associate with the EU.²⁰ Of course, the EU as an actor that builds its policy on the rule of law will always have to take legal commitments made by potential partners seriously. But a better understanding of the mechanisms in post-Soviet regional organisations may make the debate on Ukraine's potential membership in the CU more constructive.

In this light adequate analytical instruments for assessing the developments in existing or new organisations in the post-Soviet space are crucial. In the course of the empirical study the thesis developed some assumptions that might help. Firstly it calls upon analysts not to interpret any successfully established legalised agreement or even supra-national regulations as step towards integration. Even if organisations like the CU managed to set up supra-national bodies and arbitration mechanisms it would be necessary to wait and to observe whether these indeed fulfil their declared function. This note of caution is grounded in the

²⁰ This was stated by an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the interview. (UA_MFA_2)

observation that the weakness of the rule of law and the importance accorded to the states' flexibility in foreign and domestic policy decisions have so far induced the former Soviet republics to only *instrumentally participate* in such structures. A wide range of mechanisms exist in the domestic political regimes and established practices of interaction with the neighbours to undermine the agreed regulations. Not even Russia, the initiator of most CIS agreements, has so far committed to implementing the agreements. Thus, before speaking of integration successes, the analyst should carefully assess to what extent legalised rules indeed alter the established practices in and between the involved states. The second recommendation originates in the differences analysed between the proclaimed aims of sectoral activities and the actual aims and mechanisms. It is important to carefully evaluate whether the proclaimed activities and their mechanisms are indeed the driving force behind a regional organisation. The following questions may guide the analysis. Are relations between the members indeed regulated by the multilateral rules adopted or are, for instance, unilateral incentives provided by core players more significant? Is the relationship indeed shaped in the multilateral context or does the multilateral context serve to improve bilateral relations? Finally, do the states develop multilateralism in the organisations or do they only seek the identified *multilateralism light*? These questions may help to gain an adequate picture of the *de facto* dynamics in a regional organisation, of the members' aims in the organisations, of the activities on which they build these aims and finally on the impact of the organisations. The analytical framework presented in chapter 2.4 may stimulate a more narrow research focus. The identified categories need, however, to be advanced according to new developments.

9.3.2. REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

As stated in chapter 2.1, the question of whether a global network of regional organisations will gradually take over global governance functions is one of the drivers of comparative regionalism research. This sub-section will briefly respond to this question from the post-Soviet perspective. As in most other parts of the world regional organisations in the post-Soviet space have so far not assumed

regional governance functions. The thesis depicts this phenomenon not as a result of the organisations' failure. The former Soviet republics studied rather intend to prevent the organisations from assuming governance functions. In the given regional environment marked by newly independent states, persisting (inter)dependencies and political regimes that rely on non-formalised rule organisations that assume direct regional governance functions are unattractive. An organisation that is not a regional governance player cannot act as a partner in global governance matters. The members may, nevertheless, be eager to advertise an organisations' recognition as a global governance partner, as the example of GUAM highlighted. By doing so, the members aim to improve their international position rather than transfer governance tasks to the organisation. When intensifying co-operation with the organisations it should therefore be carefully assessed how the de facto function of an organisation complies with the co-operation aims.

9.3.3. EXTERNAL PROMOTION OF REGIONALISM

International actors like the US, the European Union or even Japan promote regional co-operation in the post-Soviet space. They provide material and ideational support for existing organisations such as GUAM or BSEC or establish new co-operation formats, for instance within the EU Eastern Partnership policy. These external actors share the complaint that their ambitions do not lead to much co-operation.²¹ The research findings permit some recommendations on how to improve the promotion effect.

An instructive starting point is the observation that most state actors shared the strategy to pursue a *virtual* approach towards the multilateral activities, but especially policy-makers at expert level sought tangible outcomes from multilateral interactions. Section 9.2.3 has argued that the tendency towards *instrumental participation* is in large part a response to activities that aim at establishing multilateral legalised institutions. These are not desired, since they do not qualify as a tool in the current situation in the post-Soviet space. Instead,

²¹ With regard to GUAM this has been stressed by an official from the U.S. Embassy.(U.S._Embassy_1)

policy-makers prefer to intensify the temporary co-ordination of activities by establishing personalised trust-based networks with officials from the state agencies in the neighbourhood. This implies that platforms which involve a wide range of high and low-level officials from various state agencies potentially intensify intergovernmental co-operation. Also, activities such as collective training sessions may have a positive effect. As described in chapter 8, one of the obstacles to more intensive co-ordination of activities is the lack of knowledge about the capacities which other states have in certain issue-areas and about who is responsible for which task. Joint training discloses some of this information to the state officials involved. This knowledge may induce them to turn to other states with a request for support.

The thesis has, however, revealed that insufficient communication both between superiors and ministerial officials who attend multilateral meetings and between relevant state agencies tends to prevent a more extensive use of the multilateral context. This may either be the result of a conscious strategy, as the case of Azerbaijan has shown, or an unintended obstacle as in the case of Ukraine. In order to avoid this barrier to intensified policy co-ordination it is desirable to involve both low-level ministerial experts and individuals with certain decision-making powers in the multilateral interaction. It might also be supportive to gather not only one state agency that should domestically co-ordinate the implementation of a certain practice but most of the agencies potentially relevant to the issue in hand. In any case, to be more successful in the promotion of regional co-operation external actors have to adjust their expectations of the impact of such multilateral frameworks to the domestic conceptualisations and practices.

9.4.FROM FINDINGS TO QUESTIONS – A FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

It is joy and sorrow of every scholar that research inevitably poses more questions than it gives answers. Scholars are asked to engage with the questions raised by the shortcomings of their research and queries posed by the findings. This final sub-section will therefore reflect on three questions that emerge from

the research undertaken. How to enhance the validity of the empirical research? How do the research findings inform future research on regional organisations in the post-Soviet space? And how do they inform future research on comparative regionalism?

A crucial concern of any qualitative empirical study is the question of how valid the findings are for other empirical cases, since qualitative studies draw conclusions on the basis of a small number of intensively studied cases. This thesis took two measures to reduce this vulnerability. It first tried to explore if and how the categories identified reflect themselves only in the policy-makers approaches towards the CIS and GUAM or also towards other regional organisations or policies. Secondly, it collected data on a wider set of within-cases than presented in the empirical chapters, in order to enlarge the basis upon which the findings were deduced. With reference to these strategies the thesis can claim that are applicable to Azerbaijan and Ukraine's approaches to other regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. However, original empirical studies of the states' policies in other organisations would strengthen the findings. A better picture of the plausibility of the results could also be drawn by considering them when studying similar cases. These are first of all the other former Soviet republics that share the following characteristics: newly gained independence, persisting (inter)dependencies with the post-Soviet neighbours and hybrid political regimes with affinity towards authoritarianism or democracy and a dominance of informal institutions. Their validity may also be examined in cases beyond the post-Soviet space that share some of these characteristics. However, the less regime characteristics the cases share with Azerbaijan or Ukraine the weaker is the probability that the findings provide an adequate analytical frame.

In addition a follow-up study on the same cases would help to define the research results more precisely and validate them further. Such a study should concentrate on exploring to what degree the case countries are able to employ the CIS and GUAM for the expected function. The analysis has only in selected cases been able to gain information of whether a policy was successful or not.

Mainly issues with access to relevant interviewees or to other insightful data constrained the thesis from comprehensively investigating this aspect. Also, in the case of the CIS FTA the process of adoption has still been ongoing, which has not allowed conclusions to be drawn about its effectiveness. The research would, further, benefit from including a stronger sample of private business actors and NGOs concerned with the issue-areas that are discussed in the regional organisations. Time and financial constraints made it impossible to broaden the sample. In a nutshell, the research needs more empirical data that give insights on the various perspectives mentioned. However, even in this deficient form the research may stimulate the debate and future research in the following regards.

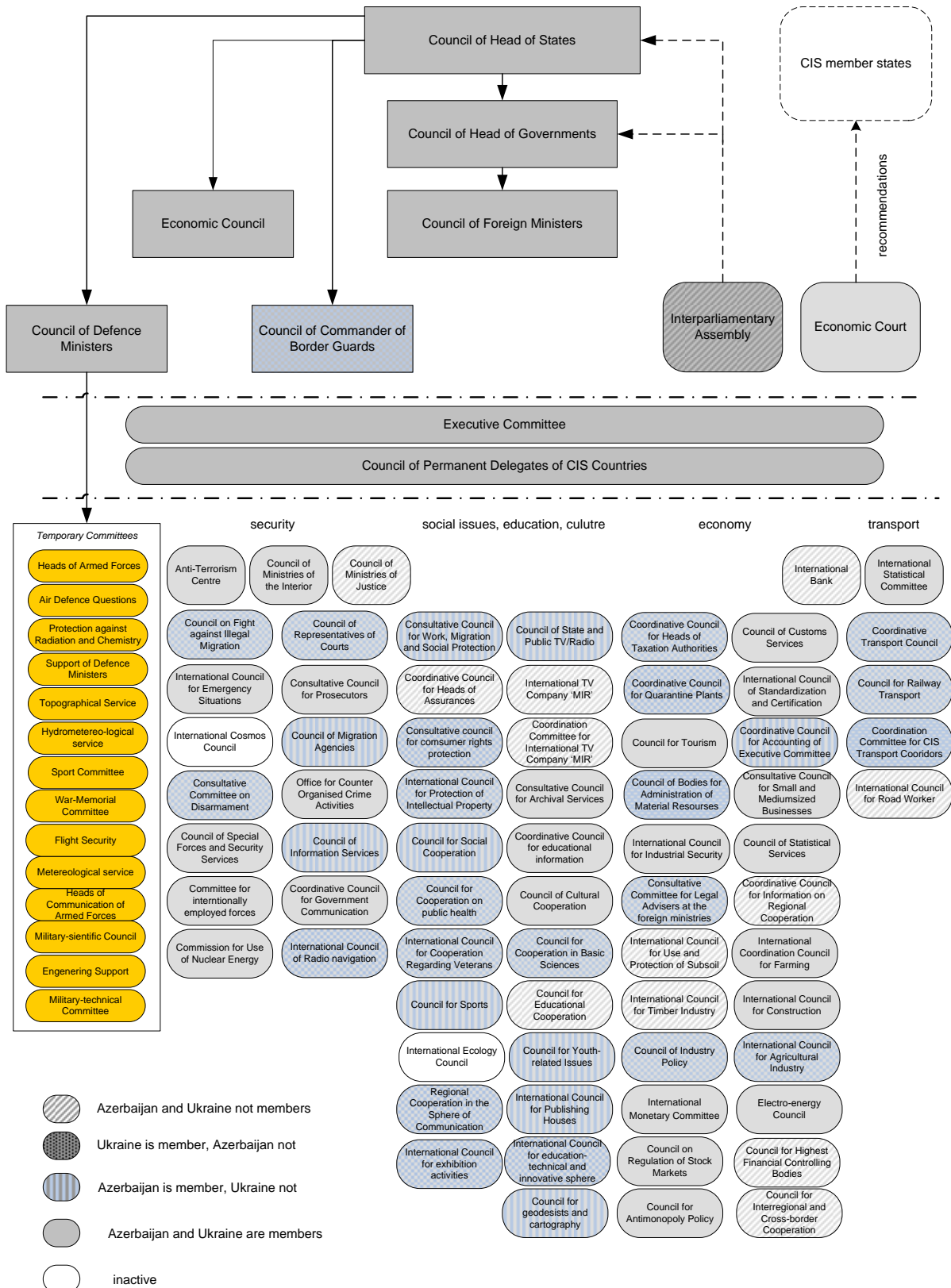
The thesis formulated in chapter 3.5 an analytical framework that mirrors how the case countries conceptualise regional organisations in the post-Soviet space. The relations and factors which it outlines call for a more precise formulation by including other cases. It would be intriguing to include how Russian or Kazakhstani state officials conceptualise the regional organisations. These states may provide a different picture, since they created a number of the new regional organisations. This is especially so since they call for more legalised integration in the new CU, but share with the other former Soviet republics the domestic features that are rather hostile to integration. To have a clearer idea on how they accommodate this call with the established practices would enhance the picture of the function of the regional organisations. It would, secondly, be interesting to explore how the cases studied alter their conceptualisations if they interact with a multilateral environment that is marked by consolidated democracies and strongly applied rule of law. Azerbaijan and Ukraine's relations with the EU may serve as example for this. At first glance, the interactions appear to also show in parts patterns of *instrumental participation*. It needs, however, to be explored if these originate from the same rationales. Thirdly, the research would benefit from a deeper study of the nexus between the specific application of the rule of law and the conceptualisation of regionalism. The thesis has been able to give only a superficial record of this link. The interplay is, however, one of the aspects

that make the area-specific study interesting for comparative regionalism research.

The proposed analytical model may induce comparative regionalism researchers to go beyond merely identifying varieties of regionalism. It may induce scholars to explore more intensively and in a comparative manner the mechanisms that produce such variety. The analytical frame of this thesis proposes a nexus between outcomes, instruments and three domestic conditions. This may inspire a more systematic approach towards analysing the variety of regionalism and its origins. Such a comparative model may enhance debates on the prospects that the varying conceptualisations of regional organisations will converge. It will also permit discussing a constructive interaction between regional organisations in different areas of the world. Such an analysis might also be instructive for the normative research on how to diffuse the European model of regional organisations. It might reveal how and under which conditions a transition from seeking only temporary policy co-ordination to permanent co-ordination is possible.

APPENDIX 1: CIS STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Figure 15: Organisational Structure of the CIS



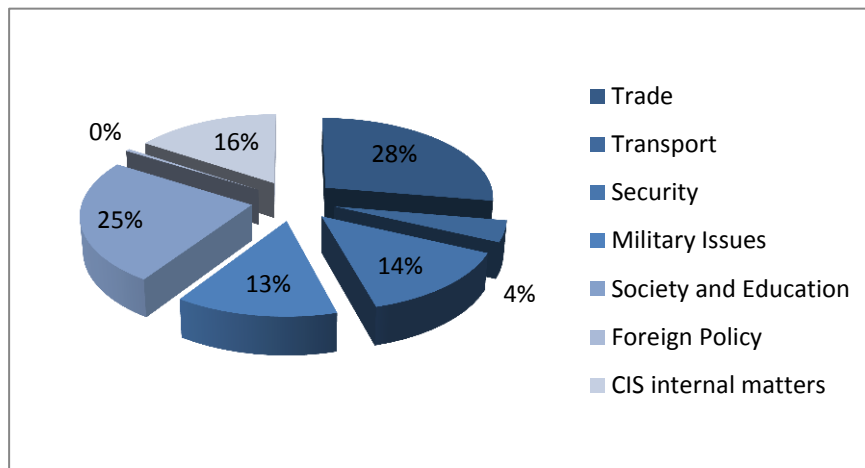
Source: scheme made by the author according to information from www.cis.minsk.by

Figure 16: Competences of the CIS Bodies

Formal CIS decision-making structures	
CIS body	Competences
Council of Head of States (CHG)	Highest decision-making body, decisions by consensus
Council of Heads of Governments (CHS)	Second highest decision-making body, decisions by consensus
Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)	Executive body for general CIS activities
Council of Defence Ministers (CDM)	Executive body for military issues
Economic Council	Recommendations to the CHS, CHG
Executive Committee	Administrative body
Economic Court	Jurisdiction on conflicts over CIS agreements; acts if appealed by one the conflicting parties or a CIS body; jurisdiction is not binding

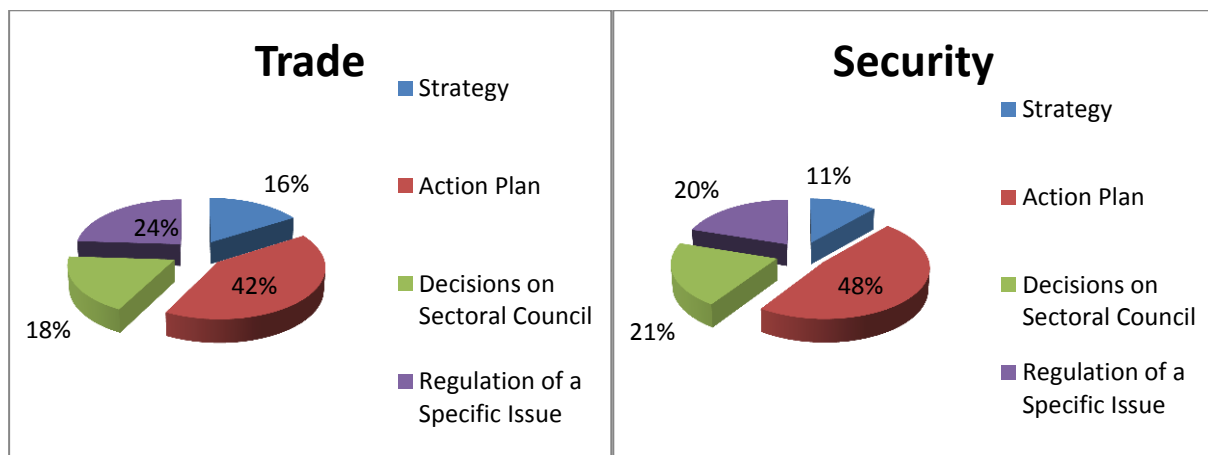
Source: overview made according to the CIS Charter

Figure 17: CIS Agreements per Issue Area



Source: calculated by the author according to information from www.cis.minsk.by, June 2010

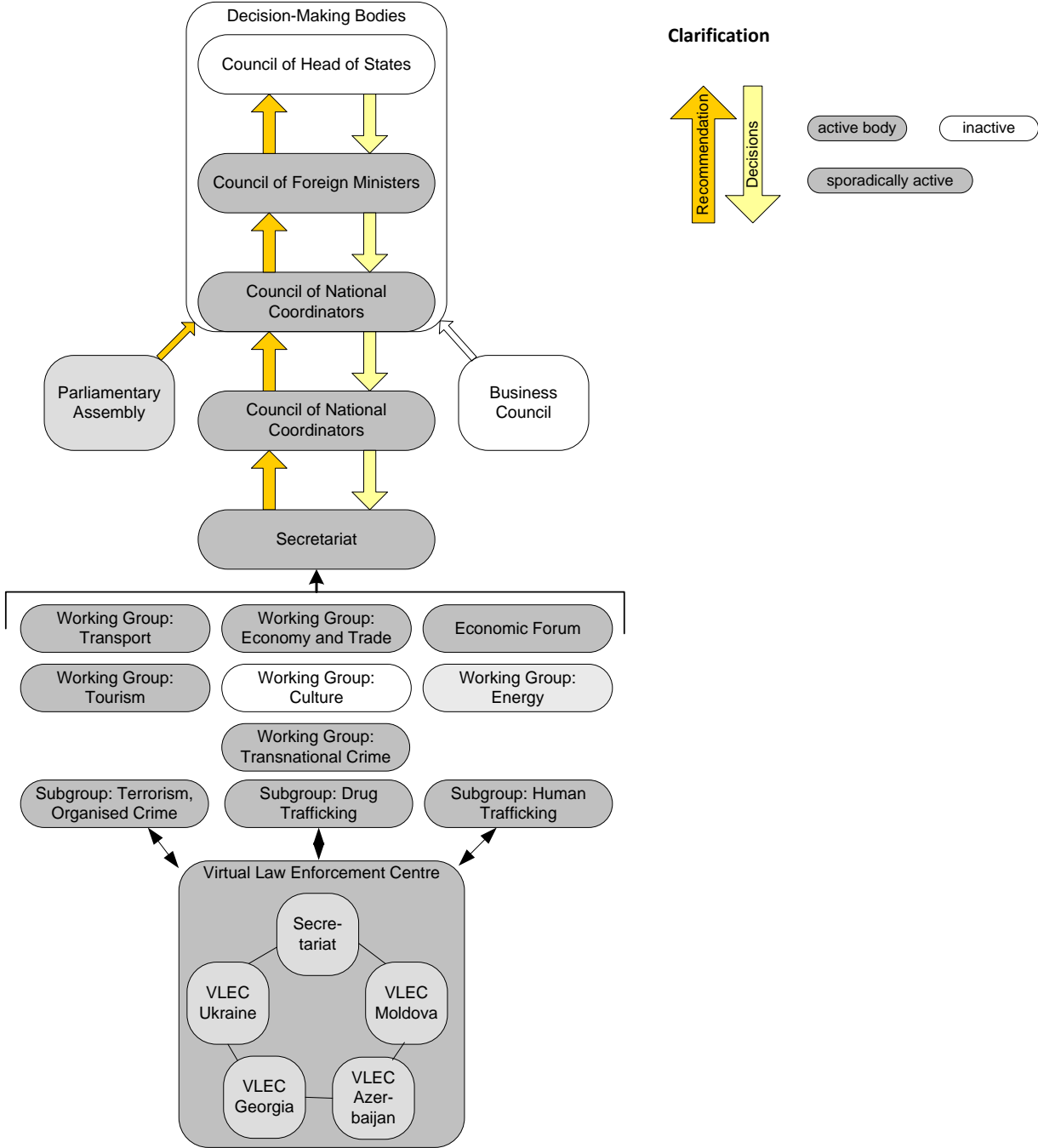
Figure 18: Type of CIS Agreements in Trade and Security Matters



Source: calculated by the author according to information from www.cis.minsk.by, June 2010 [strategy clusters agreements that define shared aims; action plan clusters agreements that define measures for implementing strategies; the third category includes all agreements that concern sectoral councils; regulation of a specific issue clusters all agreements that include concrete and at least weakly legalised rules]

APPENDIX 2: GUAM STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Figure 19: Organisational Structure GUAM in 2012



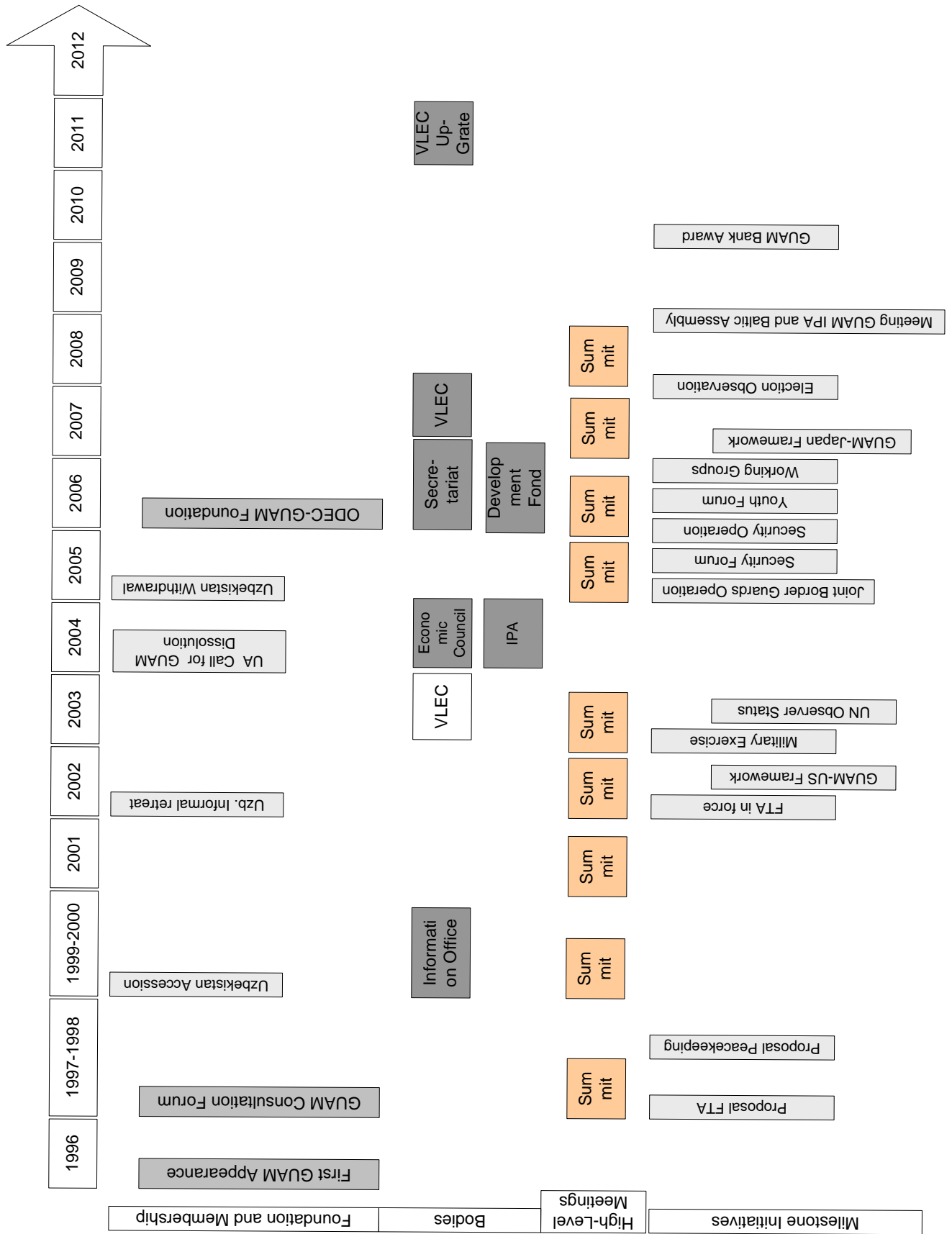
Source: scheme made by author according to information from www.guam-organization.org

Figure 20: Formal Decision-Making Structures: Competences of the GUAM Bodies

GUAM body	Competences
Council of Head of States	Highest decision-making body, decisions by consensus
Council of Foreign Minister	Executive body, establishment of sectoral bodies
Council of National Co-ordinators	Executive body
Secretariat	Administrative body

Source: Overview Made According to the GUAM Charter

Figure 21: GUAM Development Including Establishment of Bodies and Areas of Activity



Source: made by the author according to information from www.guam-organization.org

Figure 22: GUAM Presentations at UN General Assembly or Security Council

Year	Topics addressed on behalf of GUAM in UN					
	Protracted Conflicts'	Counter-Terrorism	Poverty Reduction	Trafficking in Person	GUAM-UN Cooperation	Other Matters
2001	GUAM communique (A/55/992)	GUAM communique (A/55/992)				
2002						
2003	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/58/PV.28)	Statement Azerbaijan on behalf of GUAM (A/C.6/58/SR.9)	Statement Azerbaijan on behalf of GUAM (A/C.2/58/SR.18)	Statement Azerbaijan on behalf of GUAM (A/C.2/58/SR.18)	Statement Georgia on behalf of GUAM (A/BUR/58/SR.2)	
		Documents Circulated by Azerbaijan on behalf of GUAM (S/AC.40/2003/SM.1/2/Add.1)			Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/58/PV.31)	
		GUAM communique (A/57/701)				
2004	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/59/PV.38)	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (S/PV.5059)			Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/59/PV.38)	
2005	GUAM communique (A/60/405-S/2005/623)	GUAM communique (A/60/405-S/2005/623)	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/59/PV.88)			
		Documents Circulated by Azerbaijan on behalf of GUAM (S/2005/87)				
2006	GUAM communique (A/61/569),(A/61/569-S/2006/880), (A/61/649 S/2006/1005)	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/61/PV.72)	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/C.2/61/SR.24)		Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/61/PV.38)	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/61/PV.84)
	Statement Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (A/61/PV.72),(A/61/PV.38)					
2007	GUAM draft resolution (A/62/L.28) not adopted in 2012					
2008	Georgian resolution puts GUAM draft resolution on 2009 GA Agenda (A/RES/62/249)					
2009	Georgian Resolution Sets GUAM draft resolution on 2010 GA Agenda (A/Res/63/307)					
2010						
2011	Georgian Resolution Sets GUAM draft resolution on 2012 GA Agenda (A/Res/65/287)					
2012	Georgian Resolution Sets GUAM draft resolution on 2013 GA Agenda (A/Res/66/283)					

Source: GUAM presentations at UN indicating actor who represented the organisation. Table compiled by the author based on UN documents. Full references listed in bibliography.

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEW SAMPLE

Azerbaijan						
	Abbreviation, Date and Language of Interview	Current Affiliation	Former Affiliation	Position in Policy-making Circles	Contact with CIS or GUAM	Expertise on Research Subject
1	AZ_MFA_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	In current position for several years	Close to decision-making circles	Direct involvement in GUAM, less involvement in CIS	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM, CIS and other foreign policy issues Foreign policy making in Azerbaijan
2	AZ_MFA_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Few years in current position	In contact with but not part of decision-making circles	Direct involvement in GUAM	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM Foreign policy making in Azerbaijan
3	AZ_MFA_3 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	In current position for several years	Not identified (presumably distanced to decision-making circles)	Mediated involvement in CIS	Azerbaijani migration policy in general and within CIS Policy co-ordination between state agencies
4	AZ_MFA_4 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Few years in current position	In contact with but not part of decision-making circles	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	Azerbaijani policy in other regional formats Foreign policy making in Azerbaijan
5	AZ_MFA_5 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	In current position for several years	Close to decision-making circles	No direct involvement in GUAM/CIS	Azerbaijani foreign policy Azerbaijani energy policy toward GUAM/CIS countries Foreign policy making in Azerbaijan

6	AZ_MFA_6 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Very few years in current position	In contact with but not part of decision-making circles	Direct involvement in GUAM	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM Azerbaijan in GUAM security cooperation Internal processes in GUAM
7	AZ_MFA_7 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Diplomatic Service	Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Azerbaijani Embassy	Close to decision-making circles	Direct involvement in GUAM	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM trade and transport cooperation of Azerbaijan in GUAM Internal processes in GUAM
8	AZ_MFA_8 <i>Interview 2012</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Few years in current position	Not identified	Direct involvement in CIS	Azerbaijani policy in CIS Azerbaijani priorities in CIS Azerbaijani strategy in CIS FTA negotiations
9	AZ_MED_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Economic Development	Few years in current position	In close contact with but not part of decision-making circles	Direct participation in CIS bodies, direct involvement in GUAM activities on national level	Azerbaijani economic policy in CIS and GUAM Internal processes in GUAM and CIS Foreign economic policymaking in Azerbaijan,
10	AZ_MED_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Economic Development	Few years in current position	In contact with but not part of decision-making circles	Direct participation in CIS bodies	Azerbaijani economic policy in CIS Internal processes in GUAM and CIS State-business relations Foreign economic policymaking in Azerbaijan

11	AZ_MED_3 <i>Written answers to questions in Russian received in 2011</i>	Ministry of Economic Development	In current position for several years	Close to decision-making circles	Direct participation in CIS bodies	Azerbaijani economic policy in CIS and GUAM
12	AZ_Mol_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Interior	In current position for several years	Not identified	Involved in GUAM	Azerbaijani participation in GUAM anti-drug- and human trafficking and anti-terrorism cooperation Internal processes in GUAM
13	AZ_Mol_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Interior	In current position for several years	Not identified	Direct participation in GUAM bodies	Azerbaijani participation in CIS and GUAM anti-drug- and human trafficking and anti-terrorism cooperation Azerbaijani security strategy
14	AZ_CS_1 Quotes from participant observation in GUAM bodies in 2011	State Customs Committee	In current position for several years	Not identified (presumably close to decision-making circles)	Direct participation in CIS and GUAM bodies	Azerbaijani priorities of customs cooperation in GUAM
15	AZ_ASMS_1 <i>Interview 2012</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Azerbaijan State Migration Service	In current position for several years	Not identified	Direct participation in CIS	Azerbaijani migration policy priorities Azerbaijani priorities in CIS and GUAM concerning migration Co-ordination of CIS policy and migration policy in general at national level

16	AZ_ASMS_2 <i>Interview 2012</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Azerbaijan State Migration Service	Few years in current position	Not identified	Direct involvement in CIS	Azerbaijani Russian bilateral relations concerning migration Azerbaijani priorities in CIS
17	AZ_Gov_Analyst_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years	In contact with decision-making circles	No direct involvement in GUAM/CIS	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM, CIS and other foreign policy issues Azerbaijani attitude towards conflict solution activities in GUAM
18	AZ_Gov_Analyst_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years	Not identified	No direct involvement in GUAM/CIS	Azerbaijani economic policy in the region Economic cooperation in CIS
19	AZ_Gov_Analyst_3 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for few years	In close contact with decision-making circles	No direct involvement in GUAM/CIS but in contact with state bureaucrats working with both	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM, CIS and other foreign policy issues (Foreign) policy making in Azerbaijan
20	AZ_Gov_Analyst_4 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	Few years in current position/ Working experience with MFA	In distanced contact with decision-making circles	No direct involvement in GUAM/CIS	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM, CIS (Foreign) policy making in Azerbaijan
21	AZ_Gov_Analyst_5 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years	Earlier close with decision-making circles, now distanced contact with decision-making circles	No direct involvement in GUAM/CIS	Azerbaijani policy in GUAM, CIS Regional policy and conflict settlement Policy making

22	AZ_MP_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Member of Parliament	MP since 2010, before think tank and policy advisor	In distanced contact with decision-making circles, earlier close contact.	No direct involvement in GUAM, former involvement in CIS	Azerbaijani strategy in CIS, GUAM (Foreign) policy making in Azerbaijan Economic Interest in CIS, GUAM and WTO
23	AZ_MP_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Member of Parliament	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	In contact with decision-making circles	In contact with GUAM, former involvement in CIS	Azerbaijani strategy in CIS, GUAM and other regional formats (Foreign) policy making in Azerbaijan
24	AZ_Private Business_1 <i>2 Interviews 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Non-State Business Structure/ Think Tank	Think Tank/Policy Advisor	In close contact with decision-making circles	Direct GUAM involvement	Azerbaijani grand strategy and economic strategy in GUAM Internal processes in GUAM Interest in CIS, GUAM of economic actors State-business relations in Azerbaijan
25	AZ_Private Business_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Private Business Structure	Member of Parliament	In contact with decision-making circles	Direct GUAM involvement, formerly involved in CIS related decisions	Azerbaijani (economic) policy in GUAM Interest in CIS, GUAM of economic actors State-business relations in Azerbaijan (Foreign) policy making in Azerbaijan
26	AZ_Business_Actor_3 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	State Business Structure	In current position for several years	Not identified	Direct GUAM involvement	Interest in GUAM of economic actors State-business relations in Azerbaijan

27	AZ_Analyst_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank/NGO	Analyst for several years	In distanced contact with political elite and decision-making circles	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	Irregular migration in/through Azerbaijan and state policy against it Interaction between state agencies
28	AZ_Analyst_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	Economic Advisor/ Ministry of Economics	Earlier close contact with decision-making circles contact, today no contact	No direct involvement in GUAM, formerly involved in CIS related decisions	Foreign economic policymaking in Azerbaijan State-business relations in Azerbaijan Economic regime in Azerbaijan Impact of CIS, GUAM trade cooperation on Azerbaijan
29	AZ_Analyst_3 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank/ University	Policy Advisor	In close contact with decision-making circles	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	Azerbaijani strategy in CIS/GUAM and other regional formats Foreign policy making in Azerbaijan
30	AZ_Analyst_4 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian Language</i>	Think Tank	Different positions dealing with practical and analytical aspects of migration	No contact with political elites, earlier distanced contact with political elites	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	Azerbaijani migration policy Political regime in Azerbaijan
31	AZ_Analyst_5 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years	In distanced contact with political elite	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	Azerbaijani foreign policy (Foreign) policy making in Azerbaijan

32	AZ_Analyst_6 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years	In distanced contact with political elite	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	State-business relations in Azerbaijan Economic Regime in Azerbaijan
33	AZ_Analyst_7 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years	In distance with political elite	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	Azerbaijani GUAM policy Foreign policymaking in Azerbaijan
34	AZ_Analyst_8 <i>Interview 2012</i> <i>English language</i>	International Organisation	In current position for several years	In contact with government agencies	No direct involvement in CIS/GUAM	Azerbaijani migration policy
GUAM Officials and Actors Related to GUAM						
	Abbreviation	Current Affiliation	Former Affiliation	Relations to GUAM	Period of Activities with/in GUAM	Expertise concerning Research Focus
1	GUAM_Official_1 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>English language</i>	GUAM	Other regional organisation		For several years	GUAM strategy and development GUAM cooperation with International Organisations
2	GUAM_Official_2 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian language</i>	GUAM	Diplomatic Service		For several years	GUAM strategy and development GUAM security cooperation practices Commitment of member states
3	GUAM_Official_3 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Interview in Russian</i>	GUAM	MFA		For few years	GUAM strategy and development GUAM security cooperation practices Commitment of member states

4	GUAM_Official_4 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	GUAM	Diplomatic Service and MFA		For several years	GUAM strategy and development GUAM economic cooperation practices GUAM cooperation with international partners
5	U.S._Embassy_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	U.S. Embassy Ukraine		Close relations with GUAM officials	For few years	GUAM security cooperation practices Commitment of member states U.S. cooperation with GUAM
6	GE_Private_Business_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	Private Business Structure in Georgia	Government structures	Close relation with governmental structures in Georgia	Sporadic interaction	Interest of entrepreneurs in GUAM and regional cooperation Cooperation practices in GUAM State-business relations in Georgia
Ukraine						
	Abbreviation	Current Affiliation	Former Affiliation	Position State Administration	Contact with CIS or GUAM	Expertise concerning Research Focus
1	UA_MFA_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	MFA	Diplomatic Service	Decision-making level	Direct involvement in GUAM	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian policy in GUAM and CIS

2	UA_MFA_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	MFA	Unidentified	Decision-making level	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian foreign economic policy in CIS Foreign policymaking in Ukraine
3	UA_MFA_3 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	MFA	Diplomatic Service	Expert level	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian foreign economic policy in CIS Foreign policymaking in Ukraine CIS internal processes
4	UA_MFA_4 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	MFA	MFA	Expert level	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian foreign policy in CIS Foreign policymaking in Ukraine CIS internal processes
5	UA_MFA_5 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Diplomatic Service	MFA	Expert level, strong interaction with one of the security structures in Ukraine	Direct involvement in CIS	UA security policy (non-traditional threats) CIS security cooperation Co-ordination of security policy in UA
6	UA_MFA_6 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Diplomatic Service	MFA	Expert level	In contact with GUAM, sporadic involvement in CIS	UA regional policy in GUAM UA foreign policymaking Ukrainian policy towards EU
7	UA_MFA_7 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	MFA	Diplomatic Service	Expert level	Sporadic involvement in CIS	Ukrainian regional policy in CIS Foreign policymaking in Ukraine

8	UA_MED_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	In current position for several years	Expert level	Direct involvement in CIS and GUAM	Ukrainian foreign economic policy Economic dimension of Ukraine's policy in CIS and GUAM EU-Ukrainian relations (Association Agreement) State-business relations in Ukraine
9	UA_MED_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Diplomatic Service	Decision making level	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian foreign economic strategy Economic dimension of Ukraine's policy in CIS
10	UA_MoI_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Interior	In current position for several years	Decision-making level	Direct involvement in GUAM/CIS	Ukrainian anti-drug-trafficking agenda in CIS, GUAM and other regional organisations CIS and GUAM security cooperation Co-ordination of security policy and regional cooperation in Ukraine
11	UA_MoI_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Interior	In current position for several years	Expert level	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian anti-drug-trafficking agenda in CIS, GUAM and other regional organisations CIS security cooperation Co-ordination of security policy and regional cooperation in Ukraine

12	UA_MoI_3 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Interior	Few years in current position	Expert level	In (sporadic) contact with CIS	Ukrainian policy against cyber-crime and irregular migration Co-ordination of security policy in Ukraine
13	UA_MoT_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Transport	In current position for several years	Expert level	Direct involvement in CIS and BSEC	Ukrainian regional transport policy Ukrainian policy in CIS and BSEC Foreign policy making in Ukraine
14	UA_MoT_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Ministry of Transport	In current position for several years	Decision making level	Direct involvement in CIS, BSEC and TRASECA	Ukrainian regional transport policy Ukrainian policy in CIS Foreign policy making in Ukraine
15	UA_SSTR_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	State Service for Technical Regulation in Ukraine	In current position for several years	Expert level	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian trade policy in CIS State-business relations in Ukraine
16	UA_MP_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Member of Parliament	In current position for several years		Direct involvement in CIS Parliamentary Assembly	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian policy in CIS and other regional organisations Foreign policymaking in Ukraine
17	UA_MP_2 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Member of Parliament	In current position for several years		Direct involvement in GUAM Parliamentary Assembly	Ukrainian foreign policy, Ukrainian policy in GUAM, BSEC Ukrainian policy towards EU Foreign policymaking in Ukraine

18	UA_NSDC_1 <i>Interview in 2010 and 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	National Security and Defence Council	In current position for several years	Strategy development	No direct involvement in CIS and GUAM	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian policy in GUAM, CIS Foreign policymaking in Ukraine
19	UA_NSDC_2 <i>Interview in 2010 and 2011</i> <i>English language</i>	National Security and Defence Council	Few years in current position	Strategy development, minor level	Direct involvement in GUAM	Ukrainian regional policy Ukrainian economic activities in GUAM and BSEC Policy co-ordination in Ukraine
20	UA_Gov_Analyst_1 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years	Strategy development	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian regional policy Ukrainian policy towards CIS and Russia State-business relations in Ukraine Foreign policymaking in Ukraine
21	UA_Gov_Analyst_2 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian Language</i>	Think Tank	Few years in current position	Minor level	No direct involvement in GUAM or CIS	Ukrainian regional policy Ukrainian policy in GUAM and BSEC
22	UA_Gov_Analyst_3 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian Language</i>	Think Tank	Policy Advisor		No direct involvement in GUAM or CIS	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian policy in GUAM, BSEC and CIS

23	UA_Gov_Analyst_4 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian Language</i>	Think Tank	In current position for several years		No direct involvement in GUAM or CIS	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian energy policy Foreign policymaking in Ukraine
24	UA_Gov_Analyst_5	Think Tank	In current position for several years		No direct involvement in GUAM or CIS	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian policy in GUAM, BSEC, CIS and towards EU Foreign policymaking in Ukraine
25	UA_Analyst_1 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	Policy Advisor	Earlier policy advisor with close relations to presidential administration	Direct involvement in GUAM	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian policy in GUAM, BSEC State-business relations Foreign policymaking in Ukraine
26	UA_Analyst_2 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	Few years in current position		No direct involvement in GUAM or CIS	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian energy policy
27	UA_Analyst_3 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	Governmental Think Tank and Ministry	Earlier policy advisor with close relations to government	Direct involvement in GUAM	Ukrainian energy policy Ukrainian energy strategy in GUAM
28	UA_Analyst_4 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	Policy Adviser		No direct involvement in CIS and GUAM	Ukrainian foreign and regional policy Ukrainian policy in CIS and GUAM Foreign policymaking in Ukraine

29	UA_Analyst_5 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Background talk in English</i>	Think Tank	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Expert level	No direct involvement in CIS and GUAM	Ukrainian foreign economic policy Economic Dimension of Ukrainian regional policy Ukrainian-EU FTA negotiations State-business relations in Ukraine Foreign economic policymaking in Ukrainian
30	UA_Analyst_6 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>English language</i>	Think Tank	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Earlier policy advisor with close relations to government	No direct involvement in CIS and GUAM	Ukrainian foreign economic policy Ukrainian energy policy State-business relations in Ukraine
31	UA_Analyst_7 <i>Interview 2010</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	Few years in current position	Minor level	No direct involvement in CIS and GUAM	Ukrainian foreign policy Ukrainian energy policy
32	UA_Analyst_8 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Think Tank	Ministry of Interior	Expert level	Direct involvement in CIS	Ukrainian policy concerning irregular migration, CIS migration cooperation Co-ordination of migration policy in Ukraine Ukrainian-EU migration cooperation
33	UA_Private_Business_1 <i>Interview 2011</i> <i>Russian language</i>	Private Company			Earlier direct involvement in CIS	State-business relations in general and in CIS cooperation Interest of Ukrainian companies in CIS FTA Foreign trade practices in post-Soviet space

34	UA_Private_Business_2 <i>Background talk in 2011 in Russian</i>	Business Association			Direct GUAM involvement	Interest of Ukrainian companies in GUAM FTA State-business relations in Ukraine Foreign trade practices in post-Soviet space
35	UA_Private_Business_3 <i>Background talk in 2011 in Russian</i>	Private Company			Direct GUAM involvement	Interest of Ukrainian companies in GUAM FTA State-business relations in Ukraine Foreign trade practices in post-Soviet space

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