



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
Programme of European Studies

“We need both”

Identifying the different stages of norm promotion

The European Union as a promoter of values:
the case of the Eastern Partnership

MASTER THESIS IN EUROPEAN STUDIES

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Abstract

The question of why agents adopt new norms have been addressed by a number of scholars, pointing at the importance of incentives as well as identification. Yet, less attention has been directed towards how norm promoters understand strategies for spreading values. More specifically, previous research has failed to consider the crucial role played by the officials assigned to convert the political goal of promoting values into functional policies. Aiming to bridge this gap as well as to increase our knowledge of the EU's newest foreign policy initiative, the Eastern Partnership, this thesis examines how the officials involved in the policy preparations reason about strategies for norm promotion. What assumptions were the basis for the discussions and how are the mechanisms of norm promotion understood? Interviews with civil servants representing the European Commission and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicate that offering incentives and fostering socialisation are considered *mutually reinforcing* strategies which should be combined rather than chosen between. Moreover, the result suggests that the issue of context-dependency is a determining factor in the process of norm promotion/adoption.

Hence, the main conclusion is that the officials regard the ideal strategy for promoting norms as one which takes the context of the norm target into account and invokes *both* the logic of consequence and logic of appropriateness.

Key words: EU foreign policy, Eastern Partnership, values, value promotion, norms in international relations, norm promotion, norm adoption, normative power, policy-making, administration, bureaucratic autonomy.

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Abbreviations

CEEC	Central and Eastern European Country
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
DG	Directorate-General
DG RELEX	Directorate General for External Relations
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ODIHR	(The OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PC	Partner Country
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SE	Sweden

Contents

- 1. Introduction 1**
 - 1.1 The EU as a Foreign Policy actor – what kind of policy? 3
 - 1.2 Defining the problem 5
 - 1.2.1 Elaborating the argument 6
 - 1.3 Defining the aim of the thesis 8
 - 1.4 Defining the specific research questions 9
 - 1.5 Disposition 9

- 2. Empirical context: The European Union in international affairs 10**
 - 2.1. Setting the frame: possibilities and restrictions for the EU as a foreign policy actor 10
 - 2.1.1 *From weak to important? The evolution of a Common Foreign and Security Policy* 12
 - 2.2 Background of the Eastern Partnership 14
 - 2.2.1 *Enlargement – a key foreign policy of the EU* 15
 - 2.2.2 *The European Neighbourhood Policy* 16
 - 2.3 The process of developing the Eastern Partnership 18

- 3. Theoretical framework 21**
 - 3.1 Politicians and bureaucrats 21
 - 3.1.1 *Bureaucratic autonomy in the European Union* 23
 - 3.1.2 *The argument for considering the internal policy-making process* 24
 - 3.2 Norms in international relations 25
 - 3.2.1 *The concept of normative power and the “normative power Europe”-thesis* 26
 - 3.2.2 *Strategies for norm promotion* 27
 - 3.2.3 *Foreign policy: interest-driven or milieu oriented?* 31
 - 3.2.4 *Theoretical model of strategies for norm promotion* 34

- 4. Methodological considerations 36**
 - 4.1 Relevance and limitations of the study 36
 - 4.2 Approach and design 38
 - 4.3 Case selection: the reasons for choosing the Eastern Partnership 39
 - 4.4 Selecting interviewees 40
 - 4.5 The interviews 42

- 5. The Eastern Partnership 44**
 - 5.1 Setup and content of the Eastern Partnership 44
 - 5.1.1 *Shared values?* 46

- 6. Result: going into the black box of policy-making 48**
 - 6.1 Political or technical bureaucrats? 48
 - 6.2 The objective of the Eastern Partnership 49
 - 6.3 Strategies for promoting values 52
 - 6.3.1 *Assumptions* 53
 - 6.3.2 *Rationale* 55
 - 6.3.3 *Mechanisms and instruments* 57
 - 6.4 Putting it together: how are strategies for norm promotion conceived in the internal process of policy-making? 61
 - 6.4.1 *Evaluating the theoretical model* 62
 - 6.4.2 *The ideal strategy for norm promotion: combining socialisation and incentives* 63

7. Conclusions	68
7.1. The way forward? Suggestions for further research.....	70
7.2 Final reflections	70
Summary	72
Sammanfattning	73
References	74
Appendix 1: Interview request	78
Appendix 2: Interview guide	79

Figures

Figure 1 : <i>A model of the political system</i>	22
Figure 2: <i>Strategies for norm promotion</i>	34
Figure 3: <i>The ideal strategy for norm promotion</i>	64
Figure 4: <i>Contextual factors affecting the process of norm promotion/ compliance</i>	66

Tables

Table 1: <i>Alternative mechanisms of Europeanization</i>	29
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1. Introduction

The reputation of the EU in the world is a good one, based on our strong values of freedom and democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights [...] The EU must pull its weight in areas of crisis and conflict. This is the responsibility of a global actor, but is also sound policy for the security of Europe.¹

In a few sentences Catherine Ashton, the European Union's (EU) new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, accentuates two core features of the Union's self conception: 1) the EU is an important actor in global affairs and 2) the values of democracy and human rights are essential to its identity. Since its origin, the EU has transformed from an economic community to a political union, consisting now of 27 member states and covering a broad range of policy areas. And although the extent (and desirability) of the Union's impact in an international context remain subject for discussion, academic and political observers alike seem to agree that the EU's significance should not be underestimated.² It is evident that the EU is actively seeking to strengthen its role in international affairs. For example, giving the EU a stronger voice in the world was one of the top priorities of the previous Barroso Commission and expanding the zone of "...prosperity, stability and security" remains a core aim of the Union.³ This ambition is equally apparent in the Treaty of Lisbon. Through the establishment of two new posts – a permanent President of the European Council and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – the EU seeks to ensure consistency in its external actions by giving the Union a clearer voice in global affairs.⁴ But what does the EU want to *obtain* in its relations with other countries?

Values such as democracy and human rights have long been important dimensions of the EU's internal identity. However, it was not until 1993 with the adoption of the Treaty of the European Union that they became part of its *external* policies.⁵ As of that point, the inclusion of a human rights clause was made mandatory in all trade and other agreements, meaning that (in theory at least) countries which conclude agreements with the Union are obliged to respect this principle.⁶ The adoption of the Copenhagen Criteria (the accession criteria) in 1993 turned respect for

¹ Ashton, 2009

² Not least is the EU considered to have been a crucial actor working for reform in the post communist states in Eastern Europe. See for example Dannreuther, 2006, p. 183ff. Bildt, 2010 and Schimmelfennig et al, 2005, p. 2ff.

³ Quote by Ferrero-Waldner, 2006. p. 139. See also Cramér et al, 2007, p. 1

⁴ EC, Treaty of Lisbon: The EU in the world. Apart from the symbolic importance of having clear representatives, one of the main motivations has been to ensure consistency in the Union's external action. The High Representative will also serve as Vice-President of the Commission.

⁵ Wood, 2009, p. 117.

⁶ Activities of the EU, Policy Areas: Human Rights.

certain values into an explicit condition for membership. According to the political criteria, countries wishing to join the EU must guarantee the respect for democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the rights of minorities.⁷ With the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in December 2009, the EU sends yet more important signals about its devotion to these values – not least through the adoption of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*. The Charter declares the principles on which the Union is founded; indicating in this manner that the 27 member states are in fact united on what values to prioritise *and* the importance of respecting them. Furthermore, the Treaty of Lisbon makes the *promotion* of norms an explicit goal: “Promoting these values, as well as peace and the well-being of the Union’s peoples are now the main objectives of the Union”.⁸

It is obvious that the EU seeks to communicate norms and values as important dimensions of its identity and that the Union aims to ensure – and promote – its core values internally as well as externally. However, while undeniably sending an important symbolical message about the Union's priorities, political goals say little about how to attain and ensure their fulfilment. Political goals set the agenda but must be filled with substance and turned into actual policies in order to function in the day to day work. According to previous research, civil servants play key roles in current political processes and much of the work to transform political goals into functional policies is carried out on ‘policy’ rather than the ‘political’ level. Much of the norm formulation can thus be claimed to occur in the *internal policy-making process*. This means that in order to understand the EU’s role as a global actor and how it seeks to pursue values looking at the political goals solely is not enough: we need also consider the actual policy strategies and, more specifically, the motivations behind them.

Since its origin, the EU has developed a number of foreign policies and policy instruments. According to academic and political observers alike, *enlargement* should be regarded the most successful foreign policy tool thus far, strengthening the Union’s political weight and giving it a forum for spreading norms and values.⁹ As the feasibility of using enlargement as a means to international (or rather regional) influence is currently put into question, new policies building on the enlargement logic but lacking the membership perspective have been launched by the EU. Most notably the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has been interpreted as an alternative

⁷ EC, Enlargement, Accession Criteria

⁸ European Parliament, 2000 and EC, Treaty of Lisbon: The Treaty at a Glance. Given that some theorists separate between norms and values, it should be pointed out that the two terms are used synonymously in this thesis. The main reason for doing so is that the interviewed officials made no distinction between them.

⁹ See for example Schimmelfennig et al. 2005

means to increased influence and a forum for norm promotion in the neighbourhood. Yet, the ENP has been criticised for being too general, directed towards both the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood, and for failing to take the different expectations and ambitions of these various countries into account. Its potential value as a tool for norm promotion has additionally been questioned with reference to the perceived weakness of the incentives offered.¹⁰ When the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched in late 2008, the intention was to improve the umbrella approach of the ENP by allowing for greater differentiation as well as to send a clear(er) political message of the EU's commitment to the Eastern neighbourhood. It is evident that the respect for EU-core values is a crucial dimension of both the ENP and the EaP but whereas the relation between the ENP and the EU's potential as a norm promoter has been quite thoroughly examined, the research about the EaP is scarce.

The aim with this thesis is to contribute to the theoretical understanding of norm promotion in general and the EU's role as a norm promoter in particular. By focusing on the internal process of formulating the Eastern Partnership initiative, the purpose is to give a more multifaceted picture of how strategies for norm promotion are perceived by the norm promoter (represented by the officials) as well as to bridge the research gap about the policy as such.

1.1 The EU as a Foreign Policy actor – what kind of policy?

The EU's tendency to focus on values in its relations with other countries has caused some observers to argue for an understanding and conceptualisation of the EU as a “normative” or “civilian” power. The Union is said to represent something qualitatively new in international relations, acting as *a changer of norms* rather than trying to gain impact through ‘traditional’ (hard) power means. According to this line of reasoning, the external actions of the EU are value driven rather than interest driven and the normative goals are pursued through normative means.¹¹ Not all agree with the conceptualisation of the EU as a normative actor, however. While not questioning the existence of value promotion in EU external policies, the realist critique has pointed out that the EU is essentially made up of rational states. Because they are rational in the sense that they try to maximise their interests based on the information at hand, the promotion of values should be seen as yet another means to obtain certain (often material) goals.¹²

¹⁰ Kochenov, 2009, p. 7ff

¹¹ Manners, 2002, p. 252f. See also Sjursén 2006.

¹² Hyde Price, 2006, p. 226ff. For example, improving the image of the Union/its member states could in turn increase its chances of attaining other (material) goals. Furthermore, as it is generally assumed that agents have an

Leaving the objective accuracy of these analyses behind, the question that springs to mind is whether or not this makes any difference – or, rather, if the *European Union* makes a difference. The significance of the European Union’s external actions in general and its devotion to norms in particular has been questioned with reference to the fact that most foreign and security policy matters remain subject for member state competence. This vouches for a weaker role for the EU as a foreign policy actor, limiting its freedom for manoeuvre. The EU’s lack of a *common* foreign policy worth its name is frequently pointed out in academic research as well as mainstream media. Yet, most agree that from a regional – or perhaps rather *Eastern* – point of view the EU is an actor of crucial importance. Enlargement is often described as the EU’s most successful foreign policy tool thus far, giving the Union a forum for and instruments to influence potential member states. By letting the prospect of membership serve as an incentive for non members to reform and adopt EU norms and standards, the EU has contributed to the stabilisation of these countries *and* been able to spread its core norms. Thus, the accession procedures are considered to have allowed the EU (irrespective of its motives) to become a successful value promoter.¹³

When the European Neighbourhood Policy was launched in 2004 it was accompanied by a growing sense that the EU should be precautious of relying too much on enlargement as a foreign policy strategy because, as formulated by the former European Commissioner for external relations and the ENP, Benita Ferrero-Waldner “... it is clear that the EU cannot enlarge ad infinitum”.¹⁴ Despite the fact that the desire to *join* the Union remains strong, it is becoming increasingly clear that further enlargements are at least currently off the EU-agenda.¹⁵ The ENP as well as the Eastern Partnership, have been interpreted as possible solutions to the challenge of finding new ways for EU engagement and norm promotion in the region.¹⁶ The policies appear to follow the enlargement-logic establishing a framework for cooperation and offering the neighbours incentives (commonly phrased as a stake into the internal market) in return for reforms and adherence to EU norms and values.¹⁷ Political association and economic integration are of course attractive benefits, but the absence of the EU’s most powerful incentive yet

interest in stability in their external environment promoting peace and democracy could be interpreted as a general goal per se. p. 222

¹³ See for example Haukkala, 2008, Dannreuther, 2006, Hettne et al, 2005. See also EC, The rationale for enlargement.

¹⁴ Ferrero-Waldner, 2006, p. 139

¹⁵ One indication of this is that the EU describes its ‘absorption capacity’ as an issue to be considered in future enlargement discussions, see Activities of the EU, Policy Areas: Enlargement. Yet, it is likely that the already started membership negotiations with Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey will be continued. See for example Haukkala, 2008, p. 1602, 1611ff

¹⁶ Haukkala, 2008, p. 1602. Michalski, 2009, p. 2.

¹⁷ Haukkala, 2009, p. 5. Admittedly, the Commission refers to “shared values” as the foundation for cooperation in the ENP and EaP documents. Yet, as the questions of *what* values that are to be respected has not been subject for negotiations the practical implication of these formulations can be questioned.

(membership of the Union) has caused some observers to question the potential efficiency of the ENP and EaP as means to EU influence alternative to that of enlargement.¹⁸ Although this critique is in itself problematic – it builds on the rationalist assumption that the neighbours are just interested in the incentives offered, rather than the norms and/or reform processes as such, and it presumes that promoting norms is *the* goal that the EU wants to obtain – it raises the question of how the Union perceives its potential of being a successful norm promoter when lacking the membership-incentive. Is offering incentives regarded the sole strategy for promoting values?

1.2 Defining the problem

As outlined above, academic research as well as official EU documents indicate that the EU wants to be perceived as a Union built on values (as opposed to military power) and as a “force for good” in international relations. It is furthermore evident that the EU seeks to promote its core principles (human rights, democracy etc.) by including them in trade and cooperation agreements and by establishing them as conditions for EU-membership. But what are the actual strategies for spreading values? The question of how and why norms are promoted and the empirical effects of different strategies have been addressed by a number of scholars, emphasising both the importance of external incentives and processes of socialisation and social learning.¹⁹ Less attention, however, has been directed towards how norm promotion and the relevance of different *strategies are conceived by the norm promoter itself*. More specifically, previous research has failed to take into account the conceptions held by civil servants and how norm promotion is understood in the internal process of policy-making. I argue that there are two reasons why this lack is problematic: First, institutions do not talk. This means that we cannot investigate how the EU perceives its role as a norm promoter without talking to the people who make up and represent the institution. Second, although political leaders are the most apparent representatives they are by no means the only ones involved in realising political goals. Rather, this responsibility is shared with the officials assigned to contribute expertise concerning how visionary goals can be converted into functional policies.²⁰ By leaving the preparatory phase aside and merely investigating the policies or talking to the political leaders, one runs the risk of missing important dimensions of why certain strategies are preferred above others. The aim of the thesis at hand is to bridge this gap by examining how strategies for norm promotion are

¹⁸ Haukkala, 2008, p. 1602, Michalski, 2009, p. 2.

¹⁹ See for example Schimmelfennig et al. 2005

²⁰ In accordance with the academic literature on the role played by bureaucracy in political processes, I use the terms “officials”, “bureaucrats” and “civil servants” synonymously.

conceived in the internal process of policy-making by adding the perspective of the civil servants. In order to do so I focus on the process of developing the Eastern Partnership, the European Union's newest framework for managing EU-Eastern neighbourhood relations. The EaP is a suitable case for two reasons: According to the European Commission (EC), the EaP

...should bring a lasting political message of EU solidarity, alongside additional, tangible support for their democratic and market-oriented reforms and the consolidation of their statehood and territorial integrity. (...) The EaP will be based on mutual commitments to the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights, respect for and protection of minorities, and the principles of the market economy and sustainable development.²¹

This means that promoting values is an important dimension of the initiative. Moreover the research about the Partnership in general and its relation to the EU's norm promotion-ambitions in particular is much limited. I therefore argue that the Eastern Partnership is fitting both as a "case" of a policy-making process in which norm promotion can be expected to have played an important role *and* as a unique object for analysis.

The overarching question is thus: *how is the issue of norm promotion and strategies for becoming a successful norm promoter conceived in the internal policy-making process of the EU?*

1.2.1 Elaborating the argument

The academic literature indicate that there are good reasons for directing attention to the civil servants assigned to put political goals into practice when trying to understand a political process and outcome. Because of a significant increase of power delegation from the political to the administrative level, politicians are no longer the only ones involved in policy-making.²² Some claim that this tendency is even more evident in the EU context given that the greater degree of depoliticisation of (at least some) political issues augments the need for expertise which, in turn, increases the bureaucrats' source of influence.²³ This renders examining conceptions held by civil servants highly motivated: not only do they own information that few other actors have access to but they are also in a position to *influence* the policy setups. I therefore argue that studying the preparatory work of the Eastern Partnership enables a more multifaceted picture of norm promotion in general and the EU as a norm promoter in Eastern Europe in particular than what would have been made possible by solely examining the EaP-policy and/or political declarations.

²¹ European Commission, 2008, pp. 2-3

²² This argument will be elaborated in chapter 3. For an introduction to the subject, see for example Aberbach et al. 1981

²³ Beyers et al, 2004, p. 1120 and Tallberg, 2002, p. 23

It should be pointed out, however, that although the officials' conceptions are the main object of analysis, it is not the civil servants themselves who are of primary interest. Rather, it is their role as *representatives* of the EU as an institution that makes them relevant: they can tell us something about how strategies for value promotion are conceived within the EU system as a whole.

Examining the internal process of policy-making is relevant from a theoretical as well as empirical point of view. First, in contexts where previous experiences exist, policy-makers can be expected to express insights about which strategies that are considered successful. By focusing on goals and outcomes without taking the process into account, previous research has failed to acknowledge the fact that the conceptions (often based on previous experiences) held by the civil servants form the foundation and dictate the conditions for the policies launched.²⁴ Consequently, I argue that these perceptions should be taken into account *irrespective of their objective truth*. Second, it can be expected that an examination of the process rather than just the declared goals and/or the concrete policy can increase our understanding of the dynamics between intentions and restrictions. This, in turn, improves the possibility of giving a multi-faceted picture of the EaP by casting light on what is sought for politically (the goals) *and* what has been possible in terms of policy. It might well be that certain goals are considered utterly important but turn out impossible to realise due to lack of resources and/or trade-offs between conflicting goals. Put differently, focusing on the process rather than the goals solely, we allow for *both* intentions and restrictions to be taken into consideration.

Third, I argue that there are potentially new empirical insights about the EU in general and its role as a norm promoter in particular to be gained. Admittedly, as Sjursén points out, reaching “...to the ‘hearts and souls’ of policy makers” in order to discover the ‘true’ motives is hardly doable.²⁵ However, by investigating the hands-on policy level and illuminating the (perceived) degree of devotion directed towards norm promotion we can learn more about the extent to which this goal is prioritised and actively pursued within the EU-system. Furthermore, by studying how conflicts between different (normative as opposed to ‘traditional’) goals are handled we can elaborate our understanding of the ambivalence that is sometimes claimed to characterise the EU's external actions. The point is that the degree of significance ascribed to the EU's

²⁴ See for example Rothstein, 2001, p. 15

²⁵ Sjursén, 2002, p. 496

normative goals internally tells us something about how important norm promotion is to the EU in general.²⁶

Since there are no theoretically grounded assumptions of how civil servants can be expected to reason regarding the issues at hand to guide the framework for analysis, I employ existing general theories about norm promotion/compliance as point of departure. By developing a theoretical model for norm promotion strategies and applying this to the interview data, the intention is to contribute to the theoretical as well as empirical understanding of strategies for norm promotion.

1.3 Defining the aim of the thesis

The overarching aim of this thesis is to increase the theoretical and empirical understanding of norm promotion in general and the EU's foreign policy goal of spreading values in particular. Building on existing theories about norm compliance and focusing on the *internal process of policy-making*, I seek to bridge what seems to be a gap in previous research. In order to do so, I focus on the policy-making process of the Eastern Partnership, interviewing civil servants involved in the policy preparations. How do they reason about strategies for norm promotion and what assumptions about the motives for adopting new norms seem to have guided the policy choices? The purpose of this thesis is thus twofold: on a *theoretical* level I want to contribute to the theories about norm promotion/compliance by shifting focus from the target to promoter, adding the perspective of the people involved in the internal process of policy-making. On an *empirical* level, the aim is to increase the knowledge of the EaP and its relation to the EU's general foreign policy ambition to spread values. Needless to say, although this thesis focuses on the case of the EaP, the ambition is nevertheless to draw conclusions contributing to the understanding of norm promotion and the EU as a norm promoter in general.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the policy-making process is not the subject for analysis in itself, but rather serves as an *instrument* to gain a more multifaceted picture of the EU's (in its capacity as a norm promoter) understanding of norm promotion.

²⁶ Several analyses within the field of European Studies which discusses the EU's identity point at the value dimension as an important constitutive part. See for example Barbé et al, 2008 and Sjursén, 2008.

1.4 Defining the specific research questions

In order to fulfil the theoretical and empirical aims outlined above, this thesis addresses the following specific research questions:

- How do the civil servants involved in the preparatory work of the EaP understand the intentions behind and objectives of the Eastern Partnership?
- How are strategies for norm promotion conceived in the internal policy-making process?
- Can the way the civil servants reason about norm promotion be understood in terms of the social learning and the external incentives models respectively? Are there aspects that the theoretical model presented in chapter 3.3 does not take into account?

The relevance of and intentions behind these questions will be further elaborated below.

1.5 Disposition

Chapter one introduced the area of interest and defined the problem and purpose at hand. However, before addressing the specific research questions, a more thorough exposition of the empirical as well as theoretical context is called for. Thus, chapter two lays down the *empirical context* by describing the EU's freedom for manoeuvre in foreign affairs, discussing the background and development of the EaP. In chapter three the *theoretical framework* is developed. The argument for focusing on the internal process of policy-making is elaborated, as is the concept of norms in international relations. I then direct my attention to the theories about norm promotion/compliance that form the foundation for the interview guide. The last section presents the theoretical model used in the forthcoming analysis.

Chapter four moves the study from the general to the specific by accounting for some methodological considerations as well as discussing the relevance and limitations of the study. Chapter five examines the content and setup of the Eastern Partnership and together with the theoretical framework serves as point of departure for the interviews. Chapter six presents and analyses the interview-result by linking it to the key concepts of the theoretical model presented in chapter three. In the last section, the theoretical model is evaluated and a figure illustrating how the officials conceive the ideal strategy for norm promotion developed. Finally, the last chapter summarises the conclusions drawn and discusses the significance and implications of the analysis.

2. Empirical context: the European Union in international affairs

Few would oppose that the European Union is an actor that needs to be taken into account in any analysis of current international relations. As the world's biggest trader with trade- and partnership agreements that cover almost all regions of the planet, the EU is indisputably important in economic terms.²⁷ The EU's *political* weight, however, remains controversial. Aiming to provide the reader with a general understanding of the empirical context in which the EaP has been initiated and developed, this chapter gives an overview of the particularities of EU foreign policy. In the first part the opportunities and restrictions for the EU as a foreign policy actor are discussed. The second part considers the evolution and significance of two foreign policies of particular importance for the Eastern Partnership – enlargement and the ENP – and introduces the background of the Eastern Partnership. The official EaP-documents are examined in chapter five.

2.1. Setting the frame: possibilities and restrictions for the EU as a foreign policy actor

Any examination of the EU's role in international affairs must inevitably consider the internal relationship between the powers of the EU-institutions on the one hand and the member states on the other. In doing so there are particularly two dimensions that merit attention: whether a given policy sector is a community (EU) issue or not, and what principle for decision making that is applied. To a great extent, these two aspects determine the freedom for the EU as an independent actor by defining its room for manoeuvre. The first dimension concerns the EU's possibility to act at all, ranging from far-reaching within sectors subject for community competence to very limited in sectors where member state competence prevails.²⁸ The second dimension is important as it illuminates both the degree of integration and how efficiently decisions can be expected to be made.

The idea of the European Union as *one* actor with the ability to pursue coherent policies is sometimes questioned with reference to its intergovernmental features – after all, the organisation is made up of 27 sovereign states and unanimity is still required in many policy sectors. However, since its origin in the 1950's the EU has transformed from being an economic community to

²⁷ Nugent, 2006, p. 485 and Activities of the European Union, Policy areas: External Relations.

²⁸ Nugent, 2006, p. 355, pp. 39-40. It should be noted, however, that today there are few policy areas in which the EU is not at all involved.

becoming a political Union. The widening and deepening of the cooperation has been accompanied by a continuous strengthening of the supranational features in the Union's setup and functioning. In other words, the EU should not – cannot – today be categorised as an intergovernmental organisation. I argue that there are a number of aspects that makes it plausible to talk about an EU-agenda (analytically) separable from the member states': First, the variation between the institutions' assignment principles, decision making and work procedures make the pursuit of a coherent national strategy complicated. Solely in the Council of Ministers can the member states count on their representatives to work for the "national interests". In the European Parliament (EP) the dividing lines tend to follow political affiliation rather than national belonging and the Commissioners staffing the European Commission are expected to be neutral. Although admittedly appointed by the member states, the Commissioners represent the *EU* rather than their national governments and work for the fulfilment of the Commission's explicit task to be a "...promoter of the general interest".²⁹ Thus, it seems reasonable to regard the Commission as the most important source to and driver of the EU-agenda.

Second, with the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force, the supranational features of the EU have been additionally strengthened, especially as regards the procedures for decision-making. The intergovernmental demand for unity has been replaced by qualified majority (QMV) as voting principle in most policy sectors and the EP's impact in the decision making has been expanded through increased use of the co-decision-procedure.³⁰ Furthermore, as the Treaty abolishes the pillar structure and grants the Union one single legal personality, it has now gained the capacity to conclude international agreements and to join international organisations.³¹ According to the EU, this change together with the establishment of two new posts will enable the Union to be more efficient and visible on the international stage.³² A permanent President of the European Council has been appointed with the aim to decrease previous confusion caused by the principle of a rotating presidency. And in an attempt to further ensure the effectiveness and consistency of its external actions, a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (who will also serve as Vice-President of the Commission) has been selected to represent the EU in foreign

²⁹ Nugent, 2006, p. 166 How likely it is that the Commissioners do in fact manage to shield themselves from all forms of national influence can of course be questioned.

³⁰ Nugent, 2006, p. 155, 558ff. The EP's influence in the decision making under the previously used procedures of "assent" and "consultation" was much limited. Co-decision, however, means that the law making power is equally shared between the Council and the EP. For more information, see Decision making in the EU

³¹ The essence of the structure is however kept, allowing for intergovernmental as well as supranational modes of decision making.

³² EC, Treaty of Lisbon: The EU in the world.

policy related matters.³³ Returning to the words of the newly appointed High Representative Catherine Ashton that began this thesis, it seems like the possibility for the EU to act as the global actor it aims to be has been strengthened. In extension, it might even mean that Henry Kissinger's famous question about who to call when wanting to talk to Europe has been given an answer.

2.1.1 From weak to important? The evolution of a Common Foreign and Security Policy

According to Nugent there are four policy sectors connected to the EU's external relations, namely foreign, security and defence; trade; development and; the external dimension of internal policies. The EU's role within the different sectors varies according to the logic described above; ranging from strong in trade related issues (because the EU has competence to conduct economic relations) to much more limited within the field of foreign, security and defence policy.³⁴ The Eastern Partnership falls under the umbrella policy of the ENP which, in turn, fall under the scope of the EU's general external relations. This infers that, similarly to enlargement, the ENP and EaP include issues related to *all* of the policy sectors just mentioned. So why does the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) merit extra attention? The CFSP sets out a number of ambitious objectives, ranging from strengthening the international security to developing the respect for human rights. As will be elaborated below, however, the overall intergovernmental character of the CFSP means that the EU's ability to work for their fulfilment has been (and continues to be) much limited.³⁵ Instead, previous research indicate that the EU has been most successful in its attempts to do so through enlargement and, albeit to a lesser extent, the ENP.³⁶ So, while acknowledging that neither enlargement nor the ENP are *formally* part of the CFSP, I claim that considering the slow evolution and the continuous limitations of the CFSP helps to illuminate the significance of these policies and, in extension, the need for the EaP.

With the outburst of the war in Yugoslavia and its drawn-out aftermath, it became painfully evident that the EU lacked the tools (and, some would claim, the political ambition) to act as the global power it aspires to be. The EU's attempts to broker a political solution to the crisis turned

³³ EC, Treaty of Lisbon: The EU in the world. Herman van Rompuy has been appointed President of the Council and Catherine Ashton High Representative for Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, Ashton is to be assisted by a new European External Action Service.

³⁴ Nugent, 2006, p. 483ff, Cramér et al, 2007, p. 1ff

³⁵ Nugent, 2006, p. 501

³⁶ See for example Dannreuther, 2006, and Nowak et al. 2007, p. 66ff

out unsuccessful and, as the Union did not have a military force of its own, the member states were directed to intervene only as part of the UN or NATO forces.³⁷

The EU's inability to play a constructive role during and after the Balkan wars is frequently taken as point of departure in academic as well as political discussions about the prospect for EU leadership in international affairs. The high-toned rhetoric about becoming a "...leading global actor" is considered unrealistic as long as the EU does not develop a *Common* foreign and security policy worth its name.³⁸ Admittedly, although some foreign policy cooperation did in fact occur during the 1970's and 1980's, it was not until 1992 with the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty that the CFSP was launched. Specifying that the EU and its member states "...shall define and implement a common foreign and security policy" it provided for systematic cooperation on all foreign and security matters of general interest.³⁹ Albeit an important change, its potential impact was held back by the fact that the policy remained intergovernmental in character, requiring unity for any decision to be made. With the Treaty of Amsterdam entering into force in 1999, however, the decision-making was made somewhat more efficient through the introduction of a "constructive abstention" device (allowing states to abstain from applying a decision while letting the others continue the integration-process) and the provision for QMV in matters regarding two of the existing five policy instruments.⁴⁰

Although the essentially intergovernmental character of the decision-making is maintained also with the Lisbon Treaty in place, particularly two changes can be expected to affect the EU's role as a foreign policy actor. Whitman et al emphasise the importance of the establishment of a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. According to them, the High Representative can be interpreted as a

...personification, and the animus of the new gathering together of all aspects of external action, formally responsible for its consistency across the Treaties and institutions...and clearly key to achieving the ambition of greater synergy across all aspects of external action.⁴¹

Furthermore, the granting of a legal personality to the Union enables it to sign treaties and international agreements – if only in those areas where competences have been conferred from the member state to EU-level.⁴²

³⁷Nugent, 2006, p. 495 and EC, External relations, Working for a safer world.

³⁸ Cramér et al, 2007, pp. 1-2

³⁹ Nugent, 2006, p. 91

⁴⁰ Nugent, 2006, pp. 91-98, pp. 495-501. The five policy instruments are: Principles and guidelines from the European Council, common strategies, joint actions, common positions and information and consultation.

⁴¹ Whitman et al. 2009, p. 32. For information about the specific changes see Whitman et al, 2009, p. 28ff

Making use of the two dimensions introduced in section 2.1. it is evident that the EU's impact over CFSP-related matters has been significantly strengthened in recent years. The member states *do* in fact coordinate their foreign policies, decisions can (although this is rarely done) be made by QMV and the CFSP is legally binding in the member states. As Smith points out, the institutionalisation of EU foreign policy since 1970 makes it difficult for the member states to shape their foreign policies without at least some reference to EU activities.⁴³ Yet, it is equally evident that the member states have been reluctant to this transfer of power, resulting in a much slower process of integration than what has marked many other policy sectors. Given the nature of foreign and security policy perhaps this should come as no surprise – after all, foreign policy is intimately linked to the idea of national sovereignty. Making it subject to community competence would not only implicate limitations in the freedom to pursue an independent foreign policy; it would furthermore be conceived as a compromise with the national sovereignty.⁴⁴ All in all, however, the member states have in fact judged the benefits of increased cooperation to be stronger than the disadvantages. There has been a gradual transfer of power from member state to the EU-level and prerequisites for increased EU-impact in global affairs have been improved.

Returning to the Union's inability to handle the Balkan wars constructively, the picture almost twenty years later is somewhat different. When war broke out between Russia and Georgia regarding the status of the break-away regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008, the EU made it clear that it had no intentions of accepting another foreign policy failure. Consequently, the Union established itself as the "...main diplomatic broker" and has continued its efforts to play a central role on the ground.⁴⁵ Although the final outcome of this remains yet to be seen, it is evident that the EU's role as an actor in international relations has been significantly strengthened also from an *empirical* point of view. This is not least true from a regional perspective – a fact that has been particularly well illustrated by the enlargement experiences. This is the issue to which we now turn.

2.2 Background of the Eastern Partnership

Apart from being important for the EU's role as a foreign policy actor in general, enlargement and the ENP are important backgrounds to the newly initiated Eastern Partnership. Thus, in

⁴² Dagand, 2008, p. 3

⁴³ E Smith, 2002, pp. 743-746

⁴⁴ Nugent, 2006, p. 1ff

⁴⁵ Popescu et al, 2008, p. 1

order to understand the motivations behind the EaP we need first consider these two policy areas.⁴⁶

2.2.1 Enlargement – a key foreign policy of the EU

Enlargement is generally perceived as a crucial dimension of the EU's foreign policy and as *the* context in which the Union has been most successful in its ambitions to promote norms. Since its foundation the EU has enlarged a number of times; from the first round in 1973 (when Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom were granted membership) to the most recent in 2007 (with Bulgaria and Romania joining). Yet, despite these continuous enlargements, seemingly it was not until the beginning of the 1990's that enlargement was explicitly emphasised as a means or even tool to expand the EU's influence in international relations. Admittedly, preventing Greece from falling back to authoritarian rule has been described as one important motivation for granting it membership of the Union in 1981, but the gravitational power of the EU is generally discussed with reference to the 2004 and 2007 Eastern enlargements.⁴⁷

The fall of the Soviet Union resulted in great political changes throughout the continent; the post Communist states of Eastern Europe going through transition and turning "back" to Europe. There is widespread agreement among academic as well as political observers that the EU played a key role in these reform processes and that the political accession conditionality was a crucial aspect. The fact that many of the formerly communist states applied for membership of the Union meant that the EU gained a forum for influencing their *internal* development. Presented with the offer of EU-membership (and the benefits associated with it) the non members were encouraged to carry out rapid reform processes. Membership was thus offered in return for adherence to and adoption of EU norms and standards.⁴⁸ Dannreuther comes to the conclusion that the significance of enlargement for the EU's potential as a global actor cannot be underestimated. He describes the 2004 and 2007 enlargements as key success stories for the EU giving "...greater credibility to the EU's ambitions to be treated as a global actor in world politics".⁴⁹ Apart from increasing the number of member states, population and size of the economy, enlargement has resulted in greater *political* weight for the Union and has for this reason

⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership has been pictured as an additional forum for norm promotion. Due to its lack of relation with the EaP as well as practical limitations this regional strategy will however not be considered here.

⁴⁷ See for example Schimmelfennig et al, 2005 and Dannreuther, 2006, p. 188ff. The importance of the enlargements following the fall of the Berlin wall is similarly underlined by the former Commissioner for External Relations and ENP, Benita Ferrero-Waldner. See Ferrero-Waldner, 2006, p. 139

⁴⁸ Haukkala, 2008, p. 1603 and Schimmelfennig et al. 2005

⁴⁹ Dannreuther, 2006, p. 184. Schimmelfennig et al. 2005 gives a similar picture as does Cremona et al. 2007.

been pictured as the context in which the EU has been most successful in its attempts to spread its core values. As pointed out by Haukkala

...the enlargement process acts as a conduit through which the EU as a normative power Europe...can project its norms and values in a way that is both efficient and legitimate. (...) The key here is to appreciate the fact that EU enlargement is not only about drawing geographical boundaries; it is also about establishing, or imposing, an EU order in Europe through the transference and diffusion of EU norms, values, rules and regulations.⁵⁰

Moreover, the very success of enlargement strengthened the EU's claim to possess a capacity to influence the internal development of other states using moral persuasion rather than military power.⁵¹ The conclusion to be drawn is thus that through enlargement the EU has managed to expand in territorial as well as political terms; establishing itself as a powerful foreign policy actor and giving greater impetus to the (at least self-pursued) understanding of the EU as an actor founded on norms and values rather than military means. Finally, it can be noted that the EU seems to be aware – and wishes to make use of – the double function of enlargement as a foreign policy tool. In the words of the former Commissionaire Benita Ferrero-Waldner:

The EU's aim is to expand the zone of prosperity, stability and security beyond our borders. The question is how to use our soft power to leverage the kinds of reforms that would make that possible. The answer...was Enlargement. This has been a tremendously successful policy (...) EU enlargement has made an extraordinary contribution to peace and prosperity, thanks to our strategic use of the incentives on offer.⁵²

2.2.2 The European Neighbourhood Policy

The 2004 enlargement did not merely result in a ten countries larger EU and a significant increase of its sphere of influence; it also created a whole new neighbourhood for the Union. It is evident that this change cast new light on how the EU perceives its relations with the formerly very distant (in geographical as well as political terms) but soon to be close countries. According to the Commission, the accession of the ten new member states made enhancing the EU-Eastern neighbourhood relations more urgent. Yet, *how* this was to be done, what was the ideal nature of this enhancement was not evident. Already existing forms of cooperation (the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, (PCAs), and the Association Agreements) were considered inadequate and, due to so called “enlargement fatigue” and growing (popular and political) opposition, continuing to enlarge was not perceived a feasible option. The European Neighbourhood Policy was

⁵⁰ Haukkala, 2008, p. 1604

⁵¹ Dannreuther, 2006, p. 184 and Tocci 2007, p. 24

⁵² Ferrero-Waldner, 2006, p. 139

presented as a solution to this challenge, supplementing the PCAs and Association Agreements and establishing a framework for strengthening the EU's relations with those neighbouring countries that do not have the perspective of membership of the Union.⁵³ While admittedly not solving the basic dilemma of enlargement (the ENP neither provides for nor rule out a membership perspective) the ENP provided the EU with additional tools to foster friendly neighbourhoods.⁵⁴ With the often quoted creating "...a 'ring of friends'" as its overarching purpose, the ENP builds on the (good) experiences from enlargement, offering the neighbour countries incentives in return for reforms and adherence to EU norms:

In return for concrete progress demonstrating shared values and effective implementation of political, economic and institutional reforms, including in aligning legislation with the *acquis*, the EU's neighbourhood should benefit from the prospect of closer economic integration with the EU.⁵⁵

But why was increased engagement in the Eastern neighbourhood called for? Naturally, one explanation is the political implications stemming from the 2004 enlargement: it is evident that the EU felt that the increased nearness of the less stable countries of Eastern Europe might threaten the EU's internal security. Improved relations were thus motivated from a geopolitical point of view.⁵⁶ Yet, it is equally reasonable to interpret the purpose of the ENP in more idealistic terms. The ENP-documents and webpage all stress the commitment to shared values in addition to the ambition to promote security and it is explicitly stated that the cooperation's *level of ambition* depends on the extent to which the shared values are in fact shared.⁵⁷ For this reason, the ENP has been interpreted as the most promising new forum and/or instrument for the EU to promote norms. As Tocci notes, the ENP has put "...greater and more explicit emphasis on democracy and human rights compared to previous initiatives towards the neighbouring south and east".⁵⁸ Has the EU been successful in its attempts to promote values outside the context of enlargement? The academic research point in two directions. On the one hand it is claimed that previous experiences suggest that the EU's potential as a norm promoter is intimately linked to the incentive of (full) membership.⁵⁹ On the other hand, McDonagh's empirical study of international organisations' efforts to promote democracy in Moldova shows that although the prospect

⁵³ Haukkala, 2008, Cremona et al. 2007. European Commission, 2003

⁵⁴ Smith, 2005, p. 757. In its ENP-communication the Commission states that the aim with the neighbourhood policy is to provide a framework for the "...development of a new relationship which would not, in the medium-term, include a perspective of membership or a role in the Union's institutions". European Commission, 2003, p. 5

⁵⁵ European Commission, 2003, p. 4. For more information about the incentives offered, see p. 10ff

⁵⁶ This is not least illustrated by the launch and content of the *European Security Strategy* (ESS) in 2004, stating that "...integration of acceding states increases our security but also brings the EU closer to troubled areas". The Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 8

⁵⁷ European Commission, 2003 and EC, External Relations, European Neighbourhood Policy.

⁵⁸ Tocci 2007, p. 24 See also Cremona et al. 2007.

⁵⁹ Haukkala, 2008, p. 1604

of membership is a very powerful incentive it is by no means the *only* effective tool.⁶⁰ This leads to the conclusion that although the absence of the membership perspective challenges the potential efficiency of EU-policies, it should not in itself be regarded a hindrance to successful value promotion. While recognising the advantages of offering incentives, the European Commission appears hopeful about the potential of strengthened cooperation as an instrument for increased influence, arguing that “...enhanced interdependence – both political and economic – can *itself* be a means to promote stability, security and sustainable development both within and without the EU”.⁶¹ The question is, however, if the absence of powerful incentives should be understood as the result of a conscious choice *or* an inability or even reluctance to make the necessary concessions. This is one of the issues that will be explored in the examination of how the civil servants involved in EU foreign policy-making conceive strategies for norm promotion.

2.3 The process of developing the Eastern Partnership

The EU’s approach towards its Eastern Neighbourhood post-enlargement can be characterised as a work in progress that, according to some observers, has been marked by uncertainty and the member states’ diverging interests in the region.⁶² It should perhaps therefore come as no surprise that when Poland first suggested a specific “Eastern Dimension” of EU Foreign Policy in the end of the 1990’s it did not gain much support from either the Commission or the other member states. Certainly, most agreed that the upcoming 2004 enlargement would cast new light on EU-neighbourhood relations but since the Mediterranean states insisted that any new policy would have to include the Southern countries as well, the idea of an Eastern dimension was put on ice for the benefit of the more general ENP directed towards the East *and* South. It was not until 2007 with the French president Sarkozy’s continuous efforts to establish a “Mediterranean Union” for the Southern EU-members and their neighbours, that an Eastern initiative became viable. The French proposition provoked great opposition from within the Union – eventually forcing Sarkozy to compromise and make do with a “Union for the Mediterranean” consisting of all EU member states and most of the Southern neighbours – but it also encouraged other member states to consider a similar policy with Eastern Europe.⁶³

Consequently, when Sweden and Poland made a joint proposal in the European Council in May 2008, suggesting an Eastern Partnership with the purpose to reinforce EU-Eastern

⁶⁰ McDonagh, 2008, pp. 158-159

⁶¹ European Commission, 2003, p. 4. Emphasis added.

⁶² Haukkala, 2009, p. 2

⁶³ Hillion et al. 2009, p. 5, Haukkala, 2009, p. 5

neighbourhood relations, the other member states were probably more susceptible than they had previously been. It was widely agreed that the already existing ENP was insufficiently tailored to meet the realities of the Eastern neighbourhood and, what is more, that it did not recognise their different aspirations towards the EU. The purpose of the Polish-Swedish initiative was to complement and enhance the ENP by providing a specific framework for cooperation with the Eastern neighbours of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Michalski describes the proposal as a deliberate attempt by Sweden and Poland to strengthen the Eastern non-EU members' position vis-à-vis other countries "...in the competition for the attention of the Brussels bureaucracy, the Union's financial resources and political support".⁶⁴ Moreover, she claims that the "thinly veiled" ambition to "...create an antechamber for those Eastern countries which had clearly stated their aspiration to join the EU (...) but to whom the EU was becoming increasingly reluctant to accord membership perspectives" was yet another important motivator.⁶⁵ Growing opposition to further enlargements made any efforts to actively promote full membership unrealistic and the Eastern Partnership could serve as an alternative means to support the modernisation of the Eastern Neighbours and in this manner facilitate future EU-integration. Concurrently, the times was deemed favourable because of the presidency schedule: the upcoming presidencies of the Czech Republic, Sweden and Poland – all proponents of strengthened relations with Eastern Europe – could be expected to support and carry the process forward.⁶⁶

Albeit initially supported by the other member states, the initiative soon became subject of a number of criticisms. It was pointed out that the EaP would overlap with other frameworks for regional cooperation in Eastern Europe (the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the EU's Black Sea Synergy) and that it risked diluting existing policy processes such as the ENP. The initiative was additionally criticised for the risk of cementing the regionalisation-tendency of EU foreign policies as well as for competing with other regional partners for the EU's already scarce resources. However, with war breaking out between Georgia and Russia in autumn 2008, the situation was altered. The war illuminated the vulnerable position of the Eastern neighbours, lying between Russia and the EU and, as Michalski notes, made clear that the "...former CIS republics (...) were in fact essential to EU's foreign policy aims of stability and prosperity in the neighbourhood".⁶⁷ This meant that the calls for enhancing the EU-Eastern neighbourhood relations were given new impetus. And, as the one-size-fits-all-logic underpinning the ENP was

⁶⁴ Michalski, 2009, p. 2. See also Hillion et al. 2009, p. 4ff

⁶⁵ Michalski, 2009, pp. 1-2 (quote from p. 2)

⁶⁶ Michalski, 2009, p. 2

⁶⁷ Michalski, 2009, p. 2

considered making it an inadequate response to this challenge, the idea of an Eastern Partnership was rendered highly relevant.

The Georgia-Russia conflict underlined the importance of EU presence as such *and* the urgency of enhancing EU-Eastern neighbourhood relations. It should nevertheless be pointed out that though the conflict speeded up the process of developing and adopting the Eastern Partnership, it was not the causal factor. The European Council of 19-20th June 2008 had invited the European Commission to prepare a proposal for a new policy directed towards the Eastern Neighbourhood to be presented in spring 2009. The Extraordinary European Council of 1st September 2008 "...asked for this work to be accelerated, responding to the need for a clearer signal of EU commitment following the conflict in Georgia and its broader repercussions".⁶⁸ Hence, when the Commission presented its communication in December 2008 it did so three months earlier than initially anticipated. After having been discussed and negotiated among the EU-member states, the Eastern Partnership was finally officially launched and adopted by all EU member states in May 2009.⁶⁹ Since then, the work to implement the Partnership has commenced and a so called Task Force Eastern Partnership assigned to coordinate and monitor this process has been established. By initiating a completely new section the Commission wants to signalise the "particular importance" that the EU attaches to the Eastern Partnership.⁷⁰

Although the process of developing the EaP was marked by its slow beginning and lack of enthusiasm from some member states, it is clear that the EU is becoming increasingly convinced of the necessity of engaging in the Eastern neighbourhood. The partner countries (PCs) are considered utterly important; not only because of their geostrategic positions, but also because the strong desire (in at least some of them) to integrate with Europe make them more susceptible for EU-influence than other non-member states. Hence, engaging in the Eastern neighbourhood can be interpreted as a means for the EU to confirm and strengthen its (self-understood) reputation as a global actor.

⁶⁸ European Commission, 2008, p. 2

⁶⁹ European Commission, 2008, p. 2 and EC, External Relations, Eastern Partnership. According to Hillion et al, 2009, p. 5, the Commission's proposal does not differ too much from the Polish-Swedish initiative.

⁷⁰ EC official 5. Before the establishment of the Task Force, DG RELEX was the responsible unit.

3. Theoretical framework

The previous chapter set the empirical frame for the analysis by highlighting the possibilities and restrictions for the EU as a foreign policy actor. However, we need also consider the *theoretical* framework. How does studying the internal process of policy-making enable a greater understanding of high-profiled “political” questions such as foreign policy and how does previous research conceptualise strategies for norm promotion? Aiming to answer these questions the current chapter elaborates the argument for *why* the internal process of policy-making merits attention in this context and discusses the concept of norms in international relations. It also defines the key concepts of the two theories about strategies for norm promotion – the external incentives model and the social learning model – that form the foundation for the forthcoming analysis.

3.1 Politicians and bureaucrats

“...politicians make policy; civil servants administer. Politicians make decisions, bureaucrats merely implement them”.⁷¹

In this manner Aberbach et al. succinctly summarise the commonly held conception of the ideal relationship between politicians and bureaucrats. Whereas politicians formulate visionary goals and set the political agenda, civil servants are assigned to convert these goals into concrete policies operable in the day to day work. From one point of view the dichotomy of politicians/civil servants is obvious – there are important differences in terms of appointment procedures, roles and legitimacy that make them analytically separable. At second glance, however, this distinction is less clear cut. In his classical analysis of the modern bureaucracy, Max Weber acknowledged the complicated relationship between politicians and bureaucrats, pointing at the power asymmetry generated by politicians’ needs for bureaucratic expertise. Because politicians lack the resources (in terms of knowledge, information and time) to transform policy goals to realistic plans and to implement them they become dependent on their civil servants for doing so. For this reason, Weber deemed the ideal type pictured above improbable – regardless of its normative desirability.⁷²

⁷¹ Aberbach et al, 1981, p.4. See also Rothstein, 2001, p. 7ff.

⁷² Aberbach et al, 1981, p. 5ff and Huber et al. 2002, p. 17ff.

Weber's analysis set the agenda for research on modern bureaucracies and today there is wide agreement in the academic literature that the civil servants play key roles in the processes of policy-making as well as implementation. David Easton's figure of the flow in a political system helps to elucidate the interplay between political goals and policy output and, in extension, the role played by civil servants:

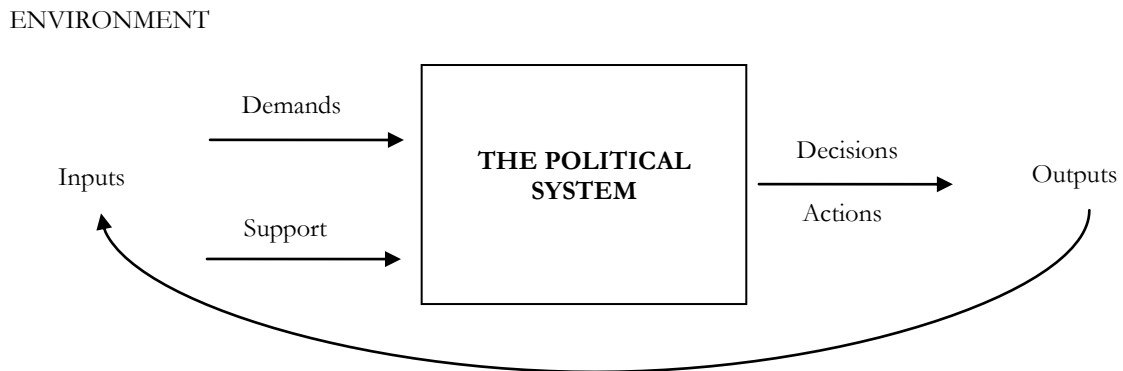


Figure 1 : *A model of the political system*, based on Easton, 1979, p. 112

Figure 1 suggests that political goals must pass through what has been called the “black box of policy-making”. Because civil servants are positioned *within* this very box, they are crucial actors in the policy-making process. The implication is thus that in current political systems

...countless important policy decisions are made by the bureaucracy rather than the legislature. By delegating decisions, the legislature takes advantage of the bureaucracy's expertise in the policy area under consideration.⁷³

Bennedsen et al. point to the fact that civil servants are not merely central to the policy-making process; they moreover possess a fair amount of autonomy in relation to the explicitly formulated political goals – a phenomenon that has been conceptualised as “bureaucratic autonomy”. But why are politicians willing to compromise with their power? This simple, but yet very important question is often answered with reference to the growing complexity of governance. The mere amount of policies and their often detailed nature is claimed to set limits for politicians' involvement: the degree of expertise needed in order to transform all political goals into concrete policies is simply too high.⁷⁴ Hence, the Weberian as well as current analyses about the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats suggest that there are good reason for delegating (some degree of) authority to the administration. Delegation might even be considered a practical necessity – after all, it would be impossible for politicians to handle every single question in every

⁷³ Bennedsen et al, 2006, p. 643

⁷⁴ Huber et al. 2002, p. 19

single policy process. Bureaucrats are needed for the political systems to function. Yet, the reason for granting bureaucrats this autonomy – their expertise – is also potentially problematic. Huber et al. describe bureaucratic expertise as a “...double-edged sword, creating both the incentive for legislatures to give policy-making power to bureaucrats and the opportunity for these bureaucrats to act counter to legislative preferences.”⁷⁵ According to this line of reasoning, it is (apart from the skills) the *responsiveness* of the bureaucrats assigned to shape and implement policies that determines whether or not a certain political goal gets the effect sought for, rather than solely the politicians’ intentions. From a democracy point of view this is of course questionable: whereas politicians can be held accountable in the general elections, there is no corresponding mechanism for the citizens to hold civil servants accountable for undesired policy choices/outcomes. On the other hand, it can be claimed that politicians can and should be held accountable for civil servants’ actions as it is they who are responsible for the decision to delegate power. What is essential, however, is that any attempt to understand the dynamics of political processes *requires that the internal process of policy-making is taken into account.*⁷⁶

3.1.1 Bureaucratic autonomy in the European Union

Mainstream media and political debaters sometimes picture the European Union as an unwieldy organisation of administration, made up of bureaucrats more concerned with the shape of cucumbers than urgent political questions. To some extent this description of the bureaucratic EU can be written off as scurrilous portraits stemming from lack of knowledge and/or EU-scepticism, but the fact is that academic research indicate that there is some relevance to this image. As mentioned in the introduction, it has been claimed that civil servants play a more important role at the EU than the national level because of the *nature of EU policies*. EU policies tend to be regulatory – as opposed to ‘political’ – in character, demanding therefore a high degree of expertise in order to be put into practice. This, it is argued, makes them more suitable for technocratic (bureaucratic) decision-making than the more politicised policies in the member states.⁷⁷ In this regard the civil servants staffing the Commission (the EU’s highest executive authority) are considered to play key roles in the EU policy-making process, setting the agenda for and shaping the form of policies.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Huber et al, 2002, p. 19

⁷⁶ Rothstein, 2001, p. 11, Huber et al. 2002, p. 19

⁷⁷ Beyers et al, 2004, p. 1120 and Tallberg, 2002, p. 23ff. Majone is one of the main proponents of this argument. See Majone, 1998

⁷⁸ Beyers et al, 2004, p. 1120. As the Commissioners are appointed by the member states’ governments and (the Commission as a whole) must be approved by the European Parliament it can be argued that some link between them and the European citizens exists. However, they are very far from being directly democratically elected.

While not challenging the reasons for nor the importance of taking the administration into account in political analyses, Beyers et al. complicate the image of the European Union policy-making as regulative and depoliticised. They argue that their empirical analysis of how different interests affect the processes of EU policy-making suggests that the degree of depoliticisation has been exaggerated. Concluding that the bureaucratic autonomy is greater by definition in the EU context than the national is misleading because the EU policy-making process is marked by a wide range of internal variations. The civil servants' freedom of manoeuvre is highly dependent on their location within the EU policy system. Beyers et al. furthermore claim that for this reason, the dichotomy of politicians/bureaucrats usually employed is ill suited to the EU context. Instead, they propose a distinction between *technical* bureaucrats (who come close to the Weberian ideal type) and *political* bureaucrats (who are to combine technical expertise with politicians' legitimacy concerns). While the former type can be found in the Commissioners' Directorate Generals, the latter is typically situated in Commission cabinets as well as the member states' foreign ministries and permanent representations. The implication of their distinction is that while political bureaucrats enjoy – and tend to make use of – a high degree of autonomy, technical bureaucrats tend to simply act in accordance with the frames given.⁷⁹

3.1.2 The argument for considering the internal policy-making process

The discussions above allow for a few conclusions to be drawn. First, previous research suggests that because bureaucrats play key roles in policy-making as well as implementation, any analysis of a political process and outcome should take the administration into account. The good reasons for examining the internal process of policy-making have certainly been acknowledged by a number of scholars who have attempted to open the “black box of policy-making”.⁸⁰ Yet, this dimension seems to have been overlooked in research about norms in international relations.

Secondly, the argument for considering more than just the *outcome* (the policy itself) appears to be even stronger in the EU- than in the national context. However, given Beyers et al.'s suggestion that the degree of depoliticisation of EU-policy-making has been exaggerated, one should nevertheless be wary of potential internal variations in terms of bureaucratic autonomy. Aiming to take this aspect into account the dichotomy of technical/political bureaucrat is considered when selecting interviewees. How this is done is elaborated in chapter 4.5. Finally, it should be

⁷⁹ Beyers et al, pp. 1119-1226, p. 1147

⁸⁰ Easton, 1979. See for example Uhrwing 2001

pointed out yet again that it is neither the policy process as such nor the extent of bureaucratic influence that are objects of interest in this thesis. Rather, the conceptions of the civil servants are *used as instruments* to examine how strategies for norm promotion are conceived in the *EU system*. In other words, the importance of the internal process of policy-making is presumed rather than examined.⁸¹

3.2 Norms in international relations

The concept of norms is frequently used but rarely explained: what do we mean when we refer to “norms”? The aim of this thesis is to elaborate our understanding of how norm *promotion* is conceived within the EU-system, rather than to examine the EU-norms as such. Nevertheless, in order to lay down the theoretical basis for the analysis to come, a brief introduction to how norms and normative power have been conceptualised in international relation’s research seems called for. I then direct my attention to the theories about norm promotion/compliance.

It has been questioned why political theory and international relations should at all study norms: after all, most would agree that there is a vast difference between what *is* in the world and *what ought to be*. Finnemore et al. give a powerful answer to this question, pointing to the fact that empirical research “...documents again and again how peoples’ ideas about what is good and what ‘should be’ in the world become translated into political reality”.⁸² In other words: if we want to understand the *is* of international affairs, also the *ought to be* needs to be taken into account. There seems to be general agreement on the definition of norms as “...a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity”.⁸³ Elaborating this basic definition, different categories or dimensions of norms have been recognised. The distinction most commonly made is that between *regulative* norms (which order and restrain behaviour) and *constitutive* norms (which create new interests, actors or categories of action). Yet, as Finnemore et al. note the very essence of the concept is perhaps best captured by the category of *evaluative* or *prescriptive* norms since

...it is precisely the prescriptive (or evaluative) quality of ‘oughtness’ that sets norms apart from other kinds of rules. Because norms involve standards of ‘appropriate’ or ‘proper’ behaviour, both the intersubjective and the evaluative dimensions are inescapable when discussing norms.⁸⁴

⁸¹ For similar reasons, I will not go deeper into the discussion about the normative desirability of bureaucratic autonomy.

⁸² Finnemore et al. 1998, p. 916

⁸³ Finnemore et al. 1998, p. 891

⁸⁴ Finnemore et al, 1998, p. 891

The obvious – but yet rarely acknowledged – implication of this is that from a norm promoter’s perspective there are no *bad* norms. Norms are established, accepted and become powerful as norms exactly because people believe in their goodness and/or appropriateness. Additionally, as Finnemore et al. point out when discussing the three-stage process of the norm “life cycle”, (norm emergence, broad acceptance and norm internalisation) norms do not appear out of thin air. Rather, they tend to be *actively built* by agents with strong opinions about what is appropriate and/or desirable.⁸⁵ This is certainly illustrated by the manner in which norms and values are described and referred to in official EU-documents; not least in the newly adopted *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*. Stating that “...the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity” the *Charter* makes it utterly clear that the EU regards its core values as universal and nonnegotiable.⁸⁶ *Promoting* these very values is thus, by definition, good. The implication of this is discussed further in chapter 4.3, addressing methodological considerations.

3.2.1 The concept of normative power and the “normative power Europe”-thesis

How can power be normative? The concept seems to suffer from a built in contradiction: on the one hand “power” indicates an ability to make someone do something they would not do otherwise, “normative”, on the other, alludes to legitimacy. On second glance, however, the concept highlights important dimensions of how agents of international affairs can influence others in the absence of (or serve as an alternative to) hard power means. It moreover enables us to acknowledge that while “traditional” sources of power *imposes* observance, normative power builds on a higher degree of voluntariness as it presupposes *willingness to comply* from the target. So, while recognising the problematic nature of the concept I nonetheless argue that it is meaningful from an analytical point of view.

The lack of military means is frequently mentioned as a core aspect of normative power but should not be considered synonymous to nor in itself enough to capture the essence of the concept. Rather, normative power refers to the power of ideas, the ideational impact or the *ability to influence what is conceived as normal*.⁸⁷ Or, put differently, the “power” is composed of a right to define the appropriate. Yet, the ability to do so is dependent on how the norm initiator/promoter

⁸⁵ Finnemore et al. 1998, p. 894ff

⁸⁶ European Parliament et al. 2000, p. 8

⁸⁷ Manners, 2002, p. 238.

is conceived by the recipient part. In order to become a “normative power” able to influence and even shape other actors’ conceptions of appropriate behaviour, the agent promoting norms (*and* the norms that are promoted) must be perceived as legitimate.⁸⁸

This thesis took the EU’s attempts to portray itself as a promoter of norms as point of departure. By continuously referring to the importance of respecting principles such as human rights and democracy in its foreign policies and by adopting a Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Union seeks to strengthen its identity as a community based on values. As noted in the introduction, there is a growing bulk of research discussing whether this means that the EU should be regarded a normative power or not. On the one hand, claims have been made that the EU represents something qualitatively new in international relations, acting as a changer of norms rather than relying on employing traditional (“hard power”) foreign policy instruments. According to the main proponent of the (new) “normative power Europe”-thesis, Ian Manners, the EU is not only constructed on a normative basis, but this moreover “...predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics”.⁸⁹ On the other hand, opponents have pointed out that EU foreign policy is marked by ambiguity and that the ambition to promote norms is far from the sole motivator for EU involvement in the neighbourhood.⁹⁰ Since it is not *objective* truth of the EU as a norm promoter that is the subject of interest here I will not go deeper into this discussion. It should nevertheless be noted that irrespective of how the effectiveness (and desirability) of EU norm promotion is conceived, most scholars agree that value promotion is a core feature of the EU’s identity.⁹¹ But *how* does it seek to do so and how do the civil servants assigned to convert the political goal of spreading norms reason about alternative strategies? In order to answer this, we must first consider the theoretical understanding of strategies for norm promotion. This is the question to which we now turn.

3.2.2 Strategies for norm promotion

The issue that has attracted most attention in recent research about norms in international relations is the issue of change. What motivates agents to adopt new norms? And, switching from a target to an initiator perspective; what strategies do norm promoters employ to spread values?

⁸⁸ Sjursén, 2006, p. 236ff, 245. See also Finnemore et al 1998 and Schimmelfennig et al. 2005

⁸⁹ Manners, 2002, p. 252

⁹⁰ See for example Wood, 2009 and Barbé et al, 2008

⁹¹ Sjursén, 2006, p. 238

Most theories aiming to describe and explain norm promotion/norm compliance make use of two “logics of action” motivating change: the logic of consequence and the logic of appropriateness. This distinction follows the broad debates between rationalism and constructivism in international relations (or rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism in comparative politics). The *rationalist* approach is actor-centred and builds on the assumption that agents are interest driven and rational in the sense that they seek to maximise their benefits based on the information at hand. *Constructivists*, in turn, acknowledge that agents have interests but claim that these interests are the results of the structures (made up of ideas, norms and identities) surrounding them rather than being determining factors themselves. Among alternative courses of action, actors tend to choose the most legitimate or appropriate one, seeking to act in accordance with what is expected from them.⁹² The basic assumptions just described lead to different interpretations about how – and why – agents are motivated to adhere to new norms. While the former approach views consequentiality as the main mechanism, the latter emphasises the mechanism of socialisation.

Aiming to take both these interpretations into account, the theoretical model in this thesis largely builds on Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier’s framework for analysis. Albeit developed to be applied in the context of European integration, their model represents a ‘mainstream’ among international relations’ theories about norm promotion and compliance. They offer three explanatory models of how and why norm (rule) adoption occurs: the external incentive model, the social learning model and the lesson-drawing model. The models differ on two key dimensions: the *logic of action* that applies (logic of consequence or logic of appropriateness) and whether the process of rule adoption is EU-driven (norm initiator driven) or CEEC-driven (target driven). As table 1 illustrates, both the external incentives model and the social learning model are classified as norm initiators-driven, whereas the norm recipient is regarded the principal actor in the lesson-drawing model.⁹³

Principal actor in the rule adoption process	Logic of rule adoption	
	<i>Logic of consequence</i>	<i>Logic of appropriateness</i>
EU-driven	External incentives model	Social learning model
CEEC-driven	Lesson-drawing model	Lesson-drawing model

⁹² Schimmelfennig et al, 2005, p. 9ff

⁹³ It can be noted that that the external incentives model is framed as *the* model for explaining norm compliance whereas the social learning model and the lesson-drawing model are presented as *alternative* explanatory models.

Table 1: *Alternative mechanisms of Europeanization* from Schimmelfennig et al. 2005, p. 8

Given that this thesis aims to examine how strategies for norm promotion are conceived in the internal process of policy-making, the principal actor is presumed rather than object of investigation. The focus lies on the norm initiator (the EU) as opposed to the target perspective, which is why the target-driven lesson-drawing model is left aside for the benefit of the EU-driven external incentives model and the social learning model.⁹⁴ These, in turn, have been elaborated with the aid of McDonagh's conceptualisation of strategies for democracy promotion as she offers a more easily applicable description of the concrete instruments.

Building on the *assumption* that agents are rational interest-maximisers, the rationalist *external incentives model* interprets norm adherence as the result of cost-benefit calculations carried out by agents who aim to minimise costs and maximise benefits. The *rationale* of the process is the logic of consequence. Essentially, this means that norms are viewed and treated as alternatives between which the agent can choose. Whether or not norms are adopted is considered to depend on how well they correspond to a given agent's interests. Hence, acting

...on the basis of the logic of consequentiality...includes the following steps: a. What are my alternatives? b. What are my values? c. What are the consequences of my alternatives for my values? d. Choose the alternative that has the best expected consequences.⁹⁵

The main *mechanism* through which norms are promoted is conditionality and the *instruments* incentives: norm recipients are presented with positive and/or negative incentives in return for norm compliance. Negative incentives typically comprise (the threat of) sanctions whereas positive incentives range from trade and/or cooperation agreements to full membership of a given organisation. The core assumption is that agents comply with political conditionality because – and when – the “...positive incentives (‘carrots’) on offer are crucial for them, or the costs of negative incentives (‘sticks’) exceed the costs of compliance”.⁹⁶ Moreover, the external incentives model understands the interplay between norm promoters and norm recipients as a bargaining process in which information, threats and promises are exchanged. The outcome of this process is determined by the relative bargaining power of the actors involved. This, in turn, depends on the asymmetrical distribution of “...(1) information and (2) the benefits of a specific agreement compared with those of alternative outcomes or ‘outside options’”.⁹⁷ Thus, a norm promoter's

⁹⁴ For more information about the lesson-drawing model and its relation to the other two, see Schimmelfennig et al, 2005. p. 20ff.

⁹⁵ March et al, 2004, p. 5

⁹⁶ McDonagh, 2008, p. 144 and Schimmelfennig et al. 2005, p. 10

⁹⁷ Schimmelfennig et al. 2005. p. 10ff

success largely depends on how the target country perceives the relation between expected benefits for adopting norms on the one hand, and the internal situation as well as alternative external interests on the other.

The constructivist *social learning model*, on the other hand, concentrates on the interplay between agents and structures and builds on the *assumption* that actions are identity-based and driven by rules of appropriateness rather than cost-benefit calculations. The *rationale* of the process of norm adoption is the logic of appropriateness. Because agents seek to live up the obligations defined by their role as members of a certain group, norms are adopted only if and when doing so corresponds to what is expected behaviour for them in a given situation. Thus, acting on the logic of appropriateness means asking oneself: “What kind of situation is this? What kind of person am I? What does a person such as I do in a situation like this?”⁹⁸ This infers that, similarly to the rationalist interpretation, norm adoption is conceived as a result of a conscious choice; the difference lies in the reasons motivating the choices made. In purpose to initiate and facilitate the three stage process of norm adoption – exposure, habituation and internalisation – norm promoters make use of the *mechanisms* of socialisation and normative pressure. Instead of linking norm compliance to specific incentives value promoters rely on the *instruments* of persuasion and social influence (naming and shaming). Persuasion is employed to change the minds and ideas and in extension the identity of the norm recipient. Making use of the social influence-instrument, on the other hand, means praising or pressurising the recipient into adopting norms, building on the assumption that

...actors will conform to policy change requests from the outside because they value certain social rewards (such as status, legitimacy, a sense of belonging) or want to avoid social punishments (such as shaming, shunning, exclusion).⁹⁹

It can be noted that just like norms never appear out of thin air, they rarely enter a normative vacuum: rather, they emerge into a space in which they compete with other, alternative norms. This infers that norm advocators trying to motivate new norms through invoking a logic of appropriateness (must) contest existing standards of appropriateness. In extension and paradoxically enough, in order to challenge the existing standards, norm promoters may need to be explicitly “inappropriate”.¹⁰⁰ Hence, the core of the social learning model is that a government will adopt a given norm if/when it is persuaded about the *appropriateness* of doing so.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ March et al, 2004, p. 4. p. 3ff

⁹⁹ McDonagh, 2008, p. 145

¹⁰⁰ Finnemore et al. 1998, p. 894ff

¹⁰¹ Schimmelfennig et al, 2005, p. 18

What can be said about the empirical effectiveness of the strategies discussed above? Building on their analysis of how norms and standards of the candidate countries were affected by the 2004 EU-enlargement, Schimmelfennig et al. come to the conclusion that incentives in general and the incentive of EU-membership in particular are crucial aspects of the Union's ability to promote norms. Yet, even though

...EU incentives become a sufficient condition for rule adoption and trump all alternative mechanisms once the EU provides a credible membership perspective and spells out its requirements, *EU incentives are not a necessary condition for rule adoption.*¹⁰²

In other words, employing the logic and mechanisms of the external incentives model should not be interpreted as the sole means to become a successful norm promoter: also the social learning model can prove efficient. Moreover, Schimmelfennig et al.'s result suggest that whether or not external incentives alone are what motivates the acceptance process have important consequences for the form and *impact* of norm adoption. Perhaps hardly a surprise, rules adopted through social-learning and lessons learned tend to be less contested in the domestic context and therefore more likely to be viable and sustainable in a long-term perspective. The potential of using strategies other than conditionality should in other words not be underestimated.¹⁰³

3.2.3 Foreign policy: interest-driven or milieu oriented?

Having explored the main dividing lines between the two explanatory theories employed in this thesis, we are almost ready to move on to the theoretical model. Before doing so, however, there is one additional aspect that deserves attention: what are the motives for agents to act in certain ways in international relations and, more specifically, why do they engage in norm promotion? International relations theory largely separate between three main perspectives seeking to explain state (or organisation) behaviour in international politics: realism, liberalism and constructivism. The realist school of thought view states as the key actors of international affairs and assumes that states are 1) rational in the sense that they seek to optimise their interest based on the information at hand and 2) motivated by a combination of drive for power and the pursuit of national interest(s). However, the anarchic nature of the international system renders the main interest – security – utterly hard to obtain. Because of the absence of a sovereign authority to enforce the rule of law and punish wrongdoers and because of the assumption that international politics is a zero-sum game, realists claim that states can never trust each others intentions. The

¹⁰² Schimmelfennig et al, 2005, p. 218

¹⁰³ Schimmelfennig et al. 2005, p. 219

quest for security thus becomes a constant struggle and conflict an ever present reality; states can never be secure enough. This, in turn, makes international cooperation a highly complicated issue and something that will happen for balancing/bandwagon reasons only.¹⁰⁴ Similarly to realists, liberals acknowledge that states are central actors of international relations. Yet, according to the liberal perspective states are by no means the *only* relevant actors: also international organisations determine the dynamics of the system. Building on the assumption that moral universal values exist (the main ones being individual liberty and human rights) and that international politics are marked by harmony of interest rather than anarchy, liberals argue that international cooperation is both likely and rational. Actors are certainly considered to be motivated by interest but from the liberal point of view their interest is guided by preference (determined by domestic factors and international norms) rather than egoism.¹⁰⁵ Constructivism, in turn, is often interpreted as a middle-way theory, seeking to bridge the gap between the extremes of neo-realism and postmodernism. With the assumption that no social features are given as their starting point, constructivists focus on the interplay between structures and agents and emphasise the impact of norms and institutions on international politics. Foreign policy is considered to be “...not only a matter of national interest, but also of acceptable behaviour in the international society”.¹⁰⁶ While acknowledging the importance of interest, constructivists argue that identity and culture are key determinants of an agent’s actions, pointing at the context dependency of preference formation.¹⁰⁷

Depending on the perspective taken, different conclusions as regards the motivations behind and objectives with an actor’s foreign policy can be drawn. Whereas realists underline security concerns as both the starting point and goal for international politics, liberals and constructivists instead point at the importance of preference. But while liberals hold that the preference for universal moral values is given, constructivists point at context and identity as explanations. How does this help us to attain this thesis’ aim: to examine how strategies for norm promotion are conceived in the internal process of policy-making? I argue that to fully understand why certain strategies are preferred over alternative ones we must link the choice of these strategies in relation to the *overarching goal* of the given actor and/or policy. If the main goal of the European Union is to employ the Eastern Partnership as a forum for obtaining the liberal/constructivist goal of

¹⁰⁴ Steans et al, 2005, p. 49ff

¹⁰⁵ Steans et al, 2005, pp. 21-46

¹⁰⁶ Steans et al. 2005, p. 185

¹⁰⁷ Steans et al, 2005, pp. 181-189. The principal difference between the liberal and the constructivist interpretation of preference is thus that while liberals view preferences as predetermined, constructivist emphasise that they emerge in specific contexts and are linked to specific identities.

promoting values, it seems reasonable to believe that the perceived efficiency of the possible strategies was the key determining factor in the policy preparations. If the EU's intention with the EaP is more in line with realist objectives (increased energy security for example) then it can be expected that other aspects than the efficiency of strategies for value promotion guided the policy-making choices.

In an attempt to elucidate the different motives underlying states' foreign policies, Tocci distinguishes between possession and milieu goals. *Milieu* goals aim at transforming the international context through the promotion of peace and democracy as well as principles such as human rights and the rule of law. *Possession* goals on the other hand, aim at protecting and advancing narrower (often material) interests such as commercial relations, border management or energy security. Clearly, the pursuit of possession goals can be interpreted in terms of the realist conceptions of how states act. Milieu oriented goals, on the other hand, correspond both to the liberal notion of harmony of interest and the constructivist emphasis on international norms as a key determinant of state behaviour. However, empirical analyses indicate that most foreign policy choices are guided by both milieu and possession goals and that the extent to which milieu goals are pursued tend to depend on the importance of alternative (possession oriented) objectives.¹⁰⁸ Barbé et al. claim that because material gains and moral impulses are so closely intertwined foreign policy is about balancing possession and milieu goals rather than choosing one approach. Moreover, although the pursuit of a possession oriented foreign policy often conflicts with milieu goals, this is far from always the case. As Tocci notes, milieu and possession goals *can* in fact be combined:

The advancement of allegedly milieu goals may underlie the pursuit of narrower possession objectives. Imposing sanctions or waging war in the name of democracy or human rights can cover aims such as protecting energy security. (...) Moreover, milieu and possession goals may well be compatible if not mutually reinforcing in the long-term.¹⁰⁹

This leads to the conclusion that drawing a fixed line between the two types of goals is a fairly complicated issue and something that is perhaps not even desirable. The point is, however, that the (analytical) distinction enables us to acknowledge and examine the logical chain between intentions, goals and policy choices. In purpose to allow for this to be taken into account in the forthcoming analysis, the two ideal types of foreign policy goals are included in the theoretical model of strategies for norm promotion.

¹⁰⁸ Tocci 2007, p. 28ff. See also Barbé et al. 2008 and Wood, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Tocci 2007, pp. 29-30 and Barbé et al. 2008, pp. 83-84

3.2.4 Theoretical model of strategies for norm promotion

The theoretical perspectives outlined above indicated the key concepts of the external incentives model and the social learning model respectively. Aiming to make these concepts applicable in the forthcoming analysis, figure 1. *Strategies for norm promotion*, has been developed to clarify the interconnections between assumptions, mechanisms and instruments.

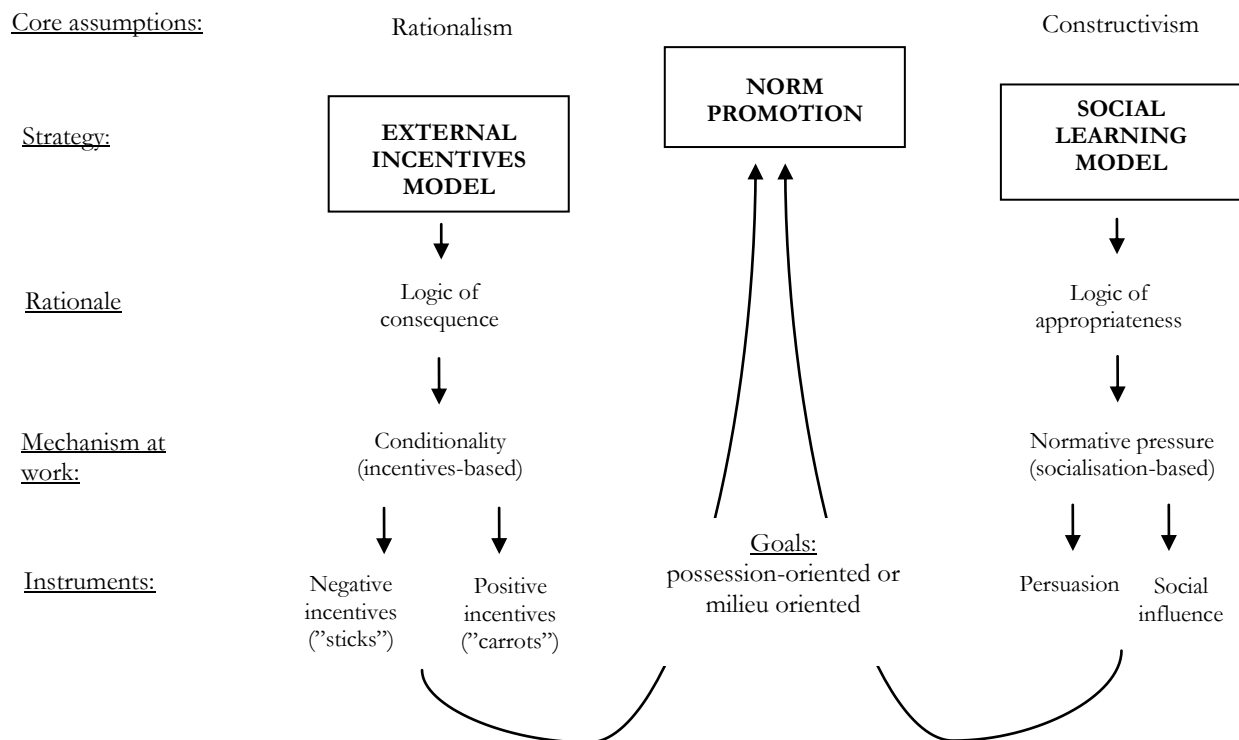


Figure 2: *Strategies for norm promotion*

The external incentives model builds on rationalist assumptions and explains norm compliance with reference to the logic of consequence: agents will adopt norms if and when doing so is considered beneficial. Employing the instrument of (positive and/or negative) incentives norm promoters build on the mechanism of conditionality in their attempts to promote norms. Their success depends on the degree to which the benefits of adopting new norms outweigh the costs of doing so. The point of departure of the social learning model, in turn, is a constructivist approach which emphasises the process of socialisation as the change provoking mechanism. Building on a logic of appropriateness, it interprets norm compliance as a consequence of normative pressure. Norms are promoted through persuasion about their intrinsic *goodness* and *appropriateness* and through shaming and praising the norm recipient into norm acceptance.

As discussed earlier, the lack of previous research about how strategies for norm promotion are conceived in the internal process of policy-making mean that there are no theoretically grounded expectations to guide the analysis. By employing the theoretical model as a framework for analysis, the ambition is to elaborate our understanding of strategies for norm promotion by adding the perspective of the civil servants involved in the policy preparations. How can the concepts and assumptions of the social learning and external incentives model help us understand how the civil servants reason about the choice of certain strategies? And, in extension, are there aspects that the model developed above fails to take into account?

4. Methodological considerations

With the theoretical and empirical frameworks in place, some specifications as regards the research questions and the design of the thesis are called for. Aiming to give the clearest picture possible of the concrete way of action and the intentions behind the chosen approach, the present chapter discusses methodological considerations as well as the relevance and limitations of the study.

4.1 Relevance and limitations of the study

By leaving the policy-making process aside and not considering the conceptions held by civil servants, previous research about norm promotion has missed a potential source of insights about the motivations behind the choice of certain strategies. Building on the arguments elaborated in chapter 3.1, the *premise* of this thesis is that the internal process of policy-making matters and should be taken into account. By letting the Eastern Partnership serve as a policy-making case *and* as an independent object of analysis the intention is to fulfil the theoretical and empirical aim. The *theoretical* aim is to contribute to the theories about norm compliance/promotion by focusing on the promoter rather than the target and adding the perspective of the internal process of policy-making. The *empirical* aim is to increase the knowledge of the Eastern Partnership in general and its relation to the EU's foreign policy ambition to spread values in particular. My argument is that by studying the preparatory work of the Eastern Partnership, we will elaborate our understanding of how norm promotion is perceived by the people who are in a position to choose between strategies for doing so *and* gain a more multifaceted picture of the importance of norm promotion in the policy as well as its relation to the EU's general foreign policy goals than what would have been possible by solely looking at the policy as such.

The relevance of this study is twofold. The *intra-scientific* relevance concerns the theory testing/developing part: several existing studies examine the preconditions for norms to be adopted, but less attention has been directed towards how norm promoters conceive strategies for norm promotion. More specifically, previous research has failed to take the role played by civil servants and how norm promotion is perceived in the internal process of policy-making into consideration. Hence, I aim to contribute to the theoretical understanding of strategies for norm

promotion by directing attention to the rationale and motivations behind choosing certain strategies over others.

The societal relevance in turn, concerns the relation between the European Union's *goals* and the *politics pursued*. If norm promotion is one of the Union's main foreign policy objectives (which the Lisbon Treaty states that it is) it is of course essential that the day to day practice corresponds to this objective. As the Eastern Partnership has been presented and interpreted a tool for spreading values, the European citizens clearly have an interest to know to what extent the ambitions to do so actually guided the policy outcome. Is the EU credible in its claims of spreading values such as democracy and human rights? Given that previous research and practical experiences indicate that the prospect of EU-membership is a key incentive in promoting EU-norms, the absence of the membership perspective in the EaP context renders this highly questionable.

The main limitation of the study stems from the fact that solely one case is examined, reducing thereby the possibility to generalise the result. In order to address this issue and improve the preconditions for drawing general conclusions, the sample selection procedure (in terms of case as well as interviewees) has been considered very carefully. As will be elaborated further in chapter five, the sample selection has been *strategically* made. Another weakness concerns the sensitivity of the subject that is explored and the possibility to gain access to the "true" motivations. Is it reasonable to expect that the interviewees will be honest about the motivations behind the Eastern Partnership if this does not correspond to the general image presented in the official documents? Certainly, the description of the European Union as a value promoter as opposed to an actor aiming to pursue possession goals is more in line with the self-image of the EU. Notwithstanding this, it is far from evident that all civil servants staffing the EU are in fact *loyal* to the image given in the official EU-documents – it might in other words well be that they themselves reflect upon and express concerns about potential ambiguities. As previously noted, reaching "...to the 'hearts and souls' of policy makers" is hardly doable; what we *can* do, however, is be aware of potential motives for giving a specific picture and be utterly sensitive for this when analysing the result.¹¹⁰ The sensitivity of a matter (and the from this resulting challenges) is not in itself an argument for not studying it.

¹¹⁰ Sjursén, 2002, p. 496

4.2 Approach and design

Conceptions are rarely coherent or perfectly logical; rather they tend to be complex and sometimes even ambiguous. Aiming to take this complexity into account and reflect as many nuances as possible, this thesis builds on a qualitative approach. Investigating internal processes of policy-making is a complicated issue: negotiations and discussions tend to be highly confidential and policy drafts are rarely available for public scrutiny. In general then, the only way to gain access to the *process* is through the civil servants involved. Talking to them enables us to reach (at least one bit) into the "black box of policy-making". In order to fulfil the theoretical and empirical aim of this thesis, I will conduct conversational interviews with a motive-analysis dimension.

As indicated in chapter 3.2, the taking for granted character of norms complicate the crucial issue of how to detect and study their existence and in extension, renders it difficult to investigate how norm promotion is conceived. Because norms tend to be assumed rather than problematised it is possible (or even likely) that the civil servants assigned to realise the political goal of spreading EU-values have not reflected upon neither the content of these values nor the *ambition to promote them*. Questions about strategies for norm promotion (albeit differently phrased) may for this reason take the officials by surprise and, in the worst case scenario result in "none" answers. This insight must necessarily be borne in mind when preparing as well as conducting the interviews. Yet, as Finnemore et al. note, we can in fact gain indirect evidence of the presence of certain norms and the key of doing so is to acknowledge and be aware of their inherent quality of oughtness. Norms build on shared moral assessment and thus "...prompt justification for action and leave an extensive trail of communication among actors that we can study".¹¹¹ This implicates that norms should be easiest to detect and study in situations where actions are (or are expected to come) in conflict with the identity of the given actor.

I argue that one way of (concretely) approaching the question of how strategies for norm promotion are conceived is by investigating the *motives* for and/or *motivations* behind the setup of the Partnership. Admittedly, neither the study of motives is uncomplicated given that we are forced to make do with agents' own interpretations – or perhaps rather descriptions – of why they choose to act in certain ways. This is especially so when the topic discussed is as sensitive as is the Eastern Partnership; we must therefore be wary of the fact that the motives we discover are motives chosen and put forth by the agents themselves. The challenges of studying motives do however not make it less interesting or important. Attempting to address these challenges, this

¹¹¹ Finnemore et al. 1998, pp. 89-90

thesis follows Esaiasson et al.'s advice on the matter. First of all, the analysis builds on and will be guided by the assumption that by solely *mentioning* a certain aspect, the agent sends two important signals: this certain issue is 1) present in the actor's mind and 2) something that the agent wants us to acknowledge. For example, for the EU to be regarded as an actor building on the logic of consequence in its attempts to promote norms, the civil servants should emphasise the importance of providing incentives rather than mechanisms for socialisation.

In order to analyse the relative importance of different motives, the manner in which these are expressed will be weighed. Hence, aspects strongly emphasised will be interpreted to be of greater importance than those mentioned more in passing, as will those that are mentioned *frequently* and/or *early/late* in a reply.¹¹² It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the civil servants might (want to) give a more positive image of the EU as a foreign policy actor (by pointing at milieu rather than possession goals, for example) than what is "objectively true". Although admittedly complicating the conclusion-drawing, there is not much to do apart from being aware of the risk for too well-directed answers.

Before conducting the interviews however, and in purpose to fulfil the empirical aim, also the content of two main official documents of the EaP must be considered.¹¹³ This is not least a practical necessity – developing a good interview guide requires sound knowledge about the topic at hand. By including this examination (which might be conceived a preparatory step) the ambition is to provide the reader with as much information possible making her thereby better equipped to validate my conclusions. Triangulating the interview data moreover improves the possibilities of giving a multifaceted picture of the EaP than does relying on interviews *or* textual analysis alone. And finally, one additional motive for including an examination of the Partnership documents is that I want to explore potential differences between how values are framed in the official documents on the one hand, and how *promoting* these very values is conceived by the civil servants on the other.

4.3 Case selection: the reasons for choosing the Eastern Partnership

There are two main reasons for choosing the Eastern Partnership as the case of policy-making. First of all, the EaP builds on a similar logic as does the enlargement procedures: the partner

¹¹² Esaiasson et al. 2005, pp. 317-330

¹¹³ These are the European Commission's Communication about an Eastern Partnership, European Commission, 2008 and the *Joint declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit* made by the member states' heads of government, Council of the European Union, 2009

countries are offered incentives in return for reforms and commitment to shared values. Given that enlargement has been pictured as the Union's most successful foreign policy tool and forum for norm promotion yet, it seems reasonable to assume that the motivation for applying this logic of consequence is that the EU seeks to make use of the (good) experiences of enlargement. Concurrently, since the main incentive of enlargement – membership of the EU – is not offered in the EaP context, the EU has made an important lapse from its previous strategy. This in turn, makes it plausible to assume that the question of *how to best influence others to adopt EU values* was present in the policy preparations. Put differently, the civil servants are likely to have reflected upon and discussed alternative strategies for norm promotion.

Secondly, the great emphasis put on commitment to shared values in the official partnership documents indicate that milieu rather than possession goals guided the policy-making choices. Given that there are a number of strategic reasons (energy security to name but one) for increased EU-engagement in Eastern Europe, it is far from evident that this is in fact the main motivation. Hence, the Eastern Partnership preparation is a suitable case also because the interplay – or trade off – between milieu and possession goals is likely to have affected the policy setup. Finally, the scarcity of previous research concerning the interrelation between the EaP on the one hand and the EU's general foreign policy goal of promoting values on the other makes it still more relevant.

4.4 Selecting interviewees

The Eastern Partnership builds on an initiative put forth by Sweden and Poland and has since then been further concretised by the European Commission and formally adopted by the member state's governments. Therefore, in the best of worlds this study would include civil servants from Sweden, Poland and the Commission, as well as from member states that might represent deviant opinions about the subject. Unfortunately, limitations in terms of time and scope mean that I must make do with a smaller sample. This is of course problematic given that different member states might perceive the motivations behind and rationale with the Eastern partnership in different ways. For example, civil servants representing states which place less emphasis on the promotion of norms in comparison to Sweden (which has a strong tradition of working for the respect of values such as human rights) potentially understand the partnership differently than the Swedish officials. Furthermore, also the *general* attitudes towards Eastern Europe might affect

how the member states perceive the EaP.¹¹⁴ While recognising the limitations, I argue that the lack of previous research about how strategies for norm promotion are conceived in the policy-making process renders even a small sample highly interesting.

Aiming to capture the main logic behind the setup of the partnership, I interview officials from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs – the Swedish MFA is chosen over the Polish equivalent for practical (in terms of geographical proximity and language) reasons. In order to improve the possibility of gaining the most multifaceted image possible given the restrictions at hand I will also interview officials from the European Commission Directorate General (DG) responsible for preparing and coordinating the EaP. The argument for doing so is twofold: first, including the Commission officials means that we allow for potential discrepancies between the member states' and Community perspectives to be taken into account. Secondly, Beyers et al.'s analysis (presented in chapter 3.1) predicts that the technical bureaucrats of the Commission might interpret their role differently than do the political officials of the Swedish MFA. Whether institutional belonging is in fact a factor affecting the ideas about norm promotion remains to be seen.¹¹⁵

Making use of Marshall et al.'s terminology, we are dealing with so called elite interviews since the interviewees are "...selected on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research".¹¹⁶ The participants were chosen because of their involvement in the preparatory work of the Eastern Partnership; it is reasonable to expect that they possess important information and insights about the objectives and motivations behind chosen setup. The choice of the specific interviewees – the sample strategy – was made strategically, building on an intensity/criterion based rationale.¹¹⁷ Put simply, I wanted to talk to the persons who could be expected to be as knowledgeable as possible about the policy as a whole (rather than just specific parts) *and* who were closest to the shaping of the policy outcome. Expected knowledge and organisational position were thus key determinants. When possible, officials in more central positions (for example heads of units) were therefore chosen before lower positioned officials. The Swedish MFA-population relevant for my purpose turned out to consist of two persons which rendered a total population sample possible. As regards the European Commission, the number of relevant persons was somewhat larger (nine persons). As interviewing all of them would have been too time-consuming, I let the

¹¹⁴ There is a clear divide between the Eastern European countries of Sweden and Poland and the pro-enlargement European Commission on the one hand, and the more Eastern Europe-sceptic southern member states on the other. It is not too far a guess to assume that this is related to the factor of financial rivalry between regions. See for example Hillion et al, 2009, p. 6

¹¹⁵ Beyers et al, p. 1119, pp. 1225-1226, p. 1147

¹¹⁶ Marshall et al, 2006, p. 105

¹¹⁷ Marshall et al. 2006, p. 65ff

principle of intensity of information described above together with the recommendations made by my contact at the Swedish MFA guide the choice of interviewees. Since all but one of the six I contacted were willing to participate, I interviewed in total five officials from the European Commission.¹¹⁸ Aiming to increase the reliability – and thereby the credibility – of the study, I asked the interviewees for permission to record the interviews. None declined.

4.5 The interviews

Since the ambition is to understand both how the civil servants involved in the policy-making process of the EaP perceive norm promotion *and* gain information about the policy as such, the interviews can be described as a mixture of respondent and informant interviews. Particularly the respondent dimension renders the concrete interview-setup important. For reliability reasons, it was essential that all interviews followed the same general pattern and that all interviewees were asked (at least fairly) the same interview questions.¹¹⁹ Notwithstanding this, one of the main advantages of employing in-depth interviews rather than surveys for example, is the (potential) *flexibility* of the method: it allows for the interviewee to raise aspects not pre-defined and enables the interviewer to follow up interesting dimensions. Aiming to balance and make use of the benefits of flexibility while still assuring the reliability of the study, a semi-structured interview (specifying the overarching themes and some concrete interview questions) guided the interviews. (See appendix 1). The informant part of the interviews, in turn, renders the empirical correctness of the civil servants statements about the EaP important. In purpose to give an as accurate description possible of the EaP, I follow Rossman et al.'s. advice to triangulate the data, including also an analysis of the official Eastern Partnership-documents.

As regards the concrete way of action, the ideal approach would have been to conduct all interviews face to face in order to maximise the similarity of setting and to allow for aspects such as facial expressions and body language to be taken into account. Due to lack of resources, however, merely the interviews with the civil servants of the Swedish MFA were carried out face to face; the Commission officials were interviewed by telephone. Although this admittedly challenges the reliability of the result, I regard the value of including both the Commission and the Swedish MFA combined with the advantages with face to face interviews to outweigh the (possible) disadvantages. Therefore, I argue that the difference in the way of action is defensible. An-

¹¹⁸ The generally difficult task of gaining access to the Commission was facilitated by the fact that I could refer to my contact at the Swedish MFA – letting her/him serve as a “gate opener”. Both the Swedish MFA and the Commission officials were contacted via email – see appendix 1.

¹¹⁹ Esaiasson et al. 2005, p. 253ff, 279ff and Marshall et al. 2006, p. 102

other potential problem from a methodological point of view is that the interviews with all but one of the Commission staff were conducted in English whereas one Commission official and both civil servants from the Swedish MFA were interviewed in Swedish. Of course, speaking another language than one's mother tongue increases the risk of misinterpretations, but as both I and the interviewees have English as our working language, I regard this to be a minor problem. More problematic, however, is that the meanings of concepts are not necessarily equally well captured in the two languages, which might result in different interpretations on the part of the interviewees. Yet, this disadvantage must be weighed against the advantages of speaking one's native language and the risk of creating a gap between me and the respondent by insisting on using English instead of Swedish. When speaking Swedish was an option I therefore choose to do so (with the obvious consequence that any quotes by these officials have been translated by me to English).

Finally, some remarks about the issue of ethics are called for. In the interview situation as well as in analysing the data, I followed the advices and principles of the Swedish Research Council. The interviewees were informed about the purpose of the research and that their contribution is voluntary (informed consent). Because of the sensitive nature of the subject and given that the relevant divide between the two groups of interviewees is the *institutional* belonging (the Commission or the Swedish MFA) rather than their organisational positions; I choose to let the participants be anonymous in the analysis. By promising the respondents maximum confidentiality and that they, when quoted, would be referred to as "one of the Commission officials" or "one of the Swedish MFA officials" I judged that they would feel able to speak more freely than what otherwise would have been the case. In the end, however, it is impossible to make sure that the interviewees 'tell all'.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Vetenskapsrådet, 2002.

5. The Eastern Partnership

The semistructured framework that guiding the interviews builds on the key concepts of the theoretical model presented in chapter 3.3. Yet, good interview questions require sound knowledge about the topic at hand. We need therefore increase our understanding of the policy that is to be examined: what is the Eastern Partnership and how does it fit into the EU's general foreign policy ambition to promote values?

5.1 Setup and content of the Eastern Partnership

When examining the EaP there are primarily two official documents to consider: the European Commission's communication on an Eastern Partnership and the heads of governments' Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership from May 2009. Rather than giving a full summary of their content – the interested reader can easily access them herself – I here concentrate on the issue of values.¹²¹ The European Commission's take on the Eastern Partnership is certainly an ambitious one, stating that

The EaP should bring a lasting political message of EU solidarity, alongside additional, tangible support for their [the Eastern neighbours] democratic and market-oriented reforms and the consolidation of their statehood and territorial integrity. This serves the stability, security and prosperity of the EU, the partners and indeed the entire continent.¹²²

Directed towards the European Union's Eastern neighbours – Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus – the EaP is presented as a response to challenges common to the entire continent.¹²³ Intended to serve as a concrete framework for cooperation it consists of two separate “tracks”. The ambition with the *bilateral* track is to create closer relations between the EU and each of the partner countries by initiating cooperation agreements with the ultimate aim of establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). The provisions range from the upgrading of contractual relations towards association agreements to progressive visa liberalisation and support for economic and social policies. The *multilateral* track, in turn, is made up of four “policy platforms”: on democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; energy security and lastly contacts between people. These

¹²¹ For more information about the implementation and financing of the EaP, see European Commission 2009.

¹²² European Commission, 2008, pp. 2-3

¹²³ EC, External Relations, Eastern Partnership. It can be noted that albeit formally included among the EaP countries, Belarus takes a somewhat special position. Besides from being the only partner country not fully covered by the ENP and lacking PCAs, the authoritarian nature of the Belarusian government make political ties highly complicated. All EU-Belarus relations are thus conducted on expert level.

provide a frame for handling challenges common to all neighbour countries and are additionally intended to, in a long term perspective, strengthen the relations among the partner countries themselves.¹²⁴

While acknowledging that all PCs share a common wish to deepen their relations with the EU, the Commission points out that they do not have identical objectives for doing so, nor are they identical in terms of democratic and/or economic development. If the EaP is to be a successful response to these countries' challenges it must take the different preconditions into consideration. Aiming at more efficient means to do so than what is provided for in the already existing general ENP, the Commission stresses the importance of the fact that the EaP agreements will be "...tailored to each partner's *specific situation and ambition*".¹²⁵ The need for a differentiated approach is certainly a core feature of the Partnership given that the agreements are not merely tailored to the individual countries' preconditions but that they also additionally will "...*evolve* according to the EaP countries' level of ambition to comply to [sic] EU's standards."¹²⁶ In close connection to the principle of differentiation is thus the mechanism of conditionality: similarly to the enlargement context, the provisions of the EaP are linked to the partner countries' performances. Put simply: more ambitious countries will be rewarded with more integration than their less ambitious counterparts.¹²⁷

Hillion et al. claim that the EaP does provide added value to the EU's neighbourhood relations as it offers a more differentiated approach towards the Eastern countries. This fact however, raises questions about the future for the ENP. As they point out, the very promises of the EaP may (combined with the Union for the Mediterranean) render the ENP superfluous. Although it appears as if the Commission understands the EaP as a supplement rather than an *alternative* to the ENP, it remains an open question whether or not the ENP will survive as the overarching framework for EU-neighbourhood cooperation.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ European Commission, 2008, p. 3 and the Council of the European Union, 2009, pp. 7-11. For an analysis of the content and potential problems with the two tracks, see Hillion et al, 2009, pp. 8-15.

¹²⁵ European Commission, 2008, p. 4. Emphasis added. See Michalski, 2009 and Hillion et al. 2009.

¹²⁶ Michalski, 2009, p. 3 For Ukraine which has repeatedly stated its ambition to join the EU, the EaP has from the beginning been perceived as an utterly bleak alternative to full EU-membership. According to Michalski, the possibility for to move forward irrespective of the development in the other participating countries was the main reason for the Ukrainian final decision to support the Partnership. See p. 5.

¹²⁷ Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 5.

¹²⁸ European Commission, 2008, p. 3 and Hillion et al, 2009, pp. 22-24

5.1.1 Shared values?

The extent to which the ambition to promote norms shaped the Eastern Partnership will be explored in the interviews. Nevertheless, it is obvious that values are an essential dimension of the EaP. In their joint declaration the EU member states' heads of governments state that the EaP

...will be based on commitments to the principles of international law, and to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, as well as to market economy, sustainable development and good governance.¹²⁹

The importance of respecting values such as democracy and human rights – and in extension the ambition to *promote* these very norms – is similarly signalled by the Commission's communication. The Commission clarifies that not only is the EaP based on "...mutual commitment" to the values just mentioned but that the "...level of ambition of the EU's relationship with the Eastern Partners will take into account the extent to which *these values are reflected in national practices and policy implementation*".¹³⁰ Consequently, the acceptance of EU norms is made conditional to increased EU-integration. Inspired by the enlargement experiences, the EaP employs the methodology of conditionality by offering incentives in return for partner countries' norm adoption and reforms. The difference is that the incentives offered in the EaP-context are deepened cooperation agreements and the granting of support rather than EU-membership.

The values in question are presented as *shared* values to which the EU member states and the partner countries are expected to be equally committed. This is furthermore linked to the issue of joint ownership:

The Eastern Partnership is launched as a common endeavour of the Member States of the European Union and their Eastern European Partners...founded on mutual interests and commitments as well as on shared ownership and responsibility. It will be developed jointly, in a fully transparent manner.¹³¹

Although it is apparent that the EU wants to send the signal that the success of the partnership depends on the commitment of the member states *and* their Eastern European counterparts, it is less evident how the principle of joint ownership works in practice and, more specifically, how this guided the process of *identifying* the shared values. It can be questioned whether the values referred to as "shared values" are actually shared, in the sense of having been commonly defined, as opposed to defined by the EU alone. Several wordings indicate that the choice of values (de-

¹²⁹ Council of the European Union, 2009

¹³⁰ European Commission, 2008, p. 4. My emphasis.

¹³¹ Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 5

mocracy, human rights etc.) was *pre-defined* rather than the result of negotiations. This is not least illustrated in the Commission's communication explicitly stating that

A sufficient level of progress in terms of democracy, the rule of law and human rights and in particular evidence that the electoral legislative framework and practice are in compliance with international standards, and full cooperation with the Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR and UN human rights bodies will be a *precondition* for starting negotiations and for deepening relations thereafter¹³².

Moreover, the Commission promises that the partner countries will be assisted to meet the conditions and commitments stemming from the cooperation agreements through a so called Comprehensive Institution Building programme developed with each country.¹³³ This sends the important signal that the EU interprets the Partnership as a forum in which the EU and not the partner countries is in the position to define the preconditions for cooperation and judge the degree to which they are fulfilled. Hence, the obvious – but yet essential – conclusion is that the (EU-) principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights are a *nonnegotiable* foundation of the EaP. The EU does not intend to compromise about their content nor the commitment shown by the partner countries. This, in turn, makes it reasonable to question the extent to which the principle of joint ownership has in fact guided the development and setup of the Eastern Partnership and whether or not it will affect the future EaP-cooperation. As Kochenov succinctly points out there is dissonance between the concepts of conditionality and joint ownership:

Simply put, either the partners are equal and own the process together, or, conditionality is employed by one of the partners, requiring that others be subject to compliance checks, while also being dependent on the conditionality-related progress findings.¹³⁴

Finally, it might be tempting to interpret the focus on norms in the EaP as an indicator of milieu oriented objectives. Yet, it should be pointed out that promoting norms is not in itself evidence of a milieu oriented foreign policy. As discussed in chapter 3.2.3, the reasons for doing so can be possession oriented just as well. Without going too deep into the discussion about the motives behind the EaP, it can be noted that the EaP is presented with reference to both possession oriented *and* milieu oriented goals. For example, increased EU security is mentioned in parallel to strengthening democratic reforms in the partner countries.¹³⁵ Whether the officials involved in the Partnership-preparations understand the EaP as mainly milieu- or possession oriented will be explored in the next chapter.

¹³² European Commission, 2008, p. 4. Emphasis added.

¹³³ European Commission, 2008, p. 4

¹³⁴ Kochenov, 2009, pp. 16-17

¹³⁵ European Commission, 2008, pp. 2-3

6. Result: going into the black box of policy-making

How is the issue of norm promotion and strategies for becoming a successful norm promoter perceived by the officials involved in the process of developing the Eastern Partnership? Aiming to answer the overarching question of this thesis, the current chapter links the officials' opinions to the key concepts of the theoretical model presented in 3.2.4. In the final section the model is evaluated and the civil servants' idea of the ideal strategy for norm promotion is presented. Yet, before addressing the main question, we will briefly explore the extent to which the distinction between technical and political bureaucrats helps to explain potential differences in the officials' reasoning.

6.1 Political or technical bureaucrats?

According to Beyers et al.'s conclusions (discussed in 3.1.1), the *technical* officials of the European Commission can be expected to interpret their room for manoeuvre as more limited than the *political* civil servants representing the Swedish MFA. The interviews indicate that there is some truth to this image. All of the civil servants acknowledged that although the Commission "owned" the process of developing the proposal for an Eastern Partnership, its possibility to pursue an agenda of its own was (and generally tends to be) highly limited by the wills of the member states. The general opinion was that the member states define the framework for the Commission's work and that it before launching a proposal needs to be certain that it corresponds to the wishes of the EU member states – otherwise it will not fly. Despite this, the officials nevertheless interpreted the *implications* as regards their roles quite differently. Whereas the Swedish MFA officials seemed at ease talking about their own contribution to the EaP-preparations, some of the EC representatives were more reluctant to do so, underlining that the Commission was *asked* to develop an initiative. By suggesting that they simply proposed what had been asked for, these officials seemed to want to describe their role in terms of the technical bureaucrat-ideal type.¹³⁶ On the other hand, two of the EC officials expressed a clear sense of ownership, stating that because the European Commission "held the pen" in drafting the proposal it was only natural that they felt a sort of authorship.¹³⁷ General opinions about how the Commission officials understand their task and degree of autonomy can therefore hardly be drawn. It is notable that the EC officials were cautious to talk about the content and even existence of the Commission's interest, underlining again that the institution is *assigned* to develop

¹³⁶ EC official 4, 5, SE MFA official 1, 2

¹³⁷ EC official 1, 3

and execute what the member states desire. Nonetheless, they did separate between the general EU-interest on the one hand and the (aggregated) interests of the member states on the other. Hardly a surprise, the Swedish MFA representatives made a clear distinction between Swedish and EU-interests.¹³⁸

The other division following from insitutional belonging concerned how the EaP is understood in relation to the umbrella policy of the ENP. Although the EC officials acknowledged the ambition to ameliorate the ENP (not least by adding a greater element of differentiation) as an important background to the launch of the EaP, it is apparent that they want the Partnership to be interpreted as an “...integral part of the European Neighbourhood Policy”.¹³⁹ The EaP was repeatedly described as a complement and a “boost” rather than an alternative to the existing framework, and the EC civil servants kept referring to similarities between the policies’ goals and setup.¹⁴⁰ The Swedish MFA officials did not express any *deviant* opinions but the fact that the ENP was rarely mentioned and not at all emphasised indicates that from the Swedish point of view, the interrelation between the ENP and the EaP is less interesting. It was moreover evident that the Swedes are not overly content with the ENP, stating that the policy was good enough when first launched but that it has turned out an instrument too blunt to function satisfactory.¹⁴¹ Given the apprehensions that the EaP and the Union for the Mediterranean might together render the ENP superflous, it is perhaps not surprising that the Commission – the “owner” of the ENP – emphasise the continous need for maintaining the policy. For Sweden on the other hand, the importance of doing so is perhaps less apparent.

Overall, however, the dividing lines following the bureaucrats’ institutional belonging were few and as regards strategies for norm promotion, no clear pattern could be deduced. As we will see further on, all of the officials appear to agree on the need for *combining* the consequentiality- and socialisation mechanisms. This implicates that Beyers et al.’s conclusions are both strengthened and weakened or, put differently, that their argument is neither possible to confirm nor refuse.

6.2 The objective of the Eastern Partnership

As pointed out in chapter 3.2.3, understanding why certain strategies are preferred over alternative ones requires that the choice of strategy is linked to the overarching goal of the policy

¹³⁸ EC official 4, SE MFA official 2

¹³⁹ EC official 5, p. 2

¹⁴⁰ EC official 1, 2 and 4.

¹⁴¹ SE MFA official 1

at hand. Therefore, before directing attention to the issue of norm promotion, I will begin by discussing how the civil servants assigned to develop the Eastern Partnership conceive the intentions behind and objectives with the initiative.

The issue of motives was often addressed with reference to two aspects: the *political context* and the *policy content*. Confirming the description given in chapter 5.1, the officials pointed at the widespread wish to ameliorate the ENP (and the, albeit less widespread desire to upgrade the EU's offer to the Eastern neighbours) together with the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean as the key factors rendering the EaP possible. The Polish-Swedish joint proposal was considered to have created the final push for the process to be initiated.¹⁴² The Swedish MFA officials moreover mentioned the will to facilitate future EU-membership as yet another important motive, underlining that the Swedish political leadership has since long expressed a clear appetite for extending the EU's offer to the Eastern neighbours.¹⁴³

As regards the policy substance, the officials described the will to integrate the six Eastern neighbours more closely to the EU as the main motive shaping the EaP-setup: the intention was to make a stronger and more attractive offer than what was possible through the ENP-framework. When asked to elaborate *why* the EU seeks to enhance its engagement in the region the interviewees raised above all two aspects: the need for sending a clear(er) signal about the EU's commitment to the region and the ambition to support reform efforts. Stating that the policy preparations were guided by the goal of creating an "all-embracing" form of cooperation one of the Swedish MFA officials described the core of the EaP in the following manner:

...the Partnership is not a Partnership à la carte in which the partner countries can choose to cooperate concerning energy and trade...this is a wide Partnership which includes also human rights, the rule of law, anti-corruption, reforming the legal system... You cannot simply choose what you want while leaving the rest aside.¹⁴⁴

Similar to this civil servant, several of the interviewees appeared to understand the EaP as a framework for influencing the internal development of the PCs – a framework through which best practices can be exchanged and reforms encouraged.¹⁴⁵ Some, albeit not all, even made an explicit reference to the EU's overarching foreign policy goal to promote values, stating that the EaP is a forum for spreading values and a means for making sure that the countries develop in the desired direction – that they democratise and guarantee the respect for key principles such as

¹⁴² EC official 4, and 5, SE MFA official 2

¹⁴³ SE MFA official 2

¹⁴⁴ SE MFA official 1

¹⁴⁵ EC official 1, 3, 4 and 5, SE MFA official 1 and 2

human rights and the rule of law.¹⁴⁶ Encouraging the partner countries to become more integrated with the EU was generally perceived as the key instrument for the EU to support reform processes. The officials seemed to regard internal development as a natural effect of EU-integration, something that might explain the emphasis put on the need for combining economic integration with integration in terms of values.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, even though the two processes were described as parallel and equally important, some of the officials' reasoning suggests that rapprochement in terms of values is considered more fundamental than economic integration. One of the Swedish MFA officials stated that drawing the partner countries closer to the EU is

...not only about making them adopt as much of the trade acquis as possible. Rather, the big, or one of the big parts of the acquis we want them to adopt concerns human rights, democratic government, rule of law, market economy.¹⁴⁸

Correspondingly, one of the EC officials highlighted the crucial importance of including values, arguing that

...the efforts to...essentially extend the *acquis communautaire* to other countries wouldn't be worth it or might prove unsustainable if there isn't an accompanied political process of democratisation, respect for human rights, rule of law, all these things that go under the banner of values.¹⁴⁹

Hence, even if economic development/integration without an equivalent progress in terms of values is *objectively possible*, this is not conceived as a *plausible alternative* within the EU-system. It is symptomatic that a majority of the interviewees were taken by surprise when asked to elaborate on the intentions behind including values in the Partnership; doing so was simply too self-evident to be questioned. Values were "fundamental" in the policy preparations and are the "foundation for the Eastern Partnership".¹⁵⁰ And, as one of the EC officials pointed out, the aim to promote values is not specific to the EaP but rather "...it is the policy of the EU in general to set preconditions for engaging with other countries...respect for common values, democracy and human rights, the rule of law."¹⁵¹ This suggests that the ambition to spread EU values was the point of departure for the EaP-policy preparations. But was it the only motive? While recognising that all member states are keen to express their deep commitment to the value dimension rhetorically, the interviewees indicated that some member states are unwilling to make the necessary concessions when converting this commitment into practice. One of the EC civil

¹⁴⁶ EC official 3, SE MFA official 1

¹⁴⁷ EC official 1, SE MFA official 1

¹⁴⁸ SE MFA official 1

¹⁴⁹ EC official 1

¹⁵⁰ EC official 2, SE MFA official 1

¹⁵¹ EC official, 2

servants described it as a “...constant struggle because on the one hand you have the need to have a more realpolitik approach which is based on interest rather than values and on the other...there is this struggle for promoting values”.¹⁵² Although *this* particular civil servant claimed that the EaP-process was rather uncomplicated in this regard, some of the others seemed to think that the EaP preparations were (at least partly) marked by a tension between foreign policy goals and economic interests – or, put differently, milieu or possession oriented objectives. Whereas the value of the EaP was considered obvious from a foreign policy point of view, the fact that the *economic* benefits of enhanced commitment were deemed less evident rendered agreeing on the width and degree of ambition complicated. Should the value of increased political influence in the region be prioritised over (short term) economic interests or the other way around? The interviews suggest that this internal divide was present both in the member state context (between the MFAs and the Ministry of Finance) *and* within the European Commission itself (between the DG RELEX and DG Trade).¹⁵³ To what extent did the tension affect the policy outcome? The Swedish MFA officials implied that they would have preferred an even more ambitious EaP, yet, the common opinion was that in the end, the political value of the EaP outweighed the economically motivated hesitations.¹⁵⁴

Given the above discussions, it seems reasonable to conclude that the civil servants conceive the Eastern Partnership as milieu rather than possession oriented. The goals of spreading values and contributing to the internal development in the PCs were emphasised much more frequently than was other potential goals. Whether the fact that the motive to advance EU-interests was not at all raised in the interviews means that it was *objectively* absent in the policy preparations or not is impossible to say. What we can assume, however, is that because the civil servants view spreading values as a core objective with the Partnership, the *efficiency of strategies for norm promotion* should have been a key determining factor in the policy preparations.

6.3 Strategies for promoting values

Addressing in turn the key concepts of assumptions, rationale, mechanisms and instruments, this section aims to answer the main question of *how the officials involved in the EaP-policy preparations conceive strategies for norm promotion*.

¹⁵² EC official 3

¹⁵³ SE MFA official 1. Another conflict that was frequently mentioned concerned the financial aspect, following the usual and expected the South versus East-divide.

¹⁵⁴ EC official 2, 3, 4, 5. SE MFA official 1 and 2

6.3.1 Assumptions

Why do the officials believe that agents adopt new norms? The interviews suggest that the civil servants build on both constructivist and rationalist assumptions in their reasoning about motives for norm adoption. On the one hand, several of the interviewees gave expression to clearly rationalist ways of thinking, describing the process of norm compliance as a trade-off between costs and benefits. Pointing at the rationality of states and the short-term perspective of politicians, these officials argued that the EU must balance expected costs for adopting new norms with concrete benefits. Because politicians' future is on the short-term (e.g. the next election) they tend to regard the kind of long term benefits resulting from value adoption subordinate to the immediate costs of undergoing reforms and making concessions. Offering "concrete deliverables" is therefore considered necessary to raise the partner countries' interest in integrating with the EU and make adopting norms a more attractive and hence likely choice.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, the interviews indicate a tendency of linking the PCs' degree of *receptiveness* to their (mainly economic) needs. For example, one EC official put forth Azerbaijan as a particularly hard case when talking about the potential of the EaP becoming a successful forum for promoting values. Stressing the Azerbaijan richness of oil and gas resources, the official questioned the motives for and the extent to which Azerbaijan is really interested in integrating with Europe – they do not need Europe.¹⁵⁶ The fact that this and other officials linked the *needs* of the target country to the interest in integration indicates that the *reward* is assumed to be the main motivator behind norm adoption. Yet another EC official seemed to suggest that the Commission in general builds on rationalist understandings of what motivates change. Commenting on the implications of not including the membership perspective in the EaP, the official stated that

Of course you can always argue that if they [the partner countries] would have an accession perspective then their collaboration would be better but this is something that is decided by the heads of states and not the Commission.¹⁵⁷

Albeit not explicitly spelled out, the quote indicates a conviction that including the membership perspective would have rendered the EaP more effective. This, in turn, suggests that the official believes that *agents change because they see benefits with doing so*.

¹⁵⁵ EC official 1, 4, SE MFA official 1. Indeed, the democratic deficit in the PCs raises questions about the relevance of this line of reasoning: do their political leaders really care about elections and legitimacy? While recognising the huge difference between how the PCs' versus the EU-members' leaders understand the need for legitimacy, the interviewees argued that the PC-leaders consider *some degree* of legitimacy necessary. The general opinion was therefore that the balance between concessions and concrete benefits are of crucial importance also in these contexts.

¹⁵⁶ EC official 4

¹⁵⁷ EC official 5

On the other hand, there were also clear indicators of constructivist assumptions. For example, both of the Swedish MFA officials linked the receptiveness of the PCs to their internal identity. According to them, the strong sense of “Europeanness” in many of these countries infers that they are more likely to change and adopt norms when doing so is perceived as strengthening their European identity.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, several of the officials underlined that the EU cannot impose values: the will to change and to adopt new norms must come from within.¹⁵⁹ As one of the EC representatives formulated it:

...either you are convinced or you are not convinced. I mean, there is not something that we can do a lot to change. (...) this is not something the EU can impose, it has to come from within and, basically, the only thing we can offer is the example of Europe.¹⁶⁰

Particularly, the necessity of reforms being driven from within was raised with reference to sustainability. All of the interviewees evidently believed that *forced reform does not last*.¹⁶¹ Confirming the understanding of norm adoption as a result of internal processes rather than external impositions, one of the Swedish MFA officials argued that the EU should

...implant values not on official political level but in the society. This is done through contacts between students and scholar exchanges...these things are equally important. It doesn't have to be activities with an explicit political purpose; it is just about exposing these countries for our values.¹⁶²

The emphasis on the target countries' willingness to change together with the fact that exposing them to the EU core values is considered a potential efficient means for promoting norms suggest that the officials build on constructivist assumptions about why and how agents adopt new norms. Additionally, the general expectation among all officials (even the more rationalism-oriented ones) was that the EaP would be a successful framework for norm promotion in the *long term*. Value adoption was more frequently stressed as an effect of slow processes of socialisation, habituation and internalisation rather than the result of interest-maximising and cost-benefit calculations. Thus, while the officials assume that the target countries are rational in the sense that they tend to balance the expected benefits of adopting norms against the expected costs for doing so, they appear to consider the *impact* of this balancing subordinate to the identity-based receptiveness of the state in question. This indicates that they regard the ideas and perceptions of the partner countries as the key determining factors: agents will not adopt new norms unless they

¹⁵⁸ SE MFA official 1 and 2

¹⁵⁹ EC official 2

¹⁶⁰ EC official 1

¹⁶¹ EC official 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and SE MFA official 1, 2

¹⁶² SE MFA official 2

are convinced. The conclusion is thus that *constructivist assumptions* appear to play a more fundamental role than rationalist ones.

6.3.2 Rationale

How do the civil servants perceive the rationale of the norm adoption process? It is clear that all of the interviewees regard the logic of consequence crucially important when promoting norms, not least because offering incentives in return for rule/value adoption proved so efficient in the pre-accession negotiations. For this reason, the policy-preparations were guided by an ambition to make use of previous experiences and transpose the enlargement methods to fit the EaP-framework. As one EC official noted “...we feel that even without offering membership there is still quite a lot into it”.¹⁶³ The interviews indicate wide agreement about countries tending to become more willing to make the necessary sacrifices involved in adopting new norms if/when offered concrete benefits for doing so. One EC official described this in the following manner:

...I'm not really sure whether they are willing to adopt these norms; they say that they are and they adopt them to a certain degree because they want to get the fruits of the economic dimension of the EaP...this motivates them a little bit to make also concessions on the human rights and good governance component.¹⁶⁴

Claiming that the concrete benefits rather than the values as such are what motivate norm adoption, the official expresses a belief in the promise of invoking the logic of consequence – a belief that seems to be shared several of the interviewees. For example, another EC official argued that

...there needs to be progress in values but we need incentives also to... basically to indicate to them [the PCs] that by integrating more in Europe they are also going to have concrete benefits.¹⁶⁵

While suggesting that progress in terms of values is the (implicit) main goal of integration, this official suggests that in order for the PCs to be(come) *willing to work towards this goal*, they need also see concrete benefits with doing so. Moreover, many referred to offering incentives as a means to manipulate the trade-off between long-term goals and short-term sacrifices. Given the indicators of the logic of consequence-rationale, it should perhaps come as no surprise that there is a clear element of linking norm adherence to the provision of incentives in the Partnership. As one of the officials summarised it: “How well you live up to the EU’s expectations affects the concrete

¹⁶³ EC official 3

¹⁶⁴ EC official 5

¹⁶⁵ EC official 3

support, the concrete economic assistance”.¹⁶⁶ Concurrently, the interviews indicate that the officials see important limitations to the usefulness and potential of the logic of consequence in the EaP-context. They underlined that its effectiveness essentially depends on the extent to which the incentives offered are considered attractive enough; a factor highly dependent on the context in and ambitions of the target country. For this reason, it was widely agreed that whereas invoking the logic of consequence can be expected efficient in the PCs for which the incentives are right, it may be inoperative or even counterproductive for others.¹⁶⁷

Additionally, several of the interviewees pointed at the importance of changing mentalities in the society as a whole in order to create the *fundaments for change* – as opposed to solely promoting change as such. There was a clear sense that, pushed to discuss democracy, human rights etc. the PCs will become habituated with and eventually more receptive for the promoted values. In this regard, the Civil Society Forum was described as particularly promising, providing a framework for socialisation and network-creation.¹⁶⁸ This suggests that also a strong belief in the logic of appropriateness-rationale guided the policy choices. Furthermore, the fact that two of the officials argued explicitly for directing norm promoting efforts towards the administrative level indicates that the ambition to invoke such a rationale shaped the policy choices.¹⁶⁹ One of the Swedish MFA stated that:

....above all, it's about gaining access to the civil servants...we believe in injecting inspiration and ideas about change in the administration. For these ideas to work inside the current political system, fostering change from within.¹⁷⁰

This tells us two things. First, by pointing at the administration as a target, the interviewees recognise that the PC officials do in fact influence the political development. Not only does this mean that they acknowledge also *their own* power over the political process (confirming thereby the relevance of this study). It moreover infers that, in the long term perspective, changing the officials' ideas and conceptions about key values is equally or even more important to converting the minds of the often short-term appointed and therefore short-sighted political leaders. Second, it is evident that they follow the logic of appropriateness in their understanding of the value adoption-process as a result of mentality-changes and identification rather than (solely) cost-benefit calculations. As noted by the official quoted above this is however

¹⁶⁶ EC official 1, 3, 5. Quote by SE MFA official 1

¹⁶⁷ EC official 1, 4, 5, SE MFA official 1, 2

¹⁶⁸ EC official 1,2, 3, 4, SE MFA official 2

¹⁶⁹ EC official 2, 3, 4, 5 and SE MFA official 2

¹⁷⁰ SE MFA official 2

...not really something one can write in a paper (...) but the choice to involve these countries' administrations on a fairly technical level in order to foster an awareness, for them to be acquainted with how the EU works...that is a foundation pillar. I guess that's how we reasoned about it.¹⁷¹

All interviewees expressed similar opinions; the other Swedish MFA official noting that the importance of altering ideas was *assumed* rather than discussed in preparing the EaP.¹⁷² This means that the extent to which the two rationales are explicitly reflected in the EaP-documents should not be interpreted in terms of strong/weak support for the logic of consequence versus the logic of appropriateness. I argue that it rather should be seen as an expression for the fact that the officials appear to understand the role and the meaning of the two rationales quite differently. There was a clear tendency of the logic of consequence being linked to the more instrumental/strategic dimensions of the EaP (e.g. how to provoke concrete change). The belief in the logic of appropriateness-rationale on the other hand, seems to have served as (the given) point of departure, impregnating the officials' reasoning about the contexts in and the mechanisms through which norms are adopted. Put differently: while the effectiveness of the former was object for discussion, the importance of the latter was taken for granted. The conclusion is thus that the officials do not perceive the rationales of the logic of consequence and the logic of appropriateness as alternative or conflicting. Rather, they regard them as *complementary*. How this affects their conclusions about mechanisms and instruments for promoting values is the question to which we now turn.

6.3.3 Mechanisms and instruments

As could be expected given the discussions above, the interviews suggest that the EaP-preparations were guided by an ambition to combine the mechanisms and instruments of the external incentives- and the social learning model respectively. The mechanism of socialisation was frequently referred to as a crucial factor when promoting values, seemingly understood as creating the *foundation* for norms to be adopted. The general expectation seems to be that if the partner countries are continuously exposed to the values the EU seeks to spread, they will become habituated with them and eventually come to regard them as natural. In the long term perspective, the hope is that this will result in value internalisation.¹⁷³ Acknowledging that the ambition to foster socialisation processes shaped the EaP-policy choices, one EC official described the intentions and approach in the following manner. The EaP provides

¹⁷¹ SE MFA official 2

¹⁷² SE MFA official 2. Also the other officials gave expression to similar opinions; for example EC official 3

¹⁷³ EC official 2, 3, 4, 5. SE MFA official 2

...some ways of creating networks for socialisation among these countries and the EU that we hope can in the longer term lead also to adoption of these values, to change in the mentalities, socialisation, to foster socialisation process. (...) This can help them, inspire them to reform...based on the model of others. That's the whole idea.¹⁷⁴

Similarly, many expressed hopes that the Civil Society Forum will facilitate network-creation and value- as well as rule rapprochement, explicitly linking it to the concept of socialisation. Although the officials mainly argued for the persuasion-instrument, particularly the Swedish MFA officials expressed support for making use also of the social pressure-instrument. Pointing out that the PCs have publicly declared their commitment to the shared values underpinning the EaP by signing the joint declaration, one of them described this as an indispensable source of influence:

...in every pledge they make in high level political contexts [about their commitment to the shared values] they expose themselves to a considerable risk of being conceived as failing to live up to the declared commitments. And we believe in the philosophy of naming and shaming (...) I mean, it is the absolutely worst thing that can happen; that you participate in a fancy meeting, invited, and someone openly criticises you.¹⁷⁵

Because these countries want to be perceived as members of the EU-club and because political leaders generally wish to avoid negative attention, they are sensitive for criticism. Thus, by drawing attention to discrepancies between their (self-declared) theory and practice, the EU can pressurise the target countries to improve. Yet, it was also emphasised that the potential of socialisation mechanisms depends on the partner country's degree of receptiveness. Whereas fostering socialisation processes was put forth as a promising strategy in the Ukrainian context (which's strong sense of Europeanness together with its explicitly declared ambition to join the EU makes it fairly receptive) the officials expressed doubts about its potential in the less EU-oriented Azerbaijan (which, because it does not identify with Europe to the same extent that does Ukraine was considered substantially less receptive).¹⁷⁶

Notwithstanding the strong support for fostering socialisation, it is apparent that the officials believe also in the consequentiality mechanism and the potential of incentives. One EC official argued that because politicians – who are the ones best positioned to initiate real change – tend to be short-sighted they generally find it hard to see the value with long term benefits. And even if they do, they tend to be reluctant to make the short-term sacrifices necessary to obtain it. Incentives in the form of “concrete deliverables” are thus needed to *manipulate* the trade-off

¹⁷⁴ EC official 2

¹⁷⁵ SE MFA official 2

¹⁷⁶ EC official 4, SE MFA official 1, 2

between short-term costs and long-term benefits.¹⁷⁷ One of the Swedish MFA officials expressed a similar opinion when talking about the concrete EaP-setup, stating that because EU-values are the foundation of the partnership “...any lapse from respecting them must have consequences. How to do this, in what stage backlashes should lead to consequences (...) is something that we must continuously discuss”.¹⁷⁸ This indicates that the conditionality-mechanism both *is* and is *understood as* a core feature of the value promoting-dimension of the Partnership. Interestingly enough, although some of the interviewees referred to the idea of sticks and carrots as underpinning the EaP, incentives were clearly interpreted in terms of carrots. Only one of the officials openly reflected on the possibility of using negative incentives, albeit concluding in the end that since the EaP builds on voluntariness and joint ownership, employing sticks would send the wrong signals and even risk undermine rather than support the attempts to promote values.¹⁷⁹

The interviews indicate that using incentives is regarded utterly efficient. Yet, similarly to their reasoning about the potential of the socialisation-mechanism, it is evident that the officials see important limitations also to the consequentiality-approach. All of the interviewees pointed out that though this logic has proved efficient before, it is by no means a guarantee to success. First, in order for conditionality to be effective it is crucial that the EU is “...coherent in *withholding* those carrots if the countries do not reach the necessary conditions”, or it will undermine its own influence.¹⁸⁰ Recognising the potentially diverging interests of the member states, the officials described obtaining coherence as utterly difficult. Second, the ambiguity of the EaP (neither offering nor ruling out future EU-membership) was put forth as a challenge: the *uncertainty* about the desired nature of future EU-PC relations risks to weaken the link between efforts and incentives.¹⁸¹ Third, the civil servants strongly emphasised that conditionality requires that the right incentives are offered: less attractive carrots will result in less ambitious/willing target countries. This “rightness”, in turn, is contextually determined. Describing the EaP-incentives as “fairly weak”, one of the Swedish MFA representatives took the issue of aerial cooperation to illustrate her point. If cooperating on rules for air service is considered beneficial then the offer to increase it will be a powerful incentive. If the target country instead seeks to secure the interests of their national airlines, then increased cooperation will have the rather opposite

¹⁷⁷ EC official 1

¹⁷⁸ SE MFA official 1

¹⁷⁹ EC official 4

¹⁸⁰ EC official 1

¹⁸¹ EC official 3, SE MFA official 1. Yet, the common opinion was that there is not much to be done about this. One of the EC officials succinctly summarised the situation stating “...and you may argue is it right or is it wrong [to exclude the membership perspective], is it a good choice on the side of the EU, is it short-sighted...but at the moment that is the position”. EC official 2

effect.¹⁸² Although this official went farthest in her critique of the EaP-incentives, all of the interviewees underlined the essential importance of taking the context-dependency into account when developing a strategy for norm promotion.¹⁸³ The officials pointed out that although the EU can influence the development by *increasing the willingness to reform* (though offering incentives and foster processes of identification) the EU cannot impose change – the will to reform must come from within. Thus, the officials perceive the EaP as a potentially powerful tool for value promotion irrespective of the strategy chosen as long as the partner countries are rhetorically and practically committed to the EaP-visions.¹⁸⁴

Given the above discussions, what can be concluded about the officials' understanding of instruments for spreading values? It is clear that neither offering incentives nor fostering socialisation is regarded unambiguously efficient. Rather, the strategies' potential effectiveness is considered dependent on the relation between the incentives/identity offered on the one hand and the context/ambitions of the target state on the other. The socialisation mechanism will only work if and when the target is already *interested in* and *identify with the EU*. The effectiveness of the consequentiality mechanism, in turn, depends on the attractiveness of the incentives offered and the EU's ability to hold the line. Moreover, confirming Schimmelfennig and Sedelmaier's notion that rule adoption motivated solely by benefits tend to be less sustainable than norms adopted through a combination of the socialisation- and consequentiality mechanisms, several of the officials argued that offering incentives without persuading the targets about the norms' goodness risked resulting in lip-service adoption rather than true internalisation of values.¹⁸⁵ Because of these limitations, none of the strategies was deemed sufficient in itself: accomplishing true and sustainable value adoption requires both the methods of offering incentives and fostering socialisation. That the officials regard *combining* the strategies of external incentives and social learning the ideal approach did not least become evident in the end part of the interviews when they were asked to elaborate on the key of becoming a successful value promoter. All of them made explicit references to both dimensions of the theoretical model, arguing for providing incentives *and* encourage socialisation. Finally, when seeking to explain the success of enlargement in terms of value promotion, one of the EC officials captured what appears to be understood as the foundation for and the core of the EU's norm promoting-ability. The key to success

¹⁸² SE MFA official 2

¹⁸³ EC official 1,2, 3, 4, 5 and SE MFA official 1, 2. The common understanding was that the EaP-incentives are ambiguous: too ambitious for some, not ambitious enough for others.

¹⁸⁴ EC official 5, SE MFA official 1, 2

¹⁸⁵ See chapter 3.2.2

...is the success of the model and the power of attraction of the EU and that, I think is first in terms of respect of the various identities of the EU members...be that national identities, regional identities, minority identities, I think we've got that in the EU. The fact that everybody contributes and *counts* in the EU is a striking difference in relation to what they had under the communist or the Soviet system. Of course, the fact that economically it has been successful and that there are some mechanisms to promote economic solidarity between states, I think that is also important.¹⁸⁶

Essentially, the European Union's potential as a norm promoter is considered intimately linked to its perceived attractiveness – in ideational *and* economic terms. As long as this attractiveness is maintained, the EU will continue to be influential in the countries which identify with and aim to gain access to the economic dimensions of the Union.

6.4 Putting it together: how are strategies for norm promotion conceived in the internal process of policy-making?

Returning to the specific research questions presented in chapter 1.4, it can be concluded that the officials interpret the Eastern Partnership as milieu- rather than possession oriented and that the ambition to spread values underpins the policy setup. Linking their reasoning to the key concepts of the theoretical model elaborated in 3.2.4 made clear that they find both the strategy of external incentives and social learning relevant. The theoretical model helped elucidate the core dimensions of how the officials understand motives for adopting norms as well as the logic behind the concrete way of action: though the EC and the Swedish MFA representatives build on rationalist *and* constructivist assumptions about what provokes change, the constructivist ways of thinking appears to weigh heavier. The general opinion was that the EU's potential source of influence lies in its ability to increase the *likeliness* for value adoption by making it a more attractive choice. It was strongly and repeatedly emphasised that the EU cannot *impose* change: agents will not adopt norms unless they are convinced of their benefits and inherent goodness. Concerning the concrete strategies, it is apparent that the civil servants consider both external incentives and social learning valuable. Aiming to invoke the logic of consequence- *and* the logic of appropriateness-rationales, the policy choices appear to have been guided by an ambition to promote norms through both the consequentiality and socialisation mechanism. The civil servants argued for the need and potential of offering incentives as well as persuade and (publicly) pressurise the partner countries to adopt the EU-core values. Finally, although all officials acknowledged the EU's ability to make the target states more receptive, there was wide

¹⁸⁶ EC official 2

agreement that in the end, the context and ambitions of the norm recipient are the key determinants for the Union's potential influence.

Hence, the overarching question of this thesis – *how is the issue of norm promotion and strategies for becoming a successful norm promoter conceived in the internal policy-making process of the EU?* – can be answered in the following manner: The civil servants involved in the policy preparations understand norm promotion as a core dimension of the milieu oriented Eastern Partnership. Supporting the logic of consequence and the logic of appropriateness, they consider both the model of external incentives and social learning relevant. The ideal strategy for becoming a successful norm promoter is therefore one that takes into account the context of the target state and which *combines* the mechanisms and instruments of consequentiality *and* socialisation.

One additional ambition in this thesis was to explore potential differences between how values are framed in the EaP-documents and how promoting these values are conceived by the civil servants assigned to prepare the policy. The picture of how the EU seeks to promote values is considerably more “flat” and univocal in the official documents than when elaborated by the officials. This is hardly surprising: conceptions do tend to be complex rather than perfectly coherent. Yet, the comparison indicates that some aspects of their understandings of the process of norm promotion/adoption are so taken for granted that they are rarely discussed and even more rarely written down. Above all, constructivist assumptions about motives for adopting new norms appear to have been crucial in the policy preparations – a fact hardly visible in the official documents. That there are additional dimensions to the EU's attempts to promote values than what is explicitly spelled out is important to bear in mind when considering *all* EU-policies. The main finding, however, is that the officials conceive the strategies of external incentives and social learning as *complementary* rather than alternative. This means that some adjustments of the theoretical model are called for.

6.4.1 Evaluating the theoretical model

Naturally, a theoretical model consists of ideal types and will therefore never give a perfect description of reality. For this reason and as previously pointed out, the expectation was not that the conceptions held by the civil servants would be possible to conceptualise solely in terms of the external incentives model *or* the social learning model. Rather, the aim with the model was to elucidate key aspects and logical links in the officials' reasoning. The discussions above indicate that the model is a good foundation for understanding how the officials of the Swedish MFA and the European Commission perceive strategies for norm promotion. However, there are two

aspects that the model does not account for. First, in presenting the two strategies as alternative, it does not consider the *interplay* between them. Reluctant to choose between the strategies of external incentives and social learning, the officials emphasised the potential of and even need for combining the consequentiality and socialisation mechanisms. Albeit not explicitly spelled out, they appear to understand norm promotion (and adoption) as a process divided into different stages. Because these stages require different approaches to maintain and strengthen the target states' interest in and receptiveness for the promoted values, the officials argued for offering incentives *and* persuading/pressurising them to change. Second, it does not acknowledge the important aspect of context-dependency. It was repeatedly and strongly underlined that any strategy for norm promotion must consider the needs and ambitions of the target: there is no such thing as a strategy universally applicable. The conclusion is thus that the theoretical model should be complemented to account also for the context-dependency of and interplay between strategies.

6.4.2 The ideal strategy for norm promotion: combining socialisation and incentives

As discussed above, the officials regard *combining* and *making use of the interplay* between the strategies of external incentives and social learning as keys in becoming a successful value promoter. But how do they conceive the *nature* of this interplay? The interviews suggest that value promotion is interpreted as a process divided into stages, each of these stages requiring different approaches.¹⁸⁷ First, the target's interest must be raised in order for its receptiveness for external influence and the promoted norms to be increased. Second, this receptiveness must be maintained and strengthened. Third, the norm promoter must help the target over the "edge", making adopting the promoted values attractive enough to outweigh potential costs by adding a final boost. The requirements of the different stages infer that the norm promoter cannot rely solely on one of the strategies: it must make use of different mechanisms and instruments. Figure 3 illustrates how the civil servants understand the optimal interplay between the strategies of external incentives and social learning:

¹⁸⁷ It should be noted that the focus here lies on norm promotion directed towards *states* – how to affect ideas of the political opposition and/or the civil society is in other words not considered. Examining the relation between requirements and target for the norm promoting efforts is however an important task for future studies.

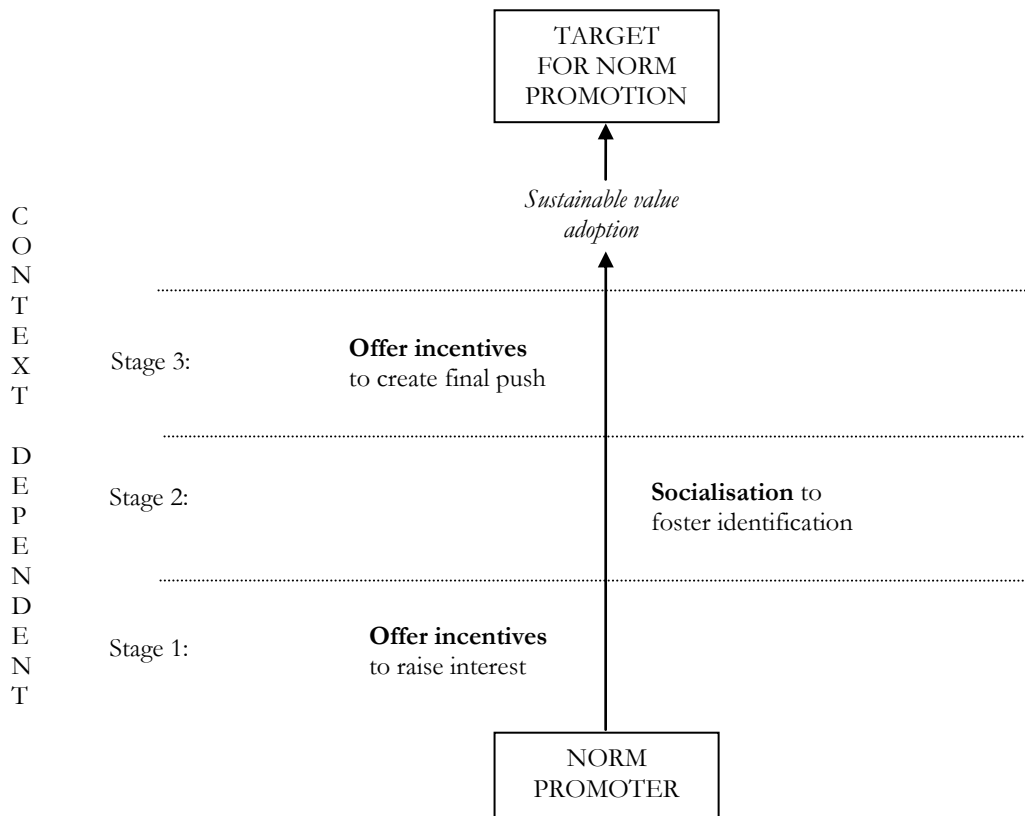


Figure 3: *The ideal strategy for norm promotion*

As indicated by figure 3, the first step is to offer incentives. Although some degree of identification with/interest in the EU is considered a *precondition* for value promotion to be possible, identification alone is not regarded a sufficient motivator. The norm promoter must therefore raise the target’s interest by offering incentives, increasing thereby its receptiveness for the promoted values. Once interest has been established, it must be maintained and supported. Thus, fostering and engaging in socialisation is perceived as the next necessary step. Through including the political leaders and bureaucrats of the target state in contexts where the promoted values condition the cooperation, the promoter can argue for and persuade the target about their universal goodness. The more the target-representatives participate in these meetings, the more they get used to the “European” way of seeing things and the more likely it becomes that they adopt and finally internalise the promoted values. Moreover, by making use of the social pressure instruments, naming and shaming the agents that do not live up to the standards set, non-compliance is rendered even less attractive. However, because reforming and adopting values to the extent desired and requested by the norm promoter tends to be extremely costly (in terms of time and financial resources as well as political capital) an extra boost is deemed needed. In order to push the target over the final edge, the third stage requires that incentives are offered once

again. Complementing the socialisation-process, the norm promoter can make adopting new norms an even more attractive choice by balancing the costs of adoption with concrete benefits.

Although it is evident that the interviewees perceive the interplay between external incentives and social learning as the key aspect of norm promotion, an additional conclusion is that there is no strategy universally applicable nor can there be one. What emphasis should be put on the different instruments as well as their optimal content is highly dependent on the needs and ambitions of the target. Furthermore, also the abilities and ambitions of the norm promoter must be acknowledged as they define the frames for what strategies are liable. Because contextual factors are of crucial importance, the norm promoter's strategy must necessarily allow for a certain degree of pragmatism in order to be effectual. For this reason, also the dimension of context-dependency has been included in figure 3. Yet, "context-dependency" is a very broad concept which tells us little about the relation between contexts on the one hand and strategies on the other. To what extent does the context affect the potential of different strategies and are there some factors that are more important than others? Since these aspects were not included in the theoretical model, they were explored only to a very limited extent in the interviews. The degree to which and how the dimension of context-dependency affect the process of norm promotion/adoption is therefore something that should be explored in future research. Figure 4 illustrates the interaction between the contextual factors put forth by the interviewed officials. As such, it lays the foundation for future studies.

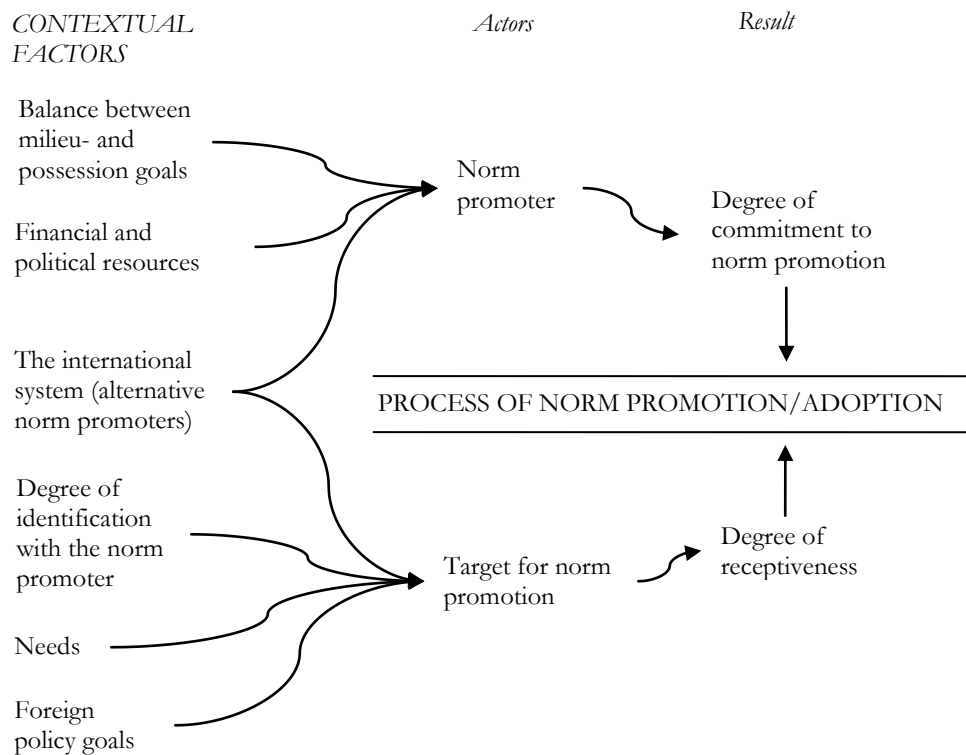


Figure 4: Contextual factors affecting the process of norm promotion/compliance

Figure 4 suggests that both the process of promoting and adopting norms is context-dependent. Acknowledging the context of the value promoter and the context of the target for norm promotion, a number of factors are considered to affect these processes. From the norm promoter's view, the internal capacities in terms of financial and political resources as well as the balance between milieu and possession oriented foreign policy objectives are determining factors. For the target it is above all its degree of identification with the norm promoter together with the (mainly economic) needs and general foreign policy goals that are aspects of extra importance. The dynamics of the international system – and particularly other potential norm promoters – affect both the promoter and recipient agent. The main conclusion to be drawn from figure 4, however, is that contextual factors are key determinants because they *affect the degree to which the promoter/target is committed to/receptive for value promotion*.

This thesis set out to examine how strategies for norm promotion are conceived in the internal policy-making system of the European Union. The interviews have increased our knowledge about how the officials assigned to put the EU's political goal of spreading values into policy practice understand the motives behind and mechanisms in adopting new norms. We have also elaborated our understanding of how instruments for norm promotion are perceived; the main

conclusion being that they are regarded complementary and mutually reinforcing rather than alternative. Promoting norms is interpreted as a process divided into stages requiring different approaches: being pragmatic is therefore a necessity. Hence, according to the officials, the ideal strategy for promoting norms is one which acknowledges the requirements of the process' different stages, takes into account the issue of context-dependency and which combines offering incentives with fostering socialisation.

7. Conclusions

With the European Union's much repeated ambition to be(come) a value-based global actor as point of departure, this thesis set out to explore how the norm-promoter EU understand strategies for norm promotion. Pointing at the administration's key role in policy-making, I argued that a full understanding of the dynamics of norm promotion requires taking into account the conceptions held by the civil servants assigned to translate the political goal of spreading values into policy practice. So, what are the lessons from going in to the black box of policy-making?

First and foremost, the result suggests that there are good reasons for considering the conceptions held by civil servants – the need for doing so was even explicitly confirmed by the interviewees themselves. By describing the recipient states' officials as promising – or even crucial – targets for norm promoting efforts, they recognised *all* civil servants' potential impact on policy-making. The main reason, however, is the discovered breach between theorists' and policy-makers' understanding of norm promoting strategies. The interviewed officials emphasised other aspects than does the academic literature. It is evident that, contrary to the general theoretical understanding, the officials do not interpret the external incentives- and the social learning models as alternative. Instead, they are regarded *complementary* and *mutually reinforcing*. Incentives must be supported by socialisation-processes in order for value adoption to be sustainable, and socialisation must be complemented by incentives in order for the targets to be(come) willing to make the necessary concessions. Admittedly, the literature does recognise the *possibility* of more than one factor motivating norm adoption. Yet, the interplay between socialisation and consequentiality is generally treated as just a possibility rather than a potentially essential component of the process. Even though this study's design does not allow for any general conclusions to be drawn concerning the strategies' empirical effectiveness, the discrepancy between the officials' and the literature's assessments nonetheless indicates that previous research may have underestimated the importance of this interplay. Investigating the interrelation between and the extent to which the mechanisms affect each other is therefore an important task for future studies. Figure 3 (presented in 6.5.2) offers an alternative understanding of the process of norm promotion and can therefore serve as starting point for such an attempt.

However, the result also supports the argument for examining civil servants' perceptions *irrespective of the objective accuracy of their conclusions*. As pointed out in the introduction, officials do

not merely execute what they have been assigned to do – their conceptions form the foundation for and guide the policy choices. To a large degree, it is how they conceive the motivations and mechanisms behind value adoption that determines the norm promoter’s final choice of strategy. The discovered breach discussed above confirms that we can hardly understand the dynamics of norm promotion by solely looking at theoretical conceptualisations and assessments of different strategies’ effectiveness. Consequently, this study’s findings are important also from an empirical point of view; increasing our understanding of how the relevance of and the strategies for norm promotion is perceived in EU-policy-making. In extension, this makes us better equipped to understand the EU as a norm promoter in general.

The question is thus if the result provides any new empirical insights in this regard? The interviews show that the EC and Swedish MFA officials all understand and handled norm promotion as a core objective when developing the EaP. When asked about the motives for including values, the interviewees were taken aback: the goodness of EU-values as well as the importance of spreading them appears to be so taken for granted that including them was self-evident. In some sense, this was quite expected. The very essence of norms (their taken-for-granted-character discussed in chapter 4.2) infers that they are rarely or never reflected upon. Yet, the fact that the officials actually do describe the Partnership as a norm promoting instrument is essential since it indicates that the officially declared ambition to spread values is more than just rhetoric. Returning to one of the issues raised in the introduction – to what extent are the declared goals perceived as *de facto goals* – it can in other words be concluded that there is accordance between the political ambitions and policy practice. Hence, from a societal point of view the perhaps most important finding is that the high-toned spreading values-objective is strongly reflected also in the EU-administration.

Another important lesson concerns the motives for promoting norms. The result suggests that norm promoters are less “single-tracked” than described by the academic literature, motivated by other aspects than merely achieving the quickest change possible. Above all, the ambition to promote *sustainable* value adoption seems to be considered a key factor guiding the policy choices. This contrasts with the approach taken in previous research in which there is a clear tendency of picturing the (measurable) effectiveness as norm promoters’ main goal. Given that this finding supports both the claimed link between norm promotion and milieu oriented foreign policy goals; and the normative power Europe-thesis it is important from a theoretical as well as empirical point of view.

Going into the black box of EU-policy-making we have increased our understanding of the dynamics of norm promotion in general and the European Union as a norm promoter in particular. Civil servants are key actors in the policy process and their conceptions should therefore receive more attention in future research. I argue that doing so is particularly important in the context of EU-norm promotion: proven efficient, the efforts to spread values will affect not only the citizens of the Union but (potentially) have ideational impact in the whole of Europe.

7.1. The way forward? Suggestions for further research

Although this thesis has advanced our understanding of how norm promoters view strategies for spreading values, the result indicates that fully understanding how and why norms are promoted (and adopted) requires that we increase our knowledge about 1) the *interplay between strategies* and 2) the *interplay between strategies and contexts*. As pointed out above, previous research does recognise that norm adoption can be the result of incentives- and socialisation-based strategies, but this has been stated as a fact rather than been explored. Therefore, examining the objective accuracy of this description as well as the extent to which the different instruments are needed are important tasks for future research. The officials' understanding of the norm promoting process presented in figure 3 can serve as point of departure for such an attempt.

Moreover, although much international relations-theory point at the issue of context-dependency, its importance has (similarly to how the interrelation between strategies has been treated) been noted rather than investigated. Additionally, because of the tendency to focus on norm compliance rather than norm promotion, contextual factors have mainly been discussed in hindsight when seeking to explain why a certain rule was adopted. The result of this thesis suggests that the degree of influence and nature of the issue of context-dependency should be further explored. Figure 4 lays the foundation for future studies by pointing at some contextual factors affecting the process of norm promotion/adoption.

7.2 Final reflections

In laying out the empirical framework of this thesis, I argued that fully understanding the significance of enlargement, the ENP and now also the EaP requires considering the EU's general foreign policy-abilities. The restrictions within the CFSP-area (discussed in chapter 2.1.2) renders the EU's potential of becoming the globally important actor it aspires to be highly

limited. It is symptomatic that the Union has turned out most successful in fulfilling its foreign policy-objectives through policies not formally part of the CFSP. The policies just mentioned are therefore essential not only from a regional-security point of view: providing the EU with alternative forums and instruments they can in fact be interpreted as means to side-step the limitations of the EU's room for manoeuvre in foreign affairs.

Verifying the conclusions drawn in previous research, this study shows that the European Union's potential impact is considered intimately linked to its perceived attractiveness. Thus, as long as the EU-model is considered ideationally and economically appealing, its source of influence can be expected to be maintained. Yet, in order to *make use* of this potential impact, there must be a framework within which the EU can communicate and cooperate with target states. Given the dim future for further enlargements and the perceived limitations of the ENP it is therefore essential also for the EU's *general* foreign policy aspirations that the Eastern Partnership turns out successful.

This thesis suggests that value promotion is a core dimension of the Eastern Partnership. But *why* does the EU seek to spread values? From an idealist point of view, the emphasis on values and internal development can be interpreted as an expression for milieu-oriented foreign policy objectives: the motive for engaging in the neighbour countries is simply that the EU wants to be a force for good; expanding the zone of prosperity. Notwithstanding this, a more subtle interpretation is that norm promotion is a means of expanding the Union's *zone of influence*. Not merely focusing on the actual development but aiming to change what is conceived as normal enables the EU to increase its impact also in a long term perspective. Spreading values is essentially about convincing others of the universal goodness and superiority of ones own ways of thinking. Whether or not the EaP turns out successful in this regard remains an issue to be seen. The main conclusion, however, is that its *potential* impact should be not be underestimated.

Summary

The issues of norm promotion and compliance have been addressed by a number of scholars. Similarly, many have sought to explore the European Union's ambition to spread its core values. Yet, previous research has failed to consider the crucial importance of the officials assigned to put the political goal of promoting values into policy practice. With this gap as point of departure and focusing on the EU's newest foreign policy tool, the Eastern Partnership, this thesis aims to elaborate our understanding of how strategies for norm promotion are conceived in EU-policy-making. Employing a theoretical model of two strategies for norm promotion (the external incentives- and social-learning model) as framework for analysis, I investigate what assumptions and logics guided the policy choices. Interviews with officials representing the European Commission and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs show a clear breach between their and the literature's understanding of strategies for promoting norms. Contrary to the general image, they consider the strategies of external incentives and social learning *complementary* and *mutually reinforcing* rather than alternative. Norm promotion is seen as a context-dependent process divided into stages, each stage requiring different approaches from the part of the norm promoter. This leads to the conclusion that the officials regard the ideal strategy for promoting norms one which acknowledges the requirements of the different stages of the process, takes into account the issue of context-dependency and which *combines* offering incentives with fostering socialisation.

Confirming the relevance of this study, the discovered breach shows that we will not understand the dynamics of norm promotion without considering also the black box of policy-making. The officials' beliefs are essential *irrespective* of the objective accuracy of their conclusions: how they conceive the motivations and mechanisms behind value adoption guide the norm promoter's final choice of strategy. Yet, the result indicates that previous research may have underestimated the importance of the interplay between incentives and socialisation. Exploring the nature and significance of this interplay is therefore an important task for future research.

The main result in empirical terms is that the interviewed officials regard value promotion as a core dimension of the Eastern Partnership. This leads to the conclusion that there is accordance between the conceptions held in the administration and the European Union's *officially declared* objectives. From a societal point of view, this finding is of crucial importance, indicating that the EU's frequently stated – and often questioned – ambition to spread values is more than just lip-service.

Sammanfattning

Vad som motiverar aktörer att ta till sig nya värderingar och vilka mekanismer som är viktigast för att sprida normer har diskuterats flitigt inom internationella relationer. Likaså har ett flertal forskare sökt undersöka betydelsen av Europeiska Unionens ofta upprepade mål att sprida grundläggande värderingar. Tidigare forskning har emellertid missat att ta hänsyn till en central aspekt, nämligen att *tjänstemännens* förståelse av vad som motiverar normefterlevnad har stor betydelse för de strategier som slutligen används för att sprida normer. I syfte att överbrygga denna lucka och öka vår förståelse av normspridning i allmänhet och EU som normspridare i synnerhet ställer jag här frågan hur tjänstemän från Europeiska Kommissionen och svenska UD som deltog i att utforma EU:s Östliga Partnerskap ser på strategier för att sprida normer.

Med en teoretisk modell bestående av två strategier (external incentives- och social-learning model) som analysverktyg undersöker jag i intervjuer med tjänstemännen vilka antaganden som låg till grund för policyutformningen. Den viktigaste slutsatsen är att deras förståelse av strategierna skiljer sig från litteraturens: emedan litteraturen utmålar dem som alternativa uppfattar tjänstemännen dem som komplementära och ömsesidigt förstärkande. Värdespridning ses som en kontextberoende process indelat i olika stadier. Eftersom dessa stadier kräver olika instrument måste normspridaren använda sig av båda strategiernas verktyg, dvs. både erbjuda incitament *och* främja socialiseringsprocesser. Resultatet bekräftar denna studies relevans genom att visa att vi svårligen kan förstå hur och varför normer sprids utan att ta hänsyn till de antaganden och idéer som *formar* strategierna för att göra så – vi måste även beakta policyutformningens svarta låda. Att undersöka hur tjänstemännen ser på mekanismer för normspridning och efterlevnad är visserligen viktigt oaktat hur rätt de har i sina slutsatser. Dessa påverkar ju vilken strategi som slutligen väljs. Vad resultatet emellertid också indikerar är att tidigare forskning kan ha underskattat betydelsen av *samspelet* mellan incitament och socialisering. Att undersöka hur och hur mycket detta samspel påverkar normspridningsprocessen är därför en viktig uppgift för framtida forskning.

Det från empirisk synvinkel viktigaste resultatet är att tjänstemännen ser värderingsspridning som en central del av Östliga Partnerskapet. Det tycks således som att Europeiska Unionens officiellt deklarerade mål om att sprida värden reflekteras också i administrationen. Ur ett samhällligt perspektiv är detta en mycket viktig slutsats eftersom det indikerar att den uttalade ambitionen att sprida EU:s grundvärden de facto är mer än bara retorik.

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European Commission official 5, 15th of April, (telephone) Brussels-Stockholm
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Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs official 2, 13th of April, Stockholm

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Appendix 1: Interview request

Sofie Andersson
Samaritgränd 1
118 53 Stockholm
Tel: +46 (0)704 835 377
E-mail: gusasof12@student.gu.se

April 10, 2010

European Commission
Brussels

Dear Mr/Ms,

My name is Sofie Andersson and I am currently writing my Master thesis in European Studies at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The thesis examines the EU's role as a foreign policy actor, with specific focus on the newly initiated Eastern Partnership.

X at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs informed me that you participated in the work of preparing the policy.

I am writing to you to inquire whether you would be willing to be interviewed about the content and purpose of the Eastern Partnership. The interview would typically last about 15-20 minutes and be carried out by telephone in the beginning of April.

Your contribution would be of great value as the EaP is still unexplored in academic research.

You are very welcome to contact me or my supervisor with any questions you might have. In any case, I will contact you again in the end of March.

Supervisor:

Ann-Kristin Jonasson, PhD in Political Science, University of Gothenburg
Email: ann-kristin.jonasson@globalstudies.gu.se
Telephone: +46 (0)317 864 317

Yours sincerely,

Sofie Andersson, student at the
Master's Programme of European
Studies, University of Gothenburg

Appendix 2: Interview guide

<p>Ethical considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Information about the purpose of the thesis -Your participation is voluntary and you can end the interview at any time. -Do you mind if I record our conversation? -If I quote you, I will refer to you as civil servant of the European Commission/the Swedish MFA. Is this alright? -Do you have any questions before we begin the interview? -Feel free to interrupt me and ask me to clarify at any time.
<p>Introductory questions: background information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is your job title? -What role did you have in the EAP policy making process? -Do you have any experience of working with enlargement and/or ENP, Euromed?
<p>The Eastern Partnership – general goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overarching purpose with the Eastern Partnership? -What problems/challenges is the EaP a solution to? -What does the EU seek to attain? -Policy-making is often about striking a balance between different goals. In your opinion, how did this mark the development of the EaP?
<p>The Eastern Partnership - setup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What were the main motivators for the chosen setup? How did you reason in the policy preparations? Elaborate! -Some have interpreted the EaP as inspired by enlargement. Would you agree with this image? -More specifically, it is the <i>methodology</i> or logic of the EaP that is considered similar to that of enlargement Do you assess that the enlargement experiences guided the shaping of the EaP? -If so, what were the main reasons for making use of this logic? -Did you discuss possible disadvantages of this approach?
<p>Norm promotion in the Eastern Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -When reading the Commission’s communication as well as the joint declaration, the commitment to shared values comes across as very important. Would you agree with this interpretation? -How important do you assess that the ambition to promote these values were in the process of preparing the EaP in comparison to other alternative goals? -With the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, spreading EU core values has become a main objective of the EU (as formulated on the EU-webpage about the Treaty). How do you conceive the potential of the EaP to be a means in the

	work towards attaining this goal?
Strategies for norm promotion	<p>-If spreading EU-values is in fact an important goal, how do you believe that this should be done (in order for the EU to be as successful as possible)?</p> <p>-Based on your experiences (of enlargement/ENP/Euromed) how do you conceive the <i>potential</i> for European Union to spread values such as human rights, rule of law etc. through the EaP?</p>
Logic/rationale	-In order for the partner – or candidate – countries to adopt EU core values, how important do you believe it is that they are convinced of the benefits or goodness of these norms?
Mechanism	<p>-How come the partner countries adopt EU rules and norms? What are the reasons for doing so?</p> <p>-In your opinion, in general, is it the <i>quality</i> of the norms in question or the fact that the EU promotes them that is the key explanation? Elaborate!</p>
Instrument	<p>-How important is the use of carrots in this context? (Sticks?)</p> <p>-In your opinion, how receptive are the partner countries of being convinced of the benefits of these norms?</p> <p>- How important is to just be included in the European context and talk to already convinced representatives?</p> <p>-Does the provision of incentives affect this?</p> <p>-In your opinion, do the motives for why partner or candidate countries choose to adopt EU rules and values effect the <i>implementation</i> and <i>potential impact</i> of the rules/values in question?</p>
Concluding questions:	<p>-What would you say is the key to become a successful so called “value promoter”?</p> <p>-Some describe enlargement as the EU’s most successful foreign policy tool. What do you believe was the key to this success? (why did the candidate countries choose to adopt to EU norms and rules?)</p>
Summing up	<p>- Thank you for taking the time.</p> <p>- Is there anything you want to add?</p> <p>- Can I call you if I have further questions or want to clarify something?</p>