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EXPLAINING NEUTRALITY: THE CASES OF TURKMENISTAN AND UKRAINE

MA thesis

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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Abstract

Neutrality has always brought attention of scholars and politicians as well. Recent events in Ukraine and further debates on Ukraine's alignment status have once again sparked interest to exploring this concept and the reasons for a state to adopt a neutral stance. The aim of this study is to contribute to the growing researches on neutrality in international politics by exploring particular explanations for different forms of neutrality. For this purpose, it conceptually differentiates forms of neutrality according to their degree of institutionalization, i.e. permanent neutrality and non-alignment, and explains the factors leading states to adopt one form or the other.

Based on existing theories of alignment behavior, the thesis formulates two explanations of neutral status: a domestic-level explanation and an explanation emphasizing ideational factors. These explanations are then applied to the cases of Ukraine and Turkmenistan. Whereas the former has followed a policy of non-alignment, the latter has adopted a permanently neutral status. Accounting for these differences in neutral status, the study demonstrates the relevance of domestic-level and ideational factors.

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Introduction

This study explores the policy of neutrality in international politics. The relevance of this topic lies in the need for researching the concept on neutrality in general and its derivatives. The notion of neutrality has developed alongside of the notion of war, as the most primitive explanation for neutrality asserts that certain actors want to stay outside an armed conflict. Among the legal findings of neutrality meaning, neutrality can be understood as a right of nation to remain at peace with other nations. There is a gap in the academic literature of studying explanations for state's adherence to particular alignment behaviour, i.e. permanently neutral or just non-aligned. Most of the literature on neutrality is grounded in international law, where scholars debate on the rights and obligations of neutral states, their behaviour in conflict situations. However, current world order makes the terminology even more difficult with the existence of post-neutral states, former neutrals, militarily non-aligned states and non-allied states (Gavouneli, 2012; Morris and White, 2011). In addition, most of the studies are focused on European examples of neutral states (Agius, 2006; Devine, 2008; Fischer, T., Aunesluoma, J., and Makko, A., 2016; Jesse, 2006). They tend to explore some individual features of the neutral cases rather than to find common trends, and only few researches pay attention to Central-Asian region, particularly to Turkmenistan. That is why this study will contribute to exploring the explanations of certain alignment behaviour of states. Within the theoretical framework, most of researches on neutrality are placed within realist perspective (Karsh, 1988; Walt, 1985; Walt, 1987). This thesis argues that a realist approach to the concept of neutrality does not provide an adequate explanation of the phenomenon. Instead, this study advocates a shift to the domestic level, to domestic-level explanations of neutrality, assuming that regime-security concerns and the national identity image affect the adoption of permanently neutral or non-aligned status. It should be added that ideational explanation is based on the constructivist approach to the concept of neutrality.

In addition, this study contributes to the explanation of different dimensions of the neutrality concept, i.e. permanent neutrality and non-alignment. Permanent neutrality obliges states to formally remain outside the structures of collective security both in peaceful time and wartime. On the contrary, non-alignment means a political position for countries in avoiding entanglement in conflicts, as non-aligned status does not preclude neutrality all the time. However, at the present stage of development of international relations, there is a tendency to consider neutrality in general and non-aligned status as similar or even identical in peacetime. Moreover, the modern interpretation of both international legal statuses in practice is reduced to

the fact that participation in security institutions does not contradict neutrality or non-alignment until it entails participation in collective actions related to the provision of collective defense.

Comparing Turkmenistan and Ukraine and investigating the reasons for their choices of alignment behaviour sheds light on the factors that account for the adoption of permanent neutrality in contrast to mere non-alignment. The study, therefore, aims to explore the factors determining the degree of institutionalization of neutrality. The research question is: “What determines the choice of permanent neutrality in Turkmenistan and non-alignment in Ukraine?”

It is worth mentioning that a characteristic feature of the problem of permanent neutrality and non-aligned status in Ukraine is their excessive politicization. However, in the context of military aggression, the question of permanent neutrality and non-aligned status has become one of the most urgent not only for Ukrainian politicians, but also for academics, since the issue of the neutral status is primarily a matter of national security of Ukraine (Brzezinski, 2014; Kissinger, 2014; Mearsheimer, 2014). Currently, a non-aligned status is in principle acceptable phenomenon for Ukraine. On the one hand, it hinders the creation of an alternative security structure in the East of Europe under the auspices of the Russian Federation and does not impose any obstacles on the ‘bridging the bridges’ with Western security structures, such as NATO. On the other hand, strategic documents on the foreign and defense policies identify Ukraine within the integration processes into the economic (EU) and military-political (NATO) structures of European security. Therefore, the possible future neutral status of Ukraine can be regarded as conditional.

As for Turkmenistan, the revision to its permanent neutral status has also become relevant recently. The limits of its positive neutrality are tested by different factors, including the export of natural gas and security at the border with Afghanistan (Bradley, 2015). In 2015, the construction of the Turkmen section of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline should be started. Turkish President Erdogan paid a visit at that time in order to start negotiating over a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, transporting Turkmen gas through the South Caucasus to Turkey. Two other Caspian gas producing countries, Russia and Iran opposed such project. In this case, the reference to the policy of neutrality is unlikely to help Ashgabat easily solve the issue in its favour.

Another issue is fighting in the north of neighbouring Afghanistan. In 2014, militants crossed at least twice the border of Turkmenistan with clashes. In one of these clashes, three Turkmen border guards died. However, the Turkmenistan's military structures, which did not have any combat experience, did not respond even when militants temporarily seized part of the country's

territory - half of the island on the Amu-Darya River, which divided the border line halfway. It would be impossible for the Turkmen authorities to ask external help to confront this threat, due to the principles of positive neutrality. President Berdimuhamedov would rather reconceptualise and redefine his policy of permanent neutrality in order to avoid external interference in any security matters of Turkmenistan.

The first section of the thesis describes the theoretical framework, focusing on the conceptualization of neutrality and researching theories from realist, liberal and constructivist schools in order to explain the choice behind different forms of neutrality. It reviews explanations of neutrality. Drawing on theoretical researches, it then formulates two explanations of different forms of neutrality: the more consolidated a regime, the higher the degree of institutionalization of neutrality; the second hypothesis that the more the idea of neutrality forms part of national identity, the higher the degree of institutionalization of neutrality.

The second chapter defines the methodological framework of this study. It describes the research design of the thesis, i.e. a comparative study, and the methods and sources that will be used in the following analysis of different forms of neutrality.

The third chapter contains the empirical analysis of the two cases, Ukraine and Turkmenistan, their non-alignment policies, and the explanations for divergent choices. It analyses the different forms of neutrality, shaped in the case studies, i.e. permanently neutral Turkmenistan and non-aligned Ukraine. Therefore, it explores possible explanations of Turkmen permanent neutrality and Ukrainian non-alignment, focusing first on domestic level, and second on ideational explanations.

Finally, in the conclusion the study summarizes the findings and concludes about the role of domestic-level factors, such as the regime consolidation, and ideational factors, such as the national identity, for different choice of the neutrality form in Turkmenistan and Ukraine, i.e. permanent neutrality or non-alignment.

Part 1

Theoretical framework of the concept of neutrality

1.1 The concept of neutrality and non-alignment in international politics

This section of the thesis explains the concept of neutrality, describes various forms of neutrality and presents a differentiation between the permanently neutral status and the non-aligned status.

The 20th century witnessed the greatest international conflicts, so that the policy of neutrality was given little attention and consideration by politicians as well as political scientists, although neutral states existed within international system. During the WWII some critics argued that they were just staying away from fighting and resisting the fascist powers and their aggression (Duggan, 1985). The Cold War times dictated states to seek alliances in order to maintain security by balancing power or balancing threats, though some neutral states maintained their policy (Walt, 1985). The post-cold war world views the choice of some states to remain neutral as unnecessary and hindering cooperation and integration of the international community (Morris and White, 2011). The discipline of International Relations has been neglecting the concept of neutrality for a long time, and this fact has left the countries that follow neutral course unexamined and considered to be unimportant. In addition, those few researches, appeared after the Cold War, were based mainly on the realist theories.

The notion of neutrality has developed alongside of the notion of war, and not as a conceptually and judicially separate and independent idea. Historically, there have always been individuals or groups that have strived for avoiding participation in a war (Karsh, 1988, p. 13). Two major principles may explain the idea of neutrality: abstention and impartiality towards the belligerents, considering that the former initially referred to the freedom from interference with the neutral's territory and trade, and the latter to the issue of equal treatment (Gavouneli, 2012). The limited interpretation of neutrality asserts that it is a status that prescribes certain behaviour of states during wartime, where the right of non-participation in wars is respected between parties involved in the conflict. The extended version of neutrality contains peacetime expectations as well (Ferreira-Perreira, 2006). Thus, today neutrality implies a peacetime status as well as wartime status.

The concept of neutrality was developed in Europe mainly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Oppenheim admits, the neutralisation of Switzerland and Belgium was one of the major events of the nineteenth century which had a huge impact on the recognition of neutrality within international law. The status of permanent neutrality of Switzerland was enforced by the great powers in 1815 within the framework of the Congress of Vienna. Switzerland was

guaranteed territorial integrity during wartime, therefore it had to remain neutral in all armed conflicts occurred on the continent. The same status was achieved by Belgium in 1839, and then by Luxembourg in 1867 as well. These treaties recognised neutrality as a possible national strategy of a state and a set of reciprocal obligations and duties, which were imposed by the international system in general (Karsh, 1988, p. 13-14).

The term ‘neutrality’ originates from the Latin word ‘neuter’, meaning “neither of two”. While in the past there was no single and strict code of behaviour, the rules of neutrality were interpreted as freely as each neutral actor would like to describe in its own understanding. Such liberty in defining neutrality at the early stages of development led to the vagueness of the concept: from the non-alignment with warring parties and the continuity of impartiality to the hire of a neutral state’s army by one of the belligerents, or alternatively, payment to a neutral party in return for abstaining from participation in the conflict. States would include in their bilateral treaties certain conditions and clauses on the issue of neutrality in wartime in order to get over uncertainty in such situations. Some scholars believe that in an official document for the first time the concept of neutrality was adopted in 1408 with a French royal decree, where the King of France declared his neutrality in the struggle between the popes of Rome and Avignon (Karsh, 1988, p. 14).

Another attempt to systematize the rules of neutrality was made by Hugo Grotius in his “*De jure belli et pacts*”. *To begin with, he admits that there are cases when the identity of the just party is certain and clear, but also cases when it is hard to determine the trustworthiness of the party. Grotius then assumes that in case of the first type of war a neutral state should avoid any action that might strengthen the unjust side or, on the contrary, be a hindrance to the just party. In addition, in case of a war when the identity of the just side is undetermined, the neutral should follow the line of impartiality and regard both belligerents as equals. Grotius understands neutrality mainly as a policy of value judgement, i.e. its meaning puts up with the specific nature of the relevant war* (Karsh, 1988, p. 15).

The legal fundamental principles of neutrality were shaped by a set of rules manifested in the 1907 Hague Conventions, which indicated the way of behaving for neutral states in time of war (Fischer, Aunesluoma and Makko, 2016, p 5).

Out of the 13 conventions, the matter of neutrality was covered in five conventions: the Hague Convention (V) respecting the rights and duties of neutral Powers in case of war on land, the Hague Convention (VIII) relating to the laying of automatic submarine contact mines, the Hague Convention (XI) relative to certain restrictions with regard to the exercise of the right of capture

in naval war, the Hague Convention (XII) relative to the creation of an International Prize Court, and the Hague Convention (XIII) relating to the rights and duties of neutral Powers in naval war. (Gavouneli, 2012) This code of regulations maintains a legal functioning core of neutrality today, despite the fact that it was drafted a century ago. The most important feature of the Hague Conventions is a right to the inviolability of neutral state's territory and a respect for maintaining its neutral status by warring parties. In addition, the principle of abstention obliges a neutral state to suppress any military assistance to belligerents, including preventing their actions on its territory, in its airspace, and in its territorial waters. The obligation of equal treatment supposes equal applying of all possible non-military measures by a neutral state, e.g. export restrictions or embargoes, to all belligerents. In turn, a neutral state has to comply with certain restrictions enforced by the belligerents, e.g. limits on international transports or trade (Fischer, Aunesluoma and Makko, 2016, p.5).

The end of the Cold War, followed by the European integration process, supposed neutrality to become extinct in the new world order, however, the issue of neutrality has survived and given rise to much controversy in certain countries. Moreover, recent events of 2014, the Crimean annexation in particular, caused a new wave of debates on whether neutrality was a strategic choice for a state to follow (Brzezinski, 2014; Fischer, Aunesluoma and Makko, 2016; Kissinger, 2014; Mearsheimer, 2014). It is worth noticing that one of the most prominent foreign policymakers of the past century Henry Kissinger took an active part in those debates (Kissinger, 2014). This means that neutrality has become an important feature of contemporary international politics.

Although neutrality was shaped within the balance of power system, a neutral behaviour does not correspond to the rules of that system, when states strive for more power, and security is a primary strategic goal. There are also contradictions between the use of neutrality and the behaviour of weak or small states, as it is considered that they are likely to bandwagon or enter alliances with stronger states in order to protect their interests (Agius, 2006, p. 42). For example, Belgium did not join Germany in WWI, as well as Finland decided to fight against Russia during the 1939–40 Winter War. These instances illustrate how alignment behaviour of certain states can be inconsistent with the expectations of alliance, and the need for researching explanations of particular alignment choices.

On the one hand, the choice for a nation of entering an alliance or remaining neutral is determined by the benefits provided - an alliance ensures an extended deterrence and assistance in case of war, and neutrality avoids being dragged into the wars of others in general (Karsh,

1988, p. 21). On the other hand, the costs must be calculated as well, because a neutral state has no allies to deter potential aggressor. Therefore, there is no universal answer of whether neutrality or alliance is the preferable strategic choice for all states at all times. However, it would be much of a simplification to define one state's alignment behaviour in a dichotomous choice as either allied or neutral (Reiter, 1994).

Neutral states were usually located on the periphery and mostly were not taken into account within the 'system of enemies and allies', i.e. the Cold War era. Austria saw neutrality as a way to gain sovereignty and to deviate from the image of Germany. Irish neutrality, for the most part, allowed of distancing from the UK affairs (Fanning, 1996). The end of the Cold War made some countries to rethink and re-conceptualize the policy of neutrality. In 1991 at the session in Accra the Non-Alignment Movement explained its new vision on neutrality and nonalignment: 'Whereas neutrality as non-participation in a given armed conflict remains certainly an option in the future, permanent neutrality as a lasting policy needs re-thinking and may have to be adjusted to changing circumstances in Europe and worldwide' (Agius, 2006, p. 41).

On the one hand, international organizations like the EU have become a favourable choice for some small states. A neutral policy did not fit in the image of the European CSDP. Däniker claims that "neutrality is viable in the post-cold war world only when states have a favourable geostrategic location, a will to remain out of wars, and reliable defence forces" (Morris and White, 2011, p. 105). Some scholars assume that neutrality is inefficient strategic choice at all to deal with numerous security issues in nowadays international system due to its adherence to isolationist principle. On the other hand, neutral states still exist and stand firmly for its status in the post-Cold War era. Moreover, not all neutral states are considered to be small or weak powers. In some instances the national adherence of a state to the principle of non-violence determines its alignment behaviour, as in case of India. Its struggle for independence was noted for non-violent resistance, so later India decided on remaining non-allied from the superpower blocs. Neutrality has become a part of the nation-state idea today, and neutral states define their policies in different ways.

There are many opinions in the scholarly community that regard neutrality as an outmoded concept. Goetschel claims that "neutrality is not seriously discussed anymore, but seen as a relic from the cold war, hampering participation in collective security endeavours" (Goetschel, 1999). Most of the recent studies on neutrality examine separate cases of countries, however, it has been done little so far to develop a concrete theory of contemporary neutrality. At the same time, the concept of neutrality has endured because states keep following a neutral stance, and their

publics are anxious about possible abandoning this policy line (Morris and White, 2011). Although legal experts affirm that permanent neutrality can exist together successfully with the participation in international organisations such as the EU (Subedi, 1993), the tension between these two statuses still may be present. Neutrality has passed several stages of development - from a purely legal concept to a political concept, which gives more opportunities today to set up special relationship between neutrality and membership in an international organization (Andr en, 1991).

Moreover, neutrality comprises legal and political dimensions. Among the legal findings of neutrality meaning, it can be understood as a right of nation to remain at peace with other nations. The international law differentiates occasional or ad hoc neutrality from permanent or perpetual neutrality. Permanently neutral country is bound to keep its neutral status in all future wars, as Switzerland agreed to its permanent neutrality by signing a multilateral agreement with the great powers at the Congress of Vienna, or Turkmenistan fixed its permanent neutral status in the Constitution, previously ratified by the UN resolution. Karsh defines permanent neutrality as “a policy of consistent non-alignment in peacetime, overtly aimed at preparing the ground for neutrality in wartime” (Karsh, 1988, p 25). As a rule, the official status of neutral state is introduced by means of domestic legislation or international treaties, which facilitate the international recognition of permanent neutrality. Great powers of the international arena usually act as the second parties to these treaties and guarantee to respect the neutral status of a state, its territorial integrity and, in addition, to render aid in case of attack by foreign forces (Karsh, 1988, p 25-26).

By contrast, occasionally neutral country exercises its status during particular war and only for the duration of that war. Sweden’s and Finland’s neutral statuses are considered to be examples in this case, as they stick to a tradition of neutrality based mostly on foreign policy strategies, but not on international legal obligations. In this context, Sweden and Finland can be regarded even as de facto military non-aligned countries, not permanently neutral.

During wartime there is no difference between the rights and obligations of an occasionally neutral state and a permanently neutral state. However, the rules of the Hague Conventions shape the foreign policy of a permanently neutral state in peacetime as well, creating political dimension of neutrality. A policy of neutrality is aimed at preservation and reinforcing the law of neutrality. Gabriel notes that “for an occasional neutral country, this embraces actions to prevent being drawn into a particular ongoing conflict. For a permanent neutral power, the implications are broader: it should do nothing to undermine the practicability and, equally important, the

credibility of its neutrality in a future war. A permanent neutral, therefore, should not enter into peacetime alliances or permit the establishment of foreign military bases on its soil” (Gabriel, 2002). Moreover, the neutral stance in peacetime is a matter of duty for states with permanent neutrality regulated by law, such as Switzerland. De facto neutral states, such as Sweden and Finland, can abandon the neutral policy, in principle, at any time (Möller and Bjereld, 2010).

In some cases an international agreement may impose a policy of permanent neutrality on a certain state, leaving it to deal with its new status and respective obligations. Such forced choice of a neutral course is called neutralization, and it was implemented several times throughout history, i.e. Switzerland, Belgium and Austria. Moreover, the idea of permanent neutrality and neutralization is able to strengthen political dimension of neutrality, making a neutral status more credible and viable strategic choice for a certain country (Karsh, 1988, p. 26).

Neutrality can be understood conceptually as a certain degree of alignment behaviour. Michael Ward highlights that “alignment is not signified by formal treaties, but is delineated by a variety of behavioural actions” (Ward, 1982). Snyder adds that alliance is merely a subset to the broader phenomenon of alignment (Snyder, 1984). Many studies assume that ‘alignment’ requires no definition and that only ‘small powers’ seek alignment with the great powers (Wilkins, 2012). In former times neutrality was regarded as an alternative to alliance membership, however, nowadays states have got several options or models to implement in order to follow a neutral course (Goetschel, 1999). A non-aligned or military non-aligned policy is one of the alignment strategies, followed by the West European neutrals in the post-Cold War setting (Agius, 2006, p. 33). It is therefore possible, and necessary, to conceptually distinguish between neutrality and other related concepts, such as non-alignment.

Non-alignment comes from the context of the Cold War, as it means a political position for countries, but not legal in avoiding entanglement in superpower conflicts (Raymond, 1997). During the Cold War a number of newly independent states rejected a choice of joining the contending ‘camps’ of superpowers or joining a warring side in their conflict. The 1961 Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the 25 nonaligned countries fixed the criteria for a nonaligned country: “A nonaligned country should adopt an independent foreign policy based on co-existence of States with different political and social systems and on nonalignment, or should be showing a trend in favour of such a policy, and consistently support movements of national independence. Such a State must not be a member of a multilateral military alliance concluded in the context of the Great Power conflict; if it has a bilateral military agreement with a Great Power or if it is a member of a regional defence pact, such an agreement or pact should

not be deliberately concluded in the context of the Great Power conflicts” (Fischer, Aunesluoma and Makko, 2016, p.6). This means that in practice a non-aligned country could have some level of defence and military cooperation with other actors. The non-alignment movement started from India, and then it spread to African, Asian, and Latin American countries. Among European countries non-alignment stance was followed by Yugoslavia and Cyprus.

According to Robert Rothstein, “the viability of non-alignment is, therefore, directly related to the power balance between the Great Powers” (Rothstein, 1969). To be non-aligned simply means that the state is not a member of two rival military alliances. Non-alignment was a moral obligation for certain states to stay outside the bloc structures. Moreover, non-alignment strived for such goals as democratization of the international system, reforming the world economic order and safeguarding the national sovereignty (Fischer, Aunesluoma and Makko, 2016, p.9). This status, however, is not based on any neutral rights and duties, nor is related to the legal status, such as permanent neutrality. It is mainly a political concept, aimed at promoting peace and stability in international relations. Karsh adds to this understanding that non-aligned states would be obliged to declare itself either neutral or at war, as non-aligned status does not preclude neutrality in all the conflicts (Karsh, 1988, p. 28). When the national interests are concerned, nonaligned states possess all rights and opportunities to wage a war. With the end of the Cold War it can be argued that non-alignment has gained a new meaning, referring to nations that follow the principle of neutrality and take an active part in defence or security alliances.

Neutrality is a similar concept to non-alignment, as it is also a political concept and has its roots in the Cold War. Karsh explains it as “a policy of non-alignment with a particular side in the confrontation between the two superpower blocs” (Karsh, 1988, p. 29). Neutrality differs from the idea of neutrality in the institutionalization of its status, as neutrality exists in a political dimension, but not in the international law. Besides, this concept is not linked to the concept of war, whereas neutrality, in principle, originates from the war.

Consequently, permanent neutrality is the legal and political status of the state, which refuses to participate in the war between other states, refuses military assistance to the conflicting parties, and refuses to participate in military blocs in peacetime. Such status is usually fixed by the international treaty, and its signatories are obliged to respect the permanent neutral status of the state. Non-alignment is basically the country's foreign policy, according to which it declares a policy of non-joining military blocs or alliances. As a rule, the non-aligned status of the country is determined independently, without any guarantees or international assurances from other states, and that is one of the main differences from permanent neutrality. For the most part, non-

alignment can be seen as a 'weak' form of neutrality, when the state does not comply with all formal conditions to be considered neutral.

Rephrasing Alexander Wendt, "neutrality is what states make of it". Joenniemi says even more explicitly that "all the neutrals tend to stress their individual features rather than those that are common to them all" (Joenniemi, 1988). Neutral states can be active or passive, and exercise their policies differently, e.g. participate in international organisations or not. Sweden can be an example of active neutrality, as it manages, to promote and extend this policy choice in the international arena by developing aid policy, supporting small states and opposing superpower modes of behaviours in the UN (Agius, 2006, p. 54).

Among various interpretations, neutrality can be seen as a part of the balance of power or as an alternative policy, aiming at peace promotion. Some regard it as a dead concept, leading to an end, but, at the same time, it is a safe passage from the war. Nevertheless, neutrality is a flexible concept, comprised of different ideas about conflict and peace with differing roles and forms.

1.2 Theories of neutrality

This section describes the theoretical framework of the concept of neutrality and its derivatives. When analysing the decision behind neutrality, scholars provide different underlying factors. Such variety in explanations is caused by the absence of a common theory of neutrality. In absence of such a theory, alternative accounts of neutrality can be formulated on the basis of the existing literature on neutrality and the mechanisms underpinning alignment behaviour in world politics. These explanations can be divided into three broad categories, each explaining neutrality with regard to a different factor or set of factors. First, a geopolitical explanation where the geopolitical environment determines the choice of neutral model for a certain state. Second a domestic-level explanation, i.e. domestic security issues may influence the decision on the neutrality. Third, the identity can be a main factor in explaining neutrality.

A geopolitical explanation comes from the realist and neorealist views that in general dominate the modern understanding of international relations. It is assumed that the level of external threat determines the alignment behaviour (Walt, 1985, p. 4). According to Walt, there are options of balancing (when a state allies against the source of threat) and bandwagoning (when a state allies with the source of threat) (Walt, 1985, p. 5). He then argues that the probability of alliance, either with or against the source of threat, is higher when threat increases, and, by contrast, the new alliances is less likely to form when threat decreases (Walt, 1985, p. 5-6). Moreover,

neutrality is not an option for a threatened state, rather a state prefers non-alignment or bandwagoning in the end. Following the realist perspective, a neutral choice is determined, primarily for a small state, by the rational calculation of interests and capabilities within the unfriendly international environment. (Jesse, 2006) Therefore, from this assumption the hypothesis posits that a benign geopolitical environment contributes to a state choosing neutrality, whereas a hostile geopolitical context leads to non-alignment and then, eventually, alliance with the strongest power. This also means that there is no option for permanent neutrality both in peacetime and wartime.

However, the realist conceptualisation of neutrality is quite narrow and limited. The dual approach to the neutral state from realist perspective assumes that, on the one hand, neutrality is an undesirable strategic choice in international relations due to its rejection of war and refusal to engage in balancing or alliances. On the other hand, neutral states exist within the hostile international system and its structural pressures oblige neutral states to put all efforts in order to survive (Agius, 2006, p.56). Moreover, the realist conceptions of the balance of power or the capabilities calculations may force a neutral state to take a more militaristic stance, i.e. armed neutrality. Thus, neutral states have to be armed in order to safeguard their sovereignty in the anarchic international system (Joenniemi, 1988). The neutrality of Belgium during the WWI, for example, failed not only because of the unrealized guarantees from the great powers, but also because of the insufficient and poor material capabilities of Belgium against the invasion. Hence, such realist approach fails to fit the idea of neutrality into its worldview.

Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff highlights that states may “focus on power in an inverted manner, seeking security through non-involvement, isolation, neutrality, appeasement, or the acceptance of a dependent buffer or satellite status” (Agius, 2006, p. 39). Although the realist thinking argues that the anarchy in the international relations conditions the choice of neutrality, it also works against such statement. Within the anarchic international system neutrality is an anomaly in principle and there is no differentiation between its forms, i.e. permanent neutrality, occasional neutrality or non-alignment.

The realist explanation of the neutrality choice assumes that states follow a neutral stance because they are weak and prefer an isolate role in the international system. Nevertheless, not all states act in the same way, and not all neutral states share a common background for their choice neutrality. The starting conditions in terms of geopolitical context of Ukraine and Turkmenistan after gaining independence were in many respects similar. During the period from 1991 to 1995, when neither the West nor Russia had a decisive influence in the region, these countries might

have used the favourable foreign policy circumstances for promoting their own political courses. Ukraine inherited from the Ukrainian SSR a powerful economic base, which had to be developed. Gas was a national wealth for Turkmenistan, as well as its transit potential. Ukraine also benefited from its geographical position. If Ukraine had to cope with the basing of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in the Crimea, then on the territory of Turkmenistan the operational group of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation was based until 1994, exercising the coordination of Turkmenistan and Russia in the military sphere. However, even the presence of Russian troops on the territory of Turkmenistan did not pose a critical obstacle to the movement of this country to neutrality. While the leadership of Turkmenistan aimed the entire country's resources and capabilities to develop and implement a course of neutrality, 25 years of Ukraine's independence were marked with the constant uncertainty in the foreign policy course: the EU or the Customs Union, NATO or non-aligned status.

Neutrality can be adopted by some states in order to protect trade, or as part of nation-state building, or as a way to protect themselves against external interference, i.e. to protect their sovereignty. As one of the goals of the sovereign state is to obtain security, neutral states conform to such idea, but through different means. Neutrality, in this case, contributes to the safeguarding of state sovereignty by remaining outside of conflict. Neutrality strives for sovereignty, but posing itself as “a kind of deviant behaviour that does not play the tune of balance of power policies” (Albrecht et al., 1988, p. 1).

Realists believe that neutral states rationally choose to stay out of wars and join one power side or another in order to achieve strategic goals like survival. Survival more often than not is better achieved by alignment rather than by neutrality. For realists it is hard to explain the presence of neutral states, especially in Europe, within modern international system, because neutrals are not part of the balance of power that is the focus of the realist analysis of world politics. That is why neutrality does not easily comply with the realist theory that is mainly concentrated on war and alliance structures. So, in the post-cold war world scholars have increasingly searched for other approaches to explain neutrality.

The second explanation is a domestic-level explanation. It is rooted in the liberal theories, assuming that domestic factors contribute to the alignment choices and maintenance of neutrality, in particular. Snyder gives an example of the 1904 Anglo-French Entente, which would not have occurred if the Radical wing of the British Liberal party had taken a lead in the foreign policy posts in the Cabinet at that time (Snyder, 1984).

It is argued from the neoliberal perspective that the domestic influences, like economic, political and military factors, and also security concern of the regime may be the source of the neutral choice and its continuation. Examining the case of Ireland, Jesse supports neoliberal arguments about party politics impact on Irish neutrality, arguing that “it is obvious that realist theory grossly underestimates the contributions of domestic factors to the establishment and maintenance of Irish neutrality” (Jesse, 2006). In the 2001 EU Nice Treaty referendum the proposal was defeated as the voters in Ireland viewed the Treaty as a threat to Irish neutrality, despite massive support in favour of the Treaty from the political parties, institutions and most of the interest groups. Ireland had to address the EU Heads of State in order to assure the public that the Nice Treaty would not affect the Irish neutrality. The public managed, in this case, to affect the conduct of international affairs due to the strength of its opinion that brought the issue of neutrality to the EU agenda, despite the efforts of pro-Treaty interest groups, major political parties and the government (Devine, 2008).

In addition, David articulates a theory of omnibalancing, where “the most powerful determinant of alignments is the rational calculation of leaders as to which outside power is most likely to keep them in power” (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, 328). This theory focuses on the internal threats to leaders, including assassination attempts, coups, civil war, concerning leader’s personal survival, and opposition leaders or parties that may pose threat to leader’s political survival (David, 1991).

According to David, leaders are likely to choose an external alignment in order to remove the most pressing domestic threats, although such external alignment may present secondary, yet security threat as well. David explains that “leaders protect themselves at the expense of promoting the long-term security of the state and the general welfare of its inhabitants” (David, 1991). It can be concluded that the threatened leader is likely to join an alliance with the powerful actor in order to balance his internal threats (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, p. 331). Thus, a leader within politically stable regime may choose to follow a neutral stance over being dragged into an alliance, or a leader might opt for neutrality if this is most beneficial for regime security. The realist theories such as balance-of-power do not take into account domestic factors, focusing primarily on the external environment. However, leaders often identify internal issues to be the most pressing, for instance a conflict within a state, so the alignment calculations are made with respect to domestic factors in the first place.

Furthermore, when choosing alignment behaviour, leaders must take into consideration social and economic constraints that limit the availability of resources in society and the government's

access to those resources. (Barnett and Levy, 1991). It is assumed that leaders seek an external alliance, if such alliance may contribute to the internal political or economic stability, e.g. to ensure the availability of material resources for challenging domestic threats to the regime. Conversely, they opt for neutrality if leaders consolidate their power within the political regime and they want to preserve their legitimacy. Based on these assumptions, the hypothesis concludes that the regime security issues may determine the neutral model, where politically and economically stable regime can pursue a course of permanent neutrality, and a threatened regime is likely to adopt the non-aligned status with further intentions to conclude an external alliance.

The ideational explanation of the alignment choice comes from the constructivist theory. The modern theories of neutrality are based for the most part on the assumptions of constructivism. Scholars have become more interested recently in examining the ideological notion of neutrality rather than the legal perspective. Constructivists highlight the valuable role of a neutral foreign policy option and its contribution to the international integration process (Morris and White, 2011). Goetschel, for example, assumes that “the security identity of states plays a prominent role in determining a state’s willingness to forego the autonomy that neutrality ensures for the advantages perceived by international integration” (Goetschel, 1999).

Constructivism tries to analyse the impact of ideas, identities and norms. Constructivists posit that people act towards objects and other actors on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them (Agius, 2006). Wallace explains that “states cannot survive without a sense of identity, an image of what marks their government and their citizens from their neighbours, of what special contribution they have to make to civilization and international order; and foreign policy is partly a reflection of that search for identity” (Wallace, 1991). Adler argues that “identity is part of a historical process of interaction which consolidates practices and beliefs, creating norms, which in turn determine action” (Adler, 1997). Moreover, different factors can influence the process of the identity constructing like collective meanings, culture, norms, even metaphors and myths. Berger and Luckmann, for instance, highlight that myths “inform the reality of everyday life, sometimes in a very decisive way” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Norms and identity are connected, as norms set a behaviour model for and nations, and primary norms at one level may define specific norms at another level (Klowert and Legro, 1996).

Wendt acknowledges that the state’s conception of ‘self’ is incomplete without an idea about the ‘other’. Nevertheless, Wendt then assumes that actors create the structure through their interests and the influence of their norms. On the example of the anarchy in the international system, he

explains that identities are constructed interactively, producing a particular set of meanings and then identities inform actions (Wendt, 1992).

Following this idea, constructivists assert that the alignment behaviour is a reflection of state's values and a projection of its national identity in international affairs. States produce different reactions to phenomena as a result of historically embedded perceptions of self and other, norms, values, practices and the meanings attributed to the internal and external factors (Agius, 2006, p. 43). Furthermore, neutral states do not behave in one pattern as well. It is the constructivist point of view that each state adheres to its own unique understanding of neutrality on the basis of its history and identity. Switzerland, for example, views its neutrality in a different way than Sweden. That is why neutrality is not merely a foreign policy course adopted out of necessity or coercion, but it is a part of the historical experiences of nation-state building, culture and practices which are constructed over a period of time (Agius, 2006, p. 44). Neutrality can be seen as a matter of identity.

It makes constructivist researches and studies on neutrality more valuable and deep, compared to the realist thinking, as they focus on the internal factors from a state's history and identity to define the meaning and significance of neutrality in a certain context, rather than bringing all neutral states to one historic and legal definition of neutrality.

As constructivists explain, neutrality has taken a significant part in constructing nation-state identity. Neutrality has become a national symbol or image of identity, which links people to the state. Moreover, a neutral course of state can provide basis for pursuing other aspects of nation-state building and international activities. In this context, foreign and security policies are exposed to the impact of the nation-state identity. When neutrality is deeply rooted in the national identity, it can strengthen the desire of a state to maintain its policy of neutrality, so, therefore, it is difficult for a state to join an alliance or to enter an institution that would require abolition or at least an adjustment of that constructed identity (Morris and White, 2011.) Ultimately, the hypothesis follows that the more the idea of neutrality is embedded into the state's identity, the more likely this state is willing to adopt permanent neutrality, rather than non-aligned status.

Part 2

Research methodology

The research design of this thesis is a comparative study of the MSSD. The goal of any MSSD study is to determine a set of variables, taken into account with the selection of a particular set of cases. The set of cases of this study includes Ukraine and Turkmenistan.

Ukraine declared a neutral status several times during its independent history, however has not succeeded in institutionalizing it and therefore, remains merely non-aligned. Developing the foreign strategy, Ukrainian officials used at the same time 'neutral' and 'non-aligned' terms in legislation, paying little attention to different contexts of these terms. In order to fill possible Ukrainian neutral status with concrete content, it is relevant to understand the preconditions of a particular neutral model, to analyze and compare the experience from other countries. This may help in deciding whether such model is acceptable and viable in Ukraine.

The analogy with the Western European countries for Ukraine is not completely relevant: the conflict in the Donbass, the occupied Crimea and the incomplete demarcation of borders are important factors that significantly differentiate the security context of Ukraine from the context of the Western European countries. The situation in the Central Asian region is quite different from the European security context. A remarkable example is Turkmenistan, which has a common border with Iran, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. For this country, the issue of territorial integrity and threats from neighbours related to terrorism, separatism, escalation of hostilities in these countries is extremely important. Obviously, the European model of neutrality for this country is absolutely inappropriate. That is why Turkmenistan has developed its own model of permanent neutrality, named 'positive' or 'constructive' neutrality. This country created the first precedent in the international law, when its neutral status was adopted by a special resolution of the UN General Assembly.

The study assumes that starting positions of Ukraine and Turkmenistan in the geopolitical context after gaining independence were very similar. A unique transit geographical position was considered to be a national wealth for Ukraine and for Turkmenistan as well. The basing of the Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea was not a feature of Ukraine that distinguished from Turkmenistan. On the territory of Turkmenistan a large grouping of Soviet and then Russian troops was based. However, the presence of Russian troops did not interfere the process of the neutrality adoption in Turkmenistan.

In order to measure the degree of institutionalization of neutrality, this study will search for explicit legal declarations at the constitutional level, international treaties, anchoring the neutral status in (the Constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan 1992; the Constitution of Ukraine 1996, the Law of Ukraine “On amending some laws concerning the rejection of the non-alignment policy implementation” 2014). In turn, non-alignment is indicated by rejection from participation in any interstate coalition or military alliance. In order to prove non-participation of the given cases in military alliances, the study will use the data the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) project and the data set on formal alliances from the Correlates of War project (COW). They provide information about the content of military alliance agreements signed by all countries of the world between 1815 and 2012 (ATOP only until 2003), including mutual defence pacts, non-aggression treaties, and ententes. In addition, the study will rely upon foreign policy reports, which reveal the state adherence to certain alignment pattern. In order to measure factors explaining for degree of institutionalization, this study looks at the political development of the given cases, domestic cleavages, presence of domestic upheaval, the regime type, the nation-building process. The study will use Freedom House’s reports in defining political regimes (Freedom House, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2011).

For the theoretical part, this thesis uses recent studies on explaining the notion of neutrality from constructivist approaches, as the dominant realist approaches fail to explain why neutrality has been maintained in general since the end of the Cold War. Constructivists emphasize on the domestic beliefs and identity-based sources of neutrality (Agius and Devine, 2011; Eliasson, 2004). Considering the regime security issues, Snyder gives an example of the 1904 Anglo-French Entente, which would not have occurred if the Radical wing of the British Liberal party had taken a lead in the foreign policy posts in the Cabinet at that time (Snyder, 1984). Steven David articulates a theory of omnibalancing, where ‘the most powerful determinant of alignments is the rational calculation of leaders as to which outside power is most likely to keep them in power’ (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005).

For identifying the factors that caused different approaches to the neutral status in the case studies, this thesis provides the following explanations: the level of domestic threats along with the national identity cause a particular choice of the neutral model. This thesis argues that an internally secured political regime prefers permanent neutrality, and a regime, faced with internal threats, chooses non-alignment and possible external alliance in the future. Regarding the national identity, it is assumed that foreign policy can be a reflection of state’s values and a projection of its national identity in international affairs. A geopolitical explanation is eliminated from the theoretical framework of this thesis, as its postulates do not explain the choices of

permanent neutrality and non-alignment, but, on the contrary, they contradict the real state of affairs in the case studies. Domestic factors as well as identity factors, can explain difference in behaviour of states, which face a similar geopolitical context, yet behave differently. That is why this study focuses only on domestic and identity explanations.

On the basis of the preceding theoretical discussion, this thesis puts forward the following hypotheses. The first hypothesis is based on a domestic level explanation of the alignment behaviour. It states the more consolidated a regime, the higher the degree of institutionalization of neutrality. The second hypothesis is derived from a constructivist approach of alignment behaviour. It assumes that the more the idea of neutrality forms part of national identity, the higher the degree of institutionalization of neutrality.

Data and sources

The form of neutrality is measured by the adherence of a stated to certain neutral model, based on shared values norms and historical alignments. For this purpose, the study relies on foreign policy reports sources. In addition, the legal anchoring of neutral statuses is exemplified in explicit declarations, international treaties, laws, foreign policy doctrines, national security strategies.

In order to assess the factors accounting for the choice of neutrality, I investigate the nation-building process and the political regime development in Turkmenistan and Ukraine, relying on the findings from articles, reviews and analysis on the foreign policy. In addition, the study relies on the researches of Ukrainian scholars, which focus on the advantages and disadvantages of the neutral status for Ukraine.

Part 3

Comparing Ukraine's and Turkmenistan's policy of neutrality

3.1 Domestic-level explanation of non-aligned status of Ukraine

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and gaining independence, Ukraine chose an appropriate independent alignment policy course. The idea of neutrality and non-aligned status of Ukraine was enshrined in the Declaration on State Sovereignty. That document referred to the intention of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic to become a permanently neutral state in the future that does not participate in military blocs. The proclamation of this intention played a positive role especially during the first years of independence, when Ukraine experienced tangible external pressures. It is the non-aligned and non-nuclear status of Ukraine that greatly simplified the rapid process of recognizing the independence of Ukraine by European countries and the whole world in general.

Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, aimed at distancing Ukraine from Russia as far as possible. He had to devote all his efforts at maintaining Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, and thus, President Kravchuk took a firm position on Russian terms in settling a range of issues between Ukraine and Russia, such as storing nuclear weapons in Ukraine or locating former Soviet military bases (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, p. 339). The non-aligned status became an effective tool for Kyiv to counteract reintegration processes in the territory of the former USSR, in particular, Kyiv refused to participate in the institutionalization of intergovernmental relations within the CIS and opposed granting the Commonwealth status of a subject of international law. Moreover, President Kravchuk spoke critically of the CIS integration, regarding this organization as "a committee to liquidate the old structures" that provided a "civilized divorce" of former Soviet republics. He highlighted that the CIS should focus on the principles promoted by the UN and the OSCE, and that the CIS should remain an international organization for facilitating the resolution of problems and issues among member states without intentions to become a supranational institution (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, p. 339-340). In addition, President Kravchuk rejected plans of the Collective Security Treaty in 1992, as he considered that agreement as an excuse for possible Russian military intervention in the future.

Nevertheless, the concept of Ukrainian neutrality and the transformation of the international relations system and its constituents subsequently influenced the evolution of the foreign policy course of the state. Thus, the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine, approved by the Verkhovna Rada on July 2, 1993, emphasized that the proclaimed once the intention to become a neutral and

non-aligned state in the future could not be considered an obstacle to the state's full participation in the European security structure. As Ukraine is located at the intersection of key routes in Europe and Asia, the neutral status would, deprive it of the maneuver, essential for maintaining multilateral contacts, promoting national interests and guaranteeing its security.

As President Kravchuk faced little opposition in the government there was no need for him to seek external alliance with Russia in order to stay in power, and besides, such an alliance would not be supported by the public opinion at that time. The more pressing foreign policy issue for him, however, was establishing contacts with the West. The US maintained quite a Russocentric view on Ukraine even after independence, though the Western countries acknowledged their support to be vital for successful transition (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, p. 342). In 1991 President George H.W. Bush delivered a speech to the Ukrainian parliament, where he noticed that "freedom is not the same as independence. . . . [Americans] will not aid those who promote suicidal nationalism based on ethnic hatred" (Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1991) That speech evidenced that the Bush administration was more concerned with Ukraine's role in the collapsing Soviet organization, rather than Ukraine's interests and intentions. Following that logic, the US would rather have one single de facto power in the region, instead of dealing with quite unpredictable newly independent former Soviet republics. Thus, the first years of Ukraine's independence marked with distanced relations between the US and Ukraine, getting one side of a triangular relationship including Russia (Miller, 2006). When relations between Russia and the US became strained in 1993-1994, then the Western powers took into consideration an independent Ukraine as a strategic partner in the post-Soviet region.

In addition, President Kravchuk saw Ukraine's nuclear weapons as a tool to get more Western assistance. The ratification of the START and the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was conditional on the terms of compensation for nuclear weapons materials, economic assistance for Ukraine's disarmament program and security guarantees from the nuclear powers (Garnett, 1995). The Budapest Memorandum, signed on December 5, 1994 by the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Kingdom, testified to the non-nuclear status of Ukraine. The signatories assured Ukraine of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the non-use of threat of force or economic pressure, and offered a mechanism for consultations on security matters. The memorandum actually broke the link between the non-nuclear and non-aligned status, confirming the first one, but not mentioning the second one.

In 1994 President Kravchuk wasn't credible to stay in power any longer, and the result of the presidential elections confirmed it. His strategy on distancing from Russia and unwillingness to

introduce economic reforms put Ukraine into a deep economic crisis. Considering such extreme hard economic situation in 1993-1994, President Kravchuk had very few arguments in his support at the elections. Nationalist parties were his only strong support. Leonid Kuchma, once a prime minister under President Kravchuk, was a serious rival and posed a real political threat to the first president. In contrast to President Kravchuk, Kuchma focused on a Russian direction, which got support from the eastern and southern regions, known for their pro-Russian orientation at that time. He emphasized Ukraine's "total dependence" on Russia, which was "a key factor in Ukraine's economic development" (Smolansky, 1995).

President Kuchma's coming to power was marked by new approaches for the implementation of the foreign policy course. Improving relations with Russia was the first issue on the agenda, as he realized a serious level of Ukraine's economic dependence on Russia. At the same time, President Kuchma, as well as his predecessor, did not have intentions to formalize alliance ties with Russia. The goal was to improve economic cooperation in the first place. The foreign policy course under President Kuchma was called a 'multivectored', aimed at developing contacts with both Russia and the West.

Despite the fact that the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine did not establish the relevant provisions that would determine neutrality or non-alignment as a means of national security or a form of Ukraine's existence in world politics, the concepts of neutrality and non-alignment became the main tools of the maneuvering policy of Ukraine between Russia and the West. The peculiarity of this policy was the chaotic change of vectors and political slogans: permanent, temporary or active neutrality; a simultaneous partnership with the EU, the US and Russia; two-vector; Euro-Atlantic choice; European and Euro-Atlantic integration while maintaining strategic partnership with Russia; the course "to Europe with Russia", the CIS (Vidnyans'kyy, 2006). In 1997, two important events took place: the signing of the Grand Treaty with Russia and the Madrid Charter on a special partnership with NATO. Thus, Ukraine, while remaining a non-aligned country, began to develop relations with the NATO. Consequently, non-alignment in practice allowed to actively strengthening ties with the western direction, while maintaining a distance from Moscow.

President Kuchma succeeded in establishing a winning political coalition, thus, avoiding a danger of internal threats, which would make him to seek an external alliance with Russia. However, the political scandal at the end of the 1990s forced President Kuchma to reconsider his alignment plans, so he decided to strengthen relations with Russia (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, p. 347). The so-called "Kuchmagate" scandal occurred when particular audiotapes were released

allegedly with the voices of President Kuchma, Internal Affairs Minister Yuriy Kravchenko, and Presidential Administration Head Volodymyr Lytvyn, linking the president to the disappearance of the journalist Georgiy Gongadze (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, p. 348). Such outrageous scandal caused massive political protests in Ukraine. In addition, in January 2001 the deputy prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko was ousted for her efforts to establish transparent rules for the energy sector, which threatened Ukrainian oligarchs and Kuchma's supporters (Miller, 2006). Yulia Tymoshenko's dismissal only fueled protest against the president.

Such internal threats only fostered the development of the Eastern vector of President Kuchma's foreign policy course. For instance, in January 2001 a military cooperation plan was signed between Ukraine and Russia, intending to create a joint command post in Sevastopol and a joint rescue detachment of the Russian and Ukrainian Black Sea Fleets. Later, in February, Ukrainian and Russian officials agreed on a series of arrangements for cooperation in the areas of high technology, industry, and energy, culminating in sixteen documents on economic cooperation. Moreover, in order to cease domestic opposition, Russia provided a diplomatic support for President Kuchma. For example, the ambassador of Russia to Ukraine Anatoliy Chernomyrdin actively interfered in the 2002 parliamentary elections, showing off his support for President Kuchma and pro-presidential (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005, p. 349). Nevertheless, the warming relations with Russia did not take the form of a formal alliance, even though an external alliance would help President Kuchma to overcome internal threats.

The second Kuchma's presidency was characterized by the transformation of a multi-vector policy into an unconditional orientation towards Russia, which respectively led to a deterioration of relations with the EU and the US. Moreover, the "Kuchmagate" scandal and the accusation of illegal sale of the radar systems 'Kol'chuga' to Iraq resulted in the actual international isolation of Ukraine, which continued to remain in the geopolitical flow of Russia. A striking illustration of that fact was the Prague Summit of NATO on November 22, 2002, where the presidents had to be seated in the French alphabet, so that President George W. Bush would not be alongside President Kuchma. As a result of such complications, the process of the European integration was slowing down, strategic partnership with Poland weakened, Western Europe rejected the Ukrainian airplane AN-70 as the basic vehicle for transport aviation, IMF refused to give loans, Russia's stance towards supplying and transporting energy resources across Ukraine became stricter. All this testified to the crisis of 'multivectorism', the loss of logic and consistency of Ukrainian foreign policy, and thus, the international image and authority of Ukraine deteriorated in the eyes of the world community (Vidnyans'kyi, 2006, p. 38).

In order to free from the actual international isolation, President Kuchma made a decision on the participation of the Ukrainian contingent as part of a peacekeeping mission in Iraq. This allowed Ukraine to improve relations with the US and NATO, but failed to fully abandon maneuvering and neutrality policies. Along with the process of sending Ukrainian troops to Iraq, the consideration of the agreement on Ukraine's participation in the Eurasian Economic Space with Russia and Kazakhstan began (Vidnyans'kyi, 2011, p. 31). In May 2002, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine decided on the necessity of joining NATO. It should be noticed that the decision contained an extremely important reservation to the provisions on Euro-Atlantic integration, while maintaining good-neighborly relations and strategic partnership with the Russian Federation. The crisis of 'multivectored' and international uncertainty of Ukraine led to a conflict in September-December 2003 between Russia and Ukraine around the Tuzla island, and it demonstrated the inefficiency of the international security guarantees and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. The incident around the Tuzla island was the first and, as it turned out, not the last tense moment in the history of bilateral relations. Consequently, non-aligned status became transient, remaining for a period before joining the alliance.

The Orange Revolution and threats to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine raised the issue of Ukraine's geopolitical uncertainty once again. President Viktor Yushchenko won the election under the slogans of Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, which could not but affect relations with Russia, which, in turn, began a powerful propaganda campaign among Ukrainian citizens aimed at preserving the non-aligned and neutral status of Ukraine. After all, the question on the abolition of the non-aligned status was immediately identified by society with the course on joining NATO. The foreign policy situation in Ukraine became much more complicated as a result of the gas war with Russia in 2005 and the unwillingness of the EU and the US to make real steps towards rapprochement with Ukraine, justifying this reluctance to fears of restoring the Cold War with Russia.

The collapse of the 'orange team' intensified the activities of the opposition, which, on the eve of the 2006 parliamentary elections, launched active anti-Nazi propaganda, speaking not only against Ukraine's accession to NATO, but also about the abolition of its non-aligned status. The main arguments of the pro-Russian political forces were that the deepening of relations with NATO would lead to Ukraine's involvement in the military actions of the Alliance; placement of American troops on the territory of Ukraine, and the main argument that it would spoil relations with Russia (Makar, 2008, p, 190). This rhetoric remained one of the main political programs and slogans of the pro-Russian forces in the early parliamentary elections of 2007. Demanding

an immediate referendum on NATO membership, opponents of the Euro-Atlantic integration were counting on the lack of awareness of the Alliance's activities among population. After all, at that time Ukrainian public opinion mostly considered NATO as a stereotype of an aggressive bloc, formed by the Soviet ideological machine.

Despite such unpopular stance, the then Ukrainian authorities began active preparations for further deepening of cooperation with the Alliance, declaring their readiness to abolish the non-aligned status of Ukraine, which was simply impossible to achieve without a parliamentary majority. A special resonance got the so-called 'letter of three'. It was a letter with the signatures of President Yushchenko, Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko to the leadership of NATO on providing Ukraine at the Bucharest summit in 2008 the possibility of joining to the Alliance's Membership Action Plan. That letter led to a long parliamentary confrontation with supporters and opponents of the Euro-Atlantic integration (Makar, 2008, p, 194). However, in that letter the emphasis was not on practical steps, but on loud declarations, and the permanent political crisis finally transformed the declared goal into an inaccessible dream in the foreseeable future. At the same time, for obvious reasons, the dialogue with the Kremlin was interrupted. It should be noted that even then Ukraine continued to remain outside any of the existing military-political blocs.

Russia's active opposition to Ukraine's possible accession to the Alliance's Membership Action Plan only succeeded with the refusal of France and Germany to immediately support Ukraine's desire to deepen its relations with the Alliance at the Bucharest Summit on April 2-4, 2008. This position of the leading EU states was perceived by Russia as giving it a *carte-blanche* for action in the post-Soviet republics, as clearly demonstrated by the Russian aggression against Georgia in August 2008 (Vidnyans'kyi, 2011, p. 31). It was the Russian-Georgian war that once again actualized the question of the geopolitical status of Ukraine and the guarantees of its territorial integrity and sovereignty. However, deep political crisis and the confrontation between the President and the Prime Minister, lack of support for the parliamentary majority did not allow abolishing the non-aligned status of Ukraine, which would create the necessary political and legal preconditions for joining NATO.

Viktor Yanukovich's victory in the presidential election was a geopolitical victory of Russia, which tried to preserve the status quo in the post-Soviet space. Already on March 5, 2010, President Yanukovich visited Moscow. For a reduction in gas prices Russian side demanded from Ukraine high-quality concessions and guarantees of impossibility of movement in the opposite foreign policy direction. The price of gas for Ukraine became an internal political

factor. The Kremlin expected a radical geopolitical reorientation from the leadership of Ukraine. On April 21, 2010, President Dmitry Medvedev visited Kharkiv, where an agreement on a \$ 100 gas price reduction for Ukraine was signed, and in return, the Ukrainian side agreed to extend the term of the deployment of the Black Sea Fleet of Russia by 2042 instead of 2017 (Vidnyans'kyy, 2011, p. 34).

After the 2010 presidential election, Ukraine radically changed its foreign policy priorities in the area of security. Such a rapid reorientation to Russia was negatively assessed by the West, because in April 2010, President Yanukovich dismissed the commission for preparing Ukraine's accession to NATO. At the same time, the Kyiv Court of Appeal banned the referendum on Ukraine's accession to NATO. Brussels also expressed its position on the inability of Ukraine to simultaneously enter the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and the creation of a free trade zone with the European Union. Already on July 1, 2010, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the Law of Ukraine "On the Principles of Internal and Foreign Policy", in which a state was identified as a non-aligned European state. On the whole, it can be assumed that this law was directed primarily against Ukraine's accession to NATO, while it laid the foundations for further economic and political integration with Russia.

Legally entrenched non-aligned status proved to be a reality that Western and eastern neighbors should have taken into account, and within which Ukraine built a national security policy and relations with external partners, including with NATO. Russia's categorical non-acceptance of NATO's policy on further eastward enlargement, Ukraine's unwillingness to meet NATO's criteria, and virtually 'closed doors' to the EU and NATO, prompted Ukraine to formally withdraw the agenda on the issue of NATO membership in 2010. Ukraine forcedly suspended the process of the official Euro-Atlantic integration, as it was in a state of non-alignment.

The main reasons for changing the foreign policy course in the field of security and the introduction of the non-aligned status of Ukraine were the following: low effectiveness of Ukraine's policy in the Euro-Atlantic area; political and economic pressure of Russia; the influence of the pro-Russian lobby inside the country; low capacity and competitiveness of the Ukrainian management elite; the low level of public support for the course on the Euro-Atlantic integration due to the lack of information policy within Ukraine. Consequently, the non-aligned status should have helped to achieve at least a few goals: distancing from Russia; distancing from the EU and NATO; obtaining a neutral status, i.e. distancing from all.

The victory of the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 and, as a result, Russian aggression against Ukraine, raised the issue of the status of Ukraine, as in spite of its non-aligned status and actual

neutrality, the voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons in exchange for the guarantee of territorial integrity, Ukraine became the victim of aggression by one of the guarantors of its sovereignty, and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Undoubtedly, the further preservation of the non-aligned status and actual neutrality of Ukraine in the context of Russian aggression was identical to the complete loss of not only international subjectivity, but also of its own statehood.

Discussions on the abolition of the non-aligned status and deepening of cooperation with NATO began immediately after the overthrow of Yanukovich's regime. Despite the threat to national security, the non-aligned status adherents emphasized that changing the geopolitical status of Ukraine would only aggravate the confrontation with Russia. Nevertheless, in December 2014, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding Ukraine's Refusal to Implement Non-Aligned Policy", which provided for amendments to the Laws of Ukraine "On the Fundamental Principles of National Security of Ukraine" and "On the Fundamental Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy". The abolition of the non-aligned status created the necessary preconditions for ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine by deepening cooperation with NATO and integration into the Euro-Atlantic security space. At the same time, joining NATO has become an instrument of national security policy, which can improve the conditions for solving domestic political problems.

Neutrality and the non-alignment status for a country with such location and scale as Ukraine are considered to be artificial categories. Being neutral in Ukraine means being politically static, and in the context of military aggression, being politically static is identical to stagnation. That is why the abandonment of the principles of neutrality and non-alignment is a completely object-oriented and evolutionary process, and in no way cannot be regarded as a betrayal of national interests (Zlenko, 2007). After all, at the present stage, the main task for Ukraine is to build a democratic, legal and defense capable state that can be an equal member of a united Europe.

Thus, the evolution of the concepts of neutrality and non-aligned status can be traced within the foreign policy courses of independent Ukraine, which were defined by the political situation of the state. At the initial stage of independence, neutrality and non-aligned status were aimed at preventing Ukraine's involvement in Moscow's projects aimed at reanimation of the USSR; in this respect, neutrality was an effective tool for a newly formed state, which needed to define with its own guidelines in foreign policy and to regulate internal affairs. However, gradually, the non-aligned status became one of the inalienable aspects of the multivector foreign policy,

which did not meet the national interests of Ukraine and led to the actual international isolation of the state.

The identification of the abolition of the non-aligned status with the Euro-Atlantic integration led to an intensification of political confrontation not only with Russia, but also in the Ukrainian government. Nevertheless, in the face of Russian aggression, the final abolition of the non-aligned status is an effective step towards further Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, since maintaining neutrality and ignoring participation in the Euro-Atlantic system of collective security in a war with a nuclear power means the total loss of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The policy of neutrality and non-alignment cannot be regarded as expedient and rational today, since Ukraine, being between two competing civilizational systems, is historically and objectively doomed to lose its non-aligned status - either voluntarily or coercively.

3.2 Domestic-level explanation of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan

It can be argued that independence for Turkmenistan was an unexpected event from the point of view of its leadership, as well as population. The 1989 all-union referendum demonstrated a vast support for the preservation of the Soviet Union and Turkmenistan as a union republic. When eventually the Soviet Union collapsed, the newly independent state had only territory and quite feeble administrative structure. Some other important characteristics of a state, such as a national identity or institutional infrastructure, had not been developed by the time of its independence (Esenov, 2001, p. 244). Moreover, there were several attempts to contest Turkmenistan's territorial integrity by neighbouring states. For example, Uzbekistan had some territorial claims on the border areas in the Tashauz and Chardzhou regions, which were populated mainly by ethnic Uzbeks. In addition, there were certain concerns about political instability spillovers to Turkmenistan from other post-Soviet republics.

In that context, the political leadership of Turkmenistan faced a threat of becoming merely an object, absorbed by the regional centres of power. Such prospect was completely unacceptable to the newly independent country. Thus, Turkmenistan preferred to adopt rather controversial course of development in order to maintain the country's territorial integrity, to guarantee its security, to secure internal and external environment for political and economic reforms in the country and to develop Turkmenistan's raw materials potential and possible export routes (Esenov, 2001, p. 245). Thus, by adopting neutral status Turkmenistan would distance itself from any regional powers, while establishing contacts with the rest of the world.

Usually, the obligation of a certain state to remain permanently neutral is recognized in the agreement between other states, as in cases of Switzerland or Austria. In the case of Turkmenistan, neutrality does not come from an agreement between other states, which recognize this status. The basis for Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality is its unilateral judicial acts (Yapici, 2018, p 294). The Constitutional Law on Permanent Neutrality, adopted on December 12, 1995, is the primary judicial act of Turkmenistan. The law implies that Turkmenistan pursue a peaceful foreign policy (article 3), avoid involvement in military alliances (article 4), do not allow the establishment of foreign states' military bases on its territory (article 6) and safeguard its permanent neutrality (article 12) (Constitutional of the Republic of Turkmenistan, 2008).

The first president of Turkmenistan Saparmurat Niyazov showed the first signs of developing a neutral course of his country at the OSCE Helsinki Summit in July 1992, where he mentioned a policy of 'positive neutrality'. Then, at the third summit of the ECO in May 1995 President Niyazov mentioned in his speech that Turkmenistan should adopt a positive neutrality status. The ECO member states expressed support for President Niyazov's proposal and agreed to confirm Turkmenistan's neutral status. In October 1995, the heads of state of the Non-Aligned Movement also welcomed the initiative of positive neutrality for Turkmenistan (Esenov, 2001, p. 246). Thus, on 12 December 1995 the UN General Assembly passed a special resolution A/RES/50/80, which formally recognized Turkmenistan's status as a permanently neutral state (Denison, 2008). The newly acquired status of Turkmenistan significantly affected the process of nation-building. The military doctrine of Turkmenistan was revised with regard to the neutral status, primarily cutting the defence spending and providing the resources for the national economy development. It is worth mentioning that the General Assembly resolutions usually contain recommendations, especially in the context of external relations with the member states. This means that the A/RES/50/80 resolution officially recognizes a permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan, but does not guarantee it (Yapici, 2018, p 296).

President Niyazov built his political regime in Turkmenistan on the basis of his self-styled personality cult (Esenov, 2001, p. 248). Initially, President Niyazov relied heavily on external support from Russia, rather than on domestic support from local elites (Horák, 2010, pp. 33). During the late Soviet period, Niyazov kept his post as a leader of the Turkmen Communist Party, so after the collapse of the Soviet Union, he was elected as the President of Soviet Turkmenistan in November 1991, and then, on 21 June 1992, he became the first president of independent Turkmenistan in his first and last presidential elections (Kurtov, 2006, pp. 115–116). President Niyazov never had to run for a president post in another elections, as firstly, the

1994 referendum extended his term until 2002 in order to fulfill his 'Ten Years of Prosperity' (Rudenko, 2004, p. 127). Then, in 1999 there was no need for elections, when President Niyazov became the President for Life, due to the 'overwhelming popular pressure' (Polese, Ó Beacháin and Horák, 2017, p. 433). The Peoples' Council approved such decision, as they owed their appointments to President Niyazov. It can be assumed that such constitutional initiatives allowed President Niyazov to neglect public opinion on the matter.

For securing the international recognition of his regime, President Niyazov focused on strengthening ties with the major powers, starting with an official visit to the White House Clinton in April 1998 and numerous visits to Moscow. He mostly tried to secure relations with the most strategic partners for Turkmenistan, such as Russia, China and Turkey, which usually shut their eyes to undemocratic political regime there. A policy of positive neutrality were aimed in practice at isolating Turkmenistan from international obligations, and President Niyazov hoped for similar indifference from the rest of the world. The Doctrine of Positive Neutrality emphasized the importance of neutrality for internal stability of Turkmenistan and highlighted 'the preservation of the best conditions for domestic development' as one of the primary targets of the country's foreign policy (Shikhmuradov and Kepbanov 1997, p. 105).

The projection and the promotion of the positive neutrality by President Niyazov as an ideological leader were only just employed for internal influence. According to President Niyazov's foreign policy course, the Turkmen regime balanced between keeping international consensus, as it contributed to the inter-Tajik peace talks, negotiated with the Taliban, facilitated relations with Iran and China, and strengthening business connections in order to develop Turkmenistan's natural resources. In this context, President Niyazov realized that as long as Turkmenistan provides low prices for gas, so that Russia may re-sell at much greater prices to European countries, he gets Kremlin's protection along with the Western neglect to his regime's imperfections.

Neutrality has also been a mainstay of both presidential cults, as it provides a legitimacy for them. The UN's recognition of Positive Neutrality is considered to be not only the greatest achievement of Turkmenistan's independent politics, but also as "an unprecedented event in the 50-years' history of the United Nations" (Anceschi, 2009, p. 27). Therefore, the policy is specified as a 'permanent symbol' of President Niyazov's unorthodox approach to international relations, his diplomatic talents and unconditional international support (Bohr, 2015, p. 44). The Turkmen press regularly mentions that the UN distinguished President Niyazov for his skilled

diplomacy and should support him in his attempt to introduce a Turkmen model of neutrality (Bohr, 2015, p. 43).

When the policy of positive neutrality was introduced, this created an official excuse for rejecting the 1995 Collective Security Concept, the Treaty on Borders' Protection between the CIS and non-CIS states in 1995, and other projects of military alignment in the post-Soviet region (Yapici, 2018, p. 299). Turkmenistan did not participate in a number of summits of the CIS heads of state, where the joint military activities were discussed. It criticized the CIS Interstate Bank, rejected the membership in the Eurasian Economic Community (later the Eurasian Economic Union), the Central Asian Cooperation Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In August 2005, Turkmenistan, being as the a full member of the CIS, changed its status to the 'associate member'. Turkmenistan authorities viewed this decision as 'opinion necessitates' in accordance with the UN-recognized international neutral status. The Turkmen television called that move "a significant step towards the country's independence" (Yapici, 2018, p. 299-300). As Pomfret fair notices that from the very beginning Turkmenistan estimated the CIS only as a consultative mechanism. (Pomfret, 2008) By highlighting its permanent neutral status, Turkmenistan officials justifies their passive involvement in the CIS development.

In 1995 Turkmenistan became the first Central Asian state that joined NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. However, it kept quite a distance not to be involved in certain military cooperation initiatives by the PfP. The Turkmenistan–NATO partnership exercises its activities in combating terrorism, civil emergency planning and environment protection. In addition, after the 9/11 attacks, contrary to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan didn't allow the usage of its air base for attacking Afghanistan by the US, although Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan allowed it from their territories (Tanrısever, 2013). Turkmenistan only provided its support to the US military operations with humanitarian and refueling missions. Turkmenistan also did not give the US military any maintenance supply during the 2003 war in Iraq, emphasizing its neutrality (Anceschi, 2009, p. 119). After the coloured revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan's negative attitude towards the United increased. In 2005, Turkmen officials had to oppose rumours about establishing a US military base in southern Turkmenistan. Assessing the level of American interference in the coloured revolutions, the Turkmen regime viewed the US as an external security (Yapici, 2018, p. 300). The positive neutrality rhetoric once again became the key aspect of the ruling elite's political discourse.

It can be noticed that Turkmenistan's positive neutrality also serves as a means for improving trade connections and energy policy. In order to become a main energy and transit hub in Asia, Turkmenistan uses its positive neutrality in developing its trade and transit connections. In this context, the relations with Afghanistan, Armenia, China and Iran were improved. Denison notices that "Turkmenistan uses its neutral status in order to maintain good relations using all kinds of regimes so that to preserve both transit route options and export markets for Turkmen gas" (Denison, 2008). Annette Bohr adds that "the declaration of neutrality was designed to strengthen Turkmenistan's independence by enabling it to develop diplomatic and trade links with a variety of sovereign states, while avoiding entanglement in the conflicts of its unpredictable neighbours" (Bohr, 2015, p. 453) .

Nevertheless, the vague Doctrine of Positive Neutrality has been considerably manipulated in order to highlight supposed changes in the regime. Moreover, the neutral policy has been closely tied to its 'rightful' guardian President Berdimuhamedow. Essentially, positive neutrality serves as a source of international legitimacy for the current regime in Turkmenistan, so by associating himself with this policy, President Berdimuhamedow continues to follow the main legitimizing discourse of the Nyyazow era (Esenov, 2001, p. 245).

After the death of President Nyyazow on December 21, 2006, it was expected that his successor would introduce a "Khrushchevian thaw" in Turkmenistan (Peyrous, 2012, p. 108). However, in practice President Berdimuhamedow largely obeyed the authoritarian regime of the first president. The political and institutional spheres have undergone no significant reforms, and no liberalization prospect for the political regime has been noticed. President Berdimuhamedow's leadership continues to oppose internal and external pressures for democratization. Turkmenistan is well-known for the most repressive in the post-Soviet space and one of the top ten most authoritarian regimes in the world. The frequent indignations, which are expressed on the poor human rights situation in the country by the international community, are the convincing proof of the gravity of the situation.

Concerning the domestic aspect, the leadership preferred a policy of total domination over the de-centralization policy, which was viewed in a similar way as destabilization. At the same time President Berdimuhamedow employed quite sophisticated political strategies such as liberalization of the regime rhetoric and introduction of multi-party-candidate elections. These strategies were aimed at securing the regime's legitimacy, ideological distancing from the President Nyyazow's regime and reinforcing the authority of the new leader.

In addition, President Berdimuhamedow had to come up with the new regime's response to the changing international environment. The Turkmen regime is notable for implementing human rights rhetoric and progressive domestic reforms as a veil for constant human rights abuse in the country. The Doctrine of Positive Neutrality has once again found its application in this context. The regime highlighted the human rights rhetoric, embedded in positive neutrality, with signing major human rights treaties in order to get Western support for the regime and potential business investments. Improving its international prestige, Turkmenistan took part in small-scale peace-building initiatives in the region, mainly with regard to Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

The Foreign Policy Concept of Turkmenistan as a Neutral State states that "the human dimension [...] represents the key aspect of the reform of Turkmen society and of its foreign policy course, which is identified in human values, humanitarian ideals, and universal justice: the basis of the policy of Neutral Turkmenistan" (Neytralnyi Turkmenistan, 2004). The Declaration on International Commitments Assumed by Neutral Turkmenistan in the Area of Human Rights, approved by the Peoples Council in December 1995, emphasizes that Turkmenistan is "aware of the responsibility to safeguard and protect the basic human rights and freedoms coming out of the country's acceptance as permanently neutral" (Anceschi, 2009, p. 126).

The content of Turkmenistan's UN speeches has shown remarkable similarities over the years. On 12 December 2015, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the UN's recognition of positive neutrality, President Berdimuhamedow acknowledged the regime's adherence to the humanitarian values, claiming that "Over the past twenty years, the neutral, peace-loving foreign policy of Turkmenistan has demonstrated compliance with national interests as well as long-term goals of the world community, the criteria of a constructive and balanced approach to building international stability and securing and establishing the principles of the UN Charter as the foundation of bilateral relations" (Neytralnyi Turkmenistan, 2015).

While rhetorically committing to the UN Charter, the Turkmen regime aimed at introducing Ashgabat as an international center for peace talks (Shikhmuradov and Kepbanov, 199, pp. 67). In fact, the media in Turkmenistan has always exaggerated the role of President Niyazow as a 'great mediator' during the 1992 – 1997 Tajik Civil War, as if positive neutrality has contributed to the peace-building process in Tajikistan. By spreading this regime, Turkmenistan accepted 10,000 Tajik refugees between 1992 and 1997, granting them full citizenship (UNHCR, 2005).

President Berdimuhamedow has adhered to this strategy, appealing repeatedly to peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government held in Turkmenistan, as he mentioned it in his speech at the 65th session of the UN General Assembly in 2010 (Neytralnyi Turkmenistan,

2010). However, his main achievement in this context was undoubtedly hosting the UN's Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia.

In order to further adapt its positive neutrality to the democratic principles of the West, Turkmenistan has signed a range of international conventions on human rights since gaining independence: the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993, the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 1994, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1997, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1999, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008 (Bradley, 2015).

However, in practice the instruments of the human rights protection have not been implemented. The international community began to express its concern about the actual state of affairs in the human rights sphere in Turkmenistan, as the results of reports from Turkmenistan to various treaties were rather controversial. For example, the report from Turkmenistan to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which operates under the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, submitted in 2004, noted that "The status of permanent neutrality [...], and Turkmenistan's international commitments associated with this status, have been influential in securing equality between citizens and compliance with international demands to ban all forms of discrimination" (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The committee, of course, saw its flaws, in particular the lack of information with regard to the ethnic composition. That report was heavily criticized, and almost all its content received negative comments from the committee. Under President Berdimuhamedow there is an example of report to the Committee against Torture in 2011, where the description of the humanitarian values of positive neutrality is rather blurred (Bradley, 2015).

It can be argued in this context that the regime in Turkmenistan uses its neutral status to shut the country away from the international civil society. President Berdimuhamedow continued the strategy of President Niyazov of non-cooperation, in particular denying access to the UN special procedures. In 2008 the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion was the first UN special rapporteur visit in Turkmenistan, which would allow the UN to further insist on its reviews in the country. However, by 2010 there have been no further proceedings on that matter. Moreover, in 2008 Turkmenistan rejected any recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review before the UN Human Rights Council with regard to the political prisoners, claiming that all these persons were ordinary criminals (Human Rights Watch; 2011).

In 2012 the UN Universal Periodic Review exercised its review once again in Turkmenistan. Although most of the recommendations were accepted, the most pressing issues, such as the demands to release political prisoners or identify prisoners, disappeared in the country's prison system, were unfortunately rejected (Human Rights Watch; 2013).

The political discourse of the regime in Turkmenistan includes the principle of the guardian human rights as one of the most important. Neutrality, in this context, is used as a symbol of commitment to the values of the UN. The Turkmen regime tries to prove its legitimacy and adherence to democratic principles by signing major international conventions, despite numerous human rights violations in the country. Nevertheless, President Berdimuhamedow allows more space for the UN rather than his predecessor, as more reports have been submitted and more reviewers have visited Turkmenistan.

In addition, the country has developed various aid programmes to African countries. In 2017 Ashgabat hosted the Indoor and Marital Arts Asian games, which proved Turkmenistan to be capable of organising major international events (Horák, 2016). Although these efforts have perceived little resonance, still they gradually improve the country's international image. Turkmenistan under President Berdimuhamedow becomes more visible on the international arena, preserving, at the same time, its permanently neutral status (Yapici, 2018, p. 437).

It can be assumed that the strategy of positive neutrality in Turkmenistan can be explained by the regime survival approach. In order to avoid absorption of the country by great powers, the Turkmen regime adopted a permanently neutral strategy.

Therefore, these findings suggest that the domestic-level explanation contributes to explaining the different forms of neutrality adopted by Turkmenistan and Ukraine. Whereas in the Turkmen case the more stable regime reflects in higher degree of institutionalization of neutrality, due to the extent of president's authority, the case of Ukraine presents lower degree of regime consolidation, continuing to be in transition, thus, consequently, reflecting less institutionalized neutrality.

3.3 Ideational explanation of permanent neutrality in Turkmenistan

In the process of nation building, certain ideas and symbols are intentionally emphasized and presented as items of national importance. (Kiepenheuer-Dreschsler, 2006, p. 130) Such invention of new national ideals and traditions is a distinctive feature to all Central Asian

countries, which gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In order to distance themselves from the Soviet past, these new independent states put in place new national symbols and traditions that are still relevant. Turkmenistan followed this strategy of ‘cultural objectification’ as well (Kiepenheuer-Dreschler, 2006, 131). Nationalist discourses in Turkmenistan highlighted the importance of pre-Soviet symbols, while rejecting or completely removing the influence of the ‘Russo-centric historiography’ (Kurzman 1999, p. 83) That is why the first President of independent Turkmenistan Saparmurat Nyyazow, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other state institutions strengthened the importance of neutrality in Turkmenistan after gaining independence in 1991, claiming that only such course “combines complete awareness of [Turkmenistan’s] place in the international political arena with the traditional attitude of Turkmens to the outer world’ (Shikhmuradov and Nurklychev 1996, p. 68). As neutrality was proclaimed to be the core idea of the Turkmen nation, the policy course in this regard was aimed at establishing the fixed status of permanent neutrality, and not ad-hoc or de-facto version on neutrality in Sweden or Finland (Aneschi, 2010).

Within the Turkmen domestic political discourse the term ‘permanent neutrality’ has got new meaning and application that differ from its legal definition. Instead of ‘permanent’, more often than not the neutrality in Turkmenistan is presented as ‘positive’ by officials, applying the same meaning as ‘permanent’. Such usage of the term has led to the blurring of the lines between the ‘permanent’ and ‘positive’ versions of neutrality in Turkmenistan (Yapici, 2018). However, it should be noted that positive neutrality has no legal definition within international law, unlike permanent neutrality. In this context, positive neutrality defines a political discourse in Turkmenistan.

Moreover, positive neutrality is described in Turkmenistan as a purely Turkmen concept that determines “the outcome of the entire course of development of the Turkmen nation” (Aneschi, 2009, p. 55). President Nyyazow singled out the model of Turkmen neutrality from the history of European neutrals such as Austria or Switzerland, claiming that the Turkmen people had always followed a neutral mode of behaviour (Bradley, 2015). According to the researches of the State Institute of the Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of Turkmenistan, Central Asia, and the Orient in Aşgabat, neutrality represents a true dream of the Turkmen people since the Seljuk reign over Central Asia in the 10th century (Kiepenheuer-Dreschler, 2006, p. 133). That is why the current policy of neutrality is seen as the logical continuation of a ‘national tradition’: “Speaking of historical conditionality of neutral model choice we shall state: neutrality, its main characteristics—peaceableness, tolerance, respect to foreign views and opinions, openness to the

world—correspond to the national thinking and peculiarities of historical development of the Turkmen nation” (Kiepenheuer-Dreschsler, 2006, p. 136).

In addition, the former Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov notes that the policy of neutrality is “a modern re-elaboration of the traditional interactions between the Turkmen tribes and the outside world” (Anceschi, 2009, p. 49). He adds that the history of the Turkmen people, who preserved their national identity and territorial integrity for hundreds of years after the collapse of the great empires founded by the Turkmens, proves that the course on neutrality is the most successful foreign policy course for the Turkmen state. He says that “the traditions of peacefulness and good neighbourliness, the mentality and cultural originality of our people were also appropriate for this”. Moreover, Shikhmuradov describes neutrality in Turkmenistan as ‘constructive neutrality’ that has no analogies or precedents in history. He explains then that such concept “combines the prospects for Turkmenistan’s own development with the trends and character of regional and global processes, and national interests with the objective requirements of today; it corresponds to the geographical, historical, and ethno-cultural realities of Turkmenistan, the mentality of its people, and their psychological disposition for good neighbourhood relations, mutual respect and tolerance” (*Shikhmuradov, 1995*).

The UN General Assembly ratified the status of Neutral Turkmenistan on 12 December 1995. Turkmenistan was the first state to get this status from the UN and this fact is actively emphasized in the Turkmen ideology as the main achievement of Turkmenbashi’s foreign policy (Horak, 2005, p. 8). President Nyyazow noted that Turkmenistan’s neutral status demonstrated the respect of the world towards Turkmen, and Turkmenistan answers with a proper response: “Today we have once again re-interpreted the historical relationships of our nation with other countries. Their nations did not know Turkmens, but today they know about their peaceful character. It is not just coincidence that our Neutrality was welcomed firstly by our neighbours and then by the rest of the world” (Horak, 2005, p. 9)

After the adoption of the UN resolution on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan a new legislation had to be introduced in order to integrate Turkmenistan’s new official status into the state apparatus. The appropriate amendments to the Constitution were adopted by the People’s Council on 27 December 1995. The Council then approved the decision to adopt the Constitutional Law of Turkmenistan ‘About the Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan’, a declaration of international obligations of neutral Turkmenistan in the area of human rights, and the concept of the foreign policy of Turkmenistan as a neutral state. These documents became the basis for constitutional and legal protection of the neutral status of Turkmenistan.

In Turkmenistan it is believed that the Turkmen model of neutrality is not based on the right for war, unlike European neutral examples. Neutrality in Turkmenistan is considered to be a model of co-operation and progress for peace in the region, because it is based on modern international law, which is 'a law of peace'. The former Foreign Minister Shikhmuradov explains: "The proposed formula of stabilisation is vital for any society where human beings are declared to be of the highest value. For each individual, it means family and personal security, peace among friends, and peaceful labour. For the family it means peace in every house, a peaceful life and a succession of generations, the continuation of fathers' work and respect for parents. For social strata and population groups it is mutual social understanding and support, absence of conflicts and of tension. For nations it means inner- and inter-ethnic consent and mutual understanding" (Shikhmuradov, 1995).

The Turkmenistan's internal and external policy is influenced and determined by the three main pillars of the Turkmen national ideology: Independence, Permanent Neutrality and Ruhnama. (Horak, 2005, p. 7) According to the national ideology, there are several phases of development in the Turkmen history, where great leaders rule the Turkmen state at each phase. The beginning of the national revival is described as a 'Golden Century' under the leadership of one of the greatest leaders, Oguz Han. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkmen state undergoes a transition from one Golden Century under the leadership of Oguz Han to another Golden Century, which began under the leadership of Saparmurat Turkmenbashi or Leader of Turkmen Nation, i.e. President Saparmurat Nyязow (Kiepenheuer-Dreschsler, 2006, p. 135).

Turkmenistan's National Revival Movement was an official program for building a new state, with a Turkmen identity and Muslim culture combined. It began at the fifth assembly of the People's Council on 17 January 1994. The People's Council was the highest representative body in Turkmenistan until 2008. The national revival included re-establishing Islam in the country after the Soviet times of atheism, restoring the Turkmen national customs, replacing the Communist Party with Democratic one. The aim of the national revival was to promote a new Independent Neutral Turkmenistan that constituted the Turkmen nation's unique cultural identity and, at the same time, presented an international position (Kiepenheuer-Drechsler, 2006).

President Nyязow felt its obligation to guide his people at the new stage of state's development and national revival, and he decided to write a guidebook. That book looked like a political pamphlet, similar to the intensions of Kadhdhafi's *The Green Book*, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* or Khomeini's *Velayat-e Faqih*. He noted that "Ruhnama brings the national perception into a system and organisation. I have written the Ruhnama to enable my nation to perceive our past

and to envision our own dignity.” (Clement, 2014, p. 555). In *Ruhnama* Nyýazow presented his interpretation of Turkmen history, mixed up with his autobiography and family history, legends about Turkmen ancestors and their important deeds, and a moral code, comprised of Turkmen and Islamic values. As a whole, this book is considered to be a source of living, spiritual and moral guidelines for Turkmen people. However, unlike *Mein Kampf* and *Velayat-e Faqih* that promote external expansion, *Ruhnama* sounds similar to the *Green Book*, which is meant to be applied within one country or one people. In reality, *Ruhnama* is a book, filled with a number of diverse facts, inspired by the Koran, Turkmen traditions and customs, Turkmen interpretation of history and even communist brochures. According to *Ruhnama*, a combination of the three principles, i.e. Independence, Neutrality and *Ruhnama*, will lead to the main goal of President Turkmenbashy’s rule - the Golden Century. These principles represent all important ideals and values to Turkmen that will help them to recover after a long period of Russian repression (Horak, 2005, p. 9-10).

Although President Nyýazow claimed most of the time that *Ruhnama* was ‘not a history book’, however its pages contained the great ‘lessons of history’(Nyýazow2002: 44, 74), and President persistently highlighted his expertise in Turkmen history. Nyýazow intended to teach his people how to be a ‘true’ Turkmen: moderately Muslim, Turkmen speaking and faithful to the state (Clement, 2014, p. 556). However, with some postulates of *Ruhnama* President Nyýazow expanded Turkmenification beyond what even ethnic Turkmen-speakers found tolerable. Popular tolerance for Nyýazow’s discourse began to decline, as it actively interfered in people’s lives. For example, President Nyýazow announced in August 2002 that the country would have to use a new calendar. The names of the months and the days of the week were changed by his presidential decree. The names of the months included the names of national heroes like Oguz Han and Alp Arslan, important events of the new Turkmen history such as the independence day, the declaration of permanent neutrality and the first publication of *Ruhnama* (Kiepenheuer-Dreschler, 2006, p. 134). The introduction of a new calendar signified the beginning of a new golden century in Turkmenistan’s history and fixed a complete break with the Soviet past.

By means of propaganda tools, the symbolic representation of neutrality within the nationalist ideology has been actively promoted in many spheres. In Turkmenistan’s case it is worth mentioning the role of architecture in establishing new ideology. Ashgabat as a capital represent a real textbook of Turkmen ideology with its grandiose constructions. One of the main centres of such ‘ideological architecture’ is the Arch of Neutrality, the symbol of the Permanent Turkmen Neutrality. It was built in 1998 in the centre of the capital. The Arch of Neutrality was designed to show the beginning of a new era as independent and neutral Turkmenistan after the collapse of

the Soviet Union. The leader of this new ‘golden century’—President Saparmurat Turkmenbashy Niyazov—is represented in a golden statue on top of the building, with open arms above the capital (Kiepenheuer-Dreschsler, 2006, p. 133).

The case of Turkmenistan exemplify quite illustratively how the foreign policy course can be actively used and promoted within nationalist and ideological discourses. Especially during the President Niyazov era, the concept of positive neutrality was deeply embedded into the life of the ordinary Turkmen citizens. For example, the two olive branches in the national flag (Peyrouse 2007, p. 77), a central square and a main avenue, a major national holiday (12 December, Neutrality Day), the official daily newspaper and even a month in the calendar introduced by the Niyazov regime in 2002 and abolished by Berdymukhammedov in April 2008 – have been named after or inspired by the country’s neutral foreign policy (Aneschi, 2010). The official documents on the proclamation of neutrality are stored in the National Museum and are included in almost every publication on Turkmenistan (Kiepenheuer-Dreschsler, 2006, p. 132).

Regarding the official daily newspaper, *Neytralnyj Turkmenistan* or Neutral Turkmenistan is the only Russian language paper published in the country. The renaming of the Soviet era *Turkmenskaya Iskra* to Neutral Turkmenistan took place on December 14, 1995, only two days after UN recognition. In addition, it was important to include a neutral foreign policy on the agenda of the researches at the institutions of higher learning throughout the country, and, more importantly, to attract younger generations to that idea. All history textbooks, for example, opened with such words: “Dear students, you can be children of different nations; Turkmen, Uzbek, Russian, Kazakh, Armenian, Byelorussian, and Azeri; but you are all the young citizens of independent and neutral Turkmenistan. Independent and neutral Turkmenistan is your country” (Denison, 2009, p. 178). Moreover, television and radio broadcasts had to pronounce such phrase: “The first country, which was accepted as permanently neutral by the UN, is our fatherland Turkmenistan. All Turkmens have the right to be proud of their fatherland. Therefore, it is compulsory for all of us to serve our fatherland” (Polese and Horak, 2015, p. 469).

The celebration of Neutrality Day each year on 12 December is a huge event for all citizens of Turkmenistan. Anthony D. Smith notes in this context that national ceremonies are one of the most “potent and durable aspects of nationalism” (Bradley, 2015). Turkmenistan’s Neutrality Day is no exception. The year 2015 was announced as ‘The Year of Neutrality and Peace’ in honor of the 20th anniversary of the UN General Assembly on 12 December 1995, with over 400 official parades across the country (RFE/RL; December 12, 2015). The President Berdymukhammedov delivered a televised national speech, emphasizing that “Neutrality is the

culmination of Turkmen democracy and will continue to guide our peaceful relations with the international community. More importantly, Positive Neutrality is the embodiment of our cooperative relationship with the UN and our continued support for the spread of peace and democracy to the outside world” (Bradley, 2015).

The implementation of the policy of permanent neutrality in Turkmenistan is seen as an expression of the true Turkmen national idea. From the beginning of independence, any other foreign policy courses were rejected, while building multilateral relations in different directions. Neutrality has become more than a political guideline that enables Turkmenistan not to be obliged to other states, but it has become a moral guideline for society as well. Turkmenistan case proves that neutrality can be adopted as a national idea, which contributes to the development of the permanent neutral foreign policy course of a certain state.

3.4 Ideational explanation of ad-hoc neutrality in Ukraine

The idea of neutrality is often presented in Ukraine as a possible national idea, which is capable of uniting society. Indeed, declarations of neutral status may receive greater support than other possible alternatives - uncertain multivector foreign policy course or joining NATO and the EU. The issue in this context is whether such prospect of neutral Ukraine is real.

The course on neutrality today is perceived by most Ukrainian experts as unlikely. There is no official document that would fix a neutral status of Ukraine. Although some officials claim that Ukraine has the legal grounds for the establishing a permanent neutrality in the Declaration of State Sovereignty, this argument should not be seen as an opportunity to implement permanent neutrality or even non-aligned status, since both statuses are not adopted in the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine, which mentions only one of the signs of neutral status - not to place foreign military bases on its territory (Art. 17), although the final provisions of Art. 14 allows the use of existing military bases for the temporary stay of foreign military forces (Zlenko, 2008).

The first mention of the permanent neutrality of Ukraine can be found in the above mentioned Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine, approved by the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR (No. 55-XII of 16.07.1990). It states Ukraine's intention to become a permanently neutral state that does not participate in military blocs and adhered to three non-nuclear principles: not to possess, produce and acquire nuclear weapons. The Law of Ukraine on Defense of December 6, 1991 also states that the country seeks neutrality and adheres to the three non-nuclear principles (Pavlenko 2009).

The neutral status of Ukraine was seen as temporary and declarative, necessary for a certain historical period, which was conditioned, firstly, by the uncertainty of the domestic political situation in Ukraine, and secondly, the uncertainty of the military-political situation in Europe. The government of newly independent Ukraine didn't know what would happen to NATO as a result of the disappearance of the bipolar system. At that time there were no clear contours of the European security system. There was no certainty of Russian behaviour and the CIS as well. During the process of identifying the main vectors of the development at the international arena, the signs of intent to acquire a neutral or non-aligned status in Ukraine have been lost. In 1993 the Military Doctrine of Ukraine mentioned non-aligned status as one of the basic principles of security assurance, however in the Military Doctrine adopted in 2004 this status disappeared. Instead, the Doctrine confirmed the principle of collective defense, which could be realized by means of full membership in NATO (Losev, 2008)

The 1991 referendum showed stunning majority - 90.3% in support of the Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Parliament August 24, 1991. Even in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions 83% of those who took part in the vote, said "yes" to an independent state, and in Crimea, despite the lowest turnout in the country, 54% of the votes were pro-Ukrainian. Moreover, 55% of ethnic Russians living in Ukraine voted for Ukraine's independence. (It should be noted that the question of the referendum asked whether a voter supported the Act of Declaration of Independent Ukraine, but not Independent and Neutral Ukraine. This fact means that the role of neutrality in the Ukrainian nation-building process was minor. In addition, unlike Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, after gaining independence post-Soviet Ukraine managed to avoid separatist movements and territorial conflicts with its neighbours (Barash, 2002). Nevertheless, more than twenty years later, when the pro-Russian "referendum" organized by separatists resulted in Russia's annexation of Crimea and Donbas armed conflict, it is reasonable to raise a question of why Ukrainian identity could not take roots in some parts of the country.

Unlike Ukraine, European nations have centuries of experience in statehood, and there is no question for an individual of a national identity or the status of a national language as an expression of identity in their own state. In the European national states the daily accustoming to national identity and, in particular, to the language as a national identifier raises the issue of language to the level of individual consciousness or within the limits of personal identity. However, in Ukraine the question of language as the fundamental ethno-cultural component of identification becomes a matter of state security.

Formation of the Ukrainian nation and, accordingly, Ukrainian identity took place during a rather long historical period. It is argued that at the earliest stages of development, the Ukrainian identity acquired characteristics of European identity. In fact, Ukrainian identity began its formation since the time when the Ukrainian lands entered the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Ukrainian-Belarusian official language used from 1362 till 1569. Gradually, the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) elite, or gentry, was created with Ruthenian (Ukrainian) self-consciousness, and then later the concept of 'Ukraine' came into being (Gorbulin, 2008). This concept spreaded with the formation and strengthening of the Ukrainian Cossack military structure "Viys'ko Zaporoz'ke". The norms of the public life of both the Lithuanian and Ukrainian lands expressed the rights and freedoms of the written law, which were regulated by the Lithuanian statutes - the First 1529, the Second 1566, the Third 1588, where each statute replaced the previous, as well as collections of 'German city rights', like Magdeburg, the use of which was considered to be traditional in Ukraine. Thus, the lifestyle of Ukrainians, developed in the 16th-17th centuries, was quite European, which was expressed, firstly, with regard to the law as the supreme transcendental value; secondly - in the belief of the priority of individual being over the public; thirdly, in a combination of the moral and political-legal aspects of justice; fourthly, in the organization of economic and administrative lifestyles on the basis of self-government; fifthly, in defining freedom as the determining feature of personality (Gorbulin, 2008).

Ukrainian ethnic identity in a mature form appeared in the first half of the XIX century. A new generation of spiritual and cultural elites, i.e. the speakers of Ukrainian romanticism, devoted themselves to the formation of an ethnic nation. Instead of the 'Malorossiya' definition, the term 'Ukraine' was used to describe appropriate territories. From the time of romanticism in Ukraine, the ethnic concept of a nation has been updated, which is based on the following elements: common origin, mobilization of the people, native language, customs and traditions (Zlenko, 2009). According to these principles, the nation means cultural and political ties that unite a single political community of all with a common historical culture and homeland. Moreover, it means that the socio-cultural identity of the individual lies in his entrenchment to the history of his people, culture, language, and traditions. At the same time, there was no mentioning of adherence to the principle of neutrality, as Ukrainian lands used to 'belonging to someone else'. So the primary goal of the early nation-builders was simply to gain independence.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, nation-building in Ukraine has faced a number of political, demographic and cultural challenges. Unlike the Baltic states, the anti-communist opposition in Ukraine in the early 1990's was too weak to establish political and ideological hegemony. As Zlenko noted, the political regime in Ukraine was the result of a compromise

between the national-democrats, which came from a broad opposition movement seeking national liberation, i.e. the Narodny Rukh (People's Movement), and so-called 'sovereign communists' - an opportunist group formed by members of the local communist nomenclature, who supported the reforms of Gorbachev (Zlenko, 2008). In the end, to a large extent the ideologically indifferent former communist nomenklatura adopted Ukrainian historical symbols, thus becoming a 'party of power' and the state builders. The yellow-blue flag, trident or tryzub as a national emblem and anthem, borrowed from a song of the times of struggle for national liberation at the beginning of the XX century, became official symbols of post-Soviet Ukraine, despite the resistance of orthodox communists.

Meanwhile, however, the Soviet Ukrainian identity was not dismantled. The Pantheon of Soviet Ukrainian heroes did not become the subject of radical revision. Rather, it slowly expanded, including such state-builders of the past as the first president of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Mykhailo Hrushevsky and Hetman Ivan Mazepa, whose images were placed on the national currency of Ukraine, the hryvnia, along with traditional canonical figures such as the poets Taras Shevchenko and Lesya Ukrainka (Makar, 2008). When the issues of the Holodomor of 1932-33, and the Stalinist repressions entered into a public discussion, the de-Sovietization was not completed, and the monuments of Lenin until recently remained untouched in most of the country.

In the 1990's, Ukrainian nationalism could not boast with the vast support across the country. The democratic nationalism of the People's Movement and the radical nationalism were both quite popular in the western regions and among the Ukrainian elite in Kyiv, but they were not liked by the rest of the population. It also resulted in different views on possible external ally in the first years of independence, while the voice of maintaining neutrality was completely silent. In addition, unlike Estonia and Lithuania, in Ukraine citizenship was automatically granted to all permanent residents of the republic (Pashkov, 2000). This inclusive concept of citizenship has created the foundations for a civil Ukrainian nation.

Since ethnic and linguistic boundaries between Russians and Ukrainians were blurred, the nationalization process in Ukraine was primarily aimed at giving a new look to cultural practices, and identities, thus essentially redefining and expanding the 'core of the nation'. Most Russians and Russian-speaking citizens in Ukraine could conveniently combine political loyalty to the new Ukrainian state with their Russian, Slavic, Orthodox or even Soviet cultural preferences. The division of national identity was strengthened by the Russian-language media, which dominated the Ukrainian market (Korolyov, 2012). Ukrainian language was proclaimed to be the

only state language in 1990 before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the first Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, who came from the Ukrainian-speaking region, made serious efforts to preserve Ukrainian language. Leonid Kuchma, the second Ukrainian president, was elected in 1994, mainly due to the support of the Russian-speaking eastern regions, although he did not then fulfil his pre-election promise - to grant Russian language a second official language status.

The policy of President Viktor Yushchenko's identity was to legitimize the pro-Western geopolitical choice of Ukraine and put an end to post-Soviet uncertainty (Korolyov, 2012). Yushchenko saw Ukraine as a post-colonial nation, struggling for liberation from Russian political and cultural influences. He tried to rehabilitate Ukrainian nationalism, which for a long time was viewed through hostile Russian and Soviet lenses. Among his most prominent initiatives in the area of identity and memory policy was the founding of the Museum of Soviet Occupation, the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor and the official recognition of the genocide of the Ukrainian people, as well as the post-mortem award of "Hero of Ukraine" to Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera, leaders of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army or UPA 1942-1954. President Yushchenko tried to institutionalize the policy of memory by creating the Institute of National Remembrance and assigning additional responsibilities to the SBU, such as controlling the archives, conducting historical research and popularizing a new official approach to the Soviet past (Vidnyans'kyi, 2011).

However, critical work with the Soviet past was inadequate due to weak democratic institutions, the lack of legal norms, as well as the political manipulation of historical memory by other parties. Yushchenko's uncritical attitude toward radical nationalism pushed back a significant part of the Ukrainian public that disagreed with the UPA's heroization and aggravated antagonism with Russia, which did not agree to recognize the Holodomor as a genocide.

With the election of Yanukovich as a president in 2010, the Party of Regions failed to develop a consistent policy of identity at the national level, since it had little to offer to central and western Ukraine. Instead, that party continued to appeal to its main electorate in the eastern regions, cultivating the so-called 'negative identity', where the regional identity of the Donbas was determined by the rejection of 'others' - the nationalists of the western Ukraine (Vidnyans'kyi, 2011). The scheduled signing of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, scheduled for the end of 2013, could have temporarily reconciled Western Ukraine with Yanukovich.

The EuroMaydan, which began in November 2013 as a protest against the government's decision to postpone the signing of the above-mentioned agreement, broke into massive protests against a

corrupt and brutal political regime and raised the old phobia of radical Ukrainian nationalism in the east and south. The pro-government media in Ukraine and the Russian mass media presented mass protests as an explosion of radical nationalism, and later as a 'fascist putsch'. This rhetoric fell to a suitable soil, namely the old clichés and stereotypes that the Party of Regions and their ideological allies, Communists, cultivated over the years in response to the 2004 Orange Revolution. In the end, during the two post-Soviet decades, internal political constraints, the ideological polarization of the post-Soviet Ukrainian elites and strong incentives for the political use of historical memory and linguistic issues in electoral politics prevented the emergence of a strong national identity in Ukraine.

During the Revolution of Dignity, Ukraine plunged into the turbulence of historical acceleration. What began to happen in Ukraine contradicted the perceptions of Ukrainians about themselves. At the same time, on EuroMaidan and then in the struggle with the Russian aggressor, the national identity was awakened and established. Threats and victories began to reproduce national instincts, for a long time oppressed by the external interference and lack of coherence. The Ukrainian identity, which suffered a powerful blow because of collectivization and genocide, began to actively revive. Russian armed aggression only accelerated the process of rehabilitating of the Ukrainian national identity.

The tragic events of 2014-2015 have shown an important feature of the Ukrainian national identity. Ukrainians used to view their history mostly with complaining about poor destiny and negative events. However, the Revolution of Dignity signified the presence of spontaneous democratic creativity of the people, people's will and protection. It contributed to the renewal of the torn string of the Ukrainian nation-building history, the restoration of those national traditions that are able to overcome the extremely difficult legacy of the recent totalitarian past and to establish the democratic institutions, acceptable and suitable for functioning in a postmodern society.

Identification processes of nowadays Ukraine have a nonlinear character, and it is not just a return to historical roots, but a complicated process of forming a modern, adequate Ukrainian realities of the XXI century as a necessary condition for self-preservation of the country. According to the Ukrainian philosopher S. Datsyuk, in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict of 2014-2015 two fundamentally different identities collided. The first identity is a national or nationalistic Ukrainian identity. Its concept-making value is Ukrainian national statehood, as well as principled guidelines: the fundamental principle of the world's territory division into states is the national organization of the world; guarantees of the development of culture and the

language of the titular nation is a monopoly of the state; corporations should serve the interests of the nation, or at least not to enter into conflicts with these interests; only a nation can be the basis of civil society, through which it exercises control over the state and corporations; diasporas in the world can be united only on the basis of national culture and language (Datsyuk, 2015).

The second identity is imperial Russian identity. Its concept-making value is the creation of a 'great Russian Empire'. It follows from the principles: state must dominate the nations that are part of the empire, first of all - over the titular nation, i.e. the empire has a supranational territorial character; state retains a monopoly over the allocation of natural resources between corporations, as well as over the control of mass consciousness - in the name of the power of the empire. S. Datsyuk characterizes this type as an 'empire of rent and control'; only the state-controlled corporations can be large, others are not allowed; only state can give freedom to civil society to the extent that it considers necessary - again for the benefit of the empire; an empire has a 'strong right' to expand on the territory of neighbouring countries and aggression to the rest of the world (Datsyuk, 2015).

The first and second identities are unitary, so they seek to dominate other identities. Unitary identity, by refusing to collide with another unitary identity, loses its essential basis - the opportunity to determine the binary opposite 'other'. Therefore, the first and second identities are doomed to conflict with each other and with other unitary identities (Datsyuk, 2015). Of course, this theory was influenced by the Ukrainian nationalist propaganda, however, such theories have remained dominant within the domestic political discourse in Ukraine.

Moreover, during the Revolution of Dignity, it can be argued that the third image of identity was formed – a European Ukrainian identity. In Ukraine, the problem of European integration once again appears as a question of national and cultural identity and manifests itself in the form of a crisis of identity, especially the problem of preserving the national one. In addition to democracy and human rights, economic and even social features can be applied as a solid foundation for European identity in Ukraine. Europeanization has become an actual practical task of Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy, which should be solved, according to official discourse, in the context of European integration of Ukraine, with a full-fledged membership in this supranational formation as an independent subject of international relations. At the same time, two opposing trends must be taken into account - Euro-optimistic and European-pessimistic. Consequently, the formation of the European identity of Ukrainian citizens is be the result of the influence of various factors, first of all - economic, political, cultural, and legitimacy of the European Union

as a political institution. Thus, the European Union has become an equally important political entity for Ukrainian citizens and Ukraine as a nation state.

Obviously, as a result of these processes, the structure and hierarchy of identities of the Ukrainian society will change. It is likely that these processes will not be simple, since the formation of Ukrainian national identity and European supranational identity must be coordinated. It will be significantly different from the Soviet or imperial Russian identity above all with values, ideology and traditions. In this context, a new identity has to focus on what unites Ukraine with European nations - common Christian roots, European traditions of governance, the history memory of Ukraine in various documents and monuments, economic and cultural ties. And this will require constant and consistent work in the political, economic, legal, educational and cultural spheres. After all, the process of Europeanization does not happen automatically. At the same time, the attachment to Ukrainian national identity and the emotional sense of belonging to Europe should be strengthened.

In general, protests on the Maidan, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the military conflict in the Donbass united the pro-Ukrainian majority and at the same time further polarized the Ukrainian society. Moreover, the conflict in the Donbass is still far from its solution, and a new military escalation or even direct Russian invasion cannot be ruled out. This poses an additional challenge to the Ukrainian leadership, which in this situation is placed between patriotic mobilization of society and the need for reconciliation and ideological compromise, in order to prevent the further alienation of an ambitious majority in the east. President Poroshenko and the Ukrainian parliament may continue to pursue Viktor Yushchenko's historic memory policy aimed at rehabilitating and heroizing the UPA, or he may try to balance the antagonistic memory and identity after studying the lesson of the recent past. In his speech on the Independence Day in August 2014, President Poroshenko mentioned the heroic traditions of the UPA, but compared the struggle of the Ukrainian Donbass with the Great Patriotic War - at first glance, a paradoxical ideological combination (Press Service of the President, 2014). In October 2014, when President was asked about his position as to whether the UPA soldiers deserved recognition, Poroshenko replied that consideration should be given to granting veterans the legal status of combatants in the Second World War. Soon, on October 14, he announced the holiday of the Pokrova as a new state holiday - the Day of the Defenders of Ukraine, thus ending the Soviet tradition of celebrating the Day of Defenders of the Fatherland on February 23 (Press Service of the President, 2014). Since October 14 is also a symbolic day for the UPA's history, such decision provoked criticism from the ideological opponents of Ukrainian nationalism.

A month later, President Poroshenko made another important symbolic act, declaring November 21 as the Day of Dignity and Freedom. He said that day: “Ukraine is a territory of dignity and freedom. We did not do this alone, but with two revolutions - our Maidan in 2004, which was the Liberty Day, and the 2013 Revolution of Dignity (Press Service of the President, 2014). The Liberty Day was originally introduced by President Yushchenko and should have been celebrated on November 22 in memory of the Orange Revolution, but this initiative was abolished by President Yanukovich. Thus, Poroshenko restored this tradition, putting it in a new meaning. The institutionalization of the narrative of the Revolution of Dignity meets the expectations of a patriotic public and refers to the civic concept of a new Ukrainian identity, which is defined through universal values.

The search for the reconciliation of historical narratives is extremely necessary for Ukraine to achieve internal stabilization. However, the goal of reconciliation is unlikely to be compatible with the requirements of the Maidan - de-Sovietization, lustration of the state apparatus and punishment of officials responsible for the bloodshed in Kyiv in February 2014. Consensus, if at all possible, would have to prohibit the neo-Soviet ghost - in other words, the overthrown monuments to Lenin are unlikely to be restored, even in the east. In any case, even if a political solution to the conflict in the Donbass is found, ideological reconciliation of Kyiv with the current leadership of the Donetsk or Lugansk ‘republics’ accepting Russian nationalism and neo-Stalinism is difficult to imagine. The three representations of identity – nationalist Ukrainian, imperialist Russian and European-Ukrainian- still exists and continue to spark debates among scholars and officials. However, the ideas on neutral identity in Ukraine are very weak, and scholars prefer to avoid this issue, as it provokes major criticism for promoting a pessimistic and failed position. As the idea of neutrality has not achieve massive support within Ukrainian national discourse, only ad-hoc attempts and the non-aligned status options have been applied throughout the history of independent Ukraine.

Therefore, these findings suggest that the ideational explanation contributes to explaining the different forms of neutrality adopted by Turkmenistan and Ukraine. Whereas in the Turkmen case the idea neutrality is deeply embedded into the national identity, thus resulting in higher degree of institutionalization of neutrality, however, in Ukraine case, neutrality forms less part of national identity, and this reflects in less institutionalized neutrality.

Conclusion

The central aim of this study has been to contribute to growing literature on neutrality in international relations by developing theoretical explanations of the different forms of neutrality states adopt, i.e. permanent neutrality, non-alignment. For this purpose, it reviewed the existing literature, and on this basis, it has developed the distinction between permanent and non-permanent forms of neutrality (i.e. non-alignment), which differ in terms of the degree of institutionalization. Second, the thesis developed two explanations of why states adopt one or another forms of neutrality, a domestic-level and an account emphasizing ideational factors. Whereas geopolitical explanations do not account for the form of neutrality, domestic-level and ideational accounts can put forward an explanation under which conditions a particular form of neutrality is adopted. On this basis, the study put forward two hypotheses: the first hypothesis is based on a domestic level explanation of the alignment behaviour, and states the more consolidated a regime, the more permanent form of neutrality; the second hypothesis is derived from a constructivist approach of alignment behaviour, and states that the more the idea of neutrality forms part of national identity, the higher the degree of institutionalization of neutrality. The hypotheses have been consequently applied to the cases of Ukraine and Turkmenistan.

This thesis has analyzed different factors, affecting the degree of non-alignment behaviour, in particular permanent neutral status and non-aligned status. The research question was: “What determines the choice of permanent neutrality in Turkmenistan and non-alignment in Ukraine?” While a geopolitical explanation has been rejected in this study, it concludes that both domestic-level factors, such as regime consolidation, and ideational factors, such as the extent to which neutrality forms part of national identity, contribute to a state adopting different forms of neutrality to different degrees. Thus, the hypotheses, derived from domestic-level and ideational accounts of alignment, have been confirmed. This study, therefore, concludes that both explanations, domestic and ideational, contribute to adopting different forms of neutrality.

While these findings have not yet distinguished a common single explanation of different forms of neutrality, the thesis has stated the reasonability of both explanations. In this context, it should be noticed that the aim of the thesis was to formulate theoretical explanations of forms of neutrality. Further studies should, therefore, try to establish the relative explanatory weight of those explanations. In addition, future studies could apply the explanations this study has suggested to other geographical context, and see whether the explanations still hold.

By exploring the concept of neutrality and its different forms, this thesis has contributed to the literature on neutrality in international relations by sharpening the conceptual distinction between forms of neutrality, which can be distinguished according to degree of institutionalization; it has made an attempt to define explanations of neutrality, thereby furthering the understanding of under which conditions states adopt one or another form of neutrality. Moreover, the thesis has explored two cases of two forms of neutrality – permanent neutrality and non-alignment – in Ukraine and Turkmenistan. In this way, it has also contributed to literature on alignment behaviour in post-Soviet region (Bradley, 2015; Horak, 2010; Vidnyans'kyi, 2011). This study has opened up various avenues for further research into the idea of neutrality in the contemporary context.

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