

Struggles in the European Union about the reform of the United Nations Security Council

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SUMMARY

The United Nations, an organization based on sovereign states, is at the centre of international politics and tries to govern the global space. The EU has no seat and limited representation in the UN Security Council. In the struggles for reform of the UNSC the EU member states UK, France, Germany and Italy play a significant role. The EU member states France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy play a significant role in the struggles for reform of the UN Security Council. The views of these states on the desirable reforms diverge greatly. Formal texts are examined in this thesis to uncover the discourses of the EU and the individual EU member states in the reform debate in order to clarify the geopolitical nature of the EU. Critical Geopolitics, Constructivism and the Discourse Theory of Laclau and Mouffe constitute the theoretical framework. The analyses of this thesis draws on the insights of this Discourse Theory, although it does not include so many practical tools for textually oriented analysis. Furthermore, the textual analyses are carried out with a deconstructivistic approach.

The analyses indicate that in the reform debate UK and France, permanent members of the UNSC, are primarily oriented towards maintaining the status quo. Germany aspires a permanent seat in the UN and Italy is questioning the current undemocratic structure of the UNSC in order to gain influence. These states contest each other's reform proposals.

The thesis concludes that, given the divergent discourses of its member states, the internal EU debate on integration and coordination must be brought to a conclusion before the EU can obtain a seat in the UNSC and present itself as a geopolitical actor in issues of international peace and security.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations, an organization based on sovereign states, is at the centre of international politics and tries to govern the global space. When thinking of international politics however, quite a large range of international, non-state political actors comes to mind, of which the EU is arguably the most influential actor. EU contributions to the UN are by far the largest (UNRIC, 2007, p. 7), and among its member states are two countries with permanent veto power in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and two or three non-permanent members are members of the EU. Even so, the EU itself only has limited representation in the UN.

Full membership of the UN would empower the EU by granting the right to vote. However, the UN only allows states to have full membership, based on the ideal of a one-country, one-vote system. Non-state actors are not allowed to become full members. The EU is obviously not a state, but does resemble a traditional state. The current criteria for a state, as agreed upon in the Montevideo Conference in 1933, are having a territory with undisputed borders, a population, and a political authority. In this definition the recognition of the state is not necessary, although in practice it is required for effective exercise of statehood (Hille, personal communication, 2011). In this respect the EU can be seen as a state: the territory is clear with undisputed borders, the EU has a population and an overarching government. The EU only lacks recognition of statehood, from internal and external states. External states have, at September 14th, 2010, voted against extension of EU powers by giving the EU 'reinforced observer status' in the UN (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 3).

The status of 'reinforced observer' was recently granted, giving the EU "the right to speak, the right to make proposals and submit amendments, the right of reply, the right to raise points of order and the right to circulate documents" (Phillips, May 3, 2011). Only the right of vote in the General Assembly is lacking. The EU already has full participant status in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The EU is not represented in the UNSC, founded in 1946 and primary responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

1.1. Research question

Now that the EU can represent itself in the UN, an important and complex puzzle needs to be solved: the EU member states have to reach a common standpoint on how to represent the whole Union. This issue lies at the heart of the geopolitical nature of the EU. The proponents of the

intergovernmental approach seek coordination between EU members in the UN. This is opposed to the ideas of the proponents of the integration approach who want to represent the EU as a single actor. The Lisbon Treaty of the EU shifts towards a coordination between member-states rather than integration of the member-states (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 3).

The issue is reflected in the ongoing debate on the EU representation and membership in the UNSC (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 3). In this debate the EU as such and the individual member states take different stands. The goal of this thesis is to gain a further understanding of the geopolitical nature of the EU, along the lines of the struggles over membership rights at the UNSC.

The research question is as follows:

‘How do the struggles over membership rights at the UNSC clarify the geopolitical nature of the EU?’

I will elucidate this question. All UN member states agree that the Security Council has to be reformed (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 8) to give it more legitimacy in carrying out its tasks. The new UNSC should mirror the current power balance in European politics. However, consensus on how it should be reformed has never been reached and all initiatives so far have failed to gain enough support. The five main issues of debate are “the categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Council and the working methods of the Security Council, the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly” (Martini, n.d., p. 2), with the first issue as main area of contention (ibid., p. 3).

The EU member states have agreed on statements about their action towards international organizations like the UN and the UNSC, as we will see in the Lisbon Treaty. Therewith they underline the importance of a European stance in this fora, in the case of the UNSC. At the same time member states strongly favour their national seat in the UNSC over a European seat, especially France and the UK who have a permanent seat. Germany demands a permanent seat in the UNSC (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 8). This indicates an underlying disagreement on how the EU should position itself on the international level. The disagreement manifests itself in the struggles about the UNSC membership rights and sheds light on the geopolitical nature of the EU.

1.2. Structure of the thesis

In the next two chapters I will successively describe the theoretical and methodological framework for this thesis. To answer the research question I use a combination of Critical Geopolitics and Constructivism in the theory section. The two theories both had a revival after the end of the Cold

War and a lot of assumptions are in accordance. Leading scholars of both theories suggest using a form of discourse analysis as main method of inquiry. The analysis of this thesis draws on the insights of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Discourse Theory does 'not include so many practical tools for textually oriented discourse analysis' (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 24). Despite this notion I deem Discourse Theory the most relevant way of discourse analysis for the aim of this thesis. Therefore I will make an attempt to apply this method in this thesis.

In the fourth chapter I will elaborate on the position of the EU regarding the UNSC. The position of relevant EU-actors regarding UNSC membership is given in the fifth chapter using discourse analysis to relevant texts within a deconstructive approach.

The outcome of the analyses is linked to the geopolitical nature of the EU in the conclusion, the sixth chapter. Finally, I reflect on the process of writing this thesis after the references.

1.3. Societal and scientific relevance

The societal relevance of this thesis is the insight given in the power relationships between the EU member states and the role of the EU in the UN. This insight makes the EU more transparent and thereby more democratic.

Knowledge of the different positions within the EU and the geopolitical nature of the EU is useful for a better understanding of the EU in general. Nowadays people have a lot of negative criticism on the EU. With this thesis they can maybe come to a more nuanced understanding of the EU, and hopefully more nuanced criticism.

The scientific relevance of the paper lies in the use of Critical Geopolitics complemented with Constructivism. Whereas often static explanations are given in studies in International Relations, these two theories offer an insight in the dynamic relations between actors. A Critical Geopolitical and Constructivist perspective anticipates on change and tries to uncover the dynamics of the relations which are considered static in a lot of other approaches.

Furthermore, although Laclau and Mouffe never elaborated on a guide for application of their Discourse Theory, this thesis uses their theory as methodological guideline in the analysis. The use of Discourse Theory will show if the method can be applied, despite of the lack of a detailed guide on how to use their Discourse Theory.

2. THEORY

In this chapter I will describe the theoretical framework used in this thesis: the theories of Critical Geopolitics and Constructivism which have much in common, and Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory.

2.1. Critical Geopolitics

The end of the Cold war, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union put the study of traditional geopolitics in a crisis (Ó Tuathail & Dalby, in: Ó Tuathail & Dalby (Eds.) 1998, p. 1). Traditional Geopolitics derived its relevance from Cold War ideologies. It was evolved in a world in which the capitalist US and the communist USSR struggled for global domination. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union this worldview did no longer fit reality as theorists of geopolitics did not foresee the possibility of change in the world system and could not describe the new world order in its complexity and heterogeneity. The theoretical vacuum left behind by the ruins of geopolitical reasoning was filled by Critical Geopolitics. This new Critical Geopolitics is not a streamlined theory, but rather a loose collection of different approaches to international politics and different ways of analysis. I first give a few descriptions of Critical Geopolitics by authoritative scholars on the subject. The purpose is not to give a definition of the term but to give an idea what Critical Geopolitics entails.

The study of Cold War Geopolitics pretended to be objective and neutral (Ó Tuathail & Dalby, in: Ó Tuathail & Dalby (Eds.) 1998, p. 2), and the world was spatialized and divided into two camps by according to ideology. Critical Geopolitics, as Merje Kuus puts it, "investigates the critical assumptions and designations that enter into the making of world politics" (n.d., p. 1). The function of geographical claims and assumptions in politics lie at the heart of such an analysis. The practices by which the world is spatialized politically need to be explained.

Critical Geopolitics, as described by Ó Tuathail and Dalby (in: Ó Tuathail & Dalby (Eds.) 1998, p. 2), acknowledges "that it has con-textuality, and that it is implicated in the ongoing social reproduction of power and political economy". Studying Critical Geopolitics is a process in which the world is being (re)shaped. It is to make a subjective construction of the world, never a neutral one. Social reality is constructed through and constructs discourses. This way of analyzing has the assumption that geopolitics is driven by ideology and highly politicized (Kuus, n.d., p. 1). The key questions to address are about how state power is "discursively and practically produced in territorial and nonterritorial forms" (Kuus, n.d., p. 7). The underlying assumptions are that international politics is fundamentally territorial and that states are the basic subjects of these politics. States are the result of discourses of sovereignty,

identity and security, not the cause. These discourses preceded the existence of states and are the basis of it. The same misconception holds for foreign policies. Foreign policies shape the state and its interests and identity, not the other way round. The main object in critical geopolitics is therefore not the state as an object, but statecraft as a multitude of practices.

According to Dalby, geopolitics is about the 'ideological process of constructing spatial, political and cultural boundaries to demarcate the domestic space as separate from the threatening other' (in: Müller, 2008, p. 323). Critical geopolitics sees geography as imbued with power and tries to deconstruct the hegemonic fixations of spatial imaginations associated with it.

These descriptions of Critical Geopolitics share at least one important point of similarity: geopolitics is not neutral, but is shaped by peoples interests and ideologies. It investigates how the political world is constructed. 'Geopolitics' contains the word 'politics' for a reason. It is imbued with power, representations of the world and discourses. 'Critical' in 'Critical Geopolitics' usually refers to the problematization of the discourses of geopolitics. This does not imply the presence of "a worked-out alternative political project, nor necessarily the support of a particular counter-hegemonic movement" (Dalby, 1996, p. 655). This lies at the heart of analyzing in Critical Geopolitics.

Critical Geopolitics has emerged out of the work of a number of scholars in the fields of geography and international relations who have sought to investigate geopolitics as a social, cultural and political practice. Another theory, Constructivism, enhances our thinking about discourses and social constructions of reality in international politics. It is not focused on politics or geopolitics, but its insights are applicable to all fields of (social) study, including Critical Geopolitics. Constructivistic inquiry is an attempt to give meaning to objects and social practices. Critical Geopolitics applies this to international politics, rooted in a history of political analysis. Seen from a constructivist perspective, Critical Geopolitics "examines the very construction and social effects of geopolitical imaginations and geopolitical identities – the imaginary spatial positioning of people, regions, states and the shifting boundaries that accompany this positioning" (Müller, 2008, p. 323).

Constructivism does not deny the existence of brute, mostly natural, facts (Guzzini, 2000, p. 159). Brute facts are phenomena, external to thought. It does oppose however that these brute facts have an objective social meaning. The meaning of objects is given through social practices. The social meaning of a phenomenon is always given through social construction. These social constructions are based upon intersubjective codes and symbols. Our knowledge of reality is thus socially constructed (Guzzini, 2000, p. 160) and language-dependent. We only have access to reality through systems of

meaning in the form of discourses (Laclau & Mouffe, in: Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 35). Objects of knowledge are socially constructed and never neutral. The language-independent reality, such as studied in natural sciences, is mostly ignored by constructivists for it is often irrelevant.

In studies of international relations, Constructivism emphasizes the social construction of reality and tries to reveal the intersubjective ideas behind international relations (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007). Ideas, intentions, culture etcetera give meaning to actions. Those actions shape the world, international relations included, with the ideas of the actors at the basis. Without knowledge of the ideas of the actors, their actions cannot be understood and then the world is unintelligible. How do these ideas come to be?

Constructivism questions the assumption that the identities and interests of states are given (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007, p. 168). This is not focused on Geopolitics in particular, although this givenness is the main critique of Critical Geopolitics on traditional Geopolitics, as it was practiced by Mackinder and his Heartland theory, Mahan with his plea for sea power and Kjellen and his “State as a living form” to name a few. The study of Critical Geopolitics derives its right to exist on this critique.

Where the way of shaping identities and interests of states is rather vague in Critical Geopolitics (see the ways of talking about construction above), founder of Constructivism Alexander Wendt has a clear explanation of how those identities and interests are constructed.

The material world around us has meaning because of interaction with others. For example, if a state builds a large army this is purely material. The goal of building this army and how other states see the building of this army depends on the interactions with other states. Without these interactions it is an army without any meaning, without a goal. Some say geopolitics is about practice: military action, revolutions and battles. This is certainly at the heart of geopolitics, but it is only through discourse that those actions are meaningful and justified (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 191). A brute fact stays a brute fact without any meaning until a discourse has been applied to give it meaning. As Alexander Wendt explains it: “The claim is *not* that ideas are more important than power and interest, or that they are autonomous from power and interest. The claim is rather that power and interest have the effects they do in virtue of the ideas that make them up. Power and interest explanations *presuppose* ideas, and to that extent are not rivals to ideational explanations at all” (Wendt, in: Jackson & Sorensen, 2007, p. 166).

Constructivists first pointed to the idea that the international political arena is shaped in a subjective and biased way. This led to the geopolitical notion that everything happening in this arena

was as subjective and biased as the arena itself. Interests and identities of a state are shaped through interaction with other states. States are geopolitical constructions in which a geographical entity defines itself in relation to the outside (Ó Tuathail & Dalby, in: Ó Tuathail & Dalby (Eds.) 1998, p. 4). Ted Hopf (in: Jackson & Sorensen, 2007, p. 172) argues that both the internal and external environments need to be taken into account to come to an understanding of the identities and interests of a state.

The ideas Wendt describes are commonly referred to as discourses. 'Critical' in 'Critical Geopolitics' usually refers to the problematization of the discourses in geopolitics. This does not imply the presence of "a worked-out alternative political project, nor necessarily the support of a particular counter-hegemonic movement" (Dalby, 1996, p. 655).

2.2. Discourse theory

2.2.1. Discourse in geopolitics

The ideas Wendt describes are commonly referred to as discourses. 'Critical' in 'Critical Geopolitics' usually refers to the problematization of the discourses in geopolitics and the uneven power relations behind this. This does not imply the presence of "a worked-out alternative political project, nor necessarily the support of a particular counter-hegemonic movement" (Dalby, 1996, p. 655). Still, in a study based on Critical Geopolitics the different discourses are problematized. A way of analyzing discourses is needed. This discourse analysis is important because of two aspects: discourse analysis enables the actors' understanding of the world they are part of, and it constitutes and defines the social parts and practices of our world (Lupovici, 2009, p. 202). Discourse analysis can be used for revealing specific discourses and their emergence, along with a critical evaluation of relations between actors.

Critical Geopolitics is not so much about states, but rather about practices of statecraft. These practices are discursive constructions of ontological claims (Kuus, n.d., p. 10). Reality is shaped by discourses and cannot exist without them. Objects do not exist external to thought and cannot be represented as outside of any discursive formation.

Some say Geopolitics is about practice: about battles, invasions and fighting (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 191). These practices are certainly geopolitical, but it is only through discourse that the practices have meaning, and possibly justification. We understand and constitute our world through the socially structured use of language. Critical Geopolitics investigates the use of language, in order to gain a better understanding of discourses and thereby a better understanding of the world.

For example, a knife does not have a meaning on its own. By clarifying it is meant for killing, the sword becomes a weapon. It becomes placed in a discourse of violence. When one clarifies the knife is meant for cutting food and cooking, it becomes part of a different discourse. Critical Geopolitics comes into play where discourses are to be analysed in international relations.

Jorgensen & Phillips explain three ways of discourse analysis in their study (2011). I deem Laclau and Mouffe's *Discourse Theory* (in: Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 35) the most appropriate for this thesis. This is because of the focus on political processes in their analysis; discourses are seen as political instruments in their essence (p. 36). The focus of this paper also revolves around politics. Hereafter follows the explanation why discourses are political in their essence.

2.2.2. Laclau and Mouffe

Discourse is "a fixation of signs in a relational net" according to Jorgensen & Phillips (2011, p. 29). They point out that several definitions of discourse exist.

Laclau and Mouffe see all phenomena as discursively constructed (in: Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 24). This has a couple of consequences. First, meaning is never fixed because it is always affected by actors and affects actors in turn. Second, social struggles about definitions of identity and society are constant. Finally, all phenomena can be analyzed using their discourse theory.

Phenomena derive meaning from linguistic practices (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 25). These linguistic signs can be seen as the web of a spider: every knot in the web represent one linguistic sign. Every knot is connected with other knots, and those knots influence one another. People try to lock every knot in its place, in order to fix meanings. This is impossible because fixation of a sign is contingent. These attempts to fix signs are where discourse analysis enters. The goal of discourse analysis is to lay out this web in which people try to fix meanings and the processes by which some fixations of meaning become so conventionalized that we think of them as natural.

A discourse is built up from moments (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 26). All signs in a discourse are *moments*. In the example of the spider web, a moment is one of the knots. A knot which is central, to which other knots relate and acquire meaning from, is called a *nodal point*. Lacan introduces the *master signifier* (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 26). This signifier would be called a 'nodal point of identity' in Discourse Theory. A nodal point in itself is an empty sign (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 28). The emptiness is filled through *chains of equivalence* (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 43). For example, one gains his identity by positioning oneself in relation to common identities. One can position himself as being religious, and then being Christian. With being Christian comes reading the bible, going to

church, etcetera. One form of identity leads to another and via this chain of equivalence a whole identity is constructed. Identity can also be constructed by contrasting oneself with what it is not.

Signs that are empty are called *floating signifiers*. A floating signifier that describes society as a totality, e.g. country, union, are called *myth* (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 39). Discourses attempt to give meaning to floating signifiers. Often nodal points are floating signs. Discourses differ from one another by giving different meanings to those nodal points. Giving meaning to floating signifiers implies that discourses rule out a lot of possible alternative meanings for the knots. In this sense discourse is a reduction of possibilities (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 27). All excluded possibilities together are called *the field of discursivity*. Laclau and Mouffe's theory contradicts itself here. Moments are related to and sometimes defined by signs outside that particular moment. The same applies to discourse. Discourse is related to and sometimes defines itself in relation to everything outside that discourse, called the field of discursivity. This relation includes the field of discursivity into the discourse, but is excluded by definition. Laclau and Mouffe contrived a solution to fix this problem. They came up with the concept of *elements*. An element is a sign with a not yet fixed meaning and multiple possible meanings. A discourse attempts to transform these elements into moments by assigning a fixed meaning to them. This assigning is called *articulation*. Discourses also establish *closures* (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 28), an end to the constant fluctuation of meaning of the signs. Discourses can always be undermined and are open to change, so it is impossible to accomplish a final closure. Jorgensen & Phillips summarize this (2011, p. 29) as a brief review:

"We can now relate all terms to one another. Discourse aims to remove ambiguities by turning the elements into moments through closure. But this aim is never completely successful as the possibilities of meaning that the discourse displaces to the field of discursivity always threaten to destabilize the fixity of meaning. Therefore, all moments stay potentially polysemic, which means that the moments are always potentially elements. Specific articulations reproduce or challenge the existing discourses by fixing meaning in particular ways. And because of the perpetual potential polysemy, every verbal or written expression (even every social action [...]) is also, to some extent, an articulation or innovation; although the expression draws on earlier fixations of meaning – that is, it draws on discourses in which the signs have become moments – the expression is never merely a repetition of something already established [...]. Therefore, every expression is an active reduction of possibilities of meaning because it positions the signs in relation to one another in only one way, thus excluding alternative forms of organization."

If the fixity of meaning is never stabilized, this means there will never be a permanent closure of meanings (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 29). Closure is temporary. Hence there will be power struggles over the prevailing structures, discourses, meanings etcetera. The concepts of *antagonism* and *hegemony* play a big role in these struggles (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 47). Antagonisms occur where discourses collide. A social antagonism occurs where two identities mutually exclude each other. An example is when a rich nobleman suddenly becomes homeless. He or she is accustomed to living the life of the rich, but suddenly lacks the means necessary for living such a life. The two identities mutually exclude each other: the customs of having luxury and the reality of being homeless. One of the two identities can prevail after a hegemonic intervention. A hegemonic intervention is “an articulation which by means of force reconstitutes ambiguity” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 48). In table 1 a glossary is given of the terminology in Laclau and Mouffe’s Discourse Theory.

| Apparatus | Term | Concept |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Discourse A relational ensemble of signifying practices creating meaning, which extends to the whole social space, both linguistic and extra-linguistic | Elements | Signifiers whose meanings are multiple and have not yet been fixed in a discourse |
| | Articulation | A practice through which a partial fixation of the meanings of elements is achieved |
| | Moments | Elements whose meaning has been partially fixated through articulation |
| | Closure | The fixation of the meaning of a signifier within a discourse |
| | Field of discursivity | The surplus of meaning which is outside discourse. A discourse is always constituted in relation to a field of discursivity. The field of discursivity harbours the potential for the contestation of a discourse. |
| | Nodal points | Privileged signifiers within discourses around which other moments are ordered in chains of equivalence |
| Identity Articulation of a subject position in a discourse which is always incomplete | Floating signifiers | Elements which are particularly open to different ascriptions of meaning and may form nodal points in different discourses |
| | Subject positions | Different possibilities of the construction of meaning of a subject in different discourses |
| | Contingency | A given identity is possible but not necessary. There can never be one single discourse which exclusively structures the social. |
| | Split subject | The split subject is perpetually incomplete and constantly strives to become a whole. |
| Politics The organisation of society in a particular way that excludes other possible arrangements | Antagonism | Discursive exteriority which presents a threatening force for a hegemonic discourse |
| | Hegemony | The fixation of meaning in an antagonistic terrain naturalising a particular articulation |
| | Objectivation | Discourses becoming seemingly natural and uncontested through hegemonic intervention |
| | Dislocation | A contingent event that cannot be symbolised or represented within a discourse and thus disrupts and destabilises orders of meaning |

Table 1. synopsis of the concepts of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory
Reprinted from "Doing discourse analysis in Critical Geopolitics" by M. Müller, 2010, *L'espace politique*, 12

Identity is often a nodal point in a discourse. In the earlier given example of nodal points in the construction of identity the individual was the starting point where Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory starts reasoning from. Identity is formed through chains of equivalence in opposition to other chains which define what the identity is not. In this way identity is relationally organized; it is defined by contrasting it to what it is not. The same principles hold for collective or group identity (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 43), and thus for entire countries. Some other notions in Discourse Theory are especially applicable to group identity. The subject of forming identity is fundamentally split, it never becomes 'itself'. This can be seen in different groups and discourses within one coherent group, for example the Germans who want a German UNSC seat on the one hand, and the Germans who advocate for an EU seat on the other. These people can alter their ideas, support the other group and change their identity, or discourse. Consequently, the group which forms its own identity is fragmented and decentered. This is a consequence of trying to tie signs in a relational net of moments. The identity is then formed by a discursively formed representation. It is an identification with a subject position in a discursive structure. Multiple representations are possible in different situations. A certain identity is "contingent – that is, possible but not necessary" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 43). This *overdetermination* leads to the notion that discourses and identities are highly changeable.

Norman Fairclough (in: Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 83) introduces the concept of *interactional control*. Interactional control investigates who has the upper hand in interaction. In terms of Laclau and Mouffe: who sets the hegemonic discourse in interaction?

Before the thesis turns to the application of Laclau and Mouffe in the next chapter, it will introduce the concept of deconstruction: a highly important concept for doing discourse analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I describe the methodological framework of this thesis: the deconstructivistic approach and the application of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis.

3.1. Deconstructivistic approach

In the previous chapter, the term signifier was coined. This is related to Saussure's notion of the relation between a signifier and the signified (Howell, 2007, p. 8). The name of an object, here the example of a knife again, is intertwined with the object itself. This relation between signifier and signified is complementary: one cannot exist without the other. The crux is that the relation between signifier and signified is arranged arbitrarily for Saussure (In different languages different phonetics are used as signifier for the same signified object: "knife" is used in English where "mes" is used in Dutch. Both signifiers have the same signified object). For Laclau and Mouffe, the fixing of signs is a matter of political power and struggle. The concept of a knife is not very controversial, but other concepts are (what is representativity? Controversy about question comes forward in the analysis).

The fixing of signs is relevant in constituting discourses. To get a better understanding of how discourses came to be one needs to start at an existing discourse and work all the way back to the constituting of the signs. Analysis in Geopolitics relies on this *deconstruction* (Müller, in: Dodds, Kuus & Sharp (Eds.), 2013, p. 51). The task when deconstructing a text is "to uncover alternative meanings and provide alternative readings of geopolitical texts, so as to expose the contingency of geopolitics and challenge its knowledge claims" (p. 52). Then Critical Geopolitics can hopefully provide alternative visions. Every term, for example 'alive', has an opposite term, 'dead' in this case. The use of one term ("alive") establishes a certain hegemony of that term (Howell, 2007, p. 6). At the same time the term inevitably gives the potential of hegemony to the other term ("dead"). Meanings "share the underlying government of the principle of either/or" (Howell, 2007, p. 6). The problem in this binary allotment of meaning lies in the terms where giving meaning is undecidable. The statement "The German claim to a national UNSC seat is legitimate" leads to the equally possible statement that the German claim is illegitimate. The construction of meaning is contingent. Different meanings can be applied to the text; it is polysemic (Müller, in: Dodds, Kuus & Sharp (Eds.), 2013, p. 51).

The idea behind the polysemy is that each text and each statement has an opposite meaning (Müller, in: Dodds, Kuus & Sharp (Eds.), 2013, p. 52). The hegemonic meaning, how objective it may seem, always has a rivaling meaning. This binary structure leads again to the notion that closure by a

certain discourse can never be reached. The hegemonic meaning is always arbitrary because it relies on the exclusion of the opposite meaning. To deconstruct is to challenge what seems objective, neutral and pre-given. One has to start by acknowledging that everything is a (cultural) construct, and has then to point out on which assumptions or unchallenged thoughts the text relies.

Albert (Müller, in: Dodds, Kuus & Sharp (Eds.), 2013, p. 52) argues that even the use of space and territory in language is not natural, but also constructed. These subjects have become so conventionalized that they seem objective. The contingency has gone in most people's minds. Every meaning anchored in this supposed field of objectivity also gains a little objectivity and a sense of certainty.

Meanings in a text exist with reference to other texts. A text is therefore "no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed within a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces" (Müller, in: Dodds, Kuus & Sharp (Eds.), 2013, p. 51). No totalization of meaning can be reached by a text (Haney II, 2009, p. 29). This leads to an indeterminacy and disunity of a text.

Howell notes (2007, p. 7) that there is no set of guidelines or rules for working deconstructionally. Setting these would "defy the principles of deconstruction". For a set of guidelines and rules on Discourse Theory I now turn to the next paragraph, "Application of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory".

3.2. Application of Laclau en Mouffe's Discourse Theory

Laclau and Mouffe never elaborated on a detailed guide on how to use their Discourse Theory (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 49). Luckily Jorgensen & Phillips present a set of guidelines around which one can build a discourse analysis. A good starting point for discourse analysis is the official discourse (Lupovici, 2009, p. 215).

The first step of analysis in Discourse Analysis is to find the key signifiers: nodal points, master signifiers and myths (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011, p. 50). In general, nodal points organize discourses, master signifiers organize identity and myths organize social space. These three signifiers are the keys to the organization of a discourse. The next step is to find out how these signifiers relate to each other, and by doing that to find out how discourses, identities and social spaces are organized discursively. The commonality between the key signifiers is that they are empty in themselves and acquire meaning only through establishing relations with other signs. Along these chains of equivalence a discourse becomes constituted. It is important to acknowledge that non-linguistic practices can also be part of a discourse,

such as the set-up of an office with the people in the upper levels of the hierarchy seated in the upper levels of the building. Finding chains of equivalence lie at the heart of distilling discourses. Jorgenson and Phillips suggest using the concepts group formation, identity and representation for analyzing identity and using floating signifiers, antagonisms and hegemony for analyzing conflicts.

4. BACKGROUND TO THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

4.1. The European Union in the General Assembly

The EU has increasingly unified voting behavior in the General Assembly (UNRIC, 2007, p. 5). This is partially due to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP). At the time of the 46th session the EU-member states voted unanimously for 86% of the all the resolutions since 1998 and at the time of the 53rd session this was increased to 97%. Before the EU enlarged in 2004 and 2007 most of the candidate member states voted in line with the EU. The EU is part of over 50 multilateral agreements and conventions in the UN (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 2). It has obtained full participant status in some conferences and commissions, such as the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. In the General Assembly the European Community gained observer status 1974. This means that a representative of European Commission can speak, but only after all 192 member states have taken the floor. Moreover, the EU does not have the right to vote. The EU member states then tabled a resolution to grant the European Union a 'reinforced observed status' (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 2). This would permit the EU to be among the first speakers in the UN General Assembly. Other UN members were skeptic towards this resolution because it had the possibility of making other regional groups solicitous of the same status, a status never granted before. The resolution did not pass the General Assembly with a 76 to 71 vote (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 3). Pirozzi blames the lack of an EU strategy for this disallowance, especially the European External Action Service. In 2011 the resolution did pass and the EU now has the same rights as other UN members, except the right to vote.

The resolution was meant to have an influence on the UN Security Council as well. Europe is represented very well with the UK and France as permanent members. Germany aspires a national seat in the UNSC, Italy is among the most active members of the UfC, the Uniting for Consensus group (this group will be discussed later), but the Security Council lacks EU representation.

4.2. The European Union and the United Nations Security Council

The EU aspires a permanent seat in the UNSC (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 9) although Lady Ashton, since 2009 the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, stated she has no opinion on the matter. The proposal of an EU seat has strong endorsement from the members of the UfC including Italy. France and the UK oppose an EU seat. Germany aspires a national UNSC seat on the one hand but supports an EU seat on the other hand.

Five restricting factors on EU claims for a seat in the UNSC can be distinguished. First, the aspiration of a European seat brings legal and political difficulties. An amendment of the UN Charter is needed to give regional groups the possibility of becoming a permanent member of the UN and it could open the door for an array of other regional groups claiming the same rights. Second, France and the UK fear diminished privileges as permanent member. Third, French and British behavior is only possible because they have a privileged position in the UNSC (Marchesi, 2008, p. 13). This enables them to hinder further cooperation in the European Common Foreign and Security Policy, the CFSP. Fourth, the non-permanent members in the UNSC act in concert with the permanent members. If they want to maintain influence and a cooperative stance from others in the UNSC and maybe even coordinate and integrate they need to abide the unwritten rules of the UNSC. Finally, the EU member states are often incapable of reaching consensus on sensitive UNSC issues, such as the war in Iraq in 2003 and the recognition of Kosovo in 2008. This comprises the credibility of the EU in the UNSC.

Attempts for a better representation of the EU in the UNSC have been made since 1993, but failed to gain enough support from all EU member states (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 6). Germany and Spain announced their plans to offer a seat in the UNSC in 2003-2004 to the EU Presidency within their delegations. France and the UK blocked this plan. In 2007-2008 Italy's suggestion of associating an EU representative with its delegation in the UNSC was rejected by France and the UK and met a lukewarm response from Germany. Belgium and Italy often stuck up for the EU's position in the UNSC.

More than 1000 internal EU coordination meetings are held every year in New York, Geneva and Vienna in order to develop a common EU stance in the UN Security Council (UNRIC, 2007, p. 3). The EU can bring its influence to bear particularly on issues upon which it has agreed a common position. Since 2001 weekly meetings between EU members were established on UN Security Council matters (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 4). Those were accompanied by weekly meetings of Heads of Mission of the EU member states in New York. The intention was to increase information flows regarding the UNSC. Yet there was no regular coordination mechanism suited for the discussions in the UNSC. Recently, the Permanent Representatives and the UNSC Coordinators of the EU members in the UNSC have started to hold monthly gatherings. The Political and Security Committee of the EU has frequented its discussions on topics debated in the UNSC.

4.3. A new way for governing Europe?

Bendiek and Kempin (2011) present a new, revolutionary idea for governing the EU. The authors argue that Europe lacks political leadership to secure its position in the world. No single EU member state can

provide leadership necessary for overcoming the internal struggles. Not even France. Maybe a group of prominent EU members could.

A limited number of member states should unite and be able to reunite other member states. Those are the states with the most prominent foreign, security and defense policy interests, and be able to go beyond the lowest-common-denominator politics of the EU-27. Other member states then have the possibility to join, in the condition that they do not water down the proposals of the leading group. Other member states are not obliged to join.

Bendiek and Kempin propose a leading group existing of France, the UK, Germany and perhaps Poland. This group could become the successor of the Europe's Franco-German axis. Bendiek and Kempin acknowledge that there is no guarantee that national interests can be reconciled.

5. THE STRUGGLE OVER MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The power balances in both the EU and the UN are socially constructed. It is difficult to change the institutional power balance since it has been anchored in treaties and covenants. The power balances were constructed and anchored when the UN and the EU were founded, based on the then dominant discourses. As said, the possibility of changing relations lies at the heart of constructivism in international relations. The discourses and relations between nations have changed over time, sometimes smooth, sometimes abrupt. The analysis will show what the current relations and discourses are.

Ó Tuathail and Dalby distinguish between three strands of geopolitical reasoning (Ó Tuathail & Dalby, in: Ó Tuathail & Dalby (Eds.) 1998, p. 4). It is a loose typology and distinguishes “the *practical geopolitics* of state leaders and the foreign policy bureaucracy from the *formal geopolitics* of the strategic community, within a state or across a group of states, and the *popular geopolitics* that is found within the artifacts of transnational popular culture, whether they be mass-market magazines, novels or movies”. This thesis focuses on interstate relations. Therefore I selected texts from the strand of formal geopolitics. These texts refer to the more ‘traditional’ geopolitical actors.

A good starting point for the analyses is the part of the EU’s constitution concerning cooperation in the UN. The Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union will be used here (see list of references), also known as the Lisbon Treaty. It entered into force on December 1, 2009 (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 1). ‘Treaty on European Union’ is abbreviated as ‘TEU’. I will analyze the text of Article 34 of the TEU as the agreed upon discourse of the EU member states. I will contrast this with the discourses of the individual countries that appear in the other texts. All texts are written in the period from 2005 to 2012.

5.1. The European Union

The text of the Treaty on European Union, Article 34 (ex Article 19 TEU), runs as follows:

1. Member States shall coordinate their action in international organizations and at international conferences. They shall uphold the Union's positions in such forums. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall organize this coordination.

In international organizations and at international conferences where not all the Member States participate, those which do take part shall uphold the Union's positions.

2. In accordance with Article 24(3), Member States represented in international organizations or international conferences where not all the Member States participate shall keep the other Member States and the High Representative informed of any matter of common interest.

Member States which are also members of the United Nations Security Council will concert and keep the other Member States and the High Representative fully informed. Member States which are members of the Security Council will, in the execution of their functions, defend the positions and the interests of the Union, without prejudice to their responsibilities under the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

When the Union has defined a position on a subject which is on the United Nations Security Council agenda, those Member States which sit on the Security Council shall request that the High Representative be invited to present the Union's position.

Looking for the discourse

The TEU expresses the intention of the EU to act as one actor in international organizations as the UNSC. When speaking about “*the Union's positions*”, the article shows an EU-discourse in which the EU is a coherent whole with corporate. It is an articulation of an element of the Union's identity. The rest of the article subverts this element of being one coherent actor. The subversion is a chain of equivalence, existing of three shackles.

First, the need for coordination organized by the High Representative points to the idea that the EU is a cooperation of 27 countries, instead of the EU being one actor.

Second, in order to act as one actor, the *“Member States which are members of the Security Council will, in the execution of their functions, defend the positions and the interests of the Union”*. The positions and interests of the Union need to be determined. The excerpt concludes by stating *“When the Union has defined a position on a subject which is on the United Nations Security Council agenda”*. What is function of the word ‘when’? In the case it means ‘at the moment’ (temporal) it leads to think that the Union will certainly define a position on whichever subject. In the case it means ‘if’ (conditional), it is not certain that the member states will come to a common position. In the last case the possibility is left open that the EU cannot define a common position. Not being able to define a position becomes an element of the EU-identity.

Third, nothing is written on the intention to obtain an EU seat in the UNSC. Only the High Representative’s function of organizing the coordination is mentioned and that *“Member States which sit on the Security Council shall request that the High Representative be invited to present the Union’s position”*. In the TEU is seeking to obtain a EU seat not an element in the EU-identity.

In order to become a coherent whole, discourses of the EU member states need to be converged. The member states have agreed that this converging is organized by the High Representative. Apparently it is needed, seeing the different standpoints of the EU Member States, to explicitly assign this authority to the High Representative. In this process, the different chains of equivalence of the member states thus have to be converged. The High Representative guides this process (called ‘articulation’ in terms of Laclau and Mouffe), trying to reach a closure on the EU positions and interests and with that the EU identity.

The *‘International organizations’* and *‘international conferences’* include those organizations and conferences where not all the member states participate. The case of the UN Security Council is explicitly addressed. The EU states which are member of the UNSC *“will, in the execution of their functions, defend the positions and the interests of the Union”* and *“shall request that the High Representative be invited to present the Union’s position”*. This is an instruction to the member states that have a seat in the UNSC. *“Member States represented in international organizations or international conferences where not all the Member States participate”* have a privileged position in comparison to other EU member states when it comes to fixing the EU standpoint. The EU is dependent on adequate representation by the member states. This gives the member states interactional control and hampers

the possibilities of the EU in representing its members. The instruction can be seen as an attempt to limit the interactional control of the member states.

By agreeing on the points in the treaty the EU member states give the EU power to influence the EU's identity. The treaty obliges the member states to coordinate their actions and uphold the Union's positions. The EU in turn organizes the coordination between member states and thus influence the latter ones. Identity is shaped by both the member states and the EU. This interconnects the identities of the individual states between one another and in relation to the EU.

Overall, the TEU attempts to reduce the centrality of the privileged member states and enhance the EU influence and make the EU more central. The TEU obliges the member states to "*uphold the Union's positions*". Why is this such an important clause? Are the EU member states reluctant to do this? In the next part of the analysis, a French-British letter, we will see that this is indeed the case.

5.2. The UK and France

France and the UK are the only European permanent members of the Security Council.

The following text is an official letter by the French and British governments. It shows their position in the debate around the UNSC. The letter is directed to the members of the UN.

(United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations & Mission Permanente de la France Auprès des Nations Unies, March 1, 2010)

The United Kingdom and France wish to pursue their efforts to ensure that the Security Council is more representative of today's world while at the same time preserving its capacity to take the steps required to cope with the problems of security posed by the 21st century,

The United Kingdom and France support an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of members, The United Kingdom and France reaffirm the support of their two countries for the candidacy of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan for new permanent seats, along with representation for Africa among the permanent members of the Security Council,

With a view to breaking the deadlock in the negotiations, the United Kingdom and France support a pragmatic intermediate solution that could provide for a new category of seats with a longer mandate than that of the members currently elected. On completion of the intermediate period, a review should take place to convert these new seats into permanent seats.

Looking for the discourse

The UK and France are the only EU permanent members of the Security Council. This gives them the opportunity to fill the representation of the EU with their own discourse. Given that they have to act “without prejudice to their responsibilities under the provisions of the United Nations Charter” (article 19 of the TEU). That offers ample opportunity for their contributions in the UNSC . France and the UK can put all interests and positions of the EU either as with or without prejudice to their responsibilities, in the way they wish to. This means they can pursue European positions and interests as they wish. This way the positions and interests of the French and British are master signifiers for the EU when it comes to issues regarding the Security Council. Their discourses have established a hegemony through the institutions of the Security Council. The United Kingdom and France also place themselves in a

hegemonic position by writing this letter. Other actors have to bargain with them in order to get what they desire. The UK and France allow themselves a lot of interactional control in this way. The two countries shape the debates around the UNSC in Europe and thus establish a hegemonic position for their discourses. The non-permanent members of the Security Council have a less hegemonic position as they will be replaced after two years. The countries that don't have a seat in the Council have even less opportunity to influence the debate.

The cooperation of UK and France in the Security Council obviously has benefits for the two countries. Working together and creating a common identity makes them stronger by giving more interactional control and more ability to keep their hegemony intact. Formulated from another angle cooperation with other EU members would be counterproductive for the hegemony of their own identity.

In the letter representation and decisiveness are postulated as mutually exclusive. Decisiveness is given hegemony in the discourse of France and the UK by stating the condition of "*preserving its capacity to take the steps required to cope with the problems of security posed by the 21st century*". Representation is the antagonism trying to overthrow the hegemonic position of the decisiveness. Decisiveness and representation do not have an antagonistic relation per se, but they do in the discourse of the UK and France. One could, for instance, argue that representation causes legitimacy and support en leads to greater decisiveness.

In the second paragraph France and the UK voice their (rhetorical) support for the G4, in line with their statement in the first paragraph. In doing so, the aspiration of the G4 is integrated in the discourse of France and the UK and the potential antagonism of the G4-stance is neutralized. What is striking is not that the G4 is mentioned, but that only the G4 is mentioned. The G4 is keen to change the UNSC structure and Germany is in the opinion of the UK and France seemingly the only European country capable to do so. By giving (rhetorical) support to the plans of the G4, France and the United Kingdom seem to allege that if Germany would join the UNSC it would reflect the power balance in the world better than the UNSC does now. At the same time they are reluctant to implement this change and instead come up with their own suggestion for a new category of seats. With that proposal they prolonge – at least for the time being – the lead of their own hegemony over the antagonism presented by the G4. France and the UK do support a "*pragmatic intermediate solution*". This solution seems to be in line with their statements of making the Security Council more representative and preserving its

capacity. The first rhetoric statement has more credibility in this way, France and the UK intent to convince that they really do want reforms of the Council. At the same time, the intermediate solution postpones all irrevocable reforms, and in the review the intermediate solution can always be cancelled.

The EU is not even mentioned in this letter and is obviously not essential in this discourse of the UK and France on membership rights. With the Lisbon Treaty in mind, where the UK and France signed to *“defend the positions and the interests of the Union”* this is remarkable. The EU does not have a legitimate entitlement to a UNSC seat, however it could expect French and British support. The reluctance of France and the UK to cooperate in EU-context in the Security Council becomes visible here.

Anticipating the UfC standpoint further on in this chapter, their proposal is indirectly rejected. By stating that *“The United Kingdom and France support an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of members”*, the only possible change for France and the UK is change with preservation of their permanent seats. The UfC proposal waves aside the existence of any permanent seat, so implicitly France and the UK wave aside the UfC proposal. Furthermore, the UfC propagates enhanced representation in the Security Council through consensus. This directly collides with the hegemonic position of decisiveness in the discourse of the French and British. The latter ones do argue that they *“pursue their efforts to ensure that the Security Council is more representative of today's world”*, but it is unsaid which efforts are made, if any. The UK and France even hinder efforts made by other countries by not mentioning the UfC and the EU in their letter.

Pirozzi (2011, p. 9) notices that the UK and France are rather reticent in supporting change in the UNSC, fearing downgrading of their status in the Council. Even further EU coordination in the UNSC meets resistance (Marchesi, 2008, p. 8). The UK and France do not want EU interference in their prerogatives and are not willing to give up their status as ‘great power’. Second, they claim that the EU is not capable of acting quickly on the world stage in times of crisis. An EU seat is thus again ruled out, this time by the condition for UNSC reform, mentioned in their letter.

According to Defarges, the French wish to use the EU as a springboard to regain their once lost status as a world-power (2003, p. 2). National sovereignty has to remain intact to recreate French dominance in the world. France sees an EU based on intergovernmentality as the most likely way to reach this goal: France wishes for EU joint action without integration. For the French, foreign policy is intergovernmental and should stay that way. The official rhetoric is clear: states are the oldest actors on global scale and therefore have the most legitimacy. Furthermore (Defarges, 2003, p. 3), in the French opinion the EU is not a full geopolitical actor. The EU lacks experience in diplomacy, culture and history. Besides that, the

EU does not have the political legitimacy and the governmental efficiency to promote its own foreign policy.

In this official rhetoric surfaces another struggle: the issue on the role of non-state actors in the Security Council. Why would an EU membership have less legitimacy than the French? The EU has recently obtained observer status in the UN and thus has at least some legitimacy.

It is impossible to verify if the “*capacity to take the steps required*” declines when changes are being made. It is even harder to know in advance. In this way the UK and France keep their options open in the reform of the UNSC. If a certain proposed change is judged as potentially detrimental for their own positions, the option is held open to claim that the change will reduce the capacity of the UNSC to take the steps required. In this way support is given for change (rhetorically) and at the same time that change can be obstructed at their own will.

5.3. Germany

The following text is a joint press statement of the outcome of the ministerial meeting of the G4 countries, in the margins of the 67th session of the UN Assembly. It was signed on September 25, 2012, by Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Guido Westerwelle, Koichiro Gamba and Ranjai Mathai, respectively the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Germany, Japan and India. It shows the position of the G4 members in the debate around the UNSC.

This text is relevant for the analysis of the geopolitical nature of the EU as a reflection of the German standpoint. Germany affiliates itself with non-European countries, namely Japan, India and Brazil. These countries are apparently better suited to reach the German goals in this struggle than the EU-countries. The countries of the G4 met “*in the margins of the opening of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*”, where the EU does not play a role.

Press statement

□ Recalling also their previous joint statements, the Ministers reiterated their common vision of a reformed Security Council, taking into consideration the contributions made by countries to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the organisation, as well as the need for increased representation of developing countries in both categories, in order to better reflect today's geopolitical realities. The G4 countries reiterated their commitments as aspiring new permanent members of the UN Security Council, as well as their support for each other's candidatures. They also reaffirmed their view of the importance of Africa to be represented in the permanent membership of an enlarged Council.

□ The Ministers discussed the progress on Security Council reform achieved thus far, including the discussions held during the eighth round of the intergovernmental negotiations. In this context, the Ministers shared the assessment that an overwhelming majority of member states voiced support for an expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. The Ministers also noted the assessment made to that end by the Chairman of the intergovernmental negotiations, H.E. Ambassador Zahir Tanin, in his letter dated 25 July 2012 to the President of the General Assembly and welcomed his recommendations therein. The Ministers expressed the view that the strong support for an expansion in both categories should be reflected in the negotiation process among member states and called for the drafting of a concise working document as the basis for further negotiations, in line with the recommendations of the Chairman.

□The Ministers welcomed the decision by the General Assembly to immediately continue the process of intergovernmental negotiations in the informal plenary of the 67th Session, building on the progress achieved and the recommendations made by the Chairman. The Ministers underlined the need to achieve a concrete outcome in the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly and, in this context, expressed their commitment to continue to work in close cooperation and in a spirit of flexibility with other Member States and Groups of Member States in genuine text-based negotiations. They also expressed their determination to inject greater political momentum into the reform process, including with a view to the holding of a high-level meeting on Security Council reform, as also recommended by the Chairman in his letter which was circulated by the President of the 66th session of the UN General Assembly to member states on 27 July 2012.

Looking for the discourse

The consensus on which the G4 is built is the vision that UNSC reform is needed and the aspiration for a national seat is just. These visions shape the identities of Germany and of the G4 and are therefore master signifiers. The *“contributions made by countries to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the organisation”* and *“the need for increased representation of developing countries in both categories”* are expressed as the main underlying reasons for UNSC reform. The G4 countries apparently identify themselves as contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security and/or developing country. The support by *“an overwhelming majority of member states”* only reinforces this identification. Although it is not said that the majority of member states supports the G4 proposal, the G4 takes it up as if it does, thereby pretending that the majority of member states supports the G4’s chain of equivalence in the struggle for Security Council reforms. This chain struggles to fill the UNSC reforms with a certain meaning: the entitlement of the G4 countries to a seat in the Security Council. This results into articulation of the G4’s chain of equivalence and their proposal. The proposal leads us to the discourse of the G4.

According to the G4, seats in the UNSC should be *“assigned by choosing among the most influential and economically strongest states of the international community”* (Martini, n.d., p. 4). The G4 shapes a social space. This space is built up from four countries. All other countries lie in the field of discursivity for this myth. At the same time, the UN and the G4 are master signifiers for Germany. The Germans feel

entitled to a seat but do not have the possibility to obtain one. To reach this goal, Germany teams up with the other three countries in the G4.

The other G4-countries have these same aspirations as the Germans. Together they established a vision on UNSC reform in which they support each other. Just as France and the UK, the G4's teaming up and supporting each other enhances the possibilities of creating hegemony for their discourse. The entitlements of Japan, India and Brazil to a permanent seat in the Security Council overlap those of Germany in their own views. They state that *"contributions made by countries to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the organisation, as well as the need for increased representation of developing countries in both categories, in order to better reflect today's geopolitical realities"* should be at the basis of entitlements to a permanent UNSC-seat. The G4-countries have made enough contributions in their own vision, and are therefore entitled to a permanent seat in the Council. The G4 justifies the change in the composition of the UNSC necessary for the desired seats by stating that *"an overwhelming majority of member states voiced support for an expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent"*.

A reason for stating the G4's *"contributions [...] to the maintenance of international peace and security"* could be a reaction on the statement in the letter by France and the UK, in which the latter ones state they want to preserve the UNSC's *"capacity to take the steps required to cope with the problems of security posed by the 21st century"*. Thus the G4 countries claim to meet the condition under which change of the UNSC has to take place, as to persuade France and the UK to permit them a seat in the Security Council. This reinforces the interactional control of the latter ones.

The claim of contributions to the maintenance of international peace is a striking claim, because on precisely this ground two of the members of the G4, Germany and Japan, did not qualify for membership of the UNSC. When the UNSC was established, Japan and Germany were refused a seat because of historical reasons. Now the aggressors of the Second World War claim a title to a permanent seat in the Security Council. This claim is furthermore unfounded in this press statement. It is unclear on which grounds the G4-countries claim to contribute to the maintenance international peace and security and it is thereby unclear why they claim entitlement to a permanent seat in the Council.

Furthermore, the G4 points out that *"an overwhelming majority of member states voiced support for an expansion of the Security Council"*. Is the will of the majority important for the G4? If it is, the members of the G4 could better support the UfC to reach a consensus. Now the will of the majority is only used when it comes in handy.

What is striking however, is the notion that the G4, and thus Germany included, “*expressed their commitment to continue to work in close cooperation and in a spirit of flexibility with other Member States and Groups of Member States*”. Close cooperation could be the foundation of support by the other states in the UN when it comes to redistributing the permanent Seats. At first sight it does not seem very relevant but it resembles a statement made in the Treaty on European Union (also analyzed in this thesis): “*Member States which are also members of the United Nations Security Council will concert and keep the other Member States and the High Representative fully informed*”. It seems as if this leaves a way open for Germany to adhere to the EU treaty. Especially the mentioning of “*Groups of Member States*” leads to think that Germany wants to maintain a good relationship with the EU and its members. Thus Germany does not lose sight of its European partners in the struggle for representation in the Security Council, where the European partners are considered Germany’s adversaries. Germany wants to maintain the good relationship because the struggle for a German seat is not over yet. Slipping the EU into the G4 negotiations becomes even more relevant now.

The UK, France and Italy are the German adversaries in the UNSC-debates at this moment but in the long term they have to cooperate as obliged by the Lisbon Treaty. This leads to note that Germany is fundamentally split. The short term goal is a national permanent seat in the Security Council, but the long term goal is a European seat in the Security Council (Martini, n.d., p. 8), but only if the EU Member States can speak with one voice. The Germans seek to balance their national aspirations and their European obligations. They are open to intermediary agreements as long as there is a chance the agreements will be adopted and supported by France and the UK.

Germany possibly supports an EU seat because of their own benefits of such a seat. If such a seat comes to be, Germany has a lot of influence in the UNSC for it already has the most influence in EU-context. The dialectical German relationship with the UNSC becomes evident here, although hidden in a seemingly neutral statement.

5.4. Italy

Italy represents the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) in the struggle about the reform of the UNSC (Pirozzi, 2011, p. 8). The UfC exists of approximately forty nations with Italy among the most active ones. The UfC is founded to counter the G4 proposal mentioned above. The opposition to the G4 is inspired by the “unjust reduction of their [UfC] international political relevance” (Martini, n.d., p. 6), and stands for reaching the broadest possible consensus about the UN reform. The following text is a critique on the proposal of the G4. This excerpt is the first half of the text (2005) by Aldo Mantovani, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN. The second half of the text deals with the proposal of the UfC itself and will be analyzed in the next paragraph.

5.4.1. UfC critique on G4

Excerpt from ‘Uniting for Consensus’ by Aldo Mantovani (2005)

The G4 approach. Shortcomings

Permanent membership

- *Creating six new permanent members will be contrary to the UN Charter’s principle of sovereign equality.*
- *It will provide permanent presence on the Council to 11 States while consigning 180 other States to compete for 14 seats.*

Representativeness.

- *It will change the ratio of permanent versus non-permanent members from 1:2 to almost 1:1, reducing, and not enhancing, the representativeness of the Council. It will, inevitably, concentrate power in the hands of 11 permanent members, marginalizing the rest of the UN membership.*

Accountability

- *The Security Council reform must also enhance not reduce the accountability of SC members to the general membership since almost half of its membership will not be obliged to seek election or re-election.*
- *Any reference to accountability is conspicuously absent from the G4 draft resolution.*

Efficiency

- *The need to reconcile the national interests of 11, rather than 5 States, will reduce the Council's ability to act quickly.*

The working methods

- *For the majority of the member States the improvement of the working methods is as important as the composition and the size.*

The question of veto.

- *The creation of new permanent members implies extension of the veto power. Question arises whether this would be feasible and desirable.*

The 'cascade effect'

- *Permanent members of the Security Council enjoy also, among their privileges, the right to be permanently present at the General Committee of the General Assembly and de facto 'right' to have permanently a judge at the International Court of Justice as well as to occupy key positions in the UN system. It is imperative to know if the G4 draft resolution creating new permanent members includes this 'cascade effect'.*

Divisiveness

- *Offering permanent privileges to additional six countries, while excluding the representation of other equally qualified member States, aggravates an inequitable situation created in 1945 for very specific historical reasons. If such a divisive proposal is brought to a vote, it would further heighten tensions and erode the universal support of Member States for the United Nations. Such universal support is the basic foundation of the Organization's credibility and legitimacy.*

Broadest possible agreement

- *If a positive outcome is to be assured, Security Council reform should be equitable and achieved through the broadest possible agreement.*

The legal perspective

- *The three-phase approach outlined in the G4 draft resolution raises more questions than it answers, particularly from the legal perspective.*

The review clause

- *The review clause envisaged in the G4 draft resolution would only secure the status of the new permanent members. If one sincerely believes in the instrument of the review conference (art. 109), it might be advisable to propose to hold one right now. The promise of a future review can hardly serve as a mechanism for accountability; only periodic elections of the Council's members by the General Assembly, can assure such accountability.*

Uncertain outcome

- *Ultimately, the G4 approach does not provide assurance of any outcome on reform of the Security Council and can stall at any stage.*

Looking for the discourse

The G4 and the UfC discourses both struggle to overthrow the hegemony of the discourse of France and the UK in which representation and decisiveness are the main nodal points but have an antagonistic relation, as we have seen. The G4 focuses on the decisiveness side by emphasizing that the G4-countries have made enough contributions in their own vision. The UfC chooses a different advance guard and stresses the interest of just representation. In this text the UfC vehemently criticizes the G4 approach to the UNSC reform. As we have seen before the G4 discourse seems to have more success than the UfC, although closure has not taken place yet, and the UfC struggles for hegemony for its discourse.

The proposal of the G4 is immediately shot down by the UfC, with the most important critique. The proposal is "*contrary to the UN Charter's principle of sovereign equality*" and apparently has a lot of struggles "*from the legal perspective*". This is presented as an objective statement that the G4 proposal is in conflict with the Charter and that it should be rejected on legal grounds. Not being a law student, I cannot assess the true value of this statement. In terms of discourse, the UfC herewith tries to introduce the legal perspective as a nodal point in the discussion on the G4 proposal.

The UfC is afraid the plans of the G4 "*would further heighten tensions and erode the universal support of Member States for the United Nations. Such universal support is the basic foundation of the Organization's credibility and legitimacy*". Consensus amongst the member states of the UN is in the

discourse of the UfC the only way for UNSC reform while maintaining credibility and legitimacy. This is a central element, a nodal point, in the discourse and again explicated when it is stated that *“Security Council reform should be equitable and achieved through the broadest possible agreement”*. The UfC derives its own right to exist from these statements. They first acknowledge, or pretend to acknowledge to make it seem objective, that universal support is the basic foundation of the UN. Then the UfC presents itself as the defender of universal support, and thereby the defender of consensus.

This text recalls the institutionalization of the UNSC. The *“situation created in 1945 for very specific historical reasons”* for the composition of the UNSC is mentioned, and this brings in a whole new chain of equivalence. Mainly the German and Japanese aspiration for a permanent seat in the UNSC is renounced, since they are widely seen as the aggressors, the wrongdoers, in the Second World War. Granting those two countries a seat in the UNSC would *“further heighten tensions and erode the universal support of Member States for the United Nations. Such universal support is the basic foundation of the Organization’s credibility and legitimacy”*. The proposed way to reform without losing the credibility and legitimacy should be *“equitable and achieved through the broadest possible agreement”*. The G4 claims a seat on basis of their economic and military power, the UfC rejects their claim on basis of the common history.

A struggle in discourse arises around the representativeness of the UNSC. The G4 proposal argues that their proposed reforms will increase the representativeness of the Security Council. This leads to think of the possibility of the opposite: the G4 proposal will not enhance the representativeness of the Council. This is exactly the stance of the UfC. Their critique is that the G4-proposal diminishes the representativeness. The UfC tries to give meaning to the nodal point ‘representativeness’ by focusing on ratio permanent vs. non-permanent, while the G4 focuses on the total amount of members. UfC states that the proposal concentrates power in the hands of the permanent members. More national influence for those countries will reduce *“the representativeness of the Council”* by *“marginalizing the rest of the UN [members]”*. In the next paragraph we shall see that the UfC-members’ argumentation also starts at their own national interests, just as the argumentation of France, the UK and the G4-countries. Italy also makes an attempt to secure its own influence. Italy sees its influence being reduced and marginalized by the G4 proposition.

5.4.2. The UfC proposal

This excerpt is the other half of the text by Mantovani (2005). The UfC-proposal for UNSC reform is examined here. This analysis completes the exploration of the discourse of the UfC.

The approach of “Uniting for Consensus”

- *Uniting for Consensus will shortly share an alternative approach, developed after wide-ranging consultations with member states, which can accommodate the interests of all States, large and small, as well as various regions and constituencies.*
- *It would add 10 elected seats, open to all Member States. Any State that can generate the support of its peers in the General Assembly could be elected and re-elected to the Council. Moreover, through the elimination of the prohibition against immediate reelection in Article 23, those States, which believe they have a larger or special contribution to make to the maintenance of international peace and security, could seek and achieve more frequent, even continuous representation in the Security Council, so long as they meet the democratic test of periodic election in the General Assembly. Such periodic elections would also serve as the best means to ensure accountability on the part of those States which claim that they would perform global or regional representational roles in the Security Council.*

Uniting for Consensus - Focal Point

- *Each regional group could create its own arrangements, e.g. designating one or more States from their region for more frequent and even continuous membership in the Security Council. Assured representations of various important groups such as CARICOM, Arab Group, OIC, can also be accommodated through such arrangements.*

Action

- *The Uniting for Consensus Movement suggests the following course of action:*
 - i) *One, considering the delicate issue of the SC reform, we all should continue the process of intensive consultations, under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly, and with the assistance of the Secretary-General, with a view to reaching the broadest possible agreement on Security Council reform.*
 - ii) *Two, we should all work sincerely and constructively to reach the broadest possible agreement, at least on the main elements of Security Council reform, by the September High-level Event.*

- iii) *Three, until such a solution has been reached, the G-4, the Uniting for Consensus and others should not formally table any draft resolution on Security Council reform or other UN reform issues nor seek to press such proposals to a vote.*

Looking for the discourse

The reform of the UNSC as proposed by the UfC is said to be “*developed after wide-ranging consultations with member states*”. By stating that the proposal is built on consultations with member states the UfC implies that in the discourse of the UfC the member states are the most relevant actors, with the non-state actors playing a less significant role.

‘Democracy’ and ‘representation’ are nodal points in the discourse of the UfC. The UfC proposes that any country or representative of an important group can get a seat in the UNSC by democratic election. Does the UfC feign this democratic ideal for international politics? This text is a not sufficient basis for answering the question. It could be a genuine wish of Italy, but they clearly profit at the same time. The UfC members, or at least some of them, now riveted to the backbenches in the Security Council, would gain more influence if the UfC proposal is carried out. The seemingly democratic ideal could be a way of gaining broad support for more influence on the UNSC.

The UfC favors “*representations of various important groups such as CARICOM, Arab Group, OIC*”. The UfC is the only group in doing so. Possibly the UfC is also in support of an EU seat in the UNSC, for the EU can be reckoned among the mentioned “*important groups*”, but this is not explicitly stated. France and the UK reject this explicitly (2011, p. 9) and the G4 does not even mention this option. Allowing participation of the EU would enable Italy to exercise more influence in the Council via the EU. In the Italian discourse art. 34 of the TEU (the first text) is “the pivotal element for the supporters of a single European Union representation” (Martini, n.d., p. 8). This article dictates sharing information, concertation and the defense of the positions and interests of the EU by the permanent members of the UNSC. This could be another institutional way for Italy for influencing the UNSC.

In the plan of the UfC, “*states, which believe they have a larger or special contribution to make to the maintenance of international peace and security, could seek and achieve more frequent, even continuous representation in the Security Council*”. This leaves the way open to more permanent participation of the G4 countries, which argue they have indeed made contributions to international peace. In the view of the UfC these countries need to pass the “*democratic test*” by periodical elections. In the discourse of

the UfC this democratic test is linked to the principles of accountability and confirmation of global and regional representation.

It is striking that 'representation' is mentioned here, but 'decisiveness' not. Decisiveness is part of the discourse of the UfC, as was found in the first half of the text of Mantovani. One of the critiques on the G4 was that the plans of the G4 *"will reduce the Council's ability to act quickly"*. This is an argument on basis of decisiveness. The UfC also does not seem to endorse the antagonistic relation between decisiveness and representation, as France and the UK do. In the UfC's discourse there is no struggle between those concepts. Decisiveness has not established hegemony over representation.

Finally, in the third point of action the UfC is trying to put up a barrier between its own discourse and the field of discursivity. This point of action states: *"until such a solution has been reached, the G-4, the Uniting for Consensus and others should not formally table any draft resolution on Security Council reform or other UN reform issues nor seek to press such proposals to a vote"*. The G4 attempted to exclude the UfC proposal from the floor (Martini, n.d., p. 7) and this was denounced by Italy. In this text the UfC makes the same attempt by prohibiting the G4 to make a rivaling proposal. Apparently the UfC feels not at all secure about a satisfactory outcome if conflicting proposals will be allowed to become part of the discourse in the UNSC on the desired reform.

6. CONCLUSION

The research question of this thesis is *‘How do the struggles over membership rights at the UN clarify the geopolitical nature of the EU?’*

In the Lisbon Treaty the EU member states have agreed on statements about their action towards international organizations like the UN and the UNSC, and therewith they underline the importance of a European stance in this fora, in this case the UNSC. In this thesis I have explored the discourses that the main EU actors apply when they act in order to reform the UNSC. The main actors are France, the UK, Germany and Italy. The rest of the EU members does not seem to be really involved in the struggle for reform of the UNSC, apart from the discussions in the EU itself on EU coordination in international organizations.

The discourses of the main actors converge in the sense that none of them explicitly values an EU seat in the UN and that each country focuses on enlarging its own sphere of interest. France and the UK, permanent members of the UNSC, strongly favour their national seats in the UNSC over a European seat. Germany demands a permanent seat in the UNSC and hope to reach this with support of three non EU states. Italy seeks more influence in the UNSC by affiliating itself with a large group of countries with less influence, claiming representation. What implications does this have for the geopolitical nature of Europe on a global level?

It should be noted that the main EU actors do not cooperate in trying to realize their goals in the reform of the UNSC. If necessary they even hamper the aspiration of each other. At home in the EU they agree on concertation regarding the UNSC and on keeping the EU states and the High Representative fully informed. Abroad in the UNSC this engagement evaporates, at least in the reform discussion.

France and the UK act together when it comes to proposals for changing the UNSC. This teaming-up is in order to protect their own extraordinary position and powers. Their responsibilities under the provisions of the UN Charter gives them ample opportunity to deviate away from the EU intentions. France and the UK came up with their own proposal for UNSC reform, but this proposal is directed to maintaining the status quo and does not grant the EU substantial influence or affect their own position.

Germany takes an ambiguous position. It aspires a permanent seat in the UNSC as one of the influential and economically strongest states of the international community. On the other hand, Germany wants to maintain a good relationship with the EU and its member states. Thus Germany does not lose sight of the TEU article on cooperation in international organizations and of its European partners in the struggle for representation in the Security Council.

Italy pleads for the broadest consensus for the UNSC reform and stresses the common interest of enhancing representativeness, but is not heard by its EU colleagues. Italy is the weaker EU player in the struggle for the reform. It tries to overcome this by doing a moral appeal to principles of democracy, representativeness and election.

The EU members that participate in the struggle for reform of the UNSC do not enter in a mutual coalition. France and the UK stick to their own cooperation. Germany seeks its coalition partners outside the EU under the influential and economically strong nations. Italy affiliates itself with other relatively non-influential countries. Evidently there is no shared EU discourse on the desirability of enhanced EU influence in the UNSC and on the way to realize this. Both Germany and Italy attack the hegemonic position of France and UK, Germany by emphasizing the contributions it makes to the maintenance of international peace and security, Italy by questioning the current undemocratic structure of the UNSC. The disagreement between the G4 and the UfC boils down to the point where the EU cannot take a common stance on the reforms of the UNSC. This was one of the main reasons for not granting the EU a seat in the UNSC and the UN in general (Marchesi, 2008, p. 13).

Given this non-cooperation and struggle between the main EU actors, what are the consequences or prospects of the EU as geopolitical factor? In the analysis of art. 34 of the Lisbon Treaty I noted that nothing is written on the intention to obtain an EU seat in the UNSC. After looking for the discourses of the main actors, it is clear that these actors a priori determine their position as an autonomous state, not as a member of the EU. The discourses of the different nations are motivated by their own national interests. So it is unlikely that the EU member states will reach a consensus on EU representation. The intergovernmental/integration debate in the EU will, with regard of the representation in the UNSC, most likely shift in favor of intergovernmentality.

The TEU puts the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in charge of organizing the coordination of the member states in international conferences. A hell of a job, as far as this concerns the reform of the UNSC! Considering the different positions of the EU members, the High Representative does not have much chance to in bringing these members together, in spite of the enormous amount of coordination meetings as mentioned in paragraph 4.2. Presumably, a much more

effective coordination instrument is required to have the desired effect. But realizing that for organizing such an instrument approval of the same member states is required, it becomes clear that an EU aspiration of coordinated EU effort backed up by the individual member states and directed towards enlarging the influence of the EU in the UNSC is for the time being a dead end. The EU will have to accept that it can only exercise influence if one of the EU member states in the UNSC concludes that the EU position on a certain issue is in its own national interest. The internal EU debate on integration or coordination must be brought to a conclusion before the EU can present itself as a geopolitical actor in issues of international peace and safety.

The plan presented by Bendiek and Kempin might be a solution to the difficult task of the High Representative. It provides the EU with a core group of states that lead the way in a common European policy, but no one can foresee if this plan succeeds in overcoming the internal struggles of the EU.

Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory was not very useful in analyzing the texts. The lack of a systematic approach and the vagueness of their concepts hampered the possibilities of analyzing structurally. It did help sharpening the mind for a deconstructivistic analysis. Maybe the insights of Laclau and Mouffe could be integrated in another theory on discourse analysis to complement it.

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REFLECTION

The most important lesson this thesis has taught me is that writing a thesis requires a huge amount of work and time. I started too late with writing and ended up in a hurry. I hope I will now finally pass this course and obtain a bachelor degree. It has cost me a lot of extra time and stress to finish this a year later than planned. The lesson learnt is that I really need to start writing earlier and more methodical. The quality of a thesis does certainly not benefit from working in a rush. This same rush prevented me from passing this thesis earlier. The constructive and hard work of the past few weeks increased the quality a lot.

Writing this thesis has taught me a lot about academic writing and research. The importance of working iteratively has dawned to me. Beforehand I thought working linear, as opposed to iterative, is the way to go. How can one do the analysis when the section on methods is not completed yet? Later I saw that unclear parts in the analysis can lead to small changes in the method section which in turn leads to a deeper understanding and widening of the analysis. Switching back and forth between the different sections proved to be the right way. Henk Donkers has already said this in the course on preparation on writing the thesis, but I was a bit stubborn. I was also unsure of how to write a thesis. I will not pretend to be an expert on the matter now, but I sure learned a lot on how to do it. This experience will be very useful when writing my master thesis.

The use of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory was difficult because of its vagueness and the lack of a systemized approach in the application of the theory. The chaos in my head was complete when I decided to switch from Constructivism as leading theory to Critical Geopolitics. In the future I will reflect on my research proposal before deciding on it a lot more than I did now. Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory did help to sharpen my analytic mind, but making their vague concepts concrete was very difficult. I did try to use Discourse Theory in my analysis but I could not manage to really apply it to the analysis. Practicing the method of working deconstructivistically helped me in questioning the statements of others and taking a more critical stance towards peoples' (linguistic) expressions.

The fact that I wrote in English has luckily not been a great restriction on my writing skills. Formulation was sometimes hard when I knew what I wanted to write but could not find the exact words or had difficulties with the grammar. Google Translate and Van Dale's English lexicon proved to be my best friends in the writing process. When I told Olivier Kramsch about this working method he asked me if I write in Dutch first and then translate it by copying the text to Google Translate. The answer is 'No! Of course not!'. I wrote the text on my own and used Google and Van Dale as dictionary

and reference. My level of English is good enough, according to Olivier Kramsch. I have some experience with writing in English so I already knew it would not be arduous. Writing in English has been a good training for the master thesis, which has to be written in English (opposed to the bachelor thesis where I had to choose between writing in Dutch or English). I am sure I made mistakes in English grammar, spelling and what not, but I hope the amount of mistakes is limited and not too distracting. And by writing this thesis I expanded my English vocabulary!