

ALLIANCE TRAJECTORIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, LATVIA, UKRAINE
AND BELARUS: A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

ALLIANCE TRAJECTORIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, LATVIA, UKRAINE AND BELARUS: A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST ANALYSIS

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Drawing on the observation that post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe, having been Warsaw Pact members during the Cold War, made different alliance decisions in the post-Cold War period, this dissertation scrutinizes the reasons for the diversity in the alliance trajectories of post-communist states. The analysis is structured on the cases of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus, which have differed among themselves in terms of their alliance decisions. This study first addresses these countries' alliance decisions with a country-focused analysis and then compares the findings from these cases with a comparative analysis in order to find out the reasons for the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space.

Written from a neoclassical realist perspective, this dissertation argues that post-communist states' alliance decisions cannot be fully comprehended by focusing exclusively on external dynamics. As such, it explains the alliance decisions of post-communist states with reference to the interaction of external dynamics with their domestic political peculiarities, and views the regional variation in the alliance trajectories as an outcome of the diversity in external and internal contexts of each post-communist state.

Keywords: Alliances, neoclassical realism, NATO, Russia, post-communist states.

ÖZ

ÇEK CUMHURİYETİ, LETONYA, UKRAYNA VE BELARUS'UN İTTİFAK YÖNELİMLERİ: NEOKLASİK REALİST ANALİZ

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Bu tez, Soğuk Savaş döneminde Varşova Paktı üyesi olan Orta ve Doğu Avrupa'daki eski komünist ülkelerin Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde farklı ittifak yönelimleri sergilediği gözleminden hareketle, bahsekonu devletlerin ittifak yönelimlerdeki farklılaşmanın nedenlerini sorgulamaktadır. Analiz, ittifak davranışları ve NATO'ya yönelik tutumları açısından kendi aralarında farklılaşan Çek Cumhuriyeti, Letonya, Ukrayna ve Belarus örnekleri temelinde yürütülmektedir. Bu çerçevede, ilk olarak, ülke-temelli bir analizle bu devletlerin ittifak kararları ayrı ayrı değerlendirilmekte; ardından, bu analizden elde edilen bulgular karşılaştırmalı bir analizle kendi içinde karşılaştırılarak eski komünist ülkelerin ittifak seçimlerindeki farklılaşmanın nedenleri araştırılmaktadır.

Neoklasik realist bir yaklaşımla hazırlanan bu tez, eski komünist devletlerin ittifak seçimlerinin sadece dış dinamiklere odaklanarak anlaşılamayacağını savunmaktadır. Buna göre, tez, eski komünist ülkelerin ittifak seçimlerini, dış dinamikler ile devletlerin kendine özgü iç siyasi dinamikleri arasındaki etkileşimle açıklamakta; ittifak seçimlerinin bölge genelinde farklılaşmasının ise, devletlerin dış ve iç bağlamlarındaki çeşitliliğin sonucu olduğunu değerlendirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İttifaklar, neoklasik realizm, NATO, Rusya, eski komünist ülkeler.

To My Beloved Mother
Canim Anneme

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All views expressed in this dissertation belong to me and do not represent any official institution.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
AFOR	Albania Force – Allied Harbour
ANP	Annual National Program
AP	Action Plan
BALTBAT	Baltic Battalion
BALTNET	Baltic Air Surveillance Network
BALTRON	Baltic Naval Squadron
BPF	Belarusian Popular Front
CECs	Central European Countries
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CR	Czech Republic
CRDF	Collective Rapid Deployment Forces
CSCE	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party
CST	Collective Security Treaty
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EU	European Union
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
FSB	Federal Security Service (Russian Intelligence Unit)
GUUAM	Georgia-Ukraine-Uzbekistan-Azerbaijan-Moldova
HZDS	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
IFOR	Implementation Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KGB	Committee for State Security (Soviet Intelligence Unit)
KPU	Communist Party of Ukraine
KSC	Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
KSCM	Bohemian and Moravian Communist Party of the Czech Republic
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRC	NATO-Russia Commission
NUC	NATO-Ukraine Commission
ODS	Civic Democracy Party (Czech Republic)
OF	Civic Forum
OSCE	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe
OF	Civic Forum (Public movement in Czechoslovakia)
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PfP	Partnership for Peace
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

RGF	Regional Group of Forces
SFOR	Stability Force
SPU	Socialist Party of Ukraine
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VPN	Public against Violence (Public movement in Czechoslovakia)
VRS	Patriotic Republican Party of the Czech Republic
WEU	Western European Union
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War had led to vast changes across the wider Eurasian space.¹ After an initial period of vacillation in both Western countries and Russia regarding how to adapt to the new circumstances, the trends of the new era had begun to unfold towards greater integration. By the mid-1990s, NATO had proven its continuing relevance after the disappearance of its *raison d'être*, the Soviet Union, acquired new tasks through a purposeful transformation process and accepted the vision of eastern enlargement.² As to the eastern side of Eurasia, Russia had re-established its links with some of the former Soviet Republics through bilateral agreements and initiated a series of integration efforts under the institutional rubric of the newly established Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

In the context of evolving NATO on the West and emerging politico-military initiatives on the East, post-communist states³, formerly aligned with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, came under the challenge of how to adapt to the new circumstances following the fall of the Warsaw Pact and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The inevitable aspect of this adaptation process for these states was the challenge of whether to sustain the Cold-War alliance affiliations

¹ In this dissertation, the term “Eurasia” will be used to denote the territorial space which encompasses both Europe and Asia and stretches from Western Europe to east including Russia, Caucasus and the Central Asia. In order to denote the eastern part of this territorial landscape, the term “former Soviet space” will be used.

² Craig Nation, “NATO's Relations with Russia and Ukraine”, Official Website of NATO, available at: <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/nation.pdf> (accessed on 13 July 2010), p. 3.

³ This dissertation uses the terms “post-communist states” and “post-communist space” to denote the countries formerly aligned with the Warsaw Pact. In order to refer to countries that had been constitutive part of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the term “former Soviet republics” will be used.

by forming alliances with other post-communist or post-Soviet states or to assume a new alliance behaviour through integration into NATO.⁴

Although all of the post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe cooperated with NATO after seizing their independence, they took different alliance trajectories and not all of them adopted the vision of NATO membership. Whilst some of them embraced the objective of acquiring NATO membership, some others preferred to sustain their former affiliation with the former Soviet space and supported Russian-led politico-military initiatives (CST/CSTO). Apart from these two types of states, some others did not form alliance and conducted cooperation with NATO in a way falling short of full membership. The diversity in the alliance decisions of post-communist states has been one of the puzzles that needs to be addressed by researches in the post-Cold War period.

1.1. Scope and Objectives

This dissertation departs from the observation that post-communist states located in Central and Eastern Europe and formerly aligned with the Warsaw Pact pursued different alliance trajectories in the post-Cold War period. In the light of this observation, the analysis aims to elaborate the reasons for the variation in the alliance trajectories of post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe.

The dissertation is structured on the cases of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus. The selection of these countries for the analysis stems from the differences in their alliance decisions and degree of their integration into NATO: Czech Republic, which sought NATO membership since the later period of Czechoslovakia and involved in NATO's first enlargement wave in 1999; Latvia, which sought NATO membership beginning from 1994 and became a NATO member in 2004; Ukraine, which did not form alliances in the post-independence period and cooperated with NATO in a way falling short of full membership; and Belarus, which has never addressed the option of NATO membership, formed alliance with Russia and joined CST/CSTO.

⁴ Stephen White, Ian McAllister, Margot Light and John Löwenhardt define this as the most difficult choice former Soviet republics faced in the post-Cold War period. "A European or a Slavic Choice? Foreign Policy and Public Attitudes in Post-Soviet Europe", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2002), p. 181.

Drawing on these observations, the dissertation mainly scrutinizes the question of why the aforementioned post-communist countries, formerly aligned with the Warsaw Pact, made different alliance decisions in the post-Cold War period, leading to a diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space. In addition, the dissertation also addresses a set of secondary questions: i) what motivations post-communist states had in making their alliance decisions; ii) to what extent and how their alliance decisions were influenced by the Russian factor; iii) how alliance decisions of these states were affected by their domestic political peculiarities, such as leaders' political considerations and policy agenda, domestic political configurations, profile of communist parties and public opinion.

Elaborating these questions, this dissertation conducts both country-focused and comparative analysis. In the country-focused analysis, the alliance decision of each selected post-communist state is scrutinized by taking into account the interaction of external dynamics with its domestic political peculiarities. Later, with a comparative analysis, the findings from all cases are compared among themselves and the reasons for the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space are assessed.

This dissertation deals with the aforementioned research questions from a neoclassical realist perspective by exploring the external-internal nexus behind foreign and security policies of the selected states. Considering the neoclassical realist assumption that external dynamics do not affect all states in the same way and their influence changes from state to state depending on the domestic political peculiarities of each state, the analysis searches for how significant externalities interacted with these states' internalities. Assessing the influence of externalities on these states' foreign and security policies in general and alliance decisions in particular, this dissertation treats their domestic political peculiarities as intervening factors that determine how external dynamics are infiltrated to the domestic realm. By engaging in such a multi-level and comprehensive analysis, the dissertation aims to develop a thorough understanding on post-communist states' alliance decisions and to account for the reasons for the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space.

This dissertation is built on the concept of alliance. However, breaking with the traditional realist approach (classical realism and neorealism) which

dominated the study of alliances during the Cold War and contemplated alliances as military structures established against external threats, this study deals with this concept in a new way. It moves beyond state-centric, military-dominated and external-focused understanding of traditional realist approach and adopts a more comprehensive perspective. Accordingly, first of all, highlighting the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space, in which the Russian factor emerged as the most significant externality, the dissertation shows that external dynamics are not sufficient to explain states' alliance decisions. After all, even if all post-communist states were affected by the Russian factor – albeit at different degrees depending on their interdependence with and vulnerability against Russia, this did not cause them to make the same alliance decision.

In addition, though the traditional realist approach contemplates alliances as military structures and assumes that states form alliances in search of military security, it is shown that states may, in fact, form alliance with motivations and considerations other than military security, due to the broadening and deepening in the meaning of security. This is especially relevant for post-communist states, which experience a comprehensive internal and external transition and have multiple needs and considerations in this process. Drawing on these observations, this dissertation adopts a multi-level and comprehensive perspective, and searches for multiple dynamics, both external and internal, and myriad concerns, both military and non-military, which influenced post-communist states' alliance decisions.

At this point, it should also be stated considering this broadened and deepened comprehension of the concept of alliance that the decisions on whether to form an alliance and "whom to ally with" were always addressed in Central and Eastern Europe as a part of the wider issue of integration into the West or the East. To that end, while making an alliance decision, post-communist states strived for being a member in not only military but also political and economic formations of the side they chose to integrate into. Despite that, this dissertation focuses on NATO in the West and politico-military formations (bilateral military alliances with Russia and the multilateral alliance of CST/CSTO) in the East with the following reasons.

Firstly, though all institutions from each side has had security functions and can be viewed as the components of the same architecture because of the broadened and deepened nature of the concept of security, certain institutions emerged as the centrepiece. Whilst the centrepiece institution in the Western security architecture was NATO, it was bilateral military agreements with Russia in the 1990s and the CSTO since 2003 in the former Soviet space. This means neither the disregard of the security functions of other institutions, such as the EU in the West, nor the broadened and deepened agenda and functions of NATO and its counterparts in the former Soviet space.

Secondly, though the post-communist states strived for seizing membership in all institutions in the side they chose to integrate into, it has been solely the eastern enlargement of NATO which precipitated controversies in the relations between Russia and the West up until very recently. Accordingly, though the recent developments in Ukraine, which began with the abandonment by President Yanukovich of the decision to sign an Association Agreement with the EU at the Vilnius Summit in November 2014, highlighted the fact that the issue of integration into the EU as well as the economic matters can also be subjects of Russian reactions and even turn into a hard security concern, NATO enlargement and the Russian reactions to this process constituted the most significant externalities which affected the security policies of post-communist states at a time when they were facing the challenges of external adaptation to the new circumstances and in the process of making an alliance decision.

The originality of this dissertation and the contributions it makes to the relevant literature can be counted as follows. First of all, it elaborates an issue, the diversity in the alliance trajectories of post-communist states in the post-Cold War period, which has not been studied in depth so far. Even though the pro-NATO vocation of the post-communist states involved in the first and second enlargement waves of NATO has been extensively studied, these analysis revolved on the question of “whether the aspirant states could be NATO members” rather than “why they chose a pro-NATO trajectory”. Other post-communist cases which did not display a pro-NATO alliance trajectory remained almost untouched. As most of the existing studies have focused on specific cases and questions, this dissertation emerges as an original study thanks to its extensive

coverage of post-communist cases as well as interest in the diversity in the post-communist space.

The second originality of this study stems from the embracement of neoclassical realism as a guidance for theoretical inquiry. An emerging approach of International Relations, neoclassical realism is still in need of theoretical refinement to highlight what it is and how it differs from other approaches of the discipline. Furthermore, due to its emerging character, it has not been applied to the study of alliances and alliance-making as well as foreign and security policies of post-communist states so far. As such, being prepared with a neoclassical realist perspective and breaking with military-dominated and external-focused nature of traditional realist approach, this study offers a comprehensive analysis with a multi-level perspective, questioning multiple dynamics, both external and internal, and myriad concerns, both military and non-military, which influenced post-communist states' alliance decisions.

In sum, analysing an insufficiently studied subject from a genuinely new theoretical perspective, this dissertation not only provides a better understanding on the developments in the post-communist space but also addresses the concept of alliance, one of the key concepts of International Relations, from a new perspective. The originality of this dissertation will have better been understood when the present state and shortcomings of the relevant literature, presented in the following section, are taken into account.

1.2. Literature Review

Having played a central role in political history, alliances have also been entrenched at the centre of International Relations following its emergence as a discipline after the First World War. They have been so central to the discipline of International Relations that, as George Liska described it, it became nearly “impossible to speak of international relations without referring to alliances.” In Liska’s words, “the two often merge in all but the name.”⁵ Ken Booth also put this

⁵ George Liska, *Nations in Alliances: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), p. 3.

by indicating that “alliances have been pervasive features in both the theory of international politics and in the practice of foreign policy.”⁶

Though alliances remained at the centre of both *lexis* and *praxis* of international relations, there has not been a scholarly consensus on their conceptual substance. This is generally attributed to multiple appearances of military cooperation among states throughout history.⁷ As Robert L. Rothstein explained it, “the specific character of alliances differ[ed] in various historical periods.”⁸ The multifarious nature of alliances caused this term to have been used interchangeably with similar concepts such as alignments, blocs, ententes, concerts, collective security organizations, coalitions and so on.⁹ This variety made it difficult to distinguish alliances from the rest of the international politics.¹⁰ Accordingly, the major scholarly concerns during the Cold War were to reveal the differences between alliances and similar concepts and to sort out if there is a correlation between the establishment of alliances and the occurrence of war.¹¹

That said, it should be noted that the dominance of realism, most notably neorealism, in both International Relations and its sub-field Security Studies set the disciplinary boundaries for theoretical discussions during Cold War. As a

⁶ Ken Booth, “Alliances,” in *Contemporary Strategy I*, eds. John Baylis et al. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987), p. 258.

⁷ Trevor Salmon, “The European Union: Just an alliance or a military alliance”, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (2006), p. 814.

⁸ Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 46.

⁹ This is still the case with the concepts of alliance and alignment. Some scholars, such as Stephen Walt, use these concepts interchangeably, whilst some other scholars draw distinctions between them. George Modelski understood alignments as a blanket term for all types of collaboration and alliances as military cooperation against a third power and formalized form of alignments. Modelski also envisioned alliances hinged upon wars whereas alignments did not. George Modelski, “The study of alliances: a review”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (December 1963), pp. 774-775. This dissertation will use both terms interchangeably.

¹⁰ Glenn H. Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” in *The Evolution of Theory in International Relations*, ed. Robert L. Rothstein (South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 1992), p. 84.

¹¹ For some studies that scrutinize the connection between alliances and war, see. Jack S. Levy, “Alliance Formation and War Behaviour: An Analysis of the Great Powers, 1495-1975”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 1981); Alastair Smith, “Alliance Formation and War”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (December 1995).

result, due to neorealists' external-focused and military-dominated security conceptualizations, some aspects of alliances were taken for granted and remained aloof of theoretical discussions. From this perspective, alliance commitments are understood as being formal, character of alliances as being military force and object of the cooperation as providing state security against another state or alliance.¹²

In accordance with this conceptual core, which embodied the basis of the traditional approach in alliance literature, Arnold Wolfers defined alliance as “a promise of mutual military assistance between two or more sovereign states.”¹³ Similarly, Glenn Herald Snyder conceptualized alliances as “formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership.”¹⁴ Other followers of this approach, Robert E. Osgood and John H. Badgley defined alliance as “a formal agreement that pledges states to co-operate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force, or to consider (unilaterally or in consultation with allies) the use of force in specified circumstances.”¹⁵

After the concept of alliance had been defined within this narrow framework for decades, new opportunities raised for more comprehensive studies in the post-Cold War period. First of all, consequent to the discredit of neorealism with the end of the Cold War, it became more plausible to argue that the insights offered by other theoretical perspectives are also useful in analysing alliances and alliance-formation. At this point, it should also be noted that this does not mean alliances were studied only by classical and neorealism during the Cold War. Instead, other theoretical approaches also offered insights about the nature of alliances and the dynamics that led states to form alliance with other states. For

¹² Kajsa Ji Noe Oeast, “The End of Alliance Theory? A Literature Review of Realist Alliance Theory”, Institut for Statskundskab, Arbejdsrapport 2007/03, available at: http://polsci.ku.dk/arbejdsrapporter/2007/ap_2007_03.pdf/ (accessed on 1 November 2013), p. 14.

¹³ Arnold Wolfers, “Alliances,” in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 268.

¹⁴ Glenn Herald Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 4.

¹⁵ Robert E. Osgood and John H. Badgley, *Japan and the US in Asia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), p. 17.

example, different from traditional conceptualization of alliances as temporary formations established and sustained against external threats, liberal institutionalists defined alliances as institutions¹⁶, emphasized the influence of common interests and states' concerns for absolute gains in their establishment and explained their sustainability with reference to the degree of institutionalization and existence of common interests.¹⁷ Of the other approaches, world-system theorists viewed alliances as instruments of the core powers to support their economic dominance, to protect the core economy from external attack or internal challenge and to remove obstacles to the flow of its products across the system.¹⁸ However, due to the realist claim that it represented the reality, which seemed to be proven by the political realities of the Cold War, the insights offered by other approaches had remained on the margins and the study of alliances had been dominated by classical realist and, mostly, neorealist perspectives. Nevertheless, once the dominance of neorealism was broken with the end of the Cold War, it became more relevant to defend the applicability of other perspectives in studying alliance-related matters.

Another consequence of the discredit of neorealism on the study of alliances was the diminished relevance of the traditional security understanding in the post-Cold War period. During the Cold War, state was taken as the only

¹⁶ Robert O. Keohane, "Alliances, Threats, and the Uses of Neorealism", *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1988), p. 174. In this article, Keohane criticizes the neorealists' neglect of institutional aspects of alliances arguing that the extensive literature on institutions could provide insights into the conditions under which alliances become institutionalized and the effects of such a process.

¹⁷ Setting aside the earlier versions of liberal institutionalism – functionalism of 1940s and early 1950s, neofunctionalism of 1950s and 1960s and interdependence theory of the early 1970s, which focuses on cooperation in low politics, one can date the liberal institutionalist interest in the study of alliances to the 1970s. For more about neoliberal institutionalist approach on cooperation in military realm, see. Robert O. Keohane, "Alliances, Threats, and the Uses of Neorealism"; Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions", *World Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (October 1985); Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Charles Lipson, "International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs," in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David A. Baldwin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Peter Gowan, "Contemporary Intra-Core Relations and World Systems Theory", *Journal of World-Systems Research*, Vol. X, No. 2 (Summer 2004), p. 473. For the application of world-system theory to Ukraine's relations with NATO, see. Andriy Levytsky, "Security Misread: A critical analysis of Ukraine's debate on NATO", *College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Theses and Dissertations*, Paper 107 (2011), available at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/etd/107> (accessed on 10 February 2014).

referent object of security and threats were understood as being of military nature and emanated from other states. Consequent to the changes in the international security environment in the post-Cold War period, the concept of security began to be studied in a broadened and deepened framework. To that end, whereas the referent objects of security have been deepened to include entities other than state, such as societies, individuals, leaders, and so on, the scope of threats has been broadened to non-military areas.¹⁹ The changes in the extent and scope of the concept of security in the post-Cold War period brought new opportunities to the study of alliances. Within this framework, it became more convincing to argue that broadening and deepening in the meaning of security should be accompanied by a similar change in the understanding of the nature and functions of alliances.

The changes in the meaning of security precipitated the understanding that states might not act with only military considerations and their choices of alliance partners might be influenced by non-military concerns. James D. Morrow explained this so that, since most of alliances are asymmetric in nature, composing of both great and small powers, they “advance diverse, but compatible, interests.”²⁰ The rising acceptance of the fact that states might expect different benefits from the same alliance led scholars to question the impact of various non-military concerns on alliance decisions, such as the economic costs of self-sufficiency²¹, expectation of economic aid²² and leaders’ concerns over their political survival.²³

¹⁹ For more about the changes in the conceptualization of security, see. David A. Baldwin, “Review Article: Security Studies and the End of the Cold War”, *World Politics*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (1996); David A. Baldwin, “The concept of security”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23 (1997); John Baylis, “International and global security in the post-Cold War era,” in *Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations*, eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, “Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods”, *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (October 1996).

²⁰ James D. Morrow, “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances”, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (November 1991), p. 905.

²¹ James D. Morrow, “Arms versus allies: trade-offs in the search for security”, *International Organization*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Spring 1993); Michael F. Atfeld, “The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test”, *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 37 (December 1984).

²² Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, “Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73”, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer 1991).

Another consequence of the discredit of neorealism for the study of alliances stemmed from the wider recognition that states' security policies are not dictated only by systemic pressures and external dynamics. Accordingly, it began to be argued that states' foreign and security policies are also affected by internal dynamics,²⁴ and scholars began to question the influence of various internal dynamics, including regime type,²⁵ sectorial interests²⁶ and public opinion²⁷ on states' foreign and security policies as well as alliance decisions.

The writings on alliances in the post-Cold War period show that, despite the predictions by some scholars for the end of the concept of alliance in the immediate post-Cold War period²⁸, there has been a revival of interest in this concept. However, considering the regions of conceptual interest, it is seen that a few studies addressed the alliance decisions of post-communist states. Most of the studies on this region addressed the cases involved in the first and second

²³ Steven David, "Explaining Third World Alignment", *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991); Richard Harknett and Jeffrey VanDenBerg, "Alignment Theory and Interrelated Threats: Jordan and the Persian Gulf Crisis", *Security Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring 1997).

²⁴ James D. Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations", *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 1 (1998); Bruce Bueno De Mesquita, "Domestic Politics and International Relations", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 46 (2002).

²⁵ Randolph M. Siverson and Juliann Emmons, "Birds of a Feather: Democratic Political Systems and Alliance Choices in the Twentieth Century", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (June 1991); Randolph M. Siverson and Harvey Starr, "Regime Change and Restructuring of Alliances", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (February 1994); Brian Lai and Dan Reiter, "Democracy, Political Similarity and International Alliances, 1816-1992", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (April 2000); William R. Thompson, "Democracy and peace: Putting the cart before the horse?", *International Organization*, Vol. 50 (1996); Michael W. Simon and Erik Gartzke, "Political System Similarity and the Choice of Allies: Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do opposites Attract?", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (December 1996).

²⁶ Kevin Narizny, "The Political Economy of Alignment: Great Britain's Commitments to Europe, 1905-39", *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Spring 2003).

²⁷ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Randolph M. Siverson, "War and the Survival of Political Leaders: A Comparative Study of Regime Types and Political Accountability", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, No. 4 (December 1995); John H. Aldrich, Christopher Gelpi, Peter Feaver, Jason Reifler and Kristin Thompson Sharp, "Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection", *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9 (2006); Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies", *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (July 1991).

²⁸ For a discussion on whether the concept of alliance is futile in the post-Cold war period, See. Rajan Menon, "The End of Alliances", *World Policy Journal* (Summer 2003); Kurt M. Campbell, "The End of Alliances? Not So Fast", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring 2004); Bruno Tertrais, "The Changing Nature of Military Alliances", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring 2004).

enlargement waves of NATO with a focus on the question of “whether they can be NATO members” instead of “why they aspired to be a NATO member”. In the cases of other former Soviet republics which have not taken a pro-NATO alliance trajectory, alliance-related issues were addressed only on the margins of the analysis on their foreign and security policies as well as relations with Russia. Furthermore, this issue has neither been studied in a comparative manner so far. Even though the literature is quite rich in terms of the comparative analysis on internal aspects of post-communist transition, there is not any study which deals with the regional diversity in terms of post-Cold War alliance trajectories— though this puzzle has been pointed in some studies.²⁹

Considering the literature on foreign and security policies of post-communist states, it is seen that analysis were mostly guided by neorealism and constructivism. Some of the writings focus on external or material factors and elaborate the influence of the Russian factor on these states’ foreign and security policies.³⁰ Emphasizing ideational factors at both systemic and domestic realms, some others scrutinize the influence of norms and identity conceptualizations on their relations with other states, basically Russia.³¹

²⁹ William C. Wohlforth, “Revisiting Balance of Power Theory in Central Asia,” in *Balance of Power Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, eds. T.V. Paul and James J. Wirtz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Eric A. Miller and Arkady Toritsyn, “Bringing the Leader Back In: Internal Threats and Alignment Theory in the Commonwealth of Independent States”, *Security Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April-June 2005); Eric A. Miller, *To Balance Or Not to Balance: Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006); Giorgi Gvalia, Bidzina Lebanidze and Zurab Iashvili, *Political Elites, Ideas and Foreign Policy: Explaining an Understanding the International Behaviour of Small States in the Former Soviet Union* (Tbilisi: Ilia State University Press, 2011).

³⁰ A few selected neorealist writings on the cases elaborated in this study: Bohdan Hawrylyshyn, “Ukrainian National Security,” in *Ukraine at a crossroads*, eds. Nicolas Hayoz and Andrej N. Lushnycky (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005); Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Ukraine’s Critical Role in the Post-Soviet Space,” in *Ukraine in the World: Studies in the International Relations and Security Structures of a Newly Independent States*, ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Ukrainian Research Institute, 1998); Sherman Garnett, “U.S.-Ukrainian Relations: Past, Present, and Future,” in *Ukraine in the World: Studies in the International Relations and Security Structures of a Newly Independent States*.

³¹ A few selected constructivist writings on the cases elaborated in this study: Stephen Shulman, “Competing versus complementary identities: Ukrainian-Russian relations and the loyalties of Russians in Ukraine”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1998); Stephen Shulman, “Asymmetrical International Integration and Ukrainian National Disunity,” *Political Geography*, Vol.18, No. 8 (1999); Anatol Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1999); Paul D’Anieri, “Nationalism and International Politics: Identity and sovereignty in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict”, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1997); Mikhail Molchanov, Mikhail Molchanov, “National Identity and Foreign Policy

Some of realist studies also takes into account internal dynamics, dealing with them as merely constraints which cause deviations from the idealized behaviours delineated by neorealism. This understanding conforms to one of many narrativizations of neoclassical realism, developed by Randall Schweller, who coined the concept of underbalancing, which denotes to the absence of balancing by states in the existence of an external threat.³² This is also reflected by William C. Wohlforth who underscored the inadequacy of neorealism in analysing the regional diversity in the alliance decisions of the former Soviet republics and identified internal dynamics as the reason for the lack of balancing by some of the post-Soviet states.³³

The dynamics behind the alliance decisions of the former Soviet republics have been addressed in the most innovative and comprehensive way so far by Eric Miller and Arkady Toritsyn.³⁴ Applying Stephen David's theory of "omnibalancing"³⁵ to the cases of Ukraine and Uzbekistan, they argue that alliance decisions of the former Soviet republics do not conform to balance of power and balance of threat theories. Instead, they are shaped by leaders' concerns over their political survival. For them, leaders are prone to ally with those who can strengthen their personal domestic power. Applying this insight to the cases of Ukraine and Uzbekistan, they explained Ukraine's attitude to alliances with reference to domestic position of the Ukrainian leaders vis-a-vis their opponents and Uzbek President Karimov's alignment with Russia with the motivation to balance his domestic opponents.

Orientation in Ukraine," in *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* eds. Jennifer D. B. Moroney, Taras Kuzio and Mikhail Molchanov (Westport: Praeger, 2002); Gražina Miniotaitė, "The Baltic States: In Search of Security and Identity," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security*, ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham Md.: Rowman&Littlefield, 2003); Rick Fawn, "Reconstituting a national identity: Ideologies in Czech foreign policy after the split", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2003).

³² Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing", *International Security*, Volume 29, Number 2 (Fall 2004).

³³ William C. Wohlforth, "Revisiting Balance of Power Theory in Central Asia," p. 233.

³⁴ Eric A. Miller and Arkady Toritsyn, "Bringing the Leader Back In: Internal Threats and Alignment Theory in the Commonwealth of Independent States"; Eric A. Miller, *To Balance Or Not to Balance: Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States*.

³⁵ Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment", *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991).

Incorporation of leaders' domestic interests and intra-state domestic political competition into the analysis embodies the strong points of the writings of Miller and Toritsyn. The shortcoming in their writings is the exclusion of external dynamics. Aware of this criticism, Miller and Toritsyn indicate that they did not consciously incorporate Russian interests and actions in the framework of analysis for two reasons. First of all, for them, the constant presence of the Russian factor for all post-Soviet states renders it analytically unimportant. After all, "Russia is seen a country that wants to maintain its hegemonial status in its former empire, and therefore other countries in the region are likely to see this as neo-imperial in some respect."³⁶ Secondly, the incorporation of the Russian factor into the analysis might cause former Soviet states as passive actors or exclusion of some domestic factors.³⁷

Against these arguments, it should be reminded that, despite the prevalence of the Russian factor in the post-Cold War period, the intensity of the perceived threat from Russia changed from time to time, mostly because of the changes in the attitude of Russian leaders, as well as from state to state, depending on their level of vulnerability and the assessments of national leaders. The changes in the intensity of the Russian factor influenced both the making and fulfilment of alliance decisions of post-communist states. For example, these states' distant attitude from alliances in the early 1990s was based on the presence of Soviet/Russian troops on their territories. When these troops were withdrawn, they could make more substantial decisions. In the case of the Central European states, from which Soviet troops were withdrawn earlier, this decision could be made earlier than other former Soviet republics, such as Baltic states. Therefore, even if the Russian factor was a constant in the post-Cold War period, its intensity and influence changed from state to state and from time to time.

This dissertation deals with an insufficiently studied subject in the literature from a genuinely new perspective which takes into account both external and internal dynamics without overemphasizing one of them or overlooking the interaction between them. Exploring the external-internal nexus behind the

³⁶ Eric A. Miller, *To Balance Or Not to Balance: Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, p. 26.

³⁷ Eric A. Miller, *To Balance Or Not to Balance: Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, pp. 25-26.

alliance decisions of four selected cases from the post-communist space, each of which represents a specific type of alliance trajectory, this study offers a multi-level and comprehensive analysis, which has not been undertaken by the present writings so far.

1.3. Main Arguments

This dissertation defends that post-communist states' alliance decisions as well as the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space cannot be fully comprehended if one focuses only on external dynamics. Even if external dynamics affected post-communist states' alliance decisions, this influence was not direct and uni-dimensional. Instead, it changed from state to state depending on their domestic political peculiarities. As such, this dissertation explains the alliance decisions of post-communist states with reference to the interaction of external dynamics with their domestic political peculiarities; and views the regional variation in the alliance trajectories as an outcome of the diversity in external and internal contexts of each post-communist state.

This dissertation explores the interaction of external dynamics with domestic political peculiarities with a theoretical inquiry based on neoclassical realism. Within this framework, it is structured on the following three theoretical assumptions. Firstly, in contrary to the traditional realist approach, it is defended that states' alliance decisions are not influenced by external dynamics directly. Even if external dynamics influence states' alliance decisions, this influence is indirect and changes from state to state depending on how they are infiltrated to the domestic realm. Secondly, the infiltration of external dynamics to the domestic realm takes place through the assessments of leaders who have decision-making power in foreign and security policy realm. As such, externalities influence states depending on who assessed them and with what considerations. Since leaders play a two-level game, they act with both external and internal considerations. To that end, when making alliance decisions, they aim to promote the external interests of their state, as defined by them, and to maintain and strengthen their domestic power. Thirdly, leaders do not act in a political and social vacuum. When making and pursuing alliance decisions, they face several external and internal constraints. As such, they can fulfil their alliance decisions if

and when they can overcome the restraining effects of external and internal constraints.

This dissertation applies the aforementioned theoretical insights to four selected cases from the post-communist space. The country-focused analysis on the cases of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus reveals that these states' alliance decisions cannot be understood with a focus on external dynamics. Rather, since the influence of external dynamics change from state to state depending on their domestic political peculiarities, one should consider both external and internal dynamics in tandem. Comparing the findings from these cases, the dissertation also conducts a comparative analysis and assesses the reasons for the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space.

The Czech case shows that domestic and foreign policies of the Czech Republic were influenced by domestic political peculiarities, such as the convergence of the majority of elites on the wider objective of “return to Europe” as well as the exclusion of communists from governments and the public disinterest in foreign and security policy issues. Whereas the first one enabled the Czech authorities to set a pro-Western orientation, the latter two provided the consistent pursuit of this orientation in the post-Cold War period. In the Czech case, the embracement of the objective of NATO membership was due to the assessment of external dynamics by the Czech authorities in accordance with their political agenda and domestic interests. When making a pro-NATO alliance decision, Czech leaders aimed not only to provide the external security of the Czech state against the future uncertainties, but also to secure the continuity of transition process and to strengthen their domestic power vis-a-vis their communist opponents.

In the Latvian case, the dominance of pro-Western political groups on the political scene as well as the exclusion of pro-Russian ones from governments and of the Russian diaspora from electoral politics with restrictive citizenship arrangements were the domestic political peculiarities that shaped the influence of external dynamics and Latvian foreign and security policies. Having the decision-making power in foreign and security policy realms, Latvia's pro-Western authorities chose a pro-NATO alliance trajectory not only to provide the external security of the Latvian State against the Russian factor, but also to strengthen their

domestic power vis-a-vis pro-Russian groups in order to enable the continuity of the transition process in accordance with their own vision.

The Ukrainian case shows that even if Ukraine's security policies were influenced by the Russian factor, each president chose to deal with it in different ways depending on their political agenda and domestic interests. As a result, during both Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, the policy of not forming alliances emerged out of presidents' multi-vector policies which were deemed more appropriate for the external security of the Ukrainian state as well as their domestic political interests. Different from Kuchma and Yanukovich, President Yushchenko, the electoral support of whom came from western and central Ukraine, defined NATO membership as the most feasible way to provide Ukrainian security and to strengthen his domestic power. However, he could not realize this objective because he could not mobilize Ukrainian elites and society at large and overcome the Russian reactions. In the end, Ukraine did not form alliances either out of deliberate choices, as witnessed during Kravchuk, Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, or against the will of leaders, as happened during the Yushchenko Presidency, because of the external and internal constraints.

Different from other three cases examined in this dissertation, the vision of NATO membership was never articulated in Belarus. Instead, Belarus has been the most pro-Russian former Soviet Republic, closely integrated with Russia in both bilateral and multilateral channels. The establishment of Belarusian-Russian military alliance was due to the assessment of the external context by President Lukashenko in accordance with his political agenda and domestic interests. Presenting NATO enlargement as a threat and forming an alliance with Russia, President Lukashenko aimed not only to promote the external interests of Belarus, as defined by him, but also to maintain his political survival.

In the comparative analysis, it is argued that, the diversity in the alliance trajectories of post-communist states can be better understood by considering different combinations of and interaction between external and internal dynamics peculiar to each post-communist state. As such, this dissertation views the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space as an outcome of the diversity in states' external and internal contexts.

1.4. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

When writing this dissertation, I mainly faced the challenge of finding an adequate theoretical approach which would enable me to analyse a dynamic space undergoing through a comprehensive transformation in the post-Cold War period. In the process of making a decision on this matter, I first observed that, though extensively used to understand states' alliance decisions, traditional realist approach cannot capture the complex dynamics in the post-communist space because it is too narrow with its over-reliance on external dynamics and military considerations. As to constructivism, which is shown as the most significant challenger to traditional realist approach in Security Studies because of its ontologically different background, it is too vague and ambiguous. Its over-emphasis on the concept of identity causes difficulties in analysing transition countries in the former Soviet space in most of which national identity has been a controversial phenomenon to date. Therefore, I have concluded that these two approaches are insufficient for both country-focused and comparative analysis on such a dynamic space in transition.

Due to the inadequacies of both approaches, I chose neoclassical realism as the theoretical approach to structure my study on. This stemmed from the fact that neoclassical realism has more analytical utility than traditional realist and constructivist approaches because its multi-level perspective, emphasising the importance of both external and internal dynamics, offers the opportunity to develop a comprehensive theoretical analysis. This helps to overcome the faulty "either/or" approach which endeavours to account for whether policies are made in response to external or internal factors. Moreover, breaking with neorealism, which searches for general and parsimonious patterns, neoclassical realism makes contextual analysis, accepting the uniqueness of each case. Its contextuality also provides the flexibility to make comparison between different cases and periods. Due to its comprehensiveness and contextuality, I viewed neoclassical realism more appropriate for both country-focused and comparative analysis in this dissertation.

However, after having chose my theoretical approach, I faced another challenge – how to apply neoclassical realism to the cases I selected. This challenge stemmed from the insufficient number of neoclassical realist writings,

which left many questions unanswered and blurred the boundaries between neoclassical realism and other approaches. I overcame this challenge by identifying the basic assumptions shared by neoclassical realists and developing a general framework on the basis of these shared assumptions.

The theoretical fluidity of neoclassical realism paradoxically embodied the strength of this study. The fact that neoclassical realism has not been used so far to understand post-communist states' foreign and security contributed to the originality of this study. Besides, the developing nature of neoclassical realism also provided the flexibility to analyse the regional diversity in the post-communist space.

This dissertation consists of both country-focused and comparative analysis. In the country-focused chapters, the internal-external nexus behind the relevant post-communist states' foreign and security policies as well as alliance decisions are elaborated. These chapters are followed by a comparative analysis in which the findings from all cases are compared among themselves.

When referring to internal-external nexus, which embodies the backbone of each country-focused chapter, I meant the interaction between "external dynamics" and states' "domestic political peculiarities". With the term "external dynamics", I referred to the most significant developments in the international and regional contexts of Central and Eastern Europe in the post-Cold War period. Since I argue that the external developments influenced the states of the region in different ways depending on how they were assessed by leaders, I preferred to use the term "external dynamics" instead of "systemic" or "structural" dynamics. The use of the latter would contradict with particularity and contextuality of neoclassical realist analysis and blur the boundary between neoclassical realism and neorealism.

With the term "domestic political peculiarities", I meant states' socio-political characteristics which show continuity over time and influence how external developments are assessed. I treated these peculiarities as intervening variables which form the linkage between the external dynamics and the outcomes they yield. In this analysis, I viewed leaders' assessments as the main intervening variable which shaped the influence of the external dynamics on states' foreign and security policies and alliance decisions. Besides, in each case, I also identified

some other domestic peculiarities, such as political configurations, profile of communist parties and public opinion, which shaped leaders' assessments and, hence, the alliance decisions.

This dissertation was prepared by drawing on findings from primary sources, including national security and foreign policy documents issued by the relevant states' ministries and institutions since 1991, *final communiqués* of NATO summits and EAPC/NACC meetings, speeches and statements of leading political actors, programmes of the most influential political parties. In addition, a number of interviews I made at NATO Headquarters with high-level officials in Brussels on 16-18 December 2013 as well as at different times in the Czech Republic embodied another primary source of this study. I also made use of my personal observations from conversations I had with different officials about the topics related to the relevant states. Besides these primary sources, in order to keep track of the political climate in relevant countries, a set of daily news portals in English were followed. The secondary resources -books, academic articles and policy papers- were also used extensively.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

In the light of the aforementioned framework, this dissertation has been structured as follows:

Chapter 2 develops a theoretical analysis on alliances and alliance-formation in the light of three questions: i) why states form alliances; ii) what factors determine states' decision to ally with whom; iii) why some states do not form alliances. The chapter begins by addressing these questions with traditional realist and constructivist approaches. The selection of these approaches is based on three reasons: first, they dominated the field of Security Studies so far; second, they are presented as alternatives to each other because of their adherence to different ontologies; and third, they embody the approaches which neoclassical realism is generally compared to. After elaborating how these approaches address the aforementioned three questions and highlighting their shortcomings, the chapter continues with an analysis on neoclassical realism. In this analysis, basic assumptions of neoclassical realism as well as its strengths and criticisms directed against it are given. The chapter comes to an end by developing a theoretical

framework on alliances and alliance-formation from a neoclassical realist perspective which the rest of the analysis in this dissertation is structured upon.

In the light of the neoclassical realist assumption that external context draws the basic framework for states' foreign and security policies by determining the influential externalities as well as available strategies, *Chapter 3* examines the significant externalities that affected post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe. It first elaborates NATO's post-Cold War evolution and the security cooperation in the former Soviet space. After conducting a chronological analysis on Russia's relations with the US from 1991 to 2014, it identifies the externalities that affected post-communist states' foreign and security policies.

The dissertation then continues with four country-focused chapters and scrutinizes how the externalities given in Chapter 3 influenced the alliance decisions of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Chapter 4 focuses on pro-NATO alliance trajectory of the Czech Republic. The chapter begins with an overview of internal political developments and post-communist internal transition process in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic with the purpose of highlighting the political attitude and main considerations of the Czechoslovak and Czech authorities. After identifying the domestic political peculiarities that characterized Czech political scene and influenced Czech foreign and security policies, the chapter continues with a section devoted to the external aspects of the transition process and security considerations of Czechoslovak and Czech authorities. After revealing the centrality of NATO membership in the Czech security policies, the chapter continues with an analysis on Czech-NATO relations and elaborates the dynamics behind the embracement of the objective of NATO membership. The chapter explains both the endorsement of and the continuity in the pursuit of the objective of NATO membership by taking into account the interaction of external dynamics with domestic political peculiarities of the Czech Republic. The chapter attributes the pro-NATO alliance trajectory to the assessment of external context by the Czech authorities in accordance with their political agenda and domestic political interests.

Chapter 5 examines Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory. In accordance with the neoclassical realist assumption that external context influences states in interaction with their domestic political peculiarities, the chapter begins with an

examination of Latvia's domestic political peculiarities which influenced the assessment of the externalities, most notably the Russian factor. After identifying the dominance of pro-Western groups as the most significant domestic peculiarity, the chapter continues by examining how this influenced Latvian security considerations and orientation towards NATO. The chapter argues that Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory cannot be explained only with reference to the Russian factor. Though the perceived threat from Russia was influential in Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory, a thorough account of the Latvian case requires evaluating the influence of the Russian factor in tandem with political agenda and domestic political interests of Latvian authorities.

Chapter 6 elaborates the reasons for Ukraine's not forming alliances in the post-Cold War period. The chapter begins by drawing an outline of the key political developments from 1991 to 2014 and then continues by identifying the domestic political peculiarities that characterized Ukrainian politics in this time-frame. After explaining the immediate post-Cold War security considerations and policies of the Ukrainian authorities, the chapter then examines Ukraine's relations with NATO across different Presidencies in a chronological order. In the end, the chapter searches for the dynamics which influenced Ukrainian-NATO relations. It is argued in this chapter that, even if Ukraine's security policies were influenced by the Russian factor, each president chose to deal with it in different ways depending on their political agenda and domestic interests and, by doing this, they sought both to promote external interests of the Ukrainian State, as defined by them, and to strengthen their domestic power. The chapter attributes Ukraine's not forming alliances to either deliberate choices of presidents, as witnessed during Kravchuk, Kuchma and Yanukovych presidencies, or the presence of external and internal constraints, as happened during Yushchenko Presidency.

Chapter 7 examines the alliance behaviour of the post-Soviet Belarus in detail. The chapter begins by dealing with the post-Soviet political developments in Belarus and identifying the domestic political peculiarities that influenced Belarusian foreign and security policies. The chapter continues by exploring political, economic and military dimensions of Belarusian-Russian integration. The chapter identifies the Lukashenko factor as the most important domestic

political peculiarity which influenced Belarus' pro-Russian alliance trajectory. The chapter explains Belarus' pro-Russian alliance trajectory and NATO-scepticism with reference to President Lukashenko's considerations to promote external interests of the Belarusian State, which was equated to the continuity of the regime, and to maintain his political survival.

In *Chapter 8*, the findings from the preceding four chapters are evaluated in tandem in the light of the three questions noted in Chapter 2. As such, the chapter elaborates why post-communist states formed alliances, what determined their decision on "whom to ally with", and why some post-communist states have not formed alliances. The chapter reveals not only the shortcomings of the traditional realist and constructivist approaches but also the relevance of neoclassical realist approach in addressing these questions. The chapter explains the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space with recourse to the diversity in post-communist states' external and internal contexts.

The dissertation comes to an end with *Chapter 9*, which summarizes all of the findings from country-focused and comparative analysis in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

Having been one of the core concepts of International Relations, alliances had been studied from classical realist and neorealist perspectives for decades. However, the appearance of the shortcomings of these perspectives, which embodied the traditional approach in the study of alliances, as well as the changes in international security environment in the post-Cold War period necessitated this concept to be studied from a new perspective. Undertaking this task, this chapter develops a theoretical analysis on alliances and alliance-formation from a neoclassical realist perspective. The analysis is guided by three questions: i) why states form alliances; ii) what factors determine states' decision on "whom to ally with"; iii) why some states do not form alliances.

The chapter begins with an overview of traditional realist and constructivist approaches in the study of alliances. After highlighting their shortcomings and arguing that the aforementioned questions can best be addressed by neoclassical realism, the chapter proceeds with the elaboration of the basic assumptions of neoclassical realism as well as its strengths and the criticisms directed against it. The chapter comes to an end by developing a neoclassical realist framework on alliances and alliance-formation in the light of the aforementioned three questions. In the end, the chapter will have established a theoretical backbone which the rest of the analysis in this dissertation will be structured upon.

2.2. Traditional Realist and Constructivist Approaches in the Study of Alliances

This section analyses how classical realism and neorealism, two representatives of the traditional approach in the study of alliances, as well as constructivism explain alliances and alliance-formation. The selection of classical realism and neorealism stems from their dominance in Security Studies during

Cold War, whilst that of constructivism derives from its delineation as the most significant challenger to neorealism in the post-Cold War period because of its ontologically different assumptions. The selection of these approaches is also due to the fact that they embody the approaches which neoclassical realism is generally compared to. After explaining the shortcomings of these approaches, the chapter continues with a detailed analysis on neoclassical realism in the next section. The whole analysis is structured on three questions given at the beginning of this chapter.

2.2.1. Traditional Realist Approach: Classical Realism and Neorealism

Rather than being a monolithic body of thought, realism can best be defined as the conglomeration of different approaches which converge on a set of basic arguments. The development of realism in International Relations “can be seen as a series of refinements, amendments, qualifications, and extensions of [these] basic argument[s].”³⁸ All realists assume that international system is characterized by anarchy, which denotes that there is no supreme authority in the international arena over states. In this setting, states are primarily concerned about their security and survival and they can pursue these goals only through self-help strategies. Even if they can cooperate with other states in the pursuit of these goals, they cannot be certain about others’ intentions, since today’s friend can easily become tomorrow’s enemy. For realists, states pursue only their self-interests and aim to increase their relative gains vis-a-vis others when cooperating with others. In this setting, characterized by uncertainty over others’ intentions and clash of interests, power politics is shown by realists as a constant in inter-state relations.³⁹

The central claim of realism that this grim picture represented the reality about international relations seemed to be justified by the political realities of the Cold War. This placed realism, most notably neorealism, at the centre of the

³⁸ William C. Wohlforth, “Realism and Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, eds. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne, 2nd edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 38.

³⁹ For a detailed analysis on the assumptions shared by all realists, see. Edward A. Kolodziej, *Security and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 128.

discipline, making it difficult for alternative perspectives to challenge its self-claimed and contextually justified dominance. This remained unchanged in International Relations scholarship until the end of Cold War and determined the content of and answers to the basic discussions in the discipline.

In this framework, realism provided answers to all security-related questions in International Relations for decades. Regarding one of the basic questions in Security Studies, “how security can be provided”, realists have argued that states can be secure only by increasing their relative power vis-a-vis others. As expressed by Hans Morgenthau, who was a classical realist, competing nations face three choices to maintain or improve their relative power: “they can increase their own power, they can add to their own power the power of other nations, or they can withhold the power of other nations from the adversary.”⁴⁰ To put it simpler, states can be secure only through self-sufficiency –by increasing their military power at the expense of others- or by cooperating with other states in the form of alliances.

In the context of the Cold War, based on two opposing military blocs, the term “alliance” became the cornerstone of many realist analyses. In this period, alliances are defined as outward-oriented mechanisms established in response to external threats. Since threats are defined in military terms, alliances are understood as military endeavours which aim to offset military preponderance of a state or alliance through power or capability aggrandizement. They are established when states can no longer counter the power of another state or alliance with self-sufficiency and, therefore, decide to combine their power with other states which also feel threatened by the superior side. This was put by George Liska so that “alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something.”⁴¹ This relational definition was also shared by Ole Holsti et al. who argued that alliances are “universal component of relations between political units, irrespective of time or place.”⁴² Even though some realists developed a

⁴⁰ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005), p. 197.

⁴¹ George Liska, *Nations in Alliances: The Limits of Interdependence*, p. 12.

⁴² Ole Holsti, Terrence P. Hopmann and John D. Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), p. 2.

different understanding on the functions of alliances over time to encompass some purposes other than power-aggregation⁴³, this military-centric and outward-oriented understanding embodied the tradition in the conceptualization of alliances.⁴⁴

The traditional realist approach explains the emergence of alliances according to the theory of “balance of power”. Hans Morgenthau put it so that alliances have encapsulated “historically most important manifestation of the balance of power.”⁴⁵ The theory of balance of power rests in the argument that, when facing a rising power, threatened states tends to balance it by joining the weaker side.⁴⁶ Arguing from a neorealist perspective, Kenneth N. Waltz explained the tendency to side with the weaker side so that the “first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system.”⁴⁷ In this framework, alliances are conceived as mechanisms which aim to restore power equilibrium in the international system and emerge as by-products of states’ balance of power considerations.

This perspective was later extended and modified by Stephen M. Walt through his theory of “balance of threat”. According to this theory, states balance threat, not crude power.⁴⁸ For Walt, perceived degree of threats shows variations depending on the combination of four factors - distribution of capabilities,

⁴³ Of these scholars, James Morrow argues that states might aim to increase not only their security but also autonomy by forming alliances. James D. Morrow, “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances”.

⁴⁴ For other supporters of traditional approach, see. Edwin H. Fedder, “The Concept of Alliance”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (March 1968); George Liska, *Nations in Alliances: The Limits of Interdependence*; Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*; Robert A. Kann, “Alliances vs. Ententes”, *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1976).

⁴⁵ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, p. 197.

⁴⁶ For more information on “balance of power”, see. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, pp. 181-217; Kenneth N. Waltz, “Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power,” in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 98-130; Edward Gulick, *Europe’s Classical Balance of Power* (New York: Norton, 1967); Chapter 7 named “The Balance of Power in Theory and Practice,” in Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962).

⁴⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, “Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power”, p. 127.

⁴⁸ Stephen M. Walt, “Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Spring 1998), p. 311.

offensive capabilities, geographical proximity and aggressive intentions.⁴⁹ For Walt, states feel threatened by stronger states located in the vicinity which have offensive capabilities.

According to “balance of threat” theory, the sense of threat towards a specific state or alliance does not cause specific alliance behaviours. As Walt argues, when confronting a threatening state, threatened states can balance against it or bandwagon with it. When threat perceptions are caused by the distribution of capabilities, offensive capabilities and geographical proximity, states might choose either balancing or bandwagoning. The bandwagoning type of behaviour might stem from the attractiveness of superior power or the imminence of threat.⁵⁰ In this theory, “aggressive intentions” of the threatening states or alliances appear as the only factor that encourages the threatened side to balance.

Even though Waltz and Walt attributed balancing to different components, power and threat respectively, they accepted that balancing is the most rational strategy for states encountering a stronger or threatening state and it takes place more frequent than bandwagoning.⁵¹ Moreover, both scholars argued that balancing has a stabilizing influence on international system since it encourages aggressive states to act with restraint and benevolence. In contrast, they accepted bandwagoning as a strategy leading to a more competitive system in which international rivalries will be tense and states will be more inclined to use force.⁵²

That said, it should also be noted that both Waltz and Walt focused on the behaviour of great powers. In their theories, small states remain on the margins since they are accepted to have a marginal effect on the operation of international system. Arguing that small states tend to balance against the stronger side, Waltz argued that:

⁴⁹ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 22-27.

⁵⁰ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 20.

⁵¹ Stephen M. Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power”, *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Spring 1985), p. 15. This is also shared by Kenneth N. Waltz in “Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power”, p. 127.

⁵² Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, pp. 112-113.

Secondary states, if they are free to choose, flock to the weaker side; for it is the stronger side that threatens them. On the weaker side, they are both more appreciated and safer, provided, of course, that the coalition they join achieves enough defensive or deterrent strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking.⁵³

Similarly, Walt argues that “the safer strategy is to join with those who cannot readily dominate their allies, in order to avoid being dominated by those who can.”⁵⁴ For him, weaker states would have a greater say if they join the weaker side because their assistance is needed more by the weak. Yet, arguing that weaker states balance only when their capabilities affect the outcome, Walt assumes that the weak might also have propensity towards bandwagoning than balancing under certain circumstances.⁵⁵

Walt also accepts the possibility that neither balancing nor bandwagoning might appear optional for some states from time to time. In such cases, states might prefer not to form alliances. Walt explains this occurrence with reference to systemic dynamics. In this respect, he delineates bipolarity as a permitting condition that enables states to avoid of joining alliances with the purpose of allaying systemic pressures which result from inter-bloc confrontation.⁵⁶ However, he does not deepen this argument and continues to structure his analysis on the options of balancing and bandwagoning.

It can be deduced from the above-mentioned framework that classical realists and neorealists accept that states might not form alliances only if they could provide their security through self-sufficiency. In other cases, this is not viewed as a rational strategy since international anarchy compels them to be constantly ready in arms against possible encroachments to their sovereignty and independence. As Waltz argued, “because any state may at any time use force, all

⁵³ Kenneth N. Waltz, “Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power”, p. 127.

⁵⁴ Stephen M. Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power”, *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Spring 1985), p. 5.

⁵⁵ For example, Stephen M. Walt argues that weak states are tempted to bandwagon if they are threatened by great powers in their vicinity. When a great power is capable of rapid and effective action, this temptation is greater. Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 120.

⁵⁶ Stephen M. Walt, “Alliances in Theory and Practice: What Lies Ahead?”, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Summer/Fall 1989), p. 2.

states must constantly be ready either to counter force with force or to pay the cost of weakness.”⁵⁷ Therefore, thought from a classical realist or neorealist perspective, it can be said that, when states are unable to provide their security through self-sufficiency, it is more rational for them to form alliances.

That said, it should also be noted that classical realism still recognizes the possibility that states might not form alliances. According to classical realism, security policies are made by statesmen through cost-benefit calculations. Since consequences of such calculations show variations according to external context, it is not possible to devise a “one-fits-all” strategy for states. Therefore, states might choose not to form alliances in case their leaders conceive this as the most appropriate strategy under some circumstances.

For Hans Morgenthau, “a nation will shun alliances if it believes that it is strong enough to hold its own unaided or that the burden of the commitments resulting from the alliance is likely to outweigh the advantage to be expected.”⁵⁸ Similarly, Dan Reiter argues, when deciding whether to join an alliance or not, “a nation must consider that entering an alliance in peacetime provides the benefits of extended deterrence and military assistance in the event of war, at the expense of raising the risks of being involved in wars of no direct interest to the nation.”⁵⁹ Using the term “neutrality” as the opposite of alliance-formation, Dan Reiter also argues that neutrality is a strategy enabling states to remain aloof of the unnecessary involvement from wars not directly related to their national interests. He further argues that states might decide not to form alliances if the benefit of avoiding of necessary involvements in wars exceeds the costs from the absence of allies that can help them in case of an attack. From his perspective, this strategy is likely to be pursued by weak states placed at the border of the poles’

⁵⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 160.

⁵⁸ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, p. 197.

⁵⁹ Dan Reiter, “Learning, Realism, and Alliances: The Weight of the Shadow of the Past”, *World Politics*, Vol. 46 (July 1994), p. 495.

spheres of influence and, hence, likely to be the first to be overrun if a war occurs between two superpowers.⁶⁰

Therefore, even though classical realists hypothetically accept that states might not form alliances, they still view this as a risky choice since it leaves states vulnerable and at the mercy of belligerents or aggressive states. For Hans Morgenthau, during war-time, belligerents evaluate the existence of such states only from one angle - in what way they are likely to influence the outcome of war. In this respect, when the involvement of these states into conflicts is seen essential for military success, they may easily become the target of attacks.⁶¹ Arguing from a similar perspective, Baker Fox argues that choosing such a strategy over alliance-formation is a choice without safety guarantees since its achievement depends on the expectation that neighbouring powers will respect it and the hope that states' own forces will serve as a physical deterrent.⁶²

The risks associated with not forming alliances are accepted to increase in bipolar international systems. For states located in the buffer zones, the strategy of not forming alliances might turn into a security problem since these states' position might be found unreliable by conflicting parties. Therefore, the lack of trust in inter-state relations as well as the suspicions of conflicting sides regarding whether their counterparts will respect the choices of states in the buffer zones place them at the centre of great power attention and confrontation. Therefore, in bipolar systems, policy makers are often forced to ally with one of the conflicting sides in order to protect themselves from possible aggression.⁶³

The Melian Dialogue is extensively used by classical realists to show the risks associated with not forming alliances when self-sufficiency is not available.⁶⁴ They point to the rejection of Melos, an island politically and legally

⁶⁰ Dan Reiter, "Learning, Realism, and Alliances: The Weight of the Shadow of the Past", pp. 495, 498.

⁶¹ Taken from Christine Agius, *The Social Construction of Swedish Neutrality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 17.

⁶² Taken from Jessica L. Beyer and Stephanie C. Hofmann, "Varieties of neutrality: Norm revision and decline", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 46 (2011), pp. 287-288.

⁶³ Ole Elgström, "Do images matter? The making of Swedish neutrality 1834-1853", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2000), p. 246.

⁶⁴ As observed in, Christine Agius, *The Social Construction of Swedish Neutrality*, p. 12.

linked to Sparta, to align with either Athens or Sparta in countering the former's pressures, and its plea for neutrality as choices leading to its ultimate destruction. They use the failure of the Melosian quest for neutrality to justify the assumption that independence can only be secured by power. Referring to what Athenians said in the Melian dialogue, they argue "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must". For classical realists, it is a timeless wisdom that the powerful will subdue the weak and the weak cannot remain impartial.

Given these assumptions, the following conclusions can be made regarding the traditional realist approach to three questions noted at the beginning of this chapter. First of all, delineating alliances as outward-oriented mechanisms, realists view states' search for security in international anarchy against external threats as the basic dynamic behind the formation of alliances. From this perspective, alliances serve their members' security through aggregating power and capabilities. Secondly, concerning the question of "whom to ally with", realists make use of "balance of power" and "balance of threat" theories. In this framework, assuming that states (*do* or *should*) tend to balance against stronger and threatening side, they argue that they (*do* or *should*) ally with weaker or threatened side. Finally, regarding the question of why some states do not form alliances, they argue that states might shun alliances if they can achieve security through self-sufficiency. If states cannot be secure in this way, they point to alliances as the only mechanism to provide security. Therefore, they argue that states *cannot* or *should not* stay out of alliances when confronting a rising or superior state if the option of self-sufficiency is not available. Realists view states which act in opposition to this assumption as deviants and relegate them to the margins of international politics.⁶⁵

2.2.2. Constructivism

It is shown in the preceding section that, due to the dominance of classical realism and neorealism in International Relations and Security Studies during Cold War, alliance-related questions had long been answered with a state-centric, external-oriented and material-dominant perspective. Even though alternative

⁶⁵ Pertti Joenniemi, "Neutrality beyond the Cold War", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 19 (1993), p. 295.

approaches had emerged in the discipline beginning from the late 1970s, it was the end of the Cold War and the dramatic changes in the international structure as well as security environment that revealed the necessity to address such questions with a new perspective. Of the approaches attempting to fulfil this task, constructivism came to the forefront with the promise of introducing ideational factors in the security analysis and setting a major renovation in the field.

Similar to realism, constructivism is an umbrella term composed of a cluster of approaches that unite in their adherence to a set of meta-theoretical assumptions but diverge among themselves according to the levels of analysis as well as the basic concepts with reference to which the analysis is conducted.⁶⁶ In general terms, what unites constructivists is their denial of positivism, rejection of materialism and adherence to social ontology. Due to this ontological background, constructivism emerges as an alternative to neorealism and a challenger to traditional security understanding.⁶⁷

The most notable difference between neorealism and constructivism is the rejection by the latter of the neorealist assumption that structure is ontologically

⁶⁶ The diversity among constructivists is categorized by Ted Hopf as *conventional* and *critical* constructivists, by Edward A. Kolodziej as *light* and *heavy* constructivists, Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit as *modernists* and *post-modernist* constructivists, by Christian Reus-Smith, in another source, as *holistic*, *systemic* and *unit-level* constructivists. For more about these categorizations, respectively see. Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer 1998); Edward A. Kolodziej, *Security Studies and International Relations*; Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, "Dangerous Liaisons?: Critical International Theory and Constructivism", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1998); Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd edition (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2005).

⁶⁷The contradictory position of realism and constructivism is not shared by all International Relations scholars, which can be seen as an outgrowth of the variant nature of both approaches. Whether they are complementary or contradictory depends on which realism or constructivism one compares. The scholars who defend the compatibility argument mainly refer to conventional constructivism and classical realism. Of them, Samuel Barkin develops the concept of "realist constructivism" which he defines as an approach that study the relationship between normative structures, political morality and power. Samuel Barkin, "Realist constructivism", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5 (2003). In contrast, scholars who claim realism and constructivism are incompatible equate realism with rationalism and materialism and constructivism with social ontology and ideationalism. Of them, Christian Reus-Smith view them contradictory because of following ontological arguments: i) rationalists assume actors are atomistic egoists; constructivists assume they are social and their identities reflect the institutionalized norms, values and ideas of the social environment in which they act; ii) rationalists treat interests as externally given; constructivists see them as endogenous to social interactions; iii) rationalists view society as a strategic realm in which actors rationally pursue their interests; constructivists evaluate it as a constitutive realm, making individuals who they are. Christian Reus-Smith, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Politics*. Drawing on the distinction made by Reus-Smith, this dissertation treats realism and constructivism as alternatives on the grounds that they share different ontologies.

prior to actors and independent of agent interactions. For constructivists, structure exists in process and acquires meaning socially and interchangeably. The shift from material to cognitive content of structure⁶⁸ leads constructivists to assume that “security environment in which states are embedded is cultural and institutional rather than just material.”⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the central role given by constructivists to ideational factors does not mean the absolute denial of material factors. What is denied by them is not the importance of material factors, but the pre-social meanings attached to materialities by neorealists.⁷⁰ For constructivists, material factors neither have a meaning on their own nor have independent effects on actors. They affect states’ security behaviour according to the meanings they yield. Arguing from this position, Alexander Wendt argues that the centrality of ideas does not change the fact that “material forces still matter and people are still intentional actors, but [what he argued is that] the meaning of the former and the content of the latter depend largely on the shared ideas in which they are embedded.”⁷¹ He sums up his position so that “without ideas there are no interests; without interests, there are no meaningful material conditions, without material conditions there is no reality at all.”⁷²

This cognitive conceptualization of security leads to a different understanding on alliance-related issues than realism. Contrary to classical realists and neorealists, who explain alliance-formation in terms of power politics and material-based considerations, constructivists identify ideas and norms as the basic dynamic behind the establishment and continuity of alliances. Ted Hopf reveals the insufficiency of neorealism by pointing to the fact that the US viewed the USSR as a threat after the Second World War despite the notable discrepancy

⁶⁸ Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 104.

⁶⁹ Ronald L. Jepperson et al., “Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), Kindle Edition.

⁷⁰ Ted Hopf, “Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory”, p. 177.

⁷¹ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 193.

⁷² Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 139.

between the US and Soviet military capabilities. For Ted Hopf, the key question is why the US, together with France, UK and Germany, came to understand the Soviet military capabilities and geographical proximity as threatening. The answer to this puzzle, for Ted Hopf, is that “state identities of Western Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union, each rooted in domestic socio-cultural milieus, produced understandings of one another based on differences in identity and practice.”⁷³

Significant in constructivist security approach is the concept of identity, which crucially influences how states understand the nature of prevailing security environment and accordingly make their foreign and security policies.⁷⁴ For constructivists, the linkage between identity and security implies the existence of an other against which the notion of self and conditions of insecurity are articulated. This is put by Ken Booth so that “identity- who I really think I am / who one actually believes one is / who they think they are / what makes us believe we are the same and them different is basic to many aspects of the discussion of security.”⁷⁵ As also argued by Wendt:

Processes of identity formation under anarchy are concerned first and foremost with preservation or “security” of the self. Concepts of security therefore differ in the extent to which and the manner in which the self is identified cognitively with the other.⁷⁶

In telling people who they are, identities strongly imply a particular set of interests and preferences with respect to choices of action in particular domains, and with respect to particular actors.⁷⁷ According to Alexander Wendt, “interests

⁷³ Ted Hopf, “Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory”, p. 187.

⁷⁴ Matt McDonald, “Security, sovereignty and identity”, refereed paper presented to the Jubilee conference of the Australian Political Studies Association, Australian National University, Canberra, October 2002, available at: <http://arts.anu.edu.au/sss/apsa/Papers/mcdonald.pdf> (accessed on 29 January 2011), p. 8.

⁷⁵ Ken Booth, “Security and Self Reflections of a Fallen Realist”, paper presented at the conference “Strategies in Conflict: Critical Approaches to Security Studies”, Toronto, 12-14 May 1994, available at: <http://www.yorku.ca/yciss/publications/OP26-Booth.pdf> (accessed on 10 March 2011), p.4.

⁷⁶ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992), p. 399.

⁷⁷ Ted Hopf, “Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory”, p. 175.

presuppose identities, because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is.”⁷⁸ Giving an ontologically prior status to identities over interests, Wendt further explicates that:

Identities are the basis of interests. Actors do not have a ‘portfolio’ of interests that they carry around independent of the social context; instead, they define their interests in the process of defining situations.⁷⁹

These lead constructivists to assume that there is not a single logic of anarchy. As expressed by Alexander Wendt, “anarchy is an empty vessel without intrinsic meaning”⁸⁰ and “self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy.”⁸¹ Instead, “anarchy is what states make of it.”⁸² Therefore, neither anarchy nor being self-help means states having egoistic mind-set and pursuing selfish interests at the expense of others. The inevitable consequence of this understanding is that states do not regard all other states as potential enemies, but understand other states differently.⁸³ Actors “act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them.”⁸⁴ As a result, contrary to realists who assume “states do what they have the power to do”, constructivists argue that “states do what they think most appropriate.”⁸⁵

In the light of these assumptions, constructivists envisage that a shared identity is likely to generate a shared definition of threat among states.⁸⁶ As such,

⁷⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 231.

⁷⁹ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, p. 398.

⁸⁰ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 309.

⁸¹ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, p. 394.

⁸² Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, p. 395.

⁸³ Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory”, p. 188.

⁸⁴ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, pp. 396-7.

⁸⁵ Theo Farrell, “Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program”, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 2002), p. 52.

they expect states with similar ideational milieu to ally with one another. Arguing from this perspective, Michael N. Barnett analyses the alliance patterns in the Middle East from a constructivist perspective and shows how the shared Arab identity caused Arab states to identify Israel as a common threat. For him, even though this did not solve the collective action problems and free-riding, the shared identity patterns established the ground for the emergence of alliances due to the similar threat perceptions they yielded.⁸⁷

They further argue that, once established, alliances develop a sense of collective identity among allied states. The most well-known concept in this regard is “security communities”. This concept envisages that, even though initially established against another state or coalition, which is perceived as a significant other, alliances turn into imaginative and cognitive regions based on a collective identity.⁸⁸ Once alliances serve to the reproduction of state identities, they also become the instruments of providing “ontological security”⁸⁹ through the reproduction of state identities. In this framework, in contrast to neorealists who explain maintenance of alliances according to the prevalence of external threats, constructivists explain the persistence of alliances according to the degree of community among its members. In addition, contrary to neorealists who show alliances merely as instruments of military security, they assume that alliances also serve to states’ ideational needs.

It can also be reasoned that constructivism does not exclude the possibility that some states might not form alliances. Since states act in the international sphere according to what they think would be appropriate, they might prefer to

⁸⁶ Michael N. Barnett, “Identity and Alliances in the Middle East,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*.

⁸⁷ Michael N. Barnett, “Identity and Alliances in the Middle East”.

⁸⁸ Emanuel Adler, “Imagined (Security) Communities: Cognitive Regions in International Relations”, *Millenium*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1997); Ronald R. Krebs, “The Limits of Alliance: Conflict, Cooperation, and Collective Identity,” in *The real and the ideal: essays on international relations in honor of Richard H. Ullman*, eds. Anthony Lake and David Ochmanek (Oxford: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), p. 219.

⁸⁹ According to Jennifer Mitzen, ontological security is the security of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action. Jennifer Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2006), p. 344.

shun alliances if their identities guide them to do so.⁹⁰ Such an occurrence might take place if states do not identify themselves with the existing alliances or their identities generate norms praising neutrality.⁹¹ For Christine Agius, the latter case is likely to happen for states which embrace internationalist worldview emphasising normative values.⁹² Furthermore, it is argued that, once embraced, such a position might be difficult to change because it turns into a belief and becomes a part of states' security cultures.⁹³

In the light of the aforementioned theoretical framework, the three questions given at the beginning of this chapter can be answered from a constructivist perspective as follows. First of all, similar to traditional realist approach, constructivism understands alliances as mechanisms established against threats. However, since states define threats on the basis of their identities, they argue that security interests promoted by alliances have not only material but also ideational content. Due to the correlation between material and ideational interests, alliances also become mechanisms of promoting not only material but also ontological security of states. Secondly, as states' self-identifications determine who the others are or what threats they face, similar self-identifications produce similarities in threat perceptions and states are likely to be allied with other states sharing the same identity with them. Finally, regarding the question of why some states do not form alliances, they argue that states might refrain from forming alliances if the image represented by alliances contradict with the norms

⁹⁰ Christine Agius, "Transformed beyond recognition? The politics of post-neutrality", p. 375.

⁹¹ Laurent Goetschel also explains neutrality "as a principled belief whose political core consists of interest-based, normative ideas on foreign and security policy orientation." Laurent Goetschel, "Neutrality, a Really Dead Concept?", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1999), p. 117.

⁹² Christine Agius, "Transformed beyond recognition? The politics of post-neutrality", p. 375.

⁹³ National security culture denotes to cognitive traditions rooted in countries' persistent organizational process, history, tradition and culture. Bearing the imprint of socialized and intergenerationalized interpretations of historical legacies, persistent geographical parameters and social realities, it helps the policy actors to give a meaning to the present material circumstances and, therefore, forms a bridge between the present circumstances and the legacies carried forward from the past. Peter Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1995); Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars", *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1995); Christoph O. Meyer, "Convergence Towards a European Strategic Culture? A Constructivist Framework for Explaining Changing Norms", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1995); Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic culture and national security policy", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2002).

at the basis of their identities or if their identities generate norms praising neutrality.

2.2.3. Shortcomings of Traditional Realist and Constructivist Approaches

This chapter has elaborated so far the basic assumptions of traditional realist and constructivist approaches in the study of alliances and alliance-formation. In the rest of the section, a neoclassical realist framework on alliances and alliance-formation will be developed. Before deepening the analysis in this regard, it seems essential to analyse the shortcomings of both approaches in order to highlight why they are disregarded as theoretical guidance in this study and why neoclassical realism is chosen as the approach which the rest of the analysis will be structured on.

Evaluating the adequacy of traditional realist approach in the study of alliances, it should first be noted that it cannot fully capture the complexities of the process of alliance-formation. To begin with, due to the broadened nature of security in the post-Cold War world, it is no longer possible to define threats only in external and military terms. Accordingly, alliances can no longer be viewed only as mechanisms of power-aggrandizement to counter military threats coming from other states or alliances. Instead, states might choose to form alliances with different reasons. They might expect benefits other than military security, such as receiving economic aid or political guidance, making use of advanced military technologies or dealing with non-traditional security threats in a concerted way.

In addition, neorealists excessively focus on external dynamics and disregard the complexities in foreign and security policy making process. Even though the influence of external dynamics and material considerations on states' alliance decisions still endure, this does not mean that states only respond to external dynamics. After all, neither are states as unitary as neorealists assume nor do their leaders have unconstrained authority and possess maximum mobilizing and extracting capacity. Instead, they are constrained by both external and internal dynamics. Since alliance decisions are made by leaders and as leaders are engaged in both international and domestic politics, alliance decisions are inevitably influenced by leaders' considerations at both levels.

All in all, though classical realists and neorealists could claim to delineate the reality during Cold War, it seems no longer possible for them to make such a claim because they cannot fully explain the complexities of contemporary security environment and alliance-formation due to their excessive reliance on externalism and materialism.

The need to address the concept of alliances with a new approach which goes beyond realists' excessive materialism seems to be undertaken by constructivism. The most remarkable difference brought by constructivism is its elaboration of states' ideational milieu in understanding their security considerations and policies. Nevertheless, constructivists base their analysis on concepts such as culture and identity which are ambiguous and difficult to comprehend. Such concepts may lead to various and even sometimes conflicting assumptions depending on how they are defined at the state level. This might create problems to understand the security and threat definitions of states, such as those in the former Soviet space, in which national identities are controversial. Furthermore, similar to classical realists and neorealists, constructivists also focuses on external threats. Though they define threats with reference to ideational factors, they still view alliances as military mechanisms promoting security against external threats/others. Therefore, despite the renovations brought by constructivism, it is still not possible to view it sufficient to conduct a comprehensive and precise analysis on alliance-related questions. Due to the analytical difficulties and its theoretical ambiguity, constructivism is also disregarded for the analysis in this dissertation.

These shortcomings make it clear that both traditional realist and constructivist approaches are insufficient to develop a thorough and comprehensive understanding on alliances. Given the complexity of the current security environment as well as policy-making processes, the formation of alliances should be studied with an approach which takes into account external and internal dynamics as well as military and non-military considerations. This task can be achieved by neoclassical realism, which analyses states' foreign and security policies with a multi-level perspective.

2.3. Neoclassical Realism and the Study of Alliances

This dissertation adopts neoclassical realism as its theoretical guide. Considering the fact that it is an approach still in the making and in need of clarification, the following analysis starts by explaining its content. To that end, this section first gives the basic assumptions of neoclassical realism and then clarifies its position vis-a-vis other approaches. After developing an understanding on what neoclassical realism is and how it differs from other approaches, a neoclassical realist framework on alliances and alliance-formation is drawn. The theoretical analysis in the following part of this chapter will guide the rest of the analysis in this dissertation.

2.3.1. Basic Assumptions of Neoclassical Realism

The term neoclassical realism was coined by Gideon Rose in 1998 to denote a number of realist scholars who claim to offer a more sophisticated explanation for states' foreign and security policies by combining external and internal variables.⁹⁴ Given the relatively recent emergence of neoclassical realism, it is more accurate to describe it as a crystallizing body of thought. For that reason, its content and assumptions are often described with reference to the writings of leading neoclassical realists, most prominently Randall Schweller, Fareed Zakaria, William Curtis Wohlforth, Thomas Christensen and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro.⁹⁵ This is why it is sometimes argued that there is no single neoclassical theory, but theories.⁹⁶

To date, the most well-known and frequent-quoted description of neoclassical realism is provided by Gideon Rose. As Rose puts it:

⁹⁴ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy", *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (October 1998).

⁹⁵ Basic neoclassical texts include the following: Randall Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); William Curtis Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993); Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁹⁶ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell and Norrin M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the state, and foreign policy," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 10.

[Neoclassical realists] argue that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative capabilities. This is why they are realist. They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical.⁹⁷

As revealed by this definition, neoclassical realism has linkages to both classical realism and neorealism. Neoclassical realists not only adhere to neorealist assumption that international system sets the basic framework for states' international behaviour, but also revive the classical realists' interests in state-society relationship and leadership.

The primary concern of neoclassical realists is to explain the variations in a specific state's foreign policy over time as well as differences in different states' behaviours when they faced similar external constraints.⁹⁸ This also embodies the basic difference between neorealism and neoclassical realism. Whereas neorealism explains the recurrent patterns in international outcomes, neoclassical realism is interested in states' specific foreign and security policies. To put it differently, whilst neorealism analyses the aggregate behaviour of states, neoclassical realism examines the behaviour of particular states at a particular time and in certain circumstances. In this respect, whereas neorealism is defined a system theory, neoclassical realism is generally described as a theory of foreign policy.⁹⁹

The common theme in the writings of neoclassical realists is their rejection to the neorealist priority given to systemic influences in the shaping of state behaviours. Criticizing the neorealist attempt to explain state behaviours merely with reference to systemic pressures, they incorporate domestic factors into the analysis in order to provide a better understanding on how states behave in the international arena. Nevertheless, they do not incorporate domestic dynamics into analysis in a domestic-reductionist way since they argue that "a good account of a

⁹⁷ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy", p. 146.

⁹⁸ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State-Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State", *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (July-September 2006), p. 480.

⁹⁹ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy", p. 146.

nation's foreign policy should include systemic, domestic, and other influences, specifying what aspects of foreign policy can be explained by what factors."¹⁰⁰ Therefore, adopting a holistic approach to the level of analysis problem and taking a multi-level perspective, they provide a more sophisticated understanding on state behaviours.

That said, it should also be indicated that this does not mean disregard of the importance of systemic or external factors on states' foreign and security policies. Instead, for neoclassical realists, analysis must start at the system level because it is the systemic factors, basically distribution of capabilities, which set the framework within which states can determine their policies. In this regard, similar to neorealism, neoclassical realism envisages that states with relatively strong material capabilities have more policy options than states with less and they can adopt more ambitious foreign policies.

Furthering this assumption, neoclassical realists also argue that international system does not directly shape states' foreign policies. Rather, states assess and adapt to changes in their external environment as a result of their domestic political peculiarities. As Jennifer Sterling-Folker explains, "anarchy does not dictate how states should arrange their domestic processes to achieve that ends. States are free to experiment [...] Domestic processes act as the final arbiter for state survival within an anarchic environment."¹⁰¹ Therefore, what matters from a neoclassical perspective is how systemic pressures are interpreted at the domestic level, a task which they undertake by incorporating domestic political peculiarities as intervening variables into their analysis.

For neoclassical realists, "complex domestic processes act as transmission belts that channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces (primarily changes in relative power)."¹⁰² Because their domestic contexts differ from one another, states behave differently and react to international

¹⁰⁰ Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay", *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Summer 1992), p. 198.

¹⁰¹ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State-Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State", p. 467.

¹⁰² Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing", p. 164.

environment in different ways even if they are located in similar external circumstances and faced similar external pressures. As Sterling-Folker puts it:

Because domestic processes are not identical, no group addresses the pressures of environment in quite the same way or emulates the processes of others in quite the same manner. The interpretation of success itself is filtered through perceptual lenses colored by existing internal processes and their differences.¹⁰³

The most significant consequence of rejecting systemic determinism is the acceptance of the agential influences on state behaviours. Accordingly, in order to explain variations in states' foreign and security policies, neoclassical realists examine how external context is assessed at this level. To express with the established jargon, neoclassical realists open the black-box of states.

A different contemplation of agent-structure nexus brings neoclassical realists closer to their classical predecessors, which emphasize the importance of leadership. After all, it is leaders that make decisions on behalf of their states. Therefore, deviating from the primacy given by neorealists to international structure, neoclassical realists bring statesmen back to the analysis. From their viewpoint, "statesmen, not states, are the primary actors in international affairs, and their perceptions of shifts in power, rather than objective measures, are critical."¹⁰⁴ This is underlined by Randall L. Schweller so that statecraft is not only about geostrategic risks and opportunities presented by a given systemic environment, but also a consequence of elites' preferences and perceptions of the external environment and domestic political risks associated with certain foreign policy choices.¹⁰⁵

In order to fully understand leaders' calculations, it should also be underlined that leaders play a two-level game and pursue external and internal ends at the same time.¹⁰⁶ Whilst they are externally interested in achieving self-

¹⁰³ Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "Realist Environment, Liberal Process, and Domestic-Level Variables", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (March 1997), p. 21.

¹⁰⁴ Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁵ Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing", p. 169.

¹⁰⁶ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Summer 1988).

preservation of their state, they are internally concerned with maintaining and strengthening their domestic power. Rather than addressing these realms separately and pursuing their objectives at these levels independently, leaders combine them. In the end, they can act internationally for the domestic ends or domestically for international ends.¹⁰⁷

The top-down conceptualization of state, which presupposes that foreign policies are made by state elites, leads some neoclassical realists to base their analysis on the claim that elites have access to information and intelligence and are most able to assess the long-term strategic interests of their country. However, for many neoclassical neorealists, this is not as smooth as first envisaged. After all, elites who have decision-making power in the domain of foreign and security policies may be divided over threat assessments and policies to be pursued to encounter them. Such divergences might turn foreign policy into an area of domestic competition. This is especially the case with states whose political systems distribute decision-making powers equally among competing institutions and divergent elites.

Another common theme in neoclassical realist writings is the societal influence on policy making and implementation processes. Even though neoclassical realists prioritize the leaders' assessments in the making of foreign and security policies, they do not insulate leaders from society. After all, leaders need to take into account the societal support both to implement their policies and to maintain and strengthen their domestic power.

Norrin Ripsman identifies the political system of states as a factor that influences the degree of societal influence on foreign policies. Accordingly, he argues that, in a state with non-democratic credentials, leaders might be more autonomous, and thus, insulated from the demands of general public as well as domestic actors and institutions. Yet, leaders of non-democratic states might also be vulnerable because they depend on the support of strong political actors to retain their hold in power. In such cases, leaders mostly tend to consider the demands of the groups from which their domestic power stem, and the military,

¹⁰⁷ Steven E. Lobell, "Threat Assessment, the state, and foreign policy: a neoclassical realist model," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, p. 56. For a similar view, see, Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics", *International Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Autumn 1978).

which can attempt to overturn them through a coup in case of dissatisfaction with the policies pursued.¹⁰⁸

For Ripsman, leaders of democratic states face demands by various actors each of which has the potential to influence the policy-making process. Pointing to the parliaments, he argues that the legislature is the principal agent through which the demands of various domestic groups and public opinion are channelled to the political realm.¹⁰⁹ The significance of legislature also stems from the fact that it can influence the policy making process in several direct or indirect ways. Whilst the right of veto guaranteed by the Constitution gives the legislature the means of direct influence, the budgetary discussions emerge as an instrument of indirect influence.

Regarding the issues of what kind of domestic actors are the most able to influence the policy making process and under what conditions, Norrin M. Ripsman foresees that,

In general, the domestic actors that can be most influential are those that have sufficient power to remove the leader or executive from office, those that can use their veto to obstruct the government's programmatic goals, or those that can shape the definition of national interests. These actors are more likely to have a significant impact on policy choices, principally when the international threat situation is low, when the leader's hold on power is weak, and when the national security executive lacks structural autonomy.¹¹⁰

Evaluating the impact of societal factors on foreign policies, neoclassical realists also address the electoral concerns of leaders. As such, the desire of the leaders to satisfy their electorate is shown as a factor that determines what is politically rational for themselves¹¹¹ since a strong domestic opposition increases the domestic vulnerability and risks for them.¹¹² Vulnerable leaders are more open to criticism, and therefore, less free to choose and implement their own

¹⁰⁸ Norrin M. Ripsman, "Neoclassical realism and domestic interest groups," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁹ Norrin M. Ripsman, "Neoclassical realism and domestic interest groups", p. 171.

¹¹⁰ Norrin M. Ripsman, "Neoclassical realism and domestic interest groups", p. 192.

¹¹¹ Özgür Özdamar and Balkan Devlen, "Neoclassical Realism and Foreign Policy Crises," in *Rethinking Realism in International Relations: Between Tradition and Innovation*, eds. Annette Freyberg-Inan, Ewan Harrison and Patrick James (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 145.

¹¹² Özgür Özdamar and Balkan Devlen, "Neoclassical Realism and Foreign Policy Crises", p. 147.

preferences, or more inclined to pursue moderated foreign policies. In a similar vein, Randall L. Schweller argues regarding the government or regime vulnerability that “weak governments have less policy capacity than do legitimate ones; that is, they are less able to detect and assess threats; to control mobilize, and allocate national resources; to articulate and choose policies; and to implement those policies.”¹¹³

Neoclassical realist focus on leaders’ relative ability to make and implement policies shows a stark contrast to neorealism, which assumes that leaders (states) have maximum ability to mobilize resources at their disposal in devising adequate security strategies. From a neoclassical realist perspective, states are constrained not only by their relative capabilities vis-a-vis others but also their ability to use them.

To shed a light on this issue, Thomas Christensen differentiate between “state power” and “national power”. The former denotes the aggregate resources at a state’s disposal, whereas the latter means the ability of leaders to mobilize their nation’s human and material resources behind security policy initiatives.¹¹⁴ For Thomas Christensen, when states grow in power vis-a-vis society, this causes an increase in its power, even if its aggregate power and capabilities do not change.¹¹⁵

Fareed Zakaria makes a similar judgement through the concept of “extractive capacity”, which he defines as the ability to extract material and human resources from society for whatever purposes state elites determine. For Fareed Zakaria, the extractive capacity of states determines the strategies to be developed. Building upon and complementing the neorealist assumption that states engage in a strategy of internal balancing when faced an external threat, Fareed Zakaria assumes that states might choose among three types of strategies depending on their extractive capacity: emulation, innovation, or continuity of the

¹¹³ Randall L. Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing”, p. 174.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*, p. 11.

¹¹⁵ Brian Rathbun, “A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism”, *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2008), p. 302.

existing strategies and practices. Emulation and innovation require high extraction capacity because these two strategies entail reallocation of resources and increased extraction from society as well as creation of new institutions and destruction of old ones. By differentiating between strong and weak states, he argues that stronger states have greater access to economic and potential resources, so they can adopt more ambitious foreign policies. In contrast, weak states suffer from fragmentation, penetration by interest groups, lack of revenues, minimal responsibilities.¹¹⁶

In addition to leadership factor and state-society relationship, neoclassical realists point to social cohesion as an influential factor on foreign and security policy making process. Social cohesion denotes the relative strength of ties that bind individuals and groups to the core of a given society.¹¹⁷ When all members of society “feel interconnected and integrated into the vast series of networks that make up society, good social cohesion is likely. As soon as one group feels excluded from the society in which that group is nonetheless formally present, social division is likely.”¹¹⁸

It is more difficult for leaders of divided societies to implement their policies because of their inability to mobilize the public and to extract the resources necessary to pursue their objectives. In order to counter this constraint, leaders devise strategies to mobilize public opinion. The most common strategy is to identify security conditions with reference to past traumas or glories with the purpose of integrating the society around the same objective. For Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, ideology also serves a similar purpose, increasing the propensity of individuals to identify with the state¹¹⁹ and, thus, have an integrative effect on social cohesion.

¹¹⁶ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, “State-Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State”, p. 488.

¹¹⁷ Randall L. Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing”, p. 175.

¹¹⁸ Jacques Semelin, *Unarmed against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939-1943*, trans. Suzan Husserl-Kapit (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993), pp. 64-65; as quoted in Randall Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing”, p. 176.

¹¹⁹ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, “State-Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State”, p. 491.

As it becomes clear from this framework, neoclassical realism assumes that states' foreign and security policies do not conform to systemic dictates, contrary to what neorealists assume, but come into being as a result of the interaction between external and internal dynamics. The assessment of the external context by state leaders is essential in determining the outcome of this interaction.

2.3.2. Theoretical Weaknesses and Strengths of Neoclassical Realism

As the aforementioned points show, neoclassical realism borrows from different approaches, blends their assumptions and emerges as an approach with extensive analytical value. Though this eclectic nature enables neoclassical realism to draw on the strengths and override the weaknesses of existing approaches, most notably neorealism, this structure also embodies one of the most frequent criticisms directed against this new-born realist approach. Critics argue that neoclassical realism delves too much into various theories in a way that it does not have any theoretical boundaries. This makes it clear that, in order to provide a better understanding on neoclassical realism, it is not sufficient to delineate its basic assumptions, but one also has to elaborate its position vis-à-vis relevant theoretical approaches.

Evaluating the differences of neoclassical realism from other approaches, one should first examine the relationship between neorealism and neoclassical realism since the latter emerges out of the former with the promise of fulfilling its deficiencies. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro describes the relationship between neorealism and neoclassical realism as complementary in the sense that one explains what the other does not.¹²⁰ Similarly, Fareed Zakaria argues that neoclassical realism serves to fulfil the gap left unaddressed by neorealism. To exemplify this point, Zakaria shows that neorealism assumes states engage in internal balancing along with external balancing, when facing an external threat, but leaves unanswered the questions of why and how states choose among different strategies of internal balancing, including emulation, innovation, or the support for status-quo.¹²¹ In this

¹²⁰ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited", p. 132.

¹²¹ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State-Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State", p. 466.

example, neoclassical realism offers insights about what influences the selection of different internal balancing strategies by states.

Considering the complementary relationship between neorealism and neoclassical realism, some scholars treat the latter as a “theory of mistakes”.¹²² In this case, neoclassical realism is seen as a theoretical framework used to explain the deviations from ideal behaviour determined by the international system and described by neorealism. This view is defended by defensive realists, who view domestic factors as the reasons for deviations from the ideal behaviour. The most well-known examples of this approach are Randall L. Schweller’s theory of underbalancing and Robert Jervis’s study on perceptions and misperceptions.¹²³

However, idealization of certain behaviours and description of others as failures mean narrowing states’ security policy options and accepting neorealists’ claim of supremacy. Leaders might not prefer to act as envisaged by neorealism. It is not possible to attribute this to their short-sightedness and the fact that they cannot fully comprehend the long-term trends in international politics. Instead, they might consciously prefer strategies different than those idealized by neorealists depending on their assessments of external context and domestic political interests.

Moreover, considering the fact that each state is evidently influenced by the same external context in different ways, it is also not possible to make a specific description of “success” or “failure”. Therefore, it seems analytically more relevant to analyse why states choose to behave in certain ways than what consequences their behaviours produce at the systemic level or whether or not they conform to systemic pressures. This perspective is defended by Jeffrey W. Taliaferro et al., who reject to idealize any specific behaviour and argue that the

¹²² This term belongs to Randall L. Schweller. He uses this term to describe underbalancing, which he contrasts with balancing and occurs when states either misperceive the intentions of rising powers as benign or, even if they correctly identify the threat, cannot adopt prudent policies to protect themselves because of constraining domestic factors. Randall L. Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing”, p. 168.

¹²³ Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats – Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

theoretical insights offered by neoclassical realism can be used to explain any foreign policy behaviour of states.¹²⁴

Criticising the eclectic nature of neoclassical realism, Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravscik argue that neoclassical realism puts realism in a trouble by luring its well-established core and objectives. For them, if realism is ontologically materialist, methodologically positivist and depicts states as rational and unitary, any assumption which is not in conformity with this framework means a degenerative theoretical effort. Therefore, neoclassical realists are theoretically less determinate, less coherent, and less distinctive to realism.¹²⁵

However, this criticism underestimates the point that realists hardly share a common epistemological and methodological position. After all, classical realists had no epistemological concern or claim to conduct scientific analysis, which did not make them less realist than neorealists. It is also not possible to argue that ontological position of neoclassical realists deviate from that of their predecessors since they adhere to the basic assumptions about international politics, addressed at the beginning of this chapter. What is done by neoclassical realists is to revivify realism which became too abstract and positivist under the influence of neorealism by returning back to its classical roots and giving credit to agential influences. Therefore, it is more accurate to argue with reference to Jeffrey W. Taliaferro that neorealism has not been the core of realism, so departure from it cannot be seen as a sign of degeneration.¹²⁶ Brian Rathbun adopts a similar position and argues that neoclassical realism does not jettison neorealism but progress it. He sums up this position so that neoclassical realism is “a rose by another name” and “a rose by another name is still a rose.”¹²⁷

The methodology of neoclassical realists are also criticized by Stephen M. Walt, who argues that neoclassical realism “tends to incorporate domestic

¹²⁴ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, et.al, “Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the state, and foreign policy”.

¹²⁵ Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravscik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?”, *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall 1999), p. 6.

¹²⁶ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, “State-Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State”, p. 480.

¹²⁷ Brian Rathbun, “A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism”, p. 297.

variables in an ad hoc manner” and not offer “a distinct set of explanatory hypotheses on its own.”¹²⁸ This argument rests in the belief that neoclassical realists are not keen to generalizations and parsimony as their neorealist counterparts are. As a result, neoclassical realists are criticized for arbitrarily selecting domestic variables and making contextual assumptions. As a result, Walt claims that “neoclassical realism has given up generality and predictive power in an attempt to gain descriptive accuracy and policy relevance.”¹²⁹ Similarly, Sterling-Folker argues that “it [neoclassical realism] is certainly less a coherent research program and more a return to that realist state-of-mind in which ‘the tragedy of power politics’ cannot be attributed to structural forces that are somehow ‘out there’ or beyond our control.”¹³⁰

Though criticized, selection of specific variables can be seen inevitable for a neoclassical realist analysis. This is based on the fact that neoclassical realists make contextual than parsimonious analysis. Since the relevance of variables change from state to state, it is not possible to identify certain variables that fit all contexts. Certain variables might be more salient in some contexts and for some states. Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that neoclassical realism draws a general framework which is based on general assumptions and applicable to all contexts and leaves it to scholars to make substantial analysis according to these assumptions.

Apart from neorealism, constructivism embodies another approach that neoclassical realism is generally compared to. Though neoclassical realists share with their constructivist counterparts the assumptions that domestic factors influence states’ foreign and security policies and that anarchy does not generate identical influences beyond state control, there are notable differences between two approaches. First, neoclassical realism and constructivism draw on different ontological backgrounds. As opposed to constructivists’ social ontology,

¹²⁸ Stephen M. Walt, “The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition,” in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), p. 211.

¹²⁹ Stephen M. Walt, “The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition”, p. 211.

¹³⁰ Jennifer Sterling-Folker, “Realist Theorizing as Tradition: Forward Is As Forward Does,” in *Rethinking Realism in International Relations: Between Tradition and Innovation*, p. 210.

neoclassical realists adhere to materialistic ontology. As a result, different from constructivists who define interests as intersubjectively constructed and shared ideas, neoclassical realists define interests in utilitarian terms. Accordingly, in contrast to constructivists who argue that political units act in accordance with what they deem appropriate, neoclassical realists defend that political units promote their material interests and power. Furthermore, different from constructivists who attribute ideational factors both regulative and constitutive functions and treat them as determining variables, neoclassical realists understand them as intervening variables which influence how external dynamics infiltrate to the domestic realm.¹³¹

In sum, though it still needs further theoretical clarification and faces many criticisms, neoclassical realism brings important renovations to realism. It re-incorporates particularity and contextuality into the analysis with a break from neorealist search for parsimony and generalization. Moreover, attributing internal factors equal importance with external ones, neoclassical realism develops theoretically informed narratives tracing how different factors combine to yield particular foreign policies.¹³² Therefore, it bridges the distance between external and internal factors, and gives an end to “either/or” understanding regarding whether external or internal factors are dominant in the making of policies.

The theoretical strengths of neoclassical realism render the analysts new opportunities to study key issues and concepts of International Relations with a genuinely new perspective. Having been at the centre of International Relations for decades, alliance and alliance-formation are of these concepts that can be studied with a new realist thinking.

2.3.3. Neoclassical Realist Approach to Alliances and Alliance-Formation

As it is shown in the preceding parts of this chapter, different theoretical approaches provide different insights on the questions of why states do or do not form alliances and what factors influence their alliance decisions. Given the shortcomings of neorealism and constructivism in explaining state motivations to

¹³¹ Brian Rathbun, “A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism”, p. 300.

¹³² Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy”, p. 153.

form alliances and considering the promise of neoclassical realism to study international phenomena with a new perspective, it seems necessary to address what insights can be drawn from neoclassical realism for a better understanding on alliance-formation.

It should be indicated beforehand that, due to the emerging character of neoclassical realism, alliances remained understudied in neoclassical realist literature so far. The most promising studies have been undertaken by Randall L. Schweller, who developed the concept of “underbalancing”, and Stephen R. David, who put forward the concept of “omnibalancing.”¹³³ Both Schweller and David have developed their theoretical frameworks as refinements to Stephen Walt’s “balance of threat” theory. Departing from Walt’s assumptions which focus on external dynamics, they incorporated internal dynamics into their analysis and questioned the influence of these dynamics on states’ alliance decisions.

Randall L. Schweller draws on a traditional understanding of security and argues that states feel threatened by increases in aggregate power of other states. For him, balancing is the rational option for states that confront a rising or threatening state or alliance. However, he shows that, balancing may not be as common as neorealists assume, and states may not respond to systemic pressures that encourage them to balance against external threats. He describes the absence of balancing, despite the presence of an aggressor, as a situation of “underbalancing”.¹³⁴ He attributes the reasons for underbalancing to domestic factors and uses neoclassical realism to understand how domestic factors cause such policy mistakes. In the end, he turns neoclassical realism into a “theory of mistakes”, which he views useful to understand deviations from the ideal behaviour described by neorealism.¹³⁵

¹³³Though Steven David does not use the term neoclassical realism in his writings, which is understandable since this label is coined later than his earlier writings, the concept of “omnibalancing” can still be viewed as a neoclassical one because of its emphasis on leadership and concomitant elaboration of external and internal dynamics.

¹³⁴ For the concept of “underbalancing”, see. Randall L. Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing” and *Unanswered Threats – Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*.

¹³⁵ Randall L. Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing”, p. 168.

According to the framework developed by Schweller, underbalancing occurs out of four domestic conditions. Firstly, in the absence of a consensus among decision-makers regarding which threat to encounter and whether it is necessary to pursue a balancing strategy, appeasement or other forms of underbalancing triumph because “these policies represent the path of less domestic resistance and can appeal to a broad range of interests along the political spectrum.”¹³⁶ Secondly, if the regime or leadership is illegitimate, it becomes more open to political constraints and restrictions and less effective in determining security strategies. In this case, since it cannot convince their public of the necessity to balance, it cannot mobilize the resources necessary for this strategy. Thirdly, drawing on the assumption that an external threat increase the social cohesion and create a “rally-around-the-flag” effect, Schweller argues that the lack of social cohesion and absence of solidarity among the members of society produce differentiations in threat perceptions at the societal level and make it difficult for leaders to mobilize state resources for a balancing strategy. Finally, if state elites are politically polarized over threat perceptions and security policies, decision-makers are more likely to be criticized and tend to refrain from controversial policy moves with electoral concerns.

The domestic conditions referred by Schweller underline the neoclassical realist assumption that leaders are constrained by not only external but also internal factors when making their decisions. However, the main weakness of his approach is the idealization of balancing strategy for states which face an external threat. Since leaders’ cost-benefit calculations change from context to context and there is not a universal rationality that fits all contexts, it is not possible to claim that states *does* or *should* balance every time when they face a superior power or a threatening state. Instead, depending on their states’ peculiar external or internal circumstances, other policy options, including non-balancing, might be more rational and preferable for leaders.

That said, it should be noted that Randall L. Schweller also accepts the possibility of states not forming alliances. He describes this occurrence with the term “non-balancing”. He counts buck-passing, bandwagoning, appeasement,

¹³⁶ Randall L. Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing”, p. 172.

engagement, distancing or hiding as different types of non-balancing behaviour. Schweller argues that, these policies are “prudent and rational when the state is thereby able to avoid the costs of war either by satisfying the legitimate grievances of the revisionist state, or by allowing others to do so, or by letting others defeat the aggressor while safely remaining on the sidelines.”¹³⁷

The weakness of his position comes from his excessive focus on external and military threats. In the current security environment, it is no longer possible to argue that basic threats states encounter come from other states and are of military nature. Instead, states face various non-traditional threats originating from different levels. Therefore, it is no longer possible to sustain the assumption that alliances are only driven by the motivation to ensure state security against military threats coming from other states. Now that security is a broadened and deepened concept, states might seek membership in them with varied considerations other than military security.

This shortcoming is well-addressed by Steven R. David, who assumes that states’ alliance decisions respond to both external and internal threats against the continuity of state borders and survival of regimes, such as coups and assassinations. He argues that, when confronted with multiple threats, leaders pursue a dual strategy of balancing and appeasement. Defining this strategy as “omnibalancing”, he indicates that “leaders of states will appease – that is, align with- secondary adversaries so that they can focus their resources on prime adversaries.”¹³⁸

For Steven R. David, the relevance of external and internal threats changes from context to context. Examining alliance patterns in the Third World, David argues that it was internal than external threats that determined alliance behaviours of states in that space. To that end, he assumes that leaders from the Third World form alliances which can help them to balance against or defeat domestic threats. As such, they bandwagon with the externally threatening state in order to balance against their domestic opponents. Steven R. David assumes that,

¹³⁷ Randall L. Schweller, “Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing”, p. 167.

¹³⁸ Steven R. David, “Explaining Third World Alignment”, p. 235.

in some cases, these leaders even “protect themselves at the expense of the interests of the state.”¹³⁹

Steven R. David highlights the fact that states feel threatened not only by external but also internal threats. In this sense, it is of no doubt that his approach represents a progress from the traditional realist approach in alliance studies that focus merely on external threats. However, his assumptions also pose several problems. First of all, Steven R. David supports the following logic: states balance against the prevailing external threat in the absence of influential domestic threats; and, bandwagon with the prevailing external threat in order to balance domestic threats. He envisages that Third World leaders ignore external threats if they face internal ones. This assumption rests in a hierarchy between external and internal threats and overlooks the fact that threats might be interrelated in some contexts.

Moreover, even though leaders’ consideration of political survival is an important factor in shaping states’ foreign and security policies as well as alliance decisions, this cannot be confined only to the leaders from the “Third World”. All leaders act with twin objectives of providing the external security of their state, as defined by them, and the continuity of their political power. Hence, states’ alliance decisions reflect not only their leaders’ considerations to maintain their political power but also how they define the external interests of their state. This is also true for authoritarian states in which state and regime are fused and the external interests of the state are defined in terms of the continuity of regimes.

In addition, contrary to David’s assumptions, threats to leaders’ political survival might not take the form of coups or assassinations. Even in democratic systems, leaders feel threatened from opposition and try to circumvent the risk of losing their power even if this takes place through elections.

Richard Harknett and Jeffrey VanDenBerg develop an alternative perspective by taking into consideration the interrelated nature of external and internal threats. For them, interrelated threats are more likely in social contexts where society has competing national allegiances, leaders lack legitimacy and state is the main distributor of wealth and power.¹⁴⁰ Under these conditions, it

¹³⁹ Steven R. David, “Explaining Third World Alignment”, p. 236.

¹⁴⁰ Richard Harknett and Jeffrey VanDenBerg, “Alignment Theory and Interrelated Threats: Jordan and the Persian Gulf Crisis”, p. 122.

becomes easier for the threatening outsider to act as a stimulator to the internal threats by igniting internal discontents and supporting domestic opponents in order to promote its own interests. In such cases, it might not be possible to disassociate these two realms and, hence, external and internal threats from one another. Considering this point, Harknett and VanDerBerg develop the concept of “omnialignment” as a “combined response to internal and external threats.”¹⁴¹ Accordingly, they define balancing as an “alignment driven by the desire to find security in resisting or defeating one's most pressing threat” and bandwagoning as an “alignment driven by the desire to find security in appeasing one's most pressing threat.”¹⁴²

Though Harknett and VanDenBerg is quite adequate on the interrelated nature of external and internal threats. The problem in their assumptions is that, even if it might be possible to discern both external and internal threats in some contexts, leaders might choose not to act and preferred to refrain from making specific alliance decisions if this is deemed more appropriate for their external and internal objectives. In this case, instead of making specific alliance decisions, leaders might choose to appease threats, whether external or internal, by not forming alliances.

Steven E. Lobell also addresses the interaction between external and internal dynamics through his concept of “complex threat identification”. He argues that, operating at the nexus of international and domestic politics, foreign policy executive “focuses outward on the systemic and sub-systemic balance of power (where states compete), and inward on the domestic balance of power (where societal actors compete).”¹⁴³ For him, since the boundaries between these realms are blurred, leaders might act at one level with the objective of influencing the outcome at the other level. He also argues that, “foreign policy decision-makers and societal leaders do not balance against aggregate or net shifts in power

¹⁴¹ Richard Harknett and Jeffrey VanDenBerg, “Alignment Theory and Interrelated Threats”, p. 123.

¹⁴² Richard Harknett and Jeffrey VanDenBerg, “Alignment Theory and Interrelated Threats”, p. 124.

¹⁴³ Steven E. Lobell, “Threat assessment, the state, and foreign policy: a neoclassical realist model,” p. 46.

alone; instead they also define threats based on specific components of a foreign state's power."¹⁴⁴ Therefore, leaders and societal actors feel threatened by the rise of a state in so far as their specific interests are endangered.¹⁴⁵ He shows as an example the pressure by the US labour leaders, fearing job losses, on George W. Bush administration to make it lead the Chinese government to increase wages and improve working conditions.¹⁴⁶

Taking into account the basic assumptions of neoclassical realism as well as the weaknesses and strengths of the aforementioned neoclassical realist perspectives on alliances and alliance-formation, one can address the three questions noted at the beginning of this chapter from a neoclassical realist perspective as follows.

First of all, regarding the issue of why states form alliances, it is assumed with a neoclassical realist perspective that alliances are formed in order to promote state security. Yet, the incorporation of state leaders into analysis as well as the acceptance of contextuality of interests allow for the embracement of a broader and deeper understanding of security. Since security is defined in accordance with new parameters and threats originate from different spheres, external and internal, or areas, military and non-military, the security dynamics behind the establishment of alliances can also be contemplated in a broader and deeper framework. As such, the expectation of getting military benefits might be more salient for some states, whereas economic concerns might be more relevant for others depending on their unique circumstances. The diversity in the motivations behind alliance-formation necessitates an examination of the unique conditions of each state rather than evaluating their case on the basis of generalizations.

When elaborating the question of "whom to ally with", one needs to take into account the motivations of leaders who have decision-making competences in foreign and security policy realms. Neoclassical realism envisages that decision-makers act with both external and internal motivations. Whilst they are externally

¹⁴⁴ Steven E. Lobell, "Threat assessment, the state, and foreign policy", p. 54.

¹⁴⁵ Steven E. Lobell, "Threat assessment, the state, and foreign policy", p. 56.

¹⁴⁶ Steven E. Lobell, "Threat assessment, the state, and foreign policy", p. 57.

concerned with promoting the external security of their state, they are internally interested in maintaining or strengthening their own domestic power. Guided by these twin objectives, leaders choose to ally with those who contribute to the promotion of both objectives.

This flexible framework allows for the adoption of a wide array of strategies. From a neoclassical perspective, external context draws the basic framework of strategies, but it is the leaders that make specific decisions among alternative options. Leaders' choices depends on their external and internal objectives. Whatever option is chosen, this is supposed to be the one that promotes the external interests of states and enables leaders to maintain and strengthen their domestic power.

However, this does not mean that states do not form alliances only if their leaders deliberately decide to do so. Instead, they might also not form alliances even if their leaders seek membership in specific alliances. If leaders do not have decisive decision-making power or share it with alternative power centres, states' not forming alliances emerges out of the power competition among these alternative centres and the inability to make specific decisions. In case leaders are deprived of extractive power, this status results from their inability to convince their public of the benefits of integration into alliances and, thus, the difficulty to forming alliances. Therefore, the reasons for states not forming alliances should also be analysed by considering their external and internal conditions in tandem.

These assumptions make it clear that the interaction of external dynamics with states' domestic political peculiarities produce different outcomes at different contexts. This means that, even if states are located in a similar external context, externalities influence them differently depending on their domestic political peculiarities. Therefore, in order to understand why a state does or does not form alliances and why it prefers one alliance over others, one has to take into account its unique external and internal conditions. This study applies this theoretical framework to alliance decisions of four post-communist states from Central and Eastern Europe.

2.4. Conclusion

In the light of the aforementioned theoretical analysis, it becomes clear that a better understanding on alliances and alliance-formation in today's complex security environment is possible only through a comprehensive analysis which takes into account both external and internal dynamics and military and non-military considerations. Traditional realist approach cannot achieve this since its narrow security conceptualization cannot account for the complexities of both present security environment and foreign and security policy making processes. Constructivism is also inadequate because of the analytical difficulties yielded by its ambiguity.

Different from these two approaches, neoclassical realism enables the analyst to make a comprehensive analysis by taking into account multiple dynamics and myriad considerations. It also achieves this in a genuinely new way thanks to the fact that it not only studies both external and internal dynamics but also explores the interaction between them. Due to its theoretical promises, it overcomes the weaknesses of traditional realist approach, even though it also belongs to the realist family, and offers an innovative thinking on alliance-related issues.

Neoclassical realist analysis starts at the systemic level. Within this framework, analysts first examine the external context, which set the framework for alternative strategies, and identify the significant externalities. They continue their analysis at the domestic level and searches for the domestic political peculiarities that influence states' foreign and security policies. In this phase, analysts examine not only the political attitudes, objectives and agenda of decision-makers, but also the basic characteristics of socio-political landscape, such as political configurations as well as elite and public attitudes on foreign and security policy issues.

For neoclassical realists, states' alliance decisions are influenced by their peculiar external and internal contexts and how they interact with one another. As such, different external contexts draw different frameworks and cause differences in available strategies. In case states are located in the same external context, internalities appear to be more decisive since they influence how external context is assessed and, accordingly, which strategies are chosen. Therefore, as states'

external and internal conditions show variations, it is not possible to make general conclusions on alliance-related matters. It is the task of neoclassical realists to search for peculiarities in specific cases.

In the following parts of this dissertation, this theoretical framework will be applied to the alliance decisions of post-communist states as well as the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space. The analysis will focus on the cases of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus. In the end, conducting a multi-level analysis and elaborating the interaction of significant externalities with states' domestic political peculiarities, the dissertation will not only develop a genuine comprehensive and comparative analysis, but also underline the adequacy of neoclassical realism in the study of alliances and alliance-making.

CHAPTER 3

CHANGING STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE OF POST-COLD WAR ERA

3.1. Introduction

It has been shown in the previous chapter that, similar to neorealism, neoclassical realism also assumes that states' security policies and alliance decisions are influenced by external dynamics. Yet, different from neorealism, neoclassical realists argue that externalities do not dictate any specific kind of policies on states. Rather, they influence states depending on how they interact with states' domestic political peculiarities. The next four chapters will elaborate this interaction in four post-communist cases. Before the country-focused chapters, this chapter draws the general framework of the external context from 1991 to 2014 and identifies the significant externalities which influenced post-communist states' alliance decisions.

This chapter starts by examining the initial discussions on the future of NATO in the early 1990s and elaborating the type of relations NATO developed with former Warsaw Pact countries. After highlighting NATO's multi-faceted transformation and the controversial nature of eastern enlargement, it then examines post-Cold War security cooperation in the former Soviet space. The chapter continues by analysing the relations between Russia and the US and revealing the constraints generated by the estrangement between them on post-communist states' security policies.

This chapter shows that NATO's eastern enlargement as well as the rising assertiveness of Russia immensely influenced the strategic landscape of Europe and the former Soviet space. As such, the relations between Russia and the Western countries, most notably the US, have never had a bilateral nature. Instead, they had immense implications for international and regional politics as well as domestic politics of the post-communist states. The framework drawn in this chapter will be used in the latter chapters which scrutinize how the external

context given in this chapter was assessed at the domestic level and yielded different alliance choices.

3.2. NATO Enlargement and Security Cooperation in the Former Soviet Space

This section reveals the alternative options of alignment post-communist states faced in the post-Cold War period. Within this framework, it first examines how NATO adapted to the post-Cold War conditions. After addressing the multi-dimensional evolution of NATO and addressing its eastern enlargement, the section continues by elaborating Russian-led security cooperation initiatives in the former Soviet space.

3.2.1. Evolution of NATO and Cooperation with Former Adversaries

It had been a widely heard argument on the eve of the end of Cold War that NATO would dissolve in the absence of its *raison d'être*.¹⁴⁷ Being popular among neorealist scholars, this assumption rested in the belief that NATO would lose its primary function, common defence, and become moribund without a clear adversary. Drawing on the neorealist assumption that internal cohesion of alliances weakens in the absence of a common threat, Mearsheimer had similarly argued that the Soviet Union was the glue that held NATO together, and when it disappeared, the US was likely to abandon the Continent and the alliance it headed for 40 years might disintegrate.¹⁴⁸ Waltz had also claimed in the immediate afterwards of the Cold War that the years of NATO were numbered, even if not its days are.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War", *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990). In contrast, another group of scholars argued NATO would retain its utility in the coming era. Charles L. Glaser, "Why NATO is Still the Best: Future Security Arrangements for Europe", *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Summer 1993); Antony Forster and William Wallace, "What is NATO for?", *Survival*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2001), p. 111; Michael O. Williams and Iver B. Neumann, "From Alliance to Security Community: NATO, Russia and the Power of Identity", *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 29 No. 2 (2000), p. 366; Thomas Risse-Kapsen, "Identity in a Democratic Security Community: The Case of NATO," in *The Culture of National Security*.

¹⁴⁸ John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War", p. 52.

¹⁴⁹ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1993), p. 76.

Despite these early predictions, one of the most significant developments of the post-Cold War European security landscape has been the survival of NATO and its evolution from a framework based merely on common defence to a hybrid one blended with collective security. In this multi-dimensional evolution process, NATO acquired new tasks, improved its capabilities and formed new type of relations.

The constructivist explanation for this development is that NATO has never been merely a military alliance against the Soviet Union. Instead, it has been a multi-purpose security community which has brought together a group of countries bound by common norms and values. From this perspective, preservation of NATO stemmed from institutionalized relations in Europe and served to reinforcement of these relations as well as reproduction of the European identity and the values it represented.¹⁵⁰

However, normative dynamics cannot be seen as the sole dynamic behind NATO's survival because the post-Cold War European security landscape has been inhabited by different organizations, all of which were inherited from the Cold War and structured on the same norms, but it was NATO that continued to be the centrepiece of the European security architecture in the post-Cold War era.

The uniqueness of NATO, which has helped it prevail over other security institutions, lies in its capabilities. Nevertheless, only holding of necessary capabilities cannot be seen sufficient to explain institutional continuity. More importantly, the continuity must also be supported by member states since institutions cannot be thought independent of their members. Arguing from a neoclassical realist perspective, it can be said that NATO survived because its member states wanted it to survive. Its prevalence was supported by its members because the persistence of NATO was in conformity with their interests. NATO proved its continuing utility for the European security during the Balkan crisis in the early 1990s, when the Europeans were unable to take the lead because of inadequate military capabilities and cumbersome decision-making processes in

¹⁵⁰ Antony Forster and William Wallace, "What is NATO for"; Helene Sjørnsen, "On the identity of NATO", *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (2004).

the WEU/EU and when the US involvement was needed to end the atrocities.¹⁵¹ This path of development was also consistent with the political agenda of European allies, which had seized the opportunity to direct their resources and political attention to the EU matters and their domestic agenda at that time thanks to the continuing security assistance by the US. NATO's continuity also became consistent with the US foreign and security policy agenda after a process of strategic adjustment in the Alliance.

Since the beginning, the US was the leading force behind the survival and transformation of NATO. In fact, it was strategically favouring greater involvement in the Middle East in the early 1990s. The mismatch between the strategic priorities of the US and the security needs of the European allies led to the outbreak of a series of discussions in the US policy circles regarding the value and utility of NATO. This mismatch was overcome when NATO was given diverse roles beyond common defence and began to take active role in out-of-area.

In the post-Cold War period, adopting a broader security understanding, NATO assumed new tasks by undertaking a more resilient role in peacekeeping and crisis-management operations, developing new types of relations with non-member states and initiating new cooperation and dialogue mechanisms. In this framework, after the fall of communism in Central European countries, NATO had invited Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union to establish regular diplomatic liaisons with NATO at the 1990 London Summit. The process of opening up to the East and establishing dialogue with the Warsaw Pact countries were supplemented with the establishment of the NACC in December 1991, which would be renamed as Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997. This mechanism was complemented by the PfP at NATO's Brussels Summit in January 1994. Different from NACC, designed as a multilateral dialogue forum, PfP is designed as a bilateral platform of cooperation with the Partner countries. Whilst the NACC was concerned with doctrinal issues, aimed at developing a common approach to peacekeeping, PfP was more about operational issues and establishing a real operational capacity and interoperability between the member and partner countries. Alongside these mechanisms, NATO

¹⁵¹ Luca Ratti, "Post-cold war Nato and international relations theory: The case for neo-classical realism", *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2006).

also developed a special type of partnership with Russia and Ukraine in the form of NATO-Russia Council and NATO-Ukraine Council, both of which were established in 1997.

More importantly, NATO members began to discuss the issue of eastern enlargement to include some of the former Warsaw Pact members, which became the most significant and controversial aspect of the post-Cold War evolution of NATO. NATO members remained highly divided over the benefits and setbacks of enlargement until 1994. Of the then 16 NATO members, the US was the most ardent supporter of enlargement and Germany was a follower. The most salient argument of pro-enlargement countries was that, as a process of the extension of liberal democratic values, enlargement would contribute to European security and stability. Other NATO members either opposed to enlargement or approached it with reservations with the argument that this would complicate decision-making process, blur Article 5 commitments, generate a sense of exclusion among outsiders and provoke Russian reactions.¹⁵²

After a period of intra-Alliance discussions, the uncertainties over the eastern enlargement of NATO finally came to an end with the Brussels Summit in 1994. In the following period, the questions of “how” and “why” were addressed by the “Study on NATO Enlargement” in September 1995¹⁵³ and those of “whom” and “when” were dealt at the Madrid Summit in 1997. Following the invitation to begin accession talks at the Madrid Summit, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary became NATO members in 1999. In the following time, NATO members engaged in a new round of discussion on the feasibility and benefits of further enlargement and whether the acceptance of more members would increase the Alliance security. These discussions came to an end when NATO invited seven countries to begin accession talks at the Prague Summit in 2002. The

¹⁵² For a detailed analysis on the setbacks of enlargement, See. Chapter 2 in: David Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001).

¹⁵³ The Study counted the rationale for enlargement as follows: encouraging and supporting democratic reforms; fostering the patterns and habits of cooperation, consultation and consensus building among the new Allies; promoting good-neighbourly relations in the Euro-Atlantic area; extending benefits of common defence to new members; reinforcing integration and cooperation in Europe based on common values; strengthening Trans-Atlantic security. “Study on NATO Enlargement”, 3 September 1995, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_24733.htm (accessed on 4 November 2013).

second enlargement round took place in 2004 with the inclusion of Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and three Baltic states into the Alliance.

The enlargement of NATO into an area which Russia viewed as its exclusive sphere of interest inevitably led to the Russian reactions and an estrangement between Russia and the West beginning from the mid-1990s. Arguing from a neorealist perspective, the expansion of NATO into a territory which Russia viewed as its exclusive sphere of interest can be attributed to the intention to meet the perceived threat from Russia or the likely Russian resurgence in the future. Lars S. Skalnes explains the inadequacy of this assumption so that Russia clearly does not pose a threat to the West because of its restricted power and offensive capabilities. Moreover, as he puts it, even if Russia is taken as a likely threat because of future uncertainties, neorealism still cannot explain why enlargement is tied to domestic reforms and why it excluded the strategically important countries bordering the former Soviet space.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, this neorealist assumption cannot explain why NATO supported cooperative type of relations with Russia in the post-Cold War period. Rather than identifying Russia as a threat, NATO members developed mechanisms for consultation and cooperation and attempted to incorporate Russia into the European security matters.

Different from neorealism's material-based explanations, constructivists view enlargement as a value-driven process and explain it as the expansion of the security community NATO represents. They explain the efforts of the outsider states to join NATO with the degree of internalization of community norms and values.¹⁵⁵ From a constructivist perspective, the exclusion of Russia from NATO enlargement as well as the estrangement between Russia and the West can be explained with the lack of internalization of NATO's norms and values in Russia as well as the mismatch between their self-identifications. For constructivists, competition took place as the Western countries identified themselves as the

¹⁵⁴ For an analysis on the inadequacy of neorealism in NATO's post-Cold War transformation, see. Lars S. Skalnes, "From the outside in, From the Inside Out: NATO Expansion and International Relations Theory", *Security Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Summer 1998), pp. 58-67; Robert B. McCalla, "NATO's persistence after the Cold War", *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Summer 1996).

¹⁵⁵ Frank Schimmelfennig, "NATO enlargement: A constructivist explanation", *Security Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1998).

pioneers of democracy and supported the expansion of democratic values in their eastern yard and as Russia, which identified itself as “a gravitational pole in world affairs, a full member of the community of major powers, a voice to be heard and a presence to be reckoned with,”¹⁵⁶ regarded the self-identification of the West as a challenge to its own self-identification. Therefore, in contrast to neorealists, who explain the conflict of interests between Russia and the West with reference to material-based considerations, constructivists attributed this occurrence to the incompatibility of the ideational milieu of both sides.

The problem of neorealist and constructivist approaches in explaining the position of NATO and Russia vis-a-vis one another is the fact that they take the antagonism between Russia and the West as granted. However, as it will be shown in the latter parts of this chapter, the relations between Russia and the West were not as competitive as they would become in the course of the 1990s. Instead, the early 1990s had been characterized by euphoria and Russia had welcomed NATO’s cooperation with the former adversaries. Therefore, the competition and antagonization between Russia and the West were neither a given, as neorealists assume, nor an inevitable occurrence which derived from contradictory self-identifications, as constructivists reason. Instead, in consistent with neoclassical realism, the estrangement emerged over time out of the changes in the interpretation of the external context by the ruling authorities from both sides in accordance with their domestic interests. Accordingly, neoclassical realism which enables one to study the policy changes over time by taking into account the interaction between external and internal dynamics as well as the linkages between foreign policies and domestic politics emerges as a more appropriate theoretical perspective to understand the growing antagonization between Russia and the West in the 1990s.

3.2.2. Security Cooperation in the Former Soviet Space

Having been established on the basis of the Union Treaty of 30 December 1922, the political existence of the Soviet Union had come to a new stage in the late 1990s with the emergence of uprisings in the constituent republics, motivated

¹⁵⁶ Eugene B. Rumer, “Putin’s Foreign Policy – A Matter of Interest”, *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 47, No. 390 (2007), p. 24.

by the politically relaxed atmosphere of *Glasnost* and the fall of communist regimes in the Central European members of the Warsaw Pact. In this process, Baltic States were the first to experience these demonstrations and followed by other republics.¹⁵⁷ This process culminated, first, in the declarations of sovereignty by the constituent republics and starting of the discussions on the establishment of a new formation, the “Union of Sovereign States”, planned to replace the Soviet Union. It then led to the declarations of independence following the August coup attempt in Moscow which was launched by conservative forces against Gorbachev to give an end to political liberalization process and to restore the Soviet control over Republics. Hence, by the end of 1991, fifteen new states declared their independence from the Union though it was still not clear at that time how the Union would be influenced by these events.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty and turbulence, the Heads of State of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus came together in Minsk on 8 December 1991 and signed the Belavezha Accords, which announced not only that “the USSR has ceased to exist as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality” but also the establishment of the CIS.¹⁵⁸ As Kembayev stated, even though these three states had exceeded their powers by signing the Belavezha Accords, since they had only the right to withdraw from the Union under the 1977 Constitution, they took the first step towards the ultimate demise of the Soviet Union. In the afterwards, when Gorbachev’s calls to decide the fate of the Union through the Constitutional means failed¹⁵⁹ and other independent republics, excluding Baltic States and Georgia¹⁶⁰, joined the Belavezha trio on 21 December 1991 with the Alma-Ata Declaration, the Soviet Union formally came to an end.

¹⁵⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski and Paige Bryan Sullivan, *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ The Minsk Agreement, 8 December 1991, *The Library of Congress*, available at: lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/belarus/by_appnb.html (accessed on 10 November 2014).

¹⁵⁹ Zhenis Kembayev, *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area* (Springer: Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2009), pp. 28-29.

¹⁶⁰ During the presidency of Gamsakhurdia, who was a nationalist, Georgia took an anti-Russian attitude and refused to join the CIS. Following the inauguration of the Presidency of Shevardnadze, a more moderate political figure, Georgia joined CIS in December 1993 in order to establish control in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In February 2006, Georgia withdrew from the Council of Defence Ministers, though it remained a member of the CIS. It withdrew from CIS altogether in August 2009.

In this framework, concomitantly with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the CIS emerged as the new structure that brought together eleven of the former Soviet Republics.¹⁶¹ However, it was still unclear whether it “was merely a euphemism for a partially restructured Soviet empire or the framework for ‘civilized divorce’”.¹⁶² The CIS members attributed this formation different meanings. Whilst some of them, such as Ukraine and Turkmenistan, viewed it as a platform of addressing post-dissolution problems and a means of “civilized divorce” among former Soviet Republics, some others, including Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, understood it as a platform of re-integration.

Security cooperation under the tutelage of the CIS has been one of the integration areas in which the hampering effects of this diversity were felt extensively. In May 1992, CST was signed in Tashkent with the participation of seven CIS members.¹⁶³ The vision of military cooperation was supplemented with the CIS Statute, signed in January 1993, which committed member states to abstain from any actions that could endanger other members’ security, envisaged coordinated security and defence policy, a system of collective defence, joint operation of peacekeeping operations and common border guarding.¹⁶⁴ Similar to the CST, the Charter included a phrase on collective defence, stipulating that:

In the event of a threat to the sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity of one or several member states or to the international peace and security, member states shall immediately activate the mechanism of mutual consultations with the aim of coordinating positions and adopting measures to eliminate the threat; including the peacemaking operations and the use, where need be, of Armed Forces in exercise of the right to

¹⁶¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Georgia joined these countries in 1993.

¹⁶² Zbigniew Brzezinski and Paige Bryan Sullivan, *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, p. 6.

¹⁶³ CST was signed by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Azerbaijan signed the CST in September 1993, whilst Georgia and Belarus joined it in December 1993. It had been signed for five years. In 1999, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan did not join the prolongation of CST. After CSTO was established, Uzbekistan joined the Organization in 2006.

¹⁶⁴ “Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States”, 22 January 1993, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 12 February 1993 [FBIS Translation]; in *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, pp. 506-511.

individual or collective self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.¹⁶⁵

However, apart from the establishment of the United Air Defence System by 10 of the 12 CIS members¹⁶⁶, settlement of the CIS peacekeeping force in Abkhazia in Georgia and cooperation against organized crime and terrorism, the CIS could not exercise an effective collective effort in the 1990s. Apart from the differences in the meanings attributed to the CIS by its members, the low performance of the CIS resulted from the bilateral problems between some CIS members, mistrust of some members towards the Russian leadership, limited military resources of the CIS members other than Russia and differences in the members' security agenda.¹⁶⁷ The persistence of these factors in the 1990s not only hindered the prospects of a region-wide effective security cooperation but also promoted development of smaller and cross-cutting groupings that overlapped and even sometimes conflicted.¹⁶⁸ In this framework, due to the low-profile of the CIS, Russia also signed various bilateral military agreements with the CIS members.

Despite the patchy outlook of the 1990s, the security cooperation in the former Soviet space was given a new boost in the early 2000s. As such, six remaining members of the CST decided to revitalize the Treaty and turned it into an institution by signing on 7 October 2002 the Charter of CSTO and the Agreement on its legal status, which came into force on 18 September 2003. The Organization was designed as a multi-functional security organization, dealing with not only traditional military threats, but also non-traditional threats, such as "international terrorism and extremism, the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and arms, organized transnational crime, illegal

¹⁶⁵ "Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States", pp. 507-508.

¹⁶⁶ Azerbaijan and Moldova do not participate in the United Air Defence System.

¹⁶⁷ Adam Weinstein, "Russian Phoenix: The Collective Security Treaty Organization", *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* (Winter/Spring 2007); Stanislav Secieru, "Russia's Foreign Policy under Putin: 'CIS Project' Renewed", *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, No. 10 (January 2006); J.H. Saat, *The Collective Security Treaty Organization*, Conflict Studies Research Center, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (2005).

¹⁶⁸ Alyson J.K. Bailes, Vladimir Baranovsky and Pal Dunay, "Regional Security cooperation in the former Soviet area", *SIPRI Yearbook 2007: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (2007), p. 168.

migration.”¹⁶⁹ It was given the aims of “coordination and deepening of military-political cooperation, formation of multilateral structures and [being the] mechanism of cooperation to provide national security of member states on collective basis, to provide help, including military one to the Member State which became a victim of aggression.”¹⁷⁰

The major advancement of CSTO over its predecessor has been the fact that its decisions are binding for all members. Furthermore, CSTO members are more compact, as the Organization had less members than the CIS. CSTO has also differed from its predecessor on the grounds that it has had a functioning institutional structure with real military capabilities. “The Strategic concept of this organization entailed the creation of three regional groups of forces: the Western group that includes Russia and Belarus, the Caucasian group composed of Russia and Armenia; and the Central Asian group consisted of Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.”¹⁷¹ The Collective Rapid Deployment Forces (CRDF) began to be developed gradually as of 2009 and was based in the Russian airbase in Kant, Kyrgyzstan. In April 2003, the Council of Defence Ministers called for the establishment of a Joint Staff, which would monitor forces and resources of collective security and propose joint activities to increase combat readiness in the interest of collective defence.¹⁷² In 2007, CSTO members also adopted a decision to develop a peacekeeping force.

Elaborating the reasons behind the revitalization of security cooperation in the former Soviet space through CSTO, one can argue from a neorealist perspective that CSTO was formed as an act of balancing against NATO because of the perceived threat from NATO’s eastern enlargement as well as increasing US interest in the region following the September 11 attacks. Considering the identification of “strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances, above all

¹⁶⁹ Article 8 in “Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization”, 7 October 2002, Official Website of CSTO, available at: http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=1896 (accessed on 20 December 2014).

¹⁷⁰“Basic facts”, The Website of Collective Security Treaty Organization, http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index_aengl.htm (accessed on 23 November 2014).

¹⁷¹ Stanislav Secieru, “Russia’s Foreign Policy under Putin: ‘CIS Project’ Renewed”, p. 295.

¹⁷² J.H. Saat, *The Collective Security Treaty Organization*, p. 6.

NATO's Eastward expansion" as a threat to Russia in the 2000-dated National Security Concept,¹⁷³ the establishment of CSTO can also be seen as an attempt to strengthen the outer Russian borders. The NATO factor also seems convincing in the case of Belarus, one of the CSTO members, which has displayed a vocal anti-NATO stance since 1994.

Though the NATO factor as well as the increasing US interest in Central Asia were of the external dynamics that reinforced the establishment of the CSTO for some of its members, an overemphasis on these dynamics overlooks the fact that each CSTO member had a different motivation when establishing it. Thought from the side of Russia, as it will be later analysed in this chapter, the preservation of Russian influence in the former Soviet space was one of the persistent factors in Russian foreign policy as of 1993, which stemmed from leaders' twin considerations of strengthening the external security of the Russian State and of maintaining domestic power against their nationalist and communist opponents. Hence, the establishment of CSTO was viewed not only a way of increasing Russian external security but also a means of consolidating domestic power of the ruling authorities. For Belarus under Lukashenko Presidency, this was a tool of receiving economic rewards from Russia, which was perceived necessary not only for maintaining the health of Belarusian economy but also for sustaining the public support to Lukashenko regime. For the economically rising Kazakhstan, CSTO meant not only a defence organization but also a platform for sustaining its bilateral and multilateral relations with other member states of the organization.¹⁷⁴ CSTO meant a platform for finding allies to defend its occupation of Azerbaijani territories of Nagorno-Karabakh for Armenia and to overcome the challenge of colourful revolutions and resist the Western criticisms after the Andijan events in 2005 for Uzbekistan. Therefore, even though the external dynamics played a role

¹⁷³ Russian National Security Concept (2000), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, available at: <http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/36aba64ac09f737fc32575d9002bbf31!OpenDocument> (accessed on 25 February 2013).

¹⁷⁴ Aigerim Shilibekova, "Russian-Kazakh Security Relations Revisited", *Russian Analytical Digest*, Issue 87 (19 November 2010), available at: <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-87-7-10.pdf> (accessed on 5 January 2015).

in the establishment of CSTO, this was not direct and changed from state to state depending on their leaders' peculiar considerations.

Alternatively thought from a constructivist perspective, CSTO can be seen as the conglomeration of states sharing the same ideational milieu. Hence, the establishment of the Organization can be explained with reference to the sense of community, which constructivists see as the basis of convergence on threats among its members. Furthermore, thought from the side of Russia, the leading force of the Organization, the CSTO can be seen as a mechanism of reproducing its great-power identity by establishing influence in the near abroad.

Constructivist perspective is also problematic in explaining the establishment of CSTO. As mentioned above, CSTO members hardly share a common external threat perception. Whilst NATO factor might be viewed more salient for some members, it did not generate a sense of threat for others. Moreover, there is not a strong sense of community among the CSTO members. Most of CSTO members have bilateral problems or fall into crisis from time to time. This can clearly be seen from the relations between Russia and Belarus. For example, despite his strong support for multilateral integration in the CIS area, President Lukashenko boycotted a CSTO meeting in 2009 in order to react to Russian ban on Belarusian dairy products and declined to assume to take on the rotating chairmanship. Moreover, despite their alliance with Russia, most of the CSTO members still harbour suspicions over the intentions of Russia, which seem to intensify as Russia uses different leverages against them and announce its intention to preserve its influence in the near abroad.¹⁷⁵

All in all, neither neorealism nor constructivism is sufficient to explain the security cooperation in the former Soviet space in depth. As seen from the CSTO case, states form alliances with different motivations, military or non-military, and in response to both external and internal dynamics. Therefore, a better understanding of states' alliance decisions necessitates a deeper analysis on their unique external and internal circumstances, as argued by neoclassical realism.

¹⁷⁵ Jakob Hedenskog and Robert L. Larsson, *Russian Leverage on the CIS and the Baltic States*, FOI Report, June 2007, Swedish Defence Research Agency, available at: foi.se/ReportFiles/foir_2280.pdf (accessed on 10 December 2014).

3.3. Relations between Russia and the US and Implications for NATO

The previous section showed that NATO's eastern enlargement and emerging politico-military initiatives in the former Soviet space embodied two options of alliance-formation for the post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe. Giving the relations between Russia and the US in a chronological order, this section reveals how these options began to be seen alternative to one another because of the estrangement between Russia and the US as well as Russian reactions to NATO's eastern enlargement. The section also highlights that this estrangement emerged as the most significant external dynamic that influenced the alliance decisions of the post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe.

3.3.1. Relations between Russia and the West in the 1990s

The relations between Russia and the West had been opened with an euphoria in the early 1990s. Taking over the momentum of Gorbachev's *New Thinking*, the first Russian President, Boris Yeltsin had expressed commitment to the reformist zeal, taken the strategic decision to pursue cooperation with the West and defined Russia's basic objectives in this period as integration into the world markets and European institutions on the basis of shared values, political cooperation with the newly found partners in international institutions and abandonment of military-strategic parity.¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, the Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev had expressed that NATO was no longer thought of as an adversary¹⁷⁷ and welcomed the establishment of NACC as a means "to free Europe of the legacy of the Cold War and to eradicate any sense of enmity and distrust."¹⁷⁸

However, the Atlanticist attitude of Yeltsin and his ruling entourage was hardly shared by all actors in Russia in the early 1990s. Nationalists and

¹⁷⁶ Jeffrey Mankoff, "Vladimir Putin and the Re-Emergence of Russian Foreign Policy", Yale University, Department of History, International Security Studies Certificate Paper Series, No: 06-02, available at: http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/iac/security_papers/mankoff.pdf (accessed on 5 November 2008), p. 5.

¹⁷⁷ Andrei Kozyrev, "Russia: A Chance of Survival", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (Spring 1992), p. 15.

¹⁷⁸ Andrei Kozyrev, "The New Russia and the Atlantic Alliance", *NATO Review*, No. 1 (February 1993), available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1993/9301-1.htm> (accessed on 10 July 2011).

communists as well as the military were criticizing the ruling authorities with having disregarding Russian national interests and were defending to take a more robust presence in the near abroad. In the context of the confrontation between these two groups, the continuity and receptiveness of the political attitudes of the ruling authorities were dependent on the successes they would achieve against their domestic rivals. Having resulted in the victory of communist and nationalist groups, the 1993 parliamentary elections highlighted the decreasing political profile of the ruling authorities and encouraged them to reconsider their political agenda and objectives.

The new decade had brought a set of problems for Russia. Apart from severe economic problems and social decay, there had also emerged a sense of growing disillusionment with the West because of the perceived exclusion from European security issues as well as reaction to NATO's eastern enlargement and greater involvement in out-of-area. These internal and external issues provided Russian nationalists and communists with the opportunity to challenge their Atlanticist rivals and justifying their own political perspectives. In the face of growing criticisms, the ruling authorities began to lose their domestic power base and became more vulnerable vis-a-vis their opponents. The consideration of the ruling authorities to keep their domestic power and to divert the public attention away from internal problems resulted in the abandonment of initial Atlanticism. In the end, having initially had an Atlanticist outlook, Russian foreign and security policies slid towards the Eurasianist position towards the end of 1993.

In this context, in contrast to their initial attitude in the immediate post-Cold War period, the ruling authorities in Russia began to argue that NATO was a defence organization "wedded to the stereotypes of the bloc thinking."¹⁷⁹ Sergei Karaganov, advisor of the President Yeltsin, defended this position so that:

In 1990, we were told quite clearly by the West that the unification of Germany would not lead to NATO expansion. We did not demand written guarantees because in the euphoric atmosphere of the time it would have

¹⁷⁹ The expression comes from a report prepared by Russian Foreign Intelligence Service and published in November 1993. Quoted from Hannes Adomeit, "Russia as a 'Great Power' in World Affairs: Images and Reality", *International Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 1995), p. 49.

seemed indecent-like two girlfriends giving written promises not to seduce each other's husbands.¹⁸⁰

This foreign policy change was further supplemented with the replacement of the Atlanticist Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev by Evgenii Primakov, known with his critical attitude towards the Western practices and support for a more resilient presence in the near abroad. The following remarks of the new Foreign Minister Evgenii Primakov at the NACC meeting on 11 December 1996 expressed the newly assumed attitude towards NATO:

We cannot be satisfied with a declaration that the expansion of NATO is not aimed at anyone and that there is no intention behind it of causing estrangement among the states of Europe. Expansion will inevitably lead to the development of such estrangement, if one takes into account the psychological, political, and military aspects connected with it.¹⁸¹

The persistence of the conditions that precipitated Russia's disillusionment with the West made NATO-scepticism a common position shared by almost all political forces in Russia. This can clearly be seen from the following statement of Grigory Yavlinsky, the leader of the liberal Yabloko group that supported the Atlanticist foreign policy discourse in the early 1990s:

Talk that this is a different NATO, a NATO that is no longer a military alliance, is ridiculous. It is like saying that the hulking thing advancing toward your garden is not a tank because it is painted pink, carries flowers, and plays cheerful music. It does not matter how you dress it up; a pink tank is still a tank.¹⁸²

However, neither this discourse had brought a change in Russia's international position nor could internal problems be solved throughout the 1990s. In the context of the persistence of internal and external problems, the presidential elections of 2000 came to be depicted as an event with utmost importance in

¹⁸⁰ Quoted from Özlem Tür, "NATO's Relations with Russia and Ukraine", June 2000, Official Website of NATO, available at: www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/tur.pdf (accessed on 18 November 2012), p. 20.

¹⁸¹ Evgenii Primakov, speech at the NACC meeting on 11 December 1996, official website of NATO, available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1996/s9612115.htm> (accessed on 11 November 2011).

¹⁸² As quoted in Rick Fawn, "Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy: An Introduction," in *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Rick Fawn (Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 3.

Russia. The course of developments following the election of Putin as the new Russian President in 2000 proved this expectation.

3.3.2. Russian Resurgence under Putin Presidency (2000-2008)

Making use of rising sensitivities and adverse circumstances, Vladimir Putin, one of the presidential candidates, run his campaign with the slogan of “Great Russia” and “Strong Russian Statehood.”¹⁸³ Due to the appeal of his campaign for Russian public, Putin seized Presidency vacated by Boris Yeltsin by winning 52.94 per cent of the votes.¹⁸⁴ A former KGB agent, then one-time head of FSB and Secretary of the Security Council, Putin brought “new ideas, approaches to governance, and new faces to the Kremlin that likely will define the priorities and character of the Russian government for at least the next decade.”¹⁸⁵

Putin’s rise to power illuminates the neoclassical realist assumption that leaders might use foreign policy issues with domestic ends. Accordingly, Putin’s election campaign centred on the vision of displaying a resilient international role helped him win the presidential elections. After having seized Presidency, Putin sustained this discourse by immediately adopting the new Russian National Security Concept and Military Doctrine, the earlier versions of which were adopted respectively in 1993 and 1994.

These documents supported the vision drawn by President Putin during presidential elections in many respects. First of all, it was put in the Russian National Security Concept that there were two opposing trends in the international system: on the one hand, there was a trend towards establishing a unipolar world based on the domination of one superpower and its excessive reliance on use of force, and on the other, due to the rise of different countries in world politics, there was another trend towards a multipolar world based on equal rights and

¹⁸³ Ludmilla Selezneva, “Post-Soviet Foreign Policy: Between Doctrine and Pragmatism,” in *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, p. 17.

¹⁸⁴ OSCE/ODHIR Final Report on Presidential Election on 26 March 2000, Official Website of OSCE, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/russia/16275?download=true> (accessed on 10 November 2000), p. 32.

¹⁸⁵ Ariel Cohen, “The Rise of Putin: What It Means for the Future of Russia”, Heritage Foundation, available at: <http://www.heritage.org/research/russiandeurasia/bg1353.cfm> (accessed on 29 January 2009).

recognition of distinct interests of nations.¹⁸⁶ Reflecting the rejection of the former, the Concept described Russia as “one of the world's major countries, with centuries of history and rich cultural traditions” and stipulated that, “despite the complex international situation and its own temporary difficulties, Russia continues to play an important role in global processes by the virtue of its great economic, scientific, technological and military potential and its unique strategic location on the Eurasian continent.”¹⁸⁷

Secondly, the Concept revealed that Russia viewed its presence in the near abroad essential to its interests. In this respect, it stated that Russia had vested interests in developing relations with the CIS as well as traditional partners including Ukraine, Belarus and the newly independent Caucasian Republics, and supporting the integrative processes within the framework of the CIS.¹⁸⁸ In accordance, Putin accelerated the integration efforts in the CIS during his reign.¹⁸⁹

Thirdly, the National Security Concept stated that “a number of states are stepping up efforts to weaken Russia politically, economically, militarily and in other ways.” It identified “the attempts of other states to oppose strengthening of Russia as one of the influential centres of a multipolar world, to hinder the exercise of its national interests and to weaken its position in Europe, the Middle East, Transcaucasus, Central Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region”¹⁹⁰ as the main threats to Russia in the international sphere. In the earlier version of these documents, having been prepared with the initial euphoria in the early 1990s, the threats emanating from other powers had been downplayed and it had been stated

¹⁸⁶ Russian Military Doctrine (2000), University of California, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, available at: <http://igcc.ucsd.edu/assets/001/502378.pdf> (accessed on 18 November 2012).

¹⁸⁷ Russian National Security Concept (2000).

¹⁸⁸ Russian National Security Concept (2000).

¹⁸⁹ Apart from CSTO, Presidents of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan signed a treaty on Single Economic Space (SES) in 2003. In the same year, Russia precipitated the establishment of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) with China and Central Asian republics. Besides multilateral initiatives, Putin also signed several long-term agreements with the CIS members in economic and military matters. For detailed information on Russian policies in the former Soviet space, see. Stanislav Secrieru, “Russia’s Foreign Policy under Putin: ‘CIS Project’ Renewed”.

¹⁹⁰ Russian National Security Concept (2000).

that “Russian Federation [...] regards no state as its enemy.”¹⁹¹ The removal of this clause and identification of “strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances, above all NATO’s Eastward expansion” as external threats to Russia codified the already changed attitude towards NATO and the US.

Though the resilient foreign policy discourse which was also encoded later in these documents had helped Putin seize Presidency, mere reliance on it would not bring any concrete benefits for Putin’s domestic power as long as internal problems persisted. Therefore, after having seized power, Putin prioritized the resolution of domestic issues, which would help him strengthen his domestic position. To that end, Putin adopted a pragmatic stance in foreign affairs and sought to solve problems in relations with the West in order to be able to focus on domestic issues. This would bring many economic benefits, such as cutting defence spending for the sake of taking more vivid economic measures and entering into European markets, and political ones, such as involving in European affairs as much as possible. This pragmatism reflected itself when Putin sided with the US President George W. Bush in the wake of September 11 attacks and later calmed down its resistance to the accession of the Baltic states to NATO.

Nonetheless, having entered the new decade with a mood of cooperation consequent to September 11 attacks, the relations between Russia and the West were soon replaced by a new wave of estrangement and the disagreements. Consistent with the neoclassical realist emphasis on the leadership factor, in the re-emergence of this estrangement was influential who hold the political power in the US and Russia, how they defined external interests of their state, what they deemed necessary to hold their domestic power and accordingly how they interpreted their respective international behaviours.

Having resulted from political agenda and domestic interests of the US President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, this competitive trend in bilateral relations was later sustained by the results of 2004 presidential elections. Motivated by the rise of Russia’s international and domestic fortunes, Russians elected Putin in 2004 for another four years until 2008. Similarly, still

¹⁹¹ “The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (1993)”, FAS – Federation of American Scientists, available at: <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/russia-mil-doc.html> (accessed on 10 January 2009).

undergoing through the trauma of September 11 attacks, Americans voted for their incumbent President in 2004. As such, the Russian and US presidential elections of 2004 resulted in not only the electoral victory of Putin and Bush but also continuity of the state of crisis in the US-Russian relations in the following four years.

During his second term, Putin took a number of steps to strengthen his powers and centralization in Russia with a set of measures, such as increasing his competences in the appointment of regional governors and restricting the activities of Russian civil society.¹⁹² In the introduction of these measures had become influential Putin's intention to strengthen his own power by keeping domestic developments under control and curbing the activities of his political opponents as well as dissidents from the federate states. In order to supplement these measures with policies generating public consent, Putin instrumentalized foreign policy issues and assumed a new assertive tune in foreign affairs. Putin had come to power in 2000 and been re-elected in 2004 thanks to the public receptiveness of his promise of restoring great powerdom of Russia. Accordingly, since his domestic political fortunes rested in the realization of this promise, Putin presented external developments of this period as challenges to Russian interests at regional and international spheres. Due to the linkages between foreign policies and domestic politics, as pointed by neoclassical realism, defending the interests of the Russian State then became closely linked to maintaining and strengthening his own political power.

The main targets of Putin's assertiveness were the US and NATO. He had expressed this during the 43rd Munich Security Conference on 17 February 2007 by famously stating that "the US has overstepped its national borders in every way" and there was nobody who liked this.¹⁹³ The harsh tune in this statement was a clear expression of his resurgent foreign policy attitude and disenchantment from the US. Rather than having been a given, as neorealists assume, this

¹⁹² Jim Nichol, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests", 31 March 2014, Congressional Research Service, available at: <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33407.pdf> (accessed on 3 August 2012), p. 6.

¹⁹³ Vladimir Putin, Speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, 22 February 2007, Official Website of the Permanent Mission of Russia to NATO, available at: <http://natomission.ru/en/cooperation/document/14/> (accessed on 6 August 2008).

disenchantment was in fact a consequence of how Putin defined the interests of the Russian state in accordance with his domestic political interests at that time.

Within this framework, a series of developments turned into problematic issues in US-Russian relations at that period. First of all, the US support for NATO enlargement and a global role for the Alliance were viewed with wary eyes in Russia. Alluding to the US support for Ukraine and Georgia's entry into NATO, Putin had expressed in his Munich Speech that:

NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact?¹⁹⁴

The discursive support of the US to pro-democracy movements and colour revolutions in former Soviet territory, particularly in Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004 and Kyrgyzstan in 2005, was a source of further discontent. Pro-democracy rhetoric of the US was regarded in Russia as a cloak for the US attempts to reshape the post-Soviet space and to curb Russian influence there. As Eugene B. Rumer described it, these attempts were interpreted as “naive and misguided at best, and deliberately hostile to Russian interests at worst, intended to further isolate and encircle Russia and deny it any influence it still has in an area where Russia's interests are [understood to be] far greater than those of the West.”¹⁹⁵

The US withdrawal from Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in order to construct missile defence sites in Poland and the Czech Republic was another cause of deterioration. Even though the US justified this move with reference to Iran's nuclear program, President Putin interpreted it as a measure directed against Russia and, thus, a source of further insecurity. The establishment of missile sites in Poland and the Czech Republic was understood as a development that would drastically change the nuclear balance in Europe and put Russia in a militarily disadvantaged position vis-à-vis the US, which meant a challenge to the vision presented by Putin.

¹⁹⁴ Vladimir Putin, Speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy.

¹⁹⁵ Eugene B. Rumer, “Putin's Foreign Policy – A Matter of Interest”, p. 25.

Evaluating from a neorealist framework, one can attribute problems in the US-Russian relations to power competition between them which was caused by international anarchy. However, attributing inter-state competition to international anarchy, which is accepted by neorealists as a constant, leads to a linear understanding which makes inter-state competition as an unchangeable characteristic of international relations. This means a fallacious approach which is unable to account for periodical changes in states' foreign and security policies. Overemphasising external factors at the expense of internal ones and attributing them a meaning independent of the assessments of leaders mean disregarding the fact that foreign policies and domestic politics are interrelated and that the former is influenced by the interaction of external dynamics with states' domestic political peculiarities. The influence of this interaction on states' foreign and security policies, which takes place through the assessment of external context by leaders who have decision-making power, can clearly be seen from the changes in the track of the US-Russian relations following the 2008 presidential elections in both countries.

3.3.3. A Fragile “Reset” in US-Russian Relations (2008-2012)

The year 2008 was a year of leadership change in both Russia and the US. From the Russian presidential elections of May 2008, Dmitry Medvedev, the former Vice Prime Minister of Russia, emerged victorious and became the new Russian President. In November 2008, George W. Bush was replaced by a Democrat President, Barack Obama, who assumed office with the promise of pursuing a moderate foreign policy and ameliorating the international image of the US. Indeed, during Obama's term, a new leaf was opened in the US-Russian relations.

Until the inauguration of Obama Presidency, the US-Russian relations continued to be conducted by Medvedev and Bush. Persistent problems continued during that period and the year 2008 turned into a year of crisis in bilateral relations. The leading crises occurred over the issues of US plans to establish missile defence system in Central Europe and the recognition of the Kosovar independence by the Western countries. Besides, Russian intervention into South

Ossetia and Abkhazia became the most important crisis in 2008 with widespread consequences at systemic and regional levels.

Under these circumstances, having assumed power towards the end of 2008, Obama promised to reset relations with Russia. As such, he downplayed controversial issues such as NATO enlargement and gave up his predecessor's plans for missile defence system. This policy gave its first fruit in April 2009, when Obama and Medvedev committed themselves to start negotiations for a replacement to START-I, which would expire in December 2009, and immediately started negotiations in May 2009.¹⁹⁶ This momentum was sustained with Moscow meeting in July 2009, when they decided to reinvigorate the US-Russia commission to advance cooperation in several issues including arms control, energy, combating terrorism and facilitating business linkages.¹⁹⁷ At the same meeting, they also agreed on a framework document that would replace START-I and decided to continue their cooperation in Afghanistan. In consequence, Russia granted flight rights to the US aircraft for the non-lethal cargo transfer over its airspace.

This rapprochement also echoed in the new National Security Strategy of Russia, which was adopted in May 2009. Taking a conciliatory stance, the document involved the objective of establishing “a full strategic partnership with the USA based on coinciding interests.”¹⁹⁸ However, the document also reiterated the traditional Russian stance that “a global security architecture oriented towards NATO is bound to fail.” It further stated that Russia “will not cease its vigilance with respect to plans to move NATO's military architecture closer to its borders and efforts to give the Alliance a global character, which breach international

¹⁹⁶ Joint Statement by Dmitry A. Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation, and Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, Regarding Negotiations on Further Reductions in Strategic Offensive Arm, Official Website of the White House, 1 April 2009, available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-Statement-by-Dmitriy-A-Medvedev-and-Barack-Obama (accessed on 28 January 2013).

¹⁹⁷ “US-Russia Relations: ‘Reset’ Fact Sheet”, Official Website of the White House, available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/us-russia-relations-reset-fact-sheet> (accessed on 28 January 2013).

¹⁹⁸ Keir Giles, “Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020”, NATO Defence College, Research Division, June 2009, available at: <http://www.conflictstudies.org.uk/files/RusNatSecStrategyto2020.pdf> (accessed on 2 August 2012), p. 8.

law.”¹⁹⁹ Still, reflecting the new international climate, the document also included the statement that “Russia is ready to develop a relationship with NATO based on equality and with a view of strengthening the common security in the Euro-Atlantic region if NATO shows respect for Russia’s legitimate interests.”²⁰⁰

Nevertheless, this rapprochement was not without any limitations. It took place within the limits introduced by the US position to maintain NATO’s supremacy in European security architecture and the Russian position to resist any structure which it perceived to exclude itself from European security matters. The limits of US-Russian rapprochement can clearly be seen from how Obama dealt with Medvedev’s proposal to establish new European security architecture.

The idea of creating a new European security structure was first broached by Medvedev during his Berlin meeting with political and civic leaders in June 2008. At this meeting, Medvedev had expressed traditional Russian distrust towards NATO and argued that none of the European security institutions had exclusive rights to manage security issues in the Continent. Criticizing bloc politics, he had called for furthering Helsinki process by signing a legally binding treaty which all OSCE members and the current institutions in the Euro-Atlantic area would adhere to.²⁰¹ At the OSCE Annual Review Conference in Vienna on 23-24 June 2009, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov once again brought the proposal on the agenda by arguing that it would eliminate structural shortcomings in the European security architecture, create an integral security space and establish a clear system of co-ordinates that would act as a guide not only for states but for all the organizations operating in that zone.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ As quoted in Tomislava Penkova, “Russia’s New Security Doctrine: ‘Security through Stable Development’”, ISPI Policy Brief, No. 144, June 2009, available at: http://www.ispionline.it/it/documents/PB_144_2009.pdf (accessed on 2 August 2012), p. 5.

²⁰⁰ As quoted in Penkova, “Russia’s New Security Doctrine”.

²⁰¹ Dmitry Medvedev, Speech at the meeting with German political, parliamentary and civic leaders, Berlin, 5 June 2008, Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, available at: http://www.in.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/c080dc2ff8d93629c3257460003496c4 (accessed on 1 August 2012).

²⁰² This initiative was based on four “conceptual blocks”: i) good-faith and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity in inter-state relations, ii) support for arms control regimes and confidence-building measures, iii) conflict-resolution procedures and mechanisms in conformity with the UN Charter, iv) cooperative approach in dealing with the new security threats and challenges. For more information on this initiative, See. Sergey Lavrov, Statement at the Opening Session of the

At the first glance, the proposal reminded the earlier Russian proposals which aimed at reinvigorating OSCE. Different from them, the new proposal incorporated the US and NATO into the picture. What Russia offered was in fact to establish a code of conduct which would manage the relations between all stakeholders within the present institutional framework in a new way and acquire a decisive say on European security issues.²⁰³ Despite the repetitious calls by Russia, Obama remained silent on the Russian proposal. In order not to alienate Russia, he concomitantly downplayed sensitive issues such as NATO enlargement which had heightened Russian resentments since the mid-1990s.

3.3.4. US-Russian Relations in the Post-2010 Period

After having fallen to one of the deepest nadirs in the Post-Cold War era with the outbreak of the August War in Georgia,²⁰⁴ Russo-American relations had recovered when Barack Obama was elected as the new President in the US. Having changed his predecessor's foreign policies, Obama had set the vision of resetting relations with Russia. Stemmed from Obama's intention of getting Russian support in several foreign policy issues, such as uprisings in the Middle East and challenges in the post-ISAF Afghanistan, as well as concern of focusing on domestic economic issues, the reset policy had been welcomed by Russian President Medvedev and led to several achievements, such as the signing of a new START, cooperation in Afghanistan and establishment of a bilateral commission at the presidential level with the vision of promoting dialogue and exploring cooperation opportunities.

Nevertheless, the reset in US-Russian relations could produce only limited progress. As Craig Nations observed, "the reset has opened up space for modest

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, 23 June 2009, Vienna, PC.DEL/480/09, available at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/37721> (accessed on 1 August 2012), pp. 5-7.

²⁰³ The articles of the draft Treaty involve several commitments for the parties, such as refraining from taking any measures directed against others' security and from supporting the evolution of international organizations in a way harmful to others' interests. For full text, see. "The draft European Security Treaty", Official Website of President of Russia, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/275> (accessed on 2 August 2012).

²⁰⁴ R. Craig Nation, "Reset or rerun? Sources of discord in Russian–American relations", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2012.07.011>, p. 1.

collaboration, but it has not transformed relations in a fundamental way.”²⁰⁵ As a result, similar to the earlier periods, the mood of optimism was quickly replaced by that of pessimism and the post-reset US-Russian relations continued to be characterized by uneasiness and instability. The years following 2010 became a period during which the limited nature of this progress became increasingly visible.

Evaluating from a neorealist perspective, one can attribute the lack of progress in the post-reset process to strategic rivalry and lack of mistrust between Russia and the US. However, the deficiencies of neorealist perspective become clear when one questions why Obama chose to reset relations with Russia at the first place.

Alternatively thought from a constructivist perspective, one can see the reset policy as an attempt to establish a sense of community between two countries in order to restore trust which constructivism treats as a precondition of solving inter-state problems. As such, the lack of progress in the post-reset period can be attributed to the failures in this regard. Nevertheless, constructivism also appears inadequate since it cannot explain why Russia and the US failed to build trust in their relations since the mid-1990s though they had necessary institutional mechanisms, such as NATO-Russia Council as well as the bilateral commission at the presidential level, which was established twice during Clinton and Obama presidencies.

Instead of these two approaches, neoclassical realism is more relevant in explaining both the rationale behind Obama’s reset policy and the lack of progress in the post-reset process. This stems from neoclassical realist emphasis on domestic roots of foreign and security policies, which seems to capture the fact that Russo-American relations have never been merely a foreign policy issue, but a constant theme in US and Russian domestic politics.²⁰⁶

As given in Chapter 2, neoclassical realism envisages that leaders operate at the nexus of external and internal domains and seek to pursue foreign and security policies that could bring them benefits at both spheres. As such, in

²⁰⁵ R. Craig Nation, “Reset or rerun? Sources of discord in Russian–American relations”, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ Angela Stent, “US-Russia Relations in the Second Obama Administration”, *Survival*, Vol. 54, No. 6 (December 2012-January 2013), p. 123.

contrast to neorealist explanations, the US and Russian foreign and security policies in the post-2008 period did not derive from the strategic rivalry between two countries. Contrary to constructivist assumptions, it was neither related to the level of community between two states. Instead, as presupposed by neoclassical realists, foreign policies of both countries reflected the assessments of the external context by their leaders in accordance with their political objectives. In this respect, the pursuit of the reset policy by Obama as well as positive attitude of Medvedev to this policy stemmed from how they defined the external interests of their state and what their domestic objectives and interests were at that time. Rapprochement was utilized by both US and Russian leaders to divert their attention to other issues, such as economic problems, which were perceived as a greater challenge at that period.

The main foreign policy topics on Obama's political agenda in the post-2010 period were the uprisings in the Middle East and the withdrawal from Afghanistan. He was in need of getting Russian support to be able to effectively deal with these issues. For the new US administration, reset policy was an instrument of downgrading the tensions with Russia in order to get support to US policies on more salient issues. Moreover, even though the "establishment of partnership with Russia" is shown as the rationale behind Obama's policies towards Russia²⁰⁷, the reset policy was also linked to Obama's consideration of strengthening his domestic position by improving the US economy, torn because of years-long military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. As such, Obama's insistence on the development of arms control and disarmament processes in cooperation with Russia as a part of the reset process, was also linked to his expectation of cutting defence spending with economic concerns.

The 2012 presidential elections in both US and Russia revealed the interconnected nature of foreign policies and domestic politics. Similar to earlier period, the US elections displayed the duality between Republicans and Democrats. Whilst Republican candidate Mitt Romney argued for a tougher stance, Democrat candidate Barack Obama defended the achievements of reset

²⁰⁷ This is given by the US officials as the rationale behind Obama's reset policy.

policy in the last four years.²⁰⁸ In the end, Obama's re-election for another term underlined the US commitment to continue the reset policy towards Russia. Similar to the US, foreign policy issues were also included in the campaigning process in Russia. However, different from the US, due to the discredit of Atlanticism at both elite and societal levels in the early 1990s, mistrust towards the US and reaction to NATO were more common in the election campaigns of the leading candidates.²⁰⁹

The developments in the afterwards of the election of Putin as the new Russian President in 2012 intensified the bilateral discords between two countries. In the post-2012 period, human rights and democratic governance have been the most controversial topics on the agenda. This discontent had already been triggered when Putin announced in March 2011 that he would run for a third term in the 2012 presidential elections and aggravated when the victory of the pro-Putin United Russia Party in the parliamentary elections of December 2011 raised allegations of electoral fraud and manipulation. When the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reacted to the latter development by calling for election investigations, Russia responded by issuing a statement by the Foreign Ministry, accusing the US for involvement in Russian domestic affairs.²¹⁰ Following the election of Putin, the US criticisms over the suppression of civil society and opposition in Russia increased. Every time criticized by the US, Putin responded by claiming that the US was intervening into Russia's domestic affairs and by defending Russian sovereignty and independence. This made "US reaction and Russian counter-reaction" a continuous pattern in the post-2012 US-Russian relations.

²⁰⁸ "The Candidates on US-Russia Relations", Council on Foreign Relations, available at: <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/candidates-us-russia-relations/p27283> (accessed on 14 January 2014); Mark Simeone, "US-Russia Relations and the 2012 U.S. Presidential Elections: 'Reset' or 'Overcharge'", Center for Strategic and International Studies, 26 October 2012, available at: <http://csis.org/blog/us-russia-relations-and-2012-us-presidential-elections-reset-or-overcharge> (accessed on 14 January 2014).

²⁰⁹ "Profiles of Russia's 2012 presidential election candidates", *BBC*, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16750990> (accessed on 14 January 2014).

²¹⁰ "Comment from the Russian MFA Spokesman in Relation to the Statements of US Administration Representatives on the State Duma Elections on December 4, 2011", 6 December 2011, Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, available at: http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/C9C9AD90D31D26AE4425796_0004E5236 (accessed on 23 September 2013).

Afghanistan continued to be an issue of mutual concern for both Russia and the US in this period. In the earlier years, common concerns over the threat of extremism originated from Central Asia had led Russia to cooperate with the US in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the possibility that US could continue its military presence in Central Asia after the termination of ISAF raised Russian concerns. This can clearly be seen from the CSTO decision taken in December 2011 that the establishment of foreign military bases on the territories of CSTO members would be possible only with the common consent of all members.²¹¹

NATO-related issues continued to strain relations in this period. At the Lisbon Summit on 19-20 November 2010, NATO members had adopted a new Strategic Concept, named “Active Engagement, Modern Defence”, which highlighted in many ways NATO’s increasing transformation as a security organization of political and global nature.²¹² As such, in accordance with the importance attached to crisis management and collective security, the Concept emphasised the need to improve partnership relations.²¹³ Moreover, in order to strengthen common defence, the Concept developed a deterrence strategy, which rested on a mixture of nuclear and conventional weapons.²¹⁴ As a part of this strategy, the Concept gave a renewed momentum to the cooperation efforts to establish a missile defence system for the Continent. Accordingly, NATO members decided to expand the coverage of NATO’s Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence Programme to whole Allied territory, forces and populations.²¹⁵ Welcoming the European Phased Adaptive Approach of the US

²¹¹ “CSTO Wants Mutual Consent for Foreign Military Bases”, 21 December 2011, available at: http://www.rferl.org/content/csto_wants_mutual_consent_foreign_military_bases/24429242.html (accessed on 10 January 2014).

²¹² Jens Ringsmose and Sten Rynning, “Introduction. Taking Stock of NATO’s New Strategic Concept,” in *NATO’s New Strategic Concept: A Comprehensive Assessment*, eds. Jens Ringsmose and Sten Rynning (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2011), p. 7.

²¹³ “Active Engagement in Cooperative Security: A More Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy”, 15 April 2011, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/2011_0415_110415-Partnership-Policy.pdf (accessed on 14 August 2012).

²¹⁴ “Active Engagement, Modern Defence. Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization”, p. 14.

²¹⁵ “Lisbon Summit Declaration”, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Press Release (2010) 155, 20 November 2010, Official

and similar other programmes of member states as valuable contributions to the NATO missile defence architecture, they envisioned to develop missile defence consultation, command and control arrangements by the time of the March 2011 meeting of NATO Defence Ministers.²¹⁶

Considering the fragility of resetted relations with Russia, NATO members tried to accommodate Russian concerns while increasing the extent and scope of NATO activities. To this end, NATO issued a set of joint declarations with Russia at the NRC meeting in Lisbon with the vision of “achieving a true strategic and modernized partnership.”²¹⁷ In the declaration named “Joint Review of 21st Century Common Security Challenges”, they enlisted areas of mutual concern and explored ways to jointly deal with them. They also expressed their commitment to revitalize and modernize conventional arms control regime in Europe and continue dialogue on disarmament. They issued a “Joint Ballistic Threat Assessment” and committed to cooperate in missile defence cooperation. Consequent to the NRC meeting, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen told that:

We agreed to discuss pursuing missile defence cooperation. We agreed on a joint ballistic missile threat assessment and to continue dialog in this area. The NRC will also resume Theatre Missile Defence Cooperation. We have tasked the NRC to develop a comprehensive Joint Analysis of the future framework for missile defence cooperation.²¹⁸

Even though NATO members and Russia expressed their intention to cooperate on missile defence system to be established in Europe, what they expected from this cooperation differed markedly. Whilst Russia was expecting the cooperation to be built on a unified and jointly controlled missile shield, NATO limited it to information-sharing. Moreover, Russia insisted to acquire formal security guarantees from NATO that the system would not be directed

Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68828.htm?mode=pressrelease (accessed on 14 August 2012).

²¹⁶ “Lisbon Summit Declaration”.

²¹⁷ “NATO-Russia Council Joint Statement at the meeting of the NATO-Russia Council held in Lisbon on 20 November 2010”, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_68871.htm (accessed on 14 August 2012).

²¹⁸ “NATO-Russia set on path towards strategic partnership”, 20 November 2010, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-5BDD6439-5A871DC4/natolive/news_68876.htm (accessed on 6 August 2012).

against Russia. Due to discontents over such disagreements, Russia opened an anti-missile radar system in Kaliningrad in November 2011. Medvedev expressed Russian reaction to the missile defence system so that:

We will either come to terms on missile defence and form a full-fledged joint mechanism of cooperation or ... we will plunge into a new arms race and have to think of deploying new strike means, and it's obvious that this scenario will be very hard.²¹⁹

NATO's Chicago Summit on 20-21 May 2012 added one more issue to the already strained agenda of NATO-Russia relations. Even though the Summit focused on the issues of capability-development, further improvement of missile defence system and the future of Afghanistan after the planned withdrawal of ISAF forces at the end of 2014, it also addressed the issue of further enlargement and began to deal with the Georgian case in tandem with the Balkan countries and decoupled from the Ukrainian case.²²⁰ Reiteration of the support for Georgian territorial integrity, demands from Russia to withdraw its forces from South Ossetia and Abkhazia as well as strengthening of the membership vision for Georgia revitalized Russian reactions to the issue of enlargement after the Chicago Summit.

3.4. Conclusion: Russian Reactions to NATO Enlargement and Implications for the Post-Communist states

It has been shown above that the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War led to drastic changes in Europe and the former Soviet space. Following the fall of the Union and the end of the inter-bloc confrontation, not only fifteen new states emerged in the former Soviet space, but also the strategic landscape of the region started to change with the adaptation of NATO to the new circumstances and emergence of Russian-led re-integration attempts among some of the former Soviet Republics.

²¹⁹ Steven A. Hildreth and Carl Ek, "Missile defense and NATO's Lisbon Summit", 28 December 2010, Congressional Research Service, available at: http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R41549_20110111.pdf (accessed on 6 August 2012), p. 9.

²²⁰ "Chicago Summit Declaration", Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Chicago on 20 May 2012, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87593.htm (15 December 2012).

After a brief period of discussions on the future of NATO, the Alliance proved its continuing relevance after the disappearance of its *raison d'être*, the Soviet Union, and acquired new tasks which went beyond mere collective defence through a transformation process. Most importantly, it began to cooperate with the former members of the Warsaw Pact and accepted the vision of eastern enlargement. As to the eastern side of Eurasia, Russia started taking a more assertive role in its adjacent areas as of 1993. As such, it sought to re-establish its links with former Soviet Republics through bilateral agreements, initiated a series of integration efforts in the former Soviet space under the institutional rubric of the CIS and established an alliance in the form of CST, which included a clause of collective defence.

The chapter has also showed that, having been opened with a sense of euphoria, the post-Cold War relations between Russia and the West were characterized by growing estrangement. Even though periodical rapprochements occurred, mostly out of the domestic political considerations of the leaders of Russia and the Western countries, NATO's enlargement in an area which Russia perceives vital for its national interests remained as a controversial issue since the mid-1990s.

Located on the borderland between the enlarging NATO and Russian-led security cooperation initiatives in the former Soviet space, post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe were immensely influenced by the changes in the strategic landscape of their surroundings. Therefore, while undergoing through a process of multi-dimensional internal adaptation, they also began to face the challenge of external adaptation. As all of them were former Warsaw Pact members, the inevitable aspect of this adaptation process was whether to sustain their Cold-War alliance patterns, by joining to the CIS and the CST or forming bilateral links with Russia, or to assume a new behaviour by seeking integration into NATO.

When Russia expressed its intention to take a more resilient presence in near abroad and began to react to NATO's eastern enlargement, the issue of choosing among two options of alignment, membership in NATO versus re-alignment with Russia, has been one of the most difficult matters post-communist states faced in the post-Cold War era. Therefore, the estrangement between Russia

and the West has never been solely a bilateral issue between the relevant countries. Instead, it influenced the developments at international and regional contexts as well as domestic politics of post-communist states to a great extent.

As it will be shown in the following chapters, facing turbulent changes within them as well as in their surrounding, all of the post-communist states initially expressed their *de facto* intention of not forming alliances in the post-Cold War period. Over time, they revised this position and began to adapt to the external changes in different ways. As such, some of them began to seek membership in NATO, whereas some others supported re-alignment with Russia by signing the CST. Different from these two group of states, some others refrained from making a specific alliance choice and, instead, sustained their self-declared *de facto* neutral position.

In the rest of the analysis, the reasons for this diversity will be elaborated in detail. To that end, the following four chapters will examine the post-Cold War alliance decisions of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Belarus and Ukraine, all of which are former Warsaw Pact members. Written from the perspective of neoclassical realism, which elaborates the linkages between foreign policies and domestic politics, each chapter will examine the interaction of significant externalities with domestic political peculiarities of these four states. This country-focused analysis will then be followed by a comparative analysis, which will compare the findings from these four cases and make a neo-classical realist explanation regarding the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space.

CHAPTER 4

CZECH REPUBLIC'S "RETURN TO EUROPE" AND ALLIANCE-FORMATION WITH NATO

4.1. Introduction

Historical predecessor of the Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia had joined the Warsaw Pact at the time of the establishment of the latter in 1955. Due to the enduring communist rule and membership in the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War, Czechoslovakia had remained militarily aligned with the Soviet Union though it had not been a Soviet republic. Following the Velvet Revolution in 1989, which gave an end to the communist rule and raised pro-Western dissidents to power in Czechoslovakia, the alliance with the Soviet Union had come to an end when the then President Vaclav Havel disbanded Czechoslovak membership in the Warsaw Pact in July 1991. With the endorsement of the wider objective of "return to Europe" in the early 1990s, the security policies of Czechoslovakia changed radically and Czechoslovak authorities began to seek full participation in all European institutions, including NATO.

This chapter elaborates the post-communist alliance trajectory of the Czech Republic in detail and scrutinizes the underlying dynamics behind the endorsement and consistent pursuit of the objective of NATO membership. The chapter basically addresses the question of why the Czech Republic adopted a pro-NATO alliance trajectory and additionally deals with how it achieved to be involved in the first enlargement wave in 1999 before other aspirant countries.

The chapter begins with an overview of the political developments and internal transition process in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic with the purpose of highlighting the political attitude and main considerations of the Czechoslovak and Czech authorities. After identifying the domestic political peculiarities that characterized the Czech political scene and influenced Czech foreign and security policies, the chapter continues with a section devoted to the security considerations and foreign affairs of the ruling authorities in the pre-accession period to NATO. The chapter then proceeds with an analysis on Czech-

NATO relations and elaborates the dynamics behind the endorsement of the objective of NATO membership.

Departing from the neoclassical realist assumption that states' alliance decisions cannot be fully comprehended if one focuses on solely external dynamics, the chapter explains both the endorsement of and the continuity in the pursuit of the objective of NATO membership by taking into account the interaction of external dynamics with domestic political peculiarities of the Czech Republic. The chapter attributes the pro-NATO alliance trajectory of the Czech Republics to the assessment of the external context by the Czech authorities in accordance with their political agenda and domestic political interests.

4.2. Domestic Background of Czech Foreign and Security Policies

The following section identifies the domestic political peculiarities which influenced, in interaction with external dynamics, Czech foreign and security policies. To that end, after giving a brief information on internal political developments in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, the chapter finds out the defining characteristics of the Czech political scene. The background drawn in this section is to be used in the latter parts of this chapter which scrutinize the role of domestic political peculiarities on the pro-NATO alliance trajectory of the Czech Republic.

4.2.1. Velvet Revolution and the Split of Czechoslovakia

The first Czechoslovak State came into existence with the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the First World War in 1918. Having maintained its independence in the inter-war years, Czechoslovakia was invaded by Germany and annexed to German territory in 1938. Following the end of the Second World War in 1945, Czechoslovakia was re-established and the communist rule endured thereof from 1948 to 1989. Within this period, the outbreak of the "Prague Spring" under the government of Alexander Dubcek in 1968, with the vision of liberalizing the political system in Czechoslovakia, set a milestone, which led to the invasion of the country by the Red Army and ended in the return of conservative communists back to the power. From 1968 to 1989, the

Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) remained as the dominant political force on the Czechoslovak political scene.

Though operating under the ground until the late 1980s, liberal dissidents intensified their activities and the public upheaval against the communist authorities emerged in Czechoslovakia in the late 1980s. The leading opposition forces were the “Civic Forum” (OF) led by Vaclav Havel in the Czech State and the “Public Against Violence” (VPN) led by Jan Budaj in the Slovak State. “The goal of both OF and VPN was to open a dialogue with the state on the liberalisation and democratisation of Czechoslovakia.”²²¹ In the context of rising discontents, communist authorities started dialogue with opponents, which eventually culminated in several political achievements for the latter, such as the release of political prisoners, elimination of constitutional articles regulating supremacy of the communists, legalization of opposition groups and unrestricted access to media.²²² This process proceeded with the inclusion of the OF into government – albeit in a limited way.

In this setting, the KSC had already ceased to be a dominant political force in Czechoslovakia in the early 1990s. This was also revealed by the outcomes of the parliamentary elections on 8-9 June 1990, which resulted in the victory of the OF in the Czech state and the VPN in the Slovak state. The elections became decisive on the future of Czechoslovakia on the grounds that the Czech State began to be dominated by pro-reform and economically liberalist forces, whilst the Slovak State began to be dominated by leftist and nationalist forces.²²³ As a result, in the period of 1990-1992, divergence rather than convergence became the rule in the Czechoslovak politics. Political conflicts occurred in several areas, including economic reforms (between proponents of rapid transition and gradual adaptation) and political ideology (left and right).²²⁴ It soon became apparent that

²²¹ Jiří Suk, “Czechoslovakia’s Return to Democracy,” in *Transformation: The Czech Experience* (Prague: Hugo Printing Company, 2006), p. 13.

²²² Jiří Suk, “Czechoslovakia’s Return to Democracy”, p. 13.

²²³ David Minarik, *Comparison of Czech and Austrian Foreign Policies and their Politics towards South Asia*, Diploma Thesis, Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations and European Studies, Brno (2008), p. 8.

²²⁴ Jiří Suk, “Czechoslovakia’s Return to Democracy”, p. 18.

then existing political framework of the Federation was not sustainable since the Czech and Slovak states were supporting transition at different paces and the right of veto they held over the other's decisions risked to block the whole transition process.

The differences between Czech and Slovak states were confirmed once again with the parliamentary elections of 1992. In the Czech state, right-wing Civic Democracy Party (ODS), led by Vaclav Klaus, won the elections, whilst the left-wing Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), led by Meciar, came first in the Slovak state. As David Minarik put it, they were seen as the “biggest rivals to each other and direct antipodes.”²²⁵ Due to the economic and political differences between both parties²²⁶, Czech and Slovak authorities could not establish a coalition at the federal level. This process culminated in the passage of the Law on the Dissolution of the Federation by the Federal Parliament on 25 November 1992, which led to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the emergence of Slovakia and the Czech Republic as independent states on 1 January 1993.

4.2.2. Transition Process and Decommunization in the Czech Republic

“The end of communist totalitarianism, coupled with the need to instigate and carry through a radical economic transformation, [had] swung the pendulum of political sympathy in favour of the right [in the Czech lands of Czechoslovakia].”²²⁷ Following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic continued to be ruled by former dissidents who supported a rapid internal and external transition. Therefore, the model of liberal democracy which was defended since the later period of Czechoslovakia continued to guide the politics of the new Czech State in the post-establishment period. As the most

²²⁵ David Minarik, *Comparison of Czech and Austrian Foreign Policies and their Politics towards South Asia*, p. 9.

²²⁶ The most apparent difference between both parties occurred in economic realm. Whilst the right-wing ODS, the leading party in the Czech state, was more oriented towards quick economic transformation and privatization, the social democrat HZDS in the Slovak State was favouring a more gradual approach.

²²⁷ Michal Klima, “Consolidation and Stabilization of the Party System in the Czech Republic”, *Political Studies*, Vol. XLVI (1998), p. 508.

obvious reflection of this situation, three parties established by breaking from the OF,²²⁸ which had been the dominant political force in the Czech lands in the pre-establishment period, placed themselves on political right. Of these parties, the Civic Democracy Party (ODS) emerged as the leading party in the Czech political scene and embodied the core of the coalition government which ruled the Country under the Premiership of Vaclav Klaus from 1992 to 1997.

Thanks to the continuing rule of liberal-minded political groups in power, Czech Republic could launch a comprehensive political and economic reform process. The Czech experience of post-communist transition was different from former Soviet Republics in many respects, which stemmed from the fact that the Czech Republic was not a constitutive part of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Within this framework, it should first be noted that the Czech Republic was the direct successor of Czechoslovakia, which remained “independent” but under the political influence of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. As a result, different from former Soviet Republics, which had to establish most of their state institutions from scratch, the Czech Republic had inherited from Czechoslovakia the necessary state structures and administrative experience to function as an independent and sovereign state in the post-Cold War period. After the embracement of the Constitution in December 1992 and the creation of institutions outlined in the Constitution, it completed the state-building process and set the institutional base to further proceed the democratization process.

In the post-establishment period, while adjusting the inherited state structures to the new realities, the primary consideration of the Czech authorities was “to create a new political culture suitable to a democratic polity.”²²⁹ Having embraced the objective of rapid transition, they were politically interested in the pluralization of political life and establishment of a competitive party system, and economically the liberalization of the economy.

For the right-wing Czech authorities, who rejected the communist past and condemned communists for keeping the then Czechoslovakia distant from Europe for decades, these could be achieved if only decommunization would be a part of

²²⁸ Civic Democracy Party (ODS), Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), Civic Movement (OH).

²²⁹ Sharon L. Wolchik, “The Czech and Slovak Republics: Two paths to the Same Destination,” in *Central and East European Politics: from Communism to Democracy*, ed. Sharon L. Wolchik and Jane L. Curry (Maryland: Rowman&Littlefield, 2011), p. 194.

the transition process. Therefore, they initiated a process of overcoming the communists' moral, political, institutional and material influence²³⁰ and “protecting the democratic system from the residues of the past.”²³¹ Accordingly, they dismantled old institutions and reoriented their work so that they could function democratically.²³² Making use of several lustration acts, which enabled them to reach to archive documents of the secret police and to reveal the people having links with the communist regime, they banned communists from working in the public sector and replaced them with liberal-minded ones whom they evaluated more appropriate for the functioning of the newly established democratic regime. Having eliminated the communist influence from state structures and excluding communists from governmental processes, the Czech authorities could achieve rapid progress in democratization and marketization processes.

The second point that distinguishes the Czech experience from many of the former Soviet Republics was the fact that nation-building was not a matter of consideration for the Czech authorities. Having not been a constitutive part of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia had been subject to neither Sovietization policies of the Stalin era nor massive Russian immigration during the Cold War. Therefore, following the split of Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic had inherited a homogenous ethnic population with a high degree of national consciousness. As a result, the Czech authorities neither experienced any difficulty of defining citizenship nor faced any social upheaval. The absence of internal domestic turmoil positively affected the transition process by enabling the authorities to focus their attention on the objective of integration into European and the Euro-Atlantic structures.

²³⁰ Pavel Žáček, “Coming to Terms with the Past – the Czech Middle Way,” in *Transformation: The Czech Experience*, p. 181.

²³¹ Petr Blazek, “Transitions to Democracy and the ‘Lustration’ Screening Process,” in *Transformation: The Czech Experience*, p. 178.

²³² Sharon L. Wolchik, “The Czech and Slovak Republics: Two paths to the Same Destination”, p. 193.

4.2.3. Domestic Political Peculiarities of the Czech Republic

Considering the course of political developments in the post-1989 period, it is possible to identify two important domestic political peculiarities which characterized the Czech politics and influenced its foreign and security policies to a great degree: first, the right-wing dominance at the time of the establishment of the Republic and, second, the convergence of the leading political forces on the wider objective of “return to Europe”. Whilst the former enabled the country to turn its face towards the West at the time of its establishment, the second one enabled the consistent pursuit of this orientation in the latter period.

Having won the elections of 1992, the right-wing ODS, an outgrowth of the Czechoslovak OF, hold the political power until 1997. It was only in the mid-1990s that a left-wing party with social democratic credentials gained sufficient support to challenge the right-wing dominance. In the parliamentary elections of 1996, ODS could supersede the Social Democratic Party (CSSD) only with a slight difference ahead. Because of the nearly equal distribution of votes between both parties, ODS signed an agreement with the CSSD in order to set up a minority government. Under this agreement, Milos Zeman, the leader of the CSSD, secured the post of the Parliamentary Chairmanship in return for supporting the ODS-led coalition government during the confidence vote at the Chamber of Deputies. Following the dissolution of this government, because of the corruption scandal over the funding of the ODS and deterioration of the economic conditions in 1997, President Havel named Josef Tosovsky as the new Prime Minister and a provisional government was established under his Premiership. This interim period came to an end with the 1998 parliamentary elections, which resulted in the victory of the CSSD and the assumption of Premiership by the CSSD leader Zeman. The CSSD repeated its victory again at the parliamentary elections in 2002 and hold the power until 2006 when it was seized again by the right-wing ODS.

Within this framework, it has been a stable pattern in the Czech politics that the country was ruled by coalition or minority governments led by either right-wing ODS or left-wing CSSD. As Kevin Deegan-Krause and Tim Haughton shows, the stability of the Czech party politics in the first two decades since 1989 owed much to the left-right division of politics and abilities of two leading parties,

ODS and CSSD, to project themselves as the leaders of this division.²³³ Considering this background, the general outlook of the Czech political system can be defined as a multi-party one with a right-wing dominant party from 1993 to 1996 and a multi-party one with two dominant parties, from both right and left side of the political spectrum, in the post-1996 period.²³⁴

The second important peculiarity of the post-establishment Czech politics was the convergence of the leading political parties on the objective of “return to Europe”, and undertaking a process of profound external and internal transition to that end. Complementing this, they also converged on the rejection of the communist ideology and communist past. Though the Communist Party (KSC) was not banned in Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic, the political system of the Czech state was based on the renunciation and condemnation of the communist ideology and the communist past. This was also encoded in July 1993 in the legislative act regarding “illegality of the Communist regime and on resistance to it”, which condemned the Czechoslovak Communist Party and transferred it the responsibility in the method of government from 1948 to 1989 and destruction of the traditional values and European civilization from the Czech lands.²³⁵

Despite the strong anti-communist attitude of the ruling Czech authorities, it has been a paradox that the Bohemian and Moravian Communist Party (KSCM), the direct successor of the KSC,²³⁶ continued to display a significant presence in the post-communist period. KSCM seized a substantial portion of votes in all elections since 1990.²³⁷ However, despite its existence in the

²³³ Kevin Deegan-Krause and Tim Haughton, “A Fragile Stability: The Institutional Roots of Low Party System Volatility in the Czech Republic, 1990-2009”, *Czech Journal of Political Science*, No. 3 (2010), p. 237.

²³⁴ Michal Klima, “Consolidation and Stabilization of the Party System in the Czech Republic”, pp. 494, 495.

²³⁵ Pavel Žáček, “Coming to Terms with the Past – the Czech Middle Way,” in *Transformation: The Czech Experience*, pp. 183-184.

²³⁶ Jiří Lach, James T. LaPlant, Jim Peterson and David Hill, “The Party Isn’t Over: An Analysis of the Communist Party in the Czech Republic”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2010), p. 365.

²³⁷ KSCM came second in the parliamentary elections of 1990 (13,24 per cent) and 1992 (14,05 per cent) and third in the elections of 1996 (10,33 per cent), 1998 (11,03 per cent), 2002 (18,51 per cent) and 2006 (12,81 per cent). European Election Database (NSD), available at:

Parliament, KSCM could not take part in the formation of any government because of the rejection of other political parties to form coalition with them. This was based on the fact that other political actors saw KSCM “as an unreformed remnant of a hard-line regime”²³⁸ which could obscure democratization of the Czech Republic and its return to Europe.

Nevertheless, even if KSCM could not participate in any of the post-establishment governments, it influenced the political processes indirectly thanks to the substantial number of seats it hold in the Parliament. As a result, though it could not influence the policy outcomes by exerting direct power, KSCM remained present in the Parliament and caused the Czech politics to be a fragile one based on coalition or minority governments established by unstable majorities in the Parliament. This kept alive the anxieties of ruling authorities regarding the continuity of transition process and their domestic power vis-a-vis their communist opponents.

As another peculiarity, inter-party competition in the post-communist period covered mainly the issues of privatization and the role of state in economic and social life.²³⁹ The electoral behaviour of the Czech people was also consistent with this propensity. As Martin Potucek puts it, “the Czech people were more concerned with problems that might threaten or enrich their everyday life; the development and fine-tuning of instruments of political democracy, market economy, and civil society did not belong to their priorities.”²⁴⁰ As a reflection of this, Czech electorate showed interest in foreign and security policy matters insofar as they influenced their economic interests. This made foreign and security policies an elite-driven project and, combined with the exclusion of communists

http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/country/czech_republic/ (accessed on 30 July 2013).

²³⁸ Carol Skalnik Leff, “Building democratic values in the Czech republic since 1989,” in *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.172.

²³⁹ Geoffrey Evans and Stephen Whitefield, “The Structuring of Political Cleavages in Post-Communist Societies: the Case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia”, *Political Studies*, Vol. XLVI (1998), pp. 115-139.

²⁴⁰ Martin Potucek, “Havel versus Klaus: Public policy making in the Czech Republic”, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1999), p. 171.

from governments, enabled the ruling authorities to pursue their foreign and security policies without facing any domestic constraint.

That said, it should also be noted that internal and external aspects of the post-communist transition of the Czech Republic proceeded in parallel to one another. Accordingly, whilst decommunization and transformation in accordance with the Western model were the internal aspects of the wider objective of “return to Europe”, the external aspects of this vision became elimination of the Soviet/Russian influence, development of closer relations with Western countries and integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, including NATO. In the following section, the external aspects of the post-communist transition of the Czech Republic will be given in tandem with the security considerations and policies of the Czechoslovak and Czech authorities.

4.3. Security Considerations and Policies in the Pre-Accession Period to NATO

Czechoslovakia had joined the Warsaw Pact at the establishment of the latter in 1955. Accordingly, it had defined its security policies in accordance with the Cold War parameters and its alliance with the Soviet Union for decades. Despite this background, the fall of communism in 1989 and the seizure of power by former dissidents precipitated an internal transformation process and reinstated a new domestic political order which influenced the assessment of the external context and, accordingly, changed foreign and security policies to a great degree.

When the Czech Republic emerged as an independent country in January 1993, the foundations of its foreign and security policies had already been established. This continuity was provided by the fact that the Czech Republic was the legal successor of Czechoslovakia and the former dissidents which rose to power in 1989 continued to hold power in the post-establishment process. Because of this continuity, the Velvet Revolution is generally presented as the “first brick” in the establishment of the Czech foreign and security policies.²⁴¹

In this framework, this section begins by explaining security considerations and policies of the Czechoslovak authorities in the period from 1989 to 1992 and continues with an analysis on the post-establishment period

²⁴¹ David Minarik, *Comparison of Czech and Austrian Foreign Policies and their Politics towards South Asia*, p. 6.

under the Premiership of Vaclav Klaus. The section not only highlights the pro-Western orientation of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic in the post-Revolution period but also reveals the fact that the objective of NATO membership was viewed as a fundamental aspect of the transition process.

4.3.1. Czechoslovakia in the Early 1990s

The period of 1989-1992 illustrates how a radical take-over in domestic politics could precipitate changes in foreign and security policies. The removal of communists and the seizure of power by liberal-minded dissidents opened a new period in Czechoslovakia, defined by not only comprehensive internal transformations but also a profound change in foreign and security policies. As such, though the external context remained the same in the pre-revolution and immediate post-revolution period, the change in ruling authorities established a new domestic political order and led to changes in foreign and security policies.

Once in power, Czechoslovak authorities were mainly concerned with eliminating the communist and Soviet influence from Czechoslovakia. Whilst the internal aspect of this consideration was to complete decommunization of state and administrative structures, its external aspects were to give an end to the military and economic dominance of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia and to sustain the achievements of de-communization and de-Sovietization through integration into Europe. As such, whilst prioritizing relations with the US and other Western countries, they identified the Soviet Union as a threat “because of the possibility of the Soviets’ attempting to reimpose a satellite status on the country and constrain its reformist path.”²⁴²

Accordingly, the Czechoslovak authorities prioritized three issues in the immediate afterwards of the Velvet Revolution: removal of Soviet troops, which was stationed in Czechoslovakia since 1968; weakening or dissolution of COMECON; and, dissolution of Warsaw Pact.²⁴³ Whilst the first two objectives

²⁴² Thomas S. Szayna, “The Czech Republic: A Small Contributor or a Free Rider?,” in *America’s New Allies: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), p. 121.

²⁴³ The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance refers to COMECON, which was established under the leadership of the Soviet Union as a counterpart to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation in Western Europe. Petr Kratochvil and Petra Kuchynkova, “Between the

were seen as measures to reinforce the Czechoslovak independence and internal sovereignty, the third one was viewed as a means of meeting external security by giving an end to bloc-politics in Europe. The negotiations on the withdrawal of Soviet troops, stationed on the Czechoslovak territory since 1968, started on 15 January 1990 and the Soviet troops on the Czechoslovak territory were completely withdrawn by July 1991.²⁴⁴ In the following time, with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON, Czechoslovak authorities completed their initial priorities regarding relations with the Soviet Union.

While re-consolidating the Czechoslovak sovereignty and independence by eliminating the communist and Soviet influence, the ruling authorities also developed closer ties with their counterparts from the immediate neighbours. Having been initially developed through the personal contacts at the leadership level, this cooperation took a formal shape in February 1991 with the establishment of Visegrad-3 among Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. Based on similar concerns of its members vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and communist opponents, this formation emerged as a mechanism to speed up the post-communist transition process and integration into the European structures through regional coordination.

In this period, Czechoslovak authorities approached European security matters with a pan-Europeanist perspective. As such, their initial security policies were based on not only rejection of bloc-politics but also revitalization of a pan-European order.²⁴⁵ President Havel put this policy in his speech at the Council of Europe in May 1990 by expressing that two-bloc structure should move towards a

Return to Europe and the Eastern Enticement: Czech Relations to Russia,” in *EU-Russian Relations and the Eastern Partnership*, ed. Gabor Feti and Zsuzsa Ludvig(Budapest: Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian academy of Sciences, 2009), p. 63.

²⁴⁴ Jiří Šedivý, “The Pull-out of Soviet Troops from Czechoslovakia”, *Perspectives*, No. 2 (Winter 1993/94); Zdenek Matejka, “How the Warsaw Pact was dissolved”, *Perspectives*, No. 2 (Winter 1993/94), p. 57.

²⁴⁵ Josefina Wallat, “Czechoslovak/Czech Foreign and Security Policy 1989-1999”, *Perspectives*, Vol. 17 (Winter 2001-2002), p. 16.

new security system on the basis of “security community involving a large part of the Northern Hemisphere.”²⁴⁶

Czechoslovak authorities moulded this vision in the proposal to establish “European Security Commission”, which they perceived as the nucleus of a new European security structure to be based on a pan-European security treaty.²⁴⁷ As they proposed, the Commission “could work alongside the two pacts as long as the pacts, or one of them, remained in existence.”²⁴⁸ Rather than dismantling NATO and Warsaw Pact, this proposal envisaged their gradual transformation.²⁴⁹ In such a system, NATO and Warsaw Pact would be “instruments of disarmament rather than instruments of armament.”²⁵⁰ For President Havel, this system would provide “all European states with the certainty that they no longer have to fear one another because they are all part of the same system of mutual guarantees, based on the principle of the equality of all participants and their obligation to protect the independence of each participating country.”²⁵¹

However, as the perceived threat from the then existing Soviet Union increased in the course of 1991 and the shortcomings of the CSCE became apparent during the crisis in the Balkans, it soon became apparent to the Czechoslovak authorities that their pan-European vision could not provide the external security of Czechoslovakia. Hence, they began to defend that “neither the concept of neutrality nor the establishment of new regional security structures was a realistic alternative to the full membership of the Czech Republic in transatlantic

²⁴⁶ Vaclav Havel, Speech at the Council of Europe Assembly, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990, Vaclav Havel Library, available at: http://archive.vaclavhavel-library.org/Functions/show_html.php?id=157770 (accessed on 10 December 2014), p. 4.

²⁴⁷ Stéphane Lefebvre, “The Czech Republic and National Security, 1993-1998: The Emergence of a Strategic Culture”, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2010), p. 339.

²⁴⁸ Jiří Šedivý, “From dreaming to Realism – Czechoslovak Security Policy since 1989”, *Perspectives*, No. 4 (Winter 1994/95), p. 64.

²⁴⁹ Vaclav Havel, Speech at the Meeting of Leaders from Three Neighbouring Countries, Bratislava Castle, 9 April 1990, Vaclav Havel Library, available at: http://archive.vaclavhavel-library.org/Functions/show_html.php?id=157669 (accessed on 10 December 2014), p. 3.

²⁵⁰ Vaclav Havel, Speech at the Council of Europe Assembly, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990, p. 5.

²⁵¹ Vaclav Havel, Speech at the Council of Europe Assembly, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990, p. 6.

security structures.”²⁵² The new approach would then be expressed by Jaromir Novotny, the then General Director of the Foreign Relations Section of the Czech Ministry of Defence, so that:

There is no longer any place for ‘isolated countries’ within Europe. Furthermore, the Czech Republic does not wish to be a conduit between East and West. We are Europeans, building our democracy and seeking to integrate with the rest of Europe.²⁵³

In this framework, initially having supported the development of a pan-European security system, Czechoslovak authorities began to view membership in NATO as the most feasible way to provide the external security of the Czechoslovak state. Having been embraced in the later period of Czechoslovakia, the objective of NATO membership continued to remain at the centre of Czech foreign and security policies after the establishment of the Czech Republic.

4.3.2. The Klaus Era

Following the establishment of the Czech Republic in 1993, the political institutions retained continuity with the later period of Czechoslovakia. Whilst Vaclav Havel became the President of the Czech Republic, the national assembly, elected in June 1992 elections, continued to be the national parliament of the Czech Republic.²⁵⁴ Yet, different from the Czechoslovak era, during which President Havel was the leading actor in foreign and security policies, Prime Minister Klaus and his Coalition Government emerged as the key actors in these policy domains in the newly established Czech Republic in accordance with the prerogatives of the new Constitution adopted in December 1992.

Prime Minister Klaus and his ruling entourage were also coming from dissident ranks and committed to the vision of “return to Europe”. This was expressed in the “Conception of the Foreign Policy”, which was adopted in 1993,

²⁵² Jan Winkler, “From the Partition to the Elections: The First Years of Czech Foreign Policy”, *Perspectives*, Vol. 6-7 (1996), p. 12.

²⁵³ Jaromir Novotny, “From PfP to IFOR – the Czech experience”, *NATO Review*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (July 1996), available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1996/9604-6.htm> (accessed on 5 December 2014).

²⁵⁴ Thomas S. Szayna, “The Czech Republic: A Small Contributor or a Free Rider?”, pp. 122-123.

that the Czech Republic strategically aimed membership in the EU, NATO and the WEU and the relations with countries in the Euro-Atlantic space were viewed as a priority.²⁵⁵ Accordingly, the relations with the Western countries as well as the objective of integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, including NATO, continued to remain at the centre of Czech foreign and security policies.

Nevertheless, despite the adherence to the objectives of NATO membership, the Klaus era displayed a passivity in security-related matters. As a reflection of that, security issues lost their salience on political agenda and the Klaus Government delayed the approval of a national security strategy which would draw a blueprint for security policies. It also refrained from making extensive military reforms and reorganizing the Czech Army.

The passivity in security issues was above all due to the changes in the external context of the Czech Republic in the post-establishment period. Different from Czechoslovakia, Czech Republic was located in a more benign external context. As such, the Russian factor was a less salient concern for the Czech authorities as the Czech Republic was less exposed to political, economic and cultural pressures of Russia. In this period, the re-united Germany was also viewed as a less security problem. Setting aside the political disagreements over the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans, Germany turned into the most important economic partner of the Czech Republic. In this context, not only military conflict with neighbours was viewed unthinkable, but also the persistent problem of “being a ‘buffer state’ between two large and sometimes aggressive powers (the USSR/Russia and Germany)”²⁵⁶ was transcended.

In the absence of imminent external security challenges, Prime Minister Klaus, who had served as the Finance Minister before the split of Czechoslovakia, viewed economic issues more important than security matters. Progress in economic transformation was viewed as the most significant way of securing the sovereignty of the Czech Republic and ensuring its long-term prosperity and development. Though the prioritization of economic issues did not change the

²⁵⁵ Jiří Šedivý, “From dreaming to Realism – Czechoslovak Security Policy since 1989”, p. 68.

²⁵⁶ Thomas S. Szayna, “The Czech Republic: A Small Contributor or a Free Rider?”, p. 118.

general orientation of the Czech Republic towards Europe, economic matters were addressed at this period at the expense of political and security issues.

Apart from the focus on economic issues, the passivity in security realm was also precipitated by Klaus's sense of Czech exceptionalism, which was based on the conviction that the Czech Republic was more advanced than the other Central European countries in political and economic terms and, thus, already a part of Europe. Jiri Pehe described this conviction so that:

Just like during the interwar period, when Czechs believed they were the upholders of democracy in Central Europe and the Slavic world in general, and in 1968, when Czechs believed their 'socialism with a human face' would salvage the communist ideology, the Klaus government believed the Czechs were destined to play a special role in reviving democracies and market economies in the post-communist world.²⁵⁷

Soon after the split of Czechoslovakia, Vladimir Dlouhy, the Czech Minister of Industry and Trade, put this conviction so that the Czech Republic would be ready for the EU membership in two years thanks to its "democratic system, economic stability, low unemployment rates, and satisfactory balance of payments."²⁵⁸ As such, viewing the Czech Republic as the western-most of the Central Europeans, the Klaus government was convinced that the Czech Republic would soon be integrated into all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, including NATO.

Despite the confidence of the Klaus government that the Czech Republic would rapidly join the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, the economic crisis which occurred in the second half of the 1990s made it clear that the Czech Republic was not as advanced as expected and the Czech entry into the EU and NATO was not guaranteed.²⁵⁹ The appearance of the gap between expectations of NATO members and the progress which the Czech Republic could make coincided with the change of political power in the Czech Republic in 1997. In this framework, in the post-Klaus era under the Interim government of Tosovsky

²⁵⁷ Jiri Pehe, "The Disappointments of Democracy", *Transitions*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (May 1998), p. 39.

²⁵⁸ Rick Fawn, "Reconstituting a National Identity: Ideologies in Czech Foreign Policy after the Split", p. 221.

²⁵⁹ Josefina Wallat, "Czechoslovak/Czech Foreign and Security Policy 1989-1999", p. 22.

and the CSSD-led Coalition Government under the Premiership of Zeman, there occurred a revival in security issues. The progress recorded in these matters in the post-Klaus era will be given in the latter section which addresses the Czech-NATO relations.

4.4. Alliance-Formation of the Czech Republic with NATO

The previous section showed that the objective of NATO membership remained at the centre of Czech security policies since 1992. This section will elaborate the dynamics behind both embracement and consistent pursuit of this objective. The section begins by examining the course of NATO-Czech relations and continues by addressing the internal and external dynamics which became influential in this process. In the end, the section will have shown how the embracement of the objective of NATO membership served both to the external and internal objectives of the Czech authorities.

4.4.1. The Course of Relations and the Czech Accession to NATO

NATO members had expressed in the London Summit in July 1990 the need to “reach out to the countries of the East” and invited the former Warsaw Pact members to “establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO.”²⁶⁰ Following this call, Czechoslovakia had established diplomatic relations with the Alliance on 31 July 1992²⁶¹ and began to cooperate with NATO under the framework of the NACC.

As it has been shown before, the Czechoslovak authorities had viewed the establishment of a strengthened pan-European security system and the transformation of military blocs towards a common security community as the best way for providing the European and Czech security. Hence, though cooperating with NATO in the framework of NACC, they had not initially endorsed the objective of NATO membership. However, when the shortcomings

²⁶⁰ “London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance”, North Atlantic Council, 5-6 July 1990, London, available at: www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c900706a.htm (accessed on 6 December 2014).

²⁶¹ Jiří Šedivý, “Czech-NATO Relations: A Dynamic Process”, Japan’s national center for Slavic and Eurasian studies, available at: <http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/sympo/96summer/sedivy.pdf> (accessed on 4 November 2013), p. 132.

of the then CSCE had become apparent and the continued utility of NATO had been proven, they left their pan-European focus and began to view the NATO membership as the most viable option to provide external security of Czechoslovakia. After the establishment of the Czech Republic, the Czech authorities followed the path of their predecessors and formulated the objective of obtaining NATO membership as a *sine qua non* of Czech foreign and security policies.²⁶²

Nevertheless, despite the endorsement of the objective of NATO membership by the Central European countries, including Czechoslovakia, NATO members were still articulating the vision of eastern enlargement and did not give a clear answer to the quest for membership by the Central Europeans. As a result, the Czech-NATO relations in the first half of the 1990s was characterized by unequal expectations and the cooperation in the framework of NACC left far behind the expectations of the Czech authorities.

In this context, the development of PfP as a new instrument of cooperation with non-members at the Brussels Summit in 1994 was welcomed by the Czech authorities and viewed as the beginning of a new stage in relations with NATO. The announcement by NATO members for the first time that they would welcome NATO expansion that would reach out to the democratic states to the East²⁶³ illustrated the end of intra-NATO discussions and gave an end to the unequal expectations in Czech-NATO relations.

Czech authorities viewed PfP as “a kind of test of maturity for the novices seeking eventual NATO membership.”²⁶⁴ It was seen as a chance to enhance the Czech capabilities with the requirements of the membership and a programme through which the Czech procedures could be modelled on those used in

²⁶² Jiří Šedivý, “Czech-NATO Relations: A Dynamics Process”, p. 132.

²⁶³ “Partnership for Peace: Invitation”, Press Communique M-1(94)2, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/North Atlantic Cooperation Council, 10-11 January 1994, Brussels, available at: www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940110a.htm (accessed on 6 December 2014).

²⁶⁴ Jaromir Novotny, “The Czech Republic an Active Partner with NATO”, NATO Review, Vol. 42, No. 3 (June 1994), available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1994/9403-3.htm> (accessed on 22 August 2014).

NATO.²⁶⁵ Therefore, under the conditions of that period, PfP was seen as “the minimum of the desirable and the maximum of the possible.”²⁶⁶

The momentum created by the development of PfP was sustained with the publication of the “Study of Enlargement” by NATO in September 1995. Addressing the questions of “why” and “how” to enlarge, the document was designed as a blueprint that identified the political and military steps to be taken by prospective members. This framework was highlighted more at the ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in December 1995, which identified the basic elements and types of dialogue in the enlargement process. Following these developments, Czech Republic submitted its first discussion paper in May 1996, addressing the issues such as the scope of Czech forces assigned to integrated structures, military infrastructure on the Czech territory and standardization.

Nevertheless, despite the military contacts between NATO and the Czech Republic and the participation of the Czech army in some of the NATO missions, the military preparedness of the Czech Republic became a problematic issue in the pre-accession period. In the early 1990s, the only military reform Czechoslovakia had was the personnel verification measures which aimed elimination of communist officials from the army.²⁶⁷ This passivity endured during the Klaus government which viewed military reforms as the misuse of economic resources.

In addition to the problems pertinent to the military preparedness of the Czech Republic, the Russian reactions to the eastern enlargement emerged as another discontent in the pre-enlargement period. Defending that enlargement would change the geopolitical balance in Europe and put Russia in a geopolitically disadvantageous position, Russian authorities expressed a firm reaction to eastern enlargement and uttered that this could undermine Russia’s multilateral obligations, such as complying with the Treaty on CFE and ratification of START-II. Russia also tried to exert direct pressure on Central

²⁶⁵ Jaromir Novotny, “From PfP to IFOR – the Czech experience”.

²⁶⁶ Adrian A. Basora, “U.S. Policy toward Central and Eastern Europe: Forging a Partnership with the Czech Republic”, *Perspectives*, No. 3 (Summer 1994), p. 15.

²⁶⁷ Thomas S. Szayna, “The Czech Republic: A Small Contributor or a Free Rider?,” in *America’s New Allies: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), p. 132.

Europeans by threatening to apply economic sanctions to if they continued their pro-NATO vocation.²⁶⁸

In this context, it was a shared position by all Czech authorities that NATO had to establish partnership with Russia in order to decrease its sense of perceived isolation and reactions. However, they also defended that this should not lead to a surveillance to Russian demands, such as the right of veto in the decision-making of NATO and giving an end to eastern enlargement after the first wave. President Havel expressed this so that, “the West paid a terrible price for its appeasement policy, so let us hope it has learned from this.”²⁶⁹

Despite this background, there occurred a breakthrough in Czech-NATO relations in 1997. In that year, the period of passivity came to an end with the change of government in the Czech State. Different from his predecessor Klaus, Interim Prime Minister Tosovsky and his social democrat successor Zeman prioritized the preparations for the NATO membership. They speeded up the military reforms and undertook several legislative measures. After years-long delay, a National Defence Strategy was adopted in March 1997 on the eve of the Madrid Summit in 1997 to satisfy the NATO requirements. Furthermore, a conceptual outline for the development and reformation of Czech Armed Forces until 2003 was accepted. The government also obliged itself to increase the defence budget gradually to the level of 2 per cent of the GDP in 2000.²⁷⁰

Another related breakthrough was the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act as a new form of cooperation on 27 May 1997. By signing the Act, NATO and Russia committed to work together to “contribute to the establishment in Europe of common and comprehensive security.”²⁷¹ To carry out the Act, a Permanent Joint Council was established as a mechanism of consultation and

²⁶⁸ Alexander Duleba, “From Domination to Partnership: The Perspectives of Russian-Central-East European Relations”, NATO Research Fellowship Program, 1996-1998, Official Website of NATO, available at: <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/duleba.pdf> (accessed on 9 December 2014), p. 39.

²⁶⁹ Quoted from Stéphane Lefebvre, “The Czech Republic and National Security, 1993-1998: The Emergence of a Strategic Culture”, p. 343.

²⁷⁰ Thomas S. Szayna, “The Czech Republic: A Small Contributor or a Free Rider?,” p. 139.

²⁷¹ “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation”, 27 May 1997, available at: www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm (accessed on 3 January 2015).

coordination. Most importantly, NATO declared it had “no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of the new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO’s nuclear posture or nuclear policy.”²⁷² Allaying the Russian fears and eliminating its reaction to the NATO enlargement, the Act facilitated the enlargement process on the eve of the Madrid Summit.

In the end, consequent to the progress in meeting NATO requirements by the Czech authorities as well as the accommodation of the Russian factor with the signing of the Founding Act, NATO members invited the Czech Republic, together with Poland and Hungary, to begin accession talks with NATO at the Madrid Summit in 1997. This process culminated in the accession of the Czech Republic to NATO at the Washington Summit on 12 March 1999.

4.4.2. External Dynamics behind pro-NATO Alliance Trajectory

The last President of Czechoslovakia and the first President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel had viewed NATO not only as a military alliance against the Soviet threat but also as a mechanism to protect democratic values against communism.²⁷³ For him, NATO was “the best tool for a collective European defense, for the defense of democratic values of states under the rule of law, and for the achievements of civilization and the traditions of the Euro-Atlantic area that are the Alliance.”²⁷⁴ The same attitude was also shared by the Czech Premier Vaclav Klaus. As Klaus expressed:

The transatlantic community has never been connected solely by one past enemy. It has deeper roots and a stronger basis. It was based on ideas, not on enemies. It was connected with the tradition of freedom, democracy, and a

²⁷² “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation”.

²⁷³ Vaclav Havel, “NATO: The Safeguard of Stability and Peace in the Euro-Atlantic Region”, XIIIth NATO Workshop on Political-Military Decision Making, 19-23 June 1996, Warsaw, available at: www.csd.org/96Book/Workshop96.htm (accessed on 10 December 2014).

²⁷⁴ Vaclav Havel, “Remarks at the opening of the XIVth NATO Workshop”, 14th International Workshop on Global Security, 21-25 June 1997, Prague, available at: www.csd.org/97Book/havel-C.htm (accessed on 10 December 2014).

market economy, a common cultural heritage that we are obliged to keep alive for future generations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.²⁷⁵

At the first glance, the frequent references to liberal democratic values by Czechoslovak authorities in defining NATO and explaining the rationale for their endorsement and pursuit of the objective of NATO membership might seem to comply with the constructivist assumption that state identities influence their interests and actions. Accordingly, whilst the identification of the Soviet Union as a threat can be seen as an outgrowth of the self-identification of Czechoslovakia as a democratic European country, its propensity to form alliance with NATO in response to it can be explained with recourse to the sense of community with the West and be seen as an attempt to reproduce the European identity of Czechoslovakia.

Though the dissidents' peculiar political approach and agenda influenced the radical change in Czechoslovak foreign and security policies in 1989, it is not possible to explain this with reference to constructivism or Havelist idealism. There was also a realist element in Havel's foreign policy approach, which stemmed from geopolitically vulnerable position of Czechoslovakia. As one of the former dissidents, Alexander Vondra expressed, together with Ronald Asmus, situated among the larger and more powerful European powers in both East and West, Central Europe, [which Czech lands were a part of], had been a focal point of "geopolitical intrigue, war and invasion routes and the resulting violence and destruction."²⁷⁶ President Havel also expressed the sense of insecurity stemmed from the vulnerable geographic position so that:

The Czech Lands lie at the very center of Europe and sometimes even think of themselves as its very heart. For this reason, they have always been a particularly exposed place, unable to avoid any European conflict. In fact, many European conflicts began or ended there.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ Vaclav Klaus, "Czech Entry into NATO", 14th International Workshop on Global Security, 21-25 June 1997, Prague, available at: www.cedr.org/97Book/klaus-C.htm (accessed on 10 December 2014).

²⁷⁶ Ronald A. Asmus and Alexander Vondra, "The Origins of Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (July 2005), p 204.

²⁷⁷ Quoted from Stéphane Lefebvre, "The Czech Republic and National Security, 1993-1998: The Emergence of a Strategic Culture", p. 341.

Aware of the geopolitical constraints on Czechoslovak security, Vaclav Havel had also adopted the objective of NATO membership in order to acquire permanent security guarantees. The influence of external dynamics can better be seen from the fact that, though initially supported a pan-European security understanding, Czechoslovak authorities adopted the objective of NATO membership in response to the rise of external security considerations and threat perceptions as well as the confirmation of continuing military strength and utility of NATO in 1992.

That said, it should also be noted that the influence of external dynamics in the embracement of this objective was also not as direct and inevitable as traditional realist approach assumes. Instead, they influenced Czechoslovakia indirectly depending on how they were assessed by ruling authorities in accordance with their political objectives and agenda.

As neoclassical realism assumes, leaders act with twin objectives when assessing the external context and making foreign and security policies – promoting external interests of their state, as defined by them, and maintaining their domestic power. As such, when embracing the objective of NATO membership, Czechoslovak authorities aimed not only to acquire permanent security guarantees, but also to secure the continuity of the transition process and to keep their communist rivals under control. NATO membership was seen not only as a remedy to the geopolitical vulnerability but also a measure of eliminating any likely external encroachments to the domestic sphere and preventing the communist take-over of power. Therefore, rather than ideas and norms, external dynamics, in interaction with the political agenda and domestic political interests of the ruling authorities, led to the embracement of the objective of NATO membership in Czechoslovakia.

The inadequacy of traditional realist approach can also be seen from the fact that, though the external context of the Czech Republic was different from that of Czechoslovakia in the immediate post-establishment period, the Czech authorities sustained the objective of NATO membership. The differences in the external context of pre-1993 and post-1993 period highlight the fact that neither external dynamics directly influenced the Czech Republic nor the ruling authorities acted with only military concerns when adopting and sustaining the

objective of NATO membership. Rather, Czech authorities sought membership in NATO not only to receive permanent security guarantees, but also to secure the achievements of the transition process and to strengthen their position vis-a-vis their communist opponents. Therefore, as neoclassical realists assume, external dynamics influenced the embracement of this objective indirectly in interaction with the domestic political peculiarities of the Czech Republic, that is, the holding of power by political groups which adopted the vision of “return to Europe” with both external and domestic concerns and assessed the external developments as a challenge to the realization of this vision.

4.4.3. Internal Discussions on NATO Membership in the Czech Republic

Following the fall of communism and the seizure of political power by pro-Western political groups, foreign and security policies became a matter of political convergence in the Czech Republic at both elite and public levels. Due to the widespread support for the objective of “return to Europe”, it was a generally shared conviction that Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic should improve its relations with the Western countries and integrate into all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. Membership in NATO was also a matter of convergence in this regard.

As it has been shown above, the Czech politics was dominated by the right-wing ODS until the governmental take-over in 1997. Led by Prime Minister Klaus, ODS was a strong supporter of a rapid return to Europe. This objective was also accepted by CSSD, another leading political party, which emerged as a left-wing alternative to ODS and took over the government in 1997. Due to the fact that both ODS and CSSD, two leading political parties that headed the coalition governments in the 1990s, converged on the objective of full integration into all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, including NATO, there did not occur any major discussion on foreign and security policy objectives at the governmental level.

Of the Czech political parties, KSCM was an opponent of the NATO vision, and supporting for a pan-European security system as well as closer relations with Russia. The vision of NATO membership was also rejected by extra-parliamentary Patriotic Republican Party (VRS), which was campaigning

for the adoption of a neutral status. Both parties based their arguments on the necessity to divert the state resources to other areas, such as health services. In order to promote their cause, KSCM also initiated a signature campaign for launching a referendum on NATO membership. Nevertheless, due to the exclusion of the communists from governmental politics as well as that of the VRS from the Czech parliament, they could not influence the Czech orientation towards NATO and the pursuit of full membership in NATO.

In this framework, setting aside extreme left and extreme right parties, foreign and security policy orientation has stood “apart of ideological differences, social cleavages and party politics.”²⁷⁸ It did not become a matter of categorization among competing world visions.²⁷⁹ The convergence among the leading political players on the essentiality of NATO membership, combined with the exclusion of opponent forces from governmental politics, enabled both the embracement and consistent pursuit of NATO membership in the 1990s.

Regarding why NATO membership was seen essential, one can find out two perspectives among the Czech policy-makers. For some of the supporters, NATO membership was an external aspect of the Czech Republic’s post-communist transformation and a reflection of its commitment to liberal democratic values. Vaclav Havel was the most well-known supporter of this approach. For some others, NATO membership was an opportunity that would economize defence issues and enable the Czech Republic to direct its resources to other projects. The figurehead of this approach was Vaclav Klaus, who served as Prime Minister from 1992 to 1997. Whatever rationale is emphasised, the fact that political power was held by the political actors which saw NATO membership essential for the external interests of the Czech State and their personal domestic power made the issue of NATO membership a sustained objective on the policy agenda.

That said, it should also be noted that the accession process of the Czech Republic to NATO was not as smooth as it first seems. Instead, due to the scepticism of CSSD on a number of issues, there also occurred political

²⁷⁸ Aart Jan Riekhoff, “The Transformation of East-Central European Security: Domestic politics, international constraints, and opportunities for policy-makers”, *Perspectives*, Vol. 21 (2004), p. 56.

²⁷⁹ Rick Fawn, “Reconstituting a national identity: Ideologies in Czech foreign policy after the split”, p. 205.

discussions on some NATO-related issues. The CSSD, which remained in opposition from 1993 to 1997 and then in power until 2007, expressed its scepticism on two issues: likely influence of NATO membership on the sovereignty of the Czech Republic and likely settlement of the nuclear weapons on the Czech territory. Regarding the first issue, CSSD had argued that subordinating the Czech army to NATO's authority would amount to a *de facto* loss of sovereignty.²⁸⁰ With this consideration, CSSD defended to hold a referendum in order to get the public approval for NATO membership. However, since this was not a position supported by all CSSD members, the Party finally left its insistence on holding a referendum in 1998.²⁸¹ The Party also dropped the issue of nuclear settlement on the Czech territory with the assurances provided by NATO members to both CECs and Russia that the enlargement would not lead to changes in the nuclear parity in the Continent.

Another NATO-related discussion in the Czech Republic was the essentiality of making spending on military programs. Due to the influence of Vaclav Klaus, who held the Premiership from 1992 to 1997, the political agenda of the Czech Republic was dominated by economic than security considerations. Moreover, Klaus was convinced that the Czech exceptionality, an understanding that the Czech Republic was more advanced economically and politically than other CECs, would lead to its early integration into Europe. As a result, even though he supported the Czech accession to NATO, he was convinced that NATO members would incorporate the Czech Republic into the first enlargement round. Therefore, despite its support for NATO membership, the Klaus government did not undertake large-scale military reforms at the expense of other projects.

The passivity of the Klaus government regarding NATO issues was also related to electoral concerns and in line with public expectations. Czech public has traditionally been disinterested in foreign and security policy issues. This resulted from both the lack of imminent threat to Czech security in the post-Cold War period and the general characteristic of the Czech public that it was interested in foreign and security policies insofar as they are linked to economic and

²⁸⁰ Stéphane Lefebvre, "The Czech Republic and National Security, 1993-1998: The Emergence of a Strategic Culture", p. 355.

²⁸¹ Stéphane Lefebvre, "The Czech Republic and National Security, 1993-1998: The Emergence of a Strategic Culture", p. 357.

distributive issues. In addition, the disinterest of the government in military issues as well as failure to launch a public awareness campaign contributed to disinterest of public in this issue.²⁸² As a result of this situation, even though public support for NATO membership was lower in the Czech Republic in compared with the other CECs, this basically stemmed from the low level of interest in foreign policy issues and never turned into a public opposition to NATO membership.

As given before, the passivity in security issues came to an end with the fall of Klaus government in 1997. While undertaking military reforms, Interim Prime Minister Tosovsky and his social-democrat successor Zeman also launched a public campaign to generate pro-NATO feeling among the Czechs and to decrease the electoral risks which might stem from the diversion of economic resources to military projects. With the support of the Foreign Minister Zieleniec, a Euro-Atlantic Forum was established, a television programme was started to give public information about NATO and a poster campaign showing an impersonification of Soviet leader Brezhnev thanking the Czech Republic for not joining NATO was initiated.²⁸³ In addition, pro-NATO deputies in the Chamber of Deputies, encompassing different parties from all sides of the political spectrum, with the exception of extreme left and right-wing parties, formed an informal group to support Czech Republic's integration into NATO and to make public appearances for this purpose.

All in all, whilst the holding of political power by liberal-minded dissidents enabled the embracement of the objective of NATO membership in 1992, the continuity in the ruling elites provided the transfer of this objective from Czechoslovakia to the Czech Republic. The convergence on the vision of "return to Europe" by all leading political groups, combined with the exclusion of opponent political parties and the public disinterest in foreign and security policy matters, enabled the consistent pursuit of this objective until 1999 when the Czech Republic seized the membership in NATO.

²⁸² Štefan Sarvaš, "Attitudes of the Czech Public toward National Security, the Military, and NATO Membership", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (September 1998), p. 72.

²⁸³ Rick Fawn, "Reconstituting a national identity: Ideologies in Czech foreign policy after the split", p. 220.

4.5. Czech Republic in NATO in the Post-Accession Period

The accession to NATO in 1999 was presented by the Czech authorities as the accomplishment of one of the priority objectives and strategic goals of the Czech foreign and security policies,²⁸⁴ and perceived to lead to a fundamental change in the external security environment and the position of the state in the European security system.²⁸⁵ Though the NATO membership was presented as a contribution to the Czech external security because of the security guarantees of NATO, it has been shown in the preceding chapters that the sense of external insecurity was quite low in the Czech Republic in the pre-accession period, which can clearly be seen from the prioritization of the economic matters and passivity of the security issues during the Premierhip of Klaus. This was expressed in the National Defence Strategy of 1997 so that “probability of a global conflict has been substantially diminished during the last years” and “the Czech Republic is not threatened with an open armed aggression at present.”²⁸⁶ It was also reiterated in the Military Strategy of 2004 that the “CR is in a relatively friendly security environment” and “this status is provided especially good relations with adjacent countries and membership of NATO and European Union (EU).”²⁸⁷

Within this framework, NATO was seen by the Czech authorities from the very beginning more than a traditional alliance focused on external and military threats and the benefits provided from NATO membership was understood in a broader manner. Apart from the protection of the Czech territorial integrity and sovereignty against likely external threats, NATO membership was also seen as a reflection of being anchored to Europe and the protection of the democratization process. It was also seen as the most adequate way of dealing with non-military

²⁸⁴ Report on the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic 1998-1999, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, available at: [www.mzv.cz/file/414931/ Report_1998_1999.pdf](http://www.mzv.cz/file/414931/Report_1998_1999.pdf) (Accessed on 15 February 2015), p. 19.

²⁸⁵ Report on the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic between January 2000 and December 2000, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, available at: [www.mzv.cz/file/414929/ Report_2000.pdf](http://www.mzv.cz/file/414929/Report_2000.pdf) (Accessed on 15 February 2015), p. 43.

²⁸⁶ National Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic (1997), available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=156842&lng=en> (accessed on 10 February 2015), p. 3.

²⁸⁷ Military Strategy of the Czech Republic (2004), available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=156844&lng=en> (accessed on 10 February 2015), p. 2.

and asymmetrical threats, including international terrorism, proliferation of WMD, illegal migration and organized crime, which characterize the global security environment.²⁸⁸ This understanding persisted in the period following the accession to NATO in 1999.

In the immediate post-accession period to NATO, the primary and most salient issue in the NATO-related agenda of the Czech Republic was the military adaptation of the Czech Armed Forces to NATO standards, with the vision of creating a more professional army, smaller in size, lighter and more mobile and better prepared for the missions abroad.²⁸⁹ Apart from that, the revision of security-related legislation, in order to make it more appropriate for the functioning of NATO, as well as continued participation in the NATO missions were other salient topics at the early post-accession period.

The sharing of the Czech experience with the candidates of NATO membership as well as the continuity of the enlargement agenda was another characteristic of this period. It was defended by the Czech authorities that, open-door policy of NATO should continue and no European democracy, whose acceptance would be in keeping with the Washington Treaty, would be excluded from this process and their case would be judged purely on their own merit.²⁹⁰ In this framework, offering experience-sharing to the countries aspiring membership in NATO, it held a number of consultation rounds on several issues with Slovakia and Latvia and regular roundtables with Latvia.²⁹¹

Nevertheless, despite such enthusiasm in the beginning, two immediate developments precipitated the understanding in the immediate post-accession period that the Czech Republic might set a difficult case among the new members of NATO. First of all, due to the passivity in security issues and military preparations in the pre-accession period, the agenda of the military adaptation to

²⁸⁸ Military Strategy of the Czech Republic (2008), available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=156845&lng=en> (accessed on 10 February 2015), p. 3.

²⁸⁹ Report on the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic between January 2000 and December 2000, p. 46.

²⁹⁰ Report on the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic between January 2000 and December 2000, p. 45.

²⁹¹ Report on the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic between January 2000 and December 2000, p. 45.

NATO standards was quite overloaded. In the Czech case, the lack of flexibility in authorizing the deployment of troops abroad, permitting for transit through and/or stationing of allied troops in Czech territory, the slow pace of security screening of both military and civilian personnel working with NATO, lack of English languages, unfamiliarity with NATO procedures and concepts, low readiness and limited training emerged as the most significant shortcomings.²⁹² Despite the dedication to address these issues, the Czech performance continued to become a matter of discussion in NATO. During his visit to Prague in February 2001, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson openly criticized the slow pace of the Czech military transition, which lagged behind the timetables the Czech set for themselves.²⁹³

Secondly, the reactions of the Czech elites and public to the Kosovo intervention of NATO, which was launched just 12 days after the first enlargement wave and set the first test of maturity for the Czech Republic, precipitated the understanding that the Czech Republic could dissent from NATO in some cases and caused the emergence of some doubts regarding its reliability as an Alliance member.²⁹⁴ Though the Czech Republic eventually sided with NATO in Kosovo, this case revealed that the pre-accession consensus among the Czech elites might be a lacking occurrence in the post-accession period, which would be confirmed once again during the internal discussions regarding the coalition of the willing against Iraq in 2003.

In their reaction to the Kosovo intervention, Czech elites and society were highly divided. Whilst President Havel was supportive of the operation, viewing it “fighting in the name of human interest in the fate of other human beings,”²⁹⁵ his enthusiasm was not shared by the majority of Czech political elites. Setting aside

²⁹² Jiří Šedivý, “The puzzle of NATO enlargement”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2001), p. 10.

²⁹³ Jiří Šedivý, “The puzzle of NATO enlargement”, p. 10.

²⁹⁴ Ivan Gabal, Lenka Helsusova, Thomas S. Szayna, “The Impact of NATO Membership in the Czech Republic: Changing Czech Views of Security, Military and Defence”, Conflict Studies Research Centre, March 2002, available at: www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=97457&Ing=en (Accessed on 14 February 2015), p. 2.

²⁹⁵ Vaclav Havel, Speech at the Parliament of Canada, Ottawa, 29 April 1999; in *NATO, Europe, and the Security of Democracy: Vaclav Havel, Selected speeches, articles, interviews (1990-2002)* (Theo Publishing: Pardubice, 2002), p. 98.

the traditional opposition of the KSCM, the ruling coalition also could not display a united attitude. As the smaller coalition partners Christian Democrat Party and the Freedom Union supported the operation, the CSSD was highly divided as CSSD leaders Zeman was openly critical of NATO's acts. Zeman's scepticism was also shared by the ODS leader and the would-be President Vaclav Klaus, though the rest of the ODS deputies were supportive of the intervention.

The Kosovo case also revealed the consequences of the exclusion of the Czech public from the political discussions in the pre-accession period. The opposition to the operation by the majority of the population precipitated the understanding that most of the population did not have a well understanding of the obligations of NATO membership and the lack of understanding on what NATO membership means in the Czech Republic.²⁹⁶ As such, it started to be argued that the Czechs became a part of NATO but, in the mind-set, the Czech public remained outside of the alliance in 1999.²⁹⁷

Despite these initial discussions and considerations, the maturity of the Czech Republic in security affairs rapidly increased during the 2000s. As a reflection of that, the Czech Republic assumed 14 commitments to support the specialization of the Czech army in WMD protection under the Prague Capabilities Commitment in 2002. It began to host the NATO Centre of Excellence for Protection against WMD in 2007. Apart from its participation in the NATO missions in the Balkans, it also took part in ISAF in Afghanistan and the Training Mission in Iraq. It has also hosted the annual "NATO Days," known as the biggest defence industry fair in Central Europe.

In this framework, though the issue of dealing with the left-overs of the pre-accession period dominated the NATO-related political agenda of the Czech Republic after having acceded to the Alliance, the involvement of the Czech authorities in the NATO agenda increased over years and, similar to the pre-accession period, NATO membership continued to embody the cornerstone of the Czech security policies in the post-accession period.

²⁹⁶ Věra Řiháčková, "Czech Republic: 'Europeanization' of a hesitant Atlanticist?", EUROPEUM working paper, April 2005, available at: www.europeum.org/doc/arch_eur/Czech_attitudes_towards_the_US.pdf (Accessed on 14 February 2015), p. 7.

²⁹⁷ Ivan Gabal, Lenka Helsusova, Thomas S. Szayna, "The Impact of NATO Membership in the Czech Republic", p. 4.

4.6. Conclusion

It is argued in this chapter that foreign and security policies as well as the pro-NATO alliance trajectory of Czechoslovak and Czech authorities cannot be fully comprehended if one focuses only on external dynamics. Instead, the embracement and consistent pursuit of pro-NATO alliance trajectory can be better understood if one takes into account the domestic political peculiarities of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic and how they influenced the assessment of the external context.

It should first be underlined that, the Velvet Revolution in 1989 illustrated how a radical take-over in domestic power could precipitate changes in foreign and security policies. Though the external context remained the same in the pre-revolution and immediate post-revolution period, the fall of communists and the seizure of power by liberal-minded dissidents established a new political order and led to a seachange in Czechoslovak security policies.

The new rulers had come to power in 1989 with a new political agenda and vision. Their primary objective was to provide the integration of Czechoslovakia into European institutions. Whilst the internal dimension of this vision was decommunization and transformation in accordance with the Western model, its external dimension was elimination of the Soviet influence from Czechoslovakia and development of closer relations with the Western countries. In order to achieve the external transition of Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovak leaders started the negotiations for the withdrawal of troops soon after coming to power. At the same time, they declared their intention of not forming alliances and supported the establishment of a pan-European security system.

Elaborating the reasons behind the policy of not forming alliances and the pan-European attitude, it should first be considered that, Czechoslovakia was surrendered by a turbulent context in 1989, with the Soviet Union on the East and re-united Germany on the West. The sense of insecurity stemming from this turbulence was exacerbated by the fact that the Soviet troops were still stationed on the Czechoslovak territory. Under these circumstances, in order not to ignite the Soviet reactions, Czechoslovak authorities adopted the policy of not forming alliances as the most feasible option to provide the external security of their state.

At the same time, they supported the creation of a new pan-European security system, which would neutralize the likely encroachments from the then still existing Warsaw Pact.

Neoclassical realism assumes that, since leaders are concerned with their political survival, they make foreign and security policies which not only contribute to the external security of their state but also enable them to maintain and strengthen their power. As such, the policy of not forming alliances and pan-European attitude were also in conformity with the political agenda and interests of the Czechoslovak authorities at that time. At the domestic level, the new rulers were primarily interested in the establishment of a democratic polity and decommunization of state structures. The achievements in these internal objectives would not only ensure the continuity of the transition process but also secure their domestic position against their communist opponents. As such, pursuing a policy of not forming alliances, they could focus their attention on internal matters without exacerbating the external security of Czechoslovakia. At the same time, proposing a pan-European security structure in which the Warsaw Pact would be transformed, they would also have neutralized the likely external interferences into the domestic affairs and hence guarantee the continuity of the internal transition process which would eliminate communist influence from the domestic sphere.

The chapter has also shown that, as the perceived threat from the then existing Soviet Union increased in the course of 1991 and the shortcomings of the then CSCE became apparent during the crisis in the Balkans, Czechoslovak authorities left their initial pan-European focus and embraced the objective of NATO membership in order to receive quick and permanent security guarantees.

At the first glance, the influence of external dynamics in the embracement of the objective of NATO membership might seem in conformity with the traditional realist approach to alliance-formation. However, though external dynamics played a role in the embracement of the objective of NATO membership, this took place in interaction with the domestic political peculiarities of Czechoslovakia, that is, holding of political power by political groups which were concerned with sustaining the internal transition process and keeping their communist opponents under control. In this context, NATO membership was seen

by the Czechoslovak authorities more than a membership in a military alliance against external threats. It was also conceived as the guarantee of the continuity and achievements of the internal transition process and a measure of sustaining their hold in power against communists.

The inadequacy of the traditional realist approach can also be seen from the fact that this objective was sustained in the post-1993 period though the external context of the Czech Republic was relatively more benign than that of Czechoslovakia. This continuity, despite the changes in the external context, stemmed from the continuity in the political attitude of the ruling elites. Though the Klaus government emphasised its economic background and prioritized economic issues, leading to a change in the outlook of the foreign affairs of the Czech Republic, it remained committed to the vision of “return to Europe”.

At this point, the commitment to the vision of “return to Europe” might seem to conform to the constructivist assumption that states tend to ally with countries which they share common values with. From this perspective, the pro-NATO alliance trajectory of both Czechoslovak and Czech authorities might be seen as a result of their identification with the values NATO represents and an attempt to reproduce the European identity of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic.

The inadequacy of constructivism becomes apparent considering why this objective was not declared before 1992. If state identities would be the basic dynamic that influence alliance decisions, NATO membership should have been declared immediately after the disbandment of membership in Warsaw Pact. Therefore, even though the vision of “return to Europe” influenced the pro-NATO alliance of the Czechoslovak and Czech authorities, this influence did not take place as constructivists reason, but in the way neoclassical realists did.

Accordingly, in consistent with the neoclassical realist assumption that leaders make alliance decisions which promote the external security of their state and enable them to maintain their power, Czechoslovak and Czech authorities had two objectives when seeking membership in NATO: receiving permanent security guarantees against possible external threats in the future and securing the continuity and achievements of the transition process, which would enable them to keep their communist opponents under control and to maintain their power. In

this framework, the vision of “return to Europe” influenced the alliance trajectory of the Czech Republic through a nexus between external and internal objectives of the ruling authorities.

In the 1990s, this objective could be pursued without any interval. This occurrence stemmed from the absence of any counter-vailing political and societal pressure on Czech authorities. Even though KSCM was opposing the objective of NATO membership, its political influence remained limited as they could not achieve to be involved in the coalitions because of the anti-communist attitude of other political parties. There was also not a societal pressure for reversing the orientation towards NATO. Though the public support to NATO membership remained low in the Czech public than the other Central European countries, this did not turn into a domestic constraint since the public was disinterested in foreign and security policy issues. The exclusion of communists and the public disinterest turned foreign and security policies into an elite project, shaped by the preferences and assessments of the dominant political groups, which was pursued consistently until the accession to NATO in 1999.

All in all, rather than being a direct result of external dynamics, the embracement of the objective of NATO membership was due to the assessment of the external context by the Czech authorities in accordance with their political agenda and domestic interests. When making and pursuing a pro-NATO alliance decision, Czech authorities aimed not only to provide the external security of the Czech state, but also to secure the continuity of transition process and to strengthen their domestic position against their communist opponents.

CHAPTER 5

LATVIA'S ALLIANCE FORMATION WITH NATO

5.1. Introduction

Having been one of the former Soviet republics during the Cold War, Latvia neither joined the CIS at the time of its establishment nor considered the option of re-alignment with Russia in the post-Cold War period. Instead, it expressed the vision of returning to Europe and pursued a policy of integration into all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. In this framework, setting aside the initial policy of not forming alliances in the early 1990s, Latvia consistently sought NATO membership in the post-1994 period and achieved to be a NATO member in 2004.

This chapter examines Latvia's post-independence alliance trajectory in detail and mainly questions why Latvia endorsed the objective of NATO membership. In lieu with the neoclassical realist assumption that states' alliance decisions are influenced by the interaction of externalities with their domestic political peculiarities, the chapter begins with the examination of the domestic peculiarities that characterized post-Soviet Latvian politics and affected their foreign and security policies. After identifying the dominance of pro-Western groups on Latvian political scene as well as the exclusion of pro-Russian ones from governments and of Russian diaspora from electoral politics as the most significant domestic peculiarities which influenced Latvian foreign and security policies, the chapter examines the influence of these peculiarities on security considerations and policies of the Latvian authorities. The chapter then proceeds by elaborating the course of Latvian-NATO relations and the dynamics behind Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory in detail by taking into account the interaction between external and internal dynamics.

Written from a neoclassical realist perspective, this chapter argues that Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory cannot be fully explained only with reference to the Russian factor. Even though the perceived threat from Russia was

influential in Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory, a thorough account of the Latvian case requires an examination of how this factor interacted with Latvia's domestic political peculiarities and why it has been assessed as a threat to Latvian security. Similar to the Czech case, the chapter attributes Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory to the assessment of the external context by the ruling authorities in accordance with their political agenda and domestic political interests.

5.2. Domestic Background of Latvian Foreign and Security Policies

This section starts by outlining the basic internal political developments and the constellation of political groups in the post-Soviet Latvia. The section then addresses the nation-building process, which had been the key concern of Latvian authorities until 1998, as well as consequences of the controversial citizenship arrangements on Latvian politics. In the end, the section identifies the dominance of pro-Western parties as well as the exclusion of pro-Russian ones from governments as the most significant domestic political peculiarity which characterized post-Soviet Latvian politics. In the latter sections of this chapter, the influence of these peculiarities on Latvian foreign and security policies as well as pro-NATO alliance trajectory will be elaborated.

5.2.1. Internal Political Developments in Post-Soviet Latvia

Having been established as an independent state in 1918 and maintained its independence in the inter-war years, Latvia was dramatically influenced by the Second World War. In August 1939, the Soviet Union and Germany had signed a non-aggression pact, also known as Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, committing themselves not to ally with the enemies of the other party. In a secret protocol attached to the Pact, they had partitioned Central and Eastern Europe into spheres of interest and placed the Baltic region under the Soviet tutelage. In the following time, the Soviet Union had signed mutual assistance pacts with the Baltic states and established military bases on their territories. This process had finally culminated in the entry of the Red Army into Latvia in 1944, giving an end to the

three-decade Latvian independence and starting the five-decade Soviet rule in Latvia.²⁹⁸

Different from other Soviet republics, which joined the Soviet Union in the early 1920s, Baltic states had been forcefully annexed to the Soviet Union in 1944. Reflecting their reaction to the Soviet occupation, Baltic states were the first to have experienced the political awakening under *Glasnost*. The first opposition movements and anti-Soviet demonstrations erupted in the three Baltic states in 1987. The most notable development of this period was calendar protests, the main theme of which were denunciation of the key Soviet-era developments in Baltic history, such as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Soviet occupation in 1944. The widespread nationalist sentiment as well as resentments over the Soviet occupation would have an immense influence on Latvian politics in the post-independence period.

In this politically awakened context, the first free elections to the Latvian Supreme Soviet were held on 18 March 1990.²⁹⁹ The pro-independence Popular Front emerged victorious from the elections and seized two-thirds of 201 seats in the Parliament. Thanks to the majority of this group in the Supreme Soviet, Latvia restored its independence on 4 May 1990.³⁰⁰ Different from Lithuania and similar to Estonia, Latvia's pro-independence forces declared a transitional period envisioned to come to an end with the first post-independence election of the Supreme Council. The public support to these developments was exposed in a referendum on March 1991, in which 73,68 per cent of the residents voted in favour of independence.³⁰¹ In the following time, alarmed by the coup attempt against Gorbachev in Moscow in August 1991, the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR adopted a Constitutional Law on "Statehood of the Republic of

²⁹⁸ Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 and by Germany in 1941. It was invaded by the Red Army again in 1944 and annexed to the Union. For detailed information on the developments in the Baltics in the last years of the Soviet Union, see. Ole Nørgaard, Lars Johannsen, et.al., *The Baltic States after Independence* (Massachusetts: Edward Elgar, 1999).

²⁹⁹ "The Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia", Official Website of Latvian Parliament, available at: www.saeima.lv/en/about_saeima/history-of-the-legislature (accessed on 26 June 2012).

³⁰⁰ Walter R. Iwaskiw, *Latvia: A Country Study*, (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1995), online version available at: <http://countrystudies.us/latvia/> (accessed on 29 June 2012).

³⁰¹ Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs, *Latvia: The Challenges of Change* (Oxon: Routledge, 2001), pp. 63-64.

Latvia”, which gave an end to the transitional period and terminated the Soviet rule on Latvian territory.³⁰²

The Latvian independence in 1991 was based on the discourse of “restoration” and “legal continuity”. This purported to the fact that independence was not understood by Latvia’s pro-independence forces as a new phenomenon, but as the continuation of the one which existed before the Second World War. In accordance with the understanding of the “restored independence”, the new authorities reinstated the Latvian Constitution of 1922 and began to make their institutional and legal arrangements with reference to those that existed in the inter-war years.

The first post-independence elections was held in Latvia in May 1993. Since only “restored” citizens could vote for the elections, centrist and pro-Latvian nationalist parties, which promoted a “restorationist” agenda, emerged victorious, whereas pro-Russian and left-wing ones remained in minority. The same composition also endured after the 1995 elections. Due to the presence of both Latvian nationalist and pro-Russian groups in 1993 and 1995 parliaments, the main political cleavages concerned the “national project of institutionalizing the national autonomy, de-occupation, building relations between ethnic Latvians and the Russian-speaking population that had arrived in Latvia during the Soviet era, adopting legislation on the state language, dealing with the issues of education in minority languages, and solving problems of citizenship.”³⁰³

The nationalist outlook of the Latvian political scene began to change in the second half of the 1990s. Though the composition of the parliament remained more or less the same, economic issues raised their salience. This was revealed by the outcomes of the 1998 parliamentary elections which marked the rise of political parties promoting an economic-dominated agenda. Accordingly, the new government, which the nationalist “Fatherland and Freedom Party” was also a part

³⁰² In the first article of the said Law, it is stated that “Latvia is an independent, democratic republic wherein the sovereign power of the State of Latvia belongs to the people of Latvia and the statehood thereof is determined by the 15 February 1922 Constitution of the Republic of Latvia.” For full text, see. “Law on the Statehood of the Republic of Latvia”, Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/news/Newsletters/Theme-in-Focus/4156/#DOCUMENTS> (accessed on 28 June 2012).

³⁰³ Ieva Zake, “The People’s Party in Latvia: Neo-Liberalism and the New Politics of Independence”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (September 2002), p. 115.

of, “focused on protecting private property rights, completing privatization, and liberalizing the trade tariffs between the three Baltic States.”³⁰⁴ The change in policy priorities mainly stemmed from the progress in nation-building process, which had been seen as the most urgent task by the Latvian authorities at the time of independence and remained as the most significant and controversial issue on the political scene until 1998.

5.2.2. Nation-Building Process and Citizenship Arrangements

During the Cold War, the mass migration of Russians into Latvian SSR had changed the demography of Latvia radically, decreasing the number of ethnic Latvians and increasing that of Russians. Whilst the percentage of the ethnic Latvians in the Latvian population was 77 per cent in 1935, it had decreased to 52 per cent in 1989. As to the Russians in Latvia, which constituted 10,6 per cent of population in 1935, it had raised to 34 per cent in 1989.³⁰⁵

In this context, Latvian authorities viewed the nation-building process and renationalization of the Latvian State as their primary internal objective in the immediate post-independence period. Thanks to the majority of the political forces which hold a “restorationist” approach, the Supreme Soviet of Latvia issued a resolution on 15 October 1991, which restored the citizenship of the people who had been Latvian citizens in the interwar period as well as their direct descendants regardless of their ethnicity. Since most of the inhabitants of Latvia in that period was ethnic Latvian, the majority of the “restored” citizens of the newly independent Latvia was also composed by ethnic Latvians in the early 1990s. Consequent to this arrangement, “over 740.000 persons, most of them Russians or Russian speakers, remained in limbo in the immediate post-independence years, not fitting into any standard legal category – citizen, alien, or stateless person.”³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Ieva Zake, “The People’s Party in Latvia: Neo-Liberalism and the New Politics of Independence”, p. 123.

³⁰⁵ Taken from Anton Steen, “Ethnic Relations, Elites and Democracy in the Baltic States”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (December 2000), p. 72.

³⁰⁶ Nils Muižnieks, “Government Policy and the Russian Minority,” in *Latvian-Russian Relations: Domestic and International Dimensions*, ed. Nils Muižnieks (LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2006), p. 15.

The status of non-citizens was later addressed with the citizenship law in 1994. Denying citizenship to the retired Soviet military officers, KGB officials and pro-Soviet activists, the citizenship law introduced a system of naturalization as a precondition to acquire Latvian citizenship. According to the law, naturalization would take place on the basis language and history tests and a window system. The window system envisioned a gradual process through which people from different age groups would be naturalized in different years. As such, whilst spouses of citizens and those who finished a Latvian language school would be the first beneficiaries of the naturalization process, the rest of non-citizens would be naturalized at the later stages.

The status of non-citizens in Latvia was later addressed again with the “Law on the status of those former USSR citizens who do not have citizenship of Latvia or any other state,” which was adopted in April 1995. The Law did not give any political rights to non-citizens but only allowed them to acquire permanent residence permission and to carry travel documents issued by the Latvian authorities. As a result of these arrangements, “there were 740,231 non-citizens out of 2,516,517 residents that constituted 29,4 per cent of the whole population [in 1995].”³⁰⁷ Combined with the restrictive language and education laws, the citizenship law caused non-citizens to remain poorly integrated to the society in most of the 1990s.

Under the influence of internal discontents and international pressure, as well as with the initiative of President Ulmans, the citizenship law was amended in 1997, leading to the elimination of window system, granting citizenship to children born in Latvia after independence and simplifying language tests for those over the age 65. In reaction to this amendment, a referendum was held on 3 October 1998 upon the initiative of the nationalist parties, through which Latvian people were asked whether they support the amendments or not. The demand to cancel the amendments was rejected with 53 to 45 per cent of the voters.³⁰⁸ Once

³⁰⁷ Andris Spruds, *Minority Issues in the Baltic States in the Context of the NATO Enlargement*, NATO Research Fellowship Report, July 2001, available at: www.nato.int/acad/fellow/99-01/spruds.pdf (accessed on 19 December 2014), p. 6.

³⁰⁸ David J. Galbreath, “From Nationalism to Nation-Building: Latvian Politics and Minority Policy”, *Nationalities Paper*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (September 2006), p. 387.

the arrangements had been approved by both the Latvian Parliament and the electorate, this issue was finally removed from the political agenda. In the afterwards of the referendum, the Latvian government approved the Framework Document for a National Programme “the integration of Society in Latvia” in 1998. It has been stated in the document that:

Latvia has never been an ethnically homogenous nation. Society must take into account the current situation and future prospects. [...] Latvia is a national and democratic state in which every resident has the right to preserve his or her own national identity.³⁰⁹

Though this issue was removed from the agenda in 1998, the citizenship arrangements, which laid the basis of the nation-building process together with language and education policies, drastically influenced the Latvian political scene. To begin with, when making these arrangements, Latvian authorities were mainly concerned with eliminating potential sources of influence which could obscure the implementation of their political agenda and vision. After all, as Anton Steen puts it, “a party system constructed along ethnic divisions, especially when indigenous parties are fragmented and unstable, may threaten the domination of a nationalist-oriented elite.”³¹⁰ Therefore, for the Latvian authorities, if the large amount of Russians residing in Latvia at the time of independence was given the right to elect in the post-Soviet elections, they would vote for the parties of non-Latvians, increasing the number of their representatives in the parliament and preventing the fulfilment of the tasks the Latvian elites set for themselves. As such, making use of their majority in the parliament, the “restorationist” groups adopted restrictive citizenship arrangements and reduced the impact of Russian diaspora on policy-making processes.

Since the law gave citizenship to only those with the knowledge of Latvian language, ethnic Latvians acquired the right to vote and be candidate in the elections whilst majority of non-citizens, mostly composed of Russians, remained

³⁰⁹ “The Integration of Society in Latvia: A Framework Document”, Official Website of the Embassy of the Republic of Latvia to the United States of America, available at: www.mfa.gov.lv/en/usa/policy/integrated-society/integration-of-society-latvia-framework/ (accessed on 13 November 2014).

³¹⁰ Anton Steen, “Ethnic Relations, Elites and Democracy in the Baltic States”, p. 73.

excluded from electoral and political processes. This resulted in the emergence of pro-Western groups as the dominant political force and the low-profile of those with pro-Russian and left-wing ones from the post-Soviet Latvian politics. This political configuration, which emerged as a result of citizenship and electoral arrangements, not only characterized post-Soviet Latvia political scene but also influenced Latvian foreign and security policies to a great degree.

5.2.3. Domestic Political Peculiarities of Latvia

As given above, the restrictive citizenship arrangements, combined with electoral procedures, had largely influenced the main characteristics of the Latvian political scene. According to the electoral arrangements of the newly independent Latvia, only “restored citizens” were given the right to elect and to be elected in the post-independence parliamentary elections. The political attitude of the Latvian electorate, mostly composed of ethnic Latvians, brought the pro-Western and nationalist groups, which hold a “restorationist” approach, to power and reinforced the continuity in their rule in the latter period.

However, the dominance of pro-Western parties in Latvia did not mean that pro-Russian and left-wing parties did not exist and/or they were completely excluded from the political life. Instead, there have been several left-wing political parties in Latvia.³¹¹ Nonetheless, due to the limited participation of Russian minority in the electoral processes, left-wing parties could not exert any influence on policy-making processes though they were always present in the parliament. As a result of their limited presence, their parliamentary influence remained restrained and most of the legislative proposals they put forward were rejected by their liberal counterparts.³¹²

Nevertheless, the left-wing parties achieved to take the lead in election outcomes from time to time and were asked by the President to begin the coalition talks. In such cases, since they could not seize the absolute majority, they still needed the support of their pro-Western counterparts to assemble a governing

³¹¹ For detailed information on the leading leftist political parties in Latvia, See. Jānis Ikstens, “Eastern Slavic Political Parties in Latvia,” in *Latvian-Russian Relations: Domestic and International Dimensions*, ed. Nils Muižnieks (Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2006), pp. 41-53.

³¹² Jānis Ikstens, “Eastern Slavic Political Parties in Latvia”, pp. 43-44.

coalition. Due to the rejections of the latter to cooperate with the left-wing ones, their search for coalition partners ended in failure and they had to hand over the lead to establish a government to their pro-Western counterparts.

This was the case in the 1995 parliamentary elections. Though the centre-left “Owners’ Democratic Party” had emerged victorious from the elections, its efforts to set up a coalition government were circumscribed by the liberal parties. In the end, “Owners’ Democratic Party” could not set up a government, but seized a few portfolios by joining the coalition established by liberal parties in December 1995. It could acquire a deputy premiership along with the right-centre “Latvia’s Way” and the right-wing nationalist “Fatherland and Freedom Party”. Moreover, it could not have any impact on the shaping of the government programme, which envisaged “monetary stability, balancing the state budget, creating a real estate market open to international participation, agricultural protection through tariffs and subsidies, improving the investment climate, no changes to citizenship and naturalization legislation, efforts to join the European Union and prepare for accession to NATO, and pursuit of Russian recognition of the fact that the USSR occupied Latvia in 1940 by force.”³¹³

In this framework, the most defining characteristics of the post-Soviet Latvian political scene was the dominance of pro-Western political parties and exclusion of pro-Russian ones from ruling governments. As a result of the continuity in the holding of power by pro-Western political parties, foreign and security policy issues remained aloof of political discussions; and, despite the frequent governmental changes and the short life-span of governments in the post-independence period, they became a matter of consensus among the leading political players. In accordance with the neoclassical realist assumption that external dynamics influence states’ foreign and security policies depending on how they are assessed at the domestic level, this configuration influenced the assessment of the Russian factor as well as foreign and security policy objectives pursued in the post-independence period to a great extent.

³¹³ “Latvian Government Formed At Last”, *Monitor*, Vol. 1 , No. 160 (22 December 1995), available at: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=9018&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=209 (accessed on 29 June 2012).

5.3. Security Considerations and Foreign Affairs in the Pre-Accession Period to NATO

In the previous section, the dominance of pro-Western political parties on the Latvian political scene is identified as the most significant peculiarity that characterized Latvia's post-independence politics. In this section, the influence of these peculiarities on Latvian security concerns and foreign affairs from 1991 to 2004 as well as the centrality of the objective of NATO membership in Latvian security policies in the post-1994 period are revealed.

5.3.1. Security Considerations of Latvian Authorities in the Early 1990s

The emergence of three independent states, with no military capabilities, weak state institutions, vulnerable economy and less international recognition, in an area which had historically been the centre of conflict of interests among great powers was understood to create a security vacuum. The political and economic instability and the rise of nationalist and communist groups in Russia as well as emergence of secessionist conflicts in some other former Soviet republics added to this sense of insecurity. In a frequently-quoted article, Carl Bildt, former Swedish Foreign Minister, described this situation as a "litmus test" for both Western world and Russia. For Bildt, the Russian conduct towards these states would show the true nature of Russia's commitment to international norms and principles and whether it would pose a threat again to the international system. This test would also show the ability of the Western states to influence the Russian policy, by establishing a partnership with it, and to contribute to the new security order in Central and Eastern Europe.³¹⁴

Soon after seizing independence, Latvian authorities addressed the challenges stemming from this turbulent and uncertain external context by declaring a policy of not forming alliances. Though not codified in any of the strategic documents and not turned into a *de jure* "neutrality", this remained the *de facto* status of Latvia until 1994.

For Latvian authorities, the policy of not forming alliances was a transitional strategy until the primary external and internal issues were resolved. In this

³¹⁴ Carl Bildt, "The Baltic Litmus Test", *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 1994), p. 73.

period, the primary objective of Latvian authorities was to strengthen Latvian independence and sovereignty. As such, they were mainly preoccupied with eliminating all structures that kept alive the Soviet/Russian influence on and in Latvia. The withdrawal of Soviet/Russian troops from Latvian territory was the primary issue on their agenda. These troops were understood not only as a breach of Latvian sovereignty and a source of likely Russian encroachments to Latvian territory, but also a source of internal insecurity and discontents because of the agitations by them, as seen from the domestic conflicts in 1990 and 1991.³¹⁵ In this respect, the policy of not forming alliances was seen as a way of speeding up the withdrawal process and of standing against the Russian pressures on them for joining the newly established CIS. This policy was also understood by the Latvian authorities as a measure which would enable them to divert their attention to the internal issues and focus on state and nation-building processes.

The turning point for Latvia and other Baltic states came in 1994 when the Russian troops were withdrawn and intra-NATO discussions on the eastern enlargement came to an end. Once the source of the perceived imminent threat was removed from the Latvian territory in 1994, Latvian authorities began to make more substantial decisions and declared their intention to join NATO.³¹⁶ The objective of NATO membership was later inscribed into the Latvian Security Concept of 1997 as one of the basic goals of Latvia's external security policies.³¹⁷ This objective formed the basis of Latvian foreign and security policies from 1994 to 2004 when Latvia finally joined NATO.

5.3.2. Relations with Western Countries

When seceding from the Soviet Union, Latvian authorities had declared independence as the restoration of the one hold in the interwar years. As a result,

³¹⁵ Žaneta Ozolina, "Latvian Security Policy," in *The Baltic States: Search for Security*, eds. Atis Lejiņš and Daina Bleiere (Riga: Latvian Institute for International Affairs, 1996), pp. 31-33.

³¹⁶ Žaneta Ozolina, *The Regional Dimension in Latvian Security Policy*, Harmonie Paper 8, August 1999, Centre of European Security Studies, available at: www.cess.org/doc.php?id=24 (accessed on 21 December 2014).

³¹⁷ "Security Concept of the Republic of Latvia", Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/security/news/4457/?pg=4533&print=on> (accessed on 29 June 2012).

they had refrained from joining the CIS and had not sought denser relations with Russia. Instead, taking a pro-Western strategic orientation, they had declared their objective to develop relations with the Western countries and to integrate into all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. The then Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs expressed this orientation so that:

Located on the border between the East and the West, Latvia has always sought to be a part of the West while being pressed to be a part of the East or a transitional zone. Though at the convergence point of two different cultures and systems of order, Latvia and the other Baltic States clearly realize that they are and always have been part of Europe.³¹⁸

In this framework, soon after seizing independence, Latvia began to seek membership in all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. It joined the Council of Europe in 1994 after it had fulfilled the necessary condition for addressing the status of non-citizens and adopting a citizenship law. It joined the OSCE in 1991. Latvia signed a free trade agreement with the EU on 28 July 1994, signed a Europe Agreement in June 1995 and applied for full membership in October 1995.³¹⁹

In bilateral terms, the Latvian authorities viewed their relations with the Nordic countries of primary importance, and strengthening of Latvian-Nordic cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral channels became one of the main pillars of Latvian foreign policies. In addition to the concerns over regional cooperation, relations with the Nordic countries were also seen as a reinforcement to Latvia's integration into NATO and the EU thanks to the "Nordic lobby" in both organizations.

Apart from the Nordic countries, the US was seen as a significant diplomatic and security asset by the Latvian authorities.³²⁰ Latvia received US assistance to promote democratic and free market freedoms and benefited from

³¹⁸ Valdis Birkavs, "Security of Latvia: Historical Parallels and Current and Future Challenges", XIIIth NATO Workshop on Political-Military Decision-Making, Warsaw, Poland, 19-23 June 1996, available at: www.cedr.org/96Book/Birkavs.htm (accessed on 10 December 2014).

³¹⁹ "Latvia and the European Union: Chronology of Events", Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, available at: www.mfa.lv/en/eu/history/4348/ (accessed on 10 December 2014).

³²⁰ Atis Lejinš, "Joining the EU and NATO: Baltic Security Prospects at the Turn of the 21st Century," in *Baltic Security Prospects at the Turn of the 21st Century*, ed. Atis Lejinš (Helsinki: Kikumora Publications, 1999), pp. 39-40.

several programmes and assistances, such as Support for East European Democracy Programs, Baltic-American Enterprise Fund, Baltic American Partnership Fund, established with participation of civil society movements.³²¹ Military cooperation, conducted with the vision of approaching Baltic states to NATO standards, had a special place on the agenda of Latvian-US relations. Signed in 1998, the US-Baltic Charter has been the main platform of cooperation between Latvia and the US and viewed as the reflection of the US commitment to facilitate the Baltic integration into NATO.³²²

Latvia prioritized its relations with the Western countries for a number of reasons. First of all, Latvia's post-Cold War security thinking was centred on the objective of not falling in the Russian sphere of influence again. This could be achieved, for the Latvian authorities, if Latvia was not eliminated from Western integration processes.³²³ Membership in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions would "enable them to reaffirm their commitment to European values, to consolidate their economic and political reforms, and to see themselves, and be seen by others, as part of Europe."³²⁴

The orientation towards Europe also stemmed from economic concerns. The declaration of independence by the Baltic states was accompanied by a set of economic counter-measures by Russia. Due to the interdependent nature of intra-Soviet economic structure, these measures brought Latvian economy on the verges of a break with negative repercussions on the social front, such as widespread unemployment. This led Latvia to search for partners from the West for economic cooperation and seek alternative energy providers.³²⁵

³²¹ Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs, *Latvia: The Challenges of Change*, p. 138.

³²² "US-Baltic Charter", 16 January 1998, Embassy of the Republic of Latvia to the United States of America, available at: www.mfa.lv/en/usa-relations/usa-baltic-charter/ (accessed on 10 December 2014).

³²³ Daina Bleiere, "Latvia and the Future of European Security," in *European Security and NATO Enlargement: A View from Central Europe*, ed. Stephen Blank (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1998), p. 123.

³²⁴ A. Thomas Lane, "The Baltic States, the enlargement of NATO and Russia", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1997), p. 296.

³²⁵ Žaneta Ozolina, "Latvian Security Policy", pp. 37-38.

Due to the linkages between foreign policies and domestic politics, the promotion of relations with the Western countries would also have positive repercussions for the domestic power of ruling authorities. The achievements in their Western-oriented foreign policy agenda would increase the public support to their rule and strengthen their position vis-a-vis their pro-Russian opponents. Being a part of the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions would also secure the achievements and continuity of the transition process which was being conducted in accordance with their own agenda and limiting the influence of the pro-Russian groups.

5.3.3. Cooperation with other Baltic States

Beginning from the late pre-independence period, there was a momentum among the Baltic states to cooperate for the joint objectives they had. In the post-independence period, this momentum was sustained through further cooperation on, first, the international promotion and maintenance of their newly declared independence and, later, the pursuit of their shared foreign and security policy objectives. In order to give their cooperation an institutional character, Baltic states established Baltic Assembly, the first session of which was held in Riga in 1992. In the following time, Baltic Council was set up to facilitate trilateral cooperation between legislative and executive branches of the Baltic states, and the Council of Ministers started to function in 1994 to oversee the process and outcomes of the cooperation efforts.

Having had no military capabilities at all, Baltic states began to cooperate in military issues soon after they seized independence and achieved a significant progress in this realm. In 1993, they signed a declaration “on closer military, security and defense cooperation, and the declaration included the proposal of establishing a unified defense system, speeding up trilateral information exchange, organizing joint military exercises and seminars, and preparing for possible participation in UN peacekeeping forces.”³²⁶ In September 1994, Baltic states established BALTBAT (Baltic Battalion), the first multilateral project in the Baltics and a common peacekeeping unit, with the support of four Nordic

³²⁶ Janis Kapustans, *Cooperation among the Baltic states: Reality and Prospects*, NATO Research Fellowship, 1998, available at: <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/kapustan.pdf> (accessed on 1 August 2013), p. 20.

countries and the UK. The military cooperation was strengthened with the establishment of BALTRON, a naval defence unit, and BALTNET, a regional air surveillance network. In accordance with the decision taken at a meeting of Baltic and Nordic defence ministers in May 1997, Baltic Defence College was established for the training of military officers from Baltic states. Each of these initiatives was supported by Western countries, especially the US and the Nordic states. Therefore, military cooperation initiatives not only served to the enhancement of Baltic security but also established a channel of cooperation between Baltic States and the Western countries.³²⁷

Considering the dynamics behind the cooperation among the Baltic states in the military realm, a constructivist might point to the common ideational milieu in the Baltics, and argue that the common experience of “occupation” and the sharing of the perception of Russia as an “other” precipitated convergence in threat perceptions and enabled the military cooperation among them. From a constructivist perspective, the military cooperation among Baltic states can also be seen as a security community based on common values and shared identities.³²⁸

However, a closer scrutiny on the Baltic cooperation reveals a set of setbacks which refute the constructivist assumption of the sense of community among the Baltic states. First of all, there were several bilateral problems among Baltic states and the relations among them were not as harmonious as it first seems. Following their re-emergence as independent states, they had several border problems. Latvia had maritime border issues with both Estonia and Lithuania over the sea-based rights. Estonian-Latvian land border could be confirmed in 1992 whereas the sea border could be determined in 1996. As to the Latvian-Lithuanian border, it was confirmed in land in 1993 and sea in 1999.³²⁹

Secondly, though they expressed their intention to coordinate their efforts for integration into Europe, they showed interest in the Baltic cooperation insofar as this did not hamper the prospect of their own integration. When it was signalled

³²⁷ BALTBAT was supported by Nordic countries, UK and the US; BALTRON was supported by Germany, four Nordic countries, France, Netherlands, US, UK, Belgium, Iceland and Poland.

³²⁸ Gražina Miniotaitė, “The Baltic States: In Search of Security and Identity”.

³²⁹ Nivedita Das Kundu, “The Baltic States’ Search for Security”, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (July-September 2003), pp. 474-475.

by the European states that they might integrate into the EU at different times because of the differences in their political and economic conditions, the Baltic solidarity began to fragment.³³⁰ For example, they could not set a joint position before the Amsterdam Summit of the EU in 1997 when Lithuania and Latvia insisted that accession negotiations should be started with all Baltic states at the same time and Estonia defended that the start of negotiations with even one Baltic state would be a gain for all.³³¹ The dominance of national interests in the Baltic cooperation was also visible from the fact that the institutions of Baltic cooperation have been intergovernmental and often been the scene of the clash of national interests between and divergent positions of Baltic states.

These points make it clear that the term “Baltic states” was not an outgrowth of the sense of community among Baltic states. Rather, it emerged out of the consideration of the Baltic leaders to promote their political agendas. Therefore, the Baltic cooperation was mainly due to the similarities in the assessment of the external context and perceived compatibilities in national interests in the cooperation fields.

Alternatively, evaluating the Baltic cooperation from a neorealist perspective, one can point to the similarity in their geopolitical positions and shared vulnerabilities as the main dynamics that led them to share the assessment of the Russian factor as a threat and to engage in military cooperation. From this perspective, it can be argued that their geopolitical position dictated their security policies and regional cooperation.

The influence of the perceived threat from Russia on military cooperation among Baltic states and their orientation towards NATO is visible from the frequent references by the Baltic leaders to their perceived sense of external insecurity and the need to seize permanent security guarantees. Nevertheless, rather than being a given and an inevitable consequence of their geopolitical position, the influence of the Russian factor on Baltic military cooperation was

³³⁰ They pursued different transition policies in economic and political realms in the post-independence period, which led to a divergence in their domestic circumstances over time. Whereas Estonia was taking intensive economic reforms with a “shock therapy”, Latvia and Lithuania were supporting gradual economic transition. As a result, in the second half of the 1990s, Estonia was closer to EU criteria, Lithuania and Latvia had lagged behind.

³³¹ Janis Kapustans, *Cooperation among the Baltic states: Reality and Prospects*, p. 15.

more to do with the similarities in the assessment of the external context by Baltic leaders in accordance with their political agenda and objectives.

Accordingly, it should first be noted that NATO membership was the shared objective of all Baltic leaders in the post-Soviet period. When striving for this objective, they were also facing similar challenges. Different from the CECs and former Soviet republics, they had no military capabilities at the time of their independence. Therefore, in order to prove their eligibility for NATO membership, they first had to establish their armies and military structures. Because of their inadequate military capabilities as well as financial constraints they faced, Baltic states could not afford to build armed forces which matched NATO standards on their own. In this regard, they viewed military cooperation as a way of overcoming the difficulties they faced in meeting NATO standards. Developing specialized capabilities in certain areas and increasing their interoperability at a sub-regional level, they also wanted to enhance their value for the Alliance.³³² In this respect, the similarities in their political agendas as well as the challenges they faced emerged as the main dynamics behind the Baltic military cooperation.

That said, it should also be stated that Baltic leaders were also of the opinion that there was not a regional solution to their security problems.³³³ Accordingly, they presented their military cooperation neither as an alliance against Russia nor as an alternative to their prospective NATO membership. Just like the other aspects of their foreign affairs, Baltic leaders valued regional cooperation so long as this was perceived in conformity with their national interests and contributed to the fulfilment of the objective to seizing NATO membership.

As it is seen from the aforementioned points, Latvia pursued a pro-Western orientation since the seizure of independence in 1991. Accordingly, whilst promoting its bilateral relations with Western countries, it also sought to

³³² F. Stephen Larrabee, *NATO's Eastern Agenda in a New Strategic Era* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003), p. 53.

³³³ Address by Dr. Valdis Birkavs, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia at the International Conference organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Latvian Institute of International Affairs How Secure are the Baltic States Riga, 5 December 1998, Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, available at: <http://old.mfa.gov.lv/en/security/news/4457/?pg=3679> (accessed on 15 February 2015).

integrate into all European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. The objective of NATO membership, which was adopted in 1994, remained one of the main dimensions of Latvia's pro-Western orientation and determined its foreign affairs in the pre-2004 period to a great extent.

5.4. Alliance Formation of Latvia with NATO

It has been shown in the preceding section that the objective of NATO membership was one of the main objectives of Latvian foreign and security policies in the post-1994 period. In this section, Latvia's alliance-formation with NATO in 2004 is examined in detail. The section begins with an overview of the course of relations with NATO and proceeds with an analysis on the dynamics that led to the endorsement of the NATO objective by the Latvian authorities. The section explains both the embracement and consistent pursuit of the pro-NATO alliance decision by the Latvian authorities by making use of the domestic political peculiarities addressed in the first section.

5.4.1. The Course of Latvia-NATO Relations

The primary move of Latvian authorities in foreign and security policy realm in the post-Soviet period was to declare a *de facto* status of remaining out of alliances. Under the conditions of the early 1990s, this was understood not only as a measure of allaying the likely external threats, but also a way of dealing with state and nation-building processes at the domestic realm. Consequent to the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Latvian territory and the progress in state and nation-building processes, Latvian authorities could make more substantial decisions and endorsed the objective of NATO membership in 1994.

Before the declaration of the objective of NATO membership, Latvia had already joined the NACC at the time of the establishment of the latter in 1991. It deepened its cooperation with NATO over time by joining the PfP in 1994 and Individual Partnership Programme in 1995. Latvian authorities viewed PfP not only as a mechanism of taking the practical assistance of NATO in the development of the national military forces, but also a step leading to the ultimate membership. As President Ulmanis expressed in 1997, the cooperation mechanisms with NATO were "instruments that will help to implement the shared

vision [of eventual membership of NATO] and promote Latvia's preparations for integration."³³⁴ PfP was also assessed as a sign that NATO addressed the Baltic case in tandem with CECs, which seemed the most likely candidates at that time.

Though NATO members expressed their willingness to incorporate Baltic states into the Alliance when they met the necessary criteria, they neither made specific promises nor drew a clear time-table. At the Madrid Summit in 1997, during which the process of first enlargement wave was initiated, the Baltic states were not involved in the countries which received the invitation to begin accession talks. Yet, at the same Summit, NATO members also expressed the recognition of "the progress achieved towards greater stability and cooperation by the states in the Baltic region which are also aspiring members" and affirmed that NATO would "remain open to new members ... [and] the Alliance expect to extend further invitations in the coming years."³³⁵ The open door policy of NATO towards Baltic states was re-affirmed at Washington Summit in 1999, when the three Central European countries were welcomed to the Alliance. NATO members expressed in the final communique of the Washington Summit that:

We pledge that NATO will continue to welcome new members in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and contribute to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. This is part of an evolutionary process [...] The three new members will not be the last.³³⁶

Nevertheless, despite the commitment to enlarge NATO to new members, there was not a consensus among NATO members on whom to include to the second enlargement wave. Similar to the period preceding the first enlargement wave, during which each NATO member had defended the inclusion of different countries,³³⁷ the post-Madrid process also witnessed a lack of consensus on which

³³⁴ Quoted from Sergio Balanzino, "Deepening partnership: The key to long-term stability in Europe", *NATO Review*, No. 4 (July-August 1997), available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9704-3.htm> (accessed on 20 March 2015).

³³⁵ Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation, North Atlantic Council, 8 July 1997, Madrid, available at: www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm (accessed on 3 February 2015).

³³⁶ Washington Summit Communique, North Atlantic Council, Washington D.C., 24 April 1999, available at: www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm (accessed on 2 February 2015).

³³⁷ Karl-Heinz Kamp, "NATO Entrapped: Debating the Next Enlargement Round", *Survival*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Autumn 1998), pp. 175-177.

countries would be included to NATO and whether the Baltic states would be among them. There were few common interests among NATO members beyond the consensus of the continuity of open door policy and Slovenia was the only aspiring candidate whose prospective membership was shared by all.³³⁸ Of the NATO members, the US and Nordic countries were the main supporters of the Baltic accession to NATO. For Nordic countries, the inclusion of Baltic states to NATO would stabilize the region and contribute to the security of northern NATO members. The then US President Bush had expressed the US support to the Baltic accession to NATO at a speech at Warsaw University in June 2001 so that:

All of Europe's new democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and all that lie between, should have the same chance [...] to join the institutions of Europe. [...] The question of when may still be up to for debate within NATO; the question of whether should not be.³³⁹

Despite the repeated commitments to the open door policy and support by some NATO members, the Baltic case became the focal point of enlargement-related discussions in the post-Madrid process.

The first wave of NATO enlargement, which culminated in the inclusion of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to NATO in 1999, was driven more by political ambitions. Accordingly, technical matters, such as the adaptation of the national armies to NATO standards, were viewed of secondary concern to many NATO members. Different from the first wave, the technical issues were given more importance in the intra-NATO discussions in the pre-2004 period. This was also reinforced by the development of MAP in 1999, which enabled NATO members to scrutinize and make in-depth evaluations of the national armed forces of the candidate countries.³⁴⁰

In this framework, the political and military preparedness of the Baltic states for NATO membership was one of the discussion points among the NATO members. It was a frequently expressed argument that the Baltic states, which had

³³⁸ Jiří Šedivý, "The puzzle of NATO enlargement", p. 6.

³³⁹ George W. Bush, Address at the Warsaw University, 15 June 2001, available at: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=45973 (accessed on 3 February 2015).

³⁴⁰ Jiří Šedivý, "The puzzle of NATO enlargement", p. 3.

territorial disputes with Russia and among themselves, failed to solve their minority issues, did not have credible military capabilities and, thus, lagged behind the necessary political and military criteria for NATO membership. In addition, the defensibility of the Baltics in military terms because of their exposed geopolitical position and the contribution they could be made to NATO's common defence function were another suspicions sounded by NATO members.

In response to such critics, Latvia took several steps in political, economic and military areas. Making advances in military sphere was regarded as the most difficult phase in this process because of the fact that Latvia, similar to other Baltic states, had to set up their military forces from scratch. Latvian authorities overcame this problem by regionalizing security and combining the efforts of military build-up with other Baltic states at the regional level.³⁴¹ At the same time, following the creation of the Ministry of Defence in 1991, they also engaged in a process of developing a national defence system.³⁴²

Following the emergence of the first capabilities, they began to contribute to NATO missions. Latvia participated in IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina, AFOR in Albania and KFOR in Kosovo. After having been a part of the Danish battalion in SFOR from 1997 to 1998, BALTBAT began to operate in Bosnia-Herzegovina with its own contingent. Latvia also contributed to ISAF and joined the countries that formed the coalition of the willing against Iraq in 2003. The decision to deploy Latvian soldiers in Iraq was approved by 73 to 24 in the Latvian parliament and Latvian authorities viewed the participation in the coalition as a contribution to Latvia's NATO membership and, hence, in accordance with Latvian national interests.³⁴³

In addition, the Russian reactions was another issue that influenced the Baltic case. As it has been given in the preceding chapters, Russia had vehemently

³⁴¹ Stephen Larrabee, "The Baltic States and NATO Membership", Testimony presented to the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on 3 April 2003, RAND Corporation, available at: <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2005/CT204.pdf> (accessed on 1 August 2013).

³⁴² Jan Arveds Trapans, "Democracy and Defence in Latvia: Thirteen Years of Development: 1991-2004", *European Security*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 51-70.

³⁴³ Janusz Bugajski and Ilona Teleki, *Atlantic Bridges: America's New European Allies* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp. 200-201.

opposed to NATO enlargement since the very beginning of the enlargement process. On the eve of the first enlargement wave, NATO members could allay the Russian reactions by signing the Founding Act in 1997. Though the Act had facilitated the first enlargement wave, it could neither resolve the disagreements between NATO and Russia over the future of enlargement nor remove the Russian reactions. As such, while NATO had not closed its doors to further enlargement, as expressed at the Madrid Summit Declaration, Russia had declared that the Act would be reconsidered if Baltic states were ever considered for NATO membership.³⁴⁴ Russian Foreign Minister Primakov also expressed this by saying that “the whole system of Russian-NATO relations will collapse in the foreseeable future if the former Soviet republics, including the Baltic states, are included in the process of NATO enlargement.”³⁴⁵

In concurrence with this position, Russia tried to obscure the accession of the Baltic states to NATO in different ways. Besides the belligerent rhetoric, Russia attempted to discredit their eligibility for membership by creating doubts over the level of democracy and respect for minority rights in the Baltic states and by sustaining the territorial issues with them. Furthermore, Russian authorities also attempted to counter the NATO enlargement by offering security guarantees to Baltic states which could turn into a regional security pact over time.

The momentum for NATO membership for all three Baltic States began in 2001 with the rapprochement between the US and Russia in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. As given in Chapter 3, though having come to power with a rhetoric of great powerdom, President Putin was more concerned with the reinforcement of his domestic control at the beginning of his Presidency. In order to focus on domestic issues, he had adopted a pragmatic stance in relations with the West and, hence, taken a milder attitude to the Baltic case. The change in the Russian position lessened the reactions of the sceptic NATO members and created a more positive atmosphere for a pro-enlargement decision for the Baltic states.

³⁴⁴ Fergus Carr and Paul Flenley, “NATO and the Russian Federation in the New Europe: The Founding Act on Mutual Relations”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (June 1999), p. 102.

³⁴⁵ Sonatas Žiugžda, “Baltic States in the Perspective of Russia’s Security Policy”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, No. 4 (1999), p. 8.

Combined with the progress Baltic states achieved in meeting NATO criteria, the emergence of intra-NATO consensus on the Baltic case as well as the lessened Russian reactions led Latvia, together with six other countries, to have been invited for accession negotiations for NATO membership at the Prague Summit in 2002.³⁴⁶ After a period of two-year negotiations, Latvia finally joined NATO on 29 March 2004.

5.4.2. External Dynamics behind Latvia's Pro-NATO Alliance Trajectory

In calling for NATO membership, Latvian authorities generally avoided making precise definitions of external threats to their security.³⁴⁷ Nonetheless, considering the problematic nature of relations with Russia as well as the general contours of the Russian foreign policy towards the region, it was far from being certain that the Russian factor was the basic external dynamic that led Baltic states to search for permanent security guarantees.

After having seized independence, Latvian authorities were primarily concerned with the withdrawal of Russian troops from Latvian territory. The presence of Russian troops was seen incompatible with Latvia's independence and sovereignty and viewed as a threat to internal security because of the alleged involvement of Soviet/Russian officers to internal discontents. The negotiations on this issue started as early as 1992 and complicated over time due to the tensions caused by other bilateral problems, such as border disputes, Russian discontents over the status of Russian diaspora in Latvia and the differences in the interpretation of the historical events.

The issue of the troop withdrawal was finally resolved when a treaty was signed between Russia and Latvia in February 1994. Under this Treaty, with the exception of several hundred military specialists at the Russian radar station in Skrunda, which was decided to be kept open until 1998, all active Russian troops were withdrawn from Latvia by 31 August 1994. Though the Russian troops were withdrawn from Latvia by 1994, the persistence of bilateral problems as well as

³⁴⁶ The invited countries were Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

³⁴⁷ A. Thomas Lane, "The Baltic States, the enlargement of NATO and Russia", p. 296.

the presence of Russian minority in Latvia, combined with the belligerent rhetoric of the Russian leaders towards the pro-Western countries in the near abroad, kept alive the Latvian concerns over the Russian factor.

The then Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis expressed the concerns over the Russian factor in 1999 by arguing that, whilst NATO was emerging as the “central element of the European security system”, Russia was a “great unknown.”³⁴⁸ Similarly, considering the influence of the vulnerable external position, Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs described Baltic states as “prisoners of geography.”³⁴⁹

Apart from the statements of the Latvian leaders, the concern over the Russian factor was also encoded in the strategic documents outlining the basic framework of Latvian foreign and security policies. As such, the Security Concept of Latvia, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 6 May 1997, counted the basic threats to Latvian security as follows:

Activities aimed against the national independence of Latvia and its constitutional system, the political or economic subjugation or other types of dependence to or on other countries, the hindrance of Latvia’s integration into European and Transatlantic structures, the unification of different social and ethnic groups into one nation, or economic or social development in Latvia, as well as delaying of its defence capabilities.³⁵⁰

The emphasis on the words “hindrance” and “interference” reveals the centrality of the perceived external threats in Latvia’s security conceptualizations. Even though the statement did not make an explicit reference to any state, it reflected the sensitive issues in Latvia’s relations with Russia and revealed that external security concerns of Latvia was highly related to the Russian factor. The statement also revealed the interconnected nature of the threats Latvia faced. As such, the Russian factor was perceived by Latvian authorities not only as an external threat to Latvia but also being related to the internal ones they faced.

Considering the centrality of the Russian factor in Latvian security thinking and thought from the perspective of traditional realist approach, the guest

³⁴⁸ Don Hill, “Latvia: President Urges NATO-Russia Conciliation”, *RFE/RL*, 9 May 1999, available at: www.rfe.mobi/a/1091287.html (accessed on 20 December 2014).

³⁴⁹ Valdis Birkavs, “Security of Latvia: Historical Parallels and Current and Future Challenges”.

³⁵⁰ “Security Concept of the Republic of Latvia”.

for NATO membership by Latvia can be seen as an attempt to balance Russia's growing assertiveness in the near abroad. Daina Bleire explains the salience of external security concerns and the rationality of the NATO option in the Baltic case so that:

Integration with multilateral international organizations is one of the most available security policy options for small states in the present international system. One advantage of this option is that it offers small states a high level of security against traditional threats to sovereignty. Security concerns have been the main driving force behind efforts by post-communist countries, including the Baltic states.³⁵¹

Though the Russian factor was the main external dynamic that precipitated Latvia to seek NATO membership, its influence on Latvian security policies was not as direct as traditional realist approach envisages. Instead, in consistent with the neoclassical realist assumptions, it influenced Latvia indirectly depending on how it was assessed at the domestic level. In this assessment, the political agenda and domestic political interests of the Latvian authorities was essential.

Striving for integrating into Europe, Latvian authorities saw the rising resurgence of Russia in its near abroad as a challenge to Latvian national interests. Similarly, defending a more resilient role in the adjacent areas, Russian authorities viewed the Latvian orientation towards Europe as a challenge to the Russian national interests. In this context, rather than being a given, the problematic nature of Latvian-Russian relations stemmed from the incompatibility between the political agendas of Latvian and Russian authorities.

In this framework, the holding of power by the pro-Western groups, which defined the external interests of the Latvian State with the degree of integration to Europe, led to the assessment of the Russian factor as a security challenge. The Russian factor was understood by the ruling authorities as a challenge to not only the external security of the Latvian State but also the continuity of the transition process in accordance with the Western model and the maintenance of their domestic power. In order to allay the external and internal concerns stemming from the Russian factor, Latvian authorities sought NATO membership. This was

³⁵¹ Daina Bleiere, "Integration of the Baltic States in the European Union: The Latvian Perspective," in *Small States in a Turbulent Environment: The Baltic Perspective*, eds. Atis Lejinš and Zaneta Ozolina (Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 1997), p. 60.

a way of not only promoting external security of the Latvian State against the likely external threats but also securing the continuity of the transition process and their hold in power.

5.4.3. Elite and Public Attitudes to the Objective of NATO Membership

Having been declared in 1994, the objective of NATO membership could be pursued consistently by Latvian authorities until its ultimate fulfilment in 2004. In this occurrence, the convergence among the majority of Latvian elites and the electorate regarding the essentiality of NATO membership was influential. Even though the pro-Russian groups defended an alternative foreign and security policy agenda, which was based on the promise of closer relations with Russia, integration into the former Soviet space, denial of the idea of Soviet occupation of 1940 and rejection of membership in NATO, they could neither exert any countervailing pressure, because of their exclusion from governments, nor attract the Latvian electorate mostly composed of ethnic Latvians.

The opinion polls reflect the widespread support of the Latvian electorate to NATO membership. According to the numbers given by the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 68,7 per cent of the Latvian public supported Latvia's membership to NATO before joining NATO.³⁵² President Guntis Ulmanis had explained in his interview to RFE/RL on 11 May 1999 that:

For Latvia, the accession is mainly dependent upon public sentiment. The technical problems are a question of some minutes, or, at least, some hours. But public opinion and public support, not only in Baltic states but also in the world, is a crucial issue.³⁵³

The Russian foreign policy towards the region as well as the belligerent rhetoric against Baltic membership in NATO provided the Latvian authorities to justify their pro-NATO alliance trajectory on the side of the Latvian electorate. The Russian factor was also instrumental in convincing the public for the rapid

³⁵² "Public support for NATO membership high in Latvia", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia*, available at: <http://www.am.gov.lv/en/news/press-releases/2004/jan/3310/> (accessed on 22 December 2014).

³⁵³ Quoted from Vasil Siharulidze, "Public opinion trends with regard to NATO in post-Soviet countries during the 90's", NATO-EAPC Fellowship 2001-2003, available at: www.nato.int/acad/fellow/01-03/sikharulidze.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2014), p. 14.

increases in defence spending in the late 1990s.³⁵⁴ Accordingly, as revealed by opinion polls, seizing security guarantees against Russia was perceived by the Latvian electorate as one of the main benefits expected from NATO membership.³⁵⁵

However, it was also of the findings from the opinion polls that ethnicity was a remarkable factor that determined the attitude of the Latvian public towards NATO and the results of the support rates changed depending on whom the polls are applied to. There was a remarkable difference in the support rates of the ethnic Latvians and non-titular population to the NATO membership. Whilst the majority of ethnic Latvians supported NATO membership, the majority of the non-titular population was against it. As revealed by a poll made in 1999, 68,1 per cent of Latvians supported Latvia's accession to NATO, whilst only 34,7 per cent of non-Latvians saw it necessary.³⁵⁶

Nevertheless, neither the pro-Russian groups nor the other non-titular population, who did not have citizenship, could exercise a countervailing influence on the pro-NATO trajectory since they remained marginal in political and electoral terms. In the end, free from any political or societal counter-vailing influence, Latvian authorities could pursue the objective of NATO membership without any interval from 1994 until its ultimate fulfilment in 2004.

5.5. Latvia in NATO in the Post-Accession Period

From the declaration of independence in 1991 to the seizure of membership in both NATO and the EU in 2004, the main objective of Latvian foreign and security policies had been integration into both organizations. With the accession to these organizations, not only the main objective of Latvia's post-Soviet foreign and security policies was fulfilled, but also the external context of Latvia was perceived to change radically. Having been a country located in the

³⁵⁴ The share of the GDP allocated for military spending was raised from 0,67% in 1998 to 0,92 in 1999 and 2 per cent in 2003. Atis Lejinš, "Can A Small State Defend Itself? The Case of Latvia", *World Defence Systems*, RUSI, December 2002, available at: www.lai.lv/site/docs/CanASmallState.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2014), p. 174.

³⁵⁵ Vasil Siharulidze, "Public opinion trends with regard to NATO in post-Soviet countries during the 90's", p. 17.

³⁵⁶ Andris Spruds, *Minority Issues in the Baltic States in the Context of the NATO Enlargement*, p. 14.

area between Russia and the West until that time, Latvia began to be seen as a part of the West in 2004, which drastically changed its security thinking and foreign affairs.

In the pre-accession period to NATO, Latvian security policies were structured on a persistent sense of insecurity, mainly perceived to stem from the Russian factor. With the accession to NATO, the level of perceived insecurity decreased and the seizure of NATO membership was viewed as a development that positively affected the security circumstances of Latvia. As expressed by the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

The most valuable effect of Latvia's membership in NATO is having permanent allies. Latvia's dramatic history explains the need for the sense of security. Permanent allies within NATO provide confidence that never again will Latvia stand alone in the face of a threat.³⁵⁷

The State Defence Concept, adopted by the Latvian Parliament in 2008, also described the betterment in the external security conditions of Latvia in the post-accession period so that:

With accession to NATO and the EU Latvia has significantly strengthened its national security and defence. The basis of Latvian national defence and security is strengthening Latvia's military capabilities, NATO's collective defence principle and military cooperation with allied nations in the context of NATO and the EU.³⁵⁸

The increased sense of security also reflected on bilateral relations with Russia, the main external actor which shaped the security concerns of the Latvian authorities in the post-Soviet period. "Being part of a larger alliance meant that power relations between Latvia and the Russian Federation became less asymmetrical, and bilateral relations were de-emphasized in favour of a larger

³⁵⁷ "Latvia's membership benefits both Latvia and the Alliance" (I), the Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/data/file/e/Books/Latvia%20in%20Facts/benefits.PDF> (accessed on 17 February 2015).

³⁵⁸ The State Defence Concept (2008), Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, available at: http://doc.mod.gov.lv/en/Brosuras/valsts_aizsardzibas_koncepcija/files/publication.pdf (accessed on 20 February 2015), p. 2.

multilateral field of interactions.”³⁵⁹ In this respect, NATO membership was seen “a realistic chance of overcoming the past difficulties in the Balts’ relations with Russia and improving the state of bilateral affairs for the future.”³⁶⁰

Accordingly, the Latvian-Russian relations gave several signals of normalization in the immediate post-accession period to NATO. In economic terms, the post-2004 period witnessed the rise of trade volume and foreign direct investment. In political terms, several agreements were signed, including the economic cooperation agreement in 2006 and the border agreement in 2007.³⁶¹

Nevertheless, despite the initial momentum of normalization, the Russian factor still continued to shape the Latvian security thinking. This was due to the Russian resurgence during the second term of Putin Presidency and some external developments, such as the August War in Georgia in 2008, as well as the persistent problems in bilateral relations, including the disagreements over the interpretation of common history and treatment of Russian diaspora in Latvia. This was also precipitated by the continuing Latvian energy dependence on Russia and the increasing influence of Russian media outlets in Latvia.³⁶² Yet, different from the pre-accession period, these issues were not perceived by the Latvian authorities as sources of existential insecurity and addressed in a more normalized framework thanks to the security guarantees of NATO.

Apart from the increased sense of security, the widening in the horizons of Latvia’s foreign and security policies has been another benefit provided by the membership in NATO. This gave Latvia a greater weight at international and regional levels. As Normans Penke expressed, since NATO and the EU were global players, Latvia had to define its positions on several international issues on

³⁵⁹ Rasma Kārklīņa and Imants Lieģis, “Latvia and Russia within the Broader International Context,” in *Latvian-Russian Relations: Domestic and International Dimensions*, ed. Nils Muižnieks (Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2006), p. 148.

³⁶⁰ “Latvia’s membership benefits both Latvia and the Alliance” (II), the Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/images/archive/data/file/e/Books/Latvia%20in%20Facts/benefits2.PDF> (accessed on 15 February 2015).

³⁶¹ Toms Rostoks and Veronika Šilkina, “Latvia’s Foreign Policy: 10 Years of EU Membership”, Website of National University of Public Service, available at: http://uni-nke.hu/uploads/media_items/rostokos_silinka_latvias-foreignpolicy-10-years-of-eu-membership.original.pdf (accessed on 18 February 2015), pp. 105-106.

³⁶² Toms Rostoks and Veronika Šilkina, “Latvia’s Foreign Policy: 10 Years of EU Membership”, pp. 105-106.

which its influence remained limited until that time and to widen its foreign affairs now that it became a part of these organizations.³⁶³ As such, dominated mainly by the objectives of NATO and the EU memberships in the pre-accession period, Latvia's foreign affairs in the post-accession diversified and widened its scope. It was opened to the areas beyond Europe and to the issues beyond hard security.³⁶⁴

Whilst widening the horizon of its relations, Latvia continued to view its relations with the US of utmost importance. As it has been expressed by Norman Penke, State Secretary of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvia viewed constructive relations between Europe and the United States of America as an important precondition for Latvian security and committed to make the transatlantic ties as close as possible.³⁶⁵ As such, though supporting the emerging European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as a member of the EU, Latvia continued to view NATO as the centrepiece of European security architecture and viewed ESDP complementary to NATO.

Having been the beneficiary of NATO enlargement, Latvia also supported the continuity of this process in the post-accession period. "NATO enlargement to include the states of the Western Balkans, and support to the efforts of Georgia and Ukraine in approaching the Alliance" were shown as the significant aspects of Latvian security policy.³⁶⁶ Supporting further enlargement, Latvia also presented its own experience as a model to the aspiring countries. As it has been expressed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Latvia's success in becoming part of the NATO Alliance will serve as an example to the CIS and Balkan countries that are also pursuing the path of

³⁶³ Normans Penke, "New Foreign Policy Challenges", Yearbook of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (2004), available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/data/file/l/gada%20parskats%202004%20kopa.pdf> (accessed on 18 February 2015), p. 8.

³⁶⁴ Žaneta Ozolina and Tom Rostoks, "Eastern and Western Latvian Foreign Policy After 1999: A Comparative Quantitative Approach", in *Expanding Borders: Communities and Identities*, Proceedings of International Conference, Riga, 9-12 November 2005, available at: http://www.president.lv/images/modules/items/PDF/item_1127_Exp_1.pdf (accessed on 18 February 2015).

³⁶⁵ Normans Penke, "New Foreign Policy Challenges", p. 8.

³⁶⁶ "Introduction by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Māris Riekstiņš", Yearbook of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (2007), available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/data/file/l/mfayearbook%202007.pdf> (accessed on 18 February 2015), p. 7.

reform. It will demonstrate that vigorous reform policy can pay off in full membership in Western institutions. Further democratic reforms in these countries will make Europe a more secure and more stable place.³⁶⁷

As seen from this framework, Latvia's post-accession security considerations and policies displayed several continuities as well as changes.³⁶⁸ The most significant continuities were the perceived threat from the Russian factor and the centrality of NATO membership in the Latvian security thinking and policies. In the emergence of these continuities was influential not only the rising resurgence of Russia in international affairs during the second term of Putin Presidency but also the persistence in the holding of power by political groups, which emerged as the beneficiaries of the pro-Western policies of the pre-accession period and continued to assess the surrounding developments as a challenge to their political agenda.

Apart from such continuities, Latvian foreign and security policies also displayed remarkable changes due to the benefits accrued from the NATO membership. As such, though the Russian factor continued to shape Latvian security thinking, it was no longer seen as an existential threat thanks to the security guarantees provided by NATO. Once in the Alliance, Latvia seized the opportunity to multilateralize its security concerns and to further its national interests in a broader framework. Apart from the increased sense of external security, the membership in NATO increased the regional and international weight of Latvia and turned it from a policy-taker and security-consumer into a policy-maker and security-producer. In this framework, having been dominated by the objective of seizing NATO membership in the pre-accession period, Latvia's post-accession foreign and security policies centred on the question of what to do with NATO membership and how to promote Latvian national interests by making use of it. Thus, the extensive scope of NATO activities as well as the multi-dimensional nature of the Alliance provided Latvia many benefits which have gone far beyond the advantages of getting membership in a traditional military-centred alliance.

³⁶⁷ "Latvia's membership benefits both Latvia and the Alliance" (II).

³⁶⁸ David J. Galdreath, "Latvian Foreign Policy after Enlargement: Continuity and Change", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (2006), p. 458.

5.6. Conclusion

It has been given above that, setting aside the initial choice of not forming alliances in the early 1990s, Latvia consistently pursued a pro-NATO alliance trajectory from 1994 to 2004, and never considered the option of integrating into the politico-military initiatives in the former Soviet space. In this framework, the objective of seizing NATO membership constituted the bedrock of Latvian security policies from 1994 to the ultimate fulfilment of this objective in 2004.

From the perspective of the traditional realist approach, Latvia's pro-NATO alliance trajectory can be seen as an attempt of balancing against the perceived threat from Russia. This might seem convincing considering the fact that Latvian-Russian relations were embroiled with several discords in the post-Soviet period and the Russian factor was the main external dynamic that influenced the security considerations of Latvian authorities. Nevertheless, this perspective is inadequate since it cannot account for why some other former Soviet republics, such as Belarus, which was situated in the same external context with Latvia, did not assess the Russian factor as a threat but chose to form alliance with it. Moreover, this perspective also cannot explain why Latvia did not pursue the objective of NATO membership before 1994 as the CECs did.

Alternatively, evaluating the Latvian case from a constructivist perspective, one can assume that the rejection of the Soviet past led Russia to be perceived as an "other" and Latvia sought NATO membership in order to reproduce its self-identification as a European country. However, this identity-based argument is quite questionable considering the existence of pro-Russian political parties as well as the large number of Russian diaspora in Latvia, supporting the integration into the former Soviet space in the post-independence period. Therefore, the constructivist assumption that Latvian identity was the determinant behind Latvia's pro-NATO trajectory also seems inadequate.

As pointed earlier, instead of traditional realist and constructivist approaches, the Latvian case can best be explained by neoclassical realism, which assumes that external dynamics influence states' foreign and security policies indirectly depending on how they are assessed at the domestic level. Since this assessment is made by political actors who have the decision-making authority,

political configurations in a country as well as the political agenda and electoral concerns of dominant political groups influence foreign and security policy decisions to a great extent.

In this framework, though the Russian factor was the main external dynamic that precipitated Latvia to seek NATO membership, its influence on Latvian security policies was not as direct as traditional realist approach assumed. Instead, in consistent with neoclassical realist assumptions, its influence was indirect and took place in interaction with Latvia's domestic political peculiarities, most importantly the dominance of pro-Western political groups and the exclusion of pro-Russian ones. As such, the assessment of the Russian factor as a security challenge and the pro-NATO alliance trajectory as a remedy to it stemmed from the holding of power by pro-Western groups which saw it as a challenge to their external and internal objectives.

When making and pursuing their decisions, these groups were exempted from any political or social constraints since pro-Russian parties could not exert any counter-vailing influence because of their exclusion from governments and many supporters of these parties did not have the right to vote because of the restrictive citizenship and electoral arrangements. In the end, as most of the Latvian electorate was composed of ethnic Latvians who displayed a pro-Western attitude and approach Russia with scepticism, the ruling authorities could embrace and pursue a pro-NATO trajectory without facing any electoral risks and endangering their political survival.

All in all, the Latvian case showed that, rather than being a direct result of the external dynamics, the embracement and consistent pursuit of the objective of full membership was due to the assessment of external context by the Latvian authorities in accordance with their political agenda and domestic interests. By setting a pro-NATO trajectory, Latvian authorities aimed not only to provide the external security of the Latvian State, but also to secure the achievements and continuity of transition process and to strengthen their position vis-a-vis their pro-Russian rivals.

CHAPTER 6

UKRAINE'S LIMITED INTEGRATION INTO NATO

6.1. Introduction

This chapter draws on the observation that Ukraine started to cooperate with NATO as early as 1991 and this cooperation was sustained by all Ukrainian Presidents without any rupture. Ukraine's cooperation with NATO was embraced by the first Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk as a part of his policy of passive neutrality from 1991 to 1994, sustained as one of the axes of Leonid Kuchma's multi-vectored foreign policy in the period between 1994 and 2004, supported by Viktor Yushchenko with the ultimate aim of full membership from 2005 to 2010, and maintained under the name of constructive partnership by Viktor Yanukovich from 2010 to 2014 when he left the power.³⁶⁹

While cooperating with NATO, Ukrainian authorities took a sceptic attitude towards politico-military integration initiatives launched by Russia in the former Soviet space. Therefore, though having been one of the founding members of the CIS, Ukraine took a low profile in the Commonwealth by supporting economic integration in a limited way and refraining from joining politico-military ones.³⁷⁰

It is also observed that Ukraine's inclination to cooperate with NATO has not turned into a sustained and continuous vision of acquiring full membership in the Alliance. Even if Ukrainian leaders declared the intention to fully integrate into NATO from time to time, this either remained a discursive act or could not be sustained. Therefore, whilst the ultimate vision and objective of Ukraine's

³⁶⁹ The continuity in Ukraine's integration into NATO was also confirmed by NATO and Ukrainian officials I interviewed in Brussels in December 2013. This continuity was described as Ukraine's "adopting NATO's military standards" and "developing relations with every possible agency in NATO".

³⁷⁰ Though Ukraine joined Russia and Belarus in establishing the CIS on 8 December 1991, it ratified the CIS Treaty with reservations. Ukraine neither signed the CIS Charter in January 1993 nor joined the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), established in 2003. This attitude has remained unchanged from the seizure of independence to date.

cooperation with NATO showed variations over time, the limited nature of Ukraine's integration into NATO did not change.

In the light of these observations, this chapter seeks to understand why Ukraine did not form alliance with NATO in the post-Cold War period. It is argued in this chapter that, even if Ukraine's security policies were influenced by the Russian factor, each president chose to deal with it in different ways depending on their political agenda and domestic interests and, by doing this, they sought to promote external interests of the Ukrainian State, as defined by them, and to strengthen their domestic power. The chapter attributes Ukraine's not forming alliance with NATO to either deliberate choices of presidents, as witnessed during Kravchuk, Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, or the constraints of external and internal dynamics, as happened during Yushchenko Presidency.

6.2. Domestic Background of Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policies

This section identifies the domestic political peculiarities that characterized Ukraine's post-Soviet politics and influenced its foreign and security policies. To that end, it first draws an overview of the political developments from 1992 to 2014 and then identifies Ukraine's domestic political peculiarities in that period. The section shows that strong presidency, fragmented parliament, regionalism and business-politics linkages have been defining domestic political peculiarities that largely influenced Ukraine's foreign and security politics in general and attitude to NATO in particular.

6.2.1. Internal Political Developments in the Post-Soviet Ukraine (1992-2004)

Setting aside a short period between 1917 and 1920, independence had been an unaccustomed phenomenon in Ukrainian history. In the previous centuries, the territories of today's Ukraine had remained divided among different political authorities in Russia, Central Europe and the Black Sea. The eastern parts of today's Ukraine had been brought under the Soviet control in 1922 with the establishment of the Ukrainian SSR and the western parts were annexed at the end

of the Second World War.³⁷¹ Having been a Soviet constituent republic for seven decades, Ukraine had first declared its sovereignty on 16 July 1990, and emerged as a full-fledged independent country following the Declaration of Independence on 24 August 1991 and the independence referendum on 1 December 1991.³⁷²

At the time of its independence in 1991, Ukraine was deprived of all elements of modern statehood – well-entrenched institutions, administrative experience and a sense of common nationhood among its inhabitants, which had different historical experiences, held different traditions and spoke different languages. Though post-Soviet Ukraine had inherited some part of the Soviet structures and personnel, what it inherited was in fact a “proto-state” that had never performed functions of a sovereign state and lacked the institutional experience to adequately manage independence.³⁷³ Moreover, because of its fragmented historical background, there was not an encompassing sense of “Ukrainian nation” among the people located on the Ukrainian territory. Rather, what Ukraine inherited in 1991 was the conglomeration of people who historically owed their allegiance to different authorities and defined their identities in different terms.

Under these circumstances, establishing the statehood and generating a sense of unity among the people located on the Ukrainian territory were regarded as primary objectives by the Ukrainian authorities. These were seen as prerequisites to sustain the political existence of the newly established Ukrainian State and to acquire credibility in the international realm. Nevertheless, in the context of the substantial continuity between Soviet-era and post-independence state institutions and elites, it was hardly possible to argue that independence

³⁷¹ Roman Szporluk, “Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State”, *Daedalus*, Vol. 126, No. 3 (Summer 1997).

³⁷² In the national referendum of 1 December 1991, Ukrainians voted for independence with an average 90.32 per cent support rate. Whilst the highest rates over 90 per cent were recorded in the western and central Ukraine (Ternopil, Lviv, Volyn, Cherkasy, Rivne, Transcarpathia, Ivano-Frankivsk, etc.), the lowest rates were taken in Sevastopol and Crimea, 57.7 per cent and 54.19 per cent respectively. “Over 90 per cent vote yes in referendum; Kravchuk elected president of Ukraine”, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Vol. LIX, No. 49 (8 December 1991).

³⁷³ Sarah Whitmore, “State and Institution Building Under Kuchma”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (September/October 2005), p. 4; Marc Nordberg, “State and Institution-Building in Ukraine,” in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), p. 43.

brought Ukraine a clear-cut break from its Soviet bonds. Instead, political, economic and social shadow of the imperial and the Soviet past continued to be felt in the contemporary Ukraine. Rather than being an asset, this created several problems when Ukrainian authorities were adapting the inherited institutions to the new conditions and establishing new ones.

The strong presence of communists in Ukraine's post-Soviet political scene was a hindrance to the transition process in many respects. Until the 1994 parliamentary elections, Ukraine's political scene had been dominated by two groups: communists and national democrats. From the declaration of independence in December 1991 to the passage of new Constitution in 1996, political conflicts between communists, which dominated the Parliament, and the reform-minded presidents, supported by the democratic forces that constituted minority in parliament, became the dominant characteristic of Ukraine's domestic politics.³⁷⁴ Whilst the clash between these groups in the Ukrainian Parliament as well as the competition between the executive and legislative branches covered the issue of the basic credentials of the Ukrainian State during the Kravchuk presidency until 1994, it encompassed the issues of political and economic reforms during Kuchma era.³⁷⁵ At a time Ukraine was in need of constructing smoothly functioning state institutions, the divergences between communists and national democrats created many problems for the state-building process.

In the period following the 1994 parliamentary elections, disagreements among the political forces in the Parliament regarding the credentials of the Ukrainian state continued to obscure the adoption of a constitution and, thus, deprived the system from the necessary constitutional guidance until 1996 when the first post-Soviet Ukrainian Constitution was adopted.³⁷⁶ In the absence of a constitution until 1996, political differences among the political parties in the

³⁷⁴ Charles R. Wise and Volodymyr Pigenko, "The Separation of Powers Puzzle in Ukraine: Sorting Out Responsibilities and Relationships between President, Parliament and Prime Minister," in *State and Institution Building in Ukraine*, eds. Taras Kuzio, Robert S. Kravchuk and Paul D'Anieri (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 53.

³⁷⁵ Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine Under Kuchma: Political Reform, Economic Transformation and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1997), p. 90.

³⁷⁶ The Soviet-era constitution, which was adopted in 1978, continued to be used in the post-Soviet Ukraine until 1996 with 15 additional laws and numerous amendments.

Parliament as well as those between legislative and executive branches aggravated. In fact, the Declaration of Sovereignty had introduced the principle of separation of powers as a guide to inter-branch relations. However, in the absence of well-established institutional rules and a Constitutional Court to provide guidance for inter-branch discussions, this remained merely an ambiguous principle, and the clash between legislative and executive branches became inevitable. In this context, executive authority in Ukraine remained vaguely divided among the President, Prime Minister and the Parliament from 1991 to 1996. The adoption of the Ukrainian Constitution in 1996 gave an end to this institutional ambiguity and became a hallmark in Ukraine's state-building process.

Apart from state and institution-building processes, Ukrainian authorities were also concerned with moulding societal differences among Ukrainians into a single, all-encompassing allegiance in order to prevent the weak national integration from emerging as a threat to territorial integrity. Due to the controversial nature of the term "Ukrainianness" in Ukraine, they defined citizenship in civic than ethnic terms. Accordingly, the 1991 Citizenship Law gave citizenship to all residents of Ukraine at the time of independence irrespective of their ethnic or linguistic origins. The Law also banned dual citizenship to provide the allegiance of the Russian-speaking population to the centre and to curb any future possibility of Russian encroachment in the name of protecting Russian diaspora in Ukraine.

Despite all measures taken in the 1990s, regionalism remained an unchanged characteristic of Ukraine's socio-political structure.³⁷⁷ Apart from economic attachments, the most notable regional difference occurred in linguistic terms. Whereas the people in eastern and southern Ukraine has preferred to speak Russian, those in western and central Ukraine have chosen to speak Ukrainian.

³⁷⁷ In Ukraine, regions denote to sub-national spatial units with a set of defining political, economic and societal characteristics. In the most simplistic terms, Ukrainian regionalism is described with reference to the dichotomy between western and central versus eastern and southern Ukraine. Though these groupings neither exist officially nor reflect the distinctiveness within each regional cluster, they provide useful analytical generalizations to elaborate the political consequences of inter-regional differences. For a comparison among different oblasts, See. Dominique Arel, "The Hidden Face of the Orange Revolution: Ukraine in Denial Towards Its Regional Problem", translation of "La afce cachée de la Révolution Orange: l'Ukraine en négation face à son problème régional", *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Décembre 2006), available at: <http://www.ukrainianstudies.uottawa.ca/pdf/The%20Hidden%20Face.pdf> (accessed on 2 August 2013).

The concentration of Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the areas bordering Russia has kept alive the concerns over separatism among the right-wing and centre-right politicians. These groups justified their concerns with reference to widespread demands by eastern and southern Ukrainians for having dual citizenship and making Russian an official state language along with Ukrainian.

However, it would be an exaggeration to argue that regionalism posed a real separatist threat in Ukraine in the 1990s. As Dominique Arel argues, the main cleavage in Ukraine “is not an opposition of nationalities (such as Ukrainian and Russian), but rather an opposition of cohesive, or homogenous, national identity, one the one hand (Ukrainian), and a dual, or bi-ethnic, identity, on the other (Ukrainian/Russian).”³⁷⁸ Taras Kuzio similarly explains that strong regional attachment has not purported to the lack of loyalty to the State. For him, Russians were always there and theirs was an identity not marked by ethnic criteria, but by attachment to region and economic ties.³⁷⁹ Similarly, for Paul D’Anieri, regionalism does not pose a separatist threat. Instead, it has had a stabilizing influence on Ukrainian politics since it prevents one political perspective to seize dominance over others.³⁸⁰

Crimea was the only exception of this situation. Though independence was supported in Crimea in 1991 in return for acquiring autonomy from the then to-be-established Ukrainian State, some Crimean officials adopted a separatist discourse in the following time and expressed their expectations to unite with Russia.³⁸¹ At the same time, there were also ethnic tensions between Crimean Tatars and Crimean Russians. Ukrainian authorities expressed their concerns over

³⁷⁸ Dominique Arel, “The Hidden Face of the Orange Revolution: Ukraine in Denial Towards Its Regional Problem”, p. 5.

³⁷⁹ Taras Kuzio, “National identity in independent Ukraine: An identity in transition”, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1996), p. 599; Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (Routledge: London and New York, 1998), pp. 69-99.

³⁸⁰ Paul D’Anieri, “Ethnic Tensions and State Strategies: Understanding the Survival of the Ukrainian State”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (March 2007).

³⁸¹ Predominantly inhabited by the Ukrainians of Russian origin, it was turned into an autonomous republic from an oblast in January 1991 in return for its support for independence. In the run up to the elections of January 1994, the leader of the Russia Bloc and the later victor of the elections, Yuriy Meshkov had based his campaign on the objectives of closer ties with Russia, a return to the ruble zone and the introduction of Russian as the official language. After having been elected, he had also raised the issue of joining to Russia.

Crimea in the 1997 National Security Concept, which counted among others the “separatist tendencies in some regions of the country” and “aggravation of ethnic and confessional conflicts” as basic challenges to Ukrainian national security.³⁸² Though separatist tensions were prevented in the 1990s, political and social dynamics in Crimea kept alive security concerns of the Ukrainian authorities.

The above-given framework shows that Ukrainian authorities had been primarily preoccupied with the transition process, especially state and nation-building, in the 1990s. Though democratization and marketization were also declared as indispensable aspects of this process, the progress in these twin objectives remained limited. Rising discontents against the Presidency of Kuchma in the early 2000s, mostly because of his political and economic practices, ultimately turned into a domestic opposition movement called “Ukraine without Kuchma”. This process culminated in Orange Revolution in 2004, which will be elaborated in detail in the following part.

6.2.2. Orange Revolution and Afterwards (2004-2014)

Orange Revolution was a process in the making since the first evidences of Kuchma’s involvement in the murder of Gongadze became public in 2001.³⁸³ In the early 2000s, Ukrainian politics had turned into a scene of contention between pro-Kuchma forces, represented by the Bloc named “For Our Ukraine”, and anti-Kuchma forces, represented mainly by Our Ukraine, Tymoshenko Bloc and the SPU. Under these circumstances, the coming Presidential elections in 2004 had begun to be portrayed as an event that would have a spurring influence on the Ukrainian politics. The developments after the second run of the 2004 presidential elections, known as “Orange Revolution”, proved this expectation.³⁸⁴

³⁸² Olga Alexandrova, “The Premises of Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy,” in *Between Russia and the West: foreign and security policy of independent Ukraine*, eds. Kurt R. Spillman, Andreas Wenger and Derek Müller (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 41.

³⁸³ Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine’s Orange Revolution: The Opposition’s Road to Success”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (April 2005), p. 129.

³⁸⁴ The first round of elections was held on 31 October 2004, at the end of which Yushchenko, Yanukovich, Moroz and Symonenko received 39.9 per cent, 39.26 per cent, 5.82 per cent and 4.97 per cent of the votes respectively. As none of the candidates received more than 50 per cent support rate in the October round, a second run was set for 21 November. Following the second run of the elections, Yanukovich was declared as the winner with 49.46 per cent support rate over Yushchenko’s 46.61 per cent. The evidences of electoral fraud in both campaigning process and

The Orange Revolution ended with the seizure of Presidency by Victor Yushchenko and Premiership by Yulia Tymoshenko. Before coming to office, the Orange forces had promised for engendering radical changes in and for Ukraine.³⁸⁵ However, Orange coalition was a “major electoral realignment”³⁸⁶ consisted of different political parties with different discourses and interests. In this sense, it was “a heterogeneous collection of disparate groups ranging from pro-Western nationalist forces on the right to Socialists on the left.”³⁸⁷ Though they were united during the 2004 Presidential elections around the vision of “a future for Ukraine without Kuchma”, they could not coordinate their policies and lacked a common policy agenda. Thus, the revolutionary soul of the coalition remained short-lived and political clashes became inevitable.

Intra-Coalition discontents among the Revolution partners ultimately culminated in the fall of the Orange Coalition and establishment of the National Unity Coalition in August 2006 under the Premiership of Viktor Yanukovich. Due to the differences between President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yanukovich, it became impossible to conduct ordinary legislative and executive activities, which led Yushchenko to dissolve the parliament and order pre-term elections in April 2007. Following the pre-term parliamentary elections in September 2007, the Tymoshenko Bloc and Our Ukraine-People’s Self Defence

election outcomes led fierce protests by the opposition forces as well as Ukrainian public in western and central oblasts of Ukraine. Upon the call of the opposition leaders, one-month protests took place in the Maidan Square, which came to be known as the Orange Revolution. The process ended with the renewed second run of elections, at the end of which Yushchenko and Yanukovich received 51.99 and 44.20 percent of the votes respectively. OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Ukraine Presidential Election, 31 October, 21 November and 26 December 2004, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/14674?download=true> (accessed on 10 September 2010), p. 45.

³⁸⁵ Taras Kuzio, “From Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine’s 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (March-April 2005), p. 30.

³⁸⁶ Ivan Katchanovski, “The Orange Evolution? The ‘Orange Revolution’ and Political Changes in Ukraine: The Question of the ‘Orange Revolution’”, Paper presented at the 2006 Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association in Toronto, Canadian Political Science Association, available at: <http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2006/Katchanovski.pdf> (accessed on 30 September 2010), p. 24.

³⁸⁷ Stephen Larrabee, “Ukraine at the Crossroads”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Autumn 2007), p. 46.

Bloc³⁸⁸ re-established the Orange Coalition in November 2007 and Tymoshenko was re-elected as Prime Minister. The second Orange Coalition remained as fragile as the first and could not bring any revolutionary change for Ukraine.

The post-Orange Revolution period ended with the 2010 presidential elections, which inaugurated the Presidency by Yanukovich³⁸⁹ and introduced notable changes in Ukraine's domestic politics. Reinstitution of strong Presidency, increase in the political influence of oligarchs, political restrictions against opponents and imprisonment of former opposition figures, including former Prime Minister Tymoshenko, were the most significant developments of the post-2010 period.³⁹⁰ These developments would have a major influence on Ukraine's foreign relations and domestic politics in the post-2010 period.

6.2.3. Domestic Political Peculiarities of Post-Soviet Ukraine

Considering the brief political course given above, it is possible to identify a set of domestic political peculiarities that characterized Ukraine's socio-political scene in the post-Cold War period. To begin with, for most of the period from 1991 to 2014, Ukrainian presidents were the leading actors in the making and implementation of foreign and security policies. From the seizure of independence in December 1991 to the adoption of 1996 Constitution, Ukrainian foreign and security policies had been made in an *ad hoc* manner in the absence of clear rules. Giving an end to this institutional limbo, the 1996 Constitution had designed the

³⁸⁸ "Our Ukraine" was renamed as "Our Ukraine-People's Self Defence Bloc" on the eve of 2007 parliamentary elections.

³⁸⁹ From the first round of elections on 17 January 2010, Yanukovich and Tymoshenko emerged as two forerunners, taking 35.32 per cent and 25.05 per cent of the votes respectively. The run-off elections were held on 7 February 2010, which resulted in the victory of Yanukovich with 48.95 per cent. Tymoshenko took 45.47 per cent of the votes and lost the elections with a slight difference. Data taken from, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Final report on Ukraine's presidential election on 17 January and 7 February 2010, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/67844> (accessed on 16 December 2012), p. 34.

³⁹⁰ For an overview of the events of the post-2010 period, see. Mykola Riabchuk, "Yanukovich's Two Years in Power", 2 March 2012, German Marshall Fund of the United States, available at: <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/yanukovich%E2%80%99s-two-years-power> (accessed on 1 October 2013).

President as the leading actor in the making of foreign and security policies.³⁹¹ In this setting, Ukrainian political system began to be characterized by a strong presidential one and President Kuchma emerged as the leading actor in these policy areas from 1996 to 2004.

This framework changed in 2004 with the constitutional amendments that entered into force in 2006 and established a new balance between President and Prime Minister by increasing the prerogatives of the latter at the expense of the former. Since the executive power was shared by President and Prime Minister from 2006 to 2010, the pursuit of coordinated policies was conditioned upon harmonious relations between these two figures. However, the political differences between Yushchenko and Yanukovych from 2006 to 2007 and the personal clashes between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko from 2007 to 2010 turned political instability into an endemic feature of that period and obscured the pursuit of coordinated foreign and security policies. This institutional framework changed again in 2010 when the Constitutional Court outlawed the 2004 amendments and reinstated the strong Presidential system. As a result, following the constitutional amendments of 2010, President Yanukovych emerged as the leading actor in foreign and security policy making process.³⁹²

The second peculiarity of Ukraine's post-independence politics has been the fragmentations among political parties over foreign and security policy matters, especially regarding relations with Russia and NATO. As such, though designed as an influential actor in foreign and security policy making³⁹³, Ukrainian Parliament could not take a facilitating role since its members rarely

³⁹¹ Chapter V; in, Constitution of Ukraine, Adopted at the Fifth Session of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 28 June 1996, available at: <http://www.infoukes.com/history/constitution/index-en.html> (accessed on 22 January 2014).

³⁹² With the amendments, President acquired the right to appoint and dismiss Prime Minister, ministers, other heads of national executive bodies, and heads of provincial and local administrations. He also seized the right to take the lead in the formation of coalitions. According to the new procedures, the Cabinet would be responsible to President and would resign as soon as a new President is elected. Peter Roudik, "Ukraine: The 1996 Constitution Is Reinstated", Library of the Congress of the United States, available at: http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp1_1205402303_text (accessed on 11 July 2012).

³⁹³ Under the Ukrainian Constitution, Ukrainian Parliament had the right to establish the basic principles of foreign policy, to declare war after submission by the president, to approve the president's use of force, to control the budget, and to approve the sending of Ukrainian forces abroad or accepting foreign forces in Ukraine (Article 85). "Constitution of Ukraine".

converged on a common policy vision. Because of its polarized composition, the Parliament either became a platform of intense discussions and even fighting or could enact only ambiguous decisions. Therefore, it had a *constraining* than *enabling* role in this policy area.

Resulting from the fragmented historical background, regional disparities embodied the third peculiarity in Ukraine's post-independence politics. This also reflected as differences in electoral behaviours of Ukrainians from different oblasts. As such, leftist parties were supported more in southern and eastern oblasts, whereas right-wing, centre-right and centrist parties received more support in western and central Ukraine. The regional disparities in voting behaviours of Ukrainians became a pattern in all post-Soviet elections, including the parliamentary elections of 1998 as well as presidential elections of 1994 and 1998. This not only revealed the differences in the expectations of the Ukrainian public from the ruling authorities in terms of foreign and security policy decisions but also sustained the fragmented structure of the Parliament.

Another domestic political peculiarity that characterized Ukraine's post-Soviet socio-political structure was the endurance in business-politics linkages and the influence of business people representing the interests of particular sectors on political decisions. As an interest group, these people had the capacity to influence policy processes in both direct and indirect ways. First of all, they had the opportunity to influence decision-making processes directly by being elected as deputies. In this case, they supported economic measures sustaining their self-interests while obstructing others. As an illustration of this case, gas deals, which set an important topic on the agenda of relations with Russia, have never been merely a matter of negotiation between Ukraine and Russia, but are influenced by the positions of the leading gas companies and their affiliates in the Parliament. As another example, business elites rejected pro-market economic reforms which they perceived as a threat to their economic self-interests and obscured their adoption by the Parliament.

Moreover, having been in charge of state enterprises during the Soviet era thanks to their affiliation with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, business elites had retained their posts in the post-Soviet period and preserved their connections with ex-communists, known as *nomenklatura*, in the Parliament.

They also had close links with the Presidential administration during Kuchma era. These networks enabled them to get material support in the form of redistribution of resources, promises of privileged access to privatization of strategic assets and management of profitable state enterprises in exchange of their support for Kuchma.³⁹⁴ In these ways, they could also influence policy processes indirectly.

The domestic political peculiarities addressed above not only characterized Ukraine's post-Soviet socio-political structure but also affected its foreign and security policies and attitude to NATO to a great degree. This influence will be elaborated in detail in the latter sections of this chapter.

6.3. Ukrainian-NATO Relations in the Post-Cold War Period

This section will examine Ukraine's relations with NATO in the post-Cold War period. The section highlights the fact that Ukraine's cooperation with NATO was conducted in a framework falling short of full membership and, even if the objective of full membership was declared from time to time, this remained short-lived and did not or could not endure. The analysis begins by explaining Ukraine's external security considerations in the early 1990s and drawing an overview of its foreign and security policies. It then continues by elaborating Ukraine's relations with NATO during Kuchma, Yushchenko and Yanukovych Presidencies in a chronological order. In the last section of this chapter, the findings from this section will be evaluated in tandem with those from the previous one with the purpose of finding out the reasons for Ukraine's not having formed alliance with NATO in the post-Soviet period.

6.3.1. Security Considerations and Foreign Policy Agenda in the Early 1990s

The first move of Ukrainian authorities in the domain of foreign and security policies was the declaration of the intention to adopt a "neutral" status. It had been pronounced by the Supreme Council in the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine on 16 July 1990 at the very beginning of its road to independence that:

³⁹⁴ Serhiy Kudelia, "The Sources of Continuity and Change of Ukraine's Incomplete State", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2012), available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2012.06.006>.

The Ukrainian SSR solemnly declares its intention of becoming a permanently neutral state that does not participate in military blocs and adheres to three nuclear free principles: to accept, to produce and to purchase no nuclear weapons.³⁹⁵

This move was fully consistent with the neoclassical realist assumption that leaders aim to promote the external security of their state and to strengthen their political power with their foreign and security policies. Above all, this move was due to the uncertainty in the early 1990s regarding how international system would evolve in the coming period. At the time of this declaration, Ukraine was still a Soviet Republic, which seized greater autonomy from the centre after it had declared its sovereignty. At that time, it was uncertain whether the process would lead to ultimate fall of the Union and what kind of international structure would replace it. Surrendered by a turbulent and evolving external context, Ukrainian authorities declared their intention to be “neutral” as a strategy of waiting for the crystallization of the external circumstances before making substantial foreign and security policy decisions.

Significant in this regard was the fact that Ukraine’s geopolitical position bordering Russia on its eastern yard. It was visible since the very beginning that the most acute problem for the emerging republics in the Soviet space would be to frame their relations with Moscow. This was mostly due to the anxiety over how Russia would deal with the loss of the Union and what kind of policies it would pursue towards the former Soviet space. In this context, the declaration to adopt a “neutral” status after seizing independence was also a measure to allay the difficulties stemming from Ukraine’s sensitive geopolitical position.

Considering the domestic bases of this move, it should be indicated that this declaration enabled the Ukrainian authorities to delay the external issues in order to divert their attention to more urgent internal issues in the post-independence period. As noted before, the newly independent Ukraine was in need of undertaking four different transitions – “from a command-administrative system to a market economy, from a totalitarian system to a democracy, from an incomplete and deformed national identity to a nation, and from a subject of

³⁹⁵ “Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine”, Official Website of Verkhovna Rada, 16 July 1990, available at: http://gska2.rada.gov.ua/site/postanova_eng/Declaration_of_State_Sovereignty_of_Ukraine_rev1.htm (accessed on 13 July 2010).

empire to statehood.”³⁹⁶ Therefore, “neutrality” was a measure of creating a life-span to smoothly proceed the state and nation-building processes in Ukraine in the early 1990s. This consideration was especially salient during the Presidency of Kravchuk, who devoted his tenure to state and nation-building processes.

Another influential domestic consideration behind the adoption of neutrality was linked to Ukraine’s divided political and societal context. Considering the regional disparities across Ukraine, it was apparent in the pre-independence period that Ukrainian authorities would have difficulties in making decisions to be supported by all residents in the Country. A full-integrationist security agenda might exacerbate the existing political and social differences and make it more difficult to establish the necessary consensus to meet the internal challenges. Such an agenda could alienate large segments of the population, harm the nation-building process and ultimately result in the loss of power by the ruling authorities. In this context, as indicated by James Sherr, the self-declared “neutrality” not only prevented Ukraine’s becoming the object of the sectors originating in its adjacent regions, but also guaranteed the “balance of power inside the country”³⁹⁷ between different regional and political forces with pro-Western or pro-Russian stance.

Nevertheless, it should also be indicated that Ukraine’s “neutrality” remained as a *de facto* declaration and was never codified. In practice, it meant merely a declaration of intent to stand of equal distance to military formations in the West and the former Soviet space in order to alleviate external and internal security problems which might be encountered in case an integrationist agenda was set. Therefore, it was a reflection of the cautious attitude of Ukraine’s new authorities as well as a strategy to prevent the aggravation of external and internal security conditions.

Despite the declaration of “neutrality”, President Kravchuk sought closer relations with the West since the very beginning. Though Kravchuk’s pro-

³⁹⁶ Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine Under Kuchma: Political Reform, Economic Transformation and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine*, pp. 2-3.

³⁹⁷ James Sherr, “After Yugoslavia: Whither Ukraine?”, 1999, ISN International Relations and Security Network, available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=cab359a3-9328-19cc-a1d2-8023e646b22c&lng=en&id=40124> (accessed on 21 July 2010), p. 124.

European remarks did not find adequate response from Western capitals at the beginning, Ukraine's foreign and security policies during Kravchuk era performed the blend of a passive "neutrality" with an orientation towards Europe. The inclination to establish closer linkages with the West was uttered in the 1993-dated Basic Principles of the Foreign Policy Document so that:

Earlier intention, proclaimed by Ukraine, to become in the future a neutral and non-aligned state must be adapted to the new situation and cannot be seen as an obstacle to its full-scale participation in pan-European security structures.³⁹⁸

However, Ukraine's relations with the West did not go beyond mere diplomatic recognition in the early 1990s. In order to attract the Western attention, Ukrainian authorities played the nuclear card and, contrary to the provisions of the Lisbon Protocol of 1992,³⁹⁹ they declared ownership over the nuclear weapons on the Ukrainian territory and postponed the issue of their transfer to the Russian territory. The nuclear issue was finally resolved on 14 January 1994 with the signing of the Trilateral Statement.⁴⁰⁰ With the solution of this problem, Ukraine's relations with the West progressed. In the afterwards, once having been regarded as the "linchpin of the Soviet Union" by Moscow during the Cold War, Ukraine began to be viewed as the "linchpin of Europe" in the second half of the 1990s.⁴⁰¹

The pro-Western leaning in Ukraine's foreign and security policies seemed to change for a while on the eve of the 1994 Presidential elections when Kuchma conducted his election campaign with the promises of closer relations with Russia and official status for Russian language. At a time Ukrainian-Russian relations were embroiled with several problems, these promises led him to be defined as a pro-Russian candidate. However, after having assumed Presidency on 19 July

³⁹⁸ Quoted from Roman Wolczuk, "The evolution of Ukrainian foreign and security policy, 1990-1994", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1999), p. 27.

³⁹⁹ Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus, agreed to eliminate from their territory all nuclear arms inherited from the Soviet era by signing the Lisbon Protocol on 23 May 1992, an annex to the START-I.

⁴⁰⁰ Trilateral statement was the first step towards the final resolution of the nuclear question of Ukraine. Subsequent efforts to implement this agreement were ratification of the START-I by the Ukrainian Parliament in February 1994, ratification of NPT in November 1994 and the final transfer of the warheads to Russia in 1996.

⁴⁰¹ John Edwin Mroz and Oleksandr Pavliuk, "Ukraine: Europe's Linchpin", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (May/June 1996).

1994, “Kuchma’s romantic pro-Russianism soon dissipated”⁴⁰² and he began to pursue policies similar to those of Kravchuk. Nevertheless, different from his predecessor, who relatively prioritized relations with the West, Kuchma understood this principle in a more balanced fashion, and transformed it into a policy which is known as “multi-vector foreign policy.” In accordance with this policy, Kuchma sought to develop good relations with all neighbours and to be active in all directions.⁴⁰³

Kuchma’s multi-vector foreign policy aimed to take an equal distance from military alliances. Whilst refraining from politico-military initiatives in the CIS, Kuchma conducted relations with NATO in a way falling short of full membership. Even if he sometimes stated that full membership in NATO might be considered if necessary, this was merely a part of his strategy of getting benefits from the antagonization between Russia and the West by playing one side against the other. This strategy was most apparent in 2002 when Kuchma declared the objective of NATO membership without making an official application for MAP⁴⁰⁴ and while concomitantly announcing the intention for closer integration into the CIS. Kuchma’s pragmatism in conducting relations with NATO and taking such contradictory moves will be examined in detail in the next section.

6.3.2. Gradual Institutionalization of Ukrainian-NATO Relations during Kuchma Presidency

Ukraine took part in the NACC consultations since its first meeting in December 1991. Despite this beginning, it was only in the afterwards of the resolution of the nuclear issue with the Trilateral Statement and the changing geopolitical conditions with the Russian resurgence that Ukraine’s relations with the West and NATO flourished. Accordingly, Ukraine’s relations with NATO gained substantial momentum after 1994.

⁴⁰² Taras Kuzio, “Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM”, *European Security*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer 2000), p. 85.

⁴⁰³ For more about Kuchma’s multi-vector foreign policy, see. Janusz Onyszkiewicz, *Ukraine and NATO* (Warsaw: Center for International Relations, 2003); Taras Kuzio, “Neither East nor West: Ukraine’s Security Policy Under Kuchma”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (September/October 2005).

⁴⁰⁴ This information was acquired from NATO and Ukrainian officials I interviewed in Brussels in December 2013.

As a reflection of this breakthrough, Ukraine became the first CIS country which signed PfP Framework Document on 8 February 1994 and actively supported the PfP activities.⁴⁰⁵ Active involvement in PfP served to Ukraine's various interests. First of all, when restructuring its newly-established national army in accordance with the new security environment and increasing its military standards, PfP gave Ukraine the chance to get access to NATO technology and assistance. Secondly, due to the fact that Russia was also a participant in the PfP program, Ukraine could cooperate with NATO without provoking Russian reactions. In this respect, the extent and scope of PfP, falling short of full membership in NATO, suited Ukraine's strategic goal of anchoring itself more firmly in Europe while developing neighbourly relations with Russia.⁴⁰⁶ Thirdly, within the framework of PfP, Ukraine was benefiting from the same cooperation mechanisms made available to the CECs. This was contemplated in Ukraine as a reflection of the fact that NATO treated Ukraine as a part of Europe and that Ukraine mattered to NATO. Finally, as the forerunner among the CIS countries to sign the PfP, Ukraine used its active participation in the PfP as a means of reminding the West its strategic and geopolitical importance.

In the 1990s, Ukrainian authorities actively participated in NATO operations in Balkans. Ukraine's participation in NATO operations started in December 1995 with IFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina. After the termination of IFOR, Ukrainian forces also joined the follow-up operation, SFOR. Ukrainian authorities evaluated Ukraine's participation in these operations as a "valuable contribution to the international community peacekeeping efforts" and a factor that contributes to the development of its Armed Forces in accordance with the

⁴⁰⁵ Ukraine participated in its first PfP joint training activity in September 1994, which was conducted in Poland under the name of the "Cooperation Bridge." In 1995, Ukraine took part in 98 NATO events, including 11 PfP military exercises. Of them, "Peace Shield" became the first PfP exercise conducted in the Ukrainian territory. In 1996, Ukraine participated in 53 events, including 18 military exercises, three of which ("Peaceshield-96", "Kozatskiy step-96" and "Karpaty security-96") were conducted on the Ukrainian territory. Ukraine took part in 1997 in 157 events, including 22 military exercises, two of which ("Cooperative neighbour-97" and "Sea Breeze-97") were held on the Ukrainian territory. "Participation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in PfP Program", Official Website of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, available at: <http://www.mil.gov.ua/index.php?lang=en&part=cooperation&sub=participation> (accessed on 16 April 2011).

⁴⁰⁶ Oleksandr Pavliuk, "An Unfulfilling Partnership: Ukraine and the West, 1991-2001", *European Security*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2002), p. 81.

present necessities of international security.⁴⁰⁷ For them, this participation was also a way of raising Ukraine's importance in the eyes of the Western countries, and accordingly, getting the necessary diplomatic support against Russia.

One of the most significant developments in Ukrainian-NATO relations during Kuchma Presidency was the signing of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership which marked a major milestone in the institutionalization of NATO-Ukraine relations. Upgrading NATO-Ukraine relations to a level beyond ordinary cooperation, the Charter created new mechanisms of consultation and set up NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), expected to meet twice a year to regularly assess the reform process in Ukraine and to suggest ways to further enhance cooperation between NATO and Ukraine.⁴⁰⁸ The Charter also established a crisis consultative mechanism which could be activated whenever Ukraine has perceived a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence and security. Even though the assurances brought by the Charter fell short of automatic security guarantees, Ukrainian authorities evaluated them as a reflection of the Western acceptance of Ukraine's geopolitical importance and support for its independence and sovereignty.

Though President Kuchma did not support Ukraine's membership in NATO during most of his tenure, it marked a breakthrough on 23 May 2002 when he encouraged National Security and Defence Council to adopt a resolution setting the vision of NATO membership. Named the "Strategy of Ukraine towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", this resolution defined NATO as the foundation of a future Europe-wide security system and stated that the state policy of Ukraine was full integration into the European structures and accession to NATO was in accordance with Ukrainian national interests.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ "Ukraine's contribution to NATO peace support activities", Official Website of the Mission of Ukraine to NATO, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.ua/missionnato/en/10257.htm> (accessed on 30 May 2011).

⁴⁰⁸ Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine, 9 July 1997, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25457.htm (accessed on 10 July 2011).

⁴⁰⁹ "Decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine on the Strategy of Ukraine Concerning the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation", in *The Security Sector Legislation of Ukraine*, (eds.) John Colston, Philipp Fluri and Sergei Piroshkov, The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, available at: <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/The-Security-Sector-Legislation-of-Ukraine> (accessed on 25 February 2015), pp. 103-105.

This resolution represented Ukraine's first formal expression to be fully integrated into NATO. However, rather than being a genuine expression of Kuchma's support to NATO membership, this resolution was in fact a part of Kuchma's strategy of playing NATO and Russia against one another in order to promote Ukraine's external interests, as defined by him, and to maintain his domestic political power.

Thought in external terms, this resolution was precipitated by the changes in NATO-Russia relations as well as Ukraine's neighbourhood. Having reached at the lowest ebb in the post-Cold War period during the Kosovo crisis, NATO-Russia relations had seemed to recover in the afterwards of September 11 when the then Russian President Putin sided with the then US President Bush in the war against terrorism. In this atmosphere, the Baltic entry into NATO began to seem more likely. From the viewpoint of Ukrainian authorities, the Baltic membership in NATO would lead to drastic changes in the geopolitical landscape of Eastern Europe and put Ukraine in a more vulnerable geopolitical position by leaving it in a buffer zone between NATO and Russia. Therefore, Kuchma tried to alleviate any geopolitical constraint on Ukraine after the Baltic entry into NATO by declaring the objective of full membership.

This decision was also an attempt by Kuchma to recover his credit on the side of the Western countries. In combined with the lack of progress in reform process, the emergence of a series of high-profile political scandals in Ukraine⁴¹⁰ had caused the Western countries to lose their confidence in Kuchma in the early 2000s. Aware of the fact that the rapprochement between Russia and the West could be replaced by another wave of deterioration in the future, Kuchma could not run the risk of being isolated by the West. In this context, by reinforcing the Council to take a decision on the objective of NATO membership, Kuchma had aimed at recovering relations with the West with a drastic measure.

In addition to these external considerations, one should also consider domestic political conditions in Ukraine in order to fully account for the reasons behind the articulation of NATO membership in 2002. The 2002 parliamentary elections, leading to a sea change in the composition of the Parliament, had shown

⁴¹⁰ These scandals were the allegations over Kuchma's involvement in the disappearance of oppositionist journalist Gongadze and findings of Ukraine's selling Kolchugate radars to Iraq in breach of UN embargo.

not only the decreasing profile of President Kuchma but also the rise of political opposition to his rule. Until that time, the KPU and the SPU, which grew out of the remnants of the Soviet Communist Party, had dominated the Parliament and constituted the main opposition to Kuchma's regime.⁴¹¹ After the 2002 parliamentary elections, the Parliament had turned into a scene of contention between pro-Kuchma forces, represented by the Bloc named "For Our Ukraine", and anti-Kuchma forces, represented mainly by Our Ukraine, Tymoshenko Bloc and the SPU. The election results as well as the rise of anti-Kuchma protests in western and central oblasts in Ukraine were alarming for Kuchma. In this context, by declaring the intention to become a NATO member, Kuchma had also aimed to curb domestic criticisms to his rule by giving the rising opposition, mostly of liberal and pro-Western character, what they aspired. However, the attempt to eliminate the domestic opposition with such a declaration did not bear fruit and the rising discontents to his rule in the early 2000s culminated in the Orange Revolution, which gave an end to ten-year Presidency of Kuchma and brought radical changes to Ukraine's relations with NATO.

6.3.3. Post-Revolution Period and NATO's Bucharest Summit in 2008

Having been the scene of ebbs and flows during Kuchma Presidency, NATO-Ukraine relations were inaugurated in the post-Revolution process with the expectation of a qualitative transformation. This was expressed by Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, Secretary General of NATO so that, since "the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 was built upon a shared commitment to 'democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law,'" the ideals of Maidan were also the ideals of NATO members. In this context, Scheffer said that what had driven Ukraine into a future of liberty and prosperity through Orange Revolution would bring Ukraine and NATO closer to one another.⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: The Opposition's Road to Success", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (April 2005), p. 118.

⁴¹² Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, "Achieving Ukraine's Integration Goals: What needs to be done", speech at the Diplomacy Academy of Kyiv, Ukraine, 20 October 2005, Official Website of NATO, available at: www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s0510206.htm (accessed on 15 June 2010).

Confirming this expectation, President Yushchenko embraced the objective of NATO membership and expressed his readiness to undertake necessary reforms to facilitate Ukraine's accession to the Alliance. With the purpose of establishing the necessary legal base for this vision, Yushchenko re-amended the Military Doctrine in April 2005 by re-incorporating into the text the objective of NATO membership which had been removed by Kuchma in the final days of his tenure.⁴¹³

Following the Orange Revolution, Ukraine began to be viewed by NATO as a "unique partner", which participated in all kind of activities of the Alliance and committed to the same values with the NATO members.⁴¹⁴ One of the most notable developments in this period occurred during the informal meeting of NATO's foreign ministers in Vilnius on 21 April 2005 when Ukraine was invited to begin the "Intensified Dialogue" with NATO. As such, NATO members enlisted a series of concrete and immediate issues to help Ukraine to strengthen democratization, reinforce political dialogue and reinvigorate cooperation in defence and security sector reform.⁴¹⁵ Complementing these measures, a list of short-term actions was also adopted.⁴¹⁶ Addressing the lack of public support in Ukraine regarding the relations with NATO, the need for public diplomacy was also emphasised at the Summit.⁴¹⁷

In the following time, Yushchenko introduced several institutional measures to facilitate Ukraine's entry into NATO. On 27 December 2005, he issued a decree stipulating that the deputy heads of central executive authorities would be responsible for the implementation of policies designed to speed up

⁴¹³ RFE/RL Newswire, 26 April 2005, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143386.html> (accessed on 22 December 2011).

⁴¹⁴ Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Speect at the 10th anniversary of the NATO-Ukraine Partnership, 2 July 2007, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-0AFC3059-75E621FE/natolive/opinions_8184.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed on 4 November 2013).

⁴¹⁵ "NATO launches 'Intensified Dialogue' with Ukraine", 21 April 2005, Official Website of NATO, <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2005/04-april/e0421b.htm> (accessed on 15 July 2011).

⁴¹⁶ "Enhancing NATO-Ukraine Cooperation: Short Term Actions", Press Release, 21 April 2005, Official Website of NATO, available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p050421e.htm> (accessed on 15 July 2011).

⁴¹⁷ This was expressed by several Ukrainian officials I interviewed so that Ukrainian public still does not know what NATO is and what added value it can bring to Ukrainian security.

integration into NATO. Yushchenko issued another decree on 13 March 2006 by ordering the establishment of the Inter-ministerial Commission to conduct the accession process into NATO. Led by different national coordinators, the Commission was empowered to oversee the activities of NATO-Ukraine cooperation in different areas.

In this context of euphoria in the early post-Revolution period, it was a wide-shared expectation that NATO could offer Ukraine a MAP at its upcoming Riga Summit in November 2006 with an eventual invitation of formal membership likely to be extended at a follow-up summit in 2008.⁴¹⁸ However, these expectations did not come true and Ukraine failed to receive a MAP at the Riga Summit.

The failure in Riga can be explained with reference to both external and internal dynamics. Externally, this was due to hesitance of some NATO members that further enlargement to the former Soviet territory would provoke Russia, which would then endanger Western interests in several areas, most notably in the energy sector. Internally, this resulted from the polarized political and social climate in the Country. As Ukraine intensified its relations with NATO under the Presidency of Yushchenko, social reactions in eastern and southern Ukraine, especially in Crimea, heightened and the period up to the Riga Summit witnessed a series of anti-NATO rallies in those areas. The Crimean Parliament adopted a decision declaring the peninsula as a NATO-free territory and calling for cancelling the Sea Breeze-2006 exercise.⁴¹⁹ Regarding the impact of these protests, Taras Kuzio argues that they raised the conviction among some NATO members that Ukraine could be destabilized if it joined to NATO.⁴²⁰

Moreover, on the eve of Riga Summit, the executive power had passed to National Unity Coalition led by NATO-sceptic Yanukovych. Due to the increases in the competences of Prime Minister, the seizure of Premiership by Yanukovych, who were against upgrading relations with NATO, drastically influenced

⁴¹⁸ F. Stephen Larrabee, "Ukraine at the Crossroads", p. 48.

⁴¹⁹ "Crimea declares itself NATO-free", Itar-Tass News Agency, 6 June 2006, available at: <http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=9580101> (accessed on 28 January 2013).

⁴²⁰ Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's relations with the West since the Orange Revolution", *European Security*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2012), p. 4.

Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic prospects and the outcome of Riga. As such, the pace of Ukrainian-NATO relations slowed down during the tenure of National Unity Coalition. In fact, Coalition members had enlisted convergences on internal and external priorities through an informal memorandum titled "Universal Declaration of National Unity". The vision of furthering relations with NATO had in fact been secured in this document as follows:

We [the parties of the Declaration] [...] have agreed [...] to further mutually beneficial cooperation with NATO in conformity with the law of Ukraine 'On the principles of national security of Ukraine' (in the version being in action at the date when the present Universal is signed). To solve the issue of accession into NATO in accordance with the results of referendum held after Ukraine has implemented all necessary procedures.⁴²¹

Due to the differences in the interpretation of this clause⁴²², the declaration could not solve the political differences between two leaders and failed to prevent the repolarization of attitudes towards NATO. In this vein, Ukraine began to display a dual approach towards NATO: one favouring membership in NATO, represented by President Yushchenko, and one calling for a "pause" in the quest for NATO membership, represented by Prime Minister Yanukovych.⁴²³ This obscured the relations with NATO and contributed to the failure in Riga.

After the fall of National Unity Coalition and re-establishment of Orange Coalition in November 2007, expectations for forming alliance with NATO raised once again. On the eve of the 2008 Bucharest Summit of NATO, President Yushchenko, Prime Minister Tymoshenko and the Chairman of the Parliament Arseny Yatsenyuk sent a joint letter in January 2008 to Secretary General of

⁴²¹ "Universal of National Unity", 3 August 2006, Official Website of Ukrainian Government, available at: http://www.kmu.gov.ua/kmu/control/en/publish/article?ShowHidden=1&art_id=65224005&cat_id=65222957&ctime=1170422634401 (accessed on 22 October 2010).

⁴²² Whilst Yushchenko defended a "consultative" referendum to be held before joining NATO, Yanukovych supported a "determining" referendum before the adoption of MAP. Moreover, whereas Yushchenko supported Ukraine's full integration into NATO, Yanukovych defended a limited degree of integration falling short of full membership. Viktor Yanukovych, "Ukraine's Choice: Toward Europe", *The Washington Post*, 5 October 2006, available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/04/AR2006100401541.html> (accessed on 13 March 2011).

⁴²³ Stephen Larrabee, "Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy after the Collapse of the Orange Revolution", International Relations and Security Network, available at: http://se2.isn.ch/serviceengine/Files/ESDP/31069/ichaptersection_singledocument/09A05730-F4A9-41A0-8FAE-25043266176A/en/Pages+from+024_Quid+Ukraine's+Strategic+Security-6.pdf (accessed on 21 October 2010).

NATO Jaap de Hoop Scheffer by confirming their commitment to furthering ties with NATO and urging NATO members to offer Ukraine a MAP in Bucharest.

However, the initiatives of the ruling elites encountered reactions from the political opposition led by Yanukovich. Upon the above-mentioned letter, the opposition began to prevent the Parliament meetings until the adoption of a resolution stipulating that any step towards joining NATO should be preceded by a referendum. This led to another months-long crisis and deadlock in legislative activities. Similar to pre-Riga process, pre-Bucharest process also witnessed demonstrations across Ukraine. Yet, these did not retreat Yushchenko and Tymoshenko from sending another request to Jaap de Scheffer in March 2008, and launching diplomatic initiatives on the side of France and Germany by asking them to support Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.⁴²⁴

Whilst Ukraine was divided between pro-NATO and anti-NATO groups at both elite and public levels, NATO members were also divided at that time regarding whether or not to offer Ukraine, together with Georgia, a MAP. Of the NATO members, the US was the most ardent supporter of upgrading relations with Ukraine by the means of MAP. The then US President Bush launched a pre-Summit visit to Kyiv on the eve of the Bucharest Summit in order to express his support for Ukraine's accession to NATO. Apart from the US, other proponents of offering Ukraine a MAP were Canada and NATO's new members from the Central and Eastern Europe.⁴²⁵ These countries signed an unofficial note to Jaap de Scheffer by asking to extend cooperation with Ukraine and Georgia through a MAP on the grounds that this would reinforce stability and security and would contribute to democratization and reform process in that part of Europe.

In contrast, another group of countries including France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal was sceptical about offering Ukraine a MAP.⁴²⁶ They argued either Ukraine had weak qualifications or such a move would provoke Russian

⁴²⁴ RFE/RL Newline, 18 March 2008, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1144074.html> (accessed on 27 October 2010).

⁴²⁵ RFE/RL Newline, 20 March 2008, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1144076.html> (accessed on 27 October 2010).

⁴²⁶ NATO officials I interviewed explained the intra-NATO divisions regarding the Ukrainian case with three issues: Russian reactions, internal splits among Ukrainians, Ukraine's unreadiness in terms of compliance to NATO's criteria.

reactions.⁴²⁷ The German foreign minister Steinmeier had expressed this position by saying that there was not any rationale to burden relations between NATO and Russia by extending MAP to these countries.⁴²⁸ In consistent with this position, the visit of the German Chancellor Merkel to Moscow on 8 March 2008 also raised the conviction that the visit was planned to allay the Russian reactions on the eve of the Bucharest Summit.⁴²⁹

Before the Bucharest Summit, Russian authorities continued their harsh reactions. The Russian deputy foreign minister Alexander Grushko expressed Russian reactions by saying that “Georgia’s and Ukraine’s membership in the Alliance [would be] a huge strategic mistake which would have most serious consequences for pan-European security.”⁴³⁰ This was reiterated by Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov on 27 March so that:

We believe that [possible] NATO expansion plans are at odds with realities of the modern world where we face common threats. We can only tackle them together, not by mechanical expansion of blocs left over from the Cold War times.⁴³¹

Attempting to influence the Bucharest decision, Russia also raised the withdrawal issue from the Friendship Treaty with Ukraine and reopening the territorial questions.⁴³² Moreover, “in response to a question about possible Ukrainian membership in NATO, President Putin warned [on 14 February 2008] that Russia might be forced to take military countermeasures, including aiming

⁴²⁷ Vincent Morelli et al., “NATO Enlargement: Albania, Croatia, and Possible Future Candidates”, 14 April 2009, Congressional Research Service, available at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34701.pdf> (accessed on 22 October 2010), p. 18.

⁴²⁸ RFE RL Newline, 2 April 2008, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/144083.html> (accessed on 28 January 2013).

⁴²⁹ RFE RL Newline, 2 April 2008, Ibid.

⁴³⁰ “NATO denies Georgia and Ukraine”, *BBC*, 3 April 2008, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7328276.stm> (accessed on 10 May 2010).

⁴³¹ RFE/RL Newline, 28 March 2008, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/144080.html> (accessed on 22 December 2011).

⁴³² RFE/RL Newline, 1 April 2008, Ibid.

missiles against Ukraine, if Kiev hosted foreign bases or joined the US missile defence project.”⁴³³

The Bucharest Summit was held on 2-4 April 2008 in the midst of this tensious atmosphere. In the end, NATO members made a decision regarding Ukraine’s guest for the MAP by stipulating in the final communique that:

We agreed today that these countries [Ukraine and Georgia] will become members of NATO. [...] Today we make clear that we support these countries’ applications for MAP. Therefore we will now begin a period of intensive engagement with both at a high political level to address the questions still outstanding pertaining to their MAP applications. We have asked Foreign Ministers to make a first assessment of progress at their December 2008 meeting. [...].⁴³⁴

Setting aside the impact of political and military unpreparedness of Ukraine in upgrading its relations with NATO, the Bucharest decision revealed that NATO members have not supported enlargement for its own sake, but for its contribution to European security as stated in Article 10 of North Atlantic Treaty. Furthermore, in consistent with neoclassical realism, enlargement was supported by NATO members as long as it was consistent with their interests. From the perspective of hesitant NATO members, there was not any rationale to legitimize offering a MAP to Ukraine as a contribution to European security because of the Russian reactions and Ukraine’s internal discontents. Most importantly, enlargement was not the sole issue on NATO agenda at the Bucharest Summit. Energy security and the future of Afghanistan were other salient issues, which necessitated active cooperation with Russia. Therefore, NATO members did not risk the Russian cooperation in these issues by granting MAPs to Ukraine and Georgia. Unable to reach consensus to offer a MAP to Ukraine, NATO members could only express their content with Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations and reiterated that NATO’s door would continue to remain open.

⁴³³ Paul Gallis, “Enlargement Issues at NATO’s Bucharest Summit”, 12 March 2008, Congressional Research Service, available at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34415.pdf> (accessed on 4 November 2013), p. 24.

⁴³⁴ Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April 2008, Official Website of NATO, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm (accessed on 22 October 2010).

Though it was decided at the Bucharest Summit that the Ukrainian case would be re-evaluated at the meeting of the NATO Defence Ministers in December 2008, the said meeting could not yield any change. In this context, having been held as a follow-up to the Bucharest Summit, NATO's Defence Ministers' meeting in December 2008 marked the end of initial euphoria and beginning of the estrangement in Ukrainian-NATO relations. The failure to receive a MAP in April and December 2008 also caused Yushchenko to marginalize in the Ukrainian politics. In parallel to his marginalization, the objective of NATO membership also lost its salience.⁴³⁵ In this context, in contrast to the initial years of the post-Revolution period, NATO-related discussions dropped off the Ukrainian political agenda in the rest of that decade.

6.3.4. Yanukovich's Multi-Vector Foreign Policy and Constructive Partnership with NATO

The presidential take-over in 2010 drastically changed Ukraine's foreign and security policies. In contrast to President Yushchenko's emphasis on the objective of full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, Yanukovich adopted a multi-vectored foreign policy which attached equal importance to Russia and the West. As a part of this policy, he abandoned his predecessor's vision of becoming a full NATO member and supported a "non-aligned" security policy with equal distance to NATO and CSTO. As such, he supported sustaining relations with NATO in a redefined framework of "constructive partnership".

In order to fully comprehend the pursuit of multi-vectored foreign and security policies by Yanukovich, one should take into account the fact that Yanukovich's primary consideration in this period was to overcome the domestic economic crisis and to improve Ukraine's economic conditions. Setting aside the negative influences of global economic and financial crisis, high energy prices paid to Russia under the 2009 gas deal were of the main sources of Ukraine's economic problems. Therefore, in order to ameliorate Ukraine's economic conditions, Yanukovich viewed it essential to recover relations with Russia while

⁴³⁵ The marginalization of Yushchenko in the post-Bucharest process was pointed by one of the NATO officials I interviewed.

improving economic connections with the EU. Prime Minister Azarov put the salience of economic considerations by arguing that this stance “realize[s], first of all, the economic interests of our country.”⁴³⁶ Ukrainian foreign minister Gryshenko made similar comments and, referring to the geopolitical position of Ukraine, expressed the rationale for the selection of these twin objectives so that:

We were torn between two Europes. To the West was the Europe of the EU, one of the most attractive political and economic magnets in the human history. To the East was the Russian Federation, with millions of our friends, relatives and a widespread network of connections that nourished the economy. In a way, the choice between East and West was a choice we couldn't really make, because we needed both.⁴³⁷

The differences in the discourses and policies between Yushchenko and Yanukovych, despite the similarity in the external contexts, prove that external context does not have independent effects on actors. Otherwise, the Russian factor would lead to the adoption of similar policies across different Presidencies. Instead, consistent with the neoclassical realist assumption that external dynamics influence states depending on how they are infiltrated to the domestic realm, the Russian factor influenced Ukrainian foreign and security policies according to how it was assessed at the leadership level.

In this assessment became influential leaders' political agenda and domestic interests. Accordingly, Yanukovych's prioritization of economic issues with the objective of improving Ukraine's economic conditions influenced how Ukrainian foreign and security policies were affected by the Russian factor. As such, in contrast to Yushchenko, who assessed the Russian factor as a challenge to his political objectives, Yanukovych understood it as external dynamic that should be accommodated in the pursuit of domestic and foreign policy objectives. Yanukovych expressed this in his inauguration speech so that its geopolitical

⁴³⁶ “Azarov on Ukraine's foreign policy”, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 43 (24 October 2010), p. 15.

⁴³⁷ Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, Speech at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs; as quoted in Sabine Fischer, “The European Union and the Insiders/Outsiders of Europe: Russia and the Post-Soviet Space”, *Review of European Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (July 2012), p. 7.

position could enable Ukraine to establish “a bridge between East and West, [and be] an integral part of Europe and the former Soviet Union at the same time.”⁴³⁸

The new framework of Ukrainian-NATO relations in the post-2010 period was drawn with the Presidential decree issued on 18 November 2010. Announcing that the relations with NATO would be based on a “constructive partnership”, the decree envisaged establishment of a system of five national coordinators, each of which would be responsible for political and economic, defence and military, financial, security and legal issues.⁴³⁹ This framework was supplemented with the establishment of a Commission under the Presidential administration. Headed by the Ukrainian foreign minister, the Commission was entitled to coordinate the activities and works of the national coordinators. It was also empowered to monitor, analyse and evaluate the state of Ukraine’s partnership with NATO in the framework of Annual National Programmes (ANPs), Individual Partnership Programs, sectorial action plans and action plans on ANPs’ implementation.⁴⁴⁰ This system was in fact a replication of the system of coordination established by Yushchenko. The most notable difference between two systems was their ultimate objectives. Whilst the system aimed at full integration into NATO under the Presidency of Yushchenko, it was concerned with conducting “constructive partnership” with NATO during that of Yanukovich.

In this period, cooperation with NATO was sustained within the existing bilateral institutional framework. As such, the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership continued to constitute the legal basis of NATO-Ukraine relations, and the mechanisms, such as ANP and PARP, were preserved. Despite the problems in

⁴³⁸ “President Viktor Yanukovich’s Inaugural address to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine”, 25 February 2010, Official Website of the President of Ukraine, available at: <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/16600.html> (accessed on 1 August 2012).

⁴³⁹ “Developing constructive partnership between Ukraine and NATO”, Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, available at: <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/euroatlantic-cooperation/ukraine-nato> (accessed on 27 February 2013); Decree by the President of Ukraine, No: 1039/2010, 18 November 2010, available at: <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/act/open/id/1997> (accessed 27 February 2013).

⁴⁴⁰ Decree by the President of Ukraine, No: 1039/2010, Ibid.

the political aspects of cooperation, military cooperation continued at the same pace with the previous era.⁴⁴¹

6.4 Internal and External Dynamics behind Ukrainian-NATO Relations

It has been shown so far that Ukraine's military cooperation with NATO continued without any intervals since the seizure of independence. Even if the objective of full NATO membership was declared at different times, this either remained a discursive act or could not be realized. In this section, the reasons for Ukraine's limited integration into NATO without a continuous vision of membership are elaborated. The section analyses this issue by taking into account the domestic political peculiarities given in the first section.

6.4.1. The Russian Factor

It was visible since the early 1991, during which disintegration tendencies in the Soviet Union became apparent, that the most challenging issue for the would-be independent republics would be to manage their relations with Russia. The Ukrainian case was undoubtedly the most intriguing one in this regard due to the country's closeness, long-historical interaction and interdependence with Russia. In this context, how the Russian leaders would take Ukraine's secession from the Soviet Union and emergence as a sovereign and independent country had been a matter of anxiety in Ukraine at the time of its independence.⁴⁴²

In the immediate afterwards of independence, these anxieties seemed to be proven with the emergence of a series of bilateral problems with Russia and the expression of unwillingness by some Russian politicians and military leaders to recognize not only Ukraine as an independent state but also Ukrainians as a

⁴⁴¹ According to some commentators, the Yanukovich Presidency has had an enabling influence on NATO-Ukrainian relations. Oleh Aleksandrov explains this so that the "non-bloc policy" enabled the adoption of controversial laws, such as the one allowing participation of foreign troops in exercises on Ukrainian territory. Oleh Aleksandrov, "Realities and Prospects of Ukraine's Cooperation with NATO in Conditions of a Non-Bloc Policy", *National Security and Defence Journal*, No. 2-3 (2012), p. 35. This was also expressed by one of the Ukrainian officials I interviewed in NATO HQs so that the Yanukovich Presidency had a facilitating impact on Ukrainian-NATO relations by removing the controversial issues from the agenda and thus curbing the public reaction to NATO-related issues.

⁴⁴² William C. Bodie describes the Ukrainian independence as an "anxious birth" in: "Strategy and Successor States: Report From Kiev", *World Affairs*, Vol. 154, No. 3 (Winter 1992), p. 107.

distinct nation different from Russians. Since the seizure of independence by Ukraine, Ukrainian-Russian relations were embroiled with a set of issues, including the status of Crimea, disagreements over the Black Sea Fleet and border problems. Though periodical improvements could be achieved from time to time, this remained short-lived and could not be sustained.

Considering the problematic nature of relations with Russia and the continuity in Ukraine's cooperation with NATO, one may assume from the perspective of "balance of threat" theory that Ukrainian presidents acted with the motivation of balancing against the perceived threat from Russia. It is partly true that the perceived sense of insecurity against Russia contributed to Ukraine's cooperation with NATO. However, this was not an act of balancing in accordance with Walt's theory. After all, having been an active participant in all NATO activities, Ukrainian leaders did not draw the vision of full NATO membership in most of the period from 1991 to 2014, excluding the Yushchenko Presidency. In general, though it was officially stated that Ukraine's strategic objective in its relations with NATO was "integration into European and Euro-Atlantic political, economic and security structures,"⁴⁴³ Ukrainian authorities used the word "integration" to denote a form of relationship that went beyond the ordinary partnership and fell short of full membership.

This attitude stemmed from the intention of the Ukrainian authorities to refrain from taking any moves that could provoke Russia and aggravate Ukraine's external security conditions in the absence of credible security assurances. This can clearly be seen from Ukraine's attitude to the issue of enlargement. Though Ukraine supported NATO's post-Cold War evolution since the beginning and viewed NATO's eastern enlargement as one of the most significant aspects of this process, it approached this issue with reservations and defended that NATO should enlarge by normalizing its relations with Russia and taking Russian sensitivities into consideration. As NATO drew the vision of enlargement, Ukrainian authorities argued that enlargement should be a slow and evolutionary process which should be treated carefully in order not to recreate dividing lines

⁴⁴³ Statement by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko at the Meeting of Ukraine-NATO Commission in Ministerial Session, 16 December 1997, USIS Washington File, available at: http://www.fas.org/man/nato/national/97121605_wpo.html (accessed on 10 April 2011).

across Europe and not to lead to insiders and outsiders across the continent. President Kuchma had expressed this position by arguing that “Ukraine does not have any objections to NATO’s eastward expansion”, but “it is necessary to respect Russia’s interests at the same time. If we do not want Europe to be split into opposing camps again we should not forget about Russia’s interests.”⁴⁴⁴

Thus, when supporting NATO’s post-Cold War transformation and eastern enlargement, Ukrainian authorities also uttered that NATO should address the geopolitical sensitivities and security needs of the states lying between Russia and the enlarging NATO. From the Ukrainian perspective, the basic discussion regarding NATO’s eastern enlargement was not “who should join?”, “when” and “in what sequence”, but rather “how can an efficient instrument guaranteeing the security of nations that remain outside NATO be created.”⁴⁴⁵ Minister of Foreign Affairs Hennadiy Udoenko expressed the Ukrainian sensitivities as follows:

NATO is approaching Ukraine’s borders. On the other, we have [former Soviet republics] which have signed an agreement on collective security. This could hardly be satisfactory for a young state. Its position on this issue should be carefully considered.⁴⁴⁶

Considering such sensitivities, it is seen that the Russian factor was the basic external dynamic that shaped Ukraine’s security policies and cooperation with NATO. However, the influence of the Russian factor on Ukrainian foreign and security policies was not direct and uni-dimensional. Rather, it influenced Ukraine depending on how Ukrainian presidents chose to deal with it. When dealing with the Russian factor, Ukrainian presidents were concerned with not only promoting the external security of the Ukrainian state, but also maintaining and strengthening their domestic power. In this respect, the outcome of the influence of the Russian factor changed across different presidencies depending on the political agenda and considerations of the Ukrainian president in power.

⁴⁴⁴ Quoted from Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine and NATO: The Evolving Strategic Partnership”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1998), p. 14.

⁴⁴⁵ Anatoliiy M. Zlenko, “Foreign Policy Interests of Ukraine and Problems of European Security”, *Fordham International Law Journal*, Vol. 21, Issue 1 (1997), p. 56

⁴⁴⁶ Quoted from Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine and NATO: The Evolving Strategic Partnership”, p. 14.

6.4.2. Domestic Political Considerations of Ukrainian Presidents in a Fragmented Political and Societal Context

Since independence, foreign and security policies have been a matter of political discussion and polarization in Ukraine. The dilemma of integration into the East or the West as well as participation in regional security formations, either NATO or those in the former Soviet space, have been the most enduring controversies in this regard. As noted before, Ukraine's leading political parties have held radically different positions on these issues. By taking the risk of oversimplification with analytical reasons, the fragmentations can be summarized as follows: the left-wing political parties of Ukraine have supported closer relations with Russia and integration into the CIS; the centre-right parties have shown interest in furthering relations with all European institutions, including NATO; and centrist parties and social democrats took a more ambiguous stance and supported Ukraine to stand of equal distance to the West and Russia with the purpose of preventing aggravation of external security conditions and getting benefits from both sides.⁴⁴⁷

The regional dispersion in the voting behaviour of Ukrainian electorates also reflected the public polarization in foreign and security policy issues. As such, whilst the western and central oblasts displayed explicit support for Ukraine's NATO membership, the eastern and southern ones were either suspicious or hostile towards NATO. This dispersion showed that external developments have been interpreted differently by Ukrainian public living in different regions.⁴⁴⁸

In fact, the influence of public opinion on Ukraine's foreign and security policies has been a matter of discussion to date.⁴⁴⁹ It can be argued that the

⁴⁴⁷ Taras Kuzio identifies two foreign policy orientation camps – “Westernizers” and “Slavophiles”- and sub-divides these camps into “romantics” and “pragmatists”. Taras Kuzio, “Slavophiles versus Westernizers: Foreign Policy Orientations in Ukraine,” in *Between Russia and the West: foreign and security policy of independent Ukraine*, eds. by Kurt R. Spillman, Andreas Wenger and Derek Müller (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 53-74.

⁴⁴⁸ Anna Makhorkina, “Ukrainian political parties and foreign policy in election campaigns: Parliamentary elections of 1998 and 2002”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 38 (2005), p. 256.

⁴⁴⁹ Paul Kubicek, “Delegative Democracy in Russia and Ukraine”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1994); Paul Kubicek, “Regional Polarization in Ukraine: Public Opinion, Voting and Legislative Behaviour”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2000);

Ukrainian public has influenced Ukraine's foreign and security policies in two distinct ways. During election times, the public determined the parliamentary convocations, which in turn influenced the policy making processes. In other times, the public could influence the developments in these spheres in several indirect ways, such as holding mass demonstrations. Demonstrations had different influences depending on which oblasts they were held in. When Ukraine intensified its relations with NATO, anti-NATO demonstrations were frequently held in southern oblasts. This was a quite common case in the post-Orange period. When Ukrainian leaders took external and internal decisions perceived as pro-Russian, demonstrations were frequent in western oblasts. This occurrence was quite common during Yanukovich Presidency.

This fragmented socio-political landscape had enormous influence on Ukraine's foreign and security policies and attitude towards NATO. To begin with, as stated before, neoclassical realism assumes that, when making alliance decisions, leaders aim not only to promote their states' external interests, as defined by them, but also to strengthen their domestic power. As such, these fragmentations influenced the assessment of the Russian factor and attitude to NATO by affecting the domestic political considerations of Ukrainian presidents.

In the 1990s, the conduct of cooperation with NATO in a way falling short of full membership was based on not only the consideration to allay the Russian reactions but also the centrist credentials of President Kuchma. For a centrist leader like him, the political and social fragmentations meant a major electoral risk since they could easily alienate some parts of the public in case specific alliance decisions were made. As such, in order to prevent public resentment to his rule and to enlarge his electoral base, President Kuchma refrained from making any specific alliance decision and sustained cooperation with NATO in a way falling short of full membership as a part of his multi-vector foreign and security policies. Even when he articulated the objective of NATO membership in 2002, he balanced this move with a milder attitude to the CIS integration in order not to alienate his supporters from eastern and southern Ukraine.

Victor Chudowsky and Taras Kuzio, "Does public opinion matter in Ukraine? The case of foreign policy", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (September 2003).

Different from Kuchma, Yushchenko defined NATO membership as the most feasible way to provide Ukraine's external security. This option was also beneficial for the maintenance of his domestic power since his electorate was composed of western and central Ukrainians who praised pro-Western policies. However, he could not mobilize the whole society for NATO membership since Ukrainians from different oblasts viewed Russia and NATO in different terms. In the end, the rise of discontents in eastern and southern Ukraine added to the failure to be offered a MAP at both Riga and Bucharest Summits. The failure to receive MAP also alienated the electorate in western and southern Ukraine, ultimately leading to the fall of Yushchenko's popularity in the post-2008 period.

In the post-2010 period, President Yanukovich assessed the external context in accordance with his political agenda and domestic interests. Since he defined external interests of the Ukrainian state with reference to his objective of improving Ukraine's economic conditions, he sought to increase the financial support received from Russia by abandoning the vision of full membership in NATO. This option was also a way of securing the support of the electorates in eastern and southern Ukraine, from which the support of his party comes from.

All in all, the internal polarizations over the issue of "whom to ally with" not only influenced leaders' assessments of the Russian factor and the attitude to NATO by affecting their domestic political considerations, but also restrained their ability to consistently pursue and implement pro-integrationist decisions by depriving them of any society-wide mobilization opportunity.

6.4.3. Compliance with Political, Military and Economic Conditions

After having restored its international presence by establishing diplomatic relations with other countries and signing the Friendship Treaty with Russia, the primary consideration of Ukrainian authorities slid from the preservation of sovereignty and independence to completing the transition process in the late 1990s. This had been expressed by Kuchma in the opening session of the Parliament on 12 May 1998 so that:

The fact that Ukraine does exist and that it will remain a sovereign and independent state is not subject to any debate. The question is to what extent it will be a democratic, socially-oriented and law-governed state and to what

extent the integrity of the fundamental constitutional formula will be ensured.⁴⁵⁰

This political vision was in concurrence with NATO's political and economic standards, expressed in AP documents at that time and conditioned the development of NATO-Ukraine relations to a set of principles and unproblematic relations with neighbours. However, until 2004, though President Kuchma actively supported the transformation of Ukraine's political system in accordance with liberal democratic principles and committed to undertake economic reforms, the discursive practices were not matched by the policies on ground. This was due to the fact that Kuchma had broadened his political support with a system of rent-seeking and the principles enshrined in NATO documents posed a threat to this system, and hence, Kuchma's domestic interests.⁴⁵¹ In the end, his term in office led to increased corruption, patrimonialism, over-centralization, media restrictions and consolidation of presidential powers in a way diminishing the influence of the Parliament and subordinating the Cabinet.⁴⁵²

In the period following the Orange Revolution, political instability and crisis remained a constant. Though President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Tymoshenko could cooperate from time to time with the vision of seizing a MAP, they could not overcome their personal competition at other times. Under these conditions, it became impossible to conduct ordinary legislative and executive activities and Ukrainian political system entered in a deadlock despite the pro-reform discourse of two Orange Coalitions. Though this political inertia could be overcome in the post-2010 period by increasing the competences of President, this was accompanied with deterioration in democratic conditions and Ukraine's relations with the Western countries and institutions, including NATO.

⁴⁵⁰ Quoted from James Sherr, "Ukraine's New Time of Troubles", 1998, available at: http://www.ifspublications.com/pdf_downloads/INF0698_download.pdf (accessed on 20 June 2011), p. 5.

⁴⁵¹ Serhiy Kudelia, "The Sources of Continuity and Change of Ukraine's Incomplete State".

⁴⁵² Hans van Zon, "Political Culture and Patrimonialism Under Leonid Kuchma", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (September/October 2005), p. 13. For more about the gap between discursive and practical realms, see. Karatryna Wolczuk, "Adjectival Europeanization? The Impact of the European Neighbourhood Policy on Ukraine", European Research Institute, European Research Working Paper Series, Number 18, available at: <http://www.download.bham.ac.uk/govsoc/eri/working-papers/wp18-wolczuk.pdf> (accessed on 1 November 2013).

In contrast to political and economic issues, Ukraine's military cooperation with NATO recorded a remarkable progress and gradually intensified in the post-independence period. Above all, this was due to the sensitivities stemming from Ukraine's sensitive geopolitical conditions. In this respect, Ukrainian authorities had given primary importance to establish a national army and to restructure the military assets inherited from the Soviet era. Though Ukraine had inherited one of the largest military arsenals in the European and post-Soviet landscape, what it inherited was in no sense a real national army. It was outdated and insufficient in terms of both equipment and personnel issues.

In this context, military cooperation with NATO was seen by the Ukrainian authorities as an invaluable source of expertise and guidance in the process of establishment and modernization of the Ukrainian army. This had been highlighted in the State Programme, which stated that "cooperation with NATO is a *Military Policy* priority."⁴⁵³ This Programme, counted the basic objectives of Ukraine's military cooperation with NATO as strengthening of trust and mutual understanding with NATO, its members and partners, development of a modern defence system, facilitating effective defence cooperation with neighbouring states, reforming Armed Forces, and ensuring the participation of Ukraine in international peace, security and stability support efforts in Europe, including the prevention of military conflicts and crisis management.⁴⁵⁴

This framework shows that, even though Ukrainian leaders expressed their commitment to the objectives listed in different cooperation documents with NATO, which were shown as preconditions of being offered a MAP, they supported these objectives insofar as they did not contradict with their domestic political interests. In the end, while military cooperation progressed during all presidencies, political and economic issues of cooperation, which directly influenced their domestic power, lagged behind their commitments and continued to remain as controversial issues on NATO-Ukraine relations.

⁴⁵³ "The State Programme for Co-operation between Ukraine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 2001-2004," in *The Security Sector Legislation of Ukraine*, p. 112.

⁴⁵⁴ "The State Programme for Co-operation between Ukraine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 2001-2004", p. 114.

6.5. Conclusion

The abovegoing framework shows that Ukraine sustained its cooperation with NATO since 1992 in a way falling short of full membership. Even though the objective of NATO membership was declared from time to time, this either remained a discursive act, as happened in the later period of Kuchma Presidency, or could not be realized, as took place during Yushchenko Presidency.

In order to fully account for the reasons for Ukraine's not having formed alliance with NATO in the post-Cold War period, it is necessary to address the external and internal dynamics in tandem and to scrutinize the interaction between them, as envisioned by neoclassical realism. This can be done by elaborating how the Ukrainian authorities, who have the decision-making power in foreign and security policies, assessed the external context in accordance with their political agenda and domestic political interests.

The Russian factor has been the most significant external dynamic which influenced security considerations of the Ukrainian authorities in the post-Soviet period. This was based on the rejections of some Russian politicians to treat the Ukrainian independence as a temporary phenomenon, the enduring problems in bilateral relations as well as the continuing dependence on Russia in economic and energy issues. In this framework, it set a challenge for the Ukrainian leaders how to reconcile the need to develop relations with Russia, because of the condition of economic and energy dependence, with the need to protect the Ukrainian independence and sovereignty against the Russian pressures.

President Kuchma addressed this challenge by adopting a multi-vector foreign policy, which aims to develop equally close relations with the West and Russia. At the same time, he declared that Ukraine would not form alliances and kept cooperation with NATO at a level falling short of full membership in order to prevent aggravation of the external context because of the Russian reactions to NATO enlargement. This policy was also seen as a way of standing against the Russian pressures on Ukraine to closely integrate into the CIS and join the CST.

In consistent with neoclassical realism, which assumes that leaders are also concerned with their personal political interests, the cooperation with NATO at a level falling short of full membership was also consistent with President Kuchma's domestic interests. As given in this chapter, foreign and security

policies, especially the issues of relations with NATO and Russia, were highly politicized and subject of political divisions at elite and societal levels in Ukraine. In this fragmented political and social context, President Kuchma, a centrist who aimed at extending his electoral base as wide as possible, viewed the multi-vector foreign policy and limited integration into NATO as a way of not alienating any political and social group and, hence, maintaining his domestic power. President Kuchma's concerns over his domestic political interests was also influential in the fact that military cooperation between Ukraine and NATO recorded rapid progress while the political and economic cooperation lagged behind the declared commitments by Ukraine. This was due to the fact that, different from military cooperation issues, political and economic issues had direct influence on the governmental practices in Ukraine which contradicted with democratic principles but promoted the Kuchma's hold in power.

Similar to the Kuchma era, the attitude towards NATO was shaped in the post-2010 period by how the external context was assessed by President Yanukovich in accordance with his political agenda and domestic interests. Due to the constraints generated by the global financial crisis as well as the economic stalemate caused by the 2009 gas deal with Russia, the political agenda of President Yanukovich had focused on economic issues and the objective of ameliorating the economic conditions in Ukraine. According to Yanukovich, this could be achieved if only Ukraine had had full access to European markets and bought Russian gas at a lower price. In order to achieve these, Yanukovich adopted a multi-vector foreign policy and aimed to promote equally close relations with Russia and the EU. As a part of this policy, he declared that Ukraine would be military "non-aligned". Accordingly, he abandoned the objective of NATO membership, defended by his predecessor President Yushchenko, and preferred to sustain cooperation with NATO at a level falling short of full membership. This was seen not only as a way of getting economic rewards from Russia, which has been reacting to NATO enlargement, but also a way of standing against Russian pressures for Ukraine's closer integration into the former Soviet space.

The cooperation with NATO at a level falling short of full membership was also consistent with domestic political interests of President Yanukovich.

During his reign, the influence of business people from Donetsk who needed both access to European markets and cheap energy resources for their industrial interests had increased. Accordingly, the support of these people to Yanukovich's rule had influenced the political agenda of the President. Furthermore, the electoral base of Yanukovich was based on eastern and southern oblasts of Ukraine, the inhabitants of which rejected the NATO membership and favoured closer relations with Russia. As such, in the adoption of the multi-vector foreign policy as well as a non-aligned status was influential the consideration of President Yanukovich to maintain his domestic power by acting in accordance with the expectations of his electorate.

Different from Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, Yushchenko supported the vision of NATO membership. He had come to power following the Orange revolution with the promise of integrating Ukraine into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. Since his domestic power rested mainly in western Ukraine, the inhabitants of which have been strong supporters of NATO membership, his political fortunes were dependent on the realization of his promises. As such, he instrumentalized bilateral problems with Russia as well as several regional and international issues, such as the August War in Georgia, to legitimize his pro-NATO position and agenda.

The Ukrainian case proves the neoclassical realist assumption that leaders are constrained by both external and internal dynamics in implementing their policies. This was the case during the Yushchenko Presidency. Externally, the intra-NATO divisions regarding the prospect of incorporating Ukraine into the MAP framework as well as the Russian reactions to this prospect were the most influential external constraint in that period. The elite and societal reactions to the objective of NATO membership were the internal constraints Yushchenko faced. The continuity of these constraints during his reign restrained the ability of Yushchenko to turn his pro-NATO alliance trajectory into Ukraine's full membership in NATO and caused Ukraine not to form alliance despite the objectives set by the President.

All in all, the aforementioned framework shows that Ukraine's attitude to alliances as well as the reasons for it not having formed alliances from 1991 to 2014 cannot be fully comprehended if one focuses on merely external dynamics

since their influence on Ukrainian foreign and security policies changed depending on the political agenda and domestic interests of Ukrainian leaders. In this period, when assessing the external context and making their alliance decisions, Ukrainian leaders were guided by twin objectives of promoting external interests of the Ukrainian State, as defined by them, and strengthening their domestic political power. When deciding whether to form or not to form alliances, all presidents were guided by these objectives, which showed variations depending on their political agenda. At the same time, even if they made specific alliance decisions, they were restrained by external and internal dynamics noted in this chapter. In the end, Ukraine did not form alliances either out of presidents' deliberate choices, as witnessed during Kravchuk, Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, or against their will, as happened during the Yushchenko Presidency, because of the external and internal constraints.

CHAPTER 7

BELARUS' MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH RUSSIA

7.1. Introduction

Belarus is known as the most pro-Russian former Soviet republic in Eastern Europe, supporting closer integration with Russia in both bilateral and multilateral forms. At the same time, it has been vocally the most anti-NATO and Western-sceptic one, whose relations with the Western countries and institutions have displayed a problematic track marked by several intervals and crisis. Accordingly, Belarus' post-Soviet alliance trajectory was based on re-alignment with Russia and, despite the limited involvement in NATO activities and cooperation, the issue of seizing NATO membership was never endorsed in Belarus. This trajectory displayed a stark difference from other former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe, all of which were located under the same external context and faced similar constraints derived from the Russian factor, and set a challenge to the traditional realist approach which assumes that external dynamics have unidimensional and direct effects on states' alliance choices.

This chapter examines the alliance behaviour of the post-Soviet Belarus in detail. As such, it questions why Belarus chose to ally with Russia and adopted an anti-NATO attitude. The chapter begins by examining the post-Soviet political developments in Belarus and identifying the domestic political peculiarities which influenced Belarusian foreign and security policies, and continues by exploring the pro-Russian strategic orientation of Belarus in the post-Soviet era. In the last section of the chapter, the internal-external nexus behind the pro-Russian alliance trajectory of Belarus is elaborated.

Similar to other country-focused chapters in this dissertation, this chapter argues that Belarus' post-Soviet alliance trajectory cannot be fully comprehended if one focuses on merely external dynamics. Instead, the re-alignment with Russia can best be explained by taking into consideration the interaction of external dynamics with Belarus' domestic political peculiarities. The chapter identifies the

Lukashenko factor as the most significant peculiarity which signified NATO enlargement as a threat to Belarus and, accordingly, influenced alliance-formation with Russia. The chapter explains Belarus' pro-Russian alliance trajectory and NATO-scepticism with reference to President Lukashenko's consideration to maintain his political survival.

7.2. Domestic Background of Belarusian Foreign and Security Policies

Departing from the neoclassical realist assumption that states' domestic political peculiarities shape how external dynamics influence their alliance decisions, this chapter identifies the peculiarities that characterized the post-Soviet politics in Belarus. The chapter identifies the strong presidency with authoritarian tendencies as well as the low-level ethnic national consciousness and the absence of an effective opposition movement as the main characteristics of Belarus' post-Soviet socio-political scene, which will be shown in the latter sections as the basic internal dynamics that influenced Belarus' strategic orientation towards Russia.

7.2.1. Internal Political Developments in Post-Soviet Belarus

Belarusian SSR declared its sovereignty on 27 July 1990 and independence on 25 August 1991. After declaring its independence, Belarus inherited the Supreme Soviet, the deputies of which were elected on 4 March 1990. As only 10 per cent of its deputies were members of the liberal-minded Belarusian Popular Front (BPF), the Belarusian Parliament had been dominated by communists with an orthodox approach to political and economic issues. Nevertheless, despite their low numbers in the Parliament, BPF could exercise notable influence thanks to the fact that the Parliamentary Chairman, who had equal decision-making authority to Prime Minister at that time, came from its ranks. In this framework, in the early 1990s, Belarusian politics was defined by the competition between two groups - national democrats, led by the Parliamentary Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich, and communists, represented by Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich.

In this period, Parliamentary Chairman Shushkevich was the figurehead of pro-reform political movement. Taking advantage of the political turmoil and uncertainty of this period, consequent to the August coup in Moscow and the

declaration of independence in Belarus, he could achieve several reforms, such as the introduction of Belarusian as the official state language, abandonment of the Soviet symbols in favour of a new flag and adoption of a law which stipulated that the Belarusian State would respect all cultures but the priority would be given to the Belarusian one. Nevertheless, his reform efforts were countered by the communist majority which had an orthodox approach in political, economic and cultural issues and, because of this duality, Belarus displayed an ambiguous post-Soviet transition characterized by conflicting moves from both sides.

The competition between two groups reached to a zenith when communists tried to remove Shushkevich with a confidence vote in the summer of 1993 when he insisted on not signing the Collective Security Treaty, which Russia showed as a precondition for Russian-Belarusian economic integration.⁴⁵⁵ The competition intensified in the following time and Shushkevich was ousted by the communist deputies, with corruption allegations, in January 1994.

The turning point for Belarus' post-independence politics came when the institution of Presidency was introduced with the Constitution of 1994 and Aleksandr Lukashenko was elected as the first President of Belarus. Though the Constitution introduced an institutional structure in which President would be counterbalanced by the Parliament, Lukashenko took several measures which enabled him to increase his powers at the expense of other institutions. He "had gained control over 'power agencies' such as the KGB and Ministry of the Interior by appointing loyal people"⁴⁵⁶ and took control of the media.

Lukashenko's rising status brought him in conflict with the Parliament and the Constitutional Court, which were questioning many Presidential decrees and supporting the removal of Lukashenko because of his rising authoritarianism. In order to avert pressures from the Parliament and Constitutional Court, Lukashenko made use of referendums that enabled him to acquire dominant position in all spheres of political life in Belarus.

⁴⁵⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski and Paige Bryan Sullivan, "Russia/Belarus Axis," in *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, p. 294.

⁴⁵⁶ Alexander Danilovich, "Understanding Politics in Belarus", DEMSTAR - Democracy, the State, and Administrative Reforms, 'Understanding Politics' Series, June 2001, available at: www.demstar.dk/papers/Belarus.pdf (accessed on 27 July 2012), p. 13.

The referenda launched by President Lukashenko respectively in 1995 and 1996 had a decisive impact on the political course of the post-Soviet Belarus. After the referendum of 1995, Lukashenko acquired the right to dissolve the Parliament, which gave him a strong institutional leverage against his opponents. The referendum also led to the rise of Russian to the equal status with Belarusian as the second official language and the replacement of the post-independence national symbols with the Soviet ones.⁴⁵⁷ As such, a similar version of the former Soviet flag was restored and the touchstone of the history of Belarus was changed from the declaration of sovereignty in July 1990 to the “liberation” of Minsk by the Soviet forces in 1944.⁴⁵⁸

The referendum of 1996 changed the constitutional framework of the Belarusian politics immensely. The new constitutional prerogatives placed the President at the top of all other branches of power and gave him extensive decision-making rights. President Lukashenko seized most of the parliamentary functions, such as the appointment of the members of Constitutional Court and Central Election Committee. In addition, the Belarusian Parliament was divided into two sections as the House of Representatives and the Senate, one third of which would be appointed directly by the President.

In the following period, Lukashenko encroached further on the legislative agenda by issuing a decree on the proceedings of the legislative activities. According to the decree, any draft law had to be approved by the National Legislative Centre, a legal office under the Presidential Administration, before being discussed in the Parliament. Lukashenko supplemented his institutional and political gains by launching another referendum in October 2004, which lifted the constitutional limits on the number of terms a president might serve. Once the

⁴⁵⁷ In the referendum, 83 per cent voted to recognize Russian as the second state language; 82 per cent advocated the idea of economic integration with Russia; nearly 75 per cent voted for rejecting the newly accepted national symbols; and 78 per cent voted for a strong presidency. Ronald J. Hill, “Post-Soviet Belarus: In Search of Direction,” in *Postcommunist Belarus*, eds. Stephen White, Elena A. Korosteleva and John Löwenhardt (Oxford: Rowman&Littlefield, 2005), p. 7.

⁴⁵⁸ Thomas Ambrosio, “The Political Success of Russia-Belarus Relations: Insulating Minsk from a ‘Color’ Revolution”, University of Miami, available at: https://umshare.miami.edu/web/wda/maia/ISAS05/papers/Russia-Belarus_Thomas_Ambrosio.pdf (accessed on 10 March 2015), p. 17.

referendum was approved by 88 per cent of the voters, Lukashenko seized the right to stand for further terms.⁴⁵⁹

As it can be seen from this framework, having been elected as the President in 1994, Lukashenka raised his powers extensively in the following period and emerged as the most powerful political figure in post-Soviet Belarus thanks to his ability to shape the institutional structure in accordance with his domestic political interests and at the expense of other power agencies. In the process of extending his powers, he made use of several referendums, which not only served the re-shaping of the institutional structure of the state, but also reflected the public support to his rule.

7.2.2. Public Roots of Lukashenko Regime

One of the candidates of the presidential elections of 1994, Alexander Lukashenka, the then Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee fighting corruption, had conducted an election campaign based on the promise of recovering economy. Thanks to the appeal of his promises for the Belarusian public, going through the economic traumas of the transition process, Lukashenka was elected as the first President of Belarus by seizing 80,1 per cent of the votes at the second round.⁴⁶⁰ Lukashenka repeated his electoral success in the following time and was re-elected with landslide victories at each presidential election, respectively held in 2001, 2006 and 2010.⁴⁶¹ Setting aside the controversies over the conformity of referenda and election results to the democratic standards, the continuity of the Lukashenko regime as well as the referenda results showed that Lukashenko enjoyed the support of the majority of the Belarusian public.

Elaborating the reasons for the large-scale public support to his rule, one can first refer to the long historical interaction between Belarus and Russia and the inheritance of the Soviet past on contemporary Belarus. During the Soviet era,

⁴⁵⁹ Stephen White and Elena Korosteleva-Polglase, "The Parliamentary election and referendum in Belarus", *Electoral Studies*, October 2004, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2006), p. 5.

⁴⁶⁰ Ronald J. Hill, "Post-Soviet Belarus: In Search of Direction", pp. 6-7.

⁴⁶¹ In 2001, Lukashenka was re-elected as the President by winning 75.65 per cent of the votes. In 2006, he received 83 per cent and, in 2010, he seized 79,65 per cent of the votes. Election Guide: Democracy Assistance and Election News, available at: <http://www.electionguide.org/elections/?inst=Head+of+State&cont=Belarus&yr=> (accessed on 20 February 2015).

Russian language and culture had intruded into all aspects of social life in Belarus. In that period, Minsk had been inhabited by not only Russian migrants but also by a large number of Belarusians voluntarily moved from the rural areas with economic reasons. The increases in the populace of Minsk had raised the number of Belarusians having been rebranded with the Soviet mentality. Most importantly, the economic prosperity in Minsk, which was then known as the “assembly workshop” of the Union thanks to its huge industrial capacity and specialization in the final rounds of production⁴⁶², had influenced the Belarusians to equate the Soviet era with wealth and prosperity.⁴⁶³ As a result, having enjoyed a prosperous life under the Soviet rule, Belarusians began to look to the Soviet past with a great nostalgia in the post-independence period. As a reflection of this proclivity, 83 per cent of the population backed a revived union in the March 1991 referendum, which was the highest figure recorded in Eastern Europe and revealed that Belarusian SSR the least enthusiastic Soviet Republic for the break-up of the Soviet Union.⁴⁶⁴

The fact that the electorates of the 1990s were composed of elderly people who viewed the Soviet era with nostalgia was one of the reasons for the landslide victories won by Lukashenko, who was frequently expressing his proud to be a pro-Russian politician. As put by Vitali Silitski, in addition to his oratorical skills, ability to manipulate public opinion through mass media and relative economic prosperity provided by the subsidies and financial aids secured from Russia in return for pro-Russian policies, Lukashenko’s pro-Russian discourse was also a factor that contributed to his popularity in the eyes of the Belarusian electorate mostly composed of rural and elderly people nostalgic about the Soviet era.⁴⁶⁵

Drawing on the long historical interaction between Belarus and Russia and arguing that the Belarusian identity was subsumed by that of Russians/Soviet in this process, many other scholars argue that national consciousness has remained

⁴⁶² Kirill Koktysh, “The Belarusian Policy of Russia: the Era of Pragmatism”, *International Issues and Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (2006), p. 22.

⁴⁶³ Ronald J. Hill, “Post-Soviet Belarus: In Search of Direction,” p. 2.

⁴⁶⁴ John S. Dryzek and Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communist Democratization: Political Discourses across Thirteen Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 80.

⁴⁶⁵ Vitali Silitski, “Preempting Democracy: the Case of Belarus”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (October 2005), p. 85.

relatively low in Belarus compared to other former Soviet republics. George Sanford claims that post-independence meant in Belarus combining “weak or divided national consciousness with an insignificant experience of independent statehood.”⁴⁶⁶ Similarly, Grigory Ioffe argues that “Belarusian identity is janus-faced”⁴⁶⁷ and David R. Marples famously identifies Belarusians as a “denationalized nation”.⁴⁶⁸ From a similar perspective, Steven Eke and Taras Kuzio identifies two sources of contemporary Belarusian identity: first, Soviet Belarusian patriotism, which focus on the liberation of Minsk by the Soviet forces and the achievements in the afterwards, and second, and the discourse of the unity of the Slav people.⁴⁶⁹

Under these conditions, in which the majority of the public aspired for the Soviet era, one of the basic reasons for the endurance of Lukashenko Presidency was his remembrance of the past with frequent references to the Slavic unity and brotherhood with Russia. In this respect, a great part of his political strength, at least in the 1990s before a generational change occurred in the electorate, stemmed from his promise to give people what they lost in 1991.

However, the prevalence of nostalgia for Soviet past and pro-Russian attitude among the Belarusian public do not mean the absolute absence of nationalist tendencies in Belarus. In fact, the constitutive elements of the Belarusian nation remained as one of most persistent discussions between the ruling officials and their nationalist opponents, most notably the two wings of BPF⁴⁷⁰, in the post-Soviet era. Similarly, Elizaveta V. Zheganina argues that the

⁴⁶⁶ George Sanford, “Nation- State and Independence in Belarus”, *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1997), p. 227.

⁴⁶⁷ Grigory Ioffe, “Understanding Belarus: Belarusian Identity”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 8 (2003), p. 1263.

⁴⁶⁸ David R. Marples, *Belarus: A Denationalized Nation* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1999).

⁴⁶⁹ Steven M. Eke and Taras Kuzio, “Sultanism in Eastern Europe: The Socio-Political Roots of Authoritarian Populism in Belarus”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2000), p. 529.

⁴⁷⁰ The BPF was established as a social-political movement under the name “*Adradzhenne*” (Revival) in 1988. In 1993, it turned into an official political party. In 1999, it split into two factions, “Conservative-Christian Party of the Belarusian Popular Front” and “the Party of the Belarusian Popular Front”. For more about the BFP and its factions, See. David R. Marples and Uladzimir Padhol, “The Democratic Political Opposition,” in *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus* (eds.) Joerg Forbrig, David R. Marples and Pavol Demes (German Marshall Fund: Washington, 2006), pp. 47-49.

Belarusian historical memory seems more volatile than it first seems and there is an enduring contest between ruling officials and democratic opposition.⁴⁷¹ As explained by her, though nationalist opposition has waged a campaign by upholding Belarusian language, using historical symbols and creating a distinctively Belarusian version of history, “it is the official version of Belarusian identity that prevails in the republic.”⁴⁷² She attributes this to the lack of the experience of full sovereignty and persisting Soviet-style mentality, which make it hard for Belarusians to identify themselves with their ethnicity and prefer to be abide by Soviet-like rules imposed on them from above.

Besides the impact of the Soviet past, social benefits provided by the Lukashenko regime are another factor that influence the public attitude to the President. As such, as Andrei Tarnanski stated, thanks to the financial assistance provided by Russia, the level of unemployment remained low whereas that of human development was the highest in the former Soviet space, which increased the attractiveness of the Lukashenko regime for the electorate.⁴⁷³ These benefits were also means of seizing the support of the hesitant electorates.⁴⁷⁴ Distributing rewards to his followers, the President encouraged people to stay away from opposition politics and extended the level of social support to his rule.

Combined with the restrictions over opposition activities as well as the links between Presidency and state elites, which will be addressed in the following section, the widespread public support to his rule enabled President Lukashenko to maintain his Presidency since 1994.

⁴⁷¹ Elizaveta V. Zheganina, “Belarus: Factors Impeding Transition toward Democracy”, paper presented at the annual meeting of the MPSA Annual National Conference, Palmer House Hotel, Hilton, Chicago, IL, 3 April 2008, available at: http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p267407_index.html (accessed on 21 December 2014), p. 12.

⁴⁷² Elizaveta V. Zheganina, “Belarus: Factors Impeding Transition toward Democracy”, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁷³ Andrei Tarnanski, “The Peculiarities of Party Politics in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine: Institutionalization or Marginalization?,” in *Political Parties in Post-Soviet Space: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Baltics*, eds. Anatoly Kulik and Susana Pshizova (Westport: Praeger, 2005), p. 43.

⁴⁷⁴ Oleg Manaev, Natalie Manayeva and Dzmitry Yuran, “More State than Nation: Lukashenko’s Belarus”, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Fall/Winter 2011), pp. 97-98.

7.2.3. Domestic Political Peculiarities of Belarus

Considering the course of post-independence political developments, it can be said that post-independence domestic politics in Belarus was conducted in a narrow framework based on several parameters which remained almost unchanged since the mid-1990s. Firstly, the most notable peculiarity that characterized post-Soviet Belarus has been strong presidency, which showed authoritarian tendencies over time.⁴⁷⁵ Personified in Lukashenko, the post of presidency has been the centre of whole polity in which regime and state are merged⁴⁷⁶ and access to state resources is determined according to the loyalty to the President. In this system, all decisions carried the personal imprint of Lukashenko.

In the post-Soviet period, Belarus experienced three referenda (1995, 1996 and 2004), four presidential elections (1994, 2001, 2006 and 2010) and four parliamentary elections (1995, 2000, 2004 and 2008). These elections not only served to the enhancement of presidential powers, but also marginalization of other institutions and further weakening of the opposition.⁴⁷⁷ Therefore, Belarusian politics has also been characterized by the absence of a vibrant political debate and an effective opposition force. In fact, Belarusian politics was more vibrant in the pre-1996 period, during which there was a political competition between pro-reform minority and communist majority over the transition and reform process. However, after the rise of Lukashenko to power in 1994 and the extension of presidential powers with the public referenda, the political competition began to be conducted between President and his opponents.

⁴⁷⁵ Uladzimir Rouda, "Belarus: Transformation from Authoritarianism towards Sultanism", *Baltic Journal of Political Science*, No. 1 (December 2012); Steven M. Eke and Taras Kuzio, "Sultanism in Eastern Europe: The Socio-Political Roots of Authoritarian Populism in Belarus".

⁴⁷⁶ Peter Kim Laustsen, "Belarus – A Unique Case in the European Context?", *Baltic Defence Review*, No. 9, Vol.1 (2003), p. 73.

⁴⁷⁷ David R. Marples, "Outpost of tyranny? The failure of democratization in Belarus", *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (August 2009), p. 758.

In this framework, the main lines of cleavages occurred merely on presidential powers and power allocation between different state institutions.⁴⁷⁸

The control exercised by Lukashenko over Parliament turned political parties into marginal players of the political scene. Under the strict control of the regime, most of them established ties with the regime in order to survive. In the absence of constitutional guarantees for balance of power among different state institutions, most of them did not have any incentive for partisan debates and functioned merely as pro-regime forces.⁴⁷⁹

That said, it should also be indicated that this does not mean the total absence of opposition parties in Belarus. Of them, the left-oriented ones have mostly converged on economic as well as foreign and security policies of Lukashenko. What placed them in the “opposition” ranks was their rejection to the superior position of the President and support for the removal or decrease of presidential powers. As to the opposition parties with liberal and national democratic credentials, the most prominent of which has been the two wings of BPF, they promoted a more substantial opposition programme based on the post-Soviet transition on Western model and the revival of Belarusian nationalism.⁴⁸⁰ However, they could not attract mass support because of the low appeal of nationalist discourse among the majority of the Belarusian public.

All opposition parties failed to get a mass public support in elections and most of them could conduct only extra-parliamentary activity.⁴⁸¹ Elena A. Korosteleva explains this so that because of the inheritance of the Soviet era, Belarusian public has had more trust on president than political parties, which seemed to be proven by the fact that the election turnout of parliamentary

⁴⁷⁸ Elena A. Korostoleva, “Party system development in post-communist Belarus,” in *Contemporary Belarus: Between Democracy and Dictatorship*, (eds.) Elena A. Korostoleva, Colin W. Lawson and Rosalind J. Marsh (Routledge Curzon: London and New York, 2003), p. 73.

⁴⁷⁹ Elena A. Korostoleva, “Party system development in post-communist Belarus”, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁸⁰ For a detailed account of the opposition political parties, see. David R. Marples and Uladzimir Padhol, “The Democratic Political Opposition”, pp. 47-56.

⁴⁸¹ Taras Kuzio, “Radical Right Parties and Civic Groups in Belarus and the Ukraine,” in *The Revival of Right Wing Extremism in the Nineties*,(eds.) Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg (Frank Cass; Oxon, 1997), p. 205.

elections remained lower than that of presidential elections.⁴⁸² The fractioned and dispersed outlook of opposition parties as well as the difficulties they encountered in promoting their programmes because of the restrictions over them added to the public apathy.

Apart from the strong presidency and the lack of an effective opposition movement, the ambivalent nature of Belarusian national identity and the low profile of ethnic nationalism have been other domestic peculiarities that characterized post-Soviet Belarus. Because of the discussions on the meaning of Belarusian identity, it has been the state than the nation what united the people, and in a system in which the Belarusian State and the Lukashenko regime have been merged, President Lukashenko emerged as a "national unifier".⁴⁸³

In a political context in which all power agencies and opposition parties are marginalized and in a societal context in which the pro-President attitude of the public is sustained in several ways, Lukashenko emerged as the architect of not only domestic but also foreign and security policies. The continuity of the Presidency of Lukashenko, who explicitly displayed a pro-Russian stance and advocated the continuity of the Soviet-era economic model, caused Belarus to remain in the "pre-*Perestroika* era" with little restructuring in external and internal domains.⁴⁸⁴

7.3. Pro-Russian Strategic Orientation of Belarus

Of the former Soviet republics, Belarus has been the most pro-Russian state, supporting closer integration with Russia in both bilateral and multilateral terms. Though Belarus' pro-Russian strategic orientation started soon after having seized independence, this was given a new momentum with the election of Lukashenko in 1994 and the vision of Belarus' closer integration with Russia in political, economic and military realms became a constant topic on the foreign and security policy agenda in the post-1994 period.

⁴⁸² Elena A Korosteleva, "Party-system development in post-communist Belarus," p. 75.

⁴⁸³ Oleg Manaev, Natalie Manayeva and Dzmitry Yuran, "More State than Nation: Lukashenko's Belarus", p. 102.

⁴⁸⁴ Elena A. Korostoleva, "Party system development in post-communist Belarus," p. 68.

Drawing on these observations, this section will analyse the dynamics behind the pro-Russian strategic orientation of Belarus in the post-Cold War period. The section starts by elaborating the initial discussions on foreign and security policies in the early 1990s and continues by addressing the unification attempts with Russia in the post-1994 period. After highlighting the failure of unification initiatives in political and economic realms, the section will identify the military realm as the only area of success in Belarusian-Russian relations.

7.3.1. Initial Discussions on Foreign and Security Policies in the Early 1990s

After the signing of the Belavezha Accords on 8 December 1991, which led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it was a shared conviction among Belarusian political players that the newly independent Belarus needed to maintain its close relations with Russia because of its economic interdependence with the latter. However, the degree of closeness with Russia and how to reconcile this with the clause of neutrality, pledged in the Declaration of Sovereignty, was a matter of discussion among the leading political players in the early 1990s.⁴⁸⁵

The discussion over the status of neutrality and the degree of closeness with Russia embodied one of the main differences between two groups in the Belarusian Supreme Soviet which were in opposition to one another. Parliamentary Speaker Shushkevich, representing the position of the BPF deputies, was a strong supporter of neutrality, viewing it as a guarantee of the newly acquired Belarusian sovereignty and the basis of cordial relations to be developed with both Russia and the Western countries.⁴⁸⁶ In contrast, Prime Minister Kebich, who represented the communist deputies of the Supreme Soviet, advocated the abandonment of neutrality and establishment of closer integration with Russia with economic and historical reasons.

⁴⁸⁵ The clause of neutrality is still preserved in Article 18 of the Constitution of Belarus. The said article stipulates that: “[...] the Republic of Belarus pledges itself to make its territory a neutral, nuclear-free state.” “Constitution of the Republic of Belarus”, *Belarus Information Network*, available at: www.belarus.net/costitut/constitution_e.htm (accessed on 17 December 2014).

⁴⁸⁶ Zbigniew Brzezinski and Paige Bryan Sullivan, “Russia/Belarus Axis”, p. 294.

The issue of signing the CST was the clearest reflection of the polarization between these groups and embodied the most salient discussion at that period. Though having been one of the three initial signatories of Belavezha Accords, Belarus had not become one of the parties to the CST at the Tashkent Summit in 1992 since Shushkevich refused to sign the Treaty on the grounds that such an act would contradict with the neutrality clause in the Belarusian Constitution.⁴⁸⁷ Whilst this position was supported by the BPF, which viewed CST as a means of Russian encroachment to Belarusian sovereignty and independence, it was strongly criticized by Prime Minister Kebich and his communist supporters. For communist deputies, Belarus could sign the CST with certain reservations: that Belarusian citizens would undertake military service in Belarus and Belarusian territory would not be used against the third parties.⁴⁸⁸ In order to by-pass Shushkevich regarding the signing of the CST, Kebich signed a bilateral military cooperation agreement in 1992. In the afterwards, due to the continuing pressures by the communist deputies, Shushkevich finally signed the CST in 1993.

As a result of the polarization over the degree of integration with Russia, several conflicting moves were taken in political and economic domains. For example, regarding another discussion of that period, whether to leave the ruble zone, National Bank of Belarus had established a Belarusian foreign currency exchange, on which the Russian ruble was listed as a foreign currency in 1993. Contrary to this move, Kebich signed in April 1994 a treaty which envisages the merging of Belarusian and Russian banking and monetary systems. Though this agreement was not implemented, it became another reflection of polarization in Belarus in the early 1990s regarding the issue of integration with Russia.

As seen from the economic and military agreements signed by Prime Minister Kebich, Belarusian strategic orientation towards Russia had already started in the early 1990s – albeit in a binary framework since the Parliamentary Chairman Shushkevich and the BPF deputies were supporting the maintenance of the neutral status, elimination of Russian influence and establishment of closer

⁴⁸⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski and Paige Bryan Sullivan, “Russia/Belarus Axis,” in *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, p. 294.

⁴⁸⁸ “Kebich Endorses CIS Collective Security Treaty”, Interfax, 18 March 1993; in *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, p. 299.

relations with the West. This bifurcation came to an end in 1994 with the election of Lukashenka as the first Belarusian President. As Lukashenko increased his powers at the expense of other institutions and eliminated all other power centres in the following period, he emerged as the decisive actor in the making of foreign and security policies and the decisions taken in these policy realms began to reflect his imprint in the post-1994 period.

7.3.2. Unification Initiatives with Russia in the post-1994 Period

Belarus' strategic orientation towards Russia had already been started in the early 1990s under the Premiership of Kebich. The election of Lukashenko as the Belarusian President in 1994 gave a renewed boost to bilateral Belarusian-Russian relations, and several steps were taken in the direction of closer political, economic and military integration with Russia in the post-1994 period.

Soon after the election of President Lukashenko, during the visit of then Russian President Yeltsin in January 1995, the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty was signed, which was presented by both Yeltsin and Lukashenka as one step taken in the direction of closer integration. Yeltsin expressed this so that "we will move, first, toward a deeper integration and the setting up of individual large corporations and then we will simply unite and there will be a Belo-Rus."⁴⁸⁹ Defining the Belarusian-Russian partnership as a "nucleus" in the Commonwealth, Yeltsin also presented this a model for in-depth integration for other former Soviet Republics.⁴⁹⁰

The Belarusian-Russian integration came to a new stage in April 1996 when Yeltsin and Lukashenko signed the Treaty on the Establishment of the Community of Sovereign Republics. Envisaging the creation of political and economic union with supranational institutions, the Treaty created a Supreme Council including the heads of state and government, an Executive Committee and a Parliamentary Assembly. The Community was later transformed into a

⁴⁸⁹ "Yeltsin Looking Forward to 'Belo-Rus'", Russian Television, 22 February 1995; in *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, p. 314.

⁴⁹⁰ "Yeltsin's Speech at Academy of Sciences", Radio Minsky, 22 February 1995; in *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, p. 312.

Union upon the initiative by Yeltsin in 1997 with cosmetic changes in the Community institutions.

This momentum was sustained in 1999 with the establishment of the Union State, which came into force on 26 January 2000. The Treaty establishing the Union State proclaimed that it would “mark a new stage in the process of unification of the peoples of two countries into a democratic State ruled by law.”⁴⁹¹ The Treaty introduced a structure with federal characteristics, giving Russia and Belarus the status of “states within the state”. Attributing several state characteristics to the Union, the Treaty defined the territory of the participating states as the territory of the Union State, entitled it to have “emblem, flag, anthem and other attributes of statehood” and established the concept of Union citizenship.⁴⁹² Moreover, it listed several policy areas which would be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Supreme Council and placed others under the jurisdiction of participating states. Despite these federal characteristics, the Union remained on paper and could not perform any practical results in the 1990s.

Expressing his discontent with the present stalemate of the Union State, President Putin accelerated the efforts to give it a functioning character in the early 2000s. In August 2002, Putin suggested Lukashenko two schemes for completing Belarusian-Russian unification and giving the Union State a functional character: the creation of a federal state through which Belarus would join Russia either “as a single federation subject or as six separate provinces.”⁴⁹³ These were rejected by Lukashenko who said: “[...], diving Belarus into parts and merging them with the Russian Federation. I had already had my response: even Stalin didn't go as far as such a variant. Moscow is very well aware that this is an impassable variant.”⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ Emphasis added. Taken from Zhenis Kembayev, *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area*, p. 97.

⁴⁹² Zhenis Kembayev, *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area*, p. 99.

⁴⁹³ Helena Yakovlev Golani, “Two Decades of the Russian Federation’s Foreign Policy in the Commonwealth of Independent States: The Cases of Belarus and Ukraine”, Working Papers, The European Forum at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2011, available at: [www.ef.huji.ac.il/publications/Yakovlev Golani.pdf](http://www.ef.huji.ac.il/publications/Yakovlev%20Golani.pdf) (accessed on 17 December 2014), p. 21.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview by President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko to the Russian NTV Channel Programme ‘Segodnya’, 9 September 2002, Official Website of the President of the

The efforts to revive the Union State took place again following the outbreak of colourful revolutions in the former Soviet space. As such, the Union Parliament prepared a draft constitution for the Union State, to be addressed at the autumn 2005 session of the intergovernmental Russia-Belarus Council and the Supreme Council of the Union State.⁴⁹⁵ The Constitution envisaged a bicameral legislature and foresaw that the Union State would have a Prime Minister.⁴⁹⁶ Yet, this initiative ended as another failure, and it was neither addressed nor ratified.

7.3.3. Dynamics behind the Idea of Unification

The record of Belarusian-Russian integration shows that, though several treaties were signed with the vision of political and economic integration, they remained only as an “ink on paper.”⁴⁹⁷ Nevertheless, despite the failures in the declared political and economic objectives, Union-State was not terminated and continued to exist on paper. At this point, in order to fully understand the dynamics behind the continuity of the idea of “unification”, the reasons for its emergence should be analysed in detail.

Thought in economic terms, it should be indicated that, after having seized independence, Belarusian economy remained highly interdependent with the former Soviet space. At the time of independence, 80 per cent of Belarus’ industry was composed of large enterprises of the final cycle of production. Hence, the industrial activity was in need of the continuity of economic interaction with the former Soviet Republics, most notably Russia, for the provision of raw materials and sale of the final products.⁴⁹⁸ Moreover, because of the uncompetitive nature of Belarusian products on the world stage as well as trade sanctions imposed on

Republic of Belarus, available at: president.gov.by/en/press29305.html (accessed on 20 August 2012).

⁴⁹⁵ David R. Marples, “Is the Russia-Belarus Union Obsolete?”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January-February 2008), p. 29.

⁴⁹⁶ David R. Marples, “Is the Russia-Belarus Union Obsolete?”, p. 29.

⁴⁹⁷ The expression was given by Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin in October 1996. Quoted from Ingmar Oldberg, “Sunset over the swamp – the independence and dependence of Belarus”, *European Security*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1997), p. 119.

⁴⁹⁸ Kirill Koktysh, “The Belarusian Policy of Russia: the Era of Pragmatism”, p. 22.

Belarus by the Western countries in the second half of the 1990s, former Soviet area was the only market Belarus could sell its products and Russia was the main energy supplier for its energy-intensity heavy industry, specialized in mainly machine-building and military production.

In this respect, developing closer economic relations with Russia, Belarus could seize several economic gains. At the beginning of the formal integration process in 1996, Russia cancelled Belarusian energy debt of around 1,5 billion US Dollars and provided credit in the amount of 500 million US Dollars to Belarusian enterprises to be spent on imports from Russia.⁴⁹⁹ Most importantly, thanks to the integration project, Belarus could buy energy resources at a highly subsidized price. Due to Belarus's inability to pay its energy debts in hard currency, a majority of the payments to Gazprom was made through barter arrangements.

However, despite the declared objectives, this momentum did not lead to monetary integration between both countries. Above all, this was due to the differences in Belarusian and Russian economies. In the post-Cold War period, whilst Belarusian economy continued to be based on state control, Russia was making reforms with the vision of integrating into world markets. If integrated, Belarus' economy would be a burden and could lead to further economic losses for Russia.⁵⁰⁰ In this respect, reformation of the Belarusian economy was a precondition for full economic integration between both countries. However, the unwillingness of Lukashenko caused the continuity in the structural differences between Belarusian and Russian economies and the failure of declared objectives on economic integration.

Thought in political terms, one can argue from a constructivist perspective that the sense of community between two states, based on their historical experiences and common Slavic identity, was the basic reason behind Belarus' pro-Russian orientation and the idea of Belarusian-Russian unification. However, the failures in political integration as well as the discords in bilateral relations highlight that there was not a strong sense of community between two states.

⁴⁹⁹ Clelia Rontoyanni, "A Russo-Belarusian 'Union state': a defensive response to Western enlargement?", p. 14.

⁵⁰⁰ Ingmar Oldberg, "Sunset over the swamp – the independence and dependence of Belarus", pp. 118, 119.

This can be seen from the fact that both sides were mainly concerned with promoting their national interests while supporting the idea of unification. As such, there was not a consensus on what type of unification they would initiate. Belarus defended a Union modelled on a confederation, in which Russia and Belarus would have an equal say over political affairs and supranational institutions would have limited entitlements. In contrary, the unification model envisioned by Russia was denser, which would enable it to keep the superiority in the Union structures. Due to these differences, the Treaty of 1999 did not answer the question of whether the Union State was a confederation or federation.⁵⁰¹ The Constitutional Act also carried the same ambiguity as Belarus viewed it as an international agreement, which would form some form of confederation, and Russia saw it as a legal act of the Union State with federative elements.⁵⁰² In the end, due to the lack of political will, the Union State institutions became empty vessels with no clear functions. With every new step taken in the process of the so-called integration, “unimplemented agreements were [only] being replaced with new ones.”⁵⁰³

The lack of a sense of community can also be seen from the bilateral problems in Belarusian-Russian relations. Beginning from 1990s, Belarusian-Russian relations experienced several energy crisis. In the post-2000 period, President Putin used the energy card against Belarus for several times. It was first used by Putin in 2002 when Lukashenko rejected the proposal of merging two states. Following the failure of the Union Constitution, energy card was used again when Gazprom threatened in 2006 to increase the gas price to 200 US Dollars for the same amount. Each energy crisis came into an end with the signing of new agreements, which increased the energy prices and Gazprom’s share in the Belarusian energy market.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ Audrius Žulys, “Towards a Union State of Russia and Belarus”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, Vol. 15, No. 16 (2005) p. 151.

⁵⁰² Audrius Žulys, “Towards a Union State of Russia and Belarus”, p. 153.

⁵⁰³ Audrius Žulys, “Towards a Union State of Russia and Belarus”, p. 150.

⁵⁰⁴ David R. Marples, “Is the Russia-Belarus Union Obsolete?”, p. 31.

Due to such discords, President Lukashenko began to give signals of a multi-vectored foreign policy beginning from 2007. He expressed this so that: “we have been standing on one leg, whereas we should be standing on two.”⁵⁰⁵ As a result, he intensified his diplomatic efforts to diversify energy suppliers and took some limited steps for political liberalization in order to promote relations with the EU in economic issues. He began “buying oil from Venezuela, seeking to build business links with China and trying to attract Western investment through limited economic liberalization.”⁵⁰⁶ Moreover, he took some steps which clearly contradicted with the Russian stance. Following the August War in 2008, Lukashenko refused the Russian calls to recognize the so-called independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and delayed the ratification of the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Community in 2010.

This framework makes it clear that, as a result of the clash between Belarusian and Russian national interests in political and economic realms, the integration attempts in these realms could not be successful. At this point, it seems necessary to question why Belarusian and Russian leaders continued to retain the Union State and presented themselves as allies, despite the repeated failures in political and economic domains.

Evaluating from a neorealist perspective, one can attribute this to the intention of both sides to promote the external interests of their states. It should be reminded at this point that Belarus had played an integral role during Cold War for the Soviet Union as a defence shield against the West. “One of the greatest strategic impediments facing Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union was the disappearance of the defensive shield built up by the USSR in its western periphery to protect the Russian heartland from the Western powers.”⁵⁰⁷ As such, in the post-Cold War period, Russia viewed the maintenance of its influence in

⁵⁰⁵ “Alexander Lukashenko Heads West”, *Kommersant: Russia’s Daily Online*, 8 February 2007, available at: www.kommersant.com/p740812/Lukashenko_Russia_EU/ (accessed on 20 December 2014).

⁵⁰⁶ Matthew Frear, “Friends or Foes? Developments in Relations between Russia and Belarus”, *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 87 (19 November 2010), p. 2.

⁵⁰⁷ Peter Szyslo, “Countering NATO Expansion: A Case Study of Belarus-Russia Rapprochement”, p. 4.

Belarus as a matter of strategic importance, especially when facing an enlarging NATO on the west.

Because of the importance given to the maintenance of influence in the western borders, Russia provided Belarus financial assistance and diplomatic support in order to keep it on a pro-Russian track. These were also useful for the external interests of Belarus. Facing criticisms and economic sanctions by Western countries, because of the poor democratic conditions in Belarus, Lukashenko could break international political and economic isolation of Belarus thanks to the support of Russian presidents.

From this perspective, one can explain the attachment to the idea of unification in terms of geopolitical considerations of both sides and external dynamics. However, as neoclassical realists argue, external dynamics do not influence states directly. Rather, they influence states indirectly, in interaction with states' domestic political peculiarities. In this respect, the dynamics behind the embracement of the idea of unification can be better understood if one considers the influence of external dynamics in tandem with Belarus' and Russia's domestic political peculiarities.

7.3.4. Instrumentalization of Unification for Domestic Political Purposes

Neoclassical realism assumes that external dynamics influence states indirectly depending on how they are assessed at the domestic level. This assessment is made by leaders who have the decision-making power and act with the twin objectives of promoting the external security of their state and maintaining their domestic power. Thought from this perspective, it is seen that the economic and political integration initiatives served not only to external interests of Belarus and Russia but also domestic political interests of Belarusian and Russian leaders.

As such, close relations with Russia had a direct impact on Lukashenko's ability to remain in power. Thanks to his pro-Russian stance, Lukashenko seized several economic rewards from Russia, such as cancellation of energy debts, energy supplies at highly subsidized prices and free access to the Russian market for Belarusian producers. These economic incentives contributed him to preserve his domestic power in many ways. First of all, Russian financial assistance to

Belarus enabled Lukashenka to refrain from making economic reforms which could lead to a decrease in the living standards and cause the Belarusian public to turn against his rule. On the contrary, the economic assistance by Russia led to improvements in living standards, which increased public support for Lukashenko and positively affected Lukashenko's domestic power base.⁵⁰⁸

In addition, the lack of economic reforms enabled him to maintain the state control over economy. Due to his control over all aspects of Belarusian State, he could reinforce a system in which economic rewards were distributed to his supporters. In this way, it was made sure that all political and economic players remained dependent on President's favour and the rise of possible autonomous sources of economic power was prevented.

The influence of domestic political interests was also true for Yeltsin, who viewed the union as a way of resisting his opponents and solving the internal problems of the Russian State.⁵⁰⁹ Thought from the Russian side, it should be reminded that, beginning from the 1993 parliamentary elections, the domestic opposition to Yeltsin was composed of mainly communists and nationalists, who was then still accusing Yeltsin of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the failures in the War in Chechnya. Hence, presenting himself to the electorate as the integrator of former Soviet space thanks to the project of Belarusian-Russian unification, Yeltsin wanted to empower his position against his communist and nationalist opponents at the Russian Parliament.⁵¹⁰ Moreover, Yeltsin presented the Belarusian willingness to integrate with Russia as a sign of integrative attractiveness of Russia in order to transform the centrifugal forces into centripetal ones in the Federation.⁵¹¹

Different from Yeltsin, Putin had more room of manoeuvring in domestic politics since he had come to power thanks to the public appeal of his rhetoric of

⁵⁰⁸ Taras Kuzio, "National Identities and Virtual Foreign Policies among the Eastern Slavs", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (December 2003), p. 440.

⁵⁰⁹ Helena Yakovlev Golani, "Two Decades of the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy in the Commonwealth of Independent States: The Cases of Belarus and Ukraine", p. 30-32.

⁵¹⁰ Alex Danilovich, *Russian-Belarusian Integration: Playing Games Behind the Kremlin Walls* (Ashgate: Hampshire, 2006), p. 62.

⁵¹¹ Helena Yakovlev Golani, "Two Decades of the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy in the Commonwealth of Independent States: The Cases of Belarus and Ukraine", p. 19.

“Great Russia”. Therefore, he did not need Lukashenko and the project of the Union-State to prove his patriotic credentials.⁵¹² This enabled him to use energy leverage against Belarus for several times. However, even if he failed in convincing Lukashenko to revive the Union State, Putin did not give up the project of the Union State and continued to provide Belarus with economic subsidies. This stemmed from Belarus’ strategic importance for Russia, which has viewed NATO enlargement as a threat to Russian national interests, as well as the continuing popularity of the idea of unification among the Russian electorate.

The domestic political interests of both Belarusian and Russian leaders have been not only the driving force but also, paradoxically, one of the reasons of the failure of the Union State. As such, in addition to other factors noted before, the stagnation in political integration between two countries can be attributed to the personal competition between and incompatibilities of the personal interests of Yeltsin and Lukashenko at the Union State level. Even though Lukashenko and Yeltsin developed cordial relations as initiators of the integration process in the 1990s, Lukashenko entertained close relations with Russian communists and criticized the market reforms in Russia.⁵¹³ Apart from his connections with the opponents to Yeltsin, Lukashenko also attempted to increase his popularity in Russia. In the wake of the 1998 economic crisis in Russia, he condemned the liberal economic model, embraced by Yeltsin, and praised his own policies based on state-controlled economy.⁵¹⁴ Such gestures led to the conviction that Lukashenko could bring together Russian political forces interested in imperial birth⁵¹⁵ and emerge as the most influential figure in the Union State. As a result, the Union treaties never introduced a post of Union Presidency since both Yeltsin and Lukashenko were unwilling to let the other to seize such a supreme position at the Union level.

⁵¹² Clelia Rontoyanni, “Belarusian foreign policy,” in *Changing Belarus*, (ed.) Dov Lynch, Institute for Security Studies, Chaillot Paper, No. 85 (November 2005), p. 61.

⁵¹³ Ingmar Oldberg, “Sunset over the swamp – the independence and dependence of Belarus”, p. 122.

⁵¹⁴ Alex Danilovich, *Russian-Belarusian Integration: Playing Games Behind the Kremlin Walls*, p. 84.

⁵¹⁵ Margarita M. Balmaceda, “Myth and Reality in the Belarusian-Russian Relationship”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (May-June 1999), p. 7.

To sum up, because of the incompatibility of their economic systems and the lack of the political will of both sides, Belarusian-Russian integration could be successful in political and economic realms. Different from these areas, Belarus and Russia could achieve a remarkable progress in the military realm. The military integration between both countries has been “the most advanced and efficient dimension of Russian-Belarusian cooperation, while being the least controversial for both sides.”⁵¹⁶ It stood aloof of all political crisis and the Union State has operated as a military alliance between two countries.⁵¹⁷ In the rest of this chapter, the Belarusian-Russian military integration will be analysed in detail.

7.4. Belarus’ Military Alliance with Russia

This section will examine the Belarusian-Russian military alliance in detail. It is argued that, though President Lukashenko formed alliance with Russia with a vocal anti-NATO rhetoric, this cannot be explained only with reference to NATO enlargement since external dynamics do not have a direct effect on states. In this section, the influence of the interaction of external dynamics with Belarus’ domestic political peculiarities on Belarus’ military alliance with Russia will be proven by highlighting the influence of domestic political considerations of Lukashenko on the establishment of Belarusian-Russian military alliance.

7.4.1. Military Integration between Belarus and Russia

As given before, despite its constitutional status as a neutral state, Belarus’ strategic orientation towards Russia had already begun when Prime Minister Kebich signed the first military agreement in 1992, which envisaged coordination with Russia in defence strategies, and Belarus joined the CST in 1993. Following the inauguration of Lukashenko Presidency, Belarusian-Russian military integration was given a new boost and several advances were recorded in military realm.

⁵¹⁶ Wojciech Konończuk, “Difficult ‘Ally’: Belarus in Russia’s foreign policy”, Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw (September 2008), p. 45.

⁵¹⁷ “Trading off sovereignty. The outcome of Belarus’ integration with Russia in the security and defence field”, OSW Commentary, 29 April 2013, available at: <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2013-04-29/trading-sovereignty-outcome-belaruss-integration-russia> (accessed on 24 November 2014).

Different from other former Soviet republics, Belarus had not initiated a process of building national armed forces. Belarus based its post-Soviet defence establishment on the inherited Soviet military structure and did not envisage any nationalization programme. Therefore, institutional structures and military staff in Belarus were not distinct from those of the Soviet era. In this framework, the post-Soviet military cooperation was in fact "the reinstatement of a structure temporarily suspended by the collapse of the Soviet Union."⁵¹⁸ Moreover, it did not view the Soviet/Russian troops as hostile and voluntarily accepted the Russian military units on its territory. With an agreement signed in 1995, Belarus leased "its land for twenty-five years for the ballistic-missile early-warning Radar Node in Gantsevichi near Baranovichi, which was supposed to replace the one in Latvia (Skrunda), and for the low-frequency radio station or the 43rd Communications Hub for the Russian navy in Vileyka."⁵¹⁹

In the post-1994 period, Belarus formed an extensive network of military integration with Russia, envisioning interoperability and close cooperation in all areas, coordination at doctrinal level and between all related institutions. This integration was conducted not only at bilateral level but also in a multilateral framework thanks to Belarus' membership in CST and CSTO.

Lukashenko and Yeltsin signed in 1995, in parallel to the Friendship Treaty, an agreement on mutual efforts to protect state borders of Belarus. In Article 5 of the Friendship Treaty, they reaffirmed their commitment to CST and stipulated that any act of aggression on either party would result in coordinated actions in accordance with their commitments under the CST.⁵²⁰ In the afterwards, the Treaty of 1997 established the Joint Board of Defence Ministries and outlined a more extensive integration scheme with the vision of formulating joint defence policies, unifying military legislation and creating of a joint regional group of

⁵¹⁸ Ruth Deyermond, "The State of the Union: Military Success, Economic and Political Failure in the Russia-Belarus Union", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 56, No. 8 (December 2004), p. 1195.

⁵¹⁹ Helena Yakovlev Golani, "Two Decades of the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy in the Commonwealth of Independent States: The Cases of Belarus and Ukraine", p. 24.

⁵²⁰ Peter Szyslo, "Countering NATO Expansion: A Case Study of Belarus-Russia Rapprochement", NATO Reserach Fellowship Final Report, June 2003, available at: <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/01-03/szyslo.pdf> (accessed on 10 November 2014), p. 7

forces (RGF).⁵²¹ The RGF was created in October 1999 and constituted the western group of CSTO, combining the troops stationed in Belarus and Russia's Western military district.⁵²² The military integration was upgraded more with the signing of the Treaty of 1999, which envisaged the creation of a common Military Doctrine by 2000.

As this brief explanation reveals, despite failures in political and economic integration, Belarus and Russia could achieve a remarkable progress in bilateral and multilateral military integration. This marked a notable difference from other former Soviet republics located in Eastern Europe, which showed a hesitant attitude to closer integration with Russia and participated most of the multilateral initiatives in the CIS with reservations. In order to provide a better understanding on the Belarus case, the underlying dynamics behind the Belarusian-Russian alliance should be elaborated in detail with a comprehensive perspective taking into account the interaction between external and internal dynamics and the influence of Belarus' domestic political peculiarities on the sustenance of this alliance.

7.4.2. The NATO Factor behind Belarusian-Russian Military Alliance

Belarus' post-Soviet security policies are characterized by not only a military alliance with Russia but also a vocal NATO-scepticism. Though Belarus joined NACC in 1991 and sustained its cooperation with a NATO in a limited manner through PfP, the course of Belarusian-NATO relations has followed a problematic track characterized by several intervals and crisis.

After Lukashenko became President, Belarus' relations with the West deteriorated as rapid as the increase in presidential powers. Following the 1996 referendum, which introduced immense constitutional changes, European institutions either suspended their cooperation with Belarus or downsized their relations. Following the path of other European institutions, NATO also froze its relations with Belarus in 1996. The relations between Belarus and NATO were

⁵²¹ Ruth Deyermond, "The State of the Union: Military Success, Economic and Political Failure in the Russia-Belarus Union", pp. 1193-1194.

⁵²² "Trading off sovereignty. The outcome of Belarus' integration with Russia in the security and defence field".

restored in due course and Belarus opened a permanent mission in NATO in 1998. However, the relations were once again frozen following the NATO air strikes in Kosovo in 1999.

Since the beginning of his Presidency, Lukashenko displayed scepticism to the post-Cold War evolution of NATO. The official position of Belarus to European security architecture was a replication of the Russian position. President Lukashenko vividly expressed his approach at OSCE's Lisbon Summit on 2 December 1996 by arguing that European security in the new century should rest in an inclusive model. Defending that "all European countries should have equal rights in making decisions concerning the future of the continent not only *de jure* but also *de facto*", Lukashenko supported to make OSCE as the basis of European security.⁵²³ Complementing this understanding, Lukashenko strongly criticized strengthening of NATO and argued that it would be "short-sighted to make NATO a cornerstone of the European security system."⁵²⁴

NATO enlargement was a continuous theme of Lukashenko's criticisms. Presenting NATO's eastern enlargement as a threat to Belarusian security, he expressed:

I am categorically against the NATO enlargement to the East. Because it is not the Russian borders, as Putin says, that they approach, it is not at the Russian borders that they will deploy their arsenals. They will deploy those arsenals mainly at our borders, at the borders with Ukraine.⁵²⁵

The perceived threat from NATO was codified in the Military Doctrine in 2002 so that, Belarus faced military threat from "interference into internal affairs of the Republic of Belarus, attempts to restrain its interests while solving the issues of international security, expansion of military blocks and alliances which bring detriment to military security of the Republic of Belarus and counteraction concerning the formation of system of collective security with the participation of

⁵²³ "Statement by President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko on the OSCE Lisbon Summit Meeting", Lisbon, 2 December 1996, available at: http://www.belarus.net/president/statement_lisbon.htm (accessed on 1 September 2013).

⁵²⁴ "Statement by President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko on the OSCE Lisbon Summit Meeting".

⁵²⁵ "An Interview for Mass Media by President of the Republic of Belarus A.G. Lukashenko", 12 November 2002, Official Website of the President of the Republic of Belarus, available at: <http://president.gov.by/en/press29307.html> (accessed on 7 December 2012).

the Republic of Belarus, creation(build-up) of military potential of highly offensive in its origin by some states(or groups of states) which may hamper the balance of forces.”⁵²⁶ The same perception was also expressed in the Concept of National Security of Belarus, adopted in 2010, so that Belarus faced a military threat from “aspirations of individual states (coalitions of states) to resolve the existing contradictions by use of military force, [...] expansion (creation) in the European region of military-political alliances, or usurpation by them of global functions [...] and the build-up of military infrastructure near the borders of the Republic of Belarus”⁵²⁷

Lukashenko defended that NATO enlargement had to be countered with a joint response by Belarus and Russia. In a speech to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia in January 1999, he focused on the strategic aims of the Union State and the need to counter perceived hegemonic threats, arguing:

Union of Belarus and Russia should become a real counterweight to the unipolar world that has currently developed, a powerful driving force in breaking the aggressive transatlantic monopoly, [and] an international core for the new unification of states.⁵²⁸

Considering the anti-NATO statements of President Lukashenko, one can argue from the perspective of traditional realist approach that the establishment of Belarusian-Russian alliance was based on the perceived threat from NATO. In that sense, the alliance with Russia can be seen as an attempt to balance NATO through power or capability aggrandizement. This was put by Joseph Laurence Black so that: “there can be no doubt that NATO expansion hastened, indeed ensured, the Russian-Belarusian Union [...]. Of all the regions in the world where

⁵²⁶ “The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Belarus”, 3 January 2002, Official Website of Ministry of Defence of Belarus, available at: www.mod.mil.by/doktrina_eng.html (accessed on 15 May 2013).

⁵²⁷ “Concept of the National Security of the Republic of Belarus”, 9 November 2010, available at: http://canada.mfa.gov.by/eng/copy_legislation_2618/concept_of_the_national_security_of_the_public_of_belarus/(accessed on 15 May 2013).

⁵²⁸ Peter Szyslo, “Countering NATO Expansion: A Case Study of Belarus-Russia Rapprochement”, p. 22.

NATO activity shaped Russian political and strategic planning, the Belarus case is the clearest.”⁵²⁹

Though the perceived sense of threat from NATO was shown by both Belarusian and Russian officials as the driving force behind the establishment of Russian-Belarusian alliance, traditional realist approach to alliances cannot fully explain the Belarus case. Above all, it cannot explain, why other former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe did not perceive the NATO enlargement as a threat. If external dynamics had influenced all states in the same way, it would then be wise to expect the other former Soviet republics to form alliance with Russia to balance NATO. However, as other cases from the former Soviet space shows, the Russian factor was a more salient concern of external security than NATO enlargement for other former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe.

This makes it clear that the influence of external dynamics on state is not direct and uni-dimensional. Even if states are located in similar external conditions, they assess and are influenced by the same dynamics differently depending on the variation in their domestic political peculiarities. As such, the alliance decision of Belarus cannot also be explained only with reference to external dynamics. The more important issue is how the NATO and Russian factors were assessed by President Lukashenko and what determined his decision to ally with Russia. In the following section, this issue will be addressed by taking into account the domestic political considerations of President Lukashenko.

7.4.3. Alliance-Formation as a Source of Regime Survival

Neoclassical realism assumes that, as political players at both international and domestic spheres, leaders make alliance decisions which not only promote the external interests of their state, but also enable them to realize their political objectives and maintain power. Therefore, a thorough elaboration of the Belarus case can be made by taking into account the domestic political considerations behind Lukashenko’s anti-NATO rhetoric.

In the preceding sections, it has been shown that Lukashenko’s primary domestic consideration was the continuity of his political survival. In a political

⁵²⁹ Joseph Laurence Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion: Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 119.

system in which state and regime are fused and the President emerged as the key decision-maker in foreign and security policy realm, external interests of Belarus was also defined in accordance with the continuity of the regime. In this context, the perceived threats to the continuity of the regime was also assessed by Lukashenko as threats directed to the external security of Belarus.

In this context, the pro-democracy political rhetoric of the Western countries meant a greater challenge for Lukashenko. This can be clearly seen from his reaction to NATO air strikes in Kosovo in 1999. Drawing a parallel between Western condemnation of the Milosevic regime with poor human rights record and for establishing a quasi-dictatorial regime, he was alarmed that he could be the next target.⁵³⁰ So, with recourse to the Slavic unity and as a gesture of solidarity against NATO, he paid an official visit to Belgrade following the bombardment to meet Milosevic and invited his Serbian counterpart to join the Russian-Belarusian Union. Furthermore, following the Kosovo intervention, he signed a new package of military agreements with Russia and conducted a joint Belarusian-Russian military exercise, “West 99”, with the theme of anti-aircraft defence.⁵³¹

The formation of military alliance with Russia against the perceived threat from NATO not only enabled President Lukashenko to protect the external interests of the Belarusian State, as defined by him, but also brought several benefits which helped him to sustain the continuity of the regime.

It has been shown in the preceding section that, due to the strategic importance attributed to Belarus by Russian policy-makers, Russia provided Lukashenko economic and financial assistance in order to keep him in his pro-Russian track. Cognizant of the strategic importance of Belarus for Russia, Lukashenko instrumentalized NATO enlargement and exploited the antagonization between Russia and the West in order to secure more assistance from Russia. Frequently making references to the indivisibility of security between Belarus and Russia, Lukashenko argued that, if Belarus and Russia had

⁵³⁰ Clelia Rontoyanni, “The union of Belarus and Russia: The role of NATO and the EU,” in *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc*, ed. Graeme P. Herd and Jennifer D.P. Moroney (Oxfordshire and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 119.

⁵³¹ Clelia Rontoyanni, “A Russo-Belarusian ‘Union state’: a defensive response to Western enlargement?”, p. 6.

gone to separate paths, destructive external forces would be directed against Russia's vast resources and territory.⁵³² Using an exaggerated threat rhetoric, presenting Belarus as a bulk-ward against NATO expansion for Russia on its western flank and arguing that "Belarus [would] ... defend not only itself but also Russia,"⁵³³ he made use of tensions in NATO-Russia relations in order to get economic benefits from Russia.

Moreover, considering the pro-Russian sympathies of the Belarusian society, Lukashenko also used the anti-NATO rhetoric to consolidate the society and sustain the public support to his rule. Deploying the argument that Belarus has faced an imminent military threat on its western borders, he could get the public approval for his pro-Russian policies which he deemed necessary to sustain his domestic power. Mieljancoŭ also put this by arguing that the image of external enemy enabled Lukashenko to achieve "a certain level of consolidation in the society and discipline, as well as justify infringements on civil liberties."⁵³⁴

As seen from this framework, even though Belarus formed alliance with Russia in response to the perceived threat from NATO, the assessment of NATO enlargement as a threat to Belarusian State was linked to the political agenda and domestic political considerations of President Lukashenko. In order to understand how President Lukashenko could sustain the alliance with Russia over years, it seems necessary to analyse the elite and societal attitude to his pro-Russian policies.

7.4.4. Elite and Public Attitudes to Lukashenko's pro-Russianism

In the early 1990s, the strategic orientation of Belarus was a matter of discussion between the BPF and communist deputies. Whilst communists were supporting closer relations with Russia, the BPF was opposing to the pro-Russian orientation of Prime Minister Kebich and favouring the continuity of the neutral

⁵³² David R. Marples, "Is the Russia-Belarus Union Obsolete?", 31.

⁵³³ Roy Allison, Stephen White and Margot Light, "Belarus Between East and West", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (December 2005), p. 492.

⁵³⁴ Dzianis Mieljancoŭ, "Defence Systems in Lithuania and Belarus: Comparative Perspective", *Belarusian Political Science Review*, Vol. 1 (2011), p. 210.

position and a more balanced relations between Russia and the West. Issuing a decree in December 1993, BPF had put its position on this matter so that:

The BFP believes that Belarus should immediately leave the CIS. The Belarusian-Russian border should be a fully established state border... A 'common ruble zone' with the country that permanently stands on the brink of civil war is out of question. Union with Russia, which is being supported by the government, will lead us into the deadlock of murderous Russian conflicts and lead to an economic and political breakdown. Any further orientation towards Russia will bring destruction to Belarus.⁵³⁵

Despite this vibrant discussion in the early 1990s, the post-1994 developments increasingly marginalized foreign and security policy matters as BPF lost the ground and President Lukashenko increased his powers at the expense of other political players and institutions. Under these circumstances, in which political opposition acted only with the motivation to decrease or eliminate the presidential powers, foreign and security policy issues were put aside.

The majority of Belarusian elites has supported the pro-Russian policies of Lukashenko. This is the case not only for pro-presidential parties but also moderate opposition parties. Though the latter group defends that Belarus has nothing to gain from confrontation with the West and, while even Russia was seeking compromise and developing its relations, Belarus also had to establish links with the prosperous Western countries and the EU,⁵³⁶ this has not turned into a pro-NATO attitude. The only exception of this situation has been the Conservative Christian Party of the BPF, one of the post-1999 dividends, which defended NATO membership, development of warm relations with the political and economic structures of Europe and close partnership with the Baltic State, Ukraine and Poland.⁵³⁷

However, even if some parties support development of cordial relations with Europe, which they see necessary for democratization of Belarusian political

⁵³⁵ Vasilii Romanovskiy, "Popular Front Warns Against Pro-Russian Orientation", *Vecherniy Minsk*, 24 December 1993; in *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Documents, data and analysis*, p. 301.

⁵³⁶ Clelia Rontoyanni, "A Russo-Belarusian 'Union state': a defensive response to Western enlargement?", p. 7.

⁵³⁷ David R. Marples and Uladzimir Padhol, "The Democratic Political Opposition", p. 48.

system, the opposition has barely had any channels of influencing foreign and security policies because of the dominant position of President. It also has limited opportunities to promote their programme to the public due to the media restrictions.⁵³⁸ Under these circumstances, they cannot exert any countervailing pressure because of the characteristics of the Belarusian political system.

That said, it should also be noted that the idea of integration with Russia has been quite popular in Belarus. The public has displayed an explicit pro-Russian attitude, which has also been proven by all referenda and presidential election results so far. Most of the opinion polls highlight the pro-Russian sympathies of the Belarusian society. In a poll conducted in February 2006, which people were asked what variant of Belarusian-Russian relations they favour, 45,5 per cent of respondents said “good neighbourly relations”, whilst 39,2 per cent indicated “a union of two independent states” and 13,6 per cent responded with “integration into one state”.⁵³⁹ In another poll conducted in 2010 about the military security issues, respondents counted the most severe military threats Belarus faced respectively as follows: the US (6,6 per cent), NATO (6 per cent), the West in general (1,4 per cent) and Russia (0,4 per cent).⁵⁴⁰ Such results displays not only the pro-Russian attitude of the Belarusian public, but also the positive influence of the anti-NATO rhetoric of President Lukashenko on the continuity of his rule.

All in all, it can be said that pro-Russian attitude of President Lukashenko has been approved by the majority of elites and society in Belarus. Due to the absence of a countervailing elite or societal influence, Lukashenko could pursue his pro-Russian policies without encountering any resistance at the domestic level.

7.5. Conclusion

Belarus’ post-Soviet foreign and security policies can be examined in two periods. From the declaration of independence in 1991 to the inauguration of

⁵³⁸ Clelia Rontoyanni, “A Russo-Belarusian ‘Union state’: a defensive response to Western enlargement?”, p. 7.

⁵³⁹ Oleg Manaev, “Recent Trends in Belarusian Public Opinion,” in *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus*, p. 43.

⁵⁴⁰ Dzianis Melyantsou, “Security in the Public Opinion in Belarus”, Belarus Info Letter, Issue 5 (June 2010), available at: [www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id309/Bell_Issue_5_\(15\).pdf](http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id309/Bell_Issue_5_(15).pdf) (accessed on 17 December 2014), p. 1.

Lukashenko Presidency in 1994, foreign and security policies showed a binary outlook. This stemmed from the fact that Belarusian politics of that period was characterized by a power competition between two groups, which promoted alternative agendas and had equal influence on foreign and security policy realms. Whilst Parliamentary Chairman Shushkevich was defending a neutral position and development of equally close relations with Russia and the West, Prime Minister Kebich, who had the support of communist majority in the Parliament, was favouring closer integration with Russia. Despite this binary outlook, Russia's strategic orientation towards Russia had already begun when the neutral position was given a *de facto* end with the signing of the bilateral military agreement with Russia by Prime Minister Kebich in 1992 and the participation in the CIS in 1993.

The turning point in Belarusian-Russian relations came when Lukashenko was elected as the first Belarusian President in 1994. In the post-1994 period, Lukashenko increased his political powers and competences at the expense of other institutions and emerged as the most influential political figure in Belarus. Accordingly, he became the decisive actor in the making of Belarusian foreign and security policies and all decisions began to reflect his imprint.

It has been shown in this chapter that, despite the failures in political and economic integration initiatives, Belarus and Russia achieved a remarkable progress in military realm and formed alliance at both bilateral and multilateral levels. Given the vocal anti-NATO rhetoric of President Lukashenko, the formation of Belarusian-Russian military alliance is explained by traditional realist approach, with recourse to both balance of threat and balance of power theories as follows. The former theory presupposes that since Belarus was not a NATO member, it viewed NATO's eastern enlargement, which brought Allied forces closer to its borders, as a threat to its security. Therefore, in order to balance the perceived threat from NATO, he chose to ally with Russia. According to the latter theory, it can be assumed that NATO's overwhelming military capabilities raised the sense of insecurity in Belarus and precipitated it to militarily side with Russia.

These theories are deficient in two respects in explaining the Belarus case. First of all, these theories cannot explain why other former Soviet republics, located in the same external context with Belarus, did not view NATO

enlargement as a threat. If external dynamics would be the only rationale behind the formation of alliances, it would then be wise to accept other post-Soviet republics to act in the same way and form alliance with Russia. As other former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe neither perceived NATO as a threat nor acted in the same way Belarus did, the traditional realist approach cannot explain the regional diversity in the former Soviet space.

Secondly, traditional realist approach assumes that the primary consideration of all states is to maintain their sovereignty and independence. This assumption contradicts with the fact that dependence on Russia, especially in economic realm, has not been viewed as a source of insecurity in Belarus. Even though dependence on Russia increased over years, ultimately leading to complete transfer of Belarusian energy network to the Russian control, Lukashenko neither viewed this dependence as a threat nor took any steps to reduce it. Therefore, traditional realist approach also cannot explain why Lukashenko gave in the continuity of economic dependence with Russia.

Alternatively, when evaluated from a constructivist perspective, Belarus' pro-Russian alliance trajectory is attributed to its common Slavic identity and historical interactions with Russia. In this context, it can be argued that the sense of community between two countries enabled them to hold similar threat perceptions and established the necessary ground for military integration between two. Nevertheless, constructivism is also inadequate to explain the alliance-formation between Belarus and Russia as the bilateral discords as well as the failures in political and economic integration initiatives made it clear that the sense of community was not as strong as constructivists assume.

The inadequacy of constructivism in explaining the Belarus case can also be seen from the fact that, even if all former Soviet republics shared the same ideational milieu, they had different threat perceptions and accordingly made different alliance policies. Therefore, similar to neorealism, constructivism is inadequate for both a country-focused and comparative analysis in explaining both Belarus case and the regional diversity in the former Soviet space.

It is argued in this chapter that, instead of neorealism and constructivism, neoclassical realism is more relevant in explaining Belarus' pro-Russian alliance trajectory. From this perspective, in order to understand why NATO enlargement

was seen as a source of threat in Belarus, it is necessary to take into account how the assessment of external context was influenced by the domestic political considerations of President Lukashenko, the leading decision-maker in foreign and security policy realms.

Neoclassical realism assumes that leaders act with twin considerations when making alliance decisions: promoting the external interests of their state and enabling them to maintain their domestic power. Thought from this perspective, it is seen that, facing a political and economic isolation by the Western countries, because of the poor democratic conditions in Belarus, Lukashenko could break the international political and economic isolation by the Western countries by forming an alliance with Russia and securing the diplomatic and economic support of his Russian counterparts.

Since external interests of the Belarusian State have not been thought independent from those of the regime, domestic political considerations of President Lukashenko have been the most important dynamic that influenced the assessment of the external context and identification of the threats directed to the Belarusian State. Lukashenko perceived NATO a source of threat since its emphasis on democratic values was not compatible with Lukashenko's domestic interests and contradicted with his inclination to raise Presidential powers at the expense of other institutions. As a result, even at the periods of thaws in relations with Russia, Lukashenko did not consider the option of full integration into the Western institutions and preferred to interact with them at a limited level as long as this conformed to his objectives.

NATO enlargement and estrangement between Russia and the US enabled Lukashenko to adopt an exaggerated threat discourse for domestic political ends and for seizing economic assistance from Russia. Frequently referring the indivisibility of security between Belarus and Russia against the alleged common threats, Lukashenko could secure the continuity of Russian financial and economic assistance, which was essential to sustain the public approval to his rule and to maintain the regime survival and legitimacy. As a result, as a beneficiary of the Russian aid, Lukashenko did not view integration with Russia and the former Soviet space as a threat.

At this point, it should also be reiterated that foreign policy orientation did not become a matter of discussion in Belarus at both elite and societal levels. Most of the Belarusian political parties have converged on foreign and security policies defended by Lukashenko. Even though moderate opposition parties existed and supported to balance relations with Russia by developing closer relations with the West, they have remained marginalized, deprived of mass support, and therefore, could not exert any countervailing pressure on Lukashenko. In the absence of an effective countervailing political and societal force that favoured an alternative integration course, Lukashenko could implement his policies without facing any domestic constraints.

The Belarus case proves that, external dynamics do not influence states directly, but in interaction with their domestic political peculiarities. Therefore, rather than being the direct consequence of NATO enlargement, the establishment of Belarusian-Russian military alliance was due to the assessment of the external context by President Lukashenko in accordance with his political agenda and domestic interests. Presenting the NATO enlargement as a threat and forming an alliance with Russia as a remedy to it, President Lukashenko aimed not only to promote the external interests of Belarus, as understood by him, but also to maintain his political survival.

CHAPTER 8

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON POST-COMMUNIST ALLIANCE TRAJECTORIES

8.1. Introduction

In the preceding four country-focused chapters, the post-Cold War alliance trajectories of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus were examined by taking into account the dynamics and motivations behind their alliance decisions. In this chapter, the findings from these four cases are compared among themselves and the reasons for the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space are assessed. The analysis is structured on three questions given in Chapter 2. As such, the chapter elaborates: i) why post-communist states formed alliance with NATO or Russia and the CST/CSTO; ii) what determined their decision on whom to ally with; iii) why some post-communist states have not formed alliances.

The analysis in this chapter reveals not only the inadequacies of traditional realist and constructivist approaches but also the relevance of neoclassical realism in explaining the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space. This chapter views this variation as an outcome of the diversity in external and internal contexts of each post-communist state.

8.2. Why did post-communist states form alliances?

As explained in Chapter 2, traditional realist approach views alliances as outward-oriented mechanisms established against external threats with military considerations. For the supporters of this approach, states form alliances to increase their security against the stronger or threatening state or alliance by combining their power or capabilities with other states threatened by the same state or alliance. The traditional realist approach also envisions that, when confronting a threatening state or alliance, states should form alliances if they are unable to provide their security through self-sufficiency.

Drawing on these assumptions, one can assume that the alliance decisions of post-communist states were made under the influence of the perceived external threats and with military considerations. Thought from this perspective, whilst the alliance formation of the Czech Republic and Latvia with NATO can be attributed to the perceived threat from Russia, that of Belarus with Russia can be seen as a response to NATO's eastern enlargement.

Nevertheless, as highlighted in the country-focused chapters, traditional realist approach cannot adequately account for the dynamics that encouraged the post-communist states to form alliances because of its excessive focus on external factors and military considerations. First of all, the military-dominated nature of the traditional realist approach overlooks the multiple considerations behind the alliance decisions of these states. As such, though the consideration of providing the external security of their state motivated the leaders from these states to form alliances, they were not the only reason behind their search for membership in alliances. Instead, leaders from post-communist states sought membership in alliances with multiple non-military considerations, such as the expectation of economizing defence issues, getting economic aid or political guidance, increasing their political weight with membership in alliances. Furthermore, the salience of external security concerns was not a constant across the post-communist space. Instead, it changed from state to state, stemming from the unique external and internal conditions of each state.

Similar to the traditional realist approach, constructivism also assumes that alliances are formed to protect states from external threats. However, constructivist deny excessive materialism of traditional realist approach and assume that there is a correlation between state identities and threat perceptions.⁵⁴¹ On the basis of this correlation, they argue that states' ideational milieu affect their alliance decisions and states are prone to form alliance with states with which they share the same identities and, hence, threat perceptions. They also argue that, since alliances are formed on the basis of identities, they serve not only material but also ontological security of states. Hence, when forming alliances against external threats which are defined on the basis of shared identities, states

⁵⁴¹ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 399.

promote not only material but also ontological security through reproducing their identities.

However, this constructivist assumption appears problematic for this study. Setting aside the analytical difficulties yielded by the ambiguity of the concepts which constructivism is based on, it is not applicable to most of the post-communist states, in which there is not an all-encompassing national identity because of various reasons, including internal divisions, presence of large diaspora groups and uncompleted nature of the nation-building processes. The controversial nature of identities across the post-communist space makes it difficult to form a correlation between identities and threat perceptions which could then be utilized to analyse the alliance decisions of post-communist states.

Given the narrow framework of traditional realist approach as well as the ambiguity and insufficiencies of constructivism, this study addressed the question of why post-communist states formed alliances with a neoclassical realist perspective. As such, similar to traditional realist and constructivist approaches, it has been assumed that post-communist states sought membership in alliances with security considerations. However, different from both approaches, the security concerns that precipitated post-communist states to form alliances have been evaluated with a broader and deeper perspective.

As it is seen from the preceding country-focused chapters, the security policies of the post-communist states were driven by various concerns, both military and non-military. For example, in the Czech Republic, though external security issues were of less concern, decommunization of the political system as well as economic transformation continued to shape the security agenda of the Czech authorities in the post-1993 period. As to Latvia, though the security agenda was dominated by the Russian factor, this was understood both an external and internal security concern for the Latvian authorities. In Belarus, whereas NATO enlargement was understood as the primary external threat in the post-1994 period, the maintenance of the continuity of the regime and the preservation of economic well-being emerged as the main internal considerations that shaped the Belarusian security policies. In Ukraine, apart from the vulnerability against Russia, the elimination of negative consequences of regionalism as well as the improvement of economic conditions were other internal concerns that affected

Ukrainian security policies. Taking into account these myriad concerns, it has been assumed that, since most of the post-communist states were undergoing through a comprehensive internal transformation, the outlook and content of which also changed from state to state, their search for membership in alliances was also influenced by the multiple needs in the transition process.

Moreover, the salience of the type of security concerns changed from state to state depending on their unique external and internal concerns. In this framework, whereas Russian factor emerged as the main concern for some states, including Latvia, NATO enlargement was perceived more threatening than the Russian leverages for some others, such as Belarus. In addition, though military concerns were more salient for some, such as in the Ukrainian and Latvian cases, non-military concerns were more decisive for others, as it is seen from the Czech case.

Apart from the recognition of the broader concerns that precipitated post-communist states to search for membership in alliances, it has also been argued with a deeper security understanding that, since the evaluations on whether alliances are needed are made by state leaders who also act with the motivation of maintaining their domestic power, the domestic political considerations at the leadership level also influence the decisions on alliance-related matters. Accordingly, leaders from post-communist states supported alliance-formation when it was deemed necessary not only for promoting external security of their state, but also maintaining their domestic power and promoting their political agenda.⁵⁴²

The influence of domestic political considerations in the decisions in favour of the formation of alliances was confirmed by all cases elaborated in this study. The Belarus case showed that, when forming an alliance with Russia against the perceived threat from NATO, Lukashenko was acting with the motivation of getting economic rewards from Russia, which had a direct impact on his ability to remain in power.⁵⁴³ In both Czech and Latvian cases, promoting

⁵⁴² Eric A. Miller and Arkady Toritsyn, "Bringing the Leader Back In: Internal Threats and Alignment Theory in the Commonwealth of Independent States"; Eric A. Miller, *To Balance Or Not to Balance: Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States*.

⁵⁴³ Marples, David R. "Is the Russia-Belarus Union Obsolete?", p. 34.

the external security of the Czech and Latvian states was not the only motivation that influenced the pro-NATO alliance trajectory. Czech and Latvian authorities were also concerned with strengthening their position vis-a-vis their communist or pro-Russian opponents by securing the achievements of the transition process through integration into the Western structures. In the Ukrainian case, when setting the objective of NATO membership, President Yushchenko aimed to get security guarantees against Russia and to strengthen his domestic power base by acting in accordance with the expectations of his electorate in western and central Ukraine.

These points make it clear that alliances were understood by post-communist states not only as military mechanisms providing external security guarantees, but also as instruments which provide many non-military benefits. Moreover, whether the search for alliance membership is driven more by military or non-military concerns depended on unique external and internal conditions of each post-communist state. The analysis of this diversity can be better achieved by neoclassical realism, than traditional realist approach and constructivism, thanks to its emphasis on contextuality and particularity, which enables one to take into consideration both military and non-military concerns in accounting for states' alliance decisions.

8.3. What determined post-communist states' decision on "whom to ally with"?

As it has been shown in Chapter 2, the question of "whom to ally with" is addressed differently by the supporters of traditional realist approach, constructivism and neoclassical realism. The supporters of traditional realist approach evaluates this issue by taking into account external dynamics and military concerns, whereas constructivism deals with it by considering both external and internal dynamics with ideational content. Different from both approaches, neoclassical realists analyse this question by taking into account both external and internal dynamics in an interrelated way.

Giving primacy to external dynamics and military factors, traditional realist approach addresses the question of "whom to ally with" on the basis of "balance of threat" and "balance of power" theories. Accordingly, the supporters

of this approach argue that, when faced an external threat, states *do* and *should* balance against the stronger or threatening states or alliances. Drawing on this assumption, one can expect post-communist states to balance against Russia, which has pursued a policy of maintaining its influence in near abroad and using leverages in the pursuit of this objective since the early 1990s, because of their vulnerability vis-a-vis the latter.

However, in contrary to this assumption, the cases in this study showed that, though all of the former Soviet republics, which gained their independence with secession from the Soviet Union, were located in the same external context and faced similar external constraints, they assessed the Russian factor differently and made different alliance decisions. Whilst some of them assessed the Russian factor as a threat and were sceptic towards politico-military initiatives in the former Soviet space, some others did not share this assessment and displayed the same scepticism towards NATO enlargement. The diversity in the external security considerations and the differences in the assessments of the Russian factor highlight the fact that external dynamics do not influence all states in the same way. Accordingly, traditional realist approach, which explains alliance-formation with a focus on external dynamics, cannot account for the variation in post-communist space because of its over-reliance on external dynamics and propensity to make generalizations.

Furthermore, traditional realist approach cannot account for the periodical changes in states' security policies and alliance decisions. If external dynamics had had a direct influence on states' search for membership in alliances, as presupposed by the traditional realist approach, an alliance decision would have been consistently pursued, once it has been made, unless a change occurs in the external context. However, as seen from the cases in this study, this was also not the case for the post-communist states.

As such, the Ukrainian case showed that, even if specific alliance decisions have been made, they might be abandoned over time though the external context remains the same. In Ukraine, NATO membership had been first articulated by President Kuchma in 2002. However, this objective was not pursued in practice and Kuchma left it before the end of his term in office. Though this objective was endorsed again by President Yushchenko in 2005, it

was left again in 2010 with the inauguration of Yanukovich Presidency. Therefore, even if the Russian factor remained persistent since the immediate post-independence period, its influence on alliance considerations changed depending on how Ukrainian presidents chose to deal with it and the attitude to the NATO membership changed with the political agenda of presidents.

This was also the case with Czechoslovakia in 1989. Even though the external context remained the same, the change of political power from communists to pro-Western dissidents with the Velvet Revolution in 1989 drastically influenced the Czechoslovak security policies, which culminated in the disbandment of the membership in Warsaw Pact in 1991 and embracement of the objective of NATO membership in 1992.

Different from traditional realist approach, constructivists take into account both external and internal dynamics when dealing with the question of “whom to ally with”. As such, constructivists base their analysis on the concept of identity and assume that, since common identities produce convergence on threat perceptions, states form alliances with other states which they share the same ideational milieu with. Therefore, for constructivists, a greater degree of the sense of community between states precipitates them to ally with each other.⁵⁴⁴ From this perspective, Belarus’ alliance-formation with Russia can be seen as an outgrowth of its Slavic identity and long historical interactions with Russia; whilst the pro-NATO alliance trajectory of the Czech Republic and Latvia can be seen as a outgrowth of Europe-based identity definitions.

The problem with the constructivist perspective stems from the fact that national identity has been a controversial phenomenon in most of the post-communist states. For example, in the Latvian case, even though Latvian authorities frequently referred to their European identity, it is hardly possible to argue that this was shared by the majority of Russian diaspora as well as pro-Russian elites in Latvia. This was also the case with Belarus. Even though the Slavic identity conceptualization of Lukashenko as well as the pro-Russian sympathies of the Belarusian public seemed to confirm the constructivist assumptions, it is not possible to argue that Belarus was perceived as a Slavic

⁵⁴⁴ Frank Schimmelfennig, “NATO enlargement: A constructivist explanation”.

country for the political groups and segments of society which have supported an ethnic-based Belarusian identity.⁵⁴⁵ As revealed by these two cases, the focus on identity conceptualizations at the surface might overlook the fact that identity conceptualizations in some post-communist states might be fragmented and reflect the deliberate choices and preferences of the dominant political groups.⁵⁴⁶ Accordingly, explaining states' alliance decisions on the basis of identity conceptualizations, which might have a fluid and controversial character in reality, might lead one to draw fallacious conclusions.

The insufficiencies of identity-based explanations for alliance decisions is the most discernible in the Ukrainian case. As Mikhail Molchanov observed, Ukraine has had “a nation in the making that embraces several dozen ethnic groups and political communities whose visions of the goals of national development may vary to the point of direct opposition and mutual exclusion.”⁵⁴⁷ As such, since the identity of the Ukrainian State changes depending on from the perspective of which region it is evaluated, one can expect Ukraine to take either pro-Russian or pro-Western strategic orientation.

A constructivist may also assume that the fluidity of the Ukrainian identity is the reason behind Ukraine's not forming alliances in the post-Soviet era. As such, it may be argued that, since there is not a single and all-encompassing national identity in Ukraine, there has not been a consensus on which threats to encounter and how to deal with them. As a result, the lack of a common national identity and absence of a common threat conceptualization among Ukrainians may be viewed as the factor that prevented a continuous attachment to a military alliance.⁵⁴⁸

However, this constructivist explanation is also not convincing on the grounds that this fluidity has never caused the depiction of the vision of full

⁵⁴⁵ Elizaveta V. Zheganina, “Belarus: Factors Impeding Transition toward Democracy”, p. 12; Taras Kuzio, “History, Memory and Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Colonial Space”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2002), p. 254.

⁵⁴⁶ Ronald Grigor Suny, “Provisional Stabilities: The Politics of Identities in Post-Soviet Eurasia”, *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (January 2000).

⁵⁴⁷ Mikhail Molchanov, “National Identity and Foreign Policy Orientation in Ukraine”, p. 228.

⁵⁴⁸ Stephen Shulman, “Cultures in competition: Ukrainian foreign policy and the ‘cultural threat’ from abroad”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1998).

integration into the former Soviet space as an alternative option for Ukraine. Instead, despite persistent differences among Ukrainians regarding foreign and security policy matters and explicit support of some Ukrainians for Ukraine's denser integration into the former Soviet space, Ukrainian authorities have been quite consistent in sustaining cooperation with NATO, albeit in a framework falling short of full membership, and displaying scepticism towards politico-military integration in the CIS. Therefore, even though societal divergences contributed to the ambiguity of Ukrainian foreign and security policies, they still did not result in an absolute strategic indecisiveness.

Given the inadequacies of traditional realist and constructivist approaches in explaining post-communist states' decisions on "whom to ally with", this dissertation has addressed this question with a neoclassical realist perspective. Accordingly, it has been assumed that, post-communist states' alliance decisions have been influenced by both external and internal dynamics. Nevertheless, different from traditional realist approach, which base its analysis on the influence of external dynamics, it has been argued that the influence of external dynamics is not direct. Instead, external dynamics influenced states indirectly in interaction with internal dynamics. To put it in another way, external dynamics influenced states depending on how they were assessed at the domestic level. Since this assessment was made by leaders who had decision-making power, its outcome was influenced by their political agenda and domestic political interests.

As such, in the Czech case, even though the geopolitical vulnerabilities of the Czech Republic as well as the uncertainties regarding the Russian factor were influential in the Czech authorities' search for security guarantees, the assessment of NATO as a remedy to this need was in consistent with the political objectives and agenda of the ruling authorities. Therefore, the holding of power which defined the external interests of the Czech Republic with reference to the integration to Europe influenced the assessment of the Russian factor as a challenge. Similar to the Czech Republic, in the Latvian case, though the Russian factor was assessed as a security challenge, this was due to the holding of power by political groups which defined the interests of the Latvian state as the avoidance of falling into the Russian sphere of interest and attachment to the West. In both cases, though the Russian factor was influential in the pro-NATO

alliance trajectory, the assessment of the Russian factor as a security challenge and the depiction of NATO as a remedy to it were influenced by the holding of power by political groups which defined their external and internal objectives with reference to the integration into Europe. As such, NATO membership was seen by both Czech and Latvian authorities not only as a source of external security guarantees, but also as a measure of strengthening their domestic position vis-a-vis their communist or pro-Russian rivals.

In the Belarusian case, the Russian factor was not assessed as a threat. Instead, considering the pro-democracy emphasis of NATO members as a greater source of threat to his rule, President Lukashenko assessed NATO as a threat and formed alliance with Russia to counter it. For him, the Russian diplomatic, economic and military support not only contributed to the external security of Belarus, providing him with the opportunity to break the international isolation and negative effects of sanctions, but also enabled him to maintain his domestic power. Therefore, though the external dynamics influenced the alliance decision in Belarus, the outcome of this influence depended on how they were assessed by President Lukashenko.

8.4. Why have some post-communist states not formed alliances?

The cases scrutinized in this dissertation showed that states might not form alliances in two occurrences. First, state authorities might consciously prefer not to form alliance if they view this in conformity with the external security of their state and their domestic political interests. Secondly, even if they favour membership in specific alliances, they might not achieve this in case their ability to form alliance is restrained by external and internal constraints. In the first case, states do not form alliance out of the conscious choice of their leaders. In the second case, they cannot form alliance even if their leaders seek membership in specific alliances. Both cases can be explained well with a neoclassical realist perspective.

The first possibility was the case with all relevant four post-communist states in the early 1990s. As it has been shown in the preceding chapters, state authorities from these four post-communist states opted for not forming alliances in the immediate post-establishment/independence period. This was basically due

to the turbulence in their external and internal contexts. Under this turbulence, they viewed this policy as a measure of downgrading the external challenges and focusing on state and nation-building processes. By the mid-1990s, the external turbulence had come to an end when NATO set the vision of eastern enlargement and Russia had defined its foreign policy objectives towards the near abroad. The internal turbulence also ended when their socio-political structures crystallized and they made progress in internal transition process. In the end, whereas the external context determined what would be assessed, the internal context of these states specified who will make the assessment and with what considerations. Accordingly, these states began to make more substantial alliance decisions.

Different from the cases of the Czech Republic, Latvia and Belarus, Ukraine sustained its status out of alliances in the rest of the post-Cold War period. Evaluating the Ukrainian case from the perspective of the traditional realist approach, which assumes that states might not form alliances if they are militarily self-sufficient, it is seen that this approach cannot explain why Ukraine did not form alliances despite its limited military capabilities in the context of the pressures exerted by Russia. Alternatively, dealing with this case from a constructivist perspective, which envisions that only states which base their identities on an internationalist vision and norms praising neutrality and the rejection of force do not form alliance, it is seen that this approach is also inadequate since this status has been a *de facto* reality than a *de jure* declaration of neutrality encoded in the Ukrainian strategic and constitutive documents.

Rather than traditional realist approach and constructivism, the Ukrainian case can be better be explained with neoclassical realism. As such, evaluating from this perspective, it is seen that, during Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, Ukraine did not form alliance since this was deemed more suitable for the external security of their state as well as the maintenance of their domestic political power.

The Ukrainian case also proved that, even if specific alliance decisions are made, leaders' ability to form alliance might be restricted by both external and internal constraints, as witnessed during Yushchenko Presidency. Therefore, as presupposed by neoclassical realism, ruling authorities need the existence of a set of internal and external conditions in order to consistently pursue and fulfil their

pro-alliance decisions. At this point, in order to provide a better understanding on what type of constraints might be faced, it seems necessary to examine how authorities from other three cases could fulfil their objective of forming alliance.

As it is seen from the Czech, Latvian and Belarus cases, elite convergence on the essentiality of the membership in specific alliances is a significant condition for making and consistently pursuing pro-alliance decisions.⁵⁴⁹ As such, elite consensus on alliance decisions was quite high in these countries. Due to the dominance of pro-Western forces in Latvia and the Czech Republic, the option of integration into former Soviet space never became a matter of discussion in these countries. In Belarus, because of the dominant position of the President in the political system as well as the prevalence of pro-presidential and left-wing forces, the option of joining NATO was never taken as a possibility in Belarus.

Even though the objective of NATO membership was opposed by communists in the Czech Republic and pro-Russian groups in Latvia, their influence could be curtailed by the ruling authorities in several ways. In Latvia, this could be done by excluding communists from governments, as a result of the consensus of other parties not to form coalition government with them, and adopting restrictive citizenship arrangements, which refrained the majority of Russian diaspora from electoral politics. Similar to Latvia, communist influence was also limited in the Czech Republic because of the rejection of dominant political parties, both right-wing ODS and left-wing CSSD, to form coalitions with them. In the end, communists remained on the margins in both countries and could not exert a countervailing political influence.⁵⁵⁰

Secondly, because of the electoral concerns of ruling authorities, societal support is also essential for the consistent pursuit of pro-alliance decisions.⁵⁵¹ In Latvia, majority of ethnic Latvians supported the pro-NATO alliance decision of ruling authorities. Even though the Russian diaspora opposed the objective of

⁵⁴⁹ Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing", pp. 170-173.

⁵⁵⁰ For a detailed comparative perspective on the position and evolution of communist parties in the post-Cold War era, See. Taras Kuzio, "Comparative perspectives on Communist successor parties in Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 41 (2008).

⁵⁵¹ Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing", pp. 173-175.

NATO membership, it could not exert any countervailing societal influence on the ruling authorities since most of them did not have the right to vote and, thus, could not endanger the electoral chances of ruling authorities to be re-elected. In Belarus, pro-Russian policies of President Lukashenko were supported by the majority of the Belarusian public, making the President free from any electoral concerns and enabling him to sustain alliance with Russia without any interval over time. In the Czech Republic, the public was disinterested in foreign and security policies and mostly concerned about distributive economic issues. This disinterest made foreign and security policy an elite project driven by the preferences of the ruling authorities and enabled them to sustain their policies over time without facing any domestic constraints and electoral risks.

As to the external constraints faced by ruling authorities, the Latvian and Czech cases showed that the willingness of the incumbent NATO members to accept new allies was essential for the fulfilment of this objective. In addition, the moderation of the Russian factor appeared as another factor that positively influenced their alliance-formation with NATO. Whilst the Russian reactions were moderated with the signing of the Founding Act in 1997 and the commitment of NATO members not to deploy NATO infrastructure in CEE, it was eliminated with the display of more pragmatic stance by President Putin as well as the establishment of NATO-Russia Council in 2001.

Considering the internal and external conditions given above, it becomes clear that even if the Ukrainian President Yushchenko assumed the objective of NATO membership in 2005, he could not achieve Ukraine to form alliance with NATO since he failed to convince the Ukrainian elites and society at large on the essentiality of NATO membership and to overcome the Russian reactions.

8.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, it is argued that the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space cannot be adequately explained by traditional realist and constructivist approaches. Due to its external-dominated and military-focused assumptions, traditional realist approach overlooks the myriad dynamics and multiple concerns that influence these states' alliance decisions. Its inadequacy is the most visible in the case of former Soviet republics, which made different

alliance decisions despite the fact that they were located in the same external context and exposed to the same external pressures. As to constructivism, its identity-based assumptions also appear inadequate for the post-communist cases. Its emphasis on the influence of national identities in determining the threat definitions and the policies to counter them underestimates the fact that national identity has been a controversial phenomenon in most of the post-communist states.

It is defended in this chapter that the diversity in the alliance trajectories of post-communist states can best be understood with neoclassical realism. Drawing on the findings from the previous country-focused chapters, this chapter underscored that alliance decisions of post-communist states have been influenced by both military and non-military security concerns as well as external and internal dynamics. Moreover, not only the salience and the type of the security concerns changed from state to state, but also the influence of external dynamics also showed variations depending on how they were assessed at the domestic level.

All in all, this chapter highlighted that post-communist states' alliance decisions can better be explained by taking into account their contextual and particular characteristics. In either case, these states' alliance choices reflected the interaction of external dynamics with their domestic political peculiarities, and the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space emerged as an outcome of the diversity in post-communist states' external and internal contexts.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The turbulence and uncertainty in the immediate post-Cold War years posed a challenge to not only policy makers who were trying to adapt to new external and internal conditions but also International Relations scholars who were dealing with the new puzzles brought by the changing conditions. In this period, policy makers in the post-communist space found themselves in a security vacuum and began to face the challenge of how to devise their security policies under the new conditions. Similarly, with the discredit of neorealism, which dominated the discipline for decades but failed to predict and explain the end of Cold War, most of International Relations scholars found themselves as deprived of the assumptions which guided their analysis for decades.

Policy makers in post-communist states dealt with the internal turbulence in their newly independent countries by initiating a comprehensive transformation process and the external one by adopting a cautious attitude in their foreign and security policies. As a reflection of this cautious stance, they initially expressed their intention of not forming alliances. Over time, as the internal and external contexts of their states crystallized, they began to make more substantial decisions. Whilst some of them supported membership in either NATO or CST/CSTO in the former Soviet space, others preferred to remain out of alliances.

Whilst ground-breaking changes were taking place in Eurasia, a sea-change also occurred in International Relations scholarship. The discredit of neorealism opened a process of theoretical enrichment with the increasing salience and emergence of alternative approaches which have claimed either to refine or break from neorealism. In this context, International Relations scholars began to study the central concepts of the discipline and the puzzles created by the new conditions with new perspectives.

This study has addressed one of the puzzles of the post-Cold War era, the diversity in the alliance trajectories of the post-communist states, from the perspective of one of the emerging approaches of International Relations,

neoclassical realism. Accordingly, drawing on the observation that post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe, all of which were former Warsaw Pact members, took different alliance decisions in the post-Cold War period, this dissertation has searched for the dynamics behind their alliance decisions as well as the reasons for the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space with a neoclassical realist perspective.

When conducting the analysis in this regard, it has been argued that, though having dominated the alliance literature during the Cold War, traditional realist approach cannot explain post-communist states' alliance decisions in its entirety. Its propensity to make generalizations with a focus on external dynamics cannot explain why the Russian factor, the most significant externality in the post-communist space, did not influence all post-communist states in the same way. The military-dominated assumptions of traditional realist approach also overlooks the fact that post-communist states' alliance decisions were also influenced by non-military considerations. Therefore, it is concluded that traditional realist approach is inadequate for both country-focused and comparative analysis on the alliance trajectories of post-communist states because of its over-reliance on external dynamics and military concerns as well as focus on generalizations and regularities.

Alternatively, constructivism is also viewed inadequate for this analysis. Its main weakness stems from the fact that its identity-threat correlation does not fit most of the post-communist states, in which the concept of national identity remained controversial to date. As such, constructivism leads to several and contradictory assumptions depending on how one conceives the national identities of these states. Furthermore, constructivism is also inadequate for comparative analysis on the alliance trajectories of post-communist states which made different alliance decisions though all of them were militarily aligned with the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. If political culture and identities, as outgrowths of historical experiences, had been the sole drivers of states' foreign policies, then, all states in this space should have made similar decisions since they shared the same ideational milieu during the Cold War. As behavioural variation across the former Soviet space also reveals, constructivism cannot bring a thorough explanation for the alliance decisions of post-communist states in the post-Cold War period.

Due to the shortcomings of both approaches, this dissertation analysed the alliance decisions of post-communist states as well as the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space from a neoclassical realist perspective. As such, thought from this perspective, this study is structured on the following three theoretical assumptions. First of all, in contrary to the traditional realist approach, it is defended that states' alliance decisions are not influenced by external dynamics directly. Even if external dynamics influence states' alliance decisions, this influence is indirect and changes from state to state depending on how they are infiltrated to the domestic realm. Secondly, the infiltration of external dynamics to the domestic realm takes place through the assessments of leaders who have decision-making power in foreign and security policy realm. As such, externalities influence states depending on who assessed them and with what considerations. Since leaders play a two-level game, they act with both external and internal considerations. To that end, when making alliance decisions, they aim to promote the external interests of their state, as defined by them, and to maintain and strengthen their domestic power. Thirdly, leaders do not act in a political and social vacuum. When making and pursuing alliance decisions, they face several external and internal constraints. As such, they can fulfil their alliance decisions if and when they can overcome the restraining effects of external and internal constraints.

This study applied this theoretical framework to the post-communist space with both country-focused and comparative analysis. The country-focused analysis elaborated the cases of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Belarus and Ukraine. The reasons for the selection of these cases stemmed from the differences in their alliance decisions as well as the degree of their integration into NATO: Czech Republic, which sought NATO membership since the later period of Czechoslovakia and involved in NATO's first enlargement wave in 1999; Latvia, which sought NATO membership beginning from 1994 and became a NATO member in 2004; Ukraine, which did not form alliances in the post-independence period and cooperated with NATO in a way falling short of full membership; and Belarus, which has never addressed the option of NATO membership, formed alliance with Russia and joined CST/CSTO.

In consistent with neoclassical realism, this dissertation began the analysis at the systemic level and identified the significant externalities that influenced post-communist states' security considerations in the post-Cold War period. Then, it continued with the country-focused analysis and examined how the identified externalities influenced post-communist states' alliance decisions in interaction with their domestic political peculiarities. After completing the country-focused analysis, the dissertation then evaluated the findings from the four post-communist cases in tandem and articulated the reasons for the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space.

As it has been shown in Chapter 3, these states' location between the enlarging NATO and the emerging politico-military initiatives under the Russian tutelage in the former Soviet space, which has been presented as alternatives to each other because of the estrangement between Russia and the West, emerged as the most significant externality which influenced the security considerations of post-communist states. Nevertheless, it is also argued that this influence was not direct and did not idealize any foreign and security policy behaviour. Instead, it had an indirect influence on post-communist states depending on how it was assessed at the domestic level.

It was shown that all post-communist states elaborated in this study initially declared their intention of not forming alliances. This was partly due to the uncertainty in their external context and the perceived sense of threat from the stationing of the Russian troops on their territories in the early post-Cold War period. Under these conditions, they viewed this policy as a measure of downgrading the external challenges and focusing on internal problems. By the mid-1990s, the external turbulence had come to an end when NATO set the vision of eastern enlargement and Russia had defined its foreign policy towards the near abroad. The internal turbulence also ended when their socio-political structures crystallized. In the end, whereas the external context determined what would be assessed, the internal context of these states specified who will make the assessment and with what considerations. Accordingly, these states began to make more substantial alliance decisions.

In line with this general trend, following the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Czechoslovak authorities initially promoted a pan-Europeanist security

understanding. They declared a policy of not forming alliances and supported the transformation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact towards a security community. However, when the shortcomings of this approach became apparent and the external security conditions deteriorated, they endorsed the objective of NATO membership as early as 1991. This objective was sustained after the establishment of the Czech Republic, turning into a *sine quo non* of Czech security policies, and was ultimately fulfilled with the accession to NATO in 1999.

The Czech case showed that foreign and security policies of the Czech authorities were influenced by the convergence of the majority of elites on the wider objective of “return to Europe” as well as the exclusion of communists from governments and the public disinterest in foreign and security policy issues. Whereas the first one enabled the Czech Republic to set a pro-Western political orientation, the latter two provided the consistent pursuit of this objective. In the Czech case, the embracement of the objective of NATO membership was due to the assessment of external dynamics by the Czech authorities in accordance with their political agenda and domestic interests. When making a pro-NATO alliance decision, Czech leaders aimed not only to provide the external security of the Czech state against future uncertainties, but also to secure the continuity of transition process and to strengthen their domestic power against their communist opponents.

In the Latvian case, after having seized independence, Latvian authorities initially declared a status of *de facto* neutrality and refrained from forming alliances. This was understood as a temporary strategy which would enable them to allay the Russian pressure on them to join the CIS and to divert their attention on internal issues. Following the withdrawal of the Russian troops as well as the end of intra-NATO discussions on NATO enlargement, Latvia embraced the objective of NATO membership in 1994 and sustained this until its ultimate realization in 2004.

Similar to the Czech Republic, foreign and security policies had never been a matter of contention in the post-independence Latvia. There was a consensus at both elite and public levels regarding the essentiality of NATO membership and discardment of the option of integration into the CIS. This was enabled by the dominance of pro-Western liberal forces in both legislative and

executive branches as well as the pro-Western leanings of the Latvian electorate. Though there was an extensive number of Russian diaspora and pro-Russian opposition in Latvia, which had the potential to counter-influence the pro-Western dominance, they were kept under control with political and electoral arrangements. In the absence of countervailing political and societal influences and thanks to the support of the Latvian public, pro-Western political forces could consistently pursue their alliance decisions independent of internal constraints.

In Belarus, national democrats and communists were the dominant political groups in the period from 1991 to 1994. This political configuration produced a binary foreign and security policy outlook which oscillated between the policy of not forming alliances and re-integration into the former Soviet space. The decisive moment for the post-independence Belarusian politics came with the election of Lukashenko as the Belarusian President in 1994. As Lukashenko seized excessive decision-making power over time at the expense of other institutions, the Belarusian foreign and security policies began to carry his personal imprint.

In the Belarusian case, the establishment of the Belarusian-Russian military alliance was due to the assessment of the external context by President Lukashenko in accordance with his political agenda and domestic interests. Presenting the NATO enlargement as a threat and forming an alliance with Russia, President Lukashenko aimed not only to promote the external interests of Belarus, as understood by him, but also to maintain his political survival.

In the Ukrainian case, cooperation with NATO started as early as 1991 and this was sustained by all Ukrainian Presidents without any rupture. Nevertheless, Ukraine's inclination to cooperate with NATO did not turn into a sustained and continuous vision of acquiring full membership in the Alliance. Even if Ukrainian leaders declared the intention to fully integrate into NATO from time to time, this mostly remained a discursive act, as explicitly witnessed during the late period of the Presidency of Kuchma, who had been in power from 1994 to 2004, or could not be fulfilled, as seen during the Yushchenko Presidency. Combined with the hesitance to join the politico-military initiatives in the former Soviet space, this caused Ukraine to remain out of alliances in the post-independence period.

The Ukrainian case shows that even if Ukraine's security policies were influenced by the Russian factor, each president chose to deal with it in different ways depending on their political agenda and domestic interests. As a result, during both Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, the policy of not forming alliances emerged out of presidents' multi-vector policies which were deemed more appropriate for the external security of the Ukrainian state and domestic political interests of Ukrainian presidents. Different from Kuchma and Yanukovich, President Yushchenko, the electoral support of whom came from western and central Ukraine, defined membership in NATO as the most feasible way to provide Ukrainian security and to strengthen his domestic power. However, he could not realize this objective because he could not mobilize Ukrainian elites and society and overcome the Russian reactions. In the end, Ukraine did not form alliances either out of leaders' deliberate choices, as witnessed during Kravchuk, Kuchma and Yanukovich presidencies, or against the will of the leaders, as happened during the Yushchenko Presidency, because of the external and internal constraints.

Drawing on the findings from the country-focused analysis, the last chapter scrutinized the reasons for the variation in the alliance trajectories of post-communist states in the post-Cold War period in the light of three questions: i) why post-communist states formed alliances; ii) what determined their decision on "whom to ally with"; iii) why some post-communist states did not form alliances.

Regarding the first question, it has been argued that post-communist states formed alliances with both military and non-military security concerns. It has also been argued that the salience of the type of security concerns changed from state to state depending on their unique external and internal contexts. Whilst military concerns were more influential for some of them, non-military concerns were more decisive for some others.

Concerning the second question, what influenced their decision on "whom to ally with", it has been shown that post-communist states' alliance decisions have been influenced by both external and internal dynamics. Rather than having been influenced by external dynamics directly, post-communist states have been affected by them in interaction with their domestic political peculiarities. To put it in another way, external dynamics influenced states depending on how they were

assessed at the domestic level. Since this assessment was made by leaders who had decision-making power, its outcome was influenced by their political agenda and domestic political interests.

Regarding the last question, why some post-communist states did not form alliance, it has been underscored that this might occur in two cases. First, state authorities might consciously prefer not to form alliance if they view this in conformity with the external security of their state and their domestic political interests. Secondly, even if they favour membership in specific alliances, they might not achieve this in case their ability to form alliance is restrained by external and internal constraints. Whilst states do not form alliance out of the conscious choice of their leaders in t

he first case, they cannot do it because of external and internal constraints in the second case.

The comparative analysis highlighted that alliance decisions of post-communist states were influenced by both military and non-military security concerns as well as external and internal dynamics. On the basis of this finding, the analysis pointed the diversity in post-communist states' external and internal contexts as the reason for the variation in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space.

Considering the findings from both country-focused and comparative analysis, the following evaluations can be made regarding the analytical utility of neoclassical realism. First of all, the adoption of neoclassical realism, which enables one to consider both external and internal dynamics with a multi-level perspective, offered the opportunity to develop a comprehensive theoretical analysis in this study. The elaboration of the interaction between these dynamics caused this study to differ from many existing writings which were prepared with an “either/or” approach and have endeavoured to account for whether state behaviours respond to external or internal dynamics.

Furthermore, the neoclassical realist emphasis on particularity and contextuality not only enabled to make in-depth analysis on particular cases, but also allowed to discover the reasons for the behavioural variation at a specific spatial and temporal context. As such, whilst providing a better understanding on why the selected post-communist states preferred to act in the way they did and

why the behaviour of specific states changed over time, it also brought an explanation for and made some general conclusions on the behavioural variation at the regional level.

In addition, whilst the incorporation of leaders' domestic power considerations into the analysis enabled to develop a deepened security understanding, the emphasis on particularity and contextuality gave way to the recognition that states' security agenda differ and allowed to adopt a broadened security perspective. This broadened and deepened security understanding fit well to this analysis on post-communist space, which has undergone an external and internal transition, yielding different non-military security concerns.

Most importantly, this study showed that, since neoclassical realism is an emerging approach of International Relations, its analytical strength comes from the fact that it draws a general framework, the details of which are determined by researches with the variables they select. Accordingly, the general neoclassical realist framework was detailed in this study with the identification of the Russian factor and the estrangement between Russia and the West as the most significant external dynamics in Central and Eastern Europe and the selection of leaders' assessments as the main intervening dynamic that shaped how these externalities influenced post-communist states' security policies and alliance decisions. The analysis also identified different domestic political peculiarities for each case, including political configurations, profile of communists and the public opinion, which shaped leaders' assessments and, hence, alliance decisions.

That said, it should also be reminded that, despite the theoretical promises and analytical utility of neoclassical realism, it continues to face various criticisms. This basically stems from the fact that neoclassical realism is still in the making and in need of further theoretical refinement. It was seen at some phases of this analysis that the boundaries between neoclassical realism and neorealism as well as constructivism may blur in some cases, depending on the variables selected to substantiate the analysis. For example, when dealing with some domestic variables, such as the influence of public opinion on leaders' assessments, it is seen that other variables, such as history and nationalism, which other theoretical approaches emphasize, also came into the picture. Though this analysis overcame such ambiguities by using them to the degree that they

influenced leaders' domestic power considerations, this still showed that the boundaries of neoclassical realist analysis should be strengthened for the sake of further theoretical clarification.

As pointed in Chapter 2, the random selection of variables has been another criticism faced by neoclassical realists. Though the analysis in this dissertation was primarily structured on one domestic intervening variable, the assessment of leaders, which is deemed relevant to all four case, it also referred to some other domestic peculiarities, which influenced the leaders' assessments and, hence, alliance decisions. This stemmed from the fact that, because of the diversity of socio-political structures of post-communist states, different peculiarities became influential in different cases. Though this increased the analytical utility of neoclassical realism for the country-focused chapters, it raised another puzzle for the comparative analysis: "whether any categorization is possible on the basis of specific domestic peculiarities shared by different states".

This study attempted to contribute to the clarification of neoclassical realism by applying its basic assumptions to the post-Cold War alliance trajectories of the four post-communist cases. By exploring the external-internal nexus behind the alliance trajectories of each state with a neoclassical realist perspective, it showed that post-communist states' alliance decisions can be better explained with reference to the interaction of external dynamics with their domestic political peculiarities, and the diversity in the alliance trajectories in the post-communist space emerges an outcome of the variation in this interaction.

This study brought an explanation to one of the enduring puzzles of the post-Cold War period, "why post-communist states, all of which were former Warsaw Pact members, made different alliance decisions in the post-Cold War period". Further elaboration of the external-internal interaction found out in this study on the basis of different variables and evaluation of the new puzzles raised by this study will not only strengthen the understanding on the post-communist space but also will contribute to the refinement of neoclassical realism by providing further clarification to its assumptions and revealing its differences from the established approaches of International Relations.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY

ÇEK CUMHURİYETİ, LETONYA, UKRAYNA VE BELARUS'UN İTTİFAK YÖNELİMLERİ: NEOKLASİK REALİST ANALİZ

1. Giriş

Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması ve Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinin ardından, Avrupa'da ve eski Sovyet coğrafyasında siyasi ve askeri olarak yeni koşullara nasıl uyum sağlanacağı konusunda kısa süreli bir tereddüt dönemi yaşanmış, bu dönem, her iki bölgede de eş zamanlı olarak bütünleşme çalışmalarına hız verilmesiyle sona ermişti. Bu süreçte, Avrupa'nın güvenlik ittifakı olagelen NATO, yeni işlevler edinmiş, askeri yeteneklerini artırmış ve yeni ilişki modelleri geliştirmiş; Rusya ise, Aralık 1991'de kurulan Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu (BDT) çatısı altında siyasi-askeri olarak bütünleşme çalışmalarına başlamıştı.

Soğuk Savaşın sona ermesi, Sovyetler Birliği ile Varşova Paktı çatısı altında ittifak ilişkisi içinde bulunan eski komünist devletleri⁵⁵² de yeni koşullara nasıl uyum sağlayabilecekleri sınamasıyla karşı karşıya bırakmıştı. Batı ile bütünleşme veya Soğuk Savaş dönemi alışkanlıklarını sürdürerek eski Sovyet coğrafyasında Rusya liderliğinde başlatılan bütünleşme hareketlerini destekleme seçenekleri arasında ortaya çıkan bu sınama, eski komünist devletlerin bağımsızlık sonrası dış ve güvenlik politikalarının en önemli gündem maddelerinden birini oluşturmuştur. Bazı devletler tercihlerini NATO'dan, bazıları ise eski Sovyet coğrafyasındaki oluşumlardan yana kullanmış, bazı devletler ise, her iki bölgedeki ittifakların dışında kalmayı tercih etmiştir. Soğuk Savaş döneminde Varşova Paktı çatısı altında müttefik olan eski komünist ülkelerin Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde farklı ittifak yönelimleri sergilemesi,

⁵⁵² Bu tezde, eski Varşova Paktı üyesi devletleri ifade etmek için “eski komünist devletler” tabiri kullanılmaktadır. Eski komünist ülkelerden Sovyetler Birliği'ne dahil olanlar için ise “eski Sovyet cumhuriyetleri” ifadesi tercih edilmektedir.

Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde analiz edilmesi gereken sorunsallardan birini teşkil etmektedir.

2. Amaç, Kapsam ve Yöntem

Bu tez, Soğuk Savaş döneminde Varşova Paktı çatısı altında müttefik olan Orta ve Doğu Avrupa'daki eski komünist devletlerin Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde farklı ittifak yönelimleri sergilediği gözleminden hareketle, bahsekonu devletlerin ittifak yönelimlerindeki farklılaşmanın nedenlerini sorgulamaktadır. Analiz, ittifak seçimleri ve NATO ile bütünleşme dereceleri bakımından kendi aralarında farklılaşan Çek Cumhuriyeti, Letonya, Ukrayna ve Belarus örnekleri temelinde yürütülmektedir.

Bu tez, ittifak kavramı temelinde hazırlanmıştır. Tezde, ittifakları diğer devletlerden kaynaklanan dış tehditlere karşı güç artırımına olanak sağlayan askeri oluşumlar olarak gören geleneksel realist yaklaşımdan (klasik realist ve neorealist) farklı olarak, genişlemiş ve derinleşmiş güvenlik tanımlamasına uygun bir ittifak anlayışı geliştirilmektedir. Neoklasik realist bir bakış açısıyla geliştirilen bu anlayışa göre, devletlerin ittifak ilişkisi içine girmesi güvenlik arayışlarının bir sonucu olarak değerlendirilse de, bu arayışın askeri olmayan nedenlerden de kaynaklanabileceği, ayrıca, ittifakların, sadece devletlerin dış güvenlik çıkarlarına değil, aynı zamanda, dış ve güvenlik politikalarının mimarı konumunda olan, karar alma gücüne sahip siyasi aktörlerin iç siyasi çıkarlarına da hizmet ettiği savunulmaktadır.

Bu ittifak anlayışı çerçevesinde, tez, bahsekonu dört devletin ittifak kararlarını iç ve dış politikaları arasındaki bağlantıyı göz önünde bulundurarak incelemekte; dış dinamiklerin devletler üzerindeki etkisinin devletlerin kendilerine özgü iç dinamikleri çerçevesinde farklılaştığı yönündeki neoklasik realist varsayım doğrultusunda, dış dinamikler ile devletlerin kendilerine özgü iç dinamikleri arasındaki etkileşimi sorgulamaktadır. Buna göre, Rusya'nın NATO genişlemesine tepkisi ve yakın çevresinde etki sağlamaya yönelik politikası eski komünist devletler üzerindeki en önemli dış dinamikler olarak tanımlanarak, bahsekonu devletlerin ittifak yönelimlerini oluştururken bu dinamiklerden nasıl etkilendiği araştırılmaktadır. Bu şekilde, farklı düzeyleri dikkate alan kapsamlı bir

analizle, hem devletlerin ittifak seçimlerinin hem de ittifak yönelimlerinin bölge genelinde farklılaşmasının nedenleri incelenmektedir.

Tez, birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan faydalanılarak hazırlanmıştır. Tezde incelenen devletlerin resmi belgeleri ile devlet yetkilileri tarafından yapılan konuşmalar ve röportajlar, ayrıca, NATO tarafından kabul edilen karar ve belgeler, kullanılan başlıca birincil kaynaklardandır. Ayrıca, Brüksel’de Aralık 2013’de ve Çek Cumhuriyeti’nde muhtelif zamanlarda yapılan mülakatlar da teze birincil kaynak oluşturmuştur. Teze bahse konu devletlerin dış ve güvenlik politikaları ile sosyo-politik yapılarına ilişkin kitap ve makaleler de tezde geniş olarak kullanılmıştır.

Bu tez, birçok açıdan özgün bir çalışma sunmaktadır. İlk olarak, tez, şu ana kadar analiz edilmeyen bir konuyu, eski komünist devletlerin ittifak yönelimlerini konu edinmektedir. NATO’nun birinci ve ikinci genişleme dalgasına dahil olan eski komünist ülkelerle ilgili analizler mevcut literatürde geniş bir yer tutsa da, bu çalışmaların büyük bir kısmı, bu devletlerin “neden NATO üyeliği hedefini seçtikleri” sorusundan ziyade, “NATO’ya üye olup olamayacakları” sorusuna odaklanmış; NATO yönelimi sergilemeyen devletlerin durumu bu analizlerde genellikle ilgi odağı dışında kalmıştır. Bu çerçevede, eski komünist devletlerin ittifak yönelimlerin ülke-temelli ve karşılaştırmalı bir analizle irdelendiği bu çalışma, mevcut çalışmaların birçoğunun belirli ülkelere ve sorulara odaklanması nedeniyle ilgili literatürden farklılık arz etmektedir.

Çalışmanın ikinci özgün yanı, Uluslararası İlişkiler’in oluşum halindeki bir teorik yaklaşımı olan neoklasik realizm temelinde hazırlanmış olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, şu ana kadar ittifak çalışmalarında ve eski komünist ülkelerle ilgili analizlerde kullanılmamıştır. Neoklasik realizmin farklı düzeylere odaklanan kapsamlı bakış açısı sayesinde, tez, şu ana kadar geleneksel realist yaklaşımdan hazırlanan birçok çalışmadan farklılaşmakta, odaklandığı konuyu iç-dış dinamik etkileşimi ile farklı politika hedeflerini göz önünde bulundurarak irdelemektedir.

Şu ana kadar çalışılmamış bir konuyu, oluşum halindeki bir teorik perspektiften ele alan bu tez, sadece eski komünist ülkelerin ittifak seçimlerine ilişkin kapsamlı bir açıklama getirmekle kalmayıp, aynı zamanda, Uluslararası

İlişkiler'in temel kavramlarından olagelen ittifakları yeni bir bakış açısıyla analiz etmektedir.

3. Kuramsal Çerçeve ve Temel Tez

Bu tez, eski komünist ülkelerin ittifak kararlarının sadece dış dinamiklerle açıklanamayacağını savunmaktadır. Dış dinamikler ittifak seçimlerinde etkili olsa da, bu etki, doğrudan ve tek yönlü olmayıp, devletlerin kendilerine özgü iç dinamikleri çerçevesinde farklılaşmaktadır. Buna göre, tezin temel argümanı, eski komünist devletlerin ittifak seçimlerinin, dış dinamikler ile devletlerin kendine özgü iç siyasi dinamikleri arasındaki etkileşimle açıklanabileceği; ittifak seçimlerinin bölge genelinde farklılaşmasının ise, devletlerin özgül dış ve iç bağlamlarındaki çeşitliliğin sonucu olduğu yönündedir.

Tez, dış dinamiklerin devletlerin kendine özgü iç siyasi dinamikleriyle etkileşimini neoklasik realizmin üç temel varsayımı temelinde incelemektedir. İlk olarak, devletlerin dış dinamiklerden doğrudan etkilenmediği, dış dinamiklerin etkisinin dolaylı olduğu ve devletlerin kendine özgü iç siyasi özelliklerine göre değiştiği varsayılmaktadır. İkinci olarak, dış dinamiklerin devletlerin kendine özgü iç özellikleriyle etkileşiminin, karar alma gücüne sahip liderlerin değerlendirmeleri yoluyla gerçekleştiği savunulmaktadır. Buna göre, dış dinamiklerin etkisi, kendilerini değerlendirenlerin iç siyasi çıkarlarına ve politika hedeflerine göre değişmektedir. Liderler, ittifak kararları alırken, iç ve dış kaygılarla hareket eder; ittifak kararlarıyla, sadece devletlerinin dış güvenliğini sağlamayı değil, aynı zamanda, iç siyasi konumlarını güçlendirmeyi hedeflerler. Üçüncü olarak, her ne kadar karar alma süreçlerinde temel aktörler olsalar da, liderler siyasi ve sosyal bir boşlukta hareket etmez; karar alma ve uygulama süreçlerinde iç ve dış kısıtlamalarla karşı karşıya kalırlar. Bu nedenle, alınan ittifak kararlarının gerçekleştirilebilmesi, iç ve dış kısıtlayıcı engellerin aşılabilmesine bağlıdır.

Bu çalışma, neoklasik realizme dayalı bu teorik çerçeveyi, Çek Cumhuriyeti, Letonya, Ukrayna ve Belarus örneklerine uygulamaktadır. Tezde, bahse konu dört devletin ittifak yönelimlerinin dış dinamiklerin bu devletlere özgü iç siyasi özelliklerle etkileşiminden kaynaklandığı, bu çerçevede, bu devletlerin Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde sergiledikleri ittifak yönelimlerinin iç ve dış

dinamiklerin birarada değerlendirilmesiyle anlaşılacağı savunulmaktadır. Ülke-odaklı analizde savunulan bu varsayım, karşılaştırmalı analizle de doğrulanmaktadır. Müteakip bölümde, bu çalışmada ülke-odaklı ve karşılaştırmalı analizle ulaşılan bulgular ve savunulan argümanlar ayrıntılı olarak sunulmaktadır.

5. Ülke-Odaklı Analiz

Çek Cumhuriyeti

1989 yılında komünistlerin iktidardan düşmesi ve Batı yanlısı siyasi grupların iktidarı ele geçirmesiyle sonuçlanan Kadife Devrim, Çek iç ve dış siyasetinde yeni bir dönemi başlatmıştır. Devrim öncesi ve sonrası dönemde Sovyetler Birliği'nin devam eden mevcudiyeti çerçevesinde dış bağlam aynı kalsa da, iç siyaset sahnesinde yaşanan köklü değişim, ülkenin dış siyasetinde de değişikliklere neden olmuştur.

Kadife Devrim'den sonra iktidara gelen gruplar, "Avrupa'ya dönüş" vizyonu çerçevesinde kapsamlı bir iç ve dış dönüşüm sürecine başlamışlardır. Devlet kurumlarının ve siyasi sistemin komünizmin kalıtlarından arındırılması dönüşüm sürecinin iç boyutunu oluştururken, 1968 yılından itibaren ülkede konuşlandırılmış halde bulunan Sovyet askeri birliklerinin ülkeden çekilmesi, Batı ülkeleriyle yakın ilişkiler geliştirilmesi ve Batı kurumlarıyla bütünleşmesi dönüşüm sürecinin dış unsurları olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Çekoslovak yetkililer, bu hedefleri izlerken, ilk etapta, ittifakların dışında kalacaklarını açıklamışlar; NATO ve Varşova Paktı'nın "Avrupa Güvenlik Komisyonu" önerileri temelinde güvenlik toplumuna doğru evrilmelerini sağlayacak pan-Avrupacı bir güvenlik yaklaşımını savunmuşlardır.

Çekoslovakya'nın Kadife Devrim sonrasında pan-Avrupacı bir güvenlik anlayışı benimsemesinin nedenleri sorgulanırken, ilk olarak, ülkenin dış bağlamındaki belirsizlik ortamı gözönünde bulundurulmalıdır. Kadife Devrim sonrasında, Çekoslovakya, doğuda Sovyetler Birliği, Batı'da Almanya ile komşuydu. Sovyetler Birliği ve Almanya'nın gelecekte komşularına yönelik izleyecekleri politikaların belirsiz olmasına bağlı olarak algılanan güvensizlik durumu, 1968 yılında ülkede konuşlandırılan Sovyet birliklerinin Çekoslovak topraklarında devam eden varlığından da beslenmekteydi. Bu koşullar altında, ittifakların dışında kalma politikası, dış aktörlerden kaynaklanabilecek bir

müdahalenin önüne geçmenin ve ülkenin dış güvenliğini sağlamanın aracı olarak değerlendirilmişti. Pan-Avrupacı güvenlik sistemi, sadece kısa dönemli tehditleri bertaraf etmenin değil, aynı zamanda, tarih boyunca farklı devletler arasında güç mücadelesinin sahnesi olan Çekoslovakya'nın uzun dönemli güvenliğini sağlamanın bir aracı olarak da görülmüştü.

Neoklasik realism, belirlenen dış politika ve güvenlik politikalarının aynı zamanda karar alıcı durumunda bulunan iktidar sahiplerinin iç siyasi çıkarlarına hizmet ettiğini varsayar. Yani, iktidarı elinde bulunduran siyasi gruplar, güvenlik politikalarını oluştururken ve ittifak kuracakları tarafı seçerken, kendi siyasi konumlarını da güçlendirmeyi amaçlarlar. Bu varsayım temelinde değerlendirildiğinde, ittifak dışı kalınması yönündeki politikanın, Çekoslovakya'da iktidarda bulunan grupların iç siyasi çıkarlarıyla da uyum halinde olduğu görülmektedir.

Kadife Devrim sonrasında, ülkenin yeni yöneticileri, ulusal bağlamda, devlet yapılarının komünizmin etkisinden arındırılması ve siyasi sistemin demokratikleştirilmesi hedefiyle hareket etmekteydi. Bu hedeflerle başarılı olunması, Çekoslovakya'nın Batı yönelimini güçlendirmekle kalmayıp, aynı zamanda, geçiş döneminin kazanımlarını ve devamlılığını da sağlayacaktı. İktidardaki grupların siyasi hedefleri çerçevesinde sürdürülen ve bu haliyle iktidarın çıkarlarına hizmet eden geçiş döneminin kazanımlarının korunması, iktidar gruplarının siyasi konumlarının ana muhalefette bulunan komünistlere karşı güçlenmesine de neden olacaktı. Bu çerçevede, dış bağlamdan kaynaklanan tehditlerin bertaraf edilmesi amacıyla benimsenen pan-Avrupacı yaklaşım, aynı zamanda, iktidar gruplarının iç dönüşüm sürecine odaklanmalarını ve komünistler karşısındaki konumlarını korumalarını sağlamalarını da sağlamaktaydı.

1991 yılında, o dönemde hala varlığını sürdüren Sovyetler Birliği'ndeki belirsizlik ortamının artmasına bağlı olarak dış güvenlik kaygılarının yoğunlaşması, ayrıca, AGİK'e dayalı pan-Avrupacı güvenlik sisteminin yetersizliklerinin ortaya çıkması ve NATO'nun değişen güvenlik koşullarına rağmen devam eden değerinin anlaşılması, Çekoslovak liderlerin pan-Avrupacı politikalarını terkederek, kalıcı güvenlik garantilerine sahip olmak amacıyla NATO üyeliğini benimsemesine neden olmuştur.

Dış dinamiklerin Çekoslovak liderlerin NATO üyeliği hedefini belirlemedeki etkisi, ilk bakışta, geleneksel realist yaklaşımın varsayımlarıyla uyum halinde görülmektedir. Ancak, geleneksel realist yaklaşımın varsayımlarının aksine, Çekoslovakya'nın NATO üyeliğini kabul etmesi dış dinamiklerin kaçınılmaz bir sonucu değildir. Dış dinamikler, Çekoslovakya'nın ittifak tercihlerini, ülkenin kendine özgü iç siyasi özelliklerine bağlı olarak şekillendirmiştir. Çekoslovakya'da "Avrupa'ya dönüş" vizyonunu savunan ve geçiş sürecinin devamlılığını sağlamak suretiyle komünist muhalefet karşısında konumlarını güçlendirme amacıyla hareket eden siyasi grupların iktidarda olması, dış dinamiklerin etkisini şekillendiren belirleyici iç siyasi özelliktir.

Geleneksel realist yaklaşımın devletlerin ittifak tercihlerini açıklarken askeri kaygılara yaptığı vurgu da Çekoslovakya'nın NATO yönelimine uymamaktadır. Keza, NATO üyeliğinin benimsenmesinde, dış güvenliği sağlamaya yönelik kalıcı güvenlik garantileri elde etme düşüncesinin yanı sıra, geçiş dönemi ihtiyaçları ve iktidar gruplarının iç siyasete ilişkin kaygıları da etkili olmuştur.

İttifak seçimlerini dış dinamiklere ve askeri kaygılara atıfla açıklayan geleneksel realist yaklaşımın Çekoslovakya örneğindeki yetersizliği, NATO üyeliği hedefinin, dış güvenlik kaygılarının azaldığı 1993 sonrası dönemde sürdürülmesinden de anlaşılabilir. Bu devamlılık, esasen, yönetim kademesindeki devamlılığa bağlıdır. 1993 yılında iktidara gelen ve devletin kuruluşuyla eş zamanlı olarak kabul edilen yeni Anayasa'ya göre karar alma erkini elinde bulduran Klaus Hükümeti, Kadife Devrim'in komünizm karşıtı saflarında yer alan kişilerden oluşmaktaydı. Bu açıdan, Başbakan Klaus'un liderliğinde kurulan Hükümet, her ne kadar ekonomik meselelere öncelik tanıdıysa da, "Avrupa'ya dönüş" vizyonuna sadık kalarak, ülkenin dış ve iç hedeflerini, Batı ile bütünleşme ve komünizm karşıtlığı temelinde tanımlamaya devam etmişti.

"Avrupa'ya dönüş" vizyonunun ülkenin ittifak seçimlerindeki etkisi, ilk bakışta, devletlerin ortak değerleri paylaştıkları devletlerle ittifak kurduğu yönündeki konstrüktivist varsayımla uyumlu görünebilir. Bu varsayım temelinde değerlendirildiğinde, Çekoslovak ve Çek karar alıcıların NATO yanlısı bir ittifak eğilimi sergilemesinin, Çekoslovakya/Çek Cumhuriyeti'nin "Avrupalı" bir devlet olduğu yönündeki öz kimlik tanımlamasının bir sonucu olduğu söylenebilir.

Ancak, bu varsayım da Çekoslovakya/Çek Cumhuriyeti örneğine uymamaktadır. Konstrüktivistlerin öne sürdüğü gibi, devlet kimlikleri ittifak tercihlerinde belirleyici olsaydı, NATO üyeliği hedefinin, Çekoslovakya'nın Varşova Paktı üyeliğinin sona ermesinin hemen akabinde ilan edilmiş olması gerekirdi. Dolayısıyla, bu hedefin dış koşullara bağlı olarak artan güvensizlik durumunun sonucunda 1992 yılında kabul edilmesi, konstrüktivizmin Çekoslovakya'nın NATO yönelimini açıklamaktaki yetersizliğini açığa çıkarmaktadır.

“Avrupa'ya dönüş” vizyonu NATO yanlısı ittifak eğiliminin ortaya çıkmasında etkili olmuşsa da, bu etki, konstrüktivizme göre değil, neoklasik realistlerin varsayımlara uygun biçimde ortaya çıkmıştır. Neoklasik realizme göre, karar alıcılar, sadece devletlerinin dış güvenliğini sağlayan değil, aynı zamanda siyasi hedeflerini gerçekleştirmelerine olanak sağlayan ve iç siyasi konumlarını güçlendiren taraflarla ittifak kurarlar. Bu haliyle, ittifak kararları dış politika ile iç politikanın kesiştiği noktada alınmaktadır. Bu varsayım temelinde, Çek karar alıcıların NATO üyeliğini benimsemesi, ülkenin dış çıkarları ile kendi iç siyasi çıkarlarını “Avrupa'ya dönüş” vizyonu temelinde tanımlamalarına ve bu tanımlama temelinde dış bağlamı değerlendirmelerine dayanmaktadır.

NATO üyeliği hedefi, 1990'lar boyunca, Çek karar alıcılar üzerinde siyasi ve toplumsal karşı etki olmamasına bağlı olarak, kesintiye uğramadan tutarlı bir şekilde sürdürülmüştür. Komünist Parti, NATO üyeliği hedefine karşı çıkmışsa da, hakim siyasi grupların komünistlerle koalisyon kurmama yönündeki ilke kararı, komünistlerin iktidar dışı ve siyaseten etkisiz kalmasına neden olmuştur. İlaveten, Çek halkının geleneksel olarak dış politika ve güvenlik meselelerinde gösterdiği ilgisiz tutum da, iktidardaki grupların belirledikleri hedefleri herhangi bir iç toplumsal baskı ve seçim kaygısı olmadan sürdürmesini sağlamıştır. Komünistlerin siyaseten dışlanması ve halkın güvenlik meselelerindeki ilgisizliği, dış politika ve güvenlik politikalarının siyaseten etkili grupların tercihleri doğrultusunda şekillenmesine neden olmuş; NATO üyeliği hedefinin ülkenin NATO'ya girdiği 1999 yılına kadar istikrarlı şekilde sürdürülmesini sağlamıştır.

Çek Cumhuriyeti örneği, devletlerin ittifak tercihlerinin sadece dış dinamiklerle açıklanamayacağını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu örnekte, Rusya faktörü, dış güvenlik kaygılarının nedeni olarak ortaya çıkmışsa da, NATO üyeliği hedefinin benimsenmesinde doğrudan bir etki yaratmamıştır. Ülkenin dış

çıkarlarını Batı kurumlarıyla bütünleşme hedefiyle, iç siyasi çıkarlarını ise geçiş döneminin devamlılığı ve siyasi güçlerinin komünistler karşısında korunmasıyla tanımlayan grupların iktidarda olması, Rusya'nın bu hedeflere engel olabileceği düşüncesiyle güvenlik sorunu olarak algılanmasına yol açmıştır.

Sonuçta, Çek Cumhuriyeti'nin NATO yönelimi sergilemesi, sadece dış dinamiklerin sonucu olmayıp, Çek karar alıcıların dış bağlamı, siyasi gündemleri ve iç siyasi çıkarlarına uygun biçimde değerlendirmesine bağlıdır. Çek karar alıcılar, NATO yönelimli bir ittifak tercihi yaparak, sadece ülkelerinin dış güvenliğini değil, aynı zamanda, geçiş döneminin devamlılığını sağlamayı ve bu şekilde iç siyasi çıkarlarını korumayı amaçlamışlardır.

Letonya

Eski Sovyet cumhuriyetlerinden olan Letonya'da, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde, BDT'ye dahil olma ve Rusya ile ittifak ilişkisini sürdürme seçenekleri hiçbir zaman gündeme alınmamış; bunun yerine, Avrupa'nın bir parçası olma hedefi benimsenmiştir. NATO üyeliği hedefi, 1994 yılından itibaren Letonya'nın Batı yöneliminin ve güvenlik politikalarının temel unsurunu oluşturmuştur.

Rusya faktörü, Letonya'nın Soğuk Savaş sonrası güvenlik politikalarında etkili olan temel dış dinamiktir. Rusya, ikili sorunlar bağlamında sadece bir dış güvenlik sorunu olarak değil, aynı zamanda, ülkede konuşlandırılmış halde bulunan Sovyet/Rus askeri birliklerinin neden olduğu sorunlar ve Rus azınlığın ülkenin siyasi geleceğine yönelik muhtemel etkileri bağlamında iç güvenlik meselesi olarak algılanmıştır. Rus askeri birliklerinin 1994'te ülkeden çekilmesinin ardından, Rusya, eski Sovyet devletlerinin NATO yönelimlerine gösterdiği tepki ve yakın çevresinde etki sağlama politikası nedeniyle, ülkenin Batı yönelimine engel oluşturabilecek bir dış aktör olarak görülmüştür.

1990'ların başında, Leton yetkililer Rusya faktörüyle, ittifakların dışında kalacaklarını açıklayarak mücadele etmişlerdir. *De facto* bir niyet beyanı niteliğindeki bu karar, Leton yetkililer için, Rusya'nın BDT'ye dahil olmaları yönündeki baskılarına direnmenin, ayrıca, öncelikli sorun arz eden iç güvenlik meseleleri ile devlet ve ulus-inşa süreçlerine odaklanmanın bir aracı olarak değerlendirilmiştir. 1994 yılında Rus askeri birliklerinin ülkeden çekilmesi ve NATO içinde doğu genişlemesine ilişkin sürdürülen tartışmaların sona ermesinin

ardından NATO üyeliği hedeflenmiş ve bu hedef 2004 yılında NATO üyesi olana kadar kesintisiz bir şekilde sürdürülmüştür.

Rusya faktörünün Letonya'nın güvenlik algılamalarındaki etkisi çerçevesinde, NATO üyeliği hedefinin benimsenmesi, ittifak seçimlerini dış dinamiklere ve askeri kaygılara odaklanarak açıklayan geleneksel realist yaklaşımla uyumlu görünebilir. Bununla birlikte, Belarus gibi, Letonya ile aynı dış bağlamda bulunan ve benzer dış dinamiklerle karşı karşıya kalan diğer bölge ülkelerinin dış güvenlik algılamaları ve ittifak davranışlarının farklılaşması, geleneksel realist yaklaşımın yetersizliklerini açığa çıkarmaktadır. Keza, bu yaklaşımı savunanların öne sürdüğü gibi dış dinamikler devletlerin ittifak seçimleri üzerinde doğrudan etki yaratsaydı, Rusya faktörünün Doğu Avrupa'da bulunan tüm eski Sovyet devletlerince benzer şekilde algılanması ve aynı ittifak davranışlarına neden olması gerekirdi.

Alternatif olarak, konstrüktivizm açısından değerlendirildiğinde, Letonya'nın NATO yönelimi, Sovyet geçmişi reddeden ve Avrupalılık fikrine dayanan öz kimlik tanımlaması sonucunda Rusya'nın değiştirilmesine ve ortak değerlerin paylaşıldığı Avrupalı devletlerle ittifak kurma eğilimine dayandırılabilir. Bununla birlikte, bu kimlik ve tehdit tanımlamasının, Letonya'da Rusya ile bütünleşmesini savunan siyasi gruplar ile Letonya nüfusunun önemli bir kısmını oluşturan Rus azınlık tarafından paylaşıldığını söylemek mümkün değildir. Dolayısıyla, konstrüktivizmin kimlik odaklı bu varsayımı Letonya örneğini tam olarak açıklayamamaktadır.

Letonya'nın NATO yönelimi, ne geleneksel realist yaklaşımın öne sürdüğü gibi Rusya faktörünün doğrudan bir sonucu, ne de konstrüktivistlerin - varsaydığı şekilde kimlik tanımlamalarının kaçınılmaz bir yansımasıdır. Rusya faktörünün Letonya'nın güvenlik politikalarındaki etkisi, esasen, Letonya'ya özgü iç siyasi koşullara bağlı olarak şekillenmiştir. Bu çerçevede, Rusya faktörü Letonya'nın NATO yöneliminde etkili olmakla birlikte, bu etki, neoklasik realizmin öne sürdüğü şekilde, iç ve dış politikaların kesişim noktasında ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna göre, Rusya'nın bir tehdit unsuru olarak algılanması, iktidarı elinde bulunduran grupların dış bağlamı siyasi hedefleri ve iç siyasi çıkarları temelinde değerlendirmelerine bağlıdır. Rusya, ülkenin Batı ile bütünleşmesine ve

ülke içinde Batı yanlısı grupların iktidarının devamlılığına engel teşkil ettiği ölçüde tehdit olarak değerlendirilmiştir.

Neoklasik realizm iktidardaki grupların ittifak kararlarıyla, eş zamanlı olarak, devletlerinin dış güvenliğini sağlamayı ve iç siyasi konumlarını güçlendirmeyi amaçladıklarını varsayar. Buna göre, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde dış ve güvenlik politikalarını Rusya'nın etki alanı dışında kalma ve bunun için Batı'daki bütünleşme süreçlerine eklenme hedefleri çerçevesinde oluşturan Leton iktidar için, NATO üyeliğinden sağlanacak güvenlik faydaları açıktır. İç güvenlik açısından ise, NATO üyeliği, ülkenin Rusya'nın etki alanı dışında kalmasını ve Batı'ya entegre olmasını sağlamak suretiyle, iktidarın çıkarlarına hizmet edecek şekilde sürdürülen ve iktidardaki grupların siyasi vizyonlarını destekleyen geçiş sürecinin devamlılığının garanti altına alınması olarak görülmüştür.

Leton karar alıcılar, 1994 yılında benimsedikleri NATO üyeliği hedefini, herhangi bir iç baskıyla karşılaşmadan istikrarlı olarak sürdürebilmişlerdir. Bunda, Rusya yanlısı olansiyasi grupların koalisyon süreçlerinin dışında bırakılması ve Rus azınlığın siyasi etkisinin kısıtlayıcı vatandaşlık düzenlemeleriyle sınırlandırılması etkilidir. Letonya'da seçmenin büyük bir kısmı, iktidardaki gruplarla benzer vizyonu paylaşan kişilerden oluşmaktadır. Bu durum, Leton karar alıcıların NATO yönelimlerini herhangi bir iç siyasi baskı ve seçim kaygısı olmadan sürdürmelerine olanak sağlamıştır.

Letonya örneği, devletlerin güvenlik politikalarının ve ittifak seçimlerinin sadece dış dinamiklerle açıklanamayacağını, dış dinamiklerin ülkelerin kendilerine özgü iç siyasi özellikleriyle etkileşim halinde etki yarattığı yönündeki neoklasik realist varsayımı doğrulamaktadır. Yukarıda da belirtildiği üzere, Rusya faktörü, Letonya'nın güvenlik politikaları üzerinde doğrudan etki yaratmamış; bu etki, iktidardaki grupların siyasi hedefleri ve iç siyasi çıkarlarına göre şekillenmiştir. Leton karar alıcılar, NATO üyeliğini, devletin dış güvenliğini sağlama aracı olarak değil, aynı zamanda, kendi vizyonları doğrultusunda sürdürdükleri geçiş sürecinin devamlılığını sağlama ve bu şekilde Rusya yanlısı gruplara karşı sürdürdükleri güç mücadelesindeki konumlarını sağlamlaştırma aracı olarak değerlendirmiştir.

Ukrayna

Ukrayna, NATO ile işbirliğine 1991 yılında başlamış ve bu işbirliğini günümüze kadar kesintisiz biçimde sürdürmüştür. Ancak, NATO ile yapılan işbirliği, istikrarlı bir tam üyelik vizyonuna dönüşmemiş; tam üyeliğe varmayan sınırlı bir çerçevede sürdürülmüştür. NATO üyeliği hedefi dönem dönem gündeme gelse de, söylemsel düzeyde kalmış veya gerçekleştirilememiştir.

Ukrayna'nın NATO ile ittifak kurmamasının nedenlerinin tam olarak anlaşılabilmesi için, neoklasik realizmin öngördüğü şekilde, iç ve dış dinamiklerin birarada ele alınması ve aralarındaki etkileşimin sorgulanması, bu çerçevede, Ukrayna'da karar alma gücünü elinde bulunduran aktörlerin dış bağlamı siyasi hedefleri ve çıkarları doğrultusunda nasıl değerlendirdiklerinin tespit edilmesi gereklidir.

Rusya faktörü, Ukrayna'nın Sovyet sonrası dönemdeki dış güvenlik algılarını şekillendiren temel dış dinamiktir. Bunda, Rusya'daki bazı grupların Ukrayna'nın bağımsızlığını geçici bir olgu ve Ukraynalıları Rus milletinin bir parçası olarak görme eğiliminin yanı sıra, Rusya ile ikili ilişkilerde yaşanan sorunlar ve Rusya'ya karşı özellikle ekonomik alanda devam eden bağımlılık durumu etkilidir. Bu koşullar çerçevesinde, Ukrayna'da, bir yandan ekonomik çıkarları korumak adına Rusya ile ilişkilerini ilerletme ihtiyacı hissedilirken, bir yandan da, Rusya'dan kaynaklanabilecek olası güvenlik tehditlerinin önlenmesi kaygısı taşınmıştır.

Güvenlik algılamalarındaki etkisine rağmen, Rusya faktörü, Ukrayna'nın ittifak seçimlerinde, iç siyasi koşullardan bağımsız doğrudan bir etki yaratmamıştır. Rusya faktörünün, Ukrayna'nın güvenlik politikalarındaki ve ittifak seçimlerindeki etkisi, Ukrayna'da karar alma erkini elinde bulunduran devlet başkanlarının Rusya faktörünü siyasi gündemleri ve iç siyasi çıkarlarına göre nasıl değerlendirdiklerine bağlı olarak değişiklik göstermiştir. Bu süreçte, Ukrayna Devlet Başkanları, kendi tanımladıkları biçimde Ukrayna'nın dış çıkarlarını ilerletmeyi ve kendi iktidarlarını korumayı hedeflemişlerdir.

Başkan Kuçma, ekonomik gereklilikler ve Rusya faktöründen kaynaklanan güvenlik kaygılarını çok vektörlü bir dış politikayla ele almış; bu çerçevede, Rusya ve Batı ülkeleriyle ilişkileri eş zamanlı olarak ilerletmeye çalışmıştır. Aynı zamanda, Rusya'nın tepkisini çekerek dış güvenlik koşullarının kötüleşmesini

önlemek için, ittifak dışı bir politika izlemiş; NATO ile işbirliğini tam üyelik hedefi olmadan sürdürmüştür. Bu politika, Rusya'nın Ortak Güvenlik Anlaşması'na dahil olması yönündeki baskılara karşı koymanın bir aracı olarak da değerlendirilmiştir.

Bu tutumun, Kuçma iktidarının devamlılığı açısından da yansımaları olmuştur. Ukrayna'da Rusya ve NATO ile ilişkiler 1991'den bu yana elit ve toplum düzeyindeki siyasi kutuplaşma ve bölünmelerin ana temalarından birini oluşturmuştur. Bu bağlamda, seçmen tabanını mümkün olduğunca genişletmek suretiyle siyasi iktidarını sağlamlaştırma eğilimi sergileyen Başkan Kuçma, çok vektörlü bir dış politika izleyerek ve NATO ile işbirliğini tam üyeliğe varmayan bir düzeyde sürdürerek, seçmenlerin tepkisini çekmeden iktidarını korumayı amaçlamıştır. NATO ile sırlı düzeyde sürdürülen işbirliği, dış güvenlik açısından olumlu değerlendirilen ve iç siyasi dengeler açısından olumsuz sonucu olmayan askeri işbirliğinin sorunsuz bir şekilde sürdürülmesine; öte yandan, iktidarının dayandığı uygulamaların devamlılığı açısından sorun teşkil eden siyasi ve ekonomik işbirliğinde düşük bir profil sergilenmesine de olanak sağlamıştır.

Başkan Yanukoviç'in NATO'ya yönelik tutumu da dış bağlamı kendi siyasi hedefleri ve çıkarları doğrultusunda nasıl değerlendirdiğine bağlı olarak şekillenmiştir. 2010 yılında iktidara gelen Başkan Yanukoviç'in siyasi gündemi, o dönemde uluslararası düzlemde etkili olan küresel mali kriz ve 2009 tarihli Ukrayna-Rusya doğalgaz anlaşmasının neden olduğu zorluklara bağlı olarak, ekonomik meselelere odaklanmıştı. Yanukoviç'e göre, Ukrayna'nın ekonomik sorunları Avrupa piyasalarına tam erişim sağlanması ve Rusya'dan alınan doğalgazın fiyatının düşürülmesi durumunda aşılabilirdi. Yanukoviç, bu bağlamda başarı sağlayabilmek için, çok-vektörlü bir dış politika benimsemiş, Batı ve Rusya'yla ilişkileri eş zamanlı olarak ilerletmeye çalışmıştır. Rusya ile ilişkileri güçlendirmenin bir parçası olarak, NATO ile işbirliğini tam üyeliğe varmayan sınırlı bir çerçevede sürdürmüştür. Bu açıdan, Kuçma dönemine benzer şekilde, Yanukoviç döneminde de NATO'ya yönelik tutum, "sınırlı işbirliği" seçeneğinin ülkenin dış çıkarları açısından daha uygun değerlendirilmesine bağlıdır.

Bu seçeneğin benimsenmesinde Yanukoviç'in iç siyasi çıkarları da etkilidir. Yanukoviç döneminde, ekonomik çıkarlarını Avrupa'ya erişim ve Rusya'dan ucuz enerji kaynağı temin edilmesine dayandıran Donetsk temelli iş

çevrelerinin yönetimdeki ağırlığı artmıştır. Keza, Ukrayna'nın doğu ve güney bölgelerinde bulunan ve Yanukoviç iktidarının halk tabanını oluşturan seçmenler de NATO üyeliğine karşıdır. Bu haliyle, Yanukoviç'in NATO üyeliğini terketmesi ve çok-vektörlü dış politika bağlamında ittifak-dışı bir tutum benimsemesinde, siyasi gücünün dayandığı toplumsal grupların ve seçmenlerin beklentileri etkili olmuştur.

Kuçma ve Yanukoviç'ten farklı olarak, 2004 yılında Turuncu Devrim sonrasında Batı ile bütünleşme vizyonuyla iktidara gelen Devlet Başkanı Viktor Yuşçenko, NATO üyeliği hedefini benimsemiş ve iktidarı döneminde bu hedef doğrultusunda somut adımlar atmıştır. Seçmen desteğini batı ve merkezi Ukrayna'dan alan Yuşçenko, NATO üyeliğini ülkenin dış çıkarlarını ve kendi siyasi gücünü ilerletme açısından en uygun yol olarak değerlendirmiştir.

Yuşçenko dönemi, neoklasik realizmin, liderlerin siyasi ve sosyal bir boşlukta hareket etmedikleri, ittifak kararlarını uygularken iç ve dış kısıtlamalarla karşı karşıya kaldıkları yönündeki varsayımı da doğrulamaktadır. Bu dönemde, Rusya'nın tepkileri ile Ukrayna'nın Üyelik için Eylem Planı (MAP) çerçevesine dahil edilmesi konusunda NATO içinde yaşanan tartışmalar Yuşçenko için en belirgin dış kısıtlamaları teşkil etmiştir. NATO üyeliği hedefinin elit ve toplumun büyük bir kısmı tarafından desteklenmemesi belirleyici iç kısıtlamalardır. Bu kısıtlamaların 2005-2010 dönemindeki devamlılığı, Ukrayna'nın bu dönemde Devlet Başkanı tarafından alınan kararlara rağmen ittifak dışı kalmasına neden olmuştur.

Bu tablo, Ukrayna'nın 1991-2014 döneminde ittifak kurmaması ve NATO ile ilişkileri tam üyeliğe varmayan sınırlı bir çerçevede sürdürmesinin, sadece dış dinamiklerle açıklanamayacağını göstermektedir. Dış dinamiklerin Ukrayna'nın güvenlik politikalarındaki etkisi, devlet başkanlarının dış bağlamı siyasi gündemi ve iç siyasi çıkarları doğrultusunda nasıl değerlendirdiklerine ve Rusya faktörünü nasıl ele almayı tercih ettiklerine bağlı olarak değişiklik göstermiştir. Devlet Başkanları, dış bağlama ilişkin değerlendirmelerde bulunurken, Ukrayna'nın dış güvenliğini sağlama ve kendi iktidarlarını sürdürme kaygısıyla hareket etmişlerdir. NATO ile ittifak kurma veya kurmama tercihleri bu hedefleri sağlama beklentisinin sonucudur. Bazı dönemlerde NATO ile ittifak kurma yönünde karar alınmışsa da, iç ve dış kısıtlamalarla karşı karşıya kalınmıştır. Sonuçta, Ukrayna,

Kravçuk, Kuçma ve Yanukoviç dönemlerinde, liderlerin kararları sonucunda, Yuşçenko döneminde ise, iç ve dış kısıtlamalar nedeniyle NATO ile ittifak kur(a)mamıştır.

Belarus

Belarus'un Sovyet sonrası dönemde izlediği dış ve güvenlik politikaları iki dönemde incelenebilir. 1991 yılında kabul edilen Bağımsızlık Bildirisi'nden Lukaşenko'nun iktidara geldiği 1994 yılına kadar geçen dönemde, iç düzlemde siyaseten farklı hedefleri savunan bağımsızlık taraftarı "Belarus Halk Cephesi" ve komünistler arasında yaşanan güç mücadelesinin bir sonucu olarak, dış ve güvenlik politikaları ikili bir görünüm arzemiştir. Meclis Başkanı Şuşkeviç tarafsızlık yanlısı bir tutum sergileyip, Rusya ve Batı dünyası ile ilişkileri eş zamanlı olarak geliştirmeyi savunurken; Meclis'teki komünist çoğunluğun liderliğini yapan Başbakan Kebiç, Rusya ile her alanda bütünleşmesini desteklemiştir. Bu ikili görünüme rağmen, Rusya ile 1992 yılında ikili bir askeri anlaşma imzalanması ve Ortak Güvenlik Anlaşması'na 1993 yılında taraf olunmasıyla, anayasal olarak garanti altına alınan tarafsızlık konumu *de facto* olarak sona ermiş ve Belarus stratejik olarak Rusya'yla yakınlaşmaya başlamıştır.

Belarus'un ittifak politikalarında dönüm noktası, 1994 yılında Lukaşenko'nun Cumhurbaşkanlığına seçilmesidir. Cumhurbaşkanı Lukaşenko, iktidara geldikten sonra siyasi gücünü ve yetkilerini diğer kurumlar aleyhine hızla artırmış ve Belarus'taki en etkili siyasi aktör konumuna gelmiştir. Böylece, Belarus'un iç ve dış siyasetinde alınan tüm kararlar Başkan Lukaşenko'nun izini taşımaya başlamıştır.

Lukaşenko döneminde Belarus'un Rusya ile stratejik yakınlaşması hızlanmış ve 1994 sonrası dönemde iki ülke arasında siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri alanda bütünleşme hedefi doğrultusunda bir dizi anlaşma imzalanmıştır. Siyasi ve ekonomik bütünleşme alanında kaydedilen başarısızlıklara rağmen, askeri alanda başarı sağlanmış; Belarus, Rusya ile "Ortak Devlet" çerçevesi altında ikili, Ortak Güvenlik Anlaşması ve Örgütü temelinde çok taraflı ittifak ilişkisi içine girmiştir.

Lukaşenko, Rusya ile ittifakını NATO tehdidine karşı bir önlem olarak sunmaktadır. Bu çerçevede, geleneksel realist yaklaşımın varsayımları temelinde değerlendirildiğinde, Belarus-Rusya ittifakının NATO'dan kaynaklanan dış

tehdide karşı askeri kaygılarla kurulduğu düşünülebilir. Ancak, Belarus'un Rusya ile ittifakı ayrıntılı olarak ele alındığında, ittifakın kurulmasına ve sürdürülmesine neden olan dinamik ve hedeflerin geleneksel realist yaklaşımın varsayımlarına uygun olmadığı görülmektedir.

İlk olarak, geleneksel realist yaklaşım, Belarus'un NATO genişlemesini tehdit olarak algılamasının nedenlerini tam olarak açıklayamamaktadır. Keza, NATO genişlemesi, barışçıl bir süreç olarak sürdürülmüş; genişleme sürecine tepki gösteren devletlerin kaygılarını azaltıcı önlemlerle desteklenmiştir. 1997 tarihli NATO-Rusya uzlaşısı çerçevesinde, NATO birliklerinin ittifaka 1999 yılında katılan devletlerin topraklarında konuşlandırılmaması yönünde alınan karar bu yöndeki güven artırıcı önlemlerden biridir. Dolayısıyla, NATO'nun Belarus için doğrudan bir askeri tehdit teşkil ettiği varsayımı geçerli değildir. Bu çerçevede, Belarus-Rusya ittifakının da tamamen askeri kaygılarla kurulduğu söylenemez.

İkinci olarak, geleneksel realist yaklaşım, Belarus ile aynı dış bağlamı paylaşan ve sınırlarının batısında NATO genişlemesiyle karşı karşıya olan diğer Doğu Avrupa ülkelerinin, Belarus'tan farklı olarak, bu süreci tehdit olarak algılamamasının nedenlerini açıklayamamaktadır. Dış dinamikler, geleneksel realist yaklaşımın öngördüğü şekilde devletlerin ittifak seçimlerini doğrudan belirleseydi, diğer eski Sovyet cumhuriyetlerinin de NATO genişlemesini tehdit olarak algılayıp, Rusya ile ittifak kurma yoluna gitmesi gerekirdi. Belarus ve diğer eski Sovyet devletlerinin güvenlik algılamalarındaki ve ittifak yönelimlerindeki farklılık, dış dinamiklerin devletlerin güvenlik algılarını doğrudan etkilemediğini, bu haliyle, geleneksel realist yaklaşımın yetersizliğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Alternatif olarak, kontstrüktivist bir bakış açısından değerlendirildiğinde, Belarus-Rusya ittifakı, iki devletin paylaştığı Slav kimliğinin ve tarihsel etkileşimlerin bir sonucu olarak görülebilir. Bu açıdan, iki devlet arasındaki ortak toplum algısının, tehdit algılamalarının benzerleşmesine neden olmak suretiyle, ittifak ilişkisine zemin hazırladığı düşünülebilir. Bununla birlikte, geleneksel realist yaklaşıma benzer şekilde, konstrüktivizm de Belarus ve Rusya ittifakını tam olarak açıklayamamaktadır. Keza, ikili ilişkilerdeki sorunlar ve siyasi-ekonomik bütünleşme alanlarındaki başarısızlıklardan da görüldüğü üzere, iki

devlet arasındaki ortak toplum algısı konstrüktivistlerin öne sürdüğü kadar güçlü değildir.

Devlet Başkanı Lukaşenko'nun siyasi sistemdeki ağırlığına bağlı olarak devlet ve rejimin çıkarlarının iç içe geçtiği Belarus örneği, geleneksel realist yaklaşım ve konstrüktivizminden ziyade, ittifak tercihlerinde karar alıcıların iç siyasi çıkarlarının da etkili olduğunu varsayan neoklasik realizm ile açıklanabilir. Bu açıdan, Lukaşenko'nun NATO'yu ve NATO genişlemesini tehdit olarak algılaması, dış bağlamı kendi siyasi hedefleri ve çıkarları bağlamında değerlendirmesine bağlıdır. NATO'yu Belarus için tehdit haline getiren unsur, demokratik değerlere yaptığı vurgudur. NATO'nun ortaklık veya müttefik ilişkisi içine girdiği ülkelerde demokratik uygulamaları artırmaya yönelik politikası, Lukaşenko'nun siyasi gücünü ülkedeki diğer aktörler aleyhine artırma eğilimine ters düşmüş; Lukaşenko tarafından bir tehdit unsuru olarak algılanmıştır. Bu çerçevede, Rusya ile sorun yaşanan dönemlerde dahi Batı kurumlarıyla bütünleşme hedefi benimsenmemiş; bu kurumlarla iletişim, iç çıkarlara hizmet ettiği ölçüde, asgari düzeyde tutulmuştur.

NATO genişlemesi, Lukaşenko'ya abartılmış bir dış tehdit söylemiyle Belarus'un Rusya için taşıdığı stratejik önemi kullanarak, Rusya'dan daha fazla ekonomik yardım elde etme imkanı sağlamıştır. Rusya'nın Belarus'a farklı biçimlerde sağladığı ekonomik destek, Lukaşenko'nun iktidarını sürdürmesinde doğrudan etkilidir. Bu açıdan, Lukaşenko, Belarus ve Rusya'nın güvenliğinin bölünmezliğine vurgu yaparak ve NATO temelli ortak tehdit algılaması geliştirerek, Rusya'nın ekonomik ve siyasi desteğinin devamlılığını sağlamayı, bu şekilde, iktidarını sürdürmeyi amaçlamıştır. NATO tehdidi söylemi, büyük bir kısmı Rusya'ya sempatiyle yaklaşan Belarus halkı üzerinde mobilize edici bir etki yaratmış, bu şekilde, Lukaşenko'nun rejimine ve Rusya ile ittifakına meşruiyet kazandırma çabasının bir unsurunu oluşturmuştur. Rusya ile kurulan ittifaktan esas fayda sağlayan aktör olarak, Lukaşenko, Rusya ile eski Sovyet coğrafyasıyla bütünleşmeyi tehdit olarak algılamamıştır.

Lukaşenko Rusya ile stratejik yönelimini herhangi bir iç kısıtlamayla karşılaşmadan istikrarlı biçimde sürdürmüştür. Bunda, Rusya yöneliminin Belarus'ta elit ve toplum düzeyinde tartışma arzetmemesi, keza, alternatif bir yönelim sergilenmesi ve NATO üyeliğinin benimsenmesi yönünde talep

olmaması etkilidir. İlimli muhalif partiler Rusya ile ilişkilerin Batı ile dengelenmesini savunsa da, siyaseten etki sahibi olmamaları ve toplum desteğinden yoksun olmaları nedeniyle Lukaşenko üzerinde etki sağlayamamışlardır. Alternatif bir ittifak yönelimi konusunda elit ve toplum baskısının olmaması, Lukaşenko'nun politikalarını herhangi bir seçim kaygısı olmadan iç bağlamdan bağımsız ve kendi tercihleri doğrultusunda sürdürebilmesine olanak sağlamıştır.

Belarus örneği, dış dinamiklerin devletlerin ittifak seçimleri üzerinde doğrudan etkili olmadığını, bu etkinin devletlerin kendine özgü iç dinamikleriyle etkileşim halinde şekillendiğini göstermektedir. Bu açıdan, Belarus'un Rusya ile ittifak kurması NATO genişlemesinin doğrudan bir sonucu olmayıp, Lukaşenko'nun dış bağlamı siyasi hedefleri ve çıkarları doğrultusunda değerlendirmesine bağlıdır. Lukaşenko, NATO genişlemesini tehdit olarak sunarak ve bu sözde tehdide karşı Rusya ile ittifak kurarak, sadece kendi tanımladığı biçimde Belarus'un dış çıkarlarını değil, aynı zamanda, kendi iktidarını korumayı amaçlamıştır.

6. Karşılaştırmalı Analiz

Eski komünist devletler neden ittifak kurdular?

Geleneksel realist yaklaşımın devletlerin diğer devletlerden kaynaklanan dış tehditlere karşı askeri amaçlarla ittifak kurdukları yönündeki varsayımı, eski komünist devletlerin ittifak kurma nedenlerini tam olarak açıklayamamaktadır. Bu varsayım, benzer dış koşulları paylaşan eski Sovyet cumhuriyetlerinin dış güvenlik algılamalarının farklılaşmasını açıklayamamakta, ayrıca, geçiş döneminden kaynaklanan ve askeri olmayan kaygıların ittifak seçimlerindeki etkisini gözden kaçırmaktadır. Geleneksel realist yaklaşım, dış bağlamdaki sürekliliğe rağmen, bazı devletlerin NATO'ya yönelik tutumunun dönemsel olarak değişmesini açıklamakta da yetersizdir.

Kimlik tanımlamaları ve tehdit algılamaları arasında bağlantı kuran konstrüktivizm ise, devletlerin sadece dış güvenliklerini sağlamak için değil, aynı zamanda, kimliklerini yeniden üretmek ve ontolojik güvenliklerini sağlamlaştırmak amacıyla ittifak kurduklarını varsaymaktadır. Bu varsayım da,

eski komünist devletlerin birçoğunda ulusal kimlik kavramının tartışmalı olması nedeniyle, bu bölgeye tam olarak uygulanamamaktadır.

Eski komünist devletlerin ittifak kurma nedenleri, neoklasik realizmin liderlerin ittifak kararlarıyla devletlerinin dış güvenliklerini sağlamayı ve kendi iç siyasi konumlarını güçlendirmeye çalıştıkları yönündeki varsayımı temelinde açıklanabilir. Bu varsayım, tezde ele alınan ülke incelemelerinin tümünde doğrulanmıştır. Belarus örneğinde, Lukaşenko, NATO'yu tehdit olarak sunarak, siyasi iktidarı üzerinde doğrudan etkili olan Rusya'dan ekonomik yardım alma beklentisiyle hareket etmiştir. Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Letonya örneklerinde, devletin dış güvenliğini sağlama tek beklenti olmamış, Çek ve Leton karar alıcılar aynı zamanda Rusya yanlısı gruplara karşı siyasi konumlarını güçlendirme hedefiyle hareket etmişlerdir. Ukrayna örneğinde, Başkan Yuşçenko, NATO üyeliği hedefini benimserken, sadece Rusya'ya karşı dış güvenliği sağlama beklentisiyle değil, aynı zamanda, Ukrayna'nın batı ve doğusundaki seçmenlerinin beklentilerine uygun hareket ederek iktidarını sağlamlaştırma amacıyla hareket etmiştir.

Bu tezde incelenen örnekler, ittifakların askeri kaygılar dışındaki amaçlarla da kurulduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu durum, eski komünist devletlerin geçiş döneminde olması ve farklı ihtiyaçlar içinde bulunmasına bağlıdır. Bu durum, en açık biçimde, Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Letonya örneklerinden görülmektedir. Her iki devlet yetkilileri de ittifak kararlarında dış güvenlik vurgusunda da bulunmuşsa da, geçiş döneminden kaynaklanan ihtiyaç algılamaları NATO yöneliminin seçiminde etkili olmuştur.

Eski komünist ülkelerin “kiminle ittifak kuracakları” kararını ne belirler?

Geleneksel realist yaklaşıma göre, devletler, daha güçlü ve tehdit oluşturan bir devletle karşı karşıya kaldıklarında dengeleme davranışı içine girerler. Bu varsayımdan farklı olarak, tezde incelenen örneklerden de görüldüğü üzere, eski komünist devletler Rusya faktöründen etkilense de, bu devletlerin tümü Rusya'yı dengeleme davranışı içine girmemişlerdir. Bu durum, Rusya ile kurduğu ittifakı NATO'ya karşı bir dengeleme davranışı olarak sunan ve bu itibarla diğer bölge devletlerinden farklılaşan Belarus örneğinde açık biçimde görülmektedir.

Geleneksel realist yaklaşımdan farklı olarak, konstrüktivizm, devletlerin ortak kimlik tanımlamaları ve değerleri paylaştığı devletlerle ittifak kurduklarını varsayar. Bu açıdan değerlendirildiğinde, Belarus'un Rusya ile ittifak kurması, Slav kimliğine; Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Letonya'nın NATO yönelimi ise Avrupa temelli kimlik tanımlamalarına dayandırılabilir. Ancak, konstrüktivizm, eski komünist devletlerin birçoğunda ulusal kimlik tanımlamalarının tartışmalı olduğunu gözden kaçırmaktadır. Letonya örneğinde, her ne kadar iktidar gruplarının tanımlamaları devletin Batılı kimliğini ön plana çıkarmışsa da, bu tanımlamanın ülkedeki Rusya yanlısı gruplarca ve Rus azınlıkça paylaşıldığını söylemek mümkün değildir. Benzer şekilde, Belarus'ta, Lukaşenko'nun Slav temelli kimlik tanımlamaları, Belarus halkının birçoğu tarafından onaylansa da, bu tanımlamanın Belarus'ta bulunan ve etnik temelli kimlik tanımlamalarını savunan Batı taraftarı gruplarca paylaşıldığı söylenemez.

Konstrüktivizmin yetersizliği, en açık biçimde Ukrayna örneğinde görülmektedir. İlk bakışta, Ukrayna'da tek bir ulusal kimlik tanımlamasının olmamasının siyasi elit ve toplum tarafından paylaşılan ortak bir tehdit tanımlamasını zorlaştırdığı, bu şekilde, Ukrayna'nın ittifakların dışında kalmasına neden olduğu ve bu durumun konstrüktivizmin varsayımlarına uygun düştüğü söylenebilir. Ancak, bu varsayım, Ukrayna'da Ortak güvenlik Anlaşması ve Örgütü'ne dahil olma seçeneğinin neden gündeme gelmediğini açıklayamaz. Ukrayna'da Rusya yanlısı olarak gösterilen Yanukoviç döneminde dahi, Ukrayna siyasi ve askeri olarak eski Sovyet coğrafyasıyla bütünleşme hedefi benimsenmemiş; NATO ile işbirliği sınırlı da olsa sürdürülmüştür. Dolayısıyla, toplumsal ve bölgesel farklılıklar Ukrayna dış ve güvenlik politikalarında dönem dönem muğlaklık yaratmışsa da, tam bir stratejik kararsızlığa yol açmamıştır.

Neoklasik realizme göre ise, eski komünist devletlerin kiminle ittifak kuracakları kararı almasında karar alıcıların algılamaları etkilidir. Karar alıcılar, siyasi gündemlerine ve iç siyasi çıkarlarına uygun taraflarla ittifak kurarlar. Belarus örneğinde, NATO'nun demokrasi vurgusunu kendisine tehdit olarak algılayan Lukaşenko, Rusya ile ittifak kurmaya yönelmiştir. Çek ve Letonya örneklerinde, NATO üyeliğinin, Batı'nın bir parçası olmak suretiyle geçiş döneminin kazanımlarına süreklilik kazandırdığı, bu şekilde, karar alıcıların iç

siyasi çıkarlarını komünist ve Rusya yanlısı gruplar karşısında sağlamlaştırdığı değerlendirilmiştir.

Bazı eski komünist devletler neden ittifakların dışında kalmayı tercih etmiştir?

Bu tezde incelenen örneklerden görüldüğü üzere, eski komünist devletler, karar alıcıların ittifak dışı kalmanın devletlerinin dış çıkarları ve kendi iç siyasi çıkarları açısından daha uygun olduğunu değerlendirmesi halinde veya, bazı ittifaklara üye olmak istense de, iç ve dış kısıtlamalar nedeniyle ittifakların dışında kalmışlardır.

Buna göre, ilk olarak, Orta ve Doğu Avrupa'daki eski komünist devletlerin tümünde karar alıcılar 1990'ların başında ittifak dışı bir güvenlik politikası izlemeyi tercih etmişlerdir. Bu strateji, dış bağlamdaki belirsizliklerden kaynaklanan güvenlik sorunlarını bertaraf etmenin ve iç bağlamda karşı karşıya kalınan sorunlara odaklanmanın bir aracı olarak görülmüştür. 1990'ların ortasına doğru, dış bağlamdaki belirsizlik azalmış, Rusya yakın çevresindeki etkisini muhafaza edeceğini ortaya koymuştur. Aynı dönemde eski komünist devletlerdeki iç belirsizlikler de sosyo-siyasi yapıların kristalleşmesiyle sona ermiştir. Sonuçta, dış bağlam, değerlendirmesi yapılacak dinamikleri ortaya çıkarırken, iç bağlamda bu değerlendirmenin kim tarafından ve hangi kaygılarla yapılacağı hususları netlik kazanmış; buna bağlı olarak, daha net ittifak kararları alınabilmiştir.

Bu tezde incelenen diğer devletlerden farklı olarak, Ukrayna'nın ittifak dışı konumu Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde devamlılık göstermiştir. Kuçma ve Yanukoviç dönemleri, liderlerin devletlerinin dış güvenliğine ve iç siyasi çıkarlarına uygun olduğunu değerlendirdiklerinde güvenlik politikalarını ittifak dışı kalarak oluşturabileceklerini; Yuşenko dönemi ise, ittifak kurma yönünde karar alınsa dahi, bu kararın gerçekleştirilebilmesi için uygun iç ve dış koşulların mevcudiyetinin gerekli olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

İttifak kararlarının gerçekleştirilebilmesi için mevcudiyeti gerekli olan iç ve dış koşullar, Çek Cumhuriyeti, Letonya ve Belarus'ta alınan ittifak kararlarının istikrarlı bir şekilde izlenmesive nihai olarak gerçekleştirilebilmesinin nedenlerisorgulandığında anlaşılabilir. Buna göre, ilk olarak, ittifak kararlarının istikrarlı bir şekilde sürdürülebilmesi için, ülkedeki elitlerin üyeliği arzu edilen ittifaktan sağlanacak faydalar ve üyeliğin gerekliliği konusunda görüşbirliği içinde

olmaları gereklidir. Çek Cumhuriyeti, Letonya ve Belarus örneklerinden de görüldüğü üzere, bu ülkelerdeki elitlerin büyük bir kısmının ittifak kararları konusunda hemfikir olması bu konudaki kararların istikrarlı bir şekilde sürdürülmesini sağlamıştır. Bu durum, Letonya’da Batı yanlısı grupların siyaseten hakim grup olmasına, Belarus’ta Başkan Lukaşenko’nun siyasi sistemdeki ağırlığına, Çek Cumhuriyeti’nde ise elitlerin büyük bir kısmının “Avrupa’ya dönüş” vizyonunu paylaşmasına bağlıdır. Bu çerçevede, Belarus’ta NATO’ya katılım hedefi, Letonya ve Çek Cumhuriyeti’nde ise Rusya ile ittifak kurma seçeneği hiçbir zaman gündeme gelmemiştir. NATO üyeliği hedefine Letonya’da Rus yanlısı gruplar, Çek Cumhuriyeti’nde de komünistler karşı çıkmışsa da, bu grupların iktidar dışı bırakılmasıyla ittifak kararları üzerinde karşı etki sağlamalarının önüne geçilmiştir.

Toplumların iktidardaki grupların ittifak seçimlerine desteği, bu hedefin gerçekleştirilmesini etkileyen bir diğer iç koşuldur. Örneğin, Letonya’da, seçmenlerin büyük bir kısmının NATO üyeliğini desteklemesi, iktidardaki grupların NATO üyeliği hedeflerini herhangi bir iç kısıtlama ve seçim kaygısı olmadan sürdürmesine olanak sağlamıştır. Ülkedeki Rus azınlık NATO yönelimine karşı çıkmışsa da, bu grupların kısıtlayıcı vatandaşlık düzenlemeleriyle seçim sürecinin dışında bırakılmasıyla, NATO yönelimi üzerinde kısıtlayıcı etki sağlamaları önlenmiştir.

Dış kısıtlamalar açısından ise, Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Letonya örneklerinden de görüldüğü üzere, NATO üyelerinin yeni üye kabul etme konusundaki uzlaşısı ve Rusya faktörünün etkisinin azalması, bu hedefin gerçekleşmesinde kilit rol oynamıştır. Çek Cumhuriyeti örneğinde, Rusya’nın tepkisi 1997 tarihinde Kurucu Senet’in imzalanması, Letonya örneğinde ise, 11 Eylül sonrası Rusya-Batı ilişkilerindeki yumuşama ve NATO-Rusya Konseyi’nin kurulmasıyla giderilmiştir.

Sonuç olarak, eski komünist devletlerin ittifak yönelimlerindeki çeşitlilik geleneksel realist yaklaşım ve konstrüktivizmle açıklanamazken, neoklasik realizmin iç-dış dinamik etkileşimini ve askeri olmayan kaygıları da dikkate alan varsayımları, Orta ve Doğu Avrupa’da yer alan eski komünist ülkelerin ittifak seçimlerinin kapsamlı bir şekilde açıklanmasına olanak sağlamaktadır. Bu yaklaşıma göre, eski komünist devletlerin ittifak seçimleri, dış dinamikler ile

devletlerin kendine özgü iç siyasi dinamikleri arasındaki etkileşime dayanmakta; ittifak seçimlerinin bölge genelinde farklılaşması ise, devletlerin dış ve iç bağlamlarındaki çeşitliliğin sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

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