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Why do states cooperate with NATO?

Threats, Interests and Status as Drivers in External States' Foreign Policymaking Towards the Alliance

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Abstract

Die vorliegende Arbeit beantwortet die Frage, welche Faktoren die Politik von externen Staaten gegenüber der NATO beeinflussen bzw. warum diese mit der NATO zusammenarbeiten. Die Organisation hat in ihrem strategischen Konzept von 2010 kooperative Sicherheit als eine ihrer Kernaufgaben definiert und ein Netzwerk offizieller und informeller Partnerschaften auf der ganzen Welt aufgebaut, um ihre Missionen zu unterstützen und ihre Legitimität zu unterstreichen. Jedoch heißen nicht alle Staaten das Engagement der NATO außerhalb ihres Territoriums willkommen. Basierend auf der Theorie des neoklassischen Realismus ermittelt die vorliegende Studie, wie die Variablen Bedrohungswahrnehmungen, Interesse am Status Quo sowie Revisionismus und Statuswettbewerb erklären können, warum einige Staaten mit der NATO zusammenarbeiten, während sich andere gegen das Bündnis positionieren. Diese Analyse stützt sich auf qualitative Fallstudien zweier südamerikanischer Staaten, nämlich Kolumbien als Befürworter und Brasilien als Ablehner der NATO.

Die Studie kommt dabei zum Schluss, dass die NATO-Politik von externen Staaten eher auf der Maximierung ihrer absoluten Macht als ihrer relativen Sicherheit basiert, da NATO-Partnerschaften keine gegenseitigen Bündnisverpflichtungen beinhalten. Sicherheitsüberlegungen haben jedoch Vorrang, wenn Staaten ihre Souveränität aufgrund des globalen Engagements der NATO als gefährdet ansehen, denn dann tangiert die NATO den sensiblen Kern der Strategien vieler Staaten zur Sicherung ihres Überlebens und ihrer Entwicklung. In diesem Fall können Staaten mit NATO-Mitgliedern zusammenarbeiten, um Profite zu erzielen und sich gleichzeitig gegen die NATO als Organisation stellen. Angesichts dieser Komplexität können weder Stephen Walt's Balance of Threat-Theorie noch Randall Schwellers Balance of Interests-Theorie das Verhalten externer Staaten gegenüber der transatlantischen Allianz vollständig erklären. Die Analyse geht schließlich auch auf die Rolle des Statuswettbewerbs als intervenierende Variable ein und zeigt auf, wie das Streben nach Status zur Motivation der Staaten beiträgt, sich aktiv gegenüber der NATO zu positionieren. Diese Ergebnisse bilden die Grundlage für die ermittelten Handlungsempfehlungen an die NATO. Um die Effizienz und Effektivität ihrer Bemühungen beim Aufbau neuer Partnerschaften zu steigern, sollte sie sich auf sogenannte neutrale Staaten konzentriert, anstatt zu versuchen ihre Kritiker umzustimmen.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the origins of external states' behavior towards NATO. The Alliance has adopted cooperative security as a main task in its strategic concept of 2010 and has spun a network of official and informal partnerships across the globe in order to support its missions and legitimacy. However, not all states welcome NATO's engagement outside of its territory. Based on the realist school of international relations, this thesis tests how the variables threat perception, interest in the status quo or revisionism, and status competition can explain why some states cooperate with NATO while others position themselves against the Alliance. The analysis relies on qualitative case studies of the South American states Brazil and Colombia, a denouncer and supporter of NATO respectively.

It concludes that external states' NATO policies are generally driven by maximizing power rather than relative security because partnerships do not entail mutual defense commitments. However, the study also suggests that security considerations prevail if states view their sovereignty at risk due to NATO's out-of-area engagements, a concern that touches upon the sensitive core of many states' strategies to ensure survival and development. In this case, states may simultaneously soft balance against NATO for security and bandwagon with the organization's members for profit. Given these complexities, neither Stephen Walt's Balance of Threat theory, nor Randall Schweller's Balance of Interests theory can fully explain external state behavior towards the transatlantic Alliance. The analysis also considers the role of status competition as an intervening variable, pointing out how the desire for status adds to the motivation for states to actively position themselves towards NATO. These results provide the basis for the study's policy recommendations for NATO to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its efforts to build new partnerships by focusing on neutral states, rather than aiming to appease its critics.

Preface

"Why don't you want to work with NATO? Do you know any organization that is better equipped to address the international security challenges of the 21st century?" I naively asked a former Indian General in 2011 when I was in New Delhi for my first research project on NATO's external relations. He scrunched his eyes, answering that NATO is a Cold War organization and should resolve.

A year later, I found myself sipping coffee on a black leader couch in Brazil's Itamaraty Palace, asking the same question to a senior diplomat. After hesitating, he jumped up, looked around, and asked me whether this was a joke and if he was being recorded by a video camera.

On another research mission to Ulaanbaatar in 2014, I was standing on Genghis Khan Square, cold calling government officials to inquire about interviews on Mongolia's relations with NATO. When the first one picked up, I could see his smile through the phone: "NATO? Please let me know where our driver can pick you up so I can treat you to lunch".

And similarly in 2015, inside Bogotá's heavily guarded Defense Ministry, I was proudly received by a group of senior officers, assiduously listing all of Colombia's cooperation activities with NATO, stressing that their country regards the Alliance as the most capable actor in international security, and that they believe a partnership with NATO to be "one of the country's highest strategic priorities".

These reactions illustrate the diverging opinions of NATO, going back to a whole set of reasons ranging from India's identity as a nonaligned country, over Brazil's understanding of sovereignty, over Mongolia's geopolitical situation, to Colombia's evolving foreign policy strategy. Examining the individual cases, these reasons seemed rather obvious, but considering the broader landscape of NATO's external relations, it was not easy to spot a pattern of those states that support and those that denounce the

Alliance. No matter the geographical region or the political system, one could find countries on both ends of the spectrum.

This dissertation aims to make sense of the plethora of factors that determine a state's policy towards NATO by applying theories that help explaining their alliance formation. By doing so, my results shall contribute to international relations theory that helps us explain state behavior based on specific variables. In other words, I aim to add a piece to the puzzle that makes us understand how the world works.

Of course, my efforts would not be possible without my strong support network. Therefore, I would like to thank my family: My parents, Frank and Kati, who have shaped my outlook on the world, have encouraged me to write this thesis, and have supported me throughout the process. My girlfriend, Eluisa, who I met in the library writing the first chapter of this dissertation, and who has been my source of joy, passion, and vital intellectual feedback. And the rest of my family who has put its trust in me and my work.

I would like to thank my advisor Prof. Dr. Carlo Masala, who has been the perfect "Doktorvater", assisting me with concise and extremely valuable feedback, supporting my professional and personal goals, and enriching my understanding of international politics with his forthright and engaging analysis of world affairs. In addition, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Stefan Fröhlich who has agreed to serve as second supervisor of my dissertation.

This work would not have been possible without the financial and intellectual support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung that has also been an important source for my empirical research because of its strong network of political stakeholders abroad. In addition, participating in the foundation's international PhD colloquium on security and development was a particularly enriching experience because it provided the chance to engage with of young and passionate scholars as well as leading professors, including Prof. Dr. Beate Neuss, Prof. Dr. Stephan Georg Bierling, and Prof. Dr. Nikolaus Werz.

I am also indebted to the many organizations and persons who have helped me to navigate my activities abroad. This includes my alma mater American University and The Fletcher School at Tufts University, which have served as the source of my curiosity to understand international relations and have thereby laid the practical and theoretical foundations for my research agenda. I also wish to thank the Fundação Getúlio Vargas in São Paulo and the Universidad EAFIT in Medellín, which have hosted me during my field research in Brazil and Colombia as a visiting researcher and provided valuable resources for me to gain insights into their countries' foreign policies. But most helpful to facilitate the dozens of interviews that served as the dissertation's empirical backbone were the connections I built throughout the years – the contacts from NATO and the German government, and especially my Fletcher family. Lastly, I am sincerely grateful to my friends for their welcoming and supportive attitude, and for keeping me sane during my research stays by providing me with the opportunity to really immerse myself in Latin American society, which is deeply influenced by human and geographic nature, and which is the source of both the region's cultural beauty and its systemic failures.

List of Abbreviations

ACT	Allied Command Transformation
AFRICOM	Africa Command
ALBA	*Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*
AMAZONLOG	Multinational Interagency Logistics Exercise, Brazil
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ATPDEA	Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act
AU	African Union
AUC	*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*
BACRIM	*Bandas Criminales*
BNDES	*O Banco Nacional do Desenvolvimento*
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CCDCOE	Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence
CFI	Connected Forces Initiative
CIAC	*Corporación de la Industria Aeronáutica Colombiana*
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CIVETS	Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, South Korea
CODALTEC	*Corporación de Alta Tecnología para la Defensa*
COTECMAR	*Corporación de Ciencia y Tecnología para el Desarrollo de la Industria Naval*
CPLP	*Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*
CREES	*Centro Regional de Estudios Estratégicos en Seguridad*
CTF	Combined Task Force
DCB	Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
ELN	*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*
EPL	*Ejército Popular de Liberación*
ESDEGUE	*Escuela Superior de Guerra*
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
ESUDE	*Escuela Suramericana de Defensa*
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARC	*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIFA	*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*
FRY	Former Republic of Yugoslavia
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
G20	Group of twenty major economies
G20 (dev. nations)	Group of twenty developing nations
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HQ	Headquarters
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency

IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
ICI	Istanbul Cooperation Initiative
ICP	Individual Cooperation Programme
IFOR	Implementation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
INDUMIL	*Industria Militar de Colombia*
IO	International Organization
IP	Interoperability Platform
IPAP	Individual Partnership Action Plan
IPCP	Individual Partnership and Cooperation Plan
IR	International Relations
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force Afghanistan
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JTEC	Joint Training and Evaluation Centre
M-19	April 19th Movement
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
MD	Mediterranean Dialogue
MERCOSUR	*Mercado Común del Sur*
MNNA	Major non-NATO ally
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NAM	Non-Alignment Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDB	New Development Bank
NDC	NATO Defense College
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
NSA	National Security Agency
NUC	NATO-Ukraine Commission
NWS	Nuclear Weapons States
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PASP	Political Affairs and Security Policy Division
PCSC	Partnerships and Cooperative Security Committee
PfP	Partnership for Peace Programme
PII	Partnership Interoperability Initiative
PMDB	*Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*
PPC	Political and Partnerships Committee
PROSUB	*Programa de Desenvolvimento de Submarinos*
PT	*Partido dos Trabalhadores*
R&D	Research and Development

R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
RWP	Responsibility While Protecting
SADC	South American Defense Council
SFOR	Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SISFRON	Sistema Integrado de Monitoramento de Fronteiras
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SNGP	Substantial NATO-Georgia Package
SOUTHCOM	Southern Command
TCP	Tailored Cooperation Package
TCU	*Tribunal de Contas da União*
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor
UNASUR	*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNITAS	Multinational maritime exercise in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSTAMIH	United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti
WEU	Western European Union
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZOPACAS	*Zona de Paz e Cooperação do Atlântico Sul*

1. Introduction

Today's NATO is an organization with limited regional membership, but with a truly global reach. As soon as the Alliance took on security commitments beyond territorial defense in the light of instability on the Balkans and the fight against terrorism, many debates about NATO's future broke out: Should the organization widen its scope of tasks to act in the global interests of its members, and even invite democracies outside of Europe to join the Alliance; or should NATO shift back to a limited focus on its initial task of territorial defense?

The question has never found a distinct answer, but one could claim that NATO has been aiming to put further out-of-area engagements on hold after Russia once again became a genuine security threat for Eastern European states after its aggression in Ukraine since 2014, making the Alliance more critical for defense at home than for security abroad. As NATO has finished its counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, and hoping to wrap up its engagement in Afghanistan in the foreseeable future, the Alliance concentrates its activities in and around Europe's periphery. In addition, the debate about a global NATO – an organization in which democracies around the globe would unite – led to nothing more than the realization that the majority of the current NATO states are neither willing nor able to grand security commitments to further members. Given this backdrop, why should one care about NATO's global relations?

While the idea of a global NATO has been dismissed and the current state of Afghanistan and Libya showcase the limits of the Alliance to establish security abroad, current developments have not diminished the need for partners in the light of the globalization of threats and limited resources at home. Therefore, NATO has been putting ever-great emphasis on cooperative security as one of its main tasks. By reforming its approach to partnerships – making them flexible and focusing on practical cooperation rather than membership preparation – NATO utilizes its external relations to gain mission support, legitimacy, and influence far beyond its membership. Developing an outside perspective has also helped the Alliance to further its ability to manage international security in a

genuinely cooperative fashion with powers around the globe that might not be inclined to contribute to NATO's missions, but that have an interest in coordinating their actions abroad, for example with China in anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa.

The Alliance of 29 members already counts over 40 partners to which it devotes a whole division in its headquarters (HQ), and involves its military commands to coordinate over 1,400 possible joint activities. While many analysts continue to relate NATO's external relations to its borders in Eastern Europe and North Africa, the Alliance has actually spun a network of official and informal partnerships across the globe in order to advance its capacity, which led NATO to rely on partners from Australia to Mongolia to contribute troops to its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and to engage in flexible international cooperation formats, such as training with the Colombian Navy off the coast of Somalia.

NATO's out-of-area operations, along with its expanding external relations, has led virtually every state that is active in international security to form an opinion about the Alliance, reflecting a broad set of notions from being a reliable security provider over being a Cold War relic to being a tool for American imperialism. External states' policies towards the Alliance are often puzzling and ambiguous, leading to important questions about their motivations: How can India be a staunch critic of NATO while building increasingly close defense ties with the US? Was Ukraine's sudden rapprochement with NATO after the Maidan Revolution a result of the country's national identity or international security interests? And why are authoritarian states, such as Azerbaijan and Qatar, more inclined to work with NATO as an alliance of liberal democracies than other major democratic states, say, Brazil and South Africa? I.e., what factors prevail in state's foreign policymaking towards NATO?

Analyzing individual cases, one could point to security interests, material benefits, domestic factions, ideational factors, and historical relationships, among the many motivations behind a state's NATO policy. This study aims to make sense of this plethora variables by lifting the research question of why states cooperate with NATO on a

theoretical foundation that applies leading alliance theories, thereby shedding light on the main drivers for states to support NATO or position themselves against the Alliance.

The following chapter starts by providing an overview of how the organization's external relations evolved after the Cold War, highlighting that partnerships have become a central goal for reasons of operational capacity, legitimacy, and regional stability, rather than a tool to prepare for membership. After the chapter explains the motivations behind the evolvement of NATO's partnership policy, it provides an overview of how internal dynamics shape the Alliance's engagement with external actors, and introduces an outside view on NATO, explaining the principal motivations for states to cooperate with the Alliance or oppose its actions in the international arena.

Chapter three introduces the theoretical aspects of alliance formation in international politics. Developing the rationale for applying the realist school of international relations, the section explains how power and security form the basis of balancing and bandwagoning, and how the domestic level comes into play to filter international influences, leading to rational decision making in an anarchic self-help system. Hereby, the chapter highlights Stephen M. Walt's Balance of Threat theory, Randall L. Schweller's Balance of Interest Theory, and the dynamics of status competition based on the works of William C. Wohlforth and Deborah W. Larson, among other leading scholars, as the basis for the case studies that shall help answering the research question.

The fourth chapter explains the study's methodology, defining the dependent, independent, and intervening variables: state behavior towards NATO, resulting from system-level threats and interests in the status quo or revisionism, and filtered at the unit level by a state's specific status strategy. The section explains the study's approach to data analysis and why it relies on qualitative case studies, before presenting the case study criteria and the selection of Brazil and Colombia as the case states – two democracies from a state-centric region; one supporter and one denouncer of NATO.

Chapters five and six provide a detailed analysis of Brazil's and Colombia's foreign policy during the case study period of 2001 until 2016, explain their posture towards NATO, and apply the theories that shall be tested in this dissertation. Chapter seven compares the results of the case study, thereby drawing conclusions about their applicability and the true motivation of states' foreign policy towards the Alliance. The last section, chapter eight, applies these theoretical results to reality, suggesting practical advice for NATO policymakers to refine their approach to external relations, which has been somewhat ambiguous and opaque, driven by ad-hoc factors, rather than an explicit political or strategic agenda (Edström et al. 2011: 2).

The results shall also contribute to the body of literature of in international relations theory because alliances are of key importance for the field's scholars, but they remain vastly understudied. Carlo Masala and Alessandro Scheffler Corvaja (2016: 349, 357) point out that "research is lacking on why alliances are formed" and that "what is lacking is a dynamic approach focusing not on the question of why NATO still exists, but on how NATO is developing".

In addition to filling empirical gaps of alliance studies and NATO's development, the case studies will shed light on fundamental questions of foreign policymaking: What are the true motivations of states to enter into alliances – maximizing absolute power or relative security gains? And therefore, which factors prevail in foreign policymaking – threats, interests in the status quo or revisionism, or the desire for status?

Studying these variables in combination will be especially helpful to develop the understudied concept of status competition: Underlying a neoclassical realist logic, how does status affect the state's interest in accumulating power and gaining security? How do the ideational components of status refine the notion of threats and interests, and thereby bring the Balance of Threat and Balance of Interests theory even closer to reality?

Given the complex analysis of relationships between the systemic forces and their translation at the unit level, determining the status strategies of the case states will also shed light on the states' self-perceived place and potential in the international status hierarchy, their confidence in the stability of the unipolar system, and their rationale of forming alliances or forgoing them, which shall provide significant insights into states' grand strategies and into NATO's external image around the world.

2. On NATO

This chapter starts by providing an overview of how NATO's partnership policy evolved from a being tool for promoting democracy to becoming one that serves the Alliance on rather practical terms. Subsequently, the section points out factors guiding internal policymaking and thereby shaping the practical aspects of the Alliance's commitment to cooperative security. In the last part, the chapter provides an outside view on NATO, which introduces the research puzzle and the theoretical foundation of this dissertation.

2.1. NATO's evolvement as a global actor and the evolution of its partnership policy

As NATO has reformed itself since the 1990s, taking on more tasks with a broader global footprint, the Alliance naturally expanded its engagement with external states. Therefore, NATO has adopted cooperative security as one of its core tasks in its 2010 strategic concept, on par with the tasks of territorial defense and crisis management. This is a significant development considering that partnerships used to be a tool for preparing Central and Eastern European states for membership, as indicated in the 1990 London Declaration:

> "We recognise that, in the new Europe, the security of every state is inseparably linked to the security of its neighbours. NATO must become an institution where Europeans, Canadians and Americans work together not only for the common defence, but to build new partnerships with all the nations of Europe. The Atlantic Community must reach out to the countries of the East which were our adversaries in the Cold War, and extend to them the hand of friendship." (NATO 1990)

Over two decades, twelve additional members, and more than a dozen international military and humanitarian relief operations later, partnerships have become daily business of the Alliance for reasons of operational capacity, legitimacy, and regional stability.

Former Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen (2014: 15) highlighted the importance of partnerships to enhance legitimacy and security reasons alike:

> "Well beyond the Euro-Atlantic area, partners contribute to the political legitimacy of our actions, and today strong partnerships are as important for NATO as modern military hardware and flexible forces. They are part of NATO's core business. […] This is not about NATO expanding its footprint into other parts of the world or assuming global responsibilities. It is about NATO being globally aware, globally connected and globally capable. I believe there is still considerable scope for strengthening our Alliance in such a way."

In order to understand the drivers behind the transformation of partnerships, it is essential to trace the progress of NATO's engagement in cooperative security. Trine Flockhart points to the development of the international security environment to explain how the functions of partnerships have evolved:

Stream/Year	*Trigger*	*Functionality/Outcome*	*Rationale*
1/1990	End of Cold War	Expansion and strengthening of the Euro-Alantic Community	Integration Influence
2/1995	Balkan operations	Partner participation in operations	Intervention
3/2001	9/11	Meeting global security challenges	Influence Intervention
4/2010	Global security challenges and shifts in the power balance	Sustaining the practices of liberal world order	Integration Influence Intervention

(Flockhart 2014: 29)

The first three streams were initiated by shocks that influenced the member states' perception of security: the fall of the Berlin Wall, War on the European continent, and 9/11. The fourth one started after a readjustment of NATO's grand strategy as a result of the changing international security landscape that featured emerging threats and a shifting

balance of power. By 2014 – just after Flockhart's analysis – one could add Russia's aggression in Ukraine as another shock that led NATO to shift its threat perception, to advance territorial defense, and therefore focus on capability development as a primary function of its partnership policy, for example by stepping up defense cooperation with its Scandinavian partner Sweden.

Similarly, leading NATO officials have described the Alliance's development in four stages: a Cold War NATO (1.0), a post-Cold War NATO after 1990 (2.0), a post-Lisbon Summit NATO after 2010 (3.0), and a post-Wales Summit NATO after 2014 (4.0). These stages were marked by different international security environments, including the distributions of power, security challenges, and threat perceptions, which led to the adjustment of NATO's missions and institutional setup. Taken together, the functional and institutional evolvement went hand in hand to shape NATO's conception of cooperative security and to serve as a roadmap to explain the evolvement of the Alliances' partnership policy.

2.1.1. NATO 1.0

NATO was founded in 1949 with the goal "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down", as NATO's first Secretary General Lord Ismay famously remarked (quoted in Steinmeier 2015). The Alliance remained the West's[1] military bulwark against the Soviet Union-led Warsaw Pact throughout the Cold War. Thought the two superpowers of the time maintained extensive relations with third world countries, especially in Asia and Latin America, the US and Soviet Union did not utilize NATO or the Warsaw Pact to work with them actively. As the clearly structured world order was to be managed by the superpowers alone, the military alliances served the purpose to defend territory without a mandate to engage in cooperative security beyond

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[1] The thesis will treat the "the West" as the sum of countries representing the political West through institutional membership in regimes founded and highly influenced by the US and Western European states after WWII. Scholars that conceptualize communities beyond state borders even use NATO and the West interchangeably, hinting to the close association between the West and NATO (Stünkel 2010: 37).

their boundaries. Therefore NATO 1.0 did not even have a partnership program, nor did the Alliance foster extensive external relations.

2.1.2. NATO 2.0

NATO's partnership policy took off right after the Cold War when Secretary General Manfred Wörner declared NATO's changing outlook on its external environment during the 1990 London Summit:

> "The Cold War belongs to history. Our Alliance is moving from confrontation to cooperation. […] Never before has Europe had such a tangible opportunity to overcome the cycle of war and peace that has so bedevilled its past." (Wörner 1990)

The institutional shift resulted in the 1991 strategic concept that guided the Alliance's during the 1990s, and led to the establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in December 1991, NATO's first partnership program, preparing Central and Eastern European states from the former Warsaw Pact members to become part of the Alliance. The NACC was overtaken by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997 as NATO's main Eurasian forum to build trust through long-term consultations.

Meanwhile, by 1994, the Alliance had created the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program to institutionalize bilateral practical cooperation, including virtually all of NATO's partnership activities, from security sector reform over military-to-military cooperation to assistance for science and environmental issues (Kaim 2016: 5). As PfP was successful in building military capacity and promoting democratic standards in the security sectors, the framework was also key to prepare aspiring members for membership.

While not including the same spectrum of partnership activities as PfP, NATO also reached out to its Southern Flank by establishing the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) in 1994, together with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and later Algeria (Moore 2012: 59).

In addition, NATO institutionalized its relations with the two largest post-Soviet states, establishing bilateral fora with Russia and Ukraine. Although the Alliance initiated the bilateral cooperation with Moscow and Kyiv simultaneously, they were designed for different reasons: while the most optimistic liberals may have voiced their desire for Russia to join NATO at some point, institutionalizing bilateral relations with Russia was actually a measure to reassure Moscow of the Alliances' friendly intentions of its eastward expansion. In the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, the parties committed themselves to "build together a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area on the principles of democracy and cooperative security" (NATO 1997), establishing a Permanent Joint Council (PJC) for consultations and coordination of security issues. The PJC was replaced by the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in 2002, after Moscow approached Brussels for closer cooperation following the 9/11 attacks on the Alliance (Moore 2012: 59).

In contrast, the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), established as a result of the 1997 NATO-Ukraine Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, arguably served as a tool to prepare Kyiv for membership, as was announced at the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration: "NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO" (NATO 2008: Abs. 23). Since 2014, however, Moscow's aggression in Ukraine has deterred most NATO allies from continuing to aim including Ukraine as a member. Instead, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the Kremlin's support of pro-Russian rebels to wage war against the Ukrainian government in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk have led the NUC to become a forum to discuss possibilities for NATO to assist Ukraine within the given partnership framework as a wider effort to contain Russia's influence in Europe.

After Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008, the Alliance also inaugurated the NATO-Georgia Commission for consulting on regional security concerns and enhancing military-to-military cooperation. This initiative became part of the US's and Europe's efforts to transform the country's institutions, supporting its rule of law and democratic

reforms, while helping to establish Georgia as one of the most interoperable allies, capable and willing to support NATO missions, from the Mediterranean Sea to Afghanistan.

Driven by the belief that the West won the Cold War, as Flockhart (2014: 29) explains, NATO's partnership policy towards the post-Soviet space was a natural result of aiming to integrate former communist states into the Euro-Atlantic security framework and of influencing those states that will remain outside of the Alliance. While allies were originally motivated to invest in partnerships to promote democracy and security sector reform in the post-Soviet space, as soon as NATO undertook its first out-of-area operations, partnerships started to take on an additional function: adding firepower to NATO-led interventions.

The Alliance engaged in its first out-of-area mission ever in the Balkans in 1995 and naturally turned to its partners for support. The Implementation Force (IFOR) and subsequent Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina were not only joined by all NATO members, but also by states from Europe, North Africa, South America, and Oceania.[2] Similarly, the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo (KFOR) has been supported by post-Soviet, North African, Asian, and Arab states.[3] The partners were integrated into the decision-making apparatus and were able to gain practical experience of operating with NATO forces.

Since NATO's engagement in the Balkans, partners took on an increasingly important role in contributing to the Alliance's forces on the ground. And when NATO became involved outside of Europe, partnerships took on another vital function: adding legitimacy to the Alliances' global endeavors. As Janne Haaland Matlary (2011: 69)

[2] Albania, Austria, Argentina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden; and by special agreement with the UK: Australia and New Zealand (SFOR 2005).

[3] Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Finland, Georgia, India, Ireland, Malaysia, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Philippines, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE, and Ukraine (NATO 2012, NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2008).

notes, "[t]o have a large coalition of states behind an operation is increasingly important, especially if some of these are Muslim states and the operation is linked to anti-terrorism causes". Suddenly, partners were no longer primarily regarded as a means to convey democratic values, but rather to add to NATO's image as an appropriate institution to promote security and stability beyond the Alliance's neighborhood. This was especially significant as states became concerned with NATO infringing on their sovereignty as well as disrespecting international law, for example when the Alliance interfered in Kosovo without a United Nations (UN) mandate and later when it overstretched its mandate to overthrow the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.

NATO's out-of-area engagement also led the Alliance to work and institutionalize relations with other international organizations, such as the UN and the Western European Union (WEU), the EU's former military branch. As early as 1992, NATO and the WEU assisted the UN in the Mediterranean to monitor an arms embargo against former Yugoslav republics. Based on the continued commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty that pledges to the "purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations" (NATO 1949: Preamble), NATO has taken on more mandates from the UN, most notably in the Balkans and later in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and Libya (NATO 2016d). Therefore, relations with the UN are a natural evolvement of NATO as an organization looking outward to support international security, resulting in cooperation in fields of peace operations, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, arms control disaster relief, protecting children in armed conflict, and even gender issues.

Given the overlap of member states – counting 22 European allies (before the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU) – it was also natural for NATO to coordinate responsibilities and cooperate on common challenges with the EU. During the 1990s, the WEU developed as a pillar within NATO with the aim for Europe to act more independently of the US, as well as to balance the financial burden so that Europe spends more on its own defense. Though some had feared that the two organizations would compete for competencies in European security, policymakers generally welcomed European defense initiatives because a more capable Europe also makes NATO stronger

(though some allies that are members of both organizations generally prefer to act through the EU rather than NATO, such as France).

Practically, the NATO-WEU relationship enabled European states to utilize NATO assets – including command arrangements and assistance in operational planning – for WEU missions, a set-up that later led to the 2002 Berlin Plus agreement. At that point, the EU had already established its European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) that de-facto replaced the WEU. As the EU is an organization mainly concerned with civilian security aspects, cooperation between the two Brussels-based institutions allowed for cooperation under the umbrella of the *comprehensive approach*, aiming to coordinate military and civilian responses to crisis management and operations. Therefore, NATO and the EU initiated regular meetings at the ministerial down to the staff level, and the exchange of military liaisons. They cooperated and supported each other in the operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Sudan, the Mediterranean, and at the Horn of Africa (NATO 2016a).

As a third partner organization, NATO established relations with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), an institution with a unique membership, comprised both of NATO states and Russia with the goal of fostering cooperative security from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The OSCE does not only serve as a communication channel between the West and Russia, but it also allows NATO states to engage in practical cooperation with Moscow that they would not be able to in a NATO setting. In addition to its political significance, NATO recognizes the OSCE's practical importance for civilian security issues, such as border security and election observing that ensures democratic standards in some of NATO's Eastern member states. Though NATO and the OSCE hold regular staff-to-staff talks since 1998, the relationship between the two organizations has not become as institutionalized as that with the EU (NATO 2016c).

The bilateral relations between the international organizations (IOs) serve to coordinate policy and engagement in the field, not to strengthen NATO's material capabilities (mostly because military assets are in the possession of states, not IOs). They further the

comprehensive approach to security issues and reaffirm the importance of managing international security through multilateral cooperation. And the regular exchange on different levels serves to ensure that they actually cooperate, rather than compete over their responsibilities.

Whereas NATO's relations with other IOs can be regarded as a result of the Alliance's growing stake in managing security beyond Europe's borders, it were the 9/11 attacks on the US that triggered a new era of cooperative security with further emphasis on practical cooperation to enable the Alliance to counter novel security threats that originate abroad and require partners in areas of concern (Flockhart 2014: 29). By expanding its partnership after 2001, therefore, NATO was aiming to increase its effectiveness to influence and intervene wherever the Alliance saw its security threatened. From a US point of view, NATO became a tool for effectively integrating coalitions-of-the-willing into US-led operations (Kay 2011: 28).

In practice, NATO deepened its network in regions that suddenly attracted urgent attention in the wake of the fight against international terrorism, initiating an outreach to countries from Asia to Africa, and especially enhancing the cooperation with the five Central Asian *Stans* – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – within the PfP framework. Thereby, as Rebecca Moore (2012: 60) explains, NATO was able to enact important measures from setting up bases, over establishing transit routes, to enhancing border security in order to operate effectively in Afghanistan.

By 2004, the Alliance also enhanced the cooperation with its southern rim by upgrading MD, offering to participate in activities that were previously only accessible for members of the PfP framework (Raeder 2014: 52). NATO was reaching out to Africa well beyond its Mediterranean neighborhood, initiating a dialogue with the African Union (AU) and supporting peacekeeping operations on the continent, for example by providing airlift for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and stationing military personnel in the AU headquarters to advance its capacity (Appathurai 2014: 42).

In addition to deepen and widen relations with its African partners, NATO set up the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) in 2004 with the Arab countries Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to foster trust-building and inter-regional cooperation, including defense planning, information sharing, and maritime operation (Moore 2012: 59) – specifically aimed at "adopt[ing] a bottom-up approach by building practical military-to-military ties to flesh out the political rapprochement" (Samaan 2012). By 2008, NATO also started to engage in dialogue with the Arab League. Although the cooperation remained mostly limited to NATO's 2011 Operation Freedom Falcon in Libya, the Alliance utilized the dialogue for public diplomacy to improve its image in the Middle East and thereby enhance its legitimacy to engage in nearby theaters (El-Kouedi 2013: 2, 6).

Markus Kaim (2016: 12) argues that NATO's effort to build relations with groups of African and the Middle Eastern countries yielded limited results, mostly because of the groups' heterogeneity and the lack of common security challenges among the diverse partners. As an example, he mentions the differences within MD between Tunisia's interests in defense sector reform, Jordan's aim to cooperate in the fight against the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), and Israel's desire to consult on questions of missile defense. NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy James Appathurai (2014: 41) adds that the heterogeneity of membership – including Israel among the Arab states – made it particularly hard to utilize the format for cooperation on the political level. The lack of progress to engage with the diverse partnership formats resulted in a push to build closer bilateral collaboration, for example with Tunisia, Jordan, and Qatar (Kaim 2016: 21).

NATO also expanded its network of bilateral partnerships beyond members of the regional frameworks. Since 1998, NATO set up relations with Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand – the Contact Countries, mostly major non-NATO

allies (MNNA) of the US[4] from Asia – inviting them to participate in exercises, conferences, and military-to-military cooperation on an ad-hoc basis (Kaim 2016: 16). From the 2006 Riga Summit on, these relationships were structured further to increase their operational relevance, until they were streamlined with the other partnership programs and finally called Partners Across the Globe or Global Partners.

The Alliance adjusted its cooperation with the Global Partners in the light of its out-of-area missions, engaging with them either on the basis of their contribution to NATO missions or on the basis of their shared security challenges. For example, the Alliance promoted Pakistan and Mongolia to official partners because of their support for NATO missions. The latest partner Colombia also offers operational value because of its unique expertise in guerrilla warfare. Contrarily, NATO entered into a partnership with Afghanistan and Iraq not on the grounds of their potential for mission support, but rather because of the perceived need to strengthen NATO assistance (Kaim 2016: 15-17).

Beyond official partnerships, NATO started to engage in bilateral talks with non-partner states including China, India, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia because of their value as capable dialog partners to consult on global and regional security issues, as well as their potential for practical cooperation in the future. For example, NATO and China have exchanged high-level and working-level visits of civilian and military delegations to consult on security issues, ranging from NATO's Afghanistan operation to the stability of North Korea (Moore 2012: 62-63).

NATO's efforts to build relationships across the globe have resulted in significant support for its missions. Taking ISAF as NATO's largest mission, for example: the Alliance was supported by twenty-three non-NATO states (NATO 2015a); its successor, the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), continues to be supported by eleven external states (NATO 2016e). Even when taking the Alliance's whole missions record into

[4] MNNAs: Australia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Jordan, New Zealand, Argentina, Bahrain, Philippines, Taiwan (de facto), Thailand, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tunisia (listed by date of recognition as major non-NATO ally, US House of Representatives 2017).

consideration, partners have been constant contributors: NATO's maritime Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean See to prevent the movement of terrorists and weapons of mass destruction has been supported by Georgia, Israel, Morocco, New Zealand, Ukraine, and even by Russia (NATO 2016b). During the anti-piracy Operation Ocean Shield at the Horn of Africa, NATO troops have worked with partners from with Australia, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Korea, and Ukraine (NATO Maritime Command 2016). NATO's Training Mission in Iraq has been supported by Egypt, Japan, Jordan, Ukraine, and the UAE (Sharp/Blanchard 2007). And partners even donated supplies for the NATO airlift in Pakistan following the 2005 earthquake (NATO 2010a).

In sum, the post-9/11 development stage of NATO's partnerships has been marked by expanding the Alliance's networks. The choice of new partners and the activities were inspired by the mindset shift that partnerships would no longer be a tool for fostering democracy and prepare countries for the integration into the Euro-Atlantic security community – but that partnership serve a tool for increasing firepower in military operations and to enhance legitimacy in the light of NATO's global engagement.

2.1.3. NATO 3.0

By 2010, NATO had clearly transformed since its search of a mission in the 1990s and the adoption of its previous strategic concept from 1999. The Alliance had been engaged in a decade-long fight on terror and it had been facing new global security challenges – from cyber warfare, over energy security, to climate change – as well as a shift in the international balance of power, exacerbated by the financial crisis in the West, and the ongoing economic success of developing states in the Global South. It was time to agree on a new Strategic Concept during the 2010 Lisbon Summit to lay a new roadmap for the organization's future that includes cooperative security as one of the Alliance's main tasks.

At this point, it was essential to evaluate the goals of NATO's engagement with external actors. Flockhart argues that the international environment called for investments in the liberal world order and required NATO to utilize its partnerships across the whole spectrum of functions: integration, influence, and intervention (Flockhart 2014: 29). Her liberal internationalist view should be complemented by NATO's realist perspective to gain resources and advance security by operating more effectively.

This is because NATO increasingly judged individual partners by their contribution to NATO's military apparatus. As Arif Bağbaşlıoğlu (2014: 75) concludes, "it is obvious that NATO's new partnership policy has been transformed from a supply to a demand orientation". In other words, NATO did not continue to follow its "customer-driven approach" (Frühling/Schreer 2011: 42) to supply security, but shifted the focus towards demanding partner contributions.

It made sense to expect individual partners to be more proactive because they also benefit from NATO operations – at least indirectly, for example by the protection of the sea-lanes of communication. It also allowed NATO to evaluate its own commitment to its relationships partly based on what the Alliance receives. Partnerships have become a two-way street and there is no one-way sign in sight, especially if members continue to fail living up to their financial commitment to NATO's overall mission (Kaim 2016: 15) and if the US government tightens its transactional outlook on international security.

Moreover, partnerships became important because cooperating with regional actors abroad also helps to legitimize NATO's actions (Flockhart 2014: 18). For example, regional partners who voice their approval of NATO's engagement are politically important to gain UN mandates and legitimize NATO's out-of-area operations – actions that can infringe on the sovereignty of other states.

Local support also helps NATO implementing its missions more effectively: partners can provide vital information and intelligence, allow NATO to set up bases, grant overfly rights, establish transit routes, and increase border security – as was the case of the Central Asian states during the ISAF operation. Being able to consult on security issues

in far-away regions helps the Alliance to detect potential threats. Working to increase interoperability prepares partners to assist NATO when needed. And political contacts on the ground serve NATO to help to build a stable post-conflict environment.

With this spectrum of functions in mind, from sustaining the liberal world to practical mission support, NATO decided to reform its partnership policy accordingly. As a symbolic start, the Alliance highlighted the importance of cooperative security – to build military partnerships – as one of its main tasks (NATO 2011b). In addition to its formal ties, the Alliance stressed the importance to engage with “key global actors and other new interlocutors beyond the Euro-Atlantic area with which NATO does not have a formal partnership arrangement” (NATO 2011a: Abs. 7). The 2010 Report of the Group of Experts chaired by former US Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright similarly recognized that NATO must review its partnership formats to ensure “teamwork” in a flexible format (NATO Group of Experts 2010: 22).

In order to advance cooperative security in practice, NATO decided to reform its partnership policy in 2011 in Berlin for it to become more efficient and flexible (Reisinger 2012). While leaving the existing partnership frameworks in place, NATO offered each partner to sign an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP), a bilateral document to agree on specific areas of cooperation, offering individualized agreements with over 1,400 possible joint activities in its Partnership Cooperation Menu (NATO 2014). Thereby, NATO also combined all partnership tools, increasing the availability of partnership measures previously limited for specific frameworks to a wider range of partners, such as extending the Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) to MD and ICI partners, the Tailored Cooperation Packages (TCPs) to the global partners, as well as the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) and the Planning and Review Process (PARP) programs to partners outside of PfP/EAPC on a case-by-case basis (Moore 2012: 65). By considering each case individually, NATO was now able to respond to the partners’ concerns, thereby building relations based on mutual interests rather than geographic considerations.

The focus on partners continued at the 2012 Chicago Summit, where thirteen partner states[5] were invited because of their significant contribution to NATO missions (Górka-Winter/Znojek 2015: 87). The summit declaration highlighted the legacy of partnerships:

> "For twenty years, our partnerships have facilitated and provided frameworks for political dialogue and practical regional cooperation in the fields of security and defense, contributed to advancing our common values, allowed us to share expertise and experience, and made a significant contribution to the success of many of our operations and missions." (NATO 2012: Abs. 22)

It became clear that NATO has embraced cooperative security as one of its main tasks, practically and diplomatically, by reforming the way it deals with partners and by highlighting their importance to the Alliance's success.

2.1.4. NATO 4.0

The development towards a globally engaged NATO that caused the expansion of its partnership network was partly a result of the loss of an enemy by the end of the Cold War; in other words: NATO was taking on the core task of cooperative security as a result of committing to missions to advance its member states' security beyond defending their territory from unknown threats. By 2014, however, when Russia illegally annexed Crimea and supported the outbreak of a civil war on Ukrainian territory, Central and Eastern European allies once again relied on NATO's value to deter against the Russian threat. This required NATO to put more emphasis on territorial defense, while remaining engaged with emerging threats in and beyond its neighborhood, as laid out by NATO's Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow just before the Wales Summit:

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[5] Australia, Austria, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Arab Emirates (Flockhart 2014: 26). The logic of inviting exactly these members has not been spelled out clearly, especially since there was no follow-up meeting, illustrating NATO's ad-hoc and sometimes enigmatic approach to partnerships (Kamp/Reisinger 2013: 3).

> "In the coming years, NATO will have to walk, chew gum and juggle at the same time. It's a difficult task because we live in a dangerous world, and it's all the more necessary because of that. Make no mistake: We must be prepared for every challenge the world throws at us. We need to do all our missions, political and military, extremely well. This is an Alliance that must multi-task, while remaining proficient at every task. But we also need the right connections so we can take advantage of the strengths of partner nations and organizations. This is the NATO version 4.0 that we have launched here in Wales. And you have been present at its rollout" (2014).

In order to maintain agile abroad while hardening its defense at home, the practical aspects of cooperative security became ever more important. In fact, NATO used the Wales Summit to further enhance the effectiveness of its partnership programs, for example by announcing the Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII), a continuation of past interoperability formats, including the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI), helping to establish an Interoperability Platform (IP) of twenty-four partner states to advance consultations and cooperation on interoperability (Kaim 2016: 18). The Alliance also launched a Defence and related Security Capacity Building Initiative (DCB) to further support, advise and assist military forces of partner states (Kaim 2016: 20). In addition, NATO used the chance to highlight the Alliance's relations with the EU and to announce cooperation on relatively new tasks with civilian components, such as energy security, cyber defense, and hybrid threats.

In regards to individual partners, the Alliance was able to agree on a Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP), which led to the launch of the NATO-Georgian Joint Training and Evaluation Centre (JTEC) in 2015, a flagship project that may be expanded to other capable partners (Kaim 2016: 19). Kaim (2016: 17) argues that such initiatives signal NATO's intention to utilize partnerships to further advance the capabilities of partners, enabling them to fight alongside NATO, even for the collective defense of the Alliance. In addition, investing in partner states' militaries shall empower them to tackle regional security challenges alone, without the need for NATO interventions (Kaim 2016: 20).

Appaturai (2014: 36) voiced a similar functional approach to partnerships: "The general direction of travel of NATO's partnerships seems likely to follow three main tracks: preparing together, consulting together, and acting together". In preparing together, he refers to increasing the interoperability of NATO and partner forces; in consulting together, he refers to the political interoperability to achieve a common understanding of a problem and its solution; and in acting together, he refers to the partners' support for NATO missions.

Looking back to over twenty-five years of enhancing cooperative security, one can see that NATO's partnership policy has been underlying different logics, but nevertheless expanded geographically and functionally, driven by NATO's institutional evolvement as a response to the international security environment and its member states' interests. Initially, the Alliance's cooperation activities were directed by its neighbors' motivation to help modernize their defense sectors (Haaland Matlary 2011: 66). Today, NATO broadened its partnership policy to all states willing and capable to contribute to its missions, transforming partnerships to become a tool to advance cooperative security.

Though cooperative security follows the goal of "increase[ing] international harmony and cooperation, synchronizing efforts to deal with the new multidimensional threats and providing a better understanding of common problems" (NATO 2011b), the Alliance's engagement with external actors is often viewed in geopolitical terms and therefore limited by third parties' geopolitical interests. Therefore – while "[t]here is no indication that NATO aimed to achieve the effect of a larger geo-political reach" (Haaland Matlary 2011: 68) – NATO's relations with important partners, such as Georgia and Ukraine, will continue to be regarded will suspicion by NATO's adversaries with the potential to lead to aggression and security dilemmas.

In order to achieve the spectrum of NATO's economic, political, and security objectives, cooperation was made more flexible, allowing for ad-hoc individual cooperation on different levels, even with non-partner states. "Bilateralizing" helped NATO to assess the value of individual partners and base the partnerships on practical terms, leading the

Alliance to offer formal partnership agreements to far away states. It also opened the opportunity for establishing a hierarchy of partners, an idea proposed by Kamp and Reisinger who aimed to group partners in political categories that guide the level of cooperation (Kamp/Reisinger 2013: 6-7).

Nevertheless, the outdated formats remained in place in order not to abandon the political relationships with those states that are currently not ready to contribute to NATO's missions. This proved vital in the case of Ukraine: While Kyiv was less interested in deepening the cooperation with the West under pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych, the Maidan Revolution reversed Ukraine's outlook toward EU and NATO integration. At that point, Kyiv and Brussels were able to draw on the existing structure of the NUC to quickly advance their close cooperation in their light of serious security challenges in Eastern Ukraine.

Given the Alliance's immediate security challenges, from hybrid warfare to instability in the Middle East, the value of cooperative security is not expected to drop. But the complexity of emerging threats as well as the members' economic and political constraints will likely lead NATO to a further prioritize individual partnerships with those states that offer capabilities, experiences, and expertise in the defense sector.

2.2. It takes two to tango: Views from both sides

2.2.1. The NATO view

In order to understand NATO's management of cooperative security, it is crucial to recognize that the practical application of its partnership policy is greatly affected by developments within the North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's decision-making body representing all member states. Consequently, external relations are filtered through the state level, shaped by the members' political, economic, and security interests, resulting in the lowest common denominator of all 29 nations. This is why all of NATO's partnership activities rest on the interests of all members (or at least the agreement of all NATO states' governments).

NATO's external policy is made in the Partnerships and Cooperative Security Committee (PCSC) – initially called the Political and Partnerships Committee (PPC) – and executed by NATO's Political Affairs and Security Policy Division (PASP) that is in the lead to manage the organization's relations with currently over forty partners (see: Annex I). The lean division acts demand-driven as a foreign ministry equivalent of a state, responding to both the interests of NATO allies and the requests of external states, coordinating most of the partnership programs, and managing institutional change.

While this sounds straightforward, the scope of interests that influence policy is nearly endless given that the Alliance of 29 democracies represents over 900 million citizens, deploys tens of thousands of soldiers abroad at any given point, and is managed by 2000+ military and civilian employees who work under the roof of one HQ. One could group the interests on all levels (individuals in the NATO HQ and missions, the member states, and the international arena) and consider them from different viewpoints and ontological assumptions. But it would simply be imprudent to aim providing a complete list of dynamics that lead to the Alliance's practical engagement with third parties. Therefore, the following discussion limits itself to common internal factors in order to complement the previous section and to help the reader understand the Alliance's rationale behind some of its external relations with a focus on the state level:

Economic rationale: The failure to adhere to the agreement of spending two percent of each country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense has become a source of common concern within the NAC. The defense budgets of the majority of European member states have dropped dramatically after the end of the Cold War – to an extent that they can barely fulfill their military obligations. Financial crises in the Eurozone and domestic politics have made it even harder for the majority of NATO states to sustain spending on military operations abroad. The US's announcement to "Pivot to Asia" is worsening the Alliance's prospects to fulfill its obligations in Europe because the US may shift its resources to other theaters. Though partnerships cannot balance the uneven spending within the Alliance, they can be a vital addition to increase firepower in out-of-area operations. Therefore, NATO states have put emphasis on cooperative security at

least partly as a means to secure economic mission support from partners (Kaim 2016: 25), which should be regarded in context of NATO's broader "Smart Defense" initiative to achieve "greater security, for less money, by working together more flexibly", as former Secretary General Rasmussen (2011) announced at the Munich Security Conference.

Practical mission support: Similarly, the unwillingness of members to engage in dangerous and uncertain tasks abroad, from combat operations to nation building-like missions, have led NATO to transform from an alliance in which all members jointly contribute to a common cause (as was the case during the 1990s in the Balkans) towards a platform for military coordination and cooperation of a coalition of the willing, including partner states. In the case of NATO's Libya operation, for example, over half of the allies stayed home, while the organization relied on additional support from Jordan, Qatar, Sweden, and the UAE. Capable allies also provided significant resources for ISAF in Afghanistan, such as Australia that was among the largest troop contributors, and Mongolia whose troops volunteered for unpopular tasks, such as guarding military bases.

Functional aspects: The focus on non-traditional threats to security has triggered debates about how NATO should prepare for and responds to these challenges. For example, since the 2007 cyber attacks on Estonia (allegedly by Russia), Tallinn has been at the forefront of dealing with cyber security. The Estonians are not only hosting NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), but they have also secured important posts such as the head of the Cyber Security Section in the NATO Headquarters (HQ). While they push for closer cyber security coordination and for including cyber attacks within the realm of NATO's collective defense agreements under Article V of the Washington Treaty, the level of sensitivity of cyber security has deterred some members to pool resources and share information beyond best practices.

The Alliance's reluctance towards taking on new mandates has resulted in limited cooperation with partners on these issues. This is why, when NATO cooperates with

partners on cyber security, it means that NATO offers minor defensive measures to harden the partners' hard- and software, rather than offering substantial cooperation on cyber in a military context, let alone integration into NATO's networks.

The same holds true in the case of energy security, where NATO serves to share best practices to protect critical infrastructure, rather than actively sending troops to protect pipelines or atomic power plants. This relates back to the interests of member states to channel specific concerns through other organizations, such as the EU. It also goes hand in hand with some states' interests not to militarize certain policy field by providing NATO a more substantial stake.

Diplomatic differences: "[P]artnership is a highly political issue, containing all kinds of sensitive questions", Karl-Heinz Kamp and Heidi Reisinger (2013: 2) remark, most notably because the relations between individual members and external actors add an extra layer of complexity. For example, Turkey's strained relations with the EU member Cyprus has led Ankara to veto much of NATO's engagement with the EU (Szymański/Terlikowski 2010). The same held true for the Alliance's cooperation with Israel, whose forces have raided the ship of a Turkish non-governmental organization's (NGO) that was going to break an Israeli maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip in order to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians in 2010 (Aygun 2016). Another example is Germany's historically close relationship with Russia, having led Berlin to caution US intentions to enlarge NATO further into the post-Soviet space. Therefore, it was Berlin that pushed against offering Ukraine and Georgia membership to the Alliance (Bucharest NATO Summit 2008).

American leadership: Lastly, it remains a political reality that the US – as the first among equals – has the loudest voice in shaping the agenda, as well as the strongest veto within the NAC (Kaim 2016: 7; Flockhart 2014: 17; Edström et al. 2011: 12). James Goldgeier made a case for why it was the US that made the decision to enlarge NATO' membership, inspired by the liberal ideas to build a collective security framework. In addition to utilizing membership as an instrument to further US interests, Sean Key

(2011: 18) points out that "[p]artnerships emerged in American grand strategy during the 1990s as a way to signal reassurance to new friends and old adversaries about American power". US partners were naturally adopted by NATO, which is why NATO partnerships outside of the European and post-Soviet space represent an assembly of major US allies and states with a particular strategic or geopolitical value for Washington.

Beyond its liberal internationalist policies since the end of the Cold War, the US promotes partnerships with practical and economic advantages in mind: by promoting interoperability with NATO standards, the relationships became vital for managing coalitions for military operations, empowering potential allies to take part in US-led operation. Michael Paul (2013: 3) underlines the potential for NATO's partnerships in East Asia to ensure interoperability with regional partners, thereby supporting the US' forward-partnering strategy in the context of Washington's "Pivot to Asia". Besides, as NATO's largest producer of defense equipment, the US also increases its pool of customers. Taken together, Key argues that NATO partnerships are a "key mechanism for American grand strategy […] serving both political and military needs […] as an instrumental tool for achieving responsibility sharing in security management worldwide" (Edström et al. 2011: 8).

Though the US arguably has the largest leverage, expanding NATO's partnership initiatives are also in line with those of other key members.[6] However, it should be highlighted that many do not follow the US's view that NATO may take on a greater global ordering function beyond the Euro-Atlantic area (Frühling/Schreer 2011: 43).

Again, this is not a comprehensive list of how internal dynamics shape NATO's external relations. But these examples shall illustrate that members' domestic politics and foreign

[6] Germany, for example, has launched the Enable and Enhance Initiative to assist developing countries to prevent or manage conflicts, allowing Berlin to fund projects under the political umbrella of the NATO Defence Capacity-Building Initiative (Puglierin 2016: 2). The 2016 White Paper on German Security Policy underlines that "Germany is firmly committed to further strengthening [NATO's] partnership policy. This will expand and enhance opportunities for targeted and also military cooperation and interoperability with partners outside the Alliance" (German Federal Government 2016: 65).

policies, as well as their resulting vision of the future of NATO and commitment to partnerships, serve as both drivers and obstacles to NATO's task to engage in cooperative security.

2.2.2. The other side

Of course, external states have a say in NATO's global relations as well. As NATO expanded its role outside of Europe, the Alliances' actions have produced reactions by states across the international community. Naturally, some states are in agreement with NATO while other states' interests do not coincide with those of the Alliance. The following section will provide an overview of reasons that drive state policy towards NATO, which also introduces the research puzzle of why some states support NATO while others denounce the Alliance.

2.2.2.1. NATO supporters

As NATO's partnership policy has developed from a tool for integrating Europe's neighbors into the Euro-Atlantic security framework towards one that ensures mission support, enhanced legitimacy, and regional stability, partners also transformed their outlook towards the Alliance. As the Japanese scholar Michito Tsuruoka (2010) notes:

> "NATO's new partners outside the Euro-Atlantic region see NATO very differently from the Alliance's traditional partners in the PfP (Partnership for Peace) framework. New partners do not seek membership. They are not countries in transition from communism either. They do not need NATO's advice on how to ensure the democratic control of armed forces, etc."

Nevertheless – even without the need for building integrity and the aspiration of membership –cooperation with NATO remains an integral part of countries' foreign and security policies for a range of reasons relating to both NATO's practical and ideational value:

Complementing foreign and security policy strategy: Countries may cooperate with NATO as part of their security strategy to balance against threats by gaining NATO support (tough short of the Alliance's mutual defense commitment). For example, one may argue that Ukraine and Georgia have been allying with the broader West – and specifically with NATO – in order to balance against Russia, ultimately hoping to gain membership to be included in the Alliance's mutual defense commitment. As Tor Bukkvoll (2011: 96) notes, "NATO membership might be the only economically sustainable way to achieve a satisfactory level of deterrence against Russia". In addition, states may engage with NATO simply to diversify their foreign relations, for example as part of a multi-vectored or omni-enmeshment strategy; in other words: states can use their relations with NATO as a bargaining chip with another power, or to overlap other actors' spheres of influences and entangle their interests in order to restrain them (Goh 2007). Examples mainly include states situated between rival powers, such as Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Mongolia. Relations with NATO can also serve to gain prestige and differentiate itself from its neighbors, as in the case of Argentina (that had supported NATO in the Balkans) vis-à-vis Brazil (Merke 2011).

Gaining practical benefits: Being a partner of NATO provides access to no less than 1400 partnership activities of the Partnership Cooperation Menu, from building capabilities and interoperability to supporting force transformation through defense planning, education, training, and exercises. Although NATO is increasingly evaluating its commitment to individual partnerships by considering the partners' contribution to NATO missions, the infrastructure provided to NATO partners is likely to outweigh the partner's contribution to NATO missions (ideally, partners should have an interest in supporting NATO missions because of common goals anyhow).

Edström et al. (2011: 14) point out that "NATO standards have become close to universal in peace operations". Carrying the gold standard of interoperability, military-to-military cooperation with the Alliance helps other forces to study multilateral ways of planning and operations, for example by participating in NATO's operations, exercises, and seminars (e.g., at the NATO Defense College in Rome and the NATO School in

Oberammergau), and by adopting standards necessary to be included in multilateral force structures. Once interoperability is ensured, NATO can be used as a hub to coordinate multilateral operations, for example as it did in Afghanistan where far-away partners such as Australia and New Zealand could plug in their forces relatively easy, or in the case of the Libya operation when non-member Sweden was able to contribute fighter jets within two days of its parliament's decision to partake in the mission. NATO's utility in enabling its partners to modernize their forces, gain experience in multinational settings, and promoting international standards often makes partner states' militaries and their industrial complex the staunchest supporters of cooperating with the Alliance (though industries are aware that NATO is not a customer itself, they often assume that affiliation with the Alliance advances opportunities to demonstrate and sell their products, see Bukkvoll 2011: 103).

A partnership with NATO can be particularly valuable for smaller and less capable partners who already benefit considerably from low-level NATO assistance, such as supporting defense education, implementing science projects, and building capacities for countering specific threats, including training centers and secure computer hardware. More established actors in international security benefit practically by gaining experiences in managing international conflicts and by increasing interoperability to be able to plug their forces into multi-national structures.

Raising profile in international security: While multilateral efforts have become the norm among leading actors in international security – often mandated by the UN – these undertakings are still new for most countries in the world. In order for states to take part – let alone to take the lead – in such operations overseas, they need to have undergone extended training and have gained experiences in multinational settings.

Thus, those states aiming to become actors in international security – for whatever political motivation – may intend to cooperate with NATO as a venue to gain the necessary capacity to partake in multilateral operations. For example, during the 1990s, Argentina viewed NATO as the "armed wing of the UN" (Merke 2011: 183), making the

Alliance the natural contact point for Buenos Aires to take responsibility in the international security realm.

Association with NATO also implies military strength because NATO is mostly entering into partnerships with states that it recognizes to be capable. As Tsuruoka (2010) explains, "NATO's image in the outside world as an influential security actor is arguably stronger than NATO itself recognises". Therefore, being upgraded to become an official partner provides utility in itself by conveying the status of a qualified actor in international security.

Consulting on security challenges: In addition to its military component, NATO is a political alliance at heart, making diplomatic consultations on security issues one of the core components of engaging with external actors. A seat at the table in a 29+N format (29 NATO members + an unspecified number of external states) can be a large asset for the partners: it provides the opportunity to gain a shared understanding of security challenges, to voice concerns of NATO's engagement, to offer advice on regional security matters, and to develop a common strategy to tackle challenges together.

Chris Donnelly (2004) explains that especially "countries of North Africa and the Greater Middle East want first and foremost a means of getting their voice heard, and of influencing Allies' decision-making". Others, such as far-away China, entered into talks with NATO to reassure itself of the Alliance's intentions when it suddenly engaged in neighboring Afghanistan. Some even use their access to NATO to actively design policy. For example, Azeri energy experts have (unsuccessfully) lobbied for NATO to include a defense commitment in case of an attack on Azerbaijan's oil pipelines that lead towards Turkey and on to Europe because of their common shared in ensuring energy security for NATO states (see: Aslanbayli 2014).

Beyond matters related to common threats, states may also choose to raise attention for security concerns outside of NATO's radar. This holds especially true for global partners who aim NATO to acknowledge its stake in threats beyond its neighborhood. As Tsuruoka (2010) notes, "[i]t is Japan's intention to use NATO as an additional venue to

raise international, particularly European, awareness of the Asian security situation", with particular attention on North Korea, arguably outside the focus of many European NATO states.

Associating with the West: Given its Cold War past and membership portfolio, NATO carries a very Western connotation, influencing those who aim to be part of the West to strive for recognition as a partner or even as a member of NATO. This particularly includes domestic factions within countries that demonstrate heterogenic identities because of their geopolitical situation between powerful empires or civilization. NATO has therefore often been a contentious issue of those Ukrainians and Moldavians who wanted to move closer to Europe and those who preferred an orientation towards the East. Countries with a clear European orientation use their affiliation with NATO as a symbol to identify with the West. Before the 2014 Ukraine Crisis, Bukkvoll (2011: 106) underlined that "the European identity-oriented motivation has the strongest explanatory power [for understanding the general Ukrainian approach to NATO]", and why the relations between NATO and Ukraine differ vastly from those of NATO and Belarus. Similarly, Georgia has been identifying with the West, actively sponsoring a "NATO Week" and displaying NATO flags around public places and government buildings (not even common among most NATO members). Long before its military conflict with Russia, Georgia's Foreign Minister Irakli Menagarishvili (2001) explained that "Georgia's overriding foreign policy aim is to integrate itself into Euro-Atlantic political, economic and security structures to join the European community of nations and fulfill a historical aspiration of the Georgian people". Maybe less substantial but equally demonstrative was Buenos Aires' turn to NATO as part of building an "international identity of Argentina as a Western country" (Merke 2011: 204).

Advancing bilateral relations with the US: As a US-led alliance, states' relations with NATO can simply be a byproduct or reinforcement of their contribution to American aims. For example, Stephan Frühling and Benjamin Schreer (2011: 53) argue that "the primary utility of NATO for Australia in global operations has, therefore, been that of a temporary complement to the US in a specific operation, namely Afghanistan". This is

often the case for states that have a collective security or mutual defense treaty with the US, such as Japan and South Korea, where – simply speaking – the US serves as the protector, and in return the Asian allies support US actions abroad. It is therefore no surprise that states aim to cooperate with NATO as a broader strategy to support the US, which also explains why most of NATO's global partners are traditional US allies.

This overview shows that reasons to work with NATO are plentiful: while some cooperate with the Alliance because of their general posture towards regional and global security structures, others may cooperate with NATO to increase prestige as international security actors, or to reduce costs by tapping into the Alliance's experiences in peace support operations and interoperability.

2.2.2.2. NATO critics

No doubt, the added value of working with NATO has helped the Alliance to gather a considerable cohort of followers. NATO has established over forty official partnerships in various formats, and Brussels maintains relations with further countries, international organizations, as well as trans-national actors such as NGOs and think tanks that assist NATO in post-conflict management and develop new policy initiatives.

However, not all of them are eager or capable to contribute to the Alliance. Some partners are relics of outdated partnership formats; others merely receive low-level technical and military assistance without equivalent practical value for the Alliance. NATO's arguably most important "partner" Russia has transformed into an adversary, destabilizing Europe's post-Cold War security architecture, staging nuclear invasions of NATO members (Day 2009), and deploying nuclear-capable missiles to its Kaliningrad exclave situated inside NATO's territory between the Polish-Lithuanian border (Solovyov/Sytas 2016). The transformation of NATO into a globally engaged actor has also caused pushback from states outside the Alliance's regional partnership frameworks. In order to understand opposition to the Alliances' actions, it is worth considering the main arguments of NATO opponents:

Infringement of sovereignty: NATO's loudest critics are accusing the Alliance of interfering in other actors' spheres of influence by expanding its membership, partnerships, or operations into territories where others consider themselves to be authorized to determine the course of events.

It is important to note that the notion of sovereignty differs among actors. Stephen Krasner (2014) distinguishes between international legal sovereignty that "recognize[s] entities that have territory and juridical independence" and Westphalian/Vattelian[7] sovereignty where "[e]ach state is entitled to determine its own domestic authority structures". While the West generally argues international law to be the prime source for political rights over territory, others often claim the right to rule beyond its internationally recognized borders, adhering to geopolitical and historical realities.

Therefore, NATO's conception of sovereignty often differs from that of powers outside of the Euro-Atlantic order, leading to conflict over the supreme rights to be present, influence, or even rule over events in the borderlands of great powers. The most prominent example is the Alliance's cooperation with post-Soviet countries – independent third states that have chosen to ally with NATO instead of Russia – which arguably triggered Russia to counter NATO and to wage war in Georgia and Ukraine (Mearsheimer 2014). However, other states also voice their concerns about the Alliance's engagement with and within far-away regions. South American states, including Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador, have become alarmed over NATO's cooperation with Colombia because they strive for a continent free of foreign intervention. Especially Brazil has become increasingly worried over US and British presence in the South Atlantic – supposedly Brasília's sphere of influence – also causing skepticism towards NATO as a whole (Helbig 2013). In Africa, NATO's Libya operation caused opposition from the AU because NATO failed to consult the organization before its intervention on the African continent (Teddele Maru 2014: 3).

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[7] Derived from principles of the international order after the Peace of Westphalia that ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648 (see: Krasner 2016).

NATO has also been accused of violating domestic sovereignty, a third concept that refers to "[e]ffective governance within a given territory" (Krasner 2014). For example, Afghanistan's former leader Hamid Karzai has accused NATO of disrespecting his country's authority:

> "They [NATO and the US] commit their violations against our sovereignty and conduct raids against our people, air raids and other attacks in the name of the fight on terrorism and in the name of the resolutions of the United Nations. This is against our wishes and repeatedly against our wishes." (quoted in Quinn/Faiez 2013)

Such examples show that NATO's out-of-area operations have become a point of concern for those who see the Alliance's actions collide with their sovereignty – and thus with their security interests.

Violation of international law: The disregard for international law goes hand in hand with the infringement of what Krasner described as international legal sovereignty, a concept NATO actually adheres to. However, at times, NATO has failed to secure UN mandates or it has overstepped them, leading to the criticism of violating international law. Those voicing the complaints are often hypocritical in that they themselves usually adhere to Westphalian/Vattelian sovereignty, yet using international law as the pretext for their criticism. They do so to constrain NATO as a power acting outside of its territory, something they fear could break their sovereignty at some point. Specifically, NATO has caused loud opposition to its actions in Kosovo and Libya for different reasons, but both linked to the adherence of sovereignty in the definition of international law to restrain the Alliance's actions abroad.

In 1999, NATO conducted a large-scale bombing campaign to force the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) to cease its repression against Kosovo Albanians. NATO did so on the grounds of humanitarian intervention, but without a UN Security Council (UNSC) mandate as Russia and China opposed a resolution to use force against Yugoslavia. NATO's advance without the legal approval of the international community, together

with the significant casualties among the civilian populations, caused questions of legality and appropriateness as well as loud opposition by Russia (Wippman 2001). However, Moscow's draft resolution to condemn NATO's actions was vetoed by a vast majority in the UNSC (United Nations 1999), illustrating the actual political support of the international community – and that of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (Annan/Mousavizadeh 2013: 92–97) – for NATO's efforts to end the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanian population. Nevertheless, until today, Kosovo serves as a reference for NATO critics to illustrate that the Alliance also sometimes oversteps the boundaries of international law. Interestingly, it is even used as a justification for other states to violate international law, such as in the case of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea (Russia Today 2014).

Twelve years after NATO's Kosovo operation, the Alliance once again intervened on the grounds of humanitarian intervention, this time in Libya where Gaddafi's regime has conducted systematic attacks on its own population. In order to prevent genocide similar to the one in Rwanda in 1994, the UNSC authorized a military intervention referring to the international community's "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P), a UN policy developed in 2005. Based on the duty to protect populations from mass atrocity crimes and human rights violations, R2P declares that the state has the primary responsibility to protect its citizens, and that if the state fails to adhere to this responsibility, the international community has the obligation to assist that state, or to "use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other means to protect populations from these crimes" (UN Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide 2014). Thereby, the UN extended its definition of sovereignty: since R2P, "[s]overeignty no longer exclusively protects States from foreign interference; it is a charge of responsibility that holds States accountable for the welfare of their people" (UN Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide 2014).

It was the first time that the UNSC referenced R2P when it unanimously adopted resolution 1970 on February 26th, 2011, authorizing the international community to take appropriate measures. On March 17th, the UNSC mandated NATO to enforce a no-fly

zone over Libya (although China, India, Brazil, Russia, and even Germany abstained from the vote). In addition to establishing the no-fly zone, however, NATO actively contributed to Gaddafi's opposition by targeting regime forces in air strikes, thereby overstepping its mandate to further its political ambitions in the country.

Opposition to NATO's intervention arrived from all corners of the globe. Of course, staunch critics of US leadership, such as Venezuela and North Korea, condemned NATO's intervention as an imperialistic move, pointing to inhumane crimes and attempts to take control over Libyan oil (MercoPress 2011). But even mild critics condemned NATO for using force too early. For example, Argentina claimed that "all possible diplomatic resources had not been exhausted" at the time NATO convened its operation (MercoPress 2011). Arab League representatives proclaimed that what they "want is the protection of civilians and not bombing other civilians" (Beckford 2011). NATO partner Belarus charged the Alliances of vandalism (Kamp/Reisinger 2013: 3). China demanded a cease-fire, pointing out that NATO is harming civilians by overstepping its mandate (Stünkel 2015: 48). India noted that "the measures adopted should mitigate — and not exacerbate — an already difficult situation for the people of the country" (Beckford 2011). Later, India and Brazil explicitly accused NATO of merely pushing for regime change (Stünkel 2015: 134). In addition to voicing criticism, Brazil even brought forward its own "Responsibility While Protecting" (RWP) policy, which challenges the abuse of R2P by aiming to make interventions more accountable and proportionate (Avezov 2012).

The reactions to Kosovo and in particular to Libya show the vulnerability of NATO acting to prevent humanitarian disasters. The Alliance's actions are carefully observed around the world, and used by NATO critics to further their arguments that the organization is a rough and illegitimate actor in international affairs. They often forget that the violations of international law are rare exceptions in the decade-long commitment to peace and security in international theaters.

Image of a Cold War NATO: For many, NATO still carries the connotation of a Cold War institution. This image can affect external states' perception towards NATO twofold: NATO can be viewed as an illegitimate actor because its mission and its self-conception are supposedly outdated in the post-Cold World, and NATO can be regarded as a tool for American imperialism because of Washington's continuing weight within the Alliance.

Some of NATO's major members happen to be the same countries that shaped international governance after WWII, including much of the international legal order and the controversial international financial institutions of Bretton Woods. Many in the Global South – developing countries primarily located in the Southern Hemisphere, formerly referred to as the Third World – associate these institutions with the exploitation of resources and labor by multinational corporations, empowered by Western European and North American countries. Most of the Global South has organized itself in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War, originally designed for states that are not aligned with one of the two major blocks led by the US and the Soviet Union. Today, NAM has redefined its mission, standing up for anti-imperialism, self-determination, sustainable development, international governance reform, South-South cooperation, and human rights (Non Aligned Movement 2016). NAM is very critical of NATO:

> "The Heads of State or Government remained deeply concerned at strategic defence doctrines of NWS [nuclear weapons states], including the 'NATO Alliance Strategic Concept', which not only set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, but also maintain unjustifiable concepts on international security based on promoting and developing military alliances and nuclear deterrence policies" (Non Aligned Movement 2006: Abs. 75).

Naturally, NAM opposes NATO as a military alliance that relies on concepts of Cold War defense policy. For NAM leaders – currently under Venezuelan presidency – NATO is the military component of a capitalist world shaped by the West. This is not to say that the opinions of NAM leaders carry particularly big weight in international affairs, but that

their views on international affairs broadly reflects the common criticism of NATO in the Global South.

NAM's 120 members and 15 observers encompass major developing countries that have organized in further fora, such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – although Russia is not affiliated with NAM) and IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa), in order to coordinate their policy on international governance reform. Again, the practical importance of these organizations is arguably minor, mostly because of their incoherence, but their membership of rising powers forecasts opinions of NATO that will likely to be more significant as the international balance of power is shifting.

The discrepancy between the rising states' economic weight and political power leads them to lobby for international governance reform. Admittedly, demands such as UN reform are not exclusive to the Global South (Germany and Japan also lobby for a permanent UNSC seat), but rising powers are aiming for a more comprehensive overhaul of the international system, for example to structure international financial institutions according to their interest, leading them to create new institutions, such as the New Development Bank (NDB) launched by the BRICS. Developing states that aim to influence international institutions naturally believe that a globally engaged NATO does not have a *raison d'être* because it reflects the interests of the old powers and is therefore regarded as an outdated vehicle for Western influence abroad.

In addition to reflecting an archaic power structure, NATO also carries the image of being a tool for American imperialism. As the Alliance is acting globally to fulfill its tasks of crisis management and cooperative security, the argument goes that NATO is merely a cover for expanding American influence abroad, used as the military tool of the US's global neoliberal political agenda.

Critics mainly include countries in regions historically wary of US influence, such as in Latin America – Washington's "backyard" that has experienced a wide range of interference in domestic affairs during the Cold War and where "the relationship with NATO will always be seen […] through the lens of the bilateral relationship with the US"

(Merke 2011: 200). Therefore – similarly to when Argentina was granted major non-NATO ally (MNNA) status by Washington – US critics in the region were also worried when Colombia announced to advance its cooperation with NATO. They feared it could lead the Alliance to establish a military base possibly used by the US in a forward operation to topple an unfriendly regime – a Venezuelan idea developed as a result of the US-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement of 2009 and Colombia's incursion into Ecuadorian territory in 2008 as part of a military operation against the country's powerful guerrilla group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). However, fears of US power projection were ill-founded because neither did Colombia signal to invite NATO forces to be stationed on its territory, nor would the Alliance have an interest in doing so (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017).

Beyond vocal US critics around the Caribbean, the circle of those viewing NATO to be a tool for US imperialism ranges from anti-American factions in Europe to critics of American footprint in Africa. For example, the Swedish Green Parties is skeptical of its countries partnership with NATO because it leads Stockholm to join American endeavors abroad, such as the war in Afghanistan (Edström 2011: 136). Nelson Mandela proclaimed that the US uses NATO missions to police the world; and Mandela's friendship with Gaddafi did not add to his sympathy of NATO after the Alliance intervened in Libya (Bodirsky 2013).

Originally a supporter of NATO, even Argentina reevaluated its relationship with the Alliance in accordance with its deteriorating relationship with Washington that resulted from a lack of US support for Buenos Aires' debt default crisis, which illustrates that Argentina started to perceive the Alliance "more as a soft wing of US power than the hard wing of UN missions", or a "complement to the US" (Merke 2011: 190, 196). Less bold, but with a similar notion, such sentiments are common among leaders of the Global South that have – at best – a love-hate relationship with the US, such as Brazil (Helbig 2013: 4-5).

These examples show that NATO's image of being "American" may have supported the Alliance's engagement with states that sought a closer relationship with the US, but it has deterred others from considering NATO beyond ideological aspects. Similarly, the Alliance's notion of representing the west has attracted some states to seek affiliation with NATO, while it deterred others from engaging in meaningful cooperation with the organization.

This aspect is particularly interesting considering that some countries maintain close relations with individual NATO members – even with the US – while denouncing the Alliance as a whole. For example, India has not altered its negative view of NATO as a Cold War relic despite establishing close defense ties with the US, having been promoted by Washington to be on par with NATO allies in terms of military equipment sales and technology transfers. Similarly, Brazil entered into a strategic defense procurement partnership with France, while maintaining the stance that NATO should dissolve and pass on its role to the UN where Brasília is continuing to hope for a greater say.

In addition to NATO's negative connotations, the Alliance's image simply suffers from ignorance, even among partners and neighbors. Donnelly notes that "there is almost total ignorance among populations, and even certain governments in the [Mediterranean and Greater Middle East] about the true nature of NATO" (Donnelly 2004). Admittedly, understanding NATO has become more difficult since the Alliance has taken on a wide range of tasks, adding to the problem that people and even policymakers limit their opinion of NATO to an outdated image that they evaluate in the context of their ideology. This leads many to understand NATO wrong or not to understand it at all.

Historical relations: Security, law, and image aside, some states simply have a strained history with NATO, adding to their aversion to the Alliance. For example, despite public condemnation, NATO and the US maintained covert relations with South Africa during Apartheid "out of the greater geopolitical concerns of fighting communism", which continues to affect Pretoria's negative image of the Alliance (Bodirsky 2013). Very different in nature, but similarly disturbing, China associates NATO with the US's

accidental bombing of the People's Republic's embassy in Belgrade during the 1999 Kosovo operation, continuing to negatively affect NATO's image in China despite US President Bill Clinton's apology (Zhang 2003). And of course, on the individual level, everyone whose family has suffered from casualties resulting from a NATO-related operation may add to the pool of NATO critics.

Diplomatic restraints: Finally, NATO's relations with external actors are affected by diplomatic constraints. For example, a number of NATO partners in Europe have declared themselves to be neutral, which is why the "EU neutrals" (Austria, Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Sweden) may contribute greatly to operations and would probably be accepted to join the Alliance, but chose not to step up their diplomatic relations with the Alliance because of their doctrine of neutrality.

Maintaining neutrality also affects NATO's relations in the Gulf. Oman – balancing between Saudi Arabia and Iran – decided to stay out of NATO's regional partnership framework ICI because it may be portrait as an alliance between NATO and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to counter Teheran. As leader of the GCC, Saudi Arabia also did not join ICI because Riyadh does not want to be treated on par with its smaller neighbors, rather engaging with NATO on a bilateral basis. Therefore, NATO's partnership framework is limited to the four smallest of the Gulf countries (Samaan 2012).

Beyond self-imposed constraints to relations with NATO, third parties may also influence smaller states' relations with the Alliance, as was the case when Russia pressured Kyrgyzstan to close the US airbase in Manas that was a central component of NATO's logistics for ISAF. The closure of the base coincided with Bishkek's agreement to host a Russian base for fifteen years after the Kremlin wrote off $500 million in Kyrgyz debt. Although the former Soviet republic was the only country in the world that had hosted US and Russian bases simultaneously, Bishkek backed down to cease its close relations with the US, and ultimately with NATO, because of its continuing economic and strategic dependence on Russia (Pillalamarri 2014).

Given NATO's prominent role and involvement in world affairs, one could extend the list of factors that shape states' images of the organization and their policy towards it, for example by including practical issues on the operational level, such as aspects of NATO's rules of engagement or post-conflict management. However, the overview is sufficient to underline that the facets of NATO's external relations are multi-layered and multi-dimensional, illustrating that despite shared values and common challenges, many disagree with the Alliance's actions and even with its existence.

The mess of sources for foreign policy formulation towards NATO ranges from ideological to legal convictions, from diplomatic to historical considerations, and from economic to security incentives. The question which of these influences and interests prevail and shape policy towards the Alliance relates to the countries' conceptions of international rations that can be evaluated analytically applying a theoretical framework. Therefore, this dissertation will continue by considering international relations theory as the basis to solve the puzzle of why some states aim to support NATO, while others chose to denounce the Alliance.

The answer to this question is significant for both academia and policymakers: it relates state behavior to international relations theory, thereby proving or falsifying concepts of cooperation theories. The results of this study shall also help NATO to manage its partnership initiatives across the globe, and to prepare for possible scenarios and their effects on the Alliance's global relationships. What factors guide states' decisions to cooperate with NATO? What are the effects of global and regional changes in the distribution of power on NATO's partnerships across the globe? And how do domestic developments affect NATO's ability to work with specific countries? Let's see how theory can help to answer these questions.

3. Theoretical foundations

3.1. International relations theory

International relations theory provides an essential basis for making sense of the vast information of inter-state relations. State posture towards NATO can be understood by applying the realist schools because they are based on the study of conflict and cooperation – war and peace. As a normative theory, realism derives its paradigm from the state of nature rather than social interactions, helping to make predictions based on inter-state relations rooted in their interest in survival. The focus on states as the primary units of analysis makes the use of realism especially applicable because NATO is an alliance whose policy is determined by its member states and that mainly maintains external relations with state actors. In addition, since 9/11, NATO's focus on cooperative security has mainly been driven by the rationale to gain mission support, making the materialist and interest-driven emphasis of realism very applicable in order to determine the nature of NATO partnerships. Similarly, as previous studies have indicated, "[f]rom a partner perspective, realist behavior seems to dominate most clearly" (Edström et al. 2011: 15).

Liberalism/institutionalism and critical theory would be less suitable to develop a theory that helps to predict why states cooperate with NATO. Based on different epistemological and ontological principles, more ideational and constructivist in nature, these theories can provide institutional and governance aspects, as well as historical and social context respectively. While factors such as shared democratic identity, functionalism, and constructed relationships do play a role in states' posture towards NATO, they offer little opportunity for foreign policy analysis on the basis of comparable variables in order to develop a normative theory. Especially constructivism has "trouble analyzing how rational, prudent leaders deal with the pernicious problem of future uncertainty" (Copeland 2000: 210).

Some liberal arguments are easily falsifiable. For example, considering the popular variable "democracy" as a factor for states to cooperate with NATO, democracies should

be more likely to work with NATO as a club of relatively likeminded democracies (Daalder/Lindsay 2007). However, a simple analysis of NATO's external relations reveals that major democracies such as Brazil and India are among the strongest opponents of NATO, while authoritarian governments such as Qatar and Azerbaijan actively cooperate with the Alliance.

Other factors are less comparable. For example, analyzing partnerships as a process of international socialization utilizes concepts of values and norms, often in the context of changing identities after a shock (Schimmelfennig 1998). As a distinct ontological approach, such critical approaches to traditional alliance theory help to trace back the development of a partnership in an unbiased way, aiming to discover factors that affected the process. In different words: constructivism treats each case individually because it regards the process of constructing the relationship as the primary criterion that shapes the relationship. Such methods are applicable in single case studies but are hardly suited for comparison because of different historical contexts, making it impractical to single out variables in order to create a normative theory.

Thus, while acknowledging that all international relations theories are inherently imperfect, the dissertation will emphasize realism because it is suited best to study factors that explain cooperation and competition between a military alliance and external states.

3.2. The realist ontology

The following section will provide a review of the realist school of international relations. By explaining the ontological basis and discussing the development of realist theories, the section will draw on specific concepts relating to the international system and state behavior, serving as the basis for alliance theories that will be considered in answering the research question of why some states aim to cooperate with NATO, while others position themselves against the Alliance. Specifically, this section will stress the factors threat, interests, and status as a means to predict state behavior.

3.2.1. Classical realism

Classical realism is rooted in the tradition of Thucydides', Niccolò Machiavelli's and Thomas Hobbes's understandings of human nature, the role of the statesman, and the state of nature. Hobbes declared that all men are equal, that they interact in anarchy, and that they are driven by competition, diffidence, and glory (Donnelly 2000: 14). These postulates form the basis of realism: anarchy as the central ordering principle; functionally homogenous states as the primary units of analysis; and the fight for survival as the state of nature.

Anarchy exists because of the absence of an overarching power that ensures order. The scarcity of desirable things makes states competitors, and because of a lack of enforceable international law, disagreement may quickly turn into violence. Conflict is fueled by the desire for glory: "the first maketh man invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation" (Hobbes 1651: Chapter xiii). The consequence is a constant state of war of all against all, where national power is the only guaranty for survival.

Proponents of this foundation for explaining inter-state behavior, such as Edward Hallett Carr and Hans Morgenthau, base their theory on an anarchic and decentralized world in which they apply Hobbesian human properties on states as rational actors, guided by their national interest defined in terms of power (Morgenthau/Thompson 1993: 4-5). Reinhold Niebuhr (1932: 45) famously proclaimed that there is "no possibility of drawing a sharp line between the will-to-live and the will-to-power".

Classical realists consider power to be situational and measured it in terms of capabilities, glory, and the ability to use them effectively vis-à-vis other units. Power is the basis for the self-help system in which the strong states can do what they wish and the small states shall do what they must in order to ensure survival, which is in the highest duty of the statesmen (Thucydides 431 BC: V. 89).

In the autonomy of the political sphere, realists recognize that morality exists, but that statesmen must not let morality in the way of successful politics. The communitarian perspective assumes the lack of overarching common principles (international law) to be the reason for the lack of integration. Realists have little confidence in overcoming the absence of an overarching law through human reason, although they recognize that other forces, such as a hierarchical order, can help constrain conflict.

3.2.2. Neorealism

The reductionist approach of classical realists – focused on the units rather than the international system – rarely explains how the structure of the system affects the behavior of the units. In an effort to develop a holistic theory, neorealists, such as Kenneth Waltz, John J. Mearsheimer, and Stephen M. Walt, have shifted the attention from the relations of the units among each other towards how the international system affects the units, and vice versa.

Anarchy and self-help remain the ordering principles of inter-state relations (Waltz 1979: 111), defining a structure that limits cooperation because of a lack of trust. States represent the only units of analysis, which excludes any domestic considerations regarding the political system or the statesmen. States are therefore treated as interacting homogenous black boxes that act rationally and duplicate their activities according to the inherent laws of the system (Waltz 1979: 97).

Relying on a systematic approach, neorealists deduct state behavior from its place within the system, based on the distribution of capabilities. At the same time, structural change originates from the units. This provides the basis for structural analysis to explain state actions – such as cooperation or competition with NATO – as a result of their position within the deterministic system.

Waltz (1979: 113) draws clear distinctions between the organization of the domestic and the international systems:

> "The national realm is variously described as being hierarchic, vertical, centralized, heterogeneous, directed, and contrived; the international realm, as being anarchic, horizontal, decentralized, homogeneous, undirected, and mutually adaptive."

The system is structured through poles of power, purely defined in terms of material capabilities, including military capabilities and economic assets. Waltz argues that stability within the system arises from a Balance of Power between poles, such as bi- or multipolar systems in which the poles have established an equilibrium of power among themselves. Based on the conditions that a system is anarchic and the units aim for survival, Waltz (1979: 119) argues that "balances of power tend to form whether some or all states consciously aim to establish and maintain a balance, or whether some or all states aim for universal domination". He believes that it is the natural tendency of the system to gravitate towards stability, and thus to establish a symmetry of power.

If this symmetry is broken, the system loses its stability and causes conflict among opportunistic units that take the chance to augment their power as a basis for security. For instance, during the 19th century, Europe remained comparatively stable because of a concert of five powers with relatively equal capabilities (England, France, Habsburg, Prussia, and Russia). The unification of Germany in 1881 increased the power of one of the poles disproportionately, causing the Balance of Power to collapse, which is commonly viewed as one of the explanations for the Great War.

The case of pre-WWI Europe serves well to illustrate further realist concepts. The classical realist Henry Kissinger has analyzed the alliance politics of 19th century Europe, arguing that multipolar systems are stable because powers have the chance to balance power through alliances and wars not directed against another great power. In other words, multiple independent actors create opportunities for interaction and thereby increase the likelihood of cooperation. However, neorealists believe that the Balance of Power in multipolar systems is challenged by the uncertainty of threats of multiple great powers, misjudgments of actions, and entangling alliances because of multiple interests at

stake. Many neorealists believe that a bipolar system, such as during the Cold War, is most stable because the direction of the threat is more certain. While neorealists believe that "unipolarity is the least stable of all structures because any great concentration of power threatens other states and causes them to restore a balance" (Wohlforth 1999: 5), others rely on the hegemonic stability theory, arguing that a hegemon that can single-handily dominate the order creates stability through its power to maintain the status quo from which it benefits. Realists rarely consider the case of a nonpolar system, in which no state is strong enough to form a power pole.

Beyond polarity, the stability of the international system can be affected by a range of factors, including – but not limited to – the following:

- Mutually assured destruction (MAD): The guarantee of retaliation with self-destructive consequences deters states from exercising military power against others, and thus adds to the stability of the system. For example, Waltz (1981, 2012) believes that the proliferation of nuclear weapons to Iran would have a stabilizing effect because it could serve to balance Israel's nuclear unipole in the region. He believes the world would be safer if more states possessed nuclear weapons because an attack of one state would ensure sufficient retaliation to destroy its existence. Similarly, this can be ensured through second strike capabilities of the superpowers in a bipolar system, in which one superpower can retaliate against the other in case of an attack;

- Balancing/bandwagoning: States' decisions whether to balance against the main threat or bandwagon with the main threat has implications for the stability of the international system, where balancing makes the world a safer place.

> "If balancing is more common than bandwagoning, then states are more secure, because aggressors will face combined opposition. But if bandwagoning is the dominant tendency, then security is scarce, because successful aggressors will attract additional allies, enhancing their power while reducing that of their opponents." (Walt 1990: 17);

- Offense-defense balance: War can be avoided if the defense is on the advantage, which means that the system is more stable if states can defend their territory easier than conquer new land. In contrast, a tilt towards offense leads to the belief that war can be quick and decisive, which makes a preemptive first strike more profitable (Glaser 1997: 186).

This concept is based on one of the quandaries of international relations: the problem of distinguishing between offensive and defensive capabilities, which also leads to the security dilemma: Defensive actions of one state can be regarded as offensive by another, causing a spiral of measures that lead to arms races among the actors (see: Jervis 1978).

- Further factors may include structural modifiers that are neither inherent in the international system nor in the states, but alter the interactions among the units in the given structure. For example, geography, access to raw materials, and rates of technological diffusion modify how the structure affects the units' calculations and actions (Taliaferro 2000: 131). Given that neorealists treat states as black boxes, they only consider structural modifiers on the structural level whereas neoclassical realists also take into consideration unit-level factors, such as elite perceptions and state cohesion (see "2.2.3. Neoclassical Realism").

The structural foundation, such as the ordering principles, the systematic tendencies, and the resulting strategic considerations drives the units within the system – the state behavior. In order to establish a Balance of Power, states have two possibilities: they either increase their own military or economic capabilities (or ways to employ them); or they form alliances with other units. Thus, Waltz regards the systematic tendency towards a Balance of Power as the reason for alliance formation.

Neorealists also underline the concept of "security" defined by threats as a basis for state behavior. As Robert Jervis (1978: 204) argues, "[i]nternational coalitions are more readily held together by fear than hope of gain". Unlike the reductionist concept of "survival" that is mostly concerned with accumulating power, security introduces

additional systemic criteria for predicting state behavior, such as the structural modifiers above.

While the focus on security prevails among proponents of neorealism, they can generally be grouped into defensive and offensive realists, depending on whether the scholars believe defensive or offensive actions to produce more security for a state:

Waltz argues that states tend to act defensively to maintain their position in the system, which is safer than aiming to maximize power. He believes that the status-quo bias of states leads them to favor balancing over bandwagoning in order to challenge a potential hegemon and maintain the Balance of Power. States recognize that expansionist behavior leads to resistance of other states, which makes the aim of hegemony a self-defeating prophecy. Jack Snyder (1991: 11) sums up that “international anarchy punishes aggression; it does not reward it”.

On the other hand, Mearsheimer (1994: 11-12) claims that states are on the constant lookout for opportunities because material capabilities provide security in an anarchic world:

> “[T]hey look for opportunities to alter the Balance of Power by acquiring additional increments of power at the expense of potential rivals [because] the greater the military advantage one state has over other states, the more secure it is.”

He considers hegemony as the core goal of states, making them inherently revisionist. Given these predictions, offensive realism paints a rather pessimistic picture of international relations: “The world is condemned to perpetual great power competition”, Mearsheimer (2001: 2) acknowledges.

This argumentation also challenges Waltz’s theory that states tend to balance: Balancing is a costly strategy to check power mostly because of problems inherent in collective actions, such as the uncertainty of others to take on their responsibility as part of a

balancing coalition. Mearsheimer (2001: 34–35, 156–157) argues that states instead favor buck passing: to get another state to deter or fight an aggressor state while remaining on the sidelines. Therefore, it makes more sense for states to pass on the task to balance while seeking out opportunities for maximizing their power.

3.2.2.1. Balance of Threat theory

Stephen Walt has developed particularly important concepts for predicting alliance formation by refining Waltz's Balance of Power theory, arguing that states analyze their security situation more holistically. He underlines that states tend to balance threats instead of sole power, thereby including variables, such as aggregate strength (size, population, and economic capabilities), geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intentions (1990: 22). For example, because the US hardly holds hostile intentions towards Canada, Ottawa does not feel threatened by Washington despite the great power discrepancy, geographical proximity, and the US military's vast offensive capabilities.

Given the four sources of threat, the decision whether to balance against the threat or bandwagon with it depends on further factors: the relative strength of states, the availability of allies, and the context in which decisions take place (whether in peace or wartime) (Walt 1990: 29-32).

Taken together, the sources of threat and the factors that affect decision making provide a theoretical basis for predicting state behavior. For example, considering a small state situated next to a superpower, the vast power discrepancy takes the option of internal balancing (increasing its weapons arsenal) as a means of protection off the table. In addition, the weak state lacks reliable allies because it would not add a lot of value to a possible balancing coalition. The geographic proximity to the stronger state exacerbates the weak states' insecurity because it would be the first one to be run over in case of a war. Thus, the weak state will choose to bandwagon with the superpower even though it would prefer not to be dependent on the superpower's goodwill.

Given the variables, Walt formulated a list of postulates regarding balancing and bandwagoning, which shall be addressed in a later section (see: "3.3. Alliance Theory") and applied in the research design of this dissertation.

3.2.3. Neoclassical realism

As the third and latest version of the realist school of international relations, neoclassical realism reaffirms the neorealist assumptions of an anarchic international system, based on the distribution of power among individual units as a guiding force of state behavior. However, proponents of neoclassical realism also consider variables on the unit level. "Any realist discussion of international change must combine the domestic and international levels of analysis", William C. Wohlforth (1994: 91) proclaims, which stands in the tradition of Morgenthau and Waltz (Feaver et al. 2000: 166, 183).

Thus, neoclassical realists recognize that states participate in a "two-level game in which states interact with each other at the international level while also engaging in an intra-national (that is, domestic level) game with domestic actors" (Lobell et al. 2015: 150). They acknowledge that while the urge for survival remains the principal national interest, unit level forces also affect state strategy. They recognize, for example, that leaders need to preserve their legitimacy in order to govern effectively, thus adhering to domestic values and power structures. These factors also affect the decisions of states whether and how to cooperate with others. By combining the holistic and the reductionist elements of realism – thereby recognizing both independent and intervening variables from the systemic level and the domestic levels – neoclassical realists bring their analysis closer to the real world.

Giddeon Rose (1998) has analyzed different theories of foreign policy and concluded that neoclassical realism serves best to explain patterns of state behavior. He explains that other theories fall short of considering a holistic picture of factors that guide state behavior. The theory of *Innenpolitik* is solely based on domestic dynamics, including ideology and the interests of key domestic actors, which poses questions as to why states with similar domestic systems follow different foreign policy strategies. In contrast,

offensive and defensive realism can only explain state behavior as a result of the international system, thus excluding domestic sources of foreign polity besides the calculation whether offense or defense is more advantageous.

Neoclassical realism, however, combines domestic and international factors, thereby bridging the gap between system-level factors and practical foreign policy. When considering the sources of the state behavior (depended variable), neoclassical realists begin their analysis by considering a country's relative material power (independent variable), which is the "chief independent variable" that shapes patterns of state behavior over time (Rose 1998: 151).

Because of the complex impact of power, translated into policy at the domestic level, the foreign policy apparatus also matters. Rose considers two intervening variables: First, the perception of the decision makers: "how various psychological, ideational, and cultural factors may affect how political actors perceive their own and others' capabilities and how such perceptions are translated into foreign policy" (1998: 168). Second, the strength of the state apparatus: the ability to access the country's total material power resources. Referring to Zakaria Fareed, Rose (1998: 9) notes:

> "Foreign policy is made not by the nation as a whole but by its government; consequently, what matters is state power, not national power. State power is that portion of national power the government can extract for its purposes and reflects the ease with which central decision-makers can achieve their ends."

Thus, power is considered contextual rather than purely based on the size of material capabilities.

Similarly, Randall L. Schweller (2004: 180) has analyzed state cohesion as a structural modifier on the unit level. He argues that elite consensus, elite cohesion, social cohesion, and regime/government vulnerability affect a state's mobilization capacity. This means that social divisions within a state can weaken its ability to put force to use, obliging the state to form coalitions with others in order to protect its interests.

This reflects the neoclassical realist definition of power affected by intervening variables on the domestic levels. Thus, the domestic intervening variables filter state reactions to the international system into foreign policy, thereby affecting the distribution of power which shapes the international system.

Neoclassical realists pay particular attention to perceptual shocks that influence decision makers' calculations (Rose 1998: 161). For example, Thomas Juneau (2015) applied neoclassical realism to make the case that after the US invasion of Iraq, Iran suddenly faced the chance to establish itself as a leader in the Middle East. However, unlike neorealists, proponents of neoclassical realism believe that shifts in behavior are not solely a result of system-level changes, but they can also be a result of changes in domestic factors, such as the decision makers' perception as well as their ability to employ state resources.

Tatiana Romanova (2012) illustrates that the international system remains the primary source of state behavior only to be deflected by the characteristics of the states, referring to the metaphor of a pool game: "the dominance of systemic factors over internal ones suggests that the properties of the 'billiard ball' will affect the tactics of a state's actions, but not its strategy". Schweller (2006: 6) remarks that "complex domestic political processes act as transmission belts that channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces (primarily changes in relative power)".

Drawing on misguided foreign policy, he points out that neoclassical realism can help explain contradictions between state behavior determined by systemic forces and actual foreign policy, referring to it as a "theory of mistakes" (2006: 10). Therefore, the theory is concerned with factors affecting the translation of systemic forces into practical foreign policy, including ideational ones such as status.

Brian Rathbun (2008) points out that even leading neorealists apply neoclassical concepts in order to explain why policymakers have not followed their advice (i.e., why they made mistakes). For example, Mearsheimer explained that US policymakers based their decision to invade Iraq on ideological myths which led to decisions counter to US

interests in the region (Rathbun 2008: 320). Similarly, Mearsheimer's and Walt's (2007) book on Israel explains the effect of the country's lobby on US foreign policymaking, causing the US to miscalculate its interests in the region, using the neoclassical concept of "state capture" (Rathbun 2008: 321) to explain the US's Israel policy.

Mearsheimer (2014) also argues that the Ukraine Crisis was a result of imprudent Western policymaking caused by policymakers' neglect of realist principles, which would have predicted that NATO's expansion threatens Russia. Goldgeier (1999) argues that the decision to invite Central and Eastern European countries to become members of the Alliance was driven by National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrook who used their access to US President Bill Clinton to convince him of the idea to enlarge the Alliance. This coincided with Clinton's need for demonstrating leadership after the US struggled to manage the situation in Bosnia. Therefore, one could argue that US policymakers neglected systemic forces because of domestic factors, thereby setting up today's tensions with Russia.

The examples show how neoclassical realism helps neorealists to explain how unit-level intervening variables act as transmission belts deviating the systemic forces (neorealist predictions) and lead to foreign policy mistakes.

In sum, neoclassical realism is an extension of structural realism that includes constructivist elements; "all neo-classical realists are structural realists as well" Rathbun (2008: 297) argues. But even if neoclassical realists include variables generally associated with the constructivist and liberal paradigms, they base their theories on the realist ontology. They derive their view on international relations from the state of nature rather than social interactions, relying on a materialist paradigm instead of an ideational one. Unlike constructivists and liberals, neoclassical realists reject the possibility of a system change and recognize structural restraints. They continue stressing on rational decision making (on the grounds of more than material factors), allowing for more predictive concepts than the rather descriptive constructivist ones (though less so than in the ultra-rationalist world of neorealists).

3.2.3.1. Balance of Interests theory

An important neoclassical realist concept to explain state behavior is Schweller's (1994) Balance of Interests theory, applicable both on the unit and system level:

On the domestic side, the theory challenges Walt's Balance of Threat theory, arguing that states will not base their decisions on threats, but rather on their interests to maintain the status quo or to revise the current international order: "whether power and influence is used to manage the system or destroy it" (1994: 104). In other words, the theory "refers to the costs a state is willing to pay to defend its values relative to the costs it is willing to pay to extend its values" (1994: 99).

On the systemic level, the Balance of Interests theory is concerned with the relative strength of the status-quo powers and revisionist states. If the status-quo alliance is in the advantage, the system is stable; if the revisionist side is stronger, the system will undergo change.

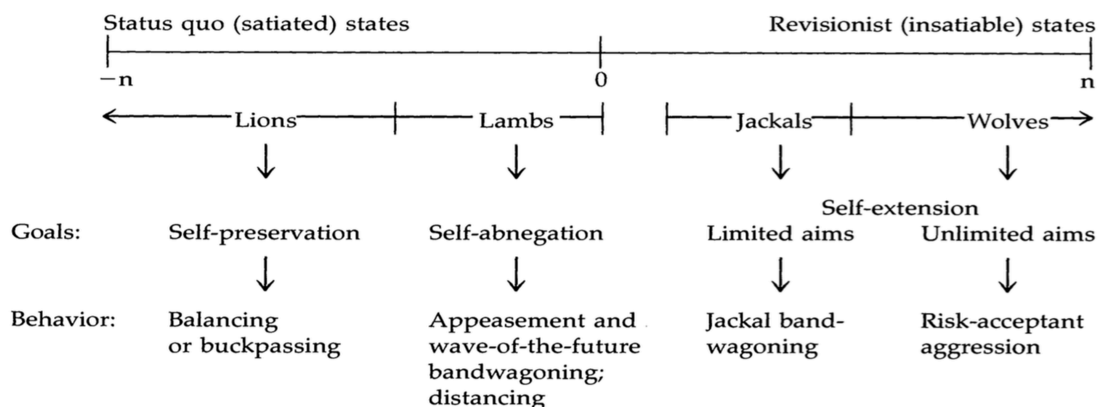
Schweller (1994: 104) defines status-quo powers as those who "seek self-preservation and the protection of values they already possess". For them, the potential benefits of war to maximize power are outweighed by the risks to their security. Thus, they remain peaceful and demand security as long as the revisionist side does not challenge their favorable position forcefully.

Contrarily, revisionist states value potential gains more than maintaining their current position. Over half a century ago, Frederick L. Schuman (1948: 378–379) explained that they "demand changes, rectifications of frontiers, a revision of treaties, a redistribution of territory and power". They would not shy away from "employ[ing] military force to change the status quo and to extend their values", Schweller (1994: 105) explains. Thereby, they form alliances of revisionist states in order to overpower the conservative side, which in turn leads status-quo states to flex their muscles or to seek partners in order to preserve their position in the international system. This can lead to a security dilemma, a spiral in which both sides arm up in order to maintain their security. It can also lead to

shifting alliance formations that represent states' national security interests, thereby creating a balance of interests.

Schweller groups states into four categories on a spectrum from aiming to maintain the status quo to aspiring to revise the current international order. He categorizes the states according to their level of interest in the status quo or revision of the system, and ascribes specific foreign policy behaviors to each of the categories (see: "Figure 1"). These classifications shall be applied in testing the Balance of Interests theory later in this dissertation.

Figure 1. State Interest (n) = (value of revision) − (value of status quo).



NOTE: The top line represents the state's calculation of its relative interests in the values of revision and of the status quo. Where the status quo outweighs revision (where n *is negative), states are satiated; where revision outweighs the status quo (*n *is positive), states are revisionist.*

(Schweller 1994: 100)

3.2.3.2. Status competition

Beyond the interest to maintain or alter the structure of the international system, neoclassical realists have considered status competition among states as a factor in foreign policy decision making. Thereby, they acknowledged the natural desire for status, going beyond the neorealist assumption that states are entirely rational actors driven by their aim for power and security in an anarchic world.

Applying psychological concepts as a means of understanding foreign policy behavior, Wohlforth (2009) considers states as social entities within a given system and argues that they also bear human-like social properties. The foundation of this argument lies in Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (SIT) that explains how group affiliation affects individual group members' decision making and views towards outsiders (Curley 2009: 650). Although he notes that the applicability of SIT for states is restrained by nature of the state system, as well as state properties (e.g., size, power, and location), he argues that the preference for status is a basic property of state behavior (2009: 35-36).

The theory argues that "people derive part of their identity from membership in various social groups – nation, ethnicity, religion, political party, gender, or occupation" (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 66). Thus, policymakers identify themselves with their state and engage in competitive behavior with policymakers of other states in order to achieve positive distinctiveness – "to be not only different but better" (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 67). The strategy to achieve a higher status is based on the national role conception – based on history, political culture, domestic influences, among others – "that determines a state's understanding of itself and its function in the international society" (Stolte 2015: 31). They tend to compare its role to similar but higher-ranked reference states (principle of unidirectional upward drive), aiming to elevate their own status in the hierarchically structured international system – while Argentina may tend to compare itself to Brazil, India is more inclined to compare itself to China.

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko (2010: 68-69) agree and argue that "[s]tates' concerns about their relative status have been largely overlooked by the dominant theoretical approaches of neorealism and liberalism". Larson, Thazha Varkey (T. V.) Paul, and Wohlforth (2014: 7) define status as "collective beliefs about a given state's ranking on valued attributes (wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, sociopolitical organization, and diplomatic clout)"; thus status requires both material capabilities and matching behavior assumed with a state's role in the international system (Larson et al. 2014: 21).

As a “social form of power” (Lake 2014: 268), status is unique – it is relative because it is scarce and positional within the social hierarchy. However, it is not necessarily strictly zero-sum because it can be considered as a club good with restrictions to enter the club in order not dilute the status – in other words, “[i]f every state is a great power, none is” (Larson et al. 2014: 9). Status is collective because it rests on the general agreement over what constitutes the ranks, and because it is conferred by others, usually by higher-ranked states. For example, a rising power can only join the club of permanent UN Security Council members if it was invited by the US, France, Great Britain, Russia, and China who act as gate-keepers for their exclusive club. Status is subjective because ideational status components, such as moral authority and diplomatic agility, cannot be easily quantified and depend on individual perceptions. Status is multidimensional because groups can be judged on the basis of different dimensions (e.g., naval or land power capabilities, and special religious or diplomatic rights) and be recognized by different status markers, such as membership in elite clubs, state visits, strategic dialogues, summit meetings, and of course material capabilities.

Status is symbolic which is why countries engage in (economically) irrational policies to signal status, acquiring expensive status symbols, such as building the highest flag pole, launching space capabilities, and hosting mega-events, while failing to provide simple public goods at home (Larson et al. 2014: 11). For example, Walt (2018) points out that during the Cold War, Warsaw Pact states undertook great efforts to win Olympic medals in order to “showcase the superiority of communism” – a phenomenon that can hardly be explained without considering the symbolic and ideational dimensions of status.

Applying psychological concepts in general – and status as a driver for state behavior in particular – helps to strengthen rationalist approaches used to understand foreign policy. It provides a foundation for calculating utility on different grounds (e.g., status), rather than solely considering the realist elements of security and material capabilities. As Tyler M. Curley (2009: 665) explains:

> "SIT offers a motivational and cognitive basis for identifying why actors come to define utility in different ways…. it allows for a deeper, psychological understanding of why actors define their interests in different ways and how that leads to differing policy choices […]."

But why does it matter in a world that is governed by the distribution of capabilities? In addition to intangible goods such as respect, esteem, and reputation, the desire for status is also in alignment with the principles of realism because status bears utility to enhance power by conferring privileges, most importantly the legitimate authority for a wide variety of foreign policy pursuits. For smaller states, status enhances sovereignty by providing decision-making autonomy because the higher the state's status, the more will others accommodate the state's interest (Neumann 2014: 88). In addition to "bolster[ing] their domestic support", states "can expect greater deference from others, simply because they are believed to be skillful, competent, and capable" (Walt 2018). For great powers, status provides "legitimacy to partake in management of the system through the institutions of diplomacy and international law, multilateral peace conventions, and balances of power" (Clunan 2014: 282). Christina Stolte (2015: 16) points out that "Great Powers enjoy special rights regarding the use of force as well as unequal representation in international institutions".

In addition to providing authority for acting beyond its borders, playing status right enables states to act more successfully at lower costs. As Volgy et al. (2014: 63) put it, if a state's status (how the state views itself and how others view the state) is consistent with its capabilities and behavior, it is "likelier to pursue [its] objectives with higher expectation of success, run lower risks of failure externally, and risk fewer domestic political consequences for their external pursuits". In addition, they argue that status makes it "less costly to intervene in disputes or create mechanisms of cooperation [because it] reduces some of the material costs major powers need to structure order and institutional development necessary for global governance" (Volgy et al. 2014: 61-62).

Taking into account the utility of status helps to understand the relationship between status, power (the influence on the behavior of others), and authority (the legitimate right to command). This is because the overlap between the concepts provides the logic for why a state's desire to enhance status is consistent with its aim to enhance power, a guiding logic of classical realists and those who argue that state behavior is mainly guided by the aim for accumulating material capabilities (see: Schweller 1994).

It is important to underline that status plays out differently in the international than in the domestic realm. Take famous athletes and pop stars, for example: They enjoy a high status in society, but have little authority over politics beyond their ability to influence their fans. In contrast, bureaucrats may only enjoy little status, but they have significant authority to command policies because they are authorized to do so by law. Thus people who enjoy high status in society do not necessarily carry authority to command others, and vice versa, which illustrates the missing link between status and authority in the domestic arena.

In the international realm, however, anarchy serves as the ordering principle and undermines the concept of authority by law, making status more important in order to gain authority. States can utilize status to gain authority in two ways: First, they can augment their power because status it is an instrument to exert power more effectively, as explained above. After all, power is not only about capabilities because "[w]hether others will comply also depends on nonstructural factors" (Jervis 2009: 192), which makes status a tool for enhancing power by providing legitimate rights to do what is desired or even to dictate the "rules of the game".

Second, "[s]tatus [itself] is about who is endowed with legitimate social power: authority" (Clunan 2014: 283) because it rests on the collective acknowledgment of others and is linked to expectations about state behavior that grant leeway for certain foreign policy ambitions. Because Russia carries the status of being the great power in the post-Soviet space, it may be expected to enforce its will on other post-Soviet states. Because Israel carries the status of being the protector of the Jews worldwide, it may be

expected to undertake risky intelligence operations to protect its people abroad. And because Germany and France carry the status of being the leaders of the EU, they may be expected to install their policy preferences in the supranational body.

Especially important for overachieving countries, authority also serves to substitute coercive capabilities (Lake 2014: 265), making it instrumental for those who cannot match their great power status with great power capabilities. This may hold true in the case of declining empires such as Great Britain that continues to benefit from its status as a world power in times of relative decline.

But being a multidimensional and subjective concept, status is a more complex than authority, and status does not always lead to authority or augmenting power. Hereby, status sheds light on the nature of power as a situational specific quality: it is crucial to consider both its scope and domain, and asking “who is influencing whom with respect to what” (Baldwin 1979: 163). While a state can be a particularly powerful actor in mediating conflicts because of its neutral status, the same state can be overrun by its neighbor because authority in conflict resolution does not add to the states’ war-fighting capabilities. Not only can status be irrelevant in specific situations, it can also be a burden for achieving certain goals; e.g., carrying a nuclear weapon status may help in the bid for becoming a UN Security Council member, but it may be a hindrance for a state to get its politician elected as a UN Secretary-General. Status and its effects on power shall therefore always be considered in a policy-contingency framework, including assumptions about the state’s goals (Baldwin 1979: 165-166).

States can employ three basic strategies to elevate their status: they can choose social mobility by identifying with a higher status group; social conflict by challenging another group’s claim to superiority; or social creativity by redefining dimensions that determine status (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 66-67). However, SIT has little predictive power about which status strategy a state will choose and about the chances of social permeability into a higher status group because of the highly contextual social and ideational nature of status.

Rose McDermott (2011: 502) explains that there exists a gap in explaining how and why individuals choose, transform, weigh, and discard identities, as well as how overlapping identities affect decision making. However, given that neoclassical realists maintain the state as the primary unit of analysis, they assume that statesmen themselves identify with their nationality rather than a subnational entity or an international organization (which may be less applicable in case of fragmented states such as Bosnia Herzegovina). Thus, they can define their status through membership of their state in a multinational alliance (e.g., NATO) rather than defining themselves directly with that organization. For example, Georgian diplomats may aim to elevate their status through NATO membership, rather than to transfer their identity from being primarily Georgian to being primarily a part of NATO.

Drawing on Thucydides, Wohlforth (2009: 31) explains that especially revisionist powers seek prestige: they challenge threats to their identity rather than to their security or welfare. He puts forth the example of the rise of Athens, which did not pose a material threat to Sparta, but rather a threat to its role as the leader of the Greek, causing war among the two. Similarly, it was not the threat of the British Navy, but the desire for status, that led Germany to build up its naval forces prior to WWI (2009: 32).

He also argues that the Crimean War of 1853–1856, in which Russia lost to a coalition of France, Britain, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia, was a result of Russia's status anxiety being second to none and equal to Britain (2009: 44-47). The war was essentially fought over Russian rights over Orthodox religious sites in the Ottoman Empire, rather than for direct security or material interests that could have inspired the Tsar to wage war.

Russia also serves as a case in point to illustrate how status plays out in contemporary history. Many scholars relate the opposition to NATO's Kosovo operation in 1999 and invasion of Georgia in 2008 to the Kremlin's perceived risk of losing its status as the protector of the Southern Slavs and the leading authority in the Southern Caucasus respectively (Clunan 2014: 285-286).

These examples illustrate that status can help explaining state behavior by considering aspects of identity, thereby adding to traditional realist theories, and at times making sense of phenomena that seem irrational when solely considering the scarcity of security, making the hunger for status a significant element for understanding state behavior.

However, it is important to stress that the distribution of material capabilities maintains a central role in status competition. Not only do the struggle for power and status support each other because capabilities can be transformed into status (2009: 38) and status augments power, but the relative distribution of capabilities also affects states' hunger for status: "narrow and asymmetrical capabilities gaps foster status competition even among states relatively confident of their basic territorial security" (Wohlforth 2009: 57). This is because it is easier for states to obtain a higher rank by overcoming smaller capability gaps than larger ones and because the rank of similarly strong powers is often uncertain, a situation which can lead to a status dilemma similar to a security dilemma. As Wohlforth (2014: 115) remarks, "status conflict may occur among states that would be satisfied with their status if only they could obtain an accurate estimate of it". By reassuring themselves of their status, however, states threaten a reference states' status, which may lead to the status dilemma, a spiral of dangerous actions, as in the case of the 19th century Crimean War (2014: 129). In contrast, clear hierarchies in which one party is vastly stronger than the other dampens competition for status, as it would be foolish for a small state, such as Liechtenstein, to strive for the rank of a great power.

The relationship between the capability gap and the propensity to engage in status competition explains why Wohlforth (2009: 41-42) believes that the chance of great power war is much smaller in unipolar systems than in bi- and multipolar ones. Flat hierarchies without a "number one" are preferred by the parties that constitute the poles, but they tend to be uncertain about their position (status dissonance), which means that slight shifts in capabilities can lead to status competition and war.

Wohlforth (2009: 47-52) illustrates how narrow margins of status created competition during the Cold War. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union has shown signs of status dissonance

causing the Soviets to wage proxy wars in the Third World to compete over influence with the US. Wohlforth argues that there is no evidence that the Soviet's policy was motivated by material or economic concerns, but rather that the Brezhnev administration aimed to achieve recognition and thereby superpower parity.

In contrast, in the post-Cold War unipolar system, states do not select status strategies that lead to status conflict with the unipole because the US has been enjoying a large capability lead, leaving no room for status dissonance similar to the ones in bi- and multipolar systems (2009: 52-56). Though other scholars such as Larson and Shevchenko (2010: 66) argue that both Russia and China have been motivated by the desire for great power status, Wohlforth (2009: 76) points out that their strategies have been ineffective in a unipolar world.

For example, in the early 1990s, supposed Western-imposed barriers to Russia's social mobility in the post-Cold War era led Gorbachev to engage in strategies of social creativity, promoting the Soviet Union as a moral leader. However, his strategy did not succeed to rise his country's status because Moscow lacked sufficient capabilities to convince the West of power parity, even if it Gorbachev was aiming at elevating Russia's status in a different dimension (through morality instead of material wealth) (Wohlforth 2009: 55).

Around the same time – from July 1995 to March 1996 – China aimed to challenge the US's status in Asia when Beijing engaged in assertive actions as a response the to US-Taiwanese rapprochement, including military exercises and missile tests in the Taiwan Strait (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 77). As Beijing realized that these actions were counterproductive in that they strengthened anti-Chinese sentiments in Asia, China accepted US predominance in the region and adopted its "peaceful rise" strategy, accommodating the US and benefiting from the status quo materially (Wohlforth 2009: 55).

Wohlforth believes that the unipole is so secure in its position as the number-one power, that it can even help secondary powers to overcome their status dissatisfaction, for

example by granting regional leadership and inviting them to join prestige organizations that convey status. He mentions a number of instances, one of which highlights the importance of NATO as a status symbol in international relations: "Russia, the country whose elite has arguably confronted the most threats to its identity, has been the object of what appear to be elaborate U.S. status-management policies that included invitations to form a partnership with NATO […]" (2009: 53).

Though these examples highlight the relevance of status in international relations, status competition as a factor in foreign policymaking has been studied only recently. Considering states' desire to elevate their status as a variable that influences their policy towards NATO shall help to fill the gap in understanding how this ideational factor plays out in the mix of state interests that motivate their behavior.

3.3. Alliance theory: A realist view

As a normative theory, realism provides a framework to make predictions based on inter-state relations rooted in the states' interests of survival. Based on the study of war and peace, it provides a sound understanding of cooperation based on security: "[M]utual fear is the only solid basis of alliance," Waltz (1959: 211) quoted Thucydides in his groundwork of neorealism *Man, the State, and War*. Robert E. Osgood (1968: 19) even defines alliances as "latent war communit[ies]". Hobbes (1651: Chapter xiii) argues that confederacies are basis of survival for the weakest.

Based on rational calculations, alliances shall contain just enough strength to overpower their components, optimally leading to "minimum winning coalitions" in which all actors aim to control their allies because they may turn out to be their next enemies. Alliances only exist as long as they serve the national interest of their member states because the decision to cooperate is rationally calculated and thus prone to respond to changes within the system. Masala and Scheffler Corvaja (2016: 353) highlight that "alliance cohesion depends […] on the degree of external challenge". The results are alliances of different levels of cohesion and stability, which will fade as soon as they achieved their goal and lost their purpose.

Generally, realists suggest that states form alliances on the basis of four general strategies. They cooperate in order to balance: allying with others against a prevailing threat; bandwagon: joining the stronger side for the sake of protection; buck-pass: getting another state to deter or fight an aggressor state while remaining on the sidelines; or chain-gang: dragging alliance partners into wars that they would otherwise have no desire to fight.

Based on these principles and the theoretical advancements that resulted in neorealism and neoclassical realism, the following analysis will apply the concepts of Balance of Threat, Balance of Interests, and status competition as a foundation for analyzing why states engage in cooperation or competition. The hypotheses put forth by the concepts based on different variables shall be applied in the case studies later in this dissertation in order to answer the research question of why some states cooperate with NATO, while others position themselves against the Alliance (see: "4. Methodology").

3.3.1. Balancing

> "*Balancing* is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat."
> (Walt 1990: 17)

3.3.1.1. Hard balancing

States can balance internally through unilateral strategies, including arms buildups, changes in military doctrine, as well as the development of new technologies and weapons systems. They can also balance externally by building or joining an alliance with others to combine their resources. Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato (2015: 57) note that "[e]xternal balancing is least desirable because it requires the help of others. States are reluctant to rely on alliances because they have little assurance that their partners will honor their commitments".

Nevertheless, states cooperate with others in order to maintain or restore the Balance of Power. As a defensive realist, Waltz argues that balancing is the most common form of cooperation because it is in the mutual security interest of several smaller states to

restrain a greater power from becoming a hegemon. This is because states seek security by balancing power among states and alliances in order to stabilize the international system. Beyond this postulate, the Balance of Power theory has little predictive power to determine who may cooperate with whom in order to balance another side.

The Balance of Threat theory provides more refinements. As outlined above, Walt believes that states calculate more holistically, balancing threats instead of sole power, including criteria, such as aggregate strength (size, population, and economic capabilities), geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intentions as the sources of threat. Their relative power, the availability of allies and whether they are acting in peace or wartime will play a role in deciding whether to balance or bandwagon. Based on these factors, Walt (1990: 32) provides a list of principles that guide states' balancing behavior:

"Hypotheses on Balancing

1. *General Form*: States facing an external threat will align with others to oppose the states posing the threat.
2. The greater the threatening state's aggregate power, the greater the tendency for others to align against it.
3. The nearer a powerful state, the greater the tendency for those nearby to align against it. Therefore, neighboring states are less likely to be allies than are states separated by at least one other power.
4. The greater a state's offensive capabilities, the greater the tendency for others to align against it. Therefore, states with offensively oriented military capabilities are likely to provoke other states to form defensive coalitions.
5. The more aggressive a state's perceived intentions, the more likely others are to align against that state.
6. Alliances formed during wartime will disintegrate when the enemy is defeated."

The hypotheses recognize that the greater the threat, the greater is the tendency to balance against it. Walt also underlines that alliances are based on common security concerns and may dissolve once the basis of the alliance – a common threat – has faded.

He believes that balancing is more common than bandwagoning under most conditions because bandwagoning entails the risk of increasing the resources available to the most threatening state, and it requires placing trust in the hegemon. Joining a balancing alliance also provides more potential for exerting influence by playing a more important role within the coalition. Thus, states generally ally with the least dangerous side.

Because Walt focuses on threats rather than sole power, a hegemon can also balance against other threatening states by cooperating with states abroad. A great power engages in offshore balancing when it allies with a regional power to check a potential challenger. Thereby, the great power forgoes large military deployments abroad that could lead to imperial overstretch, while maintaining security through a proxy.

This is a risky strategy because the great power relies on other states to act in its security interest (collective action problem), but offshore balancing is nevertheless suggested as a grand strategy for the US by Walt and Mearsheimer. They argue that the US should "pass the buck to regional powers" and use them as "the first line of defense" (2016: 73-74).

Neoclassical realists introduced domestic sources of stability as well as material incentives for alliance formation, thereby challenging Walt's systemic explanations. Their analysis is more contextual, depending on the domestic political situation, state structure, and nature of interstate relations. They would conclude that statesmen chose a strategy to advance their position of power, weighing political and economic costs and benefits. Thus it would be less feasible for them to provide a list of hypothesis similar to Walt's.

Steven R. David (1991) introduced the theory of omni balancing, which is based on Mohammed Ayoob's differentiation of Third World countries as states whose governments may experience significantly greater internal threats to their power than

external ones (see: “subaltern realism”, Ayoob 2002). Thus, they chose to “align with states that ensure their [domestic] hold on power”, David (1991: 244) argues. This means that Third World countries tend to ”appease secondary adversaries [– often the international enemy of the domestic threat –] so that they can focus their resources on prime adversaries” (David 1991: 235), thereby balancing against both internal and external threats, with the primary goal of maintaining domestic order. Levy and Barnett (1991) would add that such kinds of alliances provide additional resources that help to foster the economy and advance political stability. This strategy is not to confuse with bandwagoning with an external threat because the central goal of this strategy is to “conserve strength for the battle against the prime [domestic] threat” (David 1991: 236).

Schweller (2004: 166) believes that balancing is associated with high costs, which is why he claims that statesmen would rather choose different strategies. Because states require a certain extent of domestic consensus in order to mobilize resources, and undertake difficult actions (e.g., war), he argues that states often tend to “underbalance”, which entails buck passing, distancing, hiding, waiting, appeasement, bandwagoning, and ineffective half measures. He places the decision to balance at the domestic level, not the international one, pointing to forces that compromise a state’s balancing potential. Schweller (1994: 93) argues that if necessary to protect long-term security interests, states will engage in balancing, but they rarely chose to do so because a cost-benefit analysis makes bandwagoning more profitable (see: “3.3.2. Bandwagoning”).

In his Balance of Interests theory, Schweller has classified states according to their interests in maintaining the status quo or revising the current world order, and connected these interests with a propensity to balance or bandwagon (see: “Figure 1”). According to his theory, “lions” (the most satisfied states) and “wolves” (the most predatory and risk-taking states) are most prone to balance. This is because “lions” have an overwhelming interest to maintain their supreme role in the status quo, while wolves aim to advance their supposedly intolerable position at all costs. Thus, both have a great incentive to sustain the costs associated with balancing.

Applying the concept of balancing to the notion of status competition, one could compare the strategy of balancing against the prevailing threat with that of social conflict (in case the higher-ranked group constitutes the main threat) or social mobility (in case the higher-ranked group is leading the balancing coalition against another threat). However, balancing is based on the Balance of Threat theory, concerned with physical threats (i.e., war), while status strategies are concerned with elevating status, which is symbolic and multidimensional. For example, challenging a higher-status power might be motivated by a status strategy, but not necessarily by a threat to one's physical security. It would therefore be incorrect to put both balancing and social conflict into the same category. However, a state's status strategy may intervene with the state's balancing behavior in that the state may choose to alter its balancing strategy in order to elevate its status, which may lead to state behavior that would be not be predicted when solely relying on the factors threats and interests.

3.3.1.2. Soft balancing

Large discrepancies in capabilities as well as domestic circumstances make it not always possible to effectively balance another state or alliance militarily. However, states can also choose to apply non-military means in an effort to soft balance, a recently created concept, mostly applicable in unipolar systems, and developed specifically after the US has unilaterally engaged more assertively in the wake of the Iraq War.

When the US allegedly started posing its will on other sovereign states, second-ranked powers feared that US interventions could undermine their security interests and that the US could develop into a global hegemon, which would further restrain other states' independence (Pape 2005: 13). As a response, they aimed to contain the US and even sought a shift towards a multipolar system (Pape 2005: 10).

However, it was is not feasible for other states to balance against the global unipole because the US has been enjoying immense margins of superiority, Robert Pape (2005: 9) argues. Of course, if most other major powers would form an alliance, they could be on par with the US, but coordinating a vast spectrum of interest and relying on all parties to

act collectively composes high risks and possible sanctions from the US. Thus, Pape (2005: 17) believes that states have developed other means to restrain Washington:

> "Soft-balancing measures do not directly challenge a unipolar leader's military preponderance, but they can delay, complicate, or increase the costs of using that extraordinary power. Nonmilitary tools, such as international institutions, economic statecraft, and strict interpretations of neutrality, can have a real, if indirect, effect on the military prospects of a unipolar leader."

Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander (2005: 126) sum up that soft-balancing mechanisms include "states' efforts (1) to entangle the dominant state in international institutions, (2) to exclude the dominant state from regional economic cooperation, (3) to undermine the dominant state's ability to project military power by restricting or denying military basing rights, and (4) to provide relevant assistance U.S. adversaries such as rogue states". Pape (2005: 36) includes methods such as "territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic strengthening, and signaling of resolve to participate in a balancing coalition".

Walt (2009: 104) agrees and argues that soft balancing serves as a basis for cooperation:

> "In the current era of U.S. dominance, therefore, soft balancing is the conscious coordination of diplomatic action in order to obtain outcomes contrary to U.S. preferences, outcomes that could not be gained if the balancers did not give each other some degree of mutual support."

Pape (2005: 16) remarks that the formation of soft-balancing alliances is an incremental and slow process, and that similar to hard-balancing alliances, they pose difficulties to coordinate efforts, ensure timely cooperation, and guarantee the reliability of alliance partners.

Paul refines the concept by introducing conditions for classifying second-tier great powers' actions as soft balancing against the US (2005: 59):

- The US must be of growing concern but does not a pose a serious challenge to the sovereignty of second-tier power;
- The US must not simply be replaceable as a major source of public goods;
- The US cannot easily retaliate because soft-balancing measures are not overt or directly challengeable with military means.

If the three conditions were met, Paul (2005: 58) believes that:

> "Second tier great powers have been pursuing limited, tacit, or indirect balancing strategies largely through coalition building and diplomatic bargaining in international institutions, short of formal bilateral and multilateral military alliances. These institutional and diplomatic strategies, which are intended to constrain U.S. power, constitute forms of soft balancing."

Paul (2005: 61) puts forth the example of Russia's concern towards the US's and NATO's neglect of sovereignty when the Alliance engaged in Kosovo without a UN mandate. As a reaction, Moscow suspended the NATO-Russia Founding Act and its participation in the Partnership for Peace Program, stopped talks about establishing a NATO information office in Moscow, improved its ties with the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), enacted military exercises with its allies, and pressured the US to use the G8 as venue for political discussions on the conflict.

Even within NATO, states have soft balanced against the US, such as when France and Germany voiced opposition as a reaction to the US's unilateral policies in the wake of the Iraq War (Friedman/Long 2015: 149). Though the American actions did not pose an immediate threat to the NATO members, Washington's turn towards unilateral actions created concerns about Europe's security in the long term. Therefore, in order to restrain the US from further excluding European states in its decision-making process, France and Germany coordinated their positions in the UN, NATO, and the EU to oppose Washington's policies (Paul 2005: 69).

Brooks and Wohlforth (2005: 74-80) challenge the concept of soft balancing because they believe that the states' actions defined as soft-balancing techniques could also be motivated by goals very different from balancing a threat, for example by economic interest, regional security concerns, policy disputes, and domestic political incentives. The authors put forth three cases that have been classified as soft balancing by other authors, but could also fall into different categories. They argue that:

- Russia's assistance to the Iranian nuclear program was motivated by regional security concerns and economic incentives;
- Russia's strategic alliance with China and – to a lower extent – with India was motivated by security concerns;
- Enhanced EU military coordination was motivated by regional security needs;
- France's, Germany's, Turkey's, and Russia's opposition to the US's unilateral actions in Iraq, were motivated by foreign policy tradition, identity politics, fear for sovereignty, bargaining interests, as well as domestic and European politics.

Similarly, what some consider to be actions motivated by a soft-balancing strategy could also be a result of social competition for status, which can lead to geopolitical rivalry, arms races, and assertive military practices with the aim of influencing other states' perceptions of status rather than to influence the Balance of Power (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 72). These actions can be responses to impermeable group boundaries or designed to challenge the validity of a higher-status group's position, as India did in case of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Larson and Shevchenko also draw on Russia's spoiler behavior in the case of opposing NATO intervention in the Balkans and the US invasion into Iraq. They quote Richard Pipes (2010: 73) who proclaims that "[w]hen the Kremlin says 'no' to Western initiatives, Russians feel that they are indeed a world power".

By putting forth alternative reasons for state behaviors, scholars provide valuable input as to what constitutes soft balancing. Brooks and Wohlforth (2005: 78-79) argue that it is crucial to test whether a state's actions are intended to check the unipole as a result of a threat. If one does not take into consideration the intent of the balancing actions, all non-

military actions that are against the US's interest could be considered soft balancing. In order to have predictive and explanatory power, however, soft balancing needs to follow the causal mechanism of the Balance of Power and Balance of Threat theories; the actions of states classified as soft balancing would not occur without an imbalance of power or threat. The actions need to be connected with the desire for security in an anarchic world and intended to diminish the power of the US, rather than simply to frustrate Washington as a side effect.

The authors (2005: 81) argue that rhetoric is a poor indicator of soft balancing because it can be misused for stimulating regional anti-American coalitions for domestic purposes, for example among the leftist Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (*Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América* – ALBA). Often, states also position themselves against the US as part of their policy-bargaining strategy – a constant rather than an exception in interstate relations – which does not serve to protect security interests against the unipole (2005: 75).

Lieber and Alexander (2005: 131) agree with this argument: "The events used to detect the presence of soft balancing are so typical in history that they are not, and perhaps cannot be, distinguished from routine diplomatic friction between countries, even between allies".

Brooks and Wohlforth (2005: 83) suggest testing if actions can be classified as soft balancing by asking whether:

> "(1) they involve coordination among two or more states in areas directly related to security; (2) at least one great power, and in most cases several of them, are involved; and (3) they feature state actions that make it harder for Washington to advance its foreign policy goals."

Walt (2009: 104) agrees:

> "If states are in fact choosing to coordinate action, augment their power, and take on new commitments with others, because they are worried about the unipole's dominant position and/or are alarmed by the actions it is undertaking, it is appropriate to regard such behavior as a form of balancing."

Max Paul Friedman and Tom Long put forth that soft balancing is not a developed theory, but refer to it as a concept (2015: 134). According to Gary Goertz, "[d]eveloping a concept is more than providing a definition; it is deciding what is important about an entity" (2006: 27). Friedman and Long (2015: 129) constitute that "[s]oft balancing is, foremost, a foreign policy strategy that aims to constrain through nonmilitary means how, where, and why a unipole deploys its unrivaled military power. It does not refer to the Balance of Power as existing equilibrium in the international system."

The authors dismiss Brooks' and Wohlforth's argument that most actions that could fall into the category of soft balancing may also be classified otherwise. They believe that motives behind foreign policy are not mutually exclusive and that specific interests, such as regional security, can complement balancing motives. They also argue that specific tactics, such as policy bargaining, are more narrowly focused than soft balancing. Drawing on the readings of Charles A. Kupchan and Robert Art, Friedman and Long set three conditions to qualify state actions as soft balancing: aim, future orientation, and repetition (2015: 128-129).

Relating back to Pape who was among the first proponents of the concept, they suggest considering factors of geography, unipolar restraint and power asymmetry in order to prove the soft balancer's intentions (2015: 133). After all, reasons for detaining an unrestrained and strong neighbor are plentiful in an anarchic system where the strong states can do what they wish and the small states shall do what they must in order to ensure survival.

Applying these factors, Friedman and Long considered the late 19th and early 20th century Americas where Mexico and Argentina challenged US intervention across the Western Hemisphere. Hereby, the authors made a case for applying soft balancing as a concept in

a regional unipolar system, rather than in an international one. The examples they put forth also prove the conditions they defined. They argue that each of the individual actions they have analyzed could fall into the categories Brooks and Wohlforth put forth; but taken together, the actions check the conditions for soft balancing (aim, future orientation, and repetition) and served to convince the US to accept the principle of nonintervention in Latin America (2015: 136).

The concept of soft balancing, as well as its conditions and indications, remain debated and difficult to detect at times. This goes back to the nature of this tool of statecraft: to detain an assertive power without causing trouble for oneself. This low-risk, low-cost strategy will be part of the examination of state policy towards NATO in the empirical section, in which the conditions as mentioned above will be applied.

3.3.2. Bandwagoning

3.3.2.1. Bandwagoning for security

According to Walt (1990: 17), the opposite of balancing against the main threat is to bandwagon by "align[ing] with the source of danger". He puts forth the example of Italy's alliance choices in WWI and WWII when Rome sided with the supposedly stronger side at the verge of both wars (1985: 7-8). The logic behind bandwagoning is either to appease an aggressor or to share the spoils of victory. Stephen Van Evera (1990: 20) argues that bandwagoning is like "giv[ing] in to threats". Walt (1988: 282) agrees:

> "Bandwagoning involves unequal exchange; the vulnerable state makes asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power and accepts a subordinate role [...] Bandwagoning is an accommodation to pressure (either latent or manifest) [...] Most important of all, bandwagoning suggests a willingness to support or tolerate illegitimate actions by the dominant ally."

Similar to his postulates for balancing, Walt (1990: 32) defined a set of principles for bandwagoning:

"Hypotheses on Bandwagoning:

1. *General form*: States facing an external threat will ally with the most threatening power.
2. The greater a state's aggregate capabilities, the greater the tendency for others to align with it.
3. The nearer a powerful state, the greater the tendency for those nearby to align with it.
4. The greater a state's offensive capabilities, the greater the tendency for others to align with it.
5. The more aggressive a state's perceived intentions, the less likely other states are to align against it.
6. Alliances formed to oppose a threat will disintegrate when the threat becomes serious."

Again, Walt uses his Balance of Threat theory as a basis for predicting bandwagoning behavior. He recognizes that the greater the aggregate capabilities, geographic proximity, and offensive capabilities, the likelier it is for states to bandwagon with the greater threat. This is in alignment with Walt's reasoning for bandwagoning: to appease (" to give in to") a greater power in order to avoid hostility or to position itself on the stronger side, thereby taking advantage of the greater power's capabilities.

However, Walt claims that there is an inverse relationship between a greater power's aggressive intentions and the propensity of others to bandwagon with it. This is because bandwagoners would have to fear being exploited by a greater state with aggressive intentions; the prospects of making asymmetrical concessions to a hostile power is simply too risky to ensure the smaller state's survival.

Interestingly, comparing Walt's postulates on bandwagoning with those on balancing, it occurs that the factors aggregate capabilities, geographic proximity, and offensive capabilities positively correlate with both balancing and bandwagoning. While this seems illogical given the contradictory nature of balancing and bandwagoning, Walt argues that

the decision whether to balance or bandwagon depend on additional factors, including the relative strength of states, the availability of allies, and the context in which decisions take place (whether in peace or wartime) (Walt 1990: 29-32):

“Hypotheses on Conditions Favoring Balancing over Bandwagoning

1. Balancing is more common than bandwagoning.
2. The stronger the state, the greater its tendency to balance. Weak states will balance against other weak states but may bandwagon when threatened by great powers.
3. The greater the probability of allied support, the greater the tendency to balance. When adequate allied support is certain, however, the tendency for free riding or buck passing increases.
4. The more unalterably aggressive a state is perceived to be, the greater the tendency for others to balance against it.
5. In wartime, the closer one side is to victory, the greater the tendency for others to bandwagon with it.”

While these conditions provide more context for applying Walt’s theory, they also make its conclusions less predictable because it is complicated to define the level of variables, such as about the availability of allies, in order to predict whether a state will balance or bandwagon.

3.3.2.2. Bandwagoning for profit

Schweller (1994: 74) dismisses Walt’s notion of bandwagoning; he claims that bandwagoning is not the opposite of balancing (because aggression is). Referencing Paul Schroeder’s empirical study on state behavior, he notes that that bandwagoning is more common than balancing, which illustrates that neorealist theory is not consistent with history (Schweller 2004: 165) – though Schroeder’s conclusion has been disputed by Parent and Rosato (2015: 52) who highlight that states constantly balance through internal means. Schweller also underlines that states can balance, bandwagon, and even

buck pass at the same time, as was the case of the Soviet Union's Nonaggression Pact with Nazi Germany because the Soviets bandwagoned with Nazi Germany to avoid an attack from the stronger side, balanced against the Nazi threat by delaying an attack and preparing for war, and buck-passed the responsibility to fight against Western European powers to Germany (1999: 17).

Unlike balancing, which requires the significant presence of an external threat, Schweller (1994: 74) argues that bandwagoning is motivated by "self-extension: to obtain values coveted", making it distinct from the logic of balancing. Instead of defining bandwagoning as a form of surrender, he underlines the opportunistic aims of revisionist states that jump on a bandwagon not because of punishment, but because of their ambitions for profits.

Thereby, he follows the logic of classical realists who believe that states are interested in augmenting absolute power rather than relative security, making them "power-maximizing states" (Zongyou 2006: 196). This approach is similar to Mearsheimer's (1994: 163) doctrine of offensive realism, but differs in that it does not narrowly focus on survival as the prime motivation behind expansionist and opportunistic state behavior. Therefore, Rynning and Ringsmose (2008: 36) argue that Schweller does not neatly fit the offensive realist classification.

In his theory, Schweller distinguished between four bandwagoning categories:

- Jackal bandwagoning: Limited-aims revisionist states bandwagon with the "lion" or the revisionist coalition for opportunistic aims to share the spoils of victory (e.g., Mussolini's Italy jumping on to the powerful revisionist bandwagon of Germany in the wake of WWII) (Schweller 1994: 93-95);

- Piling-on bandwagoning[8]: If the outcome of a war is clear, states bandwagon with the winning side to claim part of the spoils of victory (e.g., the vast support of the Allied Powers from formerly neutral states at the end of WWII) (Schweller 1994: 95-96);
- Wave-of-the-future bandwagoning: if something seems superior and ripe for the future, often fueled by great success, charismatic leaders and attractive ideologies, states jump on this system's bandwagon (e.g., capitalism after at the Cold War) (Schweller 1994: 96-98);
- The contagion or domino effect: External forces push the bandwagon through a region in a chain reaction, including revolutions and wars, as well as peace accords (e.g., the 1990s land-for-peace accords between Israel and its Arab neighbors; and as a more recent example on the domestic level the revolutions of the Arab Spring) (Schweller 1994: 98-99).

Interestingly, Schweller also describes the possibility for states – especially insular powers – to extract profits by joining the weaker side, thereby acting as a kingmaker to hold the Balance of Power. The state may not join a balancing alliance for security reasons but for material gains; as Schweller (1994: 76) puts it in economic terms, "[t]he holder of the balance sells its service to the highest bidder".

By forming coalitions for rewards, states affect system dynamics: bandwagoning goes hand in hand with systemic change or at least change within the system, while balancing is usually practiced by the status-quo powers to maintain the structure (Schweller 1994: 92-93).

Following a neoclassical realist approach, Schweller also links his theory to the unit level. He refers to Larson's (1991: 103) institutional approach, arguing that bandwagoning can serve domestic purposes by helping weak regimes to "retain authority

[8] This form of bandwagoning has already been recognized by Walt (1990: 33): "In wartime, the closer one side is to victory, the greater the tendency for others to bandwagon with it."

by ending external subversion, undermining domestic rivals, and providing economic assistance and 'an aura of invincibility by association with the great power's victories' " (Schweller 1994: 77).

Larson and Shevchenko's arguments on status also apply to the logic of bandwagoning for profit: states that choose to engage in social mobility to elevate their status by siding with the higher-status group. This strategy requires the compatibility of values and social permeability because the lower-status state will have to adopt the higher-status group's values and be adopted by the higher-status group as a member. The authors cited the examples of post-WWII West Germany and the post-Cold War Central European states which adopted Western values and were permitted to join high-status clubs, such as NATO and the EU (2010: 71). They argue that imitation of the dominant states' values and ideology, as well as adopting the goal of joining a higher-status club are indicators of states using a social mobility strategy.

Clearly, states also bandwagon for status. Considering the utility of status in international relations, social mobility strategy is consistent with Schweller's belief that states bandwagon for the sake of rewards. However, status competition does not relate to the interest of maintaining the status quo or revising the international system because the lust for status simply reflects the states' natural interests and thus serves as an intervening variable that deflects or intensifies strategies based on either the Balance of Threat or Balance of Interests theory.

3.3.3. Beyond balancing and bandwagoning

Although balancing and bandwagoning are arguably the most common drivers of alliance formation in a unipolar world, it would be incomplete to neglect other foreign policy strategies leading to alliance formation.

Depending on the different school of international relations, scholars have developed various alliance theories based on different ontological foundations and the resulting forces that shape state behavior. The following section provides a short overview of

different approaches towards cooperation in the international arena across the theoretical spectrum.

3.3.3.1. Further realist approaches: buck passing and chain ganging

Consistent with realism, states chose to enter into alliances in order to get another state to deter or fight an aggressor while remaining on the sidelines, also referred to as buck passing. Hereby, a state free rides by passing the cost of providing a collective good (usually security) onto other states and thereby minimizes the expenditure for its own economic and military power, also referred to as underbalancing (Schweller 2004).

States may also cooperate in order to drag alliance partners into wars that they would have no desire to fight otherwise by creating situations in which they receive unconditional and unlimited support from an ally, especially in a crisis setting where states perceive their security interests to be tied to the destinies of their allies. Through this strategy, know as chain ganging, states overbalance by forming "gangs" that increase the risk of war by dragging all parties into a conflict.

Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder (1990: 140) argue that the logic of buck passing and chain ganging are most likely in multipolar systems because their relative instability makes alliance partners believe that their security is strongly intertwined with other alliance members. States' miscalculations lead to conflict and destabilize the balancing system, one reason why neorealists believe that multipolarity is generally unstable (Christensen/Snyder 1990: 138).

In bipolarity, as superpowers aim to stay on par or ahead of the other pole, they maintain a large stake in virtually all matters (Christensen/Snyder 1990: 142) and prefer internal balancing (mobilizing their own resources) rather than relying on external balancing (alliances) (Jervis 2009: 190). Therefore, smaller states are less likely to drag them into war or pass on their responsibilities, just like the superpowers are not able to pass their responsibilities or chain lesser powers to themselves.

Although not much has been written about buck passing and chain ganging in unipolarity, it could be argued that it exists in seldom circumstances. For example, the unipole practices buck passing in case of offshore balancing, transferring the responsibility to balance a threat to distant allies. Similarly, collective defense agreements and informal alliances lead to chain gangs following the unipole into a conflict that a smaller state may otherwise not be interested in fighting, such as the Coalition of the Willing during the Iraq war. The other way around – to pass the buck to the unipole or rope the unipole into a conflict – is less likely because the unipole has no need to rely on alliances for its security; the unipole may simply forgo alliance commitments if they were not in its interest because it does not have to fear repercussions as the sole superpower. This may explain why the US only reluctantly assisted Georgia and Ukraine in their struggle with Russia (the case of the Baltic States is different because they were invited to join NATO when Moscow was less assertive and since they are part of the Alliance, the US eagerly defends them because Washington's credibility as the regional leader is at stake).

No matter the structure of the international system, Christensen and Snyder have made a case that the propensity to engage in buck passing or chain ganging depends on whether offense or defense is prevailing. If states perceive defense to have the advantage, they would pass the buck to increase their deterrence while minimizing costs. This was the case prior to WWII, when states thought that they were safer than they actually were and therefore appeased Nazi Germany (Christensen/Snyder 1990: 166-167). If states perceive offense to be on the advantage, they would be likelier to chain gang, thereby spiraling other parties into a war that they are eager to win. For example, the perception of being vulnerable and the prospect of a quick defeat led European states to drag their alliance partners into war during WWI (Christensen/Snyder 1990: 165).

3.3.3.2. Liberal approaches: democracy and institutions

Scholars of other schools of international relations would challenge the claim that cooperation is solely driven by national interests. They acknowledge that security is a legitimate reason for states to enter an alliance, but they would also include supposedly

more significant factors that determine state behavior based on their cosmopolitan logic of common values that help states to overcome anarchy and lead to forms of cooperation that serve collective security interests.

More ideational in nature, liberals believe in the power of institutional integration and democratic values as the basis for mutual respect and the source of cooperation. They point out that democracies do not go to war with each other (see: “Democratic Peace Theory”, Doyle 1983) and advocate for a concert of democracies worldwide (Daalder/Lindsay 2007).

They also stress economic benefits as a motivation to join and maintain international organizations. According to Robert Keohane O. and Lisa L. Martin (1995: 42), “institutions can provide information, reduce transaction costs, make commitments more credible, establish focal points for coordination and, in general, facilitate the operation of reciprocity”. Pierre Martin and Mark R. Brawley (2000: 15) argues that “highly institutionalized alliances may create capacities that are worth keeping even after their original rationale is gone, especially when it costs less to maintain them in the first place”. Scholars of the functionalist school would add that institutions follow a natural evolvement to take on more tasks and decision-making power as states pool sovereignty on the basis of common interests (Wolf 1973).

Liberals often point to the prominent example of post-Cold War NATO, by far the most institutionalized alliance in history, and thus a source of durability. Instead of dissolving after the Alliance completed its mission to balance the Soviet Union, the organization took on new operations in Balkans, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, and Libya. Its 2010 Strategic Concept stresses cooperative security and crisis management, in addition to NATO’s original purpose of territorial defense. The Alliance’s evolvement, including its expansion, strengthened the liberal view that peace can be achieved through integration and institutionalism, which promotes stability, security, development, and democracy.

This powerful argument may hold true in the case of the Alliance itself (although one may question alliance cohesion on the grounds of the broadened scope of the member

states' interests and risk diffusion, see Masala 2003: 13), but barely explains why NATO has not established itself as a genuinely international organization to include democracies world wide, as former US Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder has argued for (Daalder/Goldgeier 2006). While liberals provide a solid basis for explaining why NATO did not fade after it lost its *raison d'être*, they can merely explain external states' policy towards the alliance, such as opposition from democratic leaders of the Global South towards NATO missions to engage in peace and humanitarian relief operations.

Proponents of institutionalism also developed concepts that have been applied by realists because institutions have functions that may be utilized by states to further their security interests. Beyond the economic argument, states may enter into alliances under the umbrella of international organizations to bind dominant states that may pose threats. Hereby, concerned states prevent a dominant state from exercising power through "legal commitments that allocate voting rights within international institutions so as to redistribute power from the powerful to themselves" (Legro/Moravcsik 1999: 42). G. John Ikenberry (2001: 63) describes binding as a putting "constraints on the way power can be used in the system, thereby rendering asymmetric power relations less exploitative and commitment more certain". Schweller (1999: 13) remarks that "established powers use multilateral arrangements for the purpose of entangling the rising power in a web of policies that makes exercise of its power too costly". Joseph Grieco (1995: 34) believes that "weaker but still influential partners will seek to ensure that the rules so constructed will provide sufficient opportunities for them to voice their concerns and interests and thereby prevent or at least ameliorate their domination by stronger partners".

In his aim to develop a realist theory of international institutions, Grieco puts forth that weak states may aim to bind a dominant state instead of forming a balancing alliance against or balancing with it (Legro/Moravcsik 1999: 42). For example, one may argue that smaller European states have utilized the EU as a binding strategy to contain Germany's power by binding Berlin to diplomatic and economic agreements (Dyson 2016: 23). Tom Dyson (2016: 31) describes binding as a "logical response for Defensive

Realists, who argue that the nature of security as a finite good provides an incentive for a unipolar leader to work through international institutions […]".

While this dissertation's theoretical foundations questions the applicability of international law under anarchy, the study recognizes that domestic pressure to uphold international agreements and the credibility of alliance commitments do play a role in formulating foreign policy because these factors may deviate systemic forces (similar to an intervening variable). Therefore, obligations of membership in international institutions may have a limited impact on state behavior and can be included as a soft-balancing tool to restrain a hegemon. This seems contradictory because binding leads to cooperation with the threat, similar to bandwagoning. But unlike bandwagoning, binding aims to manage a threat – not to appease it or to gain material benefits by working with it. Therefore, cooperation that originates out of binding shall be considered a cooperative approach to managing threats, not a distinct source of alliance formation because it underlies the logic of soft balancing.

3.3.3.3. Constructivist approaches: values and interactions

Based on distinct epistemological and ontological principles, constructivists draw on the historical and social context in order to understand the construction of relationships. Since constructivism is not a normative theory, but a descriptive ontology, constructivists can rarely develop a set of principles predicting state behavior. Instead, they consider each case individually by tracing the development of a relationship. Since their approach is not limited to states as the primary units of analysis, constructivist reasoning for why states cooperate is highly contextual.

For example, constructivists claim that post-WWII alliance formations can hardly be explained by considering the Balance of Power. Ted Hopf (1998) believes that American and (Western) European identifies, based on their "domestic sociocultural milieus", produced an understanding of each other as allies. Thereby, he developed explanations of the construction of the Soviet threat different from, say, Walt's Balance of Threat theory.

Karl Deutsch (Deutsch 1957) introduced the concept of "Security Communities": a group that agrees on the peaceful resolution of common problems, making violent conflict between the members almost unthinkable. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998) developed this concept further by including the construction of shared identity and values, pointing to similar examples as liberals, such as the EU.

Of course, one can apply constructivism to understand historical events and current relationships across the policy spectrum, but the theory lacks the predictive power to forecast alliance formation in an ever-complex world. This dissertation does not shy away from applying ideational factors on the basis of realist ontology, but it will do so in a positivist research design in order to test which factors shape states' policy towards NATO. Thereby, the results of this study aim to serve as a means to produce prudent policy in the future, rather than simply providing a detailed manuscript of the history of NATO's external relation.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

The research will be based on the qualitative analysis of individual states' foreign policy strategies and relations with NATO. The goal is to understand the motivations for states to cooperate with NATO or to denounce the Alliance by testing predictions of realist alliance theories and investigating the influence of antecedent factors, thereby sharpening the theories and increasing their explanatory power. Specifically, the analysis shall test whether Stephen Walt's Balance of Threat theory or Randall Schweller's Balance of Interests theory can explain state posture towards NATO. The analysis will additionally examine how status competition affects state behavior towards NATO and possibly deviates state strategy based on the structural Balance of Threat and Balance of Interests theories.

Hereby, relevant variables will be determined for the individual states in order to understand their threats and interests, as well as status strategies, serving as independent and intervening variables respectively. In the next step, the study will apply the Balance of Threat and Balance of Interests theories to predict state policy towards NATO, which shall be compared towards the actual state behavior to the Alliance. Then, the intervening variable status competition will be considered to explain possible discrepancies of the predicted and actual state behavior, or the reinforcement of the predicted state behavior. Thereby, the analysis will apply neoclassical realism as a "theory of mistakes" (Schweller 2006: 10): to determine whether status competition affects the translation of systemic forces into practical foreign policy, which leads to contradictions between the actual foreign policy and the state behavior predicted by applying structural alliance theories. Thereby, the analysis connects clearly specified variables in a causal chain: threats/interests affected by status strategy and resulting in state behavior.

4.1.1. Defining the dependent variable: support or denouncement of NATO

The analysis will consider individual states' behavior towards NATO as the dependent variable, possibly resulting from the specified independent and intervening variables that the dissertation aims to test. In order to evaluate the states' posture towards NATO, the analysis will consider political and diplomatic positions towards the Alliance, as well as practical cooperation with NATO bodies, including the Headquarters, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), the Allied Command Transformation (ACT), individual governments, and research institutions, such as the NATO Defense College.

Categorizing the states helps "identify[ing] the degree of causal homogeneity between cells and to engage in counterfactual reasoning" (Bennett/Elman 2006: 467), which will be useful in testing alliance theories in the study. Simply speaking, defining typologies are also necessary in order to know what cases to look for; otherwise all states should be analyzed, making the research design based on qualitative case studies unfeasible.

Relying on extreme values for the case selection, the states can be categorized into three categories:

- Supporters[9] of NATO: states actively seeking to cooperate with NATO
- Neutral states: states without an interest in NATO
- Denouncers[10] of NATO: states criticizing NATO's existence or continuously rejecting NATO's missions

In order to fit the case selection criteria (see: "4.3. Case selection"), applying John Stuart Mill's Method of Difference to compare states of opposite value in the dependent variable, the analysis will exclude neutral states. Complete neutrality indicates the absence of foreign policy positions and thus provides little empirical potential.

[9] To support: "to agree with or approve of (someone or something)" (Merriam-Webster 2018b).
[10] To denounce: "to pronounce especially publicly to be blameworthy or evil" (Merriam-Webster 2018a).

As a minimum threshold to categorize the states' behavior towards NATO, the analysis will consider the desire or existence of a partnership with the organization, as well as active mission support, as signals of support. Criticism of NATO's existence or a continuous rejection of its missions, either publically or implicitly through policy (e.g., continuously vetoing against NATO missions in the UN) shall be considered an indication of the denouncement.

More complex elements of the states' foreign policy towards NATO will be considered in the case studies, providing a detailed assessment of the states' relations with the Alliance. However, in the case selection stage, the analysis will initially be limited to the categories "supporters" and "denouncers" of NATO. These categories will provide both extreme values for states' posture towards the Alliance ("with or against") and a categorization free of premature judgment whether the state policy may indicate balancing, bandwagoning, or other foreign policy strategies.

4.1.2. Defining independent variables

The independent variables will be based on the Balance of Threat and Balance of Interests theories because they provide a sound basis for predicting state behavior towards a political-military alliance. They consider factors one would associate with the foreign policy decision making towards NATO: a comprehensive conceptualization of threat and a holistic assessment of grand strategy to shape the international system according to the national interest.

In order to determine the states' threats and interests, the research will be guided by Stephen Walt's and Randall Schweller's definition of threat and interests, as well as the assumptions of unipolarity within the international system and NATO as a status-quo alliance (see: "4.4. Assumptions").

4.1.2.1. Threat perception

The Balance of Threat theory solely relies on external factors as sources of the perceived threat to a states' physical security. These threats may be translated and miscalculated at the unit level, for example by the misperception of external security (e.g., other states' intentions), structural influences at the unit level such as state cohesion, and ideational variables focusing on culture and values. However, Walt excludes the unit level and relies on rational calculations and full access to information.

According to the Balance of Threat theory (Walt 1990: 21-26), the four sources of threat of another state are:

1. Aggregate strength – "a state's total resources" (1990: 22) – measured in size of population and territory, economic and military capabilities;
2. Geographic proximity, measured in nominal distance and buffering zones including third states and geographic buffers such as oceans, mountain ranges, and deserts;
3. Offensive capabilities, measured in existing stock and expected investment in offensive arms, and the ability to use these resources against a potential enemy;
4. Offensive intentions, based state's security strategy towards its potential enemy, determined through foreign policy analysis.

These factors shall be determined by considering hard data where possible (e.g., aggregate strength), as well as more nuanced qualitative research, based on foreign policy analysis (e.g., offensive intentions). By considering the factors in combination, one can paint a holistic picture of the states' threat perception.

In regards to measuring these sources of threat, it is neither feasible to estimate the total strength and offensive capabilities of all states, nor would it be useful because "offensive intentions" is by far the most important variable in order to determine threat, simply because without any offensive intentions, there would be no threat at all (though of course uncertainty clouts any threat assessment). Therefore, the case analysis will start by

considering the case states' geopolitical situation and then proceed to estimate the threats to the case state's physical security. For example, if a case state is locked between several greater powers, the threat analysis will start with the threats that originate from the great powers to the physical security of the case state.

In a more refined analysis, the study will consider threat dimensions beyond a foreign country's invasion, such as the threat to its political or economic sovereignty that may compromise a state's security, depending on the case state's security perception. For example, if a case state was very dependent on energy imports from one single country, say Belarus' energy dependence on Russia, the energy supplier poses an inherent threat to the case state's energy security and thereby possesses significant leverage over the dependent state's decision making in international politics. Analyzing such security threats is very contextual and shall therefore be guided by the identified threat dimensions in the case studies.

The case state's resulting foreign policy strategy is further based on the following factors (Walt 1990: 29-32):

- Relative strength of states, based on the comparison of states' aggregate strengths;
- Availability of allies, based on regional and international alliance networks, their nature and cohesion, affecting their viability as a reinforcement of strength;
- Context in which decisions take place, whether in peace or wartime, and whether offense or defense is perceived to be favorable.

Given a Walt's criteria to sketch a state's threat situation, this study will determine options for the case state to rationally behave according to Walt's postulates on alliance formation (see: "3.3. Alliance theory") by pursuing the following logic:

1. What is the threat situation (threats, intensity, context)?
2. Is the case state inclined to balance or bandwagon as a reaction to its threats? With or against whom?

3. How would this strategy shape its relations in the region and in the international arena in which the unipole tends to be the guiding factor?

Consequently, the study will assess whether the threat situation would lead the case state to (soft) balance against NATO as a US-led alliance, to form a (soft-)balancing alliance with it against a third party, or to bandwagoning with it. The Balance of Threat theory would then prove to be applicable for the case if the state's balancing/bandwagoning strategy towards NATO reflects the state's actual behavior towards the Alliance.

4.1.2.2. Interests in the status quo or revisionism

Schweller defines interests in relation to a state's position in the international system: whether the system offers a satisfactory position for the state, or whether it would be worth help bringing about a revised international order that offers better opportunities to further material wealth and prestige. Thus, revisionism refers to the interest of reforming the world order, representing what Alastair Iain Johnston (2003: 11) would call a "radical redistribution of material power in the international system", rather than advancing its position with in the current order.

The resulting Balance of Interests theory clusters states into four categories and ascribes certain behavior (see: Figure 1, "3.3.1. Balancing" and "3.3.2. Bandwagoning") (Schweller 1994: 101-104):

- "Lions" are staunch supporters of the status quo; satisfied great powers with a defensive posture. They "pay high costs to protect what they possess, but only a small price to increase what they value" (101). They balance against hostile states that may challenge their supremacy.
- "Lambs" are soft supporters of the status quo, often weak states, and considered prey. They distance and hide themselves in order to be eaten last. They bandwagon to appease greater powers, ride on the "wave-of-the-future", or seek protection from the stronger side.

- "Jackals" are limited–aims revisionists, dissatisfied with their position, but nevertheless value their possessions. They're ready to pay high cost to defend their status quo, and even higher ones to expand. They trail "wolfs" and "lions" in order to free ride on their capabilities ("predatory buck passing").
- "Wolfs" are unlimited–aims revisionists, unsatisfied predators, taking high risks for what they could possess, leading to reckless expansionist politics. Naturally, they challenge the status quo.

Schweller (1998) further developed this theory, defining a sum of nine zoological categories of jungle animals. They can help illustrating how a states' position in the international system shapes their interest. However, the scholar does not define specific criteria for placing states into animal categories beyond subjective judgment as to how much a state benefits from the current world order. Therefore, this study will limit itself to four categories above (staunch supporter of the status quo, limited supporter of the status quo, limited–aims revisionists, unlimited–aims revisionists).

In order to place states into the categories, one needs to determine to what extent states prefer the status quo or a revision of the international system. As Sten Rynning and Jens Ringsmose (2008: 20) pointed out, defensive realists such as Waltz assume all states to prefer the status quo, while offensive realists such as Mearsheimer believe that revisionism is "business as usual", putting all states in the revisionist category. Those assuming defense to be on the advantage believe that revisionist actions are generally too costly because they pose disproportional danger to the survival of an offensive state, making states naturally follow the status quo. Those who assume offense to be on the advantage believe that states generally seek out all opportunities to expand their power, possibly through system change, making states rather revisionist in nature.

Beyond these generalizations, the theoretical literature offers only few more nuanced definitions of status quo and revisionist states. "Despite the centrality of the terms in international relations theorizing and in discourse in the policy world, definitions of status quo and revisionist are not only vague but also under-theorized", Johnston believes

(2003: 8). He refers to advocates of power transition theory, such as Abramo Fimo Kenneth (A.F.K.) Organski and Jacek Kugler, who distinguish between satisfied and dissatisfied states, but leave out elaborate explanations about what the states may be satisfied about, let alone how to measure satisfaction (2003: 8). Robert Gilpin defines more refined indicators for determining state interests, asking whether states accept the distribution of power, the hierarchy of prestige and "the rights and rules that govern or at least influence the interactions among states" (quoted in Johnston 2003: 9-10).

Carsten Rauch (2016) questions the focus on external sources to determine a state's level of satisfaction, citing ideational factors that led to post-WWI Germany's revisionist actions. He also questions whether it is possible to determine a unitary degree of satisfaction given the varying levels of satisfaction among different domestic factions.

Schweller's concept of status quo and revisionist states is similar in that it is not merely a reflection of state behavior, but assumes policy formulation at the domestic level driven by the desire to maximize profits through a favorable position within the international hierarchy of power. Thereby, Schweller (1998: 17) counters the structural realists' assumption that states are primarily driven by maximizing security, as he follows the classical realists logic that the "true interest" of states lies within the quest for power and expansion. He puts forth the importance of prestige and wealth parallel to security which is not always complementary because "too much emphasis on security can weaken a state's overall power" (1998: 19).

The relationship between the desire for power and the national interests becomes obvious in regards to rising powers: Realists may assume that every state naturally aims to extend its power by taking opportunities that may affect the status quo. But it would be false to equate the desire for increasing power with revisionism; otherwise all states would be revisionist. Based on this logic, Schweller disputes the structural realists' assumption that rising powers are revisionist in nature and therefore pose a source of conflict: While "[s]tructural realist theories of international change invariably posit rising powers as spoilers, hell-bent on revising the international order", he points out that "[b]y definition,

rising powers are doing better than everyone else under the current order" (2015). They will therefore be satisfied, holding on to their gains and aiming to advance their position further *within* the given order.

Therefore, a revision of the international system may not be in the interest of rising powers as long as they can benefit from it. At most, rising powers seek an adjustment of the system that helps them to capitalize their newly gained power, for example with the recognition of a sphere of influence or "a place at the table". For example, Brazil and India have been challenging the non-proliferation regime and the WTO, showcasing disagreements with parts of the status quo that benefit status quo powers disproportionally (Stünkel 2010: 7). However, such limited-aims revisionist claims may actually strengthen the existing order because they update the system to the new realities, while preserving the existing norms. This example illustrates that the logic of how to accumulate power is the principal determinant for defining the states' interests and approach towards the status quo.

Jason W. Davidson (2006: 2) draws attention to the sources of (dis)satisfaction that affect the level of commitment to uphold the status quo or revisionism. He argues that on the unit level, governments pay attention to important domestic interest groups in the interest of their political survival. If the groups are externally oriented, such as nationalists, they tend to be more likely committed to either the status quo or revisionism. However, if the most important groups are oriented internally, for example those who push for welfare, the level of interest in the external order is low.

Beyond domestic orientation, Davidson (2006: 2) also includes security on the system level as a factor: the more a state is concerned with security, the more it will be committed to its interest in upholding the more status quo or revise the international order, and vice versa. Both variables, the domestic orientation and the significance of security in determining the level of state interest, interact with each other because a states' external orientation positively correlates with the significance of security in formulating foreign policy, and vice versa.

Lastly, Davidson (2006: 2) remarks that no matter the domestic orientation or interest in security, a state will only join a status-quo or revisionist alliance if the aim of upholding the status quo or revising the order is realistic given the distribution of material capabilities. According to this argument, rising states would not adopt revisionist goals as long as they do not have enough resources to counter the status quo alliance (such as NATO), even if they do not support it.

It is also important to recognize that the "quality and quantity of revisionism in a state's policy are not static properties" (Johnston 2003: 49-50). The categorization of being "status quo" or "revisionist" is merely a reflection of a point in time as the international system ("the jungle") is a dynamic structure, in which the states ("the animals") may transform their interests guided by systemic forces and unit level developments. Thus, a limited-aims revisionist state ("jackal") can transform into a staunch supporter of the status quo ("lion") if it greatly increases its relative strength and manifests its position in a beneficial world order.

At a given point of time, however, one can place states into one of the categories mentioned above by considering the two main indicators of a revisionism put forth by Johnston: "challenging formal and informal rules of the major institutions in the international system" as well as "attitudes and behavior of an actor toward distributions of material power that appear to be disadvantageous to it" (2003: 11). Therefore, the analysis will conclude that revisionist states include those that not only challenge the setup of international regimes, but also aim for a radical redistribution of material power in the international system (the unipolar order and its stabilizing features).

It is important to clarify that the "Western liberal democratic world order"[11] may be a result of American leadership, but does not define the current world order under realist

[11] Following Ikenberry's definition, the liberal order represents the post-WWII international system comprised of open multilateral rules-based institutions that limit the exercise of power and allow for further bilateral arrangements without challenging the order (Flockhart 2014: 22). The system includes primary institutions, such as fundamental norms, values, and practices (e.g., open trade, multilateralism, alliances, partnerships, democratic solidarity, human rights, and American hegemonic leadership), as well as

assumptions (see: “4.4.2. Today’s unipolar world and its effect on state behavior”). After all, international politics continues to revolve around power, not around political ideas; American unipolarity may bring about liberal values, but not vice versa.

Therefore, this study will not simply rely on indicators such as leadership travel (see: Kastner 2012) and security council vetoes (see: Chan 2015) for assessing a state’s interest in the status quo and revisionism, but aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of both the states’ policies and their intentions; whether actions that challenge liberal institutions are in fact designed with the goal of radically redistributing material power in the international order. For example, one could categorize the formation of new institutions, such as BRICS and IBSA, as a tool for undermining the status quo. However, states’ interests in launching such organizations may actually be motivated by their status strategy (either status competition or status creativity) without revisionist intentions (Stolte 2015: 36).

The analysis will also take into consideration Davidson’s factors that lead satisfied and dissatisfied states to commit to the status quo or revisionism respectively, including the orientation of leading domestic factions, the significance of security in foreign policymaking, and the feasibility of achieving status quo or revisionist goals. Thereby, the cases shall feature a comprehensive assessment of the states’ interests in the status quo or revisionism in order to group them into the animal categories.

Schweller’s Balance of Interests theory would then provide an answer as to how states would position themselves towards NATO: the compatibility of interest either to maintain the status quo or to revise the current order provides the single most important factor in the decision whether to form a balancing alliance: “satisfied powers will join the status-quo coalition, even when it is the stronger side; dissatisfied powers, motivated by

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secondary institutions that manage and support the order (e.g., bureaucratic organizations including the UN, IMF, World Bank, WTO) (Ikenberry 2015: 450).

profit more than security, will bandwagon with an ascending revisionist state" (Schweller 1994: 88).[12]

As an organization comprised of states that arguably benefit from the current international system, and led by the international unipole, NATO will be considered an alliance of status quo states that aim to secure their favorable positions in the international system (see: "4.4.3. NATO as a status-quo alliance"). Thus, according to Schweller's theory, status quo states should support NATO while revisionist states should position themselves against the Alliance.

The assessment whether state behavior towards NATO is a result or merely a correlation with its interest in the status quo or revisionism should be based on the link between the state's interest in long-term material benefits from the continuation or revision of the status quo, and NATO's role in upholding the current world order. Unfortunately, Schweller falls short at providing a necessary or sufficient condition to proving the causal relationship between states' interests in status quo/revisionism as a result of potential material benefits (see: "3.3.2.2. Bandwagoning for profit") and their alliance behavior: How does one determine whether states' behavior towards NATO is actually caused by their interest in upholding or revising the status quo? In other words, does denouncing or supporting NATO as a defender of the status quo yield material benefits – and power as a result – in the long-term (beyond immediate practical benefits that come with cooperation with NATO)?

Of course, it would be very hypothetical to measure potential profits in a revised world order, and there is no balance sheet that reflects a state's rational cost/benefit analysis for upholding or revising the status quo with a column for NATO, which would reflect a state's assumption about how much the support or denouncement of NATO could further

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[12] Schweller (1993: 83) recognizes that revisionist states may join the defensive status quo alliance, but only if this is absolutely necessary for their survival. Since this study does not deal with states in times of major international wars, revisionist states should not be expected to have to bandwagon with the status-quo coalition in order to survive.

the state's power.[13] However – in order to at least mitigate the missing causal link between state action and state interest – this study aims to assess relevant primary and secondary sources that can expose whether policymakers designed their NATO policy with their interest in upholding or revising the status quo in mind (see: "4.2.2. Data collection, analysis, and limitations"). Hereby, it will be especially important to assess whether policymakers even view NATO as a status-quo alliance, which would be the base for an interest-guided policy towards the Alliance and for proving Schweller's theory.

In addition, the case studies shall observe whether the case states also maintain alliances with revisionist powers, such as Russia and North Korea (see "4.4.3. NATO as a status-quo alliance" for a refined analysis of what constitutes the "status quo"). Ambiguous alliance behavior – allying with both status quo and revisionist powers – would undermine the Balance of Interests theory, and may hint towards other factors that may guide state behavior towards NATO, such as the aim for security or status.

4.1.3. Defining the intervening variable: status competition

Status competition shall be considered as an intervening variable because it can explain deviations from the positivist predictions linked to material capabilities and rationally calculated cost-benefit analysis in an objective world order by considering state identity and the state's view of it "appropriate role in the world" (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 93).

Applying status competition to explain the reason for state behavior towards NATO, it shall not be the objective to determine the state's exact rank in the hierarchy of states, but to define the state's status strategy because the study aims to conclude whether and how this strategy affects the state's behavior towards NATO.

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[13] Interestingly, EU enlargement studies suggest that the goal of states to join the EU are a result of their rational cost-benefit calculations, rather than a result of learning and socialization (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005). Consequently, if the EU could be classified as a status-quo organization and the prospective members' utility calculation was affected by their interest in upholding the status quo, one may assume that Schweller's Balance of Interests theory holds true in case of EU enlargement.

The study recognizes that states may follow several role conceptions in different arenas, which also makes them follow different strategies towards different actors – or even towards the same actor in different dimensions (i.e., a discrepancy between the strategy towards NATO and that towards individual NATO members). Thus, the study will consider the state's status strategy directed at NATO as a reference group in the dimension of international security, as well as how state behavior towards NATO plays into the state's status strategy towards other reference groups (e.g., a regional rival or the global unipole).

The state's decision which strategy to choose is linked to contextual and subjective criteria that vary across cases: It depends on the state's national role conception – it's "rightful place" in the multi-dimensional international hierarchy (e.g., defining itself as a great power or regional security provider). It also depends on the dynamics of the regional and international status hierarchy and the state's relative position within it – based on the perception of the policymakers themselves and that of the others. Further, it depends on the compatibility of desired status and that of what a state believes to be perceived by others.

For example, while rising powers tend to be underachievers in the international security status dimension because their perceived status lacks behind their ambition, established declining powers are often status overachievers because their relative capabilities cannot match their high rank in the status hierarchy, lingering from a time when they were able to institutionalize their status, for example by membership in the UN Security Council. Being underachievers may lead rising states to become more assertive in their status demands – but only if they are dissatisfied: as game theory suggests, states making steady gains in power tend to postpone their status demands, while those that perceive themselves to have stopped accumulating power will be more assertive in their status demands, insisting compensation for their rise (Chan 2015: 6). Such dynamics are central in foreign policy making, yet they remain subjective and thus relatively unpredictable.

Based on SIT and the study of status competition in international relations, the following list provides an overview of the three basic strategies, its indicators, and the conditions under which they occur.

1. Social mobility: identifying with a higher status group, which requires the compatibility of values with the higher status group and social permeability.
    a. Status signals are the imitation of the dominant states' values and ideology, as well as adopting the goal of joining the higher status group's agenda (e.g., joining liberal trade regimes).
    b. Most likely if a higher status group is permeable (such as the West after the end of the Cold War, allowing former Soviet states to join prestige clubs) and if it pronounces clear standards of what level of capabilities is sufficient and what kind of behavior is desired for entry.
2. Social conflict: challenging another group's claim to superiority; "making efforts to outdo the rival state in its area of strength – usually geopolitical power" (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 39).
    a. Status signals are military assertiveness (e.g., demonstration of force, arms race, small wars) and rivalry over spheres of influences with the purpose of affecting others' perceptions of the status hierarchy, rather than to enhance security. States may also act as spoilers to prove their influence in world politics even if they have no realistic possibility of successfully challenging the higher status group, such as North Korea vis-à-vis the US (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 73).
    b. Most likely if states experience narrow status gaps and if status is uncertain (see: "status dilemma", Wohlforth 2014). Also likely if rising powers perceive higher ranked powers' institutions to act as barriers to their rise (Larson et al. 2014: 25).
3. Social creativity: redefining dimensions that define status towards those in which they excel by "(1) reevaluating the meaning of a negative characteristic, or (2) finding a new dimension in which their group is superior" (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 73). Instead of changing the hierarchy, the state

aims to achieve a higher place in a different ranking system. States may also compare themselves to other low-status groups to highlight themselves positively (Stolte 2015: 34).

a. Status signals are the creation and promotion of new norms and institutions, the development of distinct agendas, and the emphasis on the country's unique contribution to the international community and its distinct identity. This often goes hand in hand with charismatic leaders who establish a high diplomatic profile (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 75).
b. Most likely if the status hierarchy seems legitimate and stable, but the improvement of status by joining existing clubs seems unfeasible because of the club's criteria (e.g., belonging to the West). Higher ranked states are more receptive to granting status to states engaging in social creativity because the new status dimensions do not directly dilute existing ones. But Wohlforth (2009: 55) adds that sufficient material capabilities are necessary to convince other powers of the states' higher status on a different scale, which introduces material considerations into the ideational sphere of status design (e.g., Israel could not maintain the status as protector of the Jews if it did not have the capabilities to protect them).

In order to determine whether a signal (rhetoric, diplomatic activity, membership in elite clubs, or acquisition of status symbols) was aimed at enhancing status, rather than security, the study will apply the following three conditions, based on Xiaoyu Pu's and Schweller's (2014: 151) hypothesis for determining whether conspicuous consumption was motivated by the primary goal of satisfying ideational needs:

- Domestic support for a potential status signal shall be positively correlated with increasing economic might, rather than countering security threats;
- the status signal is not the most cost-effective way to deal with a security threat;
- official discourse will highlight the connection between the potential status signal and status.

It should be added that "a state's disproportionate reaction to perceived humiliations are often intended to restore status or dignity" (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 69). Therefore, anger should be considered an indirect signal for dissatisfaction that potentially leads to a more assertive status strategy.

In addition to testing the validity of status signals, one can classify their importance as "big S" and "small s" for reasons of interpretation. William R. Thompson (2014: 220) explains that "big S" matters relate to fundamental questions of status hierarchy, such as questions about becoming great powers and major fluctuations in the hierarchy, whereas "small s" issues are about "less earth-shaking manifestations", such as which negotiators enter room first and who spends more on what. "Small s" matter more when "big S" transitions occur. Considering whether a state's actions falls into the categories of "big S" or "small s" will help to evaluate whether a state's policy towards NATO is a fundamental part of its status strategy or simply a side effect.

State behavior towards NATO should also be considered in the context of different signaling audiences because they may have conflicting perceptions of the Alliance. While affiliation with the organization can be considered a status symbol in international security, working with NATO may undermine domestic legitimacy because it may be perceived as having become corrupted by American influence. Partnership status provides recognition by a highly ranked club for being a valuable contributor to international security, and similar to the MNNA status granted by the US directly, it confers the "image of a stable, predictable country which [is] now fully integrated into the Western structures" (Merke 2011: 194). Therefore, the analysis will include various levels audiences, their notion of NATO, and how they fit into a state's status strategies.

Pu and Schweller (2014: 145) point out that status signals are received by multiple audiences, and that domestic expectations often outweigh international forces because leaders aim to signal status in order to legitimize their rule and "sell" the acquisition of expensive status signals as investments to join the "right" club. Especially rising powers may be inward-looking to avoid taking international responsibilities in order to sustain

their growth (Pu/Schweller 2014: 141), engaging in status signaling to please domestic factions rather than confront external powers. Therefore, questions about status signaling, such as the acquisition of space programs, nuclear weapons, and aircraft carriers should be considered in the context in which they are raised.

Similarly, as the study will also take into consideration that states may apply several status strategies in the international arena at once, it will be recognized that affiliation with NATO can send different signals to various actors on the regional and international levels. Larson and Shevchenko (2014: 42) explain that a state's strategy can be driven by "different set[s] of causal dynamics". Therefore, a state may be involved in a regional arms race related to status competition with a neighbor, while imitating the international unipole's values and ideology in order to be accepted into a prestige club on the international stage.

It is clear that "[t]he desire for enhanced status can be quite essential in shaping a state's foreign policy", as Larson et al. (2014: 25) argue. Unlike threats and interests, however, status competition is a quintessential intervening variable because a status strategy is shaped by subjective factors at the unit level. Intervening variables usually either assess a state's motivation (perception and identity) or a state's ability to pursue a specific policy (state structure and domestic competition) (Lindemann 2014: 38); in regards to this study's research question, the state's motivation for their NATO policy. The motivation depends on the policymakers' conception of their state's identity and perceived place within the international status hierarchy, "act[ing] as transmission belts that channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces" (Romanova 2006: 6). Thus, based on the neoclassical ontology, a state's status strategy should be applied as an intervening variable that deflects system level influence to solve the puzzle of why states neglect rational choices based on traditional realist alliance theories.

Status competition can affect state responses towards threats because the ideational nature of status adds threat dimensions apart from physical security. For example, Israel engages in protecting Jews worldwide through risky intelligence operations even though

the threat of Jews abroad can hardly be linked to the physical security of the Israeli state. Rather, Israel aims to protect its status as the protector of Jews worldwide, which in turn redefines threats in the eyes of Israeli policymakers.

The hunger for status can also add to or alter the notion of physical threat, for example by linking ideational factors to the idea of sovereignty. NATO's physical threat to Russia may be exacerbated by the perceived threat to Moscow's status as the prevalent power in the post-Soviet space as a result of NATO and EU expansion. While it is not the aim of this study to prove this claim, it just serves as an illustration of how status may affect the influence of system-level forces on foreign policy.

Status competition is linked even closer to the definition of interests according to Schweller (1998: 24), who explains that revisionist states are driven by the distribution of spoils, such as prestige, resources, and decision-making mechanisms. This means that the factor status competition will be especially important in influencing states' definitions of their interests and the willingness to pay for defending or extending them by engaging in status strategies as a component of their foreign policy strategy.

For example, a state might be able to benefit materially by bandwagoning with the status-quo side to maximize its profit based on the current world order, but it chooses to oppose the status-quo alliance instead as a means to further its status, engaging in a social conflict or social creativity strategy. It could be argued that this was the case when emerging powers formed coalitions to challenge current international financial institutions to expand their prestige even though their own liquidity is questionable at best; and it could explain why others challenge the outdated setup of the UN Security Council even though they might not be prepared or able to take on more responsibilities in international security. In such cases, status competition may even override material realities and security interests.

4.2. Empirical approach

4.2.1. Qualitative case study methodology

The study will rely on qualitative case studies to investigate the effects of contextual variables across cases, thereby serving as "vehicles for constructing and supporting broader theoretical generalizations" (Levy 2008: 4). Case studies are especially suitable for this dissertation's theoretical approach because they "enjoy a natural advantage in research of an exploratory nature" (Gerring 2006: 39). Rose (1998: 153) would agree because "neoclassical realism stresses the role played by both independent and intervening variables, [carrying] a distinct methodological preference – for theoretically informed narratives, ideally supplemented by explicit counterfactual analysis, that trace the ways different factors combine to yield particular foreign policies". As Rynning and Ringsmose (2008: 34) put it, "Neoclassical Realists, like all Classical Realists, believe that the world is out there (and thus can be explained) but also that it changes (and thus that our explanations must change). Neoclassical Realists are therefore inclined to use case studies and make limited causal claims." Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro also underline that neoclassical realism is suitable for deductive theorizing, testing competitive hypotheses by applying qualitative methods.

Analyzing cases qualitatively will help explaining the contextual phenomena of policy formation because they can provide a holistic account of complex connectional factors (i.e., threat perception, interests, and status competition) over time; as Maria Behrens and Eike Henning explain, qualitative research allows for comprehensive description of a matter in order to derive explanatory factors, as this study intends to do. Qualitative methods also allow applying counterfactual analysis, which serves particularly well to test theories, as explained above. Offered by David Hume as one of the two options to analyze event causation, counterfactual analysis puts the different variables into relation to each other. In its simplest form, it means that "event c caused event e" implying that "e depended counterfactually on c […] that is, that if c had not occurred, e would not have occurred" (Bennett 1987: 368).

Noel Hendrickson (2008) laid out the process of counterfactual reasoning for national security analysis, which can neatly be applied to the basis of neoclassical realism:

> "The process of counterfactual reasoning has three stages. […] First, one must establish the particular way in which the alternate possibility comes to be (i.e., develop its 'back-story'). Second, one must evaluate the events that occur between the time of the alternate possibility and the time for which one is considering its consequences. And third, one must examine the possible consequences of the alternate possibility's back-story and the events that follow it."

Applying this process to this study's research design: First, one must link a dependent variable (foreign policy) to an independent variable (system-level trigger of state behavior) and intervening variable (unit-level filter of system-level factors) by applying a specific theory. Second, one must track links between the independent and dependent variable, and evaluate the possible impact of a predetermined intervening variable on the dependent variable. And third, one must conclude how this confirms or alters the theory applied in step one, which should be used to draw conclusions on the specific case (e.g., relations with NATO). Thereby, cases will help determine causal mechanisms of policy formation towards NATO as aimed by this study.

David Collier (2011: 827) argues that the best evidence for causal inference are doubly decisive tests because they meet both the necessary and sufficient criteria by confirming one hypothesis and eliminating all others. He refers to Bennett who argues that a single test to accomplish double decisiveness is rare in social science. As the research question may be answered by a seemingly unlimited number of answers (variables that affect states' NATO policy), it would also be unfeasible to expect to eliminate all but one possible variable through a combination of tests.

Therefore, counterfactual analysis aims to test only three variables (i.e., threat perception, interests, and status competition) based on theory-guided case studies "structured by a well-developed conceptual framework that focuses attention on some theoretically

specified aspects of reality and neglects others" (Levy 2008: 4). Thereby, the analysis follows the method of quantitative comparative analysis, "compar[ing] the configurations of different case studies to identify the components that appear to be most responsible for producing specific outcomes" (Goodrick 2014: ii).

By doing so, the research also implicitly relies on process tracing: "uncovering traces of a hypothesized causal mechanism within the context of a historical case or cases" (Bennett/Elman 2006: 459). Similarly, a UNICEF Research Methodological Brief describes the method as a "case-based approach to causal inference which involves developing alternative hypotheses and then gathering evidence (clues) within a case to determine whether or not these are compatible with the available hypotheses" (Goodrick 2014: ii). Beyond the ability to investigate causation, Jack S. Levy (2008: 11) points to the advantage of process tracing in analyzing contextual "decision making at the individual, small group, and organizational levels, including the analysis of leaders' perceptions, judgments, preferences, internal decision-making environment, and choices".

Including these dimensions also helps explaining causation (Bennett/Elman 2006: 463) and determining historical phenomena that affect policymaking, such as shocks, as well as systemic and unit-level alterations (e.g., shifting global power configurations or local elections). As Paul Pierson (2004: 17-18) argues:

> "[L]arge consequences may result from relatively 'small' or contingent events; particular courses of action, once introduced, can be virtually impossible to reverse; and, consequently, political development is often punctuated by critical moments or junctures that shape the basic contours of social life."

Thereby, considering cases over time can help determine path dependencies that may impact states' posture towards NATO.

Given that process tracing serves to help to compare recurring evidence across states by carefully describing how specific variables within the individual cases alter, it is also necessary to limit these descriptions in a clearly defined and applicable timeframe.

Therefore, the study of NATO's global relationships shall be limited to the timeframe of September 11th, 2001 ("9/11") until the 2016 Warsaw Summit because these roughly fifteen years provide a feasible timeframe in NATO's recent development as a globally engaged actor. During this time, NATO devoted increasing attention beyond its already established regional partnership frameworks and traditional US alliances in Asia. After 2001, NATO engaged in its largest missions outside of Europe, such as in Afghanistan, Libya, and at the Horn of Africa, that have been a reason for criticism for some and an opportunity to engage with the Alliance for others. In addition, the timeframe entails the run-up and the adoption of NATO's latest Strategic Concept that includes cooperative security as a focus, as well as the reform of the Alliance's approach to partnerships.

It is noteworthy that the timeframe mentioned above shall limit the analysis of the relationships between NATO and selected case states, but that foreign policy analysis of the selected states may entail historical influences (i.e., path dependencies) with a profound impact on the state's threat perception, interests in the international system, and status aspirations, resulting from shocks such as independence, regime change, and wars before 9/11.

4.2.2. Data collection, analysis, and limitations

The case study will mainly rely on document analysis to extract data relevant for evaluating the variables defined above. This research method serves well to conduct case studies as it helps to produce a rich understanding of the factors that shape states' foreign policy. Therefore, documents shall include a diverse collection of primary sources, such as official statements and papers, data on defense and economics, as well as secondary sources, such as foreign policy analyses, academic journals, and news reports. These documents shall mainly determine the context in which states evaluate and chose their foreign policy options.

Where applicable, the study will include quantitative data because the "boundary between qualitative and quantitative should not be rigid" (Collier 2011: 825). The Encyclopedia of Case Study Research explains that qualitative comparative case studies "mix numerical and word forms of reporting in an effort to combine generalization and uniqueness" (Mills et al. 2010: 111). By merging qualitative and quantitative research, "comparative case studies not only assess general causal relationships but also have the ability to generate in-depth, contextual understanding" (2010: 111).

The document analysis shall be validated and complemented by semi-structured interviews with government officials and experts, such as academics and leading journalists. These sources shall help determine details of a country's relationship with NATO and the policymaking process towards the Alliance. The interviewees' sophisticated judgments will also be crucial to determining the country's threat perception, attitude towards the status quo, and status concerns by gaining insights into motivation for policy, cost-benefit considerations, and internal disputes (Behrens/Henning 2010: 247).

As Glenn Bowen (2009: 28) remarks, a "qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence; that is, to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods". This approach to data collection is commonly used in articles that compare phenomena across cases, published in leading academic journals of international relations, such as *International Security* and *World Politics*.

The wealth of data available poses the challenge of selection bias because it is not always obvious which document is important, which news report is politically motivated, and which interviewee is biased. In addition, officials send different messages to different audiences at different times (Wohlforth 2014: 115). Therefore, the research will draw on findings of diverse sources and evaluate the potential of biases in specific ones, thereby reducing the impact of selection bias.

For example, one cannot rely on a clearly defined source to judge the ideational and fuzzy concept of status perception in its contextual and multi-dimensional nature. Thus there is a need for holistic judgment, considering several perspectives, and including as many sources as necessary to determine the variable based on its definition and indicators guided by the theory's ontological basis.

Combining sources will also challenge the comparability of data across cases. Therefore, the study aims to draw on an even share of similar sources among the states, including foreign policy doctrines, academic analyses, as well as interviews with government officials and foreign policy experts, while recognizing that it is not feasible to account for exact comparability of documents and human sources. It is simply not feasible to compare all interviews as the interviewees may differ in rank, political affiliation, and mood in which they conduct the interview. Therefore, it is important to judge the validity of the sources, for example whether a government paper or a policymaker's statement expresses the real intentions of a state's policy by comparing their content with the actual state behavior.

The study aims to apply a systematic procedure for analyzing the cases:

1. Exploring the country's context in the international system, including its role in the region and its self-conception;
2. tracing the country's foreign policy development and its relations with NATO, including the internal policymaking process of establishing a policy towards the Alliance, during the course of the case study time frame;
3. gathering data to evaluate the defined variables (threat perception, interest in status quo/revisionism, and status strategy);
4. comparing the state's actual behavior towards NATO with the predictions derived from the alliance theory based on defined variables.

Following this approach, the cases commence with a policy-orientated description that serves as the basis for the theory-oriented analysis and the conclusions about the theory's applicability. Therefore, it is necessary to use some of the data repeatedly throughout the

studies (descriptive part: government followed policy x → analytic part: policy x serves or does not serve to explain the state's alliance behavior towards NATO based on the theories to be tested in this study).

This format serves to compare the theoretical results across cases, thereby drawing conclusions about state behavior towards NATO and factors to predict alliance formation. Because not all variables underlie a clear-cut definition with necessary and sufficient conditions to infer state behavior, it remains in the judgment of the study to determine the variables based on respected theories and a defined ontological background.

Given the discussion of the comparability of data to determine variables aimed at explaining broader phenomena, one can grasp the challenges of developing and verifying normative alliance theories. The leading philosopher Sir Karl Popper illustrates that the predictability ranges on a spectrum from clocks to clouds, where clocks represent predictability guided by rationality, whereas clouds represent unpredictability guided by the freedom of men. Because social sciences are subject to the freedom of men, they cannot reach the clock-like degree of deterministic hard sciences. In other words, social sciences are inherently more probabilistic, or "cloudy" (see: Almond/Glenco 1977).

Nevertheless, as part of a broader goal in the social sciences, the field of international relations has been aiming to become more scientific, shifting towards the clocks. Especially the proponents of neorealism have attempted to build a scientific theory of international relations in which systemic forces govern units, producing predictable actions based on the verifiable distribution of material capabilities within the system. This makes sense within the neorealist ontology that fully disregards the influence of human beings on state behavior. However, as Popper explains, utilizing "models of explanations appropriate to the physical sciences will not enable us to come to grips with human and cultural phenomena, and that while we can increase our understanding of them, we cannot explain them fully because of their creative and emergent properties" (Almond/Glenco 1977: 492).

Because this study recognizes the effects of human actions on state behavior, the research relies on neoclassical realism – a refinement of neorealism – in which the systemic forces are filtered at the unit level. Thus, the predictability of actions based on systemic forces is influenced by the freedom of men, including non-predictable and hardly quantifiable ideational components, making the data collection and analysis somewhat cloudy, and producing a probabilistic theory, rather than a bulletproof one. In this sense, alliance theories are no more or less scientific than the vast majority of theories of social sciences that can hardly set the standards for necessary and sufficient conditions for single variables to cause a specific outcome (George/Bennett 2005: 157). Therefore, even if this study is too "cloudy" to pass the criteria of the hard sciences, the results of this dissertation nevertheless represent a very valuable contribution to the body of knowledge within the study of international relations.

4.3. Case selection

4.3.1. Case selection criteria

Given the research design and theoretical basis, the case selection relies on selection criteria that aim to establish standards for valuable and feasible cross-case comparison, applicable to infer a theory on state behavior towards NATO based on the principles of Stephen Van Evera's *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (1997: 77-88):

- Nature of cases: Because the realist ontology is mainly concerned with states and because NATO only enters into formal relations with other states or international organizations comprised of states, the cases should only include sovereign states: those who have a permanent population, a defined territory, government, and capacity to enter into relations with the other states (See: Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States 1933, Carbone/Schiano di Pepe 2009). Their governments shall also be recognized by the international community and have sovereignty over the formulation and implementation of their foreign policy.

- To maintain the focus on states, the cases should be situated in a region with a state-centric paradigm, meaning that the regional security relations are governed by the states rather than authorities on the unit or international level. For example, European states are very influenced by Kantian ideas having transferred sovereignty to the EU as a supranational body guided by collective security interests (unlike NATO that is a multilateral organization, an alliance of states). However, the security relations between states of the Middle East are vastly influenced by non-state actors, taking part in political decision making (e.g., Hezbollah) and even in governing territory (e.g., the Kurds, the Houthi movement, and the "Islamic State"). Thus, to exclude influences of international governance and trans-national groups, the study aims to focus on states in state-centric regions that feature high degrees of centralization of foreign policy authorities within governments, strong sentiments of national sovereignty, and weak regional security alliances.

- Valuable insights beyond Europe: Rather than selecting cases consciously to confirm a specific phenomenon, this study aims to discover novel takeaways to test existing theories. Therefore, the research shall not focus on cases that have already been studied extensively (e.g., NATO-Russia relations). To exclude states whose relations with NATO can be traced back to special relationships with the US as the main NATO ally or Russia as a historic (and arguably present) rival of NATO, the cases shall also not include major non-NATO allies (MNNAs) of the US or states that have a mutual defense treaty with Washington, as well as states that have been part of the Soviet Union[14]. By excluding these states, the thesis aims to focus on the study variables (threats, interests, and status strategy), rather than on relic influences of the Cold War.

[14] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

- Breath and depth of the case studies: The study shall consider two cases to ensure enough level of depth while maintaining a standard of comparability. After all, the experimental nature of case studies can be better applied by examining a small number of similar cases containing a deep foreign policy analysis, than by a large number of heterogeneous ones (Gerring 2006: 12). The two cases should offer enough access to sources defined above in order to ensure proper determination of the variables.

- Comparability: Applying John Stuart Mill's Method of Difference, the cases need to provide different values for the dependent variable because this helps to gain "detailed knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation" (Collier et al. 2004: 87). In particular, the study shall consider cases with extreme values on both ends of the spectrum – a NATO partner ("a supporter") and one that actively positions itself again the Alliance ("a denouncer").

Given the inherent problems in the social sciences explained above, the case selection poses challenges for reasons of comparability and completeness, which the selection criteria aim to mitigate. For example, while the small number of cases and variables may limit the development of a bulletproof theory, comparing three comprehensive variables shall be sufficient to verify or improve existing alliance theories without aiming to build a novel grand theory of state behavior. While the selection for extreme values on the dependent variable would ideally entail completely similar states that differ only in a single variable that constitutes a necessary or sufficient condition for a specific state behavior, the study diminishes the natural differences between states by selecting cases that at least share a democratic tradition and regional geopolitical concerns – two major variables in the theories of international relations. By following the guidelines above and recognizing the challenges of scientific research in the social sciences, the dissertation will go on to select the two cases that will shed light on the puzzle of why some states aim to cooperate with NATO while others position themselves against the Alliance.

4.3.2. Case states

	Supporter of NATO	Denouncer of NATO
Region	Case State 1	Case State 2

The case studies will include two states, one of which supports NATO and another one that denounces the Alliance. These states shall be situated in a region that fits the state-centric paradigm while containing at least one official NATO partner and one state that has demonstrated criticism of NATO's existence or continuous rejection of its missions (see: "4.1.1. Defining the dependent variable: support or denouncement of NATO").

Before defining applicable geographical areas for the case state selection, one needs to recognize that there is no agreed upon definition of what constitutes a "region" given the diverse geographical and identity aspects that unite and separate countries from each other, leading to plentiful sources and references, from UN classification to regional soccer championships. Even within continents, cultural lines blur regional affiliation, especially if countries are situated between empires or if they stretch out to include several civilizations. For example, is Russia solely a European country considering its mixed ethnic population and geographical reach throughout Asia? Should one weigh political over geographical considerations, such as grouping countries as "Western" or "Global South"? When aiming to classify a region within to the America, should one consider all of Latin America or only South America that leaves out Central America?

Because aiming to develop a scheme to group countries into regional blocks by applying scientific criteria would go beyond the aims of this dissertation, this study will go forward applying the simplest definition of regions, considering the most commonly accepted definition of continents in order to select cases under the given criteria. As the CIA World Factbook (2016) recognizes, "[t]he most common classification recognizes seven [continents], which are (from largest to smallest): Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, and Australia". The following table will take the seven continents into consideration:

Continent	Relevance for this research design
Africa	Applicable because mainly state-centric and contains NATO supporters/denouncers.
Antarctica	N/A because continent contains no states.
Asia	Applicable because mainly state-centric and contains NATO supporters/denouncers.
Australia	N/A because continent only contains NATO partners.
Europe	N/A because Europe includes many NATO members. Other states are historically neutral or tend to base their NATO policy on Russia.
North America	N/A because the US and Canada are parts of NATO, while Central American and Caribbean states are vastly influenced by the US.
South America	Applicable because mainly state-centric and contains NATO supporters/denouncers.

Of the three candidate continents, Africa stands out as the least applicable one. Powerful non-state actors, ranging from Boko Haram to Al-Shabaab, challenge the sovereignty of states to effectively govern their own territory. In addition, African governments tend to be very unstable themselves. The Fragile States Index – formerly the Failed States Index based on key political, social, and economic indicators – ranks six African countries among the eight most fragile states with very high alert (The Fund for Peace 2016).[15] Africa is also the most undemocratic continent, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (2015) that assembles data to assess pluralism, civil liberties, and political culture, ranking Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa (and the Middle East) as the least democratic regions in the Democracy Index.

This is not to say that one could not identify two sovereign democracies that support and denounce NATO, but that the continent's continuous instability – leading to shifts in power with changing political objectives – makes it less suitable for the determination of

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[15] Somalia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Sudan, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo – among Yemen and Syria.

variables that require refined diplomatic positions. In addition, the relations between NATO and Africa have been studied extensively because many North African countries have been part of NATO's partnership programs since 1994, and because NATO itself has been carrying out several operations in and around Africa.

More suitable for the study are South America and Asia as they fulfill the criteria above: the regions' countries do not only rank highly when it comes to democracy – place three and four after North America and Europe (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2015) – they also display strong sentiments of national sovereignty. However, given that Asia already contains most of NATO's global partners (including traditional US allies such as Japan and South Korea, as well as more recent ones such as Mongolia), and that NATO has deployed missions to the region (most notably to Afghanistan), the Alliance's relations with Asia have also been subject to extensive studies.

South America stands out as an almost blank area in the fields of NATO's cooperative security engagement, absent from most of the policy debates and from the plethora of studies on NATO's external relations. The continent also makes for a suitable case study region because it is shaped by a strong state-centric perspective, developed through the central states' roles in the construction of nationhood, and cemented through institutions and development projects (Herz 2010: 608). Diamint (2004: 46) points out that despite the low degree of "interstate conflict, old geopolitical tensions persist, and domestic authorities often look at their neighbors as potential enemies, demonstrating a realist approach". Unlike in the EU, for example, where competencies are often blurred between the state and EU levels, regional organizations such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) hardly feature authorizations to interfere in countries' sovereign rights to manage their security, let alone interfere in national defense policy. Foreign policymaking is also very centralized within the government, which is underlined by clearly defined doctrines and foreign policy traditions rooted in the states' place within the regional order.

Therefore, the case studies will focus on two South American states, recognized by the

UN, sovereign in its foreign policy decision making, scoring in the categories of flawed or full democracy according to the Democracy Index, neither post-Soviet nor a major non-NATO ally of the US (or one with a mutual defense treaty), with clear positions to support or denounce NATO, and sufficient access to sources to define the variables threats, interests in the status quo or revisionism, and status strategy.

1. Brazil: a flawed democracy according to the Democracy Index, with foreign policy competencies centered in the capital Brasília, featuring a love-hate relationship with the US without major influence of Russia, displaying a transparent and accessible government that serves as a source for gathering information on NATO policy with a clearly defined position against the Alliance (denouncement of the organization's legitimacy and continued opposition to its missions).

2. Colombia: a flawed democracy according to the Democracy Index, with foreign policy competencies centered in the capital Bogotá (despite continued lack of sovereignty over parts of its territory), a traditional ally of the US (but without an MNNA status and not bound by a mutual defense treaty) without major influence of Russia, displaying a transparent and accessible government that serves as a source for gathering information on NATO policy with a clearly defined position to support the Alliance as an official global partner.

The study recognizes that further states may fit the case selection criteria, but Brazil and Colombia have demonstrated a decisive and consistent policy towards NATO. On the side of the supporters, one may note that Argentina and Chile have supported the Alliance in the 1990s in the Balkans, but they have not sought rapprochement after 9/11. In contrast, Colombia has established its aim to advance the partnership with NATO as a core part of its foreign and defense strategy in the course of the case study timeframe.

South America also features more NATO critics than just Brazil, but unlike sporadic criticism from Bolivia and Ecuador, Brasília has displayed a particularly vocal and stable opposition to the Alliance's international engagement. The case of Brazil also offers a

relevant study for understanding positions of an emerging economy and a leader of the Global South.

4.4. Assumptions

This section clarifies further assumptions that will be important for applying the alliance theories in the case studies.

4.4.1. Defining alliances

Because this thesis is concerned with alliance theories, it is worth establishing a basis by considering distinct natures of cooperation, specifically the differences between "alignments" and "alliances". Both terms stem from French, where alignment originates from *aligner* ("to range things into a line") and alliance is derived from *allier* ("to combine") (Chidley 2014: 147). Thus, alignment indicates coordination of policy whereas alliance connotes unity of states, such as a mutual defense commitment.

Alignment can be regarded as a multifaceted umbrella concept that entails more than mutual defense and security. According to Glenn Snyder (1991), it refers to any position that is aligned against (negative alignments) or aligned with something (positive alignments). He argues that alliances strengthen preexisting alignments by adding more defined and obligatory elements to the relationship. Michael D. Ward (1982: 7) similarly argues that alignments are "political, economic, military and cultural spheres [that] present a multifaceted sculpture of national and supranational postures". Thus, many relatively recent multinational groupings fall into the category of alignments: the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa), the New Asian–African Strategic Partnership (NAASP), the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), among many more (Chidley 2014).

A distinction between alignments and alliances can only be drawn if scholars allow for different degrees of cooperation between states. Given that realists maintain a narrow

definition of cooperation mainly based on security aspects (especially neorealists), they dismiss a distinction between alliances and alignments, and instead use the terms interchangeably. For example, Walt (2009: 68) states that "balancing is defined as *allying* with others against the prevailing threat; bandwagoning refers to *alignment* with the source of danger [emphasis added]". Although Schweller (1994: 79) considers inter-state relations beyond aspects of security, he also mixes the terms "alliance" and "alignment": "balance-of-threat theory is designed to consider only cases in which the goal of *alignment* is security, and so it systematically excludes *alliances* driven by profit [emphasis added]".

While "alliance" and "alignment" differ in terms of scope and intensity (alliances being narrower with a focus on security, but deeper because of reciprocal defense commitments), leading realist scholars simplify the concept of cooperation for the sake of theoretical applicability, leaving out ranges of cooperation, and simply follow the common definition that alliances are "formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between at least two sovereign states" (Masala/Scheffler Corvaja 2016: 349).

Given that this dissertation aims to apply alliance theories created by the scholars mentioned above, this study will not distinguish between alignment and alliance either, assuming that the NATO supporters ally with NATO and that the denouncers of NATO may ally against the Alliance. Further theoretical distinctions to define the nature of cooperation will be made in the individual case studies (e.g., by applying concepts of "soft balancing" or "bandwagoning for profit").

4.4.2. Today's unipolar world and its effects on state behavior

As this study aims to apply structural theories, it is necessary to frame the international order by clarifying the arrangements of the units according to their material capabilities. As explained in the theoretical foundations, the structure of the system does not only affect system stability, but also state behavior because it influences states' threat assessments, their interests in the status quo or revisionism, and their status strategies.

Relying on the "widespread agreement […] that any plausible index aggravating the relevant dimensions of state capabilities would place the United States in a separate class by a large margin" (Ikenberry et al. 2009: 6), this dissertation relies on the assumption that the international system during the applicable timeframe from "9/11" until the 2016 Warsaw Summit has been shaped by a unipolar structure in which one state "(1) commands an especially large share of the resources or capabilities states can use to achieve their ends and […] (2) excels in all the component elements of state capability, conventionally defied as size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capacity, military might, and organizational-institutional competence" (Ikenberry et al. 2009: 4). As Nuno P. Monteiro (2011: 9) highlights:

> "Since the collapse of the Soviet Union more than two decades ago, the United States has been the world's sole great power. It maintains a military that is one order of magnitude more powerful than any other; defense spending close to half of global military expenditures; a blue-water navy superior to all others combined; a chance at a splendid nuclear first strike over its erstwhile foe, Russia; a defense research and development budget that is 80 percent of the total defense expenditures of its most obvious future competitor, China; and unmatched global power-projection capabilities. The post–Cold War international system is thus unipolar."

Though "[u]nipolarity brings the international system closer to the domestic one in distancing it from anarchy and enabling the emergence of justice, law, and morality" (Jervis 2009: 196), anarchy does prevail, making unipolarity different from hegemony, which refers to a political relationship that does not quite capture today's world order in which power is concentrated within one pole, but the unipole cannot "control the external behavior of all other states" (Monteiro 2011: 13).

Naturally, states put great focus on the nature of the unipole. As Walt (2009: 120) explains: "It matters who the unipole is, where it is located and how it chooses to use its

power". Therefore, unipolarity shapes states' threat perceptions, interests in the status quo and revisionism, and status concerns, as laid out in the following sections.

4.4.2.1. Unipolarity and its impact on threat perceptions

States tend to be especially sensitive to the unipole's actions. Pape (2005: 15) explains that "the threshold for what counts as an 'aggressive' intention by a unipolar leader is lower than for major powers in a multipolar world because its capability to become a global hegemon is given". Depending on the perceived threat of the unipole, states may choose to bandwagon with or balance against it. However, different than in a bipolar or multipolar system, it is not feasible to counter the unipole militarily for several reasons.

As Ikenberry, Mastanduno and Wohlforth (2009: 2) put it, "[o]ther states rival the United States in one area or another, but the multifaceted character of American power places it in a category of its own". The vast power difference and the strong concentration of power in different domains, from the management of the global economy to the command of the global commons, make it unfeasible to replace the US by a counter-balancing alliance. In addition, it would be very costly to organize a balancing alliance because states would have to give up policy autonomy and put themselves at risk of sanctions from the unipole. Because individual members of a balancing alliance tend to experience levels of threat differently, they may even "pass the buck", leading to a collective action problem. These factors lead states to refrain from hard balancing against Washington, a circumstance that Schweller (2004) would refer to as "underbalancing".

Instead, states have adopted soft-balancing strategies towards the US, and ultimately towards NATO. This study recognizes soft balancing as a strategy to counter NATO as a response to external security assessments based on Walt's Balance of Threat theory. In order to test whether threat is the appropriate variable to explain why states denounce NATO, the study will utilize Brooks' and Wohlforth's (2005: 83) criteria for categorizing state actions as soft balancing: "(1) they involve coordination among two or more states in areas directly related to security; (2) at least one great power, and in most cases several of them, are involved; and (3) they feature state actions that make it harder for

Washington to advance its foreign policy goals". The study will also consider aim, future orientation, and repetition as conditions for classifying actions as soft balancing (Friedman/Long 2015: 128-129).

In addition to constraining states from forming hard-balancing alliances against the unipole, the unipolar order also makes buck passing and chain-ganging alliances unlikely because the logic of buck passing and chain ganging barely applies in a unipolar setting: Different than under multipolarity, the unipolar order is relatively stable, mostly because hegemonic rivalry as a source of conflict is absent (Wohlforth 1999: 7). Therefore, states do not believe that their security is strongly intertwined, as they do under multipolarity that poses great uncertainties to states' security concerns.

Considering Walt's argument that the nature of the unipole is pivotal in the unipolar system, alliances form mostly as a response to the unipole, making alliances focusing on other threats less likely (Ikenberry et al. 2009: 20). Given that the US is in a very secure position (leading with a great power distance), and that it already provides collective goods to its allies (mostly security), it would be foolish for states to assume to be able to pass the buck (further security commitments) to the US or to hook it into a chain-gang (to enter a conflict where it has no stake). Simply speaking, Washington is not in need of allies that aim to exploit the US. The same holds true for NATO: The Alliance did not accept Georgia and Ukraine as members because it did not perceive the need to take on more security commitments from the post-Soviet states (buck passing) or to risk being drawn into a conflict with Russia (chain ganging).

Internally, NATO's institutional setup as a consensus-based organization makes it hard to drag other members into a conflict because all members have to agree on an operation and the contribution of military assets is voluntary. However, this makes it possible for members to free ride on other member's commitment to international security, most notably that of the US – as former US President Harry S. Truman famously declared, that the buck must stop somewhere.

Third states can also free ride on NATO's out-of-area engagement because the Alliance aims to provide security and stability as collective goods, such as the protection of the sea-lanes of communication. However, this shall not be equated with buck passing because the provision of collective goods is merely a side effect usually not affected by cooperation with third states. The evolvement of NATO's partnership policy to become a tool for gaining resources has proven that the Alliance demands somewhat equal payback from its partners.

In the context of this study, states may only buck-pass and chain-gang in the context of soft-balancing alliances against the US, where states utilize their denouncement of NATO as a means to support their strategy to restrain the Americans power. Hereby, a state may pass its soft-balancing responsibilities (e.g., territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, or binding) to another actor, or ropes other alliance partners into soft-balancing initiatives against NATO. Therefore, the study recognizes that individual states' rationale for entering into soft-balancing alliances against NATO in a unipolar order may underlie the logic of buck passing or chain ganging.

4.4.2.2. Unipolarity and its impact on interests in the status quo and revisionism

While unipolarity continues to restrain state behavior, the study also recognizes that the system has been undergoing slow change. As emerging economies have been growing faster than the US, the degree of unipolarity is slowly decreasing. Most notably, China has been recognized to catch up with the US on economic terms by the 2020s (though the US's military might will likely prevail for much longer) (Rauch 2016: 148), foreshowing a new bipolar order in the foreseeable future. In addition to the narrowing superpower disparity, further states have been rising disproportionately. The BRICS have showcased an astonishing boom in the 2000s, and new emerging markets from Mexico over Turkey to Indonesia have been cited to be the next frontrunners of economic growth among the emerging markets (Rachman 2015). Though some of them have been hampered by economic and political turmoil (e.g., Brazil and Turkey), they have been aiming to

establish a multipolar order or at least to upgrade their political role that recognizes their economic weight and regional leadership ambitions.

But one should not overestimate the impact of the slowly emerging bipolarity of the US and China as a central factor in states' cost-benefit analysis to formulate their interests in the status quo or revisionism based on bandwagoning for profit. This is because shifting relative material capabilities only have a limited impact on the distribution of status quo and revisionist states for two main reasons: First, the material capabilities of the unipole and its allies still far outweigh those of the rising and dissatisfied states (that may be classified as revisionist). As Rauch (2016: 148) recognizes:

> "The most important allies of the US can be found among the G7 powers, thus even if China could muster a 'coalition of the dissatisfied' including states like Russia, Iran or Venezuela, it would still be far behind the former for several decades. Even adding the rising powers of India and Brazil to the Chinese camp would not be enough to even the odds and reach parity […] A real power transition/ power parity constellation might thus be farther away than economic figures and trends would have us believe."

Second, it is not even recognized that China and other emerging economies are revisionist in nature. A better position in the current system may even strengthen their interest in the status quo because the international order would finally recognize their power. Thus, it would be imprudent to equate the shifting distribution of power (the slow establishment of new poles) with a similar shift in the distribution of status quo and revisionist states.

4.4.2.3. Unipolarity and its impact on status competition

In regards to status competition, unipolarity and the current system dynamics lead to a few assumptions for the case study: First of all, NATO is a high-status club in international security – a domain mostly ruled by great powers. The Alliance is an institutionalization of great power status as it was founded by great powers after WWII,

and was even able to elevate its status under unipolarity. The Alliance continues to be led by the global unipole and several major powers (e.g., the UK, France, and to an extent Germany, see: Volgy et al. 2014: 68[16]) whose political and economic system proved to be victorious by the end of the Cold War and whose economic and military capabilities exceed those of any other potential challenger today. Not surprisingly, NATO carries the notion of being the most powerful military alliance in history.

Through its ability to deploy forces across the world and coordinate them efficiently, NATO standards have become the benchmark for interoperability and the organization has gained gold status in modern multinational engagement. NATO has a waiting list of potential members and states around the world strive to become partners and affiliates, at least partly because they aim to associate with the Alliance to impress their population and prove their value to the international community.

While the causation between the listed qualities and NATO's status as a high-status club may be disputed on the basis of an actor's subjective status definition, this study assumes that NATO is the leading club in the hierarchy of international security, a dimension that matters a great deal for states that aim to become great powers or increase their standing in a regional power structure.

Therefore, acting from an assumed position of weakness – being ranked lower than NATO in the hierarchy of international security – states are expected to regard NATO as a reference group in the dimension of international security. Given the three possible status strategies, states may either aim for social mobility by affiliating with NATO, social competition by challenging NATO, or social creativity by reframing their relation with NATO or relating their relation with NATO to another status dimension. Therefore, striving to become a partner of NATO or openly denouncing the Alliance can be considered a status signal if it fulfills the criteria to determine whether a signal was aimed

[16] Volgy et al. (2014: 62) take into consideration three components for classifying a state as a great power: the opportunity to act as one though unusual capabilities, the willingness to act as one by utilizing these capabilities to pursue expansive and independent global foreign policies, and the attribution of status by other states.

at enhancing status, rather than security (see: “4.1.3. Defining the intervening variable: status competition”).

Because the decision which strategy to choose is linked to the possibility to be granted a higher status by joining an elite club, it should be noted that NATO is a not a very permeable organization for full membership. While the Alliance absorbed whole chunks of Europe through its post-Cold War enlargement rounds, NATO has become very selective of inviting new members, only granting Montenegro to join the Alliance in 2017. However, NATO is ready to work with and grant partnership status to relatively recent actors in international security, from Mongolia to Colombia, suggesting that the Alliance is willing to support social mobility (below the level of membership). Therefore, this study assumes that NATO allows for social mobility as a strategy because its (almost) closed door for membership is related to security concerns rather than to avoid diluting its status.

Further, this study also assumes that social competition as a strategy towards NATO is unlikely because of the significant status disparity between the unipole-led Alliance and all other powers. This is because “social competition aims at overtaking and surpassing the other state in its area of superiority”, but the “US military and technological superiority is overwhelming” (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 39, 42). Wohlforth (2009: 39) agrees that “status competition is unlikely in cases of clear hierarchies in which the relevant comparison out-groups for each actor are unambiguously dominant materially”. Therefore, states shall be expected to favor identifying with a higher status group that includes the unipole (social mobility) over challenging another group’s claim to superiority (social conflict).

However, especially rising states would be expected to redefine dimensions that determine status (social creativity) as they create parallel systems with different principles (Stünkel 2010: 7), thereby questioning an “international system dominated by the Western powers who in the aftermath of the Cold War have cultivated an in-group identity based on liberal democracy, free-market capitalism, and international

responsibility" (Wang 2009: 176). Social creativity also helps rising powers to manage fulfilling several criteria simultaneously in order to be accepted as a great power by different audiences in the international community. As Stolte (2015: 22) explains, "a Great Power aspirant faces the difficult task of satisfying the expectations of the leading Great Power for a high degree of compliance and proximity in foreign policy positions as well as the demands by the smaller powers for a self-determining foreign policy and a distinct contribution to the international order". Rising powers are not expected to engage in social mobility because "it implies a humiliating relationship of tutelage" (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 39). Therefore, social creativity would serve as an accommodating strategy, allowing for rising on the ranks of a different scale that does not challenge the higher-status group directly.

Despite the large obstacles to reach the level of great power status by challenging the unipole and its followers, states could of course chose to engage in a social competition strategy under two circumstances: either they feel confident to form a coalition respected enough to challenge the higher status group's place, being accepted as a possible successor within the social hierarchy of states (e.g., a China-led coalition of rising states); or they are such outliers that they do not see the possibility to advance their status by any other means than by spoiling the international system (e.g., North Korea). However, during the case study timeframe between 9/11 and 2016, the selected case states would not fall into the categories of either being serious competitors of the US or showing signs of being rogue states.

4.4.3. NATO as a status-quo alliance

Applying Schweller's Balance of Interests theory, the study assumes that status-quo states would aim to cooperate with NATO, while revisionist states would join a coalition of revisionist states that denounces the Alliance. One can make this conclusion because this study assumes that NATO is a status-quo alliance for several reasons:

First of all, the assessment that NATO is interested in upholding the status quo is mainly based on the US's interest in doing so. NATO is a security community (Jervis 2009: 201)

in which the US's relationship with other alliance members can be considered as hegemonic because – with the exception of some European states' reaction to the American unilateralism during the Bush Presidency – "the strong state [generally] leads with the consent of the smaller powers" (Masala/Scheffler Corvaja 2016: 349). This confirms Waltz's (2000: 20) belief that "international institutions are created and maintained by stronger states to serve their perceived or misperceived interests". Schweller (2001: 181) similarly notes that "NATO is no different from any other U.S.-led institution. They have all been designed to preserve and promote American primacy by (1) enabling the United States to project its preponderance of power more effectively than it otherwise could, and (2) discouraging secondary powers from pursuing independent policies or attempting to realize their potential power and become viable contenders for America's crown". He concludes: "Yes, [NATO] looks like a tool of American power and interests" (Schweller 2001: 186).

Thus, it is crucial to determine whether the US is a status quo or revisionist power; in other words, whether Washington pursues a predominantly defensive or offensive strategy. Some scholars argue that the US has adopted a rather offensive strategy in the light of its fight against global terrorism after 9/11: Jervis (2009) points out that the satisfaction of the leading state is not guaranteed, and that the US has no restraints but enormous capabilities in order to exploit its position by further expanding its power. A case in point was the Bush Doctrine that led to the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, also cited by Monteiro (2011: 31) as evidence that the US "adopted a strategy of offensive dominance in the Middle East".

However, one should assume that the US is a not interested in "large-scale conquest in an age of nuclear weapons and economic globalization" (Ikenberry et al. 2009: 12) and "[t]erritorial conquest, which is the most ambitious goal of an offensive-dominance strategy, […] a daunting task in an age of nationalism and is thus likely to be rare" (Monteiro 2011: 30). The Bush Doctrine – and NATO's Libya intervention – should rather be considered a deviation from the US strategy interests; a mistake that resulted from "second-image thinking [the belief that through expanding liberal internationalism,

the US can make the world more peaceful], which has always been more influential in the U.S. than in Europe" (Jervis 2009: 205).

In addition, it is recognized that "the unipole does not need to follow [only] one strateg[y] globally. It could pursue offensive dominance in one region, defensive dominance in another" (Monteiro 2011: 22). This means that the US may have actively revised Iraq's international alignment and decreased Baghdad's relative power, but that this very limited preemptive approach only served to uphold the status quo, which the US – a "lion" according to Schweller's analogy (see: "Figure 1") – naturally defends.

Lieber and Alexander (2005: 133) argue that the "U.S. grand strategy in the post-September 11 world […] is ambitious, assertive, and backed by tremendous offensive military capability. But it is also highly selective and not broadly threatening". They also believe that "U.S. policy in the war on terror must be placed in the larger context of U.S. foreign policy more generally. In matters of trade, bilateral and multilateral economic development assistance, environmental issues, economically driven immigration, and many other areas, U.S. policy was characterized by broad continuity before September 11, and it remains so today" (Lieber/Alexander 2005: 137). Not every revisionist action should therefore be equated with a state being predominantly interested in revising the distribution of material capabilities in the international order.

The assessment that US foreign policy stands in the tradition of a defensive strategy to uphold its unipolar position is supported by prospect theory that "argues that actors are prone to accept great risks when they believe they will suffer losses unless they act boldly" (Jervis 2009: 200). Therefore, it may be argued that the US adopted a preventive war doctrine in light of its relative decline in order to defend its position as the most powerful state. In this sense, this study takes a rather defensive stance, not following Mearsheimer's assumptions that all states always seek to expand their power, while recognizing that revisionism exists and is motivated by a state's dissatisfaction of its position in the international system and its aim to gain material benefits by revising the world order – arguably not the case for any NATO members.

Rather, "[a]s the system leader, the United States has the means and motive to maintain key security institutions in order to ease local security conflicts and limit expensive competition among the other major powers" (Wohlforth 1999: 8). In turn, the US opposes revisions to the status quo because they "decrease the benefits of systemic leadership and limit the unipole's ability to convert its relative power advantage into favorable outcomes" (Monteiro 2011: 26). NATO partnerships should therefore not be considered part of a forward deployment strategy to expand American power and influence, but rather that the "partnership mechanism was a way to extend the range of allies and potential allies in the event of future conflicts or the need to organize coalitions to manage threats" (Kay 2011: 19).

In a broader sense, the Alliance is comprised of states that have shaped or adapted the liberal Western world order as a byproduct of unipolarity. NATO as an organization itself is even considered to be a secondary institution that is vital to uphold the liberal world order (Flockhart 2014: 22). Therefore, both the intentions of the states and the resulting actions of the Alliance naturally defend the continuation of the liberal international system, which is in its member states' security interests as it supports the US's comfortable position as the unipole.

While assuming that NATO is a status-quo alliance, this study recognizes that the status quo is represented by more that one organization. Thus, denouncers of NATO may still support primary institutions (i.e., norms and values) and secondary institutions other than NATO (e.g., as the UN), and that their policy behavior towards the international liberal order may not be a result of their aim for upholding or radically revising the redistribution material power that shapes the status quo. Vice versa, even if emerging democratic powers supposedly support the UN, they may still be considered to be in the revisionist camp if they actively work for overthrowing the "rules of the game" and thereby aim for a drastic redistribution of power.

Comparing this logic to a firm, it is like distinguishing a radical labor union that aims to redistribute the power from the management to the workers (revisionist), from an eager

employee that challenges the current management by moving up the corporate level (status quo). In this analogy, NATO may be considered a club comprised of parts of the firm's management, some of its aspiring followers, and some of those employees who seek protection against threatening external actors of the anarchic society. What is important to take away is that NATO is a club aiming to uphold the current order, and that an actor should only be considered revisionist if it actually aims to revise the structure – not the hierarchy – of the system.

Whether the interest in the status quo or revisionism proves to be a factor that influences state behavior towards NATO will be subject to testing the Balance of Interests theory in a later stage of this dissertation.

5. The origins of Brazil's NATO policy

A country of continental size and a population of over 200 million, Brazil ranks as the fifth largest in the world in terms of territory and the sixth largest in terms of population. Among the ten biggest economies, a regional hegemon, a leader of the Global South, and a member of prestigious emerging countries clubs, Brazil has already taken on a prominent role in the international power structure and on the diplomatic stage. Especially under the Presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ("Lula"), Brazil managed to upgrade its image in international affairs through bold initiatives to prove Brasília's leadership potential.

After years of economic boom, *The Economist* featured a cover story in 2009 titled "Brazil takes off". It seemed that the time had come for the "country of the future" – as Stefan Zweig famously titled Brazil in 1942 – to turn its potential, ranging from the wealth of its multi-ethnic society to its oil and freshwater reserves, into power on the international stage.

But the devastating economic crisis of 2014-2017, coupled with falling commodity prices and the largest corruption scandal in modern history, revealed the country's structural problems, resulted in a vast political crisis that hurt Brazil's ability to fulfill its foreign policy vision, and led to the impeachment of Lula's successor President Dilma Rousseff ("Dilma").

This case study will start by discussing Brazil's identity, foreign policy principles, and foreign policy strategy between 2001 and 2016 based on official documents, historical evidence, and expert assessments. It will use these findings to evaluate Brazil's relations with NATO and the US, and to apply the alliance concepts defined in the theory section with the aim of determining the reasons behind Brasília's aversion to the Alliance. In doing so, the analysis will draw on some of the same data several times in order to define the three variables (threats, interest in the status quo or revisionism, and status strategy).

5.1. Brazil's place and role in the world

5.1.1. Brazil's self-conception

> "Brazil is a force for peace, stability and prosperity in its own region and beyond." – Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil, during her opening statement at the 66th UN General Assembly 2011

Brazil conceives itself as a unique nation, carrying identities of both a developing country and a global power, a country of the Global South and of the West. Oliver Stünkel (2010: 116) explains that "[t]his somewhat schizophrenic role is reflected in Brazil's international standing as a country that is torn between a developmentalist outlook, its ties to rich nations, and the ambition to become a global player".

Based on its identification as an American power, Brazil considers itself to be "the South American counterpart of the US" (Stolte 2015: 60). This comparison shows both Brazil's regional affiliation and the country's bold understanding of its role in the world as the regional hegemon. Brazil's self-conception both unites and separates the country from the rest of South America. Despite sharing a similar colonial history, experiences of military dictatorships, and the following processes of democratization, Iberian culture, Catholicism, as well as shared challenges from drugs to inequality, Brazil has a distinct language and culture that separates it from the Hispanic Republics. Until today, many Brazilians continue to perceive its neighborhood as chaotic and a source of problems (Stünkel 2013).

Maria Regina Soares de Lima and Monica Hirst (2006: 30) explain that Brazil utilizes its South American identity as a way to elevate its standing in international relations: "Brazil's regional and international presence has been increasingly perceived as a process intimately connected to the emergence of 'South America' as a particular grouping within the international community. Brazil's identity as a *Latin* American country has therefore been increasingly replaced by idea of the country as a *South* American power [emphasis added]". Stünkel (2013) explains that "[f]ocusing on South America also removed the

only credible competitor to Brazil in the region [Mexico], thus strengthening Brazil's position as the dominant actor".

The country's confidence does not only stem from its role as the regional leader, but also from its potential to become a great power. Stolte (2015: 44) points out that "[w]hile recognizing the deficits that have prevented the country from fulfilling its Great Power destiny, Brazilians have no doubt that these are to be overcome in the future, thus finally enabling the country to assume its Great Power role". As the Brazilian political scientist Murilo de Carvalho highlights, "[a]lready at the moment of its entry into the international society of states, Brazil was convinced about its future of greatness and power" (quoted in Stolte 2015: 43). Brazil's claim for great power status is particularly reflected in the rhetoric of its "diplomats, [who already] see their country as a major power" (Burges 2013b: 290). Former Foreign Minister Celso Lafer underlined that "given the size of its territory … Brazil is naturally involved in the shaping of the international order" (quoted in Stolte 2015: 44).

Brazilian policymakers are also convinced that the world is moving towards a multipolar system in which Brazil itself constitutes a pole. As former chief foreign policy advisor of the Lula administration Marco Aurélio Garcia proclaimed in 2009: "We are marching toward a multipolar world, and South America will be one of those poles" (quoted in Brands 2011: 34). Brazil's 2012 Defense White Paper already acknowledges that elements of multipolarity exist and that Brazil should take an active role in shaping the emerging order:

> "In the current composition of international centers of power, elements of unipolarity, such as the dominant military force in North America, coexist with elements of bipolarity, such as the economic interdependence between the United States of America and China, and of multipolarity, such as the financial G-20, the

commercial G-20, the BRICS group[17], the IBSA Forum[18] and the BASIC group[19], among others." (Federative Republic of Brazil 2012: 33)

> "The advent of a multipolar order, marked by the coexistence of traditional and emerging powers, brings new opportunities and new challenges to nations in the area of defense. Although dialogue, cooperation, emphasis on multilateralism and respect for international law remain important and desirable qualities for the international environment, the rearrangement of the system on a multipolar basis is not, by itself, sufficient to guarantee that, in the current situation of transition, peaceful relations between states will prevail." (Federative Republic of Brazil 2012: 31)

Despite Brazil's confidence, the country's self-conception remains to be shaped by the lingering legacy of its colonial past. For centuries, Brazil has been dependent on exports of raw material – in different time periods from the wood "pau-brasil", to sugar, to coffee, to cotton, to tobacco, to rubber – and imports of manufactured goods from developed countries. Even today, Brazil is largely dependent on commodity prices for natural resources and agricultural goods like soy and meat. Feeling betrayed by the international economic system because of its dependence on raw materials, Brazil continues to see North-South divide and thus feels loyal to other nations of the Global South that share similar structural economic problems (Stünkel 2010: 117).

This perception also led Brazil to develop a very strong desire for sovereignty as a means to decrease its dependence on the goodwill of the Northern powers (Kenkel 2015: 92), for example through enormous import taxes to incentivize local manufacturing for its promising market. Brazil even views its defense policy through the lens of building an autonomous defense-industrial complex. Especially under the Lula administration, Brazil utilized its diplomatic initiatives to overcome the North-South divide, partly by building

[17] Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa.
[18] India, Brazil, South Africa.
[19] Brazil, South Africa, India, China.

coalitions that challenge the interests of developed countries, such as in the WTO, and by advancing South-South relations as a means to increase self-sufficiency.

In addition to Brazil's concerns about its place in the international economic system, the country is frustrated about the tradition of other powers' lack of recognition for its potential, which continues to scratch on its policymaker's self-esteem and results in desperation about the current world order. This is not only reflected in the hopeless attempts to gain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council since the end of WWII, but also in the international rhetoric about Brazil, such as the 1960s statement of France's General de Gaulle that "Brazil is not a serious country" (quoted in Stolte 2015: 53). Even in contemporary diplomacy, Brazil is often recognized for its failures rather than its virtues. In a 2014 dispute with Jerusalem over a statement condemning the Gaza Strip offensive, Israel – a country 1/380th of Brazil's territorial size and of 1/24th of its population – called Brazil a "diplomatic dwarf" (in addition to referencing the recent 7-1 FIFA soccer world cup disaster against Germany) (Leahy 2014).

Even if Brazil does not feel to be recognized by the developed world and North Atlantic powers, the country continues to believe in its special role as a peaceful mediator. Located in a region that has not experienced inter-state war since the end of the Paraguayan War in 1870 and shaped by geopolitical satisfaction after the diplomatic settlement of its borders by the early 20th century, the country developed a very pacifist outlook on international relations (Soares de Lima/Hirst 2006: 22). Coupled with its multi-ethnic dimension – home to more people of Japanese descent than any other country outside of Japan, and home to more Africans than any other country but Nigeria – Brazil believes to be "uniquely positioned to bridge chasms and build consensus in international affairs", as Sean Burges (2013a: 577) explains. Soares de Lima and Hirst (2006: 28) agree about the "country's self-image as a mediator".

An essay by Antonio Jorge Ramalho da Rocha, an influential Brazilian defense official, depicts Brazil's self-perceptions very clearly: Highlighting Brazil's economic success in the first decade of the 21st century, he is convinced that "[a]fter solving its most

socioeconomic problems, Brazil is gradually becoming a model for other developing countries" (Ramalho 2015: 78). He explains that "Brazil is applying globally the political savvy and creativity acquired regionally, and consolidating its position as a global diplomatic hub" (2015: 81), and that "Brazilian foreign policy is persevering in this strategy to help build a more secure world in the 21st century" (2015: 82).

To sum up, Brazil's role as the regional hegemon and its potential to become a great power leads the country to believe that it will assume a leading role in an unfolding multipolar system. As it lacks recognition by the developed countries and views itself to be trapped in an unfair international economic system, Brazil continues to stress its unique role as a positive force in global politics.

5.1.2. Classifying Brazil in the unipolar world order

Brazil's manifold identity led to a variety of descriptions by international relations scholars, ranging from of Brazil being a middle power to being a regional hegemon.

Based on Brazil's behavior, rather than its material power, Daniel Flemes (2009: 163) identifies Brazil as a middle power based on the concept of middlepowermanship: "the tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, the tendency to embrace compromise positions in international disputes, and the tendency to embrace notions of 'good international citizenship' to guide diplomacy".

Burges (2013b: 286) disputes the description as a middle power because "Brazil neither sees itself as a middle power, nor conducts itself as one despite superficial appearances". He argues that "middle powers [act] as the agents of the extant or declining great powers to maintain the existing system by entrenching its rules and practices" (Burges 2013b: 289). However, Brazil has not been particularly supportive of the US and the unipolar world order, which will be highlighted in the analysis below, and thus Brazil should not be considered a middle power that acts in the interest of the status quo.

As a country that makes up roughly half the territory and population of South America, Brazil clearly plays a special role as a regional power. Given its efforts in regional integration, Brazil could also be considered as the regional leader. Burges defines Brazil's role as being a consensual hegemon, taking the leadership in regional integration projects, such as supporting the Southern Common Market (*Mercado Común del Sur* – MERCOSUR) and the Union of South American Nations (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* – UNASUR), as well as taking on regional responsibilities, such as intervening in political crises in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Haiti (Soares de Lima/Hirst 2006: 32). Thomas Volgy et al. (2014: 59) even categorizes Brazil as one of the "strongest of the regional powers" worldwide.

However, as Flemes (2009: 176) points out, Brazil "does not demonstrate the political will for regional integration beyond diplomatic rhetoric". He argues that other South American states do not consent to Brasília's leadership as they soft balance against Brazil and do not accept Brasília's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat. Matias Spektor (2009) agrees that while Brazil is a regional power, it has lacked the strength and willpower to build more than a fragile regional architecture; more is required of a regional leader.

Considering the scholarly assessments, it becomes clear that there is no consensus about Brazil's role and position in the international and regional orders. Even more so, the discrepancy between perception and reality screws the conclusions of Brazilian and foreign analysts; Brazilians themselves may base their assessment about their country on completely different assumptions (i.e., an emerging multipolar rather than a durable unipolar system) than North Atlantic scholars that may classify Brazil based on its limited material capabilities and corresponding foreign policy behavior (e.g., as a middle power).

This case study aims to integrate the different assessments of Brazil's role rather than following one specific definition because the alliance theories to be tested in this dissertation focus on certain attributes of a country – threat perception, interests in the

status quo or revisionism, and status strategy – rather than a country's single role in the regional and international order. Therefore, based on its weight in the region and its bold foreign policy initiatives, this study will simply treat Brazil as the regional unipole with great power ambitions. This notion shall be complemented by Brazil's foreign policy principles helping to explain the country's outlook based on the strategic context.

5.2. On Brazil's foreign policy

5.2.1. Brazil's foreign policy principles

Brazil has followed a compass of foreign policy principles laid out in article four of its 1988 constitution (Brazilian Chamber of Deputies 2010: Art. 4):

> "The international relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil are governed by the following principles:
> I - national independence;
> II – prevalence of human rights;
> III – self-determination of the peoples;
> IV – non-intervention;
> V – equality among the states;
> VI – defense of peace;
> VII – peaceful settlement of conflicts;
> VIII – repudiation of terrorism and racism;
> IX – cooperation among peoples for the progress of mankind;
> X – granting of political asylum."

Without evaluating to what extent Brazil has held up these principles, some of them should be highlighted for this case study as they relate to Brazil's assessment of NATO and the US.

Brazil's desire for sovereignty plays a significant role in determining the country's threat perception and its opinion on foreign powers within its self-declared sphere of influence stretching from West Africa to South America's Pacific coast. As a preemptive measure to prevent foreign powers from gaining influence within its neighborhood, Brazil promotes non-intervention in foreign affairs worldwide, for example when Brasília opposed foreign interventions in Rwanda and Haiti in 1994 as well NATO's Kosovo mission later that decade. More recently, Dilma has voiced criticism about Europe's

involvement in Mali because the "fight against terrorism should not justify neo-colonial temptations" (quoted in Reis 2015: 246), thereby upholding the principle of non-intervention while failing to recognize that foreign forces were invited by Mali's government itself and mandated by the international community. Brazil's general suspicion of Western influence will be key for explaining the Lula and Dilma Administration's opposition to US and NATO interventions in Iraq and Libya later in this case study.

Coupled with the desire for sovereignty is the quest for autonomy as a prerequisite for development, which continues to play a critical role in shaping its outlook on the world. As Patrice Franko highlights, "Brazil's search for autonomy is a guiding concept in its foreign policy". This does not only hold true in terms of the ability to steer its own economy, but it is also seen as a means to project power independently. As Ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães explains, "sovereign control over the means of power [including politics, economics, psychosocial factors, the military, and a scientific and technological base] is the only way for a country to achieve national goals" (quoted in Franko 2014: 4).

The desire for autonomy has been ingrained in Brazil's foreign policymaking. As former Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio Azeredo da Silveira explained in 1975, it is his country's goal is to achieve "an outstanding position in the world, free from the paths of hegemonic construction of the past" (quoted in Franko 2014: 4). However, the means to achieve autonomy have varied over time. While some administrations aimed to achieve "autonomy through distance", others were guided by the doctrine of "autonomy through participation" or "autonomy through diversification".

Another important foreign policy principle is Brazil's commitment to the peaceful settlements of conflicts, based on its location in a region with low levels of inter-state conflict, as well as its historical experiences of the peaceful border settlements (Lafer 2000, Soares de Lima/Hirst 2006, Herz 2010, Stolte 2015). One could also argue that the desire for pacifism and multilateral solutions is rooted in Brazil's lack of military

capabilities and can therefore be interpreted as a means to achieve its security interests without building up hard power. After all, denouncing the use of force as an option to achieve interests in world politics can be considered a preemptive move to delegitimize military power.

Therefore, Brazil consistently stresses the need to solve international conflicts through peaceful negotiations and diplomatic measures, thereby denouncing the utility of the use of force. This stance will become apparent in the analysis below when Brazil denounces NATO as a tool for hard power projection, rejects (nuclear) deterrence as means of defense, and even suggests negotiating with the cruelest of all terrorist groups, such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State, instead of defeating them militarily.

As a complement to peaceful dispute settlements, Brazil highlights its commitment to multilateralism because the country aims to project power through leadership in multilateral regimes. As Flemes (2009: 171) highlights, "[r]egional powers are the key players, and often creators, of regional governance institutions". Hereby, Brazil has been actively creating regional initiatives and building coalitions in existing international organizations to promote its interests in a diplomatic setting.

Similarly to the principle of sovereignty, Brazil's commitment to multilateral solutions in a UN setting serves the country as a security measure. Although Brasília is not among the permanent UN Security Council members, the Brazilian government is concerned with the preservation of collective security and international law as it serves to restrain great powers that may threaten Brazil's interests. Again, one can point to NATO's missions in Kosovo and Libya as fuel for Brasília's suspicion of the Alliance because the military interventions lacked the appropriate UN mandates and thereby undermined the collective security system that forms the basis of Brazil's international security interests.

5.2.2. Brazil's policy towards the US – traditional alliance and love-hate relationship

As explained in the previous sections, relations with NATO "will always be seen in the

region through the lens of the bilateral relationship with the US" (Merke 2011: 200). Especially as the self-perceived South-American counterpart to the US, the relations with Washington have been playing a major role in Brazilian foreign policy, at least since the era of Baron Rio Branco who served as Foreign Minister from 1902 until 1912 – in a time when Brazil developed an American identity in the light of decoupling itself from its monarchical European ties.

Brazil aimed for taking a similar role in South America as the US did in North and Central America, an idea for which Rio Branco was aiming to gain support by forming an "unwritten alliance" with Washington. Consequently, Brazil opened its first embassy abroad in Washington in 1905 and spoke out in favor of the US's Monroe Doctrine as well as the Roosevelt Corollary that highlighted US leadership in Central America and legitimized US intervention in case of European military engagement in the region. In exchange, the US-backed Brazilian border claims in Palmas (against Argentina), Amapá (against the French Guiana) and Acre (against Bolivia).

From then on, Brazil's leaders aligned with Washington whenever it was in the interest of their country. In World War I, for example, Brasília was initially neutral, but joined the Allied Powers on the side of the US in 1917 after Brazil suffered from a number of German naval attacks. Although Brazil did not take sides between the US and Germany in the 1930s and the beginning of World War II, the Getulio Vargas Administration decided to side with the Allied Powers once again, at least partly to gain economic assistance from the US. In the post-war period, Brazil grew disappointed because the country did not significantly gain from siding with Washington. Politically, Brazil was not offered a seat at the table to shape the new world order; and economically, the US did not provide the scale of aid Brazil wished for.

This is why Brazil moved towards a more globalized independent foreign policy without predefined alignments, which strengthened the country's Third World and South American identity. However, Brazil never detached itself from the US, and thus never became neutral, such as India. The relationship with Washington regained its importance

during the military dictatorship before the regime became frustrated again because it did not receive the expected benefits in terms of aid and investments. Eventually, the partnership between Brasília and Washington picked up again during the democratization and privatization period in the 1990s.

The shifting allegiances reflect Brazil's interest-driven foreign policy and the importance of the relationship with the US as a focal point of Brazil's strategic posture. It is no coincidence that almost every senior Brazilian diplomat pays lip service to Rio Branco's legacy that reflects the importance of the US in Brazil's foreign policy strategy – just like Brazil's 26th President Castelo Branco once remarked: "In order to worthily represent Brazil abroad, you need to have nothing more before you than the teachings of Rio Branco" (quoted in Burns 1967: 196). Today, as Soares de Lima and Hirst (2006: 33) explain, Brazil continues to keep "a permanent watch on the United States and what it does in world politics, and its foreign policy decisions consistently involve an assessment of the costs and benefits of convergence with or divergence from the US". The analysis below will therefore pay particular attention to Brasília's relations with Washington during the case study time frame.

5.2.3. Brazil's foreign policy from 2001 to 2016

The following analysis will divide the case study timeframe from 2001 until 2016 into the three sections: the presidencies of Fernando Henrique Cardoso until 2002, Lula from 2003 to 2010, and Dilma from 2011 to 2016.

5.2.3.1. Cardoso – setting the stage

As Brazil liberalized its economy in the 1990s, President Cardoso – an internationally renowned intellectual – was able to replace Brazil's policy of "autonomy through distance" with that of "autonomy through participation" by the end of his term (Brands 2011: 30). Guided by neoliberal ideals (Cervo 2010: 7), he substituted self-sufficiency and isolationism with an active role in defining the structure and content of the

international system, thereby creating a new image of Brazil as a global actor. As Franko (2014: 5) notes, "[a]utonomy came to be seen as the ability to influence world affairs".

In his push for greater participation in multilateral fora, he revived MERCOSUR – a sub-regional trade block that also included Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela (suspended in 2016) –, initiated the pan-South American infrastructure project IIRSA, and pushed for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) (Pecequilo 2010: 135). He also improved Brazil's bilateral relationships with the US and Argentina, hoping to shape the regional order and gain influence in international organizations. Thereby, Cardoso set the stage for Lula's more assertive policies with the goal of establishing Brazil as a great power in the following eight years.

5.2.3.2. The Lula era – aiming to hit the great power wave

Lula, a charismatic leader, who dropped out of high school to eventually become a union leader and head of the Workers Party, took over the Brazilian Presidency in 2003. His era portrayed Brazil's new confidence through grand rhetoric and the country's most remarkable foreign policy initiatives in modern times.

On the one hand, Burges (2013a: 582) argues that "Lula's foreign policy innovation represented little more than an extension of some of the global positioning, reframing and coalition-building strategies used during the Cardoso administration". This is partly true because Cardoso already finished Brazil's "bilateral decade" – the country's hemispheric outlook towards the US – by the end of his term to replace it with the "comeback of the global multilateral view", which was consolidated under Lula (Pecequilo 2010: 132-3).

On the other hand, Soares de Lima and Hirst (2006: 22) believe that "since the inauguration of the Lula administration in January 2003, change has predominated over continuity". This is especially apparent in both the new thinking of Lula's foreign policy leadership and the concentration of foreign policy decision making in the President's office.

The authors explain that Brazil's foreign policy elite can be divided into two schools of thought on how Brazil should achieve autonomy. Representatives of the first group seek to advance the country's international credibility as they believe that autonomy "derives from the capacity to cooperate in the creation of rules and institutions" (2006: 25). The second faction believes in "an active development policy, collaboration with countries of similar interests and the need to articulate a national project focused on overcoming domestic social imbalances" (2006: 25).

While the Cardoso Administration fell into the first international liberalist camp, Lula's foreign policy team clearly fell into the second category that supports a more diversified and independent policy. For example, the Chief of Staff of Brazil's Foreign Ministry (*Itamaraty*) Ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães Neto followed a staunch anti-imperialist and "Third Worldist" ideology. Lula's main foreign policy political adviser, Marco Aurélio Garcia, was a supporter of Caracas, Havana, and the FARC. His Foreign Minister Celso Amorim may have been less provocative, but as Burges (2013a: 580) describes, he had "strong leftist street credibility". They believed that the Global North may offer large markets, but the Global South offers structural opportunities for development and for breaking old alignments with the US and Europe.

Not only did the Lula Administration represent an ideological break with the previous government, but it also shifted the center of power of foreign policy decision making from Itamaraty – largely separated from domestic politics – to the president's office. Stünkel (2010: 121) calls this the "presidentialization of foreign policy in Brazil". This shift further politicized Brazil's foreign relations under the leftist foreign policy leadership.

Moreover, Lula displayed a particular interest in foreign relations with the mission for Brazil to "assume its greatness" (quoted in Brands 2011: 29). Traveling to 35 countries within in the first year of his presidency, "Aerolula" was able to tour 85 countries – and even Antarctica – on 267 journeys by the end of his second term (Stolte 2015: 72). Quite successfully, Lula also was not only able to advance Brazil's role on the diplomatic stage,

but also to secure a whole sequence of mega-events, including the 2012 UN Rio+20 Summit, the 2013 World Youth Day, the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and the 2016 Olympic Games, placing Brazil to the center of the international attention.

Politically, Lula lobbied to reform outdated international organizations, such as the UN where Brazil has been seeking a permanent seat in the Security Council. He also built closer political relations with emerging economies, most notably through BRICS and IBSA, and expanded commercial ties with China, which became a main driver of Brazil's economic growth.

Lula also advanced his country's diplomatic engagement with Africa, increasing the number of Brazilian embassies on the continent from 18 to 37, amounting to more representations than any former colonial power, including the UK (Alves 2013). Nathan Thompson and Robert Muggah (2015) point out that Brazil's "total trade with African nations ballooned from roughly $4.3 billion in 2000 to $28.5 billion in 2013". During Lula's 28 visits to Africa, he promoted Brazil by showcasing Southern solidarity, from assisting in building the Namibian Navy, over encouraging private sector investment, to granting debt forgiveness for smaller states. Brazil also lobbied for the inclusion of South Africa as part of the BRICS and for the creation of the IBSA forum with India and South Africa.

In South America, Brasília pushed regional economic and political integration through MERCOSUR and the establishment of the pan-continental political organization UNASUR (comprising all twelve South American states until Colombia withdrew in August 2018), along with its South American Defense Council (SADC) to coordinate dialogue and promote regional autonomy (Christensen 2013: 278). Investing in UNASUR should also be regarded as a means to limit Venezuela's leadership ambitions during the country's oil boom during the first decade of the 21st century when Caracas built the regional leftist ALBA movement together with ten neighbors in South America

and the Caribbean[20]. Beyond the South American continent, the Lula Administration was also keen on reviving the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (*Zona de Paz e Cooperação do Atlântico Sul* – ZOPACAS), originally created in 1986 as a means to create a demilitarized zone free of foreign bases and weapons of mass destruction across the South Atlantic.

Complementary to advancing regional integration, Brasília aimed to exclude US influence on the South American continent whose institutions were to become increasingly consolidated under Brazilian leadership. For example, the Lula Administration criticized the growing American influence in South America in response to Washington's Plan Colombia to assist Bogotá in combatting drug cartels and insurgent groups.

Alarmed by the reinstallment of the US's fourth fleet in the South Atlantic in 2008 – after 60 years and without prior consultation with the Brazilian government – Lula vocally questioned the US's intentions to gain a presence in a "completely peaceful region now that we have discovered oil" (quoted in Reis 2015: 234), and even staged exercises simulating a war with the US over its oil resources (Flemes/Costa Vaz 2011: 13).

Lula also terminated the negotiations over the FTAA and sidelined the Organization of American States (OAS), thereby marginalizing US influence in the Americas. He even initialized presidential meetings of all OAS members minus the US and Canada plus Cuba in 2008 – without even allowing observer status to Washington and Ottawa (Burges 2013a: 591).

Beyond his engagement to exclude the US in South America and the South Atlantic, Lula was among the vocal critics of US unilateralism because Washington undermined the collective security system and Brazil's precious principle of state sovereignty, especially during the Iraq War. The Lula Administration also opposed the US's and Europe's

[20] Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela.

coercive policies to manage the international security system, for example when Brasília refrained from enacting sanctions against Teheran because of Iran's nuclear program.

However, in his quest for "autonomy through diversification" (Christensen 2013: 273), Brazil did not abandon his traditional partners of the North Atlantic (Lessa 2010: 115). Lula had a personal rapport with George W. Bush and set up a range of technical agreements with the US, from collaboration on the development of biofuels to military-to-military cooperation. In 2007, Brazil also signed on to a strategic partnership with the EU to strengthen cooperation on issues such as environmental protection and human rights. Brazil even entered into defense acquisition agreements with several European states, for example with Italy to develop the Guarani, an armored car, and most notably with France to work on the PROSUB program to build four Scorpène-class conventional submarines, and jointly construct a nuclear-powered submarine (Franko 2014: 8).

These projects were part of Brazil's aim to increase its capabilities for power projection. In 2007, the government authorized to increase the defense spending by over fifty percent to invest in countering security threats, such as drug-trafficking and the protection of the offshore oil reserves. Brazil's 2008 National Defense Strategy focused on armament, deterrence, and power projection to counter the US (Flemes 2008: 6-7). The document also recognized the importance of the Brazilian defense industry to increase national autonomy (Brazilian Ministry of Defense 2008: 34-37).

Meanwhile, Brazil has stepped up its leadership in UN Peacekeeping Operations, proving the country's forces' capabilities by leading the UN MINUSTAH mission in Haiti since 2004. Brazil has even been displaying extra-regional commitment, for example by participating in the 1999 UNAMET operation in East Timor and by leading the UNIFIL Marine Task Force off the coast of Lebanon. Brazil's former Foreign Minister and Representative to the UN Antonio Patriota chaired the UN Peacekeeping Commission and Brazilian Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz commanded the MONUSCO peacekeeping force in the Congo.

In addition to taking on a larger role in international security, Brazil has also been pushing to upgrade its economic capabilities by promoting Brazilian businesses abroad. As part of Brazil's developmentalist strategy, Brasília advanced the role of the government in the economy by placing more importance on the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES). Granting more annual loans than the World Bank at times, BNDES received money from the Brazilian Treasury and lent it to Brazilian businesses at cheap rates to a push consolidated industries into new markets, thereby establishing a zone of influence for Brazil in South America (Fausto 2015a: 4).

As state-owned corporations and pension funds have partnered with a hand full of big Brazilian businesses, they have pushed the formation of conglomerates to help market penetration, but have also made the Brazilian economy subject to the performance of single actors. By supporting the semi-state owned oil giant Petrobras, for example, the government was able to push the exploitation of pre-salt oil reserves, thereby making the firm the sole manager of ten percent of Brazil's aggregate investments (Fausto 2015a: 6). But after Petrobras has become the focus of the largest corruption scandal in Brazil's history, the effects of economic centralization, such as the close entanglement with other conglomerates and the government, have proven unsustainable. Until the end of the Lula Administration, however, proactive government support to boost the economy has helped the country to advance its economic capabilities.

Nevertheless, the disparities between Brazil's economic capabilities and its political aspirations have remained significant. This is where Dilma took over Lula's Presidency to finish some and neglect other foreign policy ventures of her predecessor.

5.2.3.3. Dilma's Brazil in global affairs – continuity and change

Dilma, a former Marxist guerrilla during Brazil's military dictatorship, did not follow into the ambitious footsteps of Lula as she displayed little interest in foreign affairs and remained occupied with domestic politics, especially with the country's political corruption scandals and her own impeachment trial during her second term. Her Presidency was marked by continuity and change: On the one hand, Dilma maintained

the foreign policy leadership team critical of the North Atlantic countries and consolidated some of Lula's strategic projects, such as Brazil's defense strategy. On the other hand, she neglected Lula's efforts to further integrate the region and to maintain a prominent position in the Global South (Gomes Saraiva 2017: 9). During her second term, she even distanced herself from the previous level of criticism of the US's and Europe's role in international relations, aiming to intensify relations with the North Atlantic countries as a result of the economic crisis that exposed the country's shortcomings and flawed foreign policy orientation of the Lula Administration.

As Brazil continued to strive for regional leadership and global recognition during the beginning of Dilma's Presidency, her Administration published the 2012 Defense White Paper to bring in line Brazil's ambitions and the country's dire military capabilities by achieving the goals proposed by the 2008 Defense Strategy (Cepik/Licks Bertol 2016: 229). The Brazilian military has been suffering from low and inefficient spending: Since 2003, Brasília's defense spending accounted for approximately 1.5 percent of Brazilian GDP – compared to 4.5 percent in the US; and spending on personnel accounted for up to 80 percent of the defense budget – compared to about 25 percent in the US (Cepik/Licks Bertol 2016: 237-8). As individual military branches continued to purchase their own equipment, the varying specifications made it difficult to achieve significant gains from economies of scale (Cepik/Licks Bertol 2016: 237-8). Furthermore, outdated and lacking materiel made analysts questions whether the Brazilian forces are sufficiently equipped to even guard its own coastline, let alone to patrol the South Atlantic.[21] For example, Brazil aims to be a maritime power, but its 56-year-old aircraft carrier is the oldest one in the world and the Navy had to retire one of its three remaining frigates in 2015 (Barreira 2015).

Under Dilma, the Brazilian government also followed the Lula Administration's course of criticizing the North Atlantic countries' willingness to solve international disputes with the use of force, especially in response to NATO's Libya mission. Hereby, Brazil tried its

[21] Assessment based on an interview with a European Defense official in Rio de Janeiro, June 2012.

hand at being a norm entrepreneur when it introduced the "Responsibility While Protecting" (RWP) policy to place limitations on interventions, thereby hoping to prevent states from undergoing humanitarian intervention under a "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) mandate as a pretext for achieving interests through coercive means. The policy has not materialized into significant practical change of the mandates or rules of engagement, but showcased Brazil's commitment to non-intervention in accordance with the UN Charter.

Brazil's opposition to the US government's style of handling international relations reached a high point when Dilma canceled her 2013 state visit to Washington after the revelation that the US's National Security Agency (NSA) has been spying on her. According to the US Congressional Research Service, the scandal also added to Brasília's decision to terminate a $2 billion contract with Microsoft, to awarded a $400 million bid for building a geostationary satellite to France's Thales over American competitors, and to award a $4.5 billion fighter jet deal to Sweden's Saab AB over Boeing (although it should be recognized that the US's reluctance to share defense technology and information has also been a general burden to US-Brazilian defense cooperation). In addition to the economic measures, Dilma denounced the US diplomatically by condemning Washington's activities as a breach of international law during her opening speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2013 (Meyer 2016: 10).

As Brasília's assertive policies towards the US rested on Brazil's economic success, the 2014 economic crisis set an end to the confident diplomatic legacy of the Lula era. Driven by low commodity prices, decreased Chinese demand, and macroeconomic imprudence, the country's economy shrunk by 3.8 percent in 2015 and contracted by another 3.6 percent in 2016 (Gillespie 2017). During the last years of the Dilma Administration, Brazil's credit rating, foreign direct investment (FDI), and the stock market plummeted, while the unemployment rate almost doubled. The low oil price made further exploration of the pre-salt oil reserves off the coast of Rio de Janeiro uneconomical. The Petrobras scandals signified the country's systemic corruption problems in all levels of the government. The Brazilian Real lost over a third of its value

to the US Dollar, adding to the high tariffs that make imported goods unreasonably expensive for the Brazilian middle class. The joint economic and political crisis became apparent when the double-digit inflation almost topped the presidential approval rating. Inevitably, the situation fell back to Dilma, who had faced a yearlong battle against her impeachment under fiscal irresponsibility claims (though political considerations were the drivers of Dilma's opponents to initiate the impeachment process).

The crisis also had severe consequences for Brazil's ability to partake in international great power politics, having to curb diplomatic engagement on the full scale and failing to follow through strategic projects. In 2015 alone, Brazil's defense procurement budget was cut by 25 percent, leaving little room for investments in strategic capabilities as well as research and development (R&D). Consequently, prestigious projects, such as the construction of the nuclear-powered submarine with the help of France, were delayed. It became unclear how many resources Brazil could commit to the general modernization of the country's armed forces that would allow them to boost their activities in the Amazon, the South Atlantic, and beyond.

One can apply Franko's (2014: 1-2) "defense acquisition trilemma" to explain this cutback in defense investments: "Brazil is undergoing military modernization. But it faces a security trilemma: it must choose among long-held aspirations of sovereignty, integration into the global value chain, and economic sustainability […] A trilemma suggests that when a country has three objectives, it must sacrifice one to achieve the remaining two". Under Lula, Brazil was able to spend its way out of the trilemma, achieving a level of sovereignty and integration into the global value chain by developing diverse defense production partnerships similar to his "autonomy through diversification" strategy. When Dilma suddenly faced economic constraints, she could not keep up expensive defense modernization projects with her European, North American, South American, Middle Eastern, and Asian partners. By delaying these strategic plans, she had to sacrifice autonomy for the sake of economic sustainability.

Similarly, the Foreign Ministry's budget was cut from $3.3 billion in 2010 to around $1.1

billion in 2016. Embassies and consulates around the world, including in Canada, Guinea, Japan, Paraguay, Portugal, and the US could not pay their utility bills. Diplomatic representations had to cut their spending by half, including on security and local staff (Muggah 2015). Brazil's aspired leadership in international organization was also undermined by Brasília's failure to pay its bills to sustain its representations, such as for its WTO office in Geneva.

The inability to pay for its commitments has become systemic: Brazil became the second largest debtor to the UN apparatus (after the US) amounting to roughly $250 million by 2015 (Foreque 2015). In January 2015, Brasília paid a lump sum of $1 to the OAS, which upset members that were much poorer than Brazil (Simon 2016). Brasília even owed £300,000 to the London-based International Coffee Organization, an equivalent to three thousand bags of coffee (Brazil produces 40 million bags annually), almost preventing Brazil from participating in the 2015 Global Coffee Forum in Milan, Italy (JusBrasil 2015). The country also lost its voting rights in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) – ironically at the same time as former Foreign Minister Amorim was promoting his book in which he recounts his experiences negotiating to reach a nuclear deal with Iran (Simon 2016).

In addition to Brazil's failure to uphold its responsibilities towards international and multilateral organizations, Brasília was unable to fulfill bilateral commitments, for example when Dilma canceled her trip to Japan and Vietnam in November 2015 last minute, officially due to budget constraints. In other cases, the Brazilian government could not follow through projects, for example when it stopped paying its part of a joint German-Brazilian initiative to increase student and scientific exchanges. Brazil's "Science Without Borders" program to facilitate international exchanges also stirred concerns in the US, where the delayed tuition payments have made the University of California one of the largest Brazilian debtors in the country (Campos Mello 2015).

Payment troubles aside, Brazil's diplomatic initiatives had only minor impacts on the international political and economic landscape. MERCOSUR and UNASUR did not

achieve any remarkable integration or cooperation projects during Dilma's presidency. For example, when UNASUR's Defense Council opened the South American Defense School in Quito, Ecuador in 2015, the organization was only staffed with one single defense official and his assistants, featuring a budget so little that even the Executive Secretary struggled to partake in international security conferences. Not surprisingly, the school has not materialized into an institution comparable to other organization's or country's training and research facilities, such as the US Army War College or the NATO Defense College.

By the end of Dilma's term, IBSA has not developed into more than a dialogue forum, and since the loose grouping has not held a summit since 2011, it was off the political radar for any practical purposes. While the BRICS were able to draw international attention for establishing its own development bank, Brazil and Russia found themselves in a situation in which they should be on the receiving, rather than on the distributing end of the international donor chain.

The Brazilian government had also lost its drive to highlight itself as an international mediator, showing the reluctance to sit down at negotiation tables, rather than actively promoting itself as an alternative leader to solve international crises. It was Illustrating that Dilma did not even send her Foreign Minister Luiz Alberto Figueiredo to attend the Geneva II Conference on Syria in 2014, even through the Syrian Civil War had become the most severe international crisis at the time and Brazil is home of the largest Syrian diaspora in the world (Simon 2016).

These developments had important implications for Brazil's international posture. While under the Lula Administration, most Brazilian government officials were convinced that their country is set to be one of the next great powers, after the 2014 economic crisis they had sobered up, facing the limits of growth based on structural socioeconomic problems, from its poor education system (about one in ten Brazilians is illiterate), over its deficient infrastructure, to its imprudent trade policies.

Consequently, strategic planners started to question the assumptions behind Lula's

foreign policy strategy, such as a waning US, as well as great value from strong political and economic relations with the BRICS, Africa, and the Arab world (Fausto 2015b: 4). Brasília had to recalculate the costs and benefits of its engagement with the Global South, leading the Dilma Administration to strengthen her ties with Brazil's old partners in the US and Europe.

Dilma started by reconsidering the lineup of her foreign policy leadership, appointing new personnel into key positions of the government at the beginning of her second Presidential term, thereby hinting to open the door for liberal reforms and cooperation with the US and Europe. In January 2015, former Ambassador to the US Mauro Vieira took over the Foreign Ministry, and President of the National Confederation of Industry (known for supporting trade deals) Armando Monteiro was appointed Minister of Development, Industry and External Trade. Dilma also invited the strategic thinker and Harvard Law School Professor Roberto Mangabeira Unger back as Minister for Strategic Affairs in February 2015. However, he left Brasília only seven months later to return to the US, distancing himself from the Dilma government and his former affiliation with the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (*Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* – PMDB), the junior partner of Dilma's Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* – PT). Most notably of Dilma's attempt to change course was the 2015 appointment of the liberal-minded University of Chicago PhD and former IMF official Joaquim Levy as Finance Minister, who also resigned within a year because he was not able to implement necessary reforms due to the country's political crisis.

In addition to inviting a new wave of personnel to join key government positions, the Dilma Administration took practical actions to restore the spoilt relations with the US. In October 2014, the Brazilian and US governments signed a memorandum of understanding to resolve a WTO trade dispute over American support for its cotton industry. In January 2015, Dilma proclaimed that "it is of great importance that we improve our relationship with the United States" (quoted in Meyer 2016: 11) and only six months later, in June 2015, she made her way to meet US President Obama in the White House – despite an outstanding apology for the NSA spying scandal.

During her visit to the US, Dilma also met with Kissinger, a staunch supporter of Latin American military dictatorships when he served as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State under US President Richard Nixon. Reflecting on her encounter, she called Kissinger a "fantastic person, with a grand global vision" (quoted in Grandin 2015) – a remarkable statement considering that she was tortured and jailed for three years under Brazil's military regime in the 1970s.

The trip to the US was not just designed to restore the political bonds between the two largest nations in the Western Hemisphere, but also to attract US investment for Brazil's struggling economy. In addition to visiting Silicon Valley in California, Dilma managed to meet corporate leaders in New York City, for example Rupert Murdoch, CEO of the media conglomerate News Corporation. The visit coincided with a special four-page advertisement for investment in Brazilian infrastructure projects in the *Wall Street Journal*, one of News Corporation's flagship publications. She was able to secure $64 billion in infrastructure investments and to convince the US to lift its 14-year-old ban on Brazilian beef imports (The Economist 2015).

In July 2015, *The Economist* magazine remarked that "[Dilma] seems to have carried out more foreign business in the past six months than in the previous four years", titling her international outreach as "making friends again" as she was looking for success abroad because of the crisis at home (2015). Although Dilma seemed open to pick up cooperation with anyone who offered economic value (e.g., she was also receiving the Chinese prime minister in May 2015 to negotiate loans and infrastructure investments), her effort to restore relations with the North Atlantic countries was a remarkable differentiation from her predecessor.

German President Angela Merkel visited Brasília in August 2015, along with a six ministers, and representatives of a total of eleven ministries, who signed seventeen bilateral documents with their Brazilian counterparts. While the German effort can be considered a notable recognition of Brazil as one of Germany's strategic partners, a

closer look at the visit's details reveals Brasília's own proactivity to foster relations with Europe's leading economy.

First of all, the high-level consultation format was already agreed upon under the Lula Administration in 2008, when Brazil was among the rising stars. The timing of the meeting suggests that the Brazilian government did not see the necessity to invite their German counterparts for seven years until it demonstrated a general outreach to the North Atlantic (though Merkel has traveled to Brazil before, twice for the 2014 FIFA World Cup alone). Less than a week before the reunions, Brazil announced measures to help its struggling automotive industry with over €800 million, which notably helped German car companies that produce in Brazil and was therefore labeled to be a gift for the German guests.

The proclaimed two-day visit took only 18 hours – not much for an almost 24-hour round-trip from Berlin to Brasília – during which Merkel also met German industry leaders who urged her to push for a friendlier investment climate in Brazil. Most significantly, however, was the relatively low-level agenda of the meeting that mainly focused on cooperation in climate policy, science and technology, education, biodiversity, innovation, and culture. It is questionable whether such an agenda would have been sufficient to initiate a state visit during the Lula Administration that was busy promoting Brazil as a rising power rather than hoping for foreign visits to distract from domestic political problems. While Germany's state visit should not be considered as a sign of Brazilian desperation, the details reveal Dilma's need for turning to old partners to gain even minor economic benefits as well as recognition both in the domestic and the international arena.

Dilma further announced the revival of the EU-MERCOSUR free trade agreement to be a priority (Reuters 2015). This was a remarkable shift from Lula's vision, hoping to build strong and independent economic relations with Africa and Asia rather than boosting investor confidence by advancing trade ties with Europe. Dilma also signed a cooperation agreement with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

– a club of developed economies – rather than deepening her relations with the Global South.

Brazil underlined its commitment to strengthening relations with Europe when Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira participated in a panel discussion on "Trade, Prosperity and Security" during the 2016 Munich Security Conference – the first time in three years that Brazil had sent a representative to the most important gathering of European and American foreign and security policymakers. Given that the 2016 Munich Security Report (2016: 7) features a Eurasia Group analysis declaring political turmoil in Brazil to be among the top ten political risks of 2016, Vieira's involvement indicated that Brazil was eager to promote itself in a more positive light, and to demonstrate its willingness to contribute constructively to the debates alongside the US and Europe.

In addition to rapprochement in the grand political and economic arena, Brazil also increased cooperation with the US and Europe on the working level, from the fight against the Zika Virus with the US to the assistance in Europe's refugee crisis (Brazil has received over 3,000 Syrian refugees – not a major amount, but more than some European countries). Brazilian policymakers even reconsidered their approach to data security, a very sensitive topic since the NSA's spying scandal: Initially, Brazil aimed to become more independent of the US by installing new fiber optic cables – prime targets for espionage – across the South Atlantic to avoid channeling its data traffic with Africa through the US and Europe. Nevertheless, government-owned Telebrás canceled its plan to jointly build the South Atlantic Cable System with Angola Cables to link Fortaleza with Luanda. Instead, Brazil entered into cooperation with French and Swiss companies to install a connection with Portugal (Edgerton/Robertson 2014), turning their back to their African partners to work once again with Europe (Angola Cables then decided to build the submarine communications cables unilaterally) (TeleGeography 2014).

Brazil's partnership with the US and Europe also gained momentum in the area of security, in which Brasília picked up cooperation with American and European forces to gain specific capabilities and to strengthen institutionalized bonds. During the 2014 FIFA

World Cup, for example, Brazil called upon the US for assistance in countering possible biological weapons attacks. To prepare for the 2016 Rio Olympics, Brazil cooperated with the German and French police, and gained assistance from the British forces who shared their experiences from the 2012 Games in London (Ribeiro Viotti 2016). In order to gain the necessary technical equipment, Brazil turned to the American private sector, purchasing two mobile laboratories for $1.8 million to be ready to respond to possible biological and chemical attacks (Comunello 2015). By working closer with the US and Europe, Brasília was forgoing a chance to strengthen operational ties with Russia that hosted the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and the upcoming 2018 FIFA World Cup.

By 2015, Brasília has become more comfortable with the idea of working with the US military, approving the Defense Cooperation Agreement and General Security of Military Information Agreement, which have been pending since 2010 and opened the door for unfolding cooperation in areas of R&D, logistics, procurement, and intelligence sharing. In the same year, the US Navy sent its aircraft carrier USS George Washington to Brazil to participate in training for combat and maritime interdiction operations on the occasion of the multi-national naval exercise UNITAS. The visit marked the largest joint training conducted between the US Navy and the Brazilian Air Force in more than two decades, thereby reinforcing trust between the troops (Konrad 2015). Though Brazil and the US never stopped cooperating on matters such as counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics, the political rapprochement allowed the forces to extend their partnership on a bilateral basis.

It is clear that Dilma started out her Presidency continuing Lula's foreign policy outlook –though with much fewer ambitions – and later adjusted Brazil's posture as a result of the country's economic crisis that made Brasília's focus on the Global South and its vocal opposition to US conduct in international politics not feasible any longer.

Eventually, Dilma suffered a massive political crisis that led to her suspension in May 2016 and her official impeachment by the end of August that year, leaving Vice-President Michel Temer as her successor. Between the time of her suspension and the end of the

case study time frame in July 2016, Temer continued Brazil's rapprochement with the North Atlantic countries, aiming to advance the country's investment climate, until he himself fell into the clutches of a corruption scandal, losing the little legitimacy he previously held to steer the country. By 2018, Brazil eventually elected the former Army Captain Jair Bolsonaro to become President, who further closed ranks with the West. But it took years for the Brazilian economy to recover its pre-crisis level, with all the given consequences for Brazil's ability to project power and engage in diplomatic initiatives.

5.2.4. Brazil's NATO policy

Having explained Brazil's broader foreign policy during the case study timeframe, this section aims to analyze the country's policy towards NATO specifically. Given Brazil's unique identity both as a Western democracy and leader of the Global South, aiming to be a great power while speaking up for the developing world, the country's outlook on NATO is not clear at first sight. However, a closer look reveals why this dissertation categorized Brazil as a denouncer of the Alliance.

Brazilian policymakers have been criticizing NATO for its global engagement under US leadership in order to defend Brazil's quest for autonomy. For example, Lula's Defense Minister Nelson Jobim denounced NATO's out-of-area operations during a speech at the Lisbon National Defense Institute in April 2010 and at a meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Arturo Valenzuela in October 2010 (Saebra 2010: 3). During the November 2010 Forte de Copacabana International Security Conference of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the minister announced that "neither Brazil [nor] South America could accept that the Americans or NATO claimed any right to intervene in any theatre of operations, under the most variable pretexts" (quoted in Saebra 2010: 3). Especially critical of possible NATO engagement in the South Atlantic, Jobim continuously underlined his suspicion of the US failing to sign the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea and the 2008 reactivation of the US's fourth fleet in the South Atlantic (Helbig 2013: 5). In the same context, Adriana Abdenur et al. (2016: 1123) quote a Brazilian diplomat who declared that "there are certain ways of doing things, we

don't want for our region. […] There are tendencies to expand ranges of action, which most of the times do not correspond to what we consider best and more constructive for the [South Atlantic] region".

Abdenur and Danilo Marcondes de Souza Neto (2013: 8) explain that "President Dilma Rousseff continue[d] to reject a broader role for the alliance within the region". Her Foreign Minister Patriota accused NATO of militarizing territory when he argued in 2013 that "Brazil's overall concerns towards NATO remained, namely the search for partnerships outside of its defensive area, way beyond the North Atlantic, including in regions of peace, democracy, social inclusion and which do not admit in its territory arms of mass destruction".

Similarly, Brazil has denounced NATO on the grounds of the Alliance's interventionist actions. After reaching a highpoint during the Alliance's Libya operation, Brazil's suspicion of NATO interventions continued, for example when Patriota's successor Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado voiced his concern over a possible NATO intervention in Syria after the NATO Secretary General Rasmussen condemned the use of chemical weapons by the Assad Regime (Sousa 2013). Even President Temer's Defense Minister Raul Jungmann (2017: 6) proclaimed his concerns that NATO could use the fight against the Islamic State in West Africa as a pretext to claim "jurisdiction over the entire Atlantic", and announced that it is Brazil's "diplomatic work to deconstruct that view".

While the official discourse remained overly critical of NATO, the Brazilian military and lower level policymakers displayed willingness to explore opportunities to engage with the Alliance, for example at a joint 2013 NATO Defense College (NDC) and University of Brasília seminar on NATO-African Union relations and during a 2013 NDC Delegation Visit to Rio de Janeiro to discuss topics ranging from maritime security to humanitarian assistance operations (Helbig 2013: 6).

Though there was no push by NATO to engage with Brazil on the political level (Reis 2015: 243), Brazil signed on to the NATO Codification Scheme International Sponsorship Programme for military standards and has participated in the NATO-chaired

Maritime Commanders Conferences to discuss maritime security challenges (Pavia 2015: 264). Brazilian officials have been in touch with the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence and with the Alliance's military commands when coordinating their engagement off the Horn of Africa, where NATO used to run its Operation Ocean Shield and Brazil deployed personnel to the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 (Pavia 2015: 265-7). Brazilian forces also partook as observers in the multinational exercise Capable Logistician in Hungary in 2015, organized by NATO, that served as a model for Brazil to host a similar logistics exercise (AMAZONLOG) together with other Latin American states, the OAS's Inter-American Defense Board, UNASUR's SADC, as well as the US and Canada (Pereira 2017).

These actions display a discrepancy between Brazil's official discourse that denounces NATO on the basis of Brazil's sovereignty concerns and the military's willingness to explore cooperation based on practical value. An illustrative example occurred during a visit of Brazilian officials to Europe in 2015, organized by a European think tank. The trip included a visit to the NATO Headquarters in Brussels, which was refused by the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. While the two Brazilian representatives nevertheless joined for the visit and took pictures in front of the NATO flag, they preferred not to include these photos in the travel report because it might upset their authorities. This demonstrates the interest of Brazilian officials to explore possibilities for cooperation with NATO, which nonetheless remains blocked by their country's official policy.

The short section displays the limited engagement between the two parties and underlines that Brazil has been denouncing NATO's existence as an actor in international security throughout politically and diplomatically, which even includes Brazil's opposition to NATO's assistance of the UN. By doing so, Brasília highlighted its commitment to collective security, Westphalian sovereignty, and independence from the US. Though rapprochement with NATO has occurred on lower levels of the government, any serious engagement has been undermined by Brazil's political leadership.

5.3. Theoretical considerations

5.3.1. Brazil's NATO policy and the Balance of Threat theory

This section aims to determine whether Walt's Balance of Threat theory can explain Brazil's opposition to NATO. Therefore, it is crucial first to analyze Brasília's threat perception rooted in its foreign policy traditions and demonstrated by Brazil's official discourse as well as the country's practical engagement in international security. The analysis will use this evidence to prove whether Brazil's opposition to NATO can be explained by Brasília's balancing behavior towards NATO and the US as the Alliance's main ally.

5.3.1.1. Brazil's threat perception towards NATO: a distinct focus on sovereignty

Brazil maintains a realist state-centered outlook on international relations. Its 2012 Defense White Paper explains that "[i]n spite of fast growing changes in recent decades, the international order remains predominantly determined by relationships among states" (Federative Republic of Brazil 2012: 31). This Westphalian worldview forms the basis of Brasília's concern about sovereignty – "the ability to implement self-rule without being constrained by others" (Franko 2014: 4) – which can be linked to its fear for compromising autonomous decision making.

Soares de Lima and Hirst (2006: 21) agree that "[a]lthough the bases for an autonomous foreign policy have become more restricted in the post-Cold War period, Brazil still seeks to preserve an independent voice within the international community and a certain level of independent capacity to determine its actions". While sovereignty is on the one hand coupled with independent political decision making and autonomous economic development, it also affects Brazil's threat perception towards its territorial integrity, especially in the Amazon and the South Atlantic, also referred to as the Green and the Blue Amazon respectively (Merke 2011: 202).

The Brazilian Amazon is a vast region, about half the EU's size, comprising the world's largest freshwater reserves and some of its greatest biodiversity. As the region continues to be sparsely populated, containing ungoverned spaces, territorial integrity in the region remains one of Brazil's national security concerns – similar to Russia's concerns in Siberia. Marco Cepicks and Frederico Licks Bertol (2016: 233) explain that "the Amazon region defense has always been particularly problematic because of its distance from the country's economic hubs, located along the Atlantic coast".

However, the demand for sovereignty in the Amazon does not only relate to maintaining territorial integrity, but also to capping foreign influence that might compromise Brazil's use of its resources. As soon as 1989, then-US Senator Al Gore claimed that "[c]ontrary to what Brazilians think, the Amazon is not their property, it belongs to all of us" (quoted in Barrionuevo 2008). Such statements and the calls of foreign NGOs for natural preservation explain the Brazilian authorities' fear for external actors using "environmental protection and the protection of local tribes as a false pre-tense to hinder Brazil to exploit its biodiversity and mineral deposits in the Amazon" (Helbig 2013: 4).

As a response, Lula aimed to restrict access to the rain forest for foreigners to "deter so-called 'biopirates' – those who want to patent unique substances discovered in the forest" (Barrionuevo 2008). The Dilma Administration created a whole command for protecting the Amazon's natural resources and deployed an estimate of 20,000 military personnel to the region (Cepik/Licks Bertol 2016: 233-4).

Similarly, the Brazilian government took significant steps to secure the Blue Amazon, a region of strategic importance because it comprises the country's massive pre-salt oil fields and channels over 90 percent of Brazil's trade (Abdenur/Marcondes de Souza Neto 2013: 7). Érico Duarte (2015: 223) argues that the "Brazilian political leadership increasingly believes that Brazil's future will depend on its ability to protect and develop the Blue Amazon". According to Cepik and Licks Bertol (2016: 236), "the possibility of foreign aggression [in the region] is perceived as a sort of 'low probability/high impact' threat, calling for serious planning and actions dedicated to coastal defense". The Lula

Administration declared that "Brazil and its Armed Forces should be ready to take measures to protect the territory, the sea lanes of trade, [and] oil platforms" as one of the guidelines of Brazil's national defense (Brazilian Ministry of Defense 2008: 17).

It is important to note that Brazil's maritime rights have been subject to diplomatic controversies as Brazil claims an extension of its exclusive economic zone to include access beyond 200 nautical miles off its coast up to the limits of its continental shelf, "which would make the Blue Amazon larger than the Green one, or over twelve times the size of Germany" (Helbig 2013: 4). Jobim condemned the US for not recognizing "the legal status of countries like Brazil, which has 350 miles of its continental shelf under its sovereignty" (quoted in Helbig 2013: 4). Luigi R. Einaudi (2011: 11) explains that the refusal of the US to ratify the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea "gave a backdrop of credibility to unrealistic but politically popular concerns articulated by Defense Minister Jobim in November 2010 about a possible out-of-area 'NATO threat' to Brazil's oil claims in the South Atlantic". Abdenur et al. (2016: 1118) agree that "certain military and civilian circles in Brazil have grown more concerned with the prospect of US- and NATO-led interventions in the South Atlantic".

In addition to the US, Brazil is critical of other countries' actions in its sphere of influence, such as of the UK's presence in the South Atlantic. As Abdenur and Marcondes de Souza Neto point out, "the UK has a string of island territories stretching from the English Channel almost down to Antarctica, including not only the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands but also Mid-Atlantic Ridge islands such as Ascension and St Helena, which provide it with a military presence in the region". Brasília supports Argentina's claim to the Falklands and did not accept one of the UK's Falkland Islands protection ships to dock in Rio de Janeiro in 2011 (Yapp 2011).

Brazil is also sensitive to foreign engagement on its continent, having voiced opposition to cooperation between the US and South American countries. A Brazilian defense

official revealed that Brasília is worried about an Iraq-style military invasion by the US, for example to overthrow the anti-American regime in Venezuela.[22]

Colombia stands out as the only country that allows permanent US presence in South America after Ecuador closed its US base in 2008, convinced that the US assisted Colombia in an incursion into Ecuadorian territory to attack a FARC outpost.[23] Since Washington started to support Bogotá with its war on drugs at the turn of the century, the US military has been advising Colombian forces on seven bases, though it does not operate any of them (US-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement 2009). Bogotá has also reached out to NATO, cooperating through information sharing, political consultations, and educational military exchanges, leading to an official partnership agreement in 2017. Brazil voiced concerns over its neighbor's agreement with an extra-continental military alliance (El Imparcial 2013) after Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos accidently announced that Colombia is starting "a process of rapprochement and cooperation, with an eye toward also joining that organization" (AFP 2013) – even though Colombia does not qualify as a NATO member under the territorial restrictions of Article X of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO 1949).

Brazil's opposition to US and NATO cooperation with South American states is rooted in its fear of Washington's hegemonic ambitions that might undermine Brazil's leadership in South America – a key for Brazil to assume a greater role in international politics. But even beyond tangible threats to territorial integrity and the country's role as the continental hegemon, Brazil also opposes US and NATO intervention worldwide in order to support Brasília's interpretation of sovereignty to deter against a possible foreign intervention in South America.

This goes back to Brazil's notion of sovereignty that differs distinctly from that of NATO states. Kai Kenkel (2010: 650) explains that Brazil interprets the breach of sovereignty in its "horizontal manifestation", focused on the inviolability of borders. In contrast, the

[22] Interview with a Brazilian defense official in Bogotá, May 2015.
[23] Though the US also maintains bases close by in El Salvador and Honduras.

North Atlantic countries focus on the "vertical or contractual aspect" highlighting the government's responsibility towards its people. Brazil opposes recently developed concepts such as human security and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), viewing them "as yet another iteration of Northern *ingérence* [interference]" (Kenkel 2010: 650). Former Foreign Minister Amorim made clear that he is most concerned about the "question of who decides whether or not there should be an intervention. The door is […] left open for certain countries to arrogate to themselves the right to intervene, without the express authorization of the [UN Security] Council or monitoring by a truly multilateral body" (quoted in Kenkel 2010: 654).

Although NATO's 2011 Libya mission was mandated by the UN, the Alliance overstepped its mandate of enforcing a no-fly zone by pushing for regime change, proving Brazil's point that NATO intervened in the name R2P to enforce the interests of North Atlantic countries on subordinate foreign governments militarily. Therefore, for Brazil, Libya stands in the tradition of Iraq and Kosovo, showcasing the continuity of offensive and illegal coercion throughout the US Administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, leaving Brazilian policymakers with the conclusion that the US and NATO potentially have offensive intentions, asking themselves where they may intervene next.

However, critics of a possible NATO engagement in the South Atlantic have failed to note that NATO's geographical scope of actions is limited by two important sources: First, crisis management operations abroad depend on the political motivation of the Alliance, resting on the consent of all 29 member states. Consequently, it is hard to imagine NATO operating far beyond Europe's extended neighborhood. Second, the notion of territorial defense is limited to the northern hemisphere as laid out in Article VI of the NATO Treaty (1949):

> "For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France 2, on the territory of

> Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area *north of the Tropic of Cancer* [emphasis added]."

In addition, it is important to note that Brazil voices its opposition to foreign intervention rather selectively. When Russia marched into Georgia, annexed Crimea, and supported pro-Russian rebels in Eastern Ukraine, Brazil refrained from a taking position. When the author asked former Foreign and Defense Minister Amorim about his position on Russia's aggression in Ukraine, he avoided the question and instead pointed out that NATO had intervened in Kosovo without a UN mandate.[24] Similarly, Brazilian policymakers also apply double standards to human rights issues, for example by condemning Israel while abstaining from voting on human rights violations against Iran.

Brazil's application of different sets of principles in similar situations reveals the country's intrinsic threat perceptions: From a realist perspective, Brazil could not care less about Russia, Iran, and other far-away countries undermining international law. This is because distant countries without serious hegemonic potential in Brazil's sphere of influence do not pose a threat to Brasília. Walt (1990: 22) defines the sources of threat as aggregate strength (size, population, and economic capabilities), geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intentions. Given Brazil's distinct threat perception, the only country that qualifies under these conditions as a potential threat is the US. In other words, when Brazilian policymakers criticize the US and its allies for undermining international law, they are not concerned about principles of sovereignty and collective security for the sake of protecting other states, but about upholding the international legal order to restrict Brazil's biggest threat from taking actions that may be against Brasília's interests.

It can be concluded that Brazil views the US as a threat to its territorial integrity, especially in regards to the Blue Amazon, and to its position as the regional leader. In addition, Brazil views US and NATO interventions as a source of danger because they

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[24] Amorim, Celso, Study Group Session, Harvard Kennedy School, 28 April 2015.

undermine Brazil's horizontal manifestation of sovereignty that – if enforced by the international community – serves as a means of protection from potential threats. Therefore, the US and NATO shall be considered as a threat in the following section that tests Walt's Balance of Threat theory.

5.3.1.2. Brazil's foreign policy strategy towards the US and NATO: bandwagoning, balancing, or neither?

The evidence laid out above suggests that Brazil's foreign policy towards NATO does not fulfill Walt's (1990: 17; 1988: 282) definition of bandwagoning: "to align with the source of danger". Neither has Brasília appeased the Alliance, nor shared any spoils with it. It has also not given in to threats, made any asymmetrical concessions, or tolerated any illegitimate actions by the dominant party. Even during the end of Dilma's term, when Brazil picked up its cooperation with the North Atlantic countries in the economic and diplomatic arena, the country's leadership has not shown any signs of aligning itself with NATO.

Bandwagoning with NATO would have been a counterintuitive strategy for Brazil because the situation does not fulfill Walt's (1990: 32) hypothesis that "[s]tates facing an external threat will ally with the most threatening power". NATO may be defined as a threat, but the Alliance simply has not displayed any serious offensive intentions towards conquering the Blue Amazon, which remains a "low probability/high impact" threat (Cepik/Licks Bertol 2016: 236). And while Brazil is opposed to NATO's policy of intervention because it may undermine Brazil's territorial integrity in the future, the Alliance's international engagement poses no existential threat to Brazil or the international order. Consequently – according to Walt's logic – the US and NATO are simply not threatening enough for Brazil to appease them.

Instead, considering the evidence and the logical conclusions of Balance of Threat theory, Brazil's behavior towards the US and NATO falls into the category of balancing, and more specifically into the subcategory of soft balancing: to utilize non-military tools in

cooperation with others to delay, complicate, or increase the unipole's costs of using extraordinary power.

As the theory section explored in length, the vast discrepancy between the US's capabilities and that of any other state makes it practically impossible to hard-balance the global unipole. Except for Brazil's short-lasting investments in upgrading the Brazilian forces, the country has not signaled any internal hard-balancing activities as its military remain poorly equipped and even struggling to fulfill their obligation to guard Brazil's coastline and borders in the Amazon. Even the construction of the nuclear-powered submarine can hardly be linked to balancing efforts. Not only is Brazil developing the submarine together with NATO ally France, but its primary function is to "deter possible threats to Brazil's future deep-water oil-drilling operations" (Einaudi 2011: 7) rather than aiming to compete with the US's global power projection.

Further, Brazil has not entered into any external military alliances. UNASUR's SADC is a barely functioning apparatus without any mutual defense clause. Though IBSA has conducted naval exercises and Brazil has entered into defense cooperation with African states, there is no concluding evidence that these actions were intended to balance the US militarily.

Instead, one should consider Brazil's diplomatic engagement to examine whether the country's behavior towards NATO and the US falls into the category of soft balancing; in other words, whether Brazil has been using non-military means to restrain the US as a global unipole, and NATO as the US's prime international military alliance.

Soft balancing against the US has become a more frequent strategy as a response to the possible dangers of unrestrained US foreign policy in the light of George W. Bush's unilateralism after 9/11. Since Washington threatened the preservation of international law in its manifestation of both Westphalian sovereignty and collective security, Brazil was among the states motivated to restrain the global unipole through soft-balancing tools, such as restricting or denying military basing rights, excluding the US from

diplomatic, economic and security cooperation, engaging in institutional balancing, and providing assistance to adversaries.

The first notable soft-balancing action occurred during the end of Cardoso's Presidency when Brazil rejected the US request to use Brazilian aircraft bases and other facilities in the Amazon in 2002 (Flemes 2009: 166). Though Brazil generally supported the US's fight against terror and cooperated with US authorities to combat possible terrorist-financing activities in the Triple Frontier at the junction of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, Brasília started to systematically decrease Washington's influence in the region by excluding the US from regional political, economic, and security projects.

After Lula started to oppose the US in the OAS, he actively aimed to exclude Washington from diplomatic initiatives across the region (Burges 2013a: 591). Hereby, Brazil has pushed existing and created new regional political, economic and security organizations that exclude US membership. As Abdenur et al. (2016: 1127) argue, "MERCOSUR helped to prevent the US-led FTAA while UNASUR is presented as an alternative to the OAS. Both contenders excluded the biggest rivals of Brazil in the hemisphere—the US and Mexico—from security governance and infrastructure projects in South America". Einaudi (2011: 13) agrees that "Brazil [asserts] regional power to [exclude] the United States".

Considering the SADC's military component, Flemes (2009: 168), Amado Luiz Cervo (2010: 18), Merke (2011: 201), Burges (2013a: 591), and Mario Carranza (2014: 5) also argue that Brazil intended to launch the Council to exclude external powers from security matters on the continent. While membership in SADC does not exclude military cooperation with external states, the goal of containing US and NATO presence in the region was clear when Bolivia's President Evo Morales requested an extraordinary SADC meeting in response to Colombia's evolving partnership with NATO, claiming Bogota's policy to be a provocation and a violation of the UNASUR treaty (Ishmael 2013).

Similarly to consolidating South America as a region of Brazilian hegemony without US influence, Brasília had been pushing for autonomy in the South Atlantic under Brazilian leadership. Lula aimed to legally deny access for external actors, especially nuclear powers, most notably by reviving the ZOPACAS treaty, signed in 1986 at the UN to create a contrast to NATO: "to preserve the region from measures of militarization" (United Nations General Assembly 1986). At the time, the US was the only country to vote against the initiative (United Nations 1986) in order to forgo a legally binding exclusion from the area. Today, Washington continues to neglect Brazil's attempt to block foreign access to the South Atlantic as the US operates in the area both with its Navy's fourth feet and its Africa Command (AFRICOM).

The revitalization of ZOPACAS is closely linked to past and present military engagement of NATO countries in the South Atlantic, such as the 1982 Falkland War between the UK and Argentina as well as the current US presence in the region. ZOPACAS should therefore be especially highlighted as a soft-balancing measure because it clearly denies North Atlantic states military access to the South Atlantic as a "mare brasiliensis", a Brazilian Ocean (Abdenur et al. 2016: 1119).

Abdenur et al. (2016: 1115) describe Lula's effort to revive ZOPACAS in the post-Cold War setting as a method of negative integration, "geared at dividing the Atlantic into North and South [rather] than at integrating the Western and Eastern shores of the South Atlantic". ZOPACAS can therefore be regarded "as an instrument to expand regional leadership, to delineate a renewed trans-regional space, and to balance NATO and the US" (Abdenur et al. 2016: 1126). Bruno Reis (2015: 235) agrees that "ZOPACAS was conceived as a counterbalance to NATO". Similarly, Nathan Thompson and Robert Muggah (2015) believe that "[t]he unstated goal […] was to minimize external meddling [in the South Atlantic], especially by NATO."

MERCOSUR, UNASUR, and ZOPACAS follow Foreign Minister Amorim's logic that "the more we cooperate [in the region], the lesser space we will leave for undue foreign interference" (quoted in Abdenur et al. 2016: 1124). The integration projects therefore

illustrate that Brazil has been advancing regional cooperation in order to restrict possible US and NATO engagement in South America and the South Atlantic.

In addition to limiting the US's physical, commercial, and political presence in the region, Brazil has undermined US influence in global governance through institutional balancing, "a complement to soft balancing [that seeks] to bind a target state into international institutions in which they can constrain their behaviour ('inclusive institutional balancing'), or [to] consolidate unity against a target state by excluding it from international institutions ('exclusive institutional balancing')" (Stephen 2012: 295).

Brazil has applied inclusive institutional balancing when it strengthened the UN's juridical and parliamentary structure in order to restrain the unipole (Soares de Lima/Hirst 2006: 28). Brasília also formed coalitions within existing international organizations to challenge North Atlantic leadership, for example when Brazil actively organized the G20 group of developing countries in the WTO (not to confuse with the G20 group of major economies) to protest US and European agriculture subsidies. Together with India and South Africa, Brazil was able to "determine the institutional agenda in order to influence emerging international norms in favour of their interests" during the WTO's Doha Round (Flemes 2009: 166). These efforts complemented Brasília's aims to build soft-balancing coalitions to limit North Atlantic countries' influence in international organizations while pushing for wider representation of the Global South, and labeling the minor US and European concessions to the developing world as Nazi propaganda, as Amorim did in 2008 (Brands 2011: 31).

In addition – and similar to Brazil's regional efforts – Brazil had been engaging in exclusive institutional balancing by creating new international organizations that exclude the US while duplicating existing institutions. Analysts often point to the BRICS as a means to coordinate initiatives aimed at constraining US influence (Skak 2011: 6-7, Gratius/Grevi 2013: 2). For example, by creating the New Development Bank, the BRICS provided an alternative to US- and European-led development initiatives and

financial assistance, thereby decreasing the leverage of North Atlantic countries on the developing world.

Analysts agree that Brazil's engagement in IBSA follows similar aims: by pushing South-South trade liberalization and sector cooperation as a response to perceived European and American protectionism, Brazil was engaged in economic strengthening while restricting North Atlantic countries' access to the Global South (Stephen 2012: 301, Flemes 2009: 166).

As part of Brasília's active diplomacy, Brazil has also built close relations with US adversaries, such as Venezuela, Cuba, and Iran – and to an extent even Libya – for example by providing loans, cooperating in infrastructure projects and maintaining close diplomatic relations. By supporting the "Axis of Evil" – as George W. Bush famously titled rogue US adversaries – Brazil was helping individual states to showcase international support for their actions, making it harder for the US to discredit them in the international community. The support for US adversaries was also deeply entrenched in Brazil's foreign policy leadership, such as chief foreign policy advisor Garcia, whose affection for the political and economic models of Cuba and Venezuela is widely acknowledged.

Brasília has also been undermining the US's and Europe's authority as chief negotiators of the nuclear deal with Iran (Skak 2011: 6). Together with Turkey, the Lula Administration was negotiating directly with the Iranian regime to agree on measures to de-escalate the conflict over Iran's nuclear program.[25] Thereby, Lula sidelined and frustrated the North Atlantic states' leadership in nuclear security issues. In addition, as Schweller (2011: 294) explains, a deal between Iran and Brazil/Turkey would have made it "less likely that Russia and China […] support tougher sanctions against Iran in the UN Security Council" because it makes the "sanctions against Iran look like a Euro-Atlantic

[25] While Turkey has been an important NATO ally since 1952, one should note that Ankara's strategic interests in the Middle East may diverge with those of other NATO states. Concerning the deal with Iran, Turkey agreed to physically handle the fuel swap, while Brazil took on the role of a mediator as Brasília's civil nuclear ambitions are similar to those declared by Teheran (Diehl/Fujii 2010).

initiative". Thereby, Brazil used its diplomatic clout to undermine both North Atlantic countries' leadership in nuclear policy as well as their stated sanctions policy against a hostile Iranian regime.

Brasília has also been raising political costs of US military engagement by setting a higher threshold for the legitimacy of US military actions. Brazil was among the staunch critics of the US's Iraq war, condemning the US of disrespecting the UN's authority (Skak 2011: 6). As Brands (2011: 33) notes, Brazil's behavior "indicates a classic soft-balancing technique, one meant to set a high threshold for the legitimacy of U.S. military action and thereby raise the diplomatic costs should Washington decide to employ its military might unilaterally".

When NATO overstepped its mandate in Libya, Brazil even introduced the RWP norm in order to restrain US and European interventions by creating higher compliance standards in the context of humanitarian missions (Burges 2013a: 580) Of course, one could question whether Brazil's diplomatic pressure had any tangible influence on the international community's perception of US engagement abroad, but speaking out against US military engagement and introducing new norms follows the logic of aiming to limit Washington's actions through diplomatic pressure and international law.

The evidence suggests that Brazil had been soft balancing against the US because Brasília's actions fulfill the criteria laid out by Pape (2005: 17), Paul (2005: 59), and Walt (2009: 104): During the case study timeframe, the global unipole – the US – had become of growing concern because it undermined international law that is pivotal for Brazil as a means to restrain great powers from inflicting on its interests. At the same time, the unipole could not simply be replaced as a major source of public goods, for example to protect the international sea lines of communication and uphold economic stability. Brazil's actions made it harder for the unipole to advance its goals, but they did not leave much space for the unipole to retaliate. The actions also fit the soft-balancing logic as they involved coordination among two or more states in areas directly related to

security, such as in the case of ZOPACAS and the opposition to US- and NATO-led military operations.

Therefore, scholars have argued that Brazil's actions towards the US can be classified as soft balancing (see: Flemes 2009, Brands 2011, Skak 2011, Franko 2014). For example, Flemes (2009: 176) argues that "Brazil pursues a soft balancing approach to the major powers with its coalition partners India and South Africa in the IBSA, or G3, forum". Franko (2014: 5) agrees that "[Lula's] goal was to increase Brazil's 'weight' in international affairs through coalition-building in order to 'soft balance' against powerful Northern structures that he saw as detrimental".

Neoclassical realists, such as Brooks and Wohlforth, may question these conclusions because they argue that the intent of a state's behavior needs to follow the causal mechanism of the Balance of Power and Balance of Threat theories. Whether Brazil's actions – from negative regional integration to diplomatic assertiveness – were designed with the specific aim of restricting the military prospects of the unipolar leader remains subjective. Any of Brazil's actions could be traced back to other political and economic interests, for example the influence of the military to push for defense investments or the principle to deny foreign powers access to South America, which also caused skepticism towards Russia's engagement in Venezuela (Helbig 2013: 5).

However, the Balance of Threat theory follows the neorealist logic with a *systemic focus on threats*. This implies that states engage in balancing behavior as a result of external forces that are perceived as threats rather than unit-level interests. While this dissertation aims to apply neoclassical realism that takes into consideration unit-level forces as intervening variables, Walt's original theory was designed to explain state behavior as a result of system-level forces only.

Therefore, the conclusion that Brazil had been soft balancing the US and NATO is based on Brazil's external threat perception as a result of the unipolar order and assertive US policies that undermine Brazil's security, instead of the unit-level analysis focusing on the specific intent of policymakers to engage in actions to restrain the unipole. While

critics of the soft-balancing concept may question whether Brazil was soft balancing the US given additional motivations that guide Brazil's behavior, Walt's theory proves true in its systemic origin.

In addition, even if Brazil and the US enjoyed a predominantly positive relationship during the Lula Administration, a close economic and political partnership does not exclude the possibility of soft balancing because a soft-balancing strategy follows the goal of restraining the unipole's unilateral military actions and increase the general costs of using extraordinary power. Hereby, Brazil could do both prosper from close economic relations with the US, while ensuring that the unipole upholds international institutions that serve Brazil's interests. One should also note that soft-balancing strategies have been attributed to a number of close US partners, including NATO allies such as Germany and France, which illustrates that states can commit to close cooperation with the unipole while aiming to restrain it. Consequently, taken together all of Brazil's actions that fall into the soft-balancing categories, it can be concluded that Brasília had been soft balancing against the US and NATO during the case study timeframe.

5.3.2. Brazil's NATO policy and the Balance of Interests theory

This section explores whether Randall Schweller's Balance of Interests Theory can explain the roots of Brazil's NATO policy. Based on Brasília's foreign policy during the case study timeframe, this analysis aims to categorize Brazil according to Schweller's animal types reflecting the country's interest in the status quo or revisionism: a staunch status-quo-supporting "lion", a soft status-quo-supporting "lamb", a limited-aims revisionist "jackal", or an unlimited–aims revisionist "wolf" (Schweller 1994: 101-104). Interest in the status quo will be defined as preserving the unipolar world order; interest in revisionism shall be indicated by denouncing the distribution of capabilities as well as challenging the formal and informal rules of the major institutions in the international system. Brazil's alliance behavior – based on the bandwagoning for profit (not security) concept – will be applied to test whether Schweller's predictions correspond with Brazil's opposition to NATO.

Determining Brazil's interest in upholding the status quo or revising the unipolar system is not clear-cut. This goes back to the dichotomy of Brazil's identity as a rising power interested in supporting the global system that enables it to rise, and the country's neocolonial mindset interested in a systemic revision to overcome barriers set by the developed world. Therefore, Brazil is undertaking the balancing act of being a participant and challenger of world order at the same time (Cervo 2010: 9). Lula illustrated this contrasts when he participated in both the elite World Economic Forum and the anti-capitalist World Social Forum within the first months of his term (Stolte 2015: 80-81).

In addition to its overall schizophrenic character, Brazil's international posture underwent a systemic shift during the case study period: Triggered by the most significant economic crisis of its history, Brazil adjusted its foreign policy interests, transforming from a limited-aims revisionist "jackal" to a soft supporter of the status quo. Nevertheless, Brasília's critical stance towards NATO remained. Given this situation, the following section will shed light on the applicability of Schweller's Balance of Interests Theory to explain Brasília's policy towards NATO.

5.3.2.1. 2001-2014: Brazil, the jackal

> "Brazil is at war, a diplomatic war, with a clear strategy and coherent tactics, against the unipolar world. Nothing personal against the United States, but entirely against a single power hovering above all, in every area." – Commentary in *Folha de São Paulo*, one of Brazil's most influential daily newspapers (quoted in Brands 2010: 50)

As Brazil showcased a remarkable rise during the first decade of the 21st century, the Lula Administration was confident enough to question the unipolar world order and to undermine the institutions that uphold it. Brazilian policymakers made clear that they viewed it to be necessary for their country to challenge the international US-led system in order to remove barriers to Brazil's own development (Christensen 2013: 271). Schweller agrees that the "Brazilian elites […] describe the Western global order [as] an imposed

order ruled by powerful Anglo-Saxon states, which use international institutions and arbitrarily enforced rules to control weaker, non-Western states" (Schweller 2011: 293).

Frustrated with being left out of the core decision-making circle of global governance institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, Lula himself explained that "it is of no value being invited to the dessert at the dinner of the powerful" (quoted in Stolte 2015: 55). Foreign Minister Amorim declared that Brazil "will not simply bow down to the evolving consensus if we do not agree" (Schweller 2011: 294), calling for "a certain reconfiguration of the world's commercial and diplomatic geography" (quoted in Brands 2011: 31). Ambassador Antonio Patriota asserted that "the days of the Monroe Doctrine are over" (quoted in Brands 2011: 41), referring to the era of US predominance in Latin America. And Ambassador Guimarães pronounced multipolarity to be the principal goal of Brazilian foreign policy (Rodriguez 2012: 85).

It should be acknowledged that Lula's concerns about the setup of the international system follow the traditional Brazilian foreign policy outlook. Ramalho (2015: 76) explains that as far bask as the 1960s, Brazilian policymakers "denounced the UN charter as a document concerned with peace and power, rather than justice, and the Security Council, in tandem with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, as a tool to freeze the distribution of power on the world stage". He argues that while Brazil aims to uphold a rules-based system, the country also aims to reform institutions and processes (Ramalho 2015: 72).

However, the Lula Administration distinguished himself from prior ones in that it did not only voice its opposition to the status quo, but actively worked towards a conceptual revision and the practical reform of major multilateral institutions (Soares de Lima/Hirst 2006: 22). Based on the conviction that Brazil's role in global politics did not match the country's position in the international distribution of power, and given that current US-led regimes do not simply reform themselves, Brazil aimed to revise the order by pushing for better representation of developing countries and creating new norms to restrain US hegemony in existing international organizations. Brasília also formed new regional and

international coalitions that work parallel to existing ones, thereby building greater autonomy of the Global South and undermining US-led organizations. Burges (2013b: 288) agrees that Brazil aimed "to reform international institutions with a view to substantially realigning the relative power configuration in the international system and retarding the sort of active, interventionist international institutions sought by the North Atlantic countries".

In his opposition to the North Atlantic status-quo alliance, Lula rejected George W. Bush's offer to extend then-G7 membership to Brazil because the "price for a seat at the top table was too high" (Schweller 2011: 293). Instead – with the goal of transforming the global order (Christensen 2013: 274) – his Administration denounced US predominance, for example during Amorim's twenty-four visits to the Middle East "arguing that the United States is no longer the 'indispensable nation' in the region" (Schweller 2011: 293). Brazil rejected fundamental institutions of the status-quo order, such as the NPT and the setup of the UN Security Council, denouncing the imbalance of power. As such, Lula even related his opposition to the current world order to race, blaming "white people with blue eyes" to be the cause of the 2008 international financial crisis (quoted in Grice 2009).

In its quest to reform the system, Brazil teamed up with other rising powers that share Brasília's interests. Together with India, as Flemes (2009: 167) points out, Brazil was among those states with the most active complainants under the WTO dispute settlement mechanism. He further notes that IBSA shares the views that "the current international economic and financial architecture has not served the interests of the poor in developing countries"; instead, the current system has led to "an increase in income inequality, both within and across emerging markets" (2009: 166-7). Similarity, Matthew Stephen (2012: 309) believes that "IBSA powers pursue an institutionally reformist (or limited revisionist) agenda, and even-out some of the power imbalances favouring the developed North within these institutions". Therefore, IBSA collaborates for "systemic revisionism aim[ing] to create a multipolar system" (Flemes 2009: 167).

Similarly, Brazilian participation in BRICS can be regarded as a way to "counter the hegemony of the industrialized states of the North Atlantic ambit", as Kenkel (2015: 113) argues. The senior Brazilian diplomat Marcos Azambuja (2010: 30) confirms that "[t]he Group was born because the preexisting power structures did not encompass the member countries in a satisfactory manner and because the changes in the geometry of international life called for revision of the makeup of the directing bodies that express world power".

Brasília's efforts to build stronger South-South relations should also be regarded as a manifestation of revisionist politics. Stolte (2015: 73) explains that "Brazil increasingly turned to a North-South discourse, presenting itself as a member of the Global South and denouncing imbalances in power and wealth within the international society". Stünkel (2010: 118) agrees that "Brazil's foreign policy is the result of the traditional 'rich vs. poor' dichotomy habitually adopted by Brazil's Workers Party's (PT)". Brazil utilized its new role as a leader of the Global South to form coalitions in international organizations to oppose perceived inequality, for example by forming the G20 developing nations to counter North Atlantic protectionism (Cervo 2010: 11).

Given Brazil's dissatisfaction with and vocal opposition of the status quo, as well as the country's active role in reforming the international political and economic system, one can conclude that Brazil constituted a limited–aims revisionists "jackal": dissatisfied with its position but nevertheless valuing its possessions; ready to pay high cost to defend its status quo, and even higher ones to expand (Schweller 1994: 103). The country would not fall into the "wolf" category because Brazil's reformist ambitions would not qualify for Schweller's description of following reckless expansionist politics (1994: 104). In addition, Brasília's revisionist claims are clearly limited as Brazil only demands to change the system where the country "expects an increase of power vis-à-vis stronger players", according to Flemes (2009: 177). Brazil's selective revisionist claims and its alliance choices tilted towards cooperation with emerging powers and the Global South, while maintaining relatively good commercial relations with the North Atlantic countries and sharing diplomatic ambitions with other status-quo states (such as Japan to gain a

permanent UN Security Council seat), provide further reasons to classify the country as a limited-revisionist "jackal".

Though one may claim that "Brazil [was] simply doing too well economically and is too secure politically within the existing system to want any real change to the structure of the international system" (Burges 2013b: 298), Brasília nevertheless denounces the status quo of the distribution of capabilities within the international system. From a realist judgment, this falls into the revisionist camp because Brazil is concerned with the redistribution of power, working to alter the unipolar world to become a multipolar one. Therefore, while institutionalists may claim that Brazil actually aims to strengthen the status quo by updating the system's existing structures to fit the current distribution of power, realists would base their categorization of Brazil as a limited-revisionist aims country on Brasília's goal to reform institutions in order to expand its power within the zero-sum power system.

This conclusion is confirmed by the assessment of leading regional specialists and political science scholars. Brand (2011: 29) concludes that "[u]nder Lula, Brazil followed a multilayered grand strategy that emphasized a gradual yet significant revision of the international order". Leonardo Valente Monteiro (2014: 186) classified Brazil's policies as "moderate autonomous revisionism". Stephen (2012: 296) asserted that Brazil "attempts [to] undermine the hegemonic consensus". Miriam Gomes Saraiva (2017: 6) believes that Brazil envisions a "non-hegemonic scenario with limited rules and a pluralistic international system of sovereign states" instead of the North Atlantic desire to follow a normative global order. And Kenkel (2015: 112) explains Brazil's desire for an active role in international security with its "revisionist view of international institutions".

Júlio César Cossio Rodriguez (2012: 84) published a whole journal article concluding that – according to the Balance of Interests theory – "the most relevant image for [Brazil] is that of the Jackals, as they are dissatisfied with the status quo and tend to take advantage of systemic opportunities“. In his doctoral theses, Rodriguez (2013: iii) also proved that Brazil adopted a limited revisionist strategy.

Schweller (2015) would agree that Brazil's classification of a "jackal" is in alignment with his description of limited-aims revisionists as "regional powers that seek either compensatory territorial adjustments to reflect their increased power, recognition as an equal among the great powers, or changes in the rules and decision-making procedures within, but not the basic norms and principles of existing regimes". He himself declared that "[t]hough it is thriving within the current international order, Brazil is nonetheless the most revisionist of all the emerging powers" (2011: 293).

In addition, the bandwagoning-for-profit logic holds true for Brazil that chose to side with the revisionist alliance for material benefits. As Burges (2013a: 577) notes, "self-interest […] lies at the core of Brazilian foreign policy and drives its attitudes to the development of international regimes and the conduct of global governance". Brasília opposes US and European leadership in international institutions on the premise that North Atlantic states set barriers to Brazil's development. Assuming that they hinder Brazil from tapping into its potential, Brazil aims to move beyond being a source of cheap agricultural goods and natural resources by opposing North Atlantic trade regimes and setting high import barriers to develop its own industries.

Therefore, even if Brazil is sacrificing short term profits by enacting protectionist measures – e.g., by increasing consumer prices (the famous *custo brasil* – the "Brazil cost"), forgoing foreign investments, and funding special tax regimes and business development programs out of government pockets – it aims to serve Brazil in the long term to build an autonomous industrial sector to achieve greater independence from the goodwill of the US and European states. After all, Lula's foreign policy leadership believed in the "greater projection of the country internationally and the maintenance of foreign policy flexibility, [including an] 'active development policy', 'collaboration with countries of similar interests' and the need to 'articulate a national project focused on overcoming domestic social imbalances' " (Soares de Lima/Hirst 2006: 25).

By advancing trade with emerging countries and the Global South, the Lula Administration similarly aimed to develop trade relations autonomous of US and

European influences. Hereby, Brazil benefited particularly from its relationship with China that became Brazil's single largest trading partner during the commodity boom. Brazil also achieved profits through trade with developing countries in Africa, potentially yielding significant long-term benefits. Stünkel (2010: 118) explains that "[a]part from strengthening Brazil's reputation in the developing world, Brazil is seeking to access new markets and promote Brazilian companies such as Petrobras (oil), Vale (mining), Odebrecht (engineering and construction) and Embraer (aviation). Aside from agricultural products, the Brazilian government believes that demand in developing countries for Brazilian biofuel could grow strongly in the future". Therefore, Brazil's shift towards diversifying its economy by investing in relations with the Global South also follows Schweller's reasoning that states bandwagon for profit.

5.3.2.2. 2014-2016: Brazil's economic crisis and the transformation of its interests

Brazil's limited-aims revisionist policy proved to be successful as long as its premises maintained valid. Rodriguez (2013: iii) identified three conditions for Brazil to adopt a limited revisionist strategy: perceived changes in the distribution of capabilities on the systemic level, the existence of an emerging revisionist actor to establish political and economic relations with Latin America (China), and an increase of material capabilities within Brazil. These prerequisites made it profitable for Lula to predominantly side with the revisionist alliance.

But as the US and Europe recovered from the 2008 financial crisis, commodity prices slumped, China's demand for resources decreased, and corruption scandals hit Brazil's political and business elite, Brazil fulfilled none of Rodriguez's conditions for following revisionist policies any longer. Put differently, Lula's prospects for a multipolar world in which Brazil would constitute one of the poles faded as his assumptions of a waning US as well as the high economic and political value of Brazil's relations with BRICS, Africa, and the Arab World turned out to be unfeasible.

Certainly, as Cervo and Lessa (2014) argue, Dilma already displayed a lack of interests in Lula's grand projects and faced decreasing investor confidence during her first term. Brazil had already become primarily focused on short-term economic gains through bilateral technical partnerships with practical value, rather than on continuing the quest for changing the unipolar world order (Gomes Saraiva 2017: 3). While Rodriguez (2012: 85) argued in 2012 that the changes of the Dilma government in favor of its traditional axis (with the USA and Europe) already illustrated Brazil's turn away from revisionist policies, one can most clearly observe the shift in policy when that 2014 economic crisis accelerated Brazil's decline on the global level.

Of course, Brazilian policymakers did not suddenly denounce their claim for multipolarity and better representation in international organizations, but in the light of their country's failure to uphold its international commitments, these goals became very distant prospects. Brazil simply could not sustain its diplomatic engagement (e.g., leaving embassies nearly empty and failing to pay its share in international organizations), much less invest in new regional and international initiatives (e.g., illustrating little initiative to expand the role of UNASUR and IBSA, and to further invest in South-South relations).

Instead, the Dilma Administration adjusted her foreign policy behavior to the new realities, approaching its old North Atlantic partners as outlined in the description of Dilma's foreign policy after the economic crisis above (e.g., restoring relations with US after the NSA scandal; pushing to conclude the EU-MERCOSUR free trade agreement; exchanging high-level visits with Europe; launching new infrastructure programs as well as cooperating on the Zika virus, the FIFA World Cup, and the Olympics with the US and Europe, rather than with the BRICS or Global South; increasing military-to-military cooperation with the US).

Therefore, as the relative capabilities of the unit "Brazil" started to decline, the changing strategic environment on the systemic level forced the Dilma Administration to reconsider its alliance choices. In turn, one can observe that Brazil's interests in the maintenance of the international system changed from revising the system to implicitly

supporting the status quo, as reflected in Brazil's move back towards working closer with the status-quo powers of the North Atlantic.

The system-level development was reinforced by Brazil's domestic situation. In the 2014 runoff against her political competitor Aécio Neves, Dilma was re-elected as President with less than 52 percent of the votes. Given this slim margin and the looming economic pressure, Dilma installed a new foreign and trade policy leadership that was more inclined to work with the US. When the Petrobras corruption scandal hit the country and Dilma's approval rating almost dropped below the country's inflation rate, the President was forced to accept economically feasible options, rather than striving for the grand goals of Brazilian diplomacy. Of course, Brazil did not suddenly turn its back on its newly gained partners, but Dilma grasped that it was no longer feasible forgoing profits from cooperation with the status-quo countries for the sake of bandwagoning with the revisionist alliance.

As Brazil moved from the revisionist to the status-quo camp, it is no longer possible to place the country into one of Schweller's animal categories. This is because Brazil clearly does not represent a "lamb", which the Balance of Interests theory defines as a weak state and considers prey. Neither does Brazil distance or hide itself "in order to be eaten last", nor does the country "bandwagon to appease greater powers", "ride on the wave-of-the-future", or "seek protection from the stronger side" (Schweller 1994: 102).

Rather, Brazil could be considered an injured "jackal" that needs to be fostered by the "lion" and his followers before rebelling against the master of the jungle in the future again. After all, Brazil adjusted its alliance choices for opportunistic reasons rather than giving up its intrinsic interests as a regional hegemon to gain an adequate position on the international level, allowing the country to shape it according to its interests. This explanation also fits Brazil's historic love-hate relationship with the US, shaped by the alternation of Brazil's desire for profit from the cooperation with Washington on the hand, and the frustration over unfulfilled demands on the other.

5.3.2.3. Brazil's interests and its policy towards NATO

Unlike its shifting interests and alliance choices after the 2014 economic crisis, Brazil did not adjust its policy towards NATO. Until the end of the Dilma Administration, Brazil has continued to denounce the Alliance, citing the same arguments as during the Lula era (see: "5.2.4. Brazil's NATO policy"). Brazil still opposes NATO on the grounds of its sovereignty concerns and suspicion of US and European-led interventions. While the Brazilian forces have expressed interest in working with Alliance, the continued opposition of the Brazilian government has blocked any meaningful cooperation.

As Brasília picked up its trade and even bilateral military-to-military cooperation with North Atlantic countries for economic prospects, but continues to oppose NATO as an organization politically, Brazil is bandwagoning for profit and soft balancing for security at the same time. Rodriguez explains that the motivation for increasing material profits while avoiding losses in security are the basic motivations of these behaviors.

In fact, Brazil has been balancing NATO as a means to follow a profitable security strategy rather than opposing NATO as part of bandwagoning with a revisionist alliance. Therefore, Schweller's Balance of Interests Theory that links alliance choices to a country's interests in the status quo or revisionism, driven by a bandwagoning-for-profit logic, falls short at explaining Brazil's opposition to NATO.

One should note that Brazil's opposition to NATO is not unprofitable, despite forgoing the potential practical value of a partnership with the Alliance, including insights into NATO's interoperability standards and experiences in peace support operations, as well as possible burden sharing in maintaining security in the South Atlantic. This is because if Brazil cooperated with and thereby supported the Alliance, the country would undermine its own economic interests for two main reasons: First, based on Brazil's perception of NATO as an offensive actor in international politics, cooperating with the Alliance would hurt the maintenance of the international legal order, including the principles of sovereignty and collective security. Second, based on Brazil's threat perception towards the US and NATO, allowing the Alliance to operate in the South

Atlantic or South America would require Brazil to step up its investment in deterrence. In other words, by working with NATO, Brazil would sacrifice its relatively inexpensive security strategy – upholding international law and regional autonomy – leading Brasília to have to invest more in its security than it would gain from cooperating with NATO.

Of course, many North Atlantic policymakers and analysts may argue that Brazil's fear of NATO engagement in the South Atlantic and South America is unfounded, and that NATO is a strong defender of the rules-based international order. However, based on the research for this dissertation, one can conclude that Brazilian policymakers have a different view of NATO, regarding the Alliance as a threat to their country's security, which makes the gains from opposing NATO more profitable than the potential benefits of cooperating with the Alliance.

This calculation is complemented by the wish to maintain political flexibility and to maintain close relations with emerging powers and developing countries that often view NATO as the military component of the unipole's strategy to uphold the unfair status quo. Therefore, the principal decision not to sign on to the North Atlantic security agenda serves to uphold political autonomy and allows for maintaining good relations with diverse actors in international relations.

In addition, opposing NATO does not compromise Brazil's ambitions in the defense sector because NATO as an organization does not produce or sell any defense materiel; and Brazil has been able to undertake its most strategic defense production projects with NATO allies, such as France. There is also no indication that Brazil's political opposition to NATO's security aspirations hurts Brazil's massive small arms sector or its internationally renowned aircraft industry.

Therefore, Brazil's opposition to NATO can indeed be explained by Brasília's rational profit calculation: many benefits and little opportunity costs. However, Schweller bases his theory on the *bandwagoning*-for-profit argument (to *cooperate* with an alliance), while Brazil's behavior towards NATO rather fits a *balancing*-for-profit argument (to *oppose* an alliance). This is because Brazil's opposition to NATO is not a result of

Brasília's bandwagoning strategy with a revisionist alliance, but rather a logical consequence of Brazil's calculations in the light of its threat perception.

Though Schweller (1999: 17) acknowledges that states can follow several strategies simultaneously, such as when the Soviet Union balanced, bandwagoned, and buck passed in regards to Germany at the same time prior to WWII, his Balance of Interests theory is not refined enough to predict parallel alliance patterns. Therefore, his theory may seem valid during the Lula Administration when Brazil's revisionist ambitions correlated with its opposition to NATO as a status-quo alliance, but it fails to provide the causal link between bandwagoning for profit and opposing NATO at times when Brazil follows an agenda that supports the status-quo alliance, such as after the 2014 economic crisis.

Applying the logic that revisionist states bandwagon with the revisionist alliance, and status-quo states bandwagon with the status-quo alliance neither explains Brazil's simultaneous bandwagoning and soft-balancing strategy towards the North Atlantic countries and NATO respectively during the later years of the Dilma administration. Nor could it have explained Brazil's opposition towards NATO's Kosovo campaign in the late 1990s when Brasília was arguably bandwagoning with the US during the Cardoso Administration. At the time, Brazil opposed NATO's engagement in Kosovo because the Alliance violated Brazil's sensitive interests in upholding sovereignty and collective security, rather than because of a bandwagoning alliance with Russia as an opportunistic move to gain material profits.

Therefore, one can conclude that Schweller's Balance of Interests theory cannot explain Brasília's policy towards NATO as a military organization because it differs from Brazil's profit-driven strategy towards the North Atlantic markets. Profit aspirations may explain Brazil's policy towards NATO, but the Balance of Interest theory does not.

5.3.3. Brazil's NATO policy and status competition as an intervening variable

The goal of this section is to determine whether Brazil has been following a social mobility, social competition, or social creativity strategy during the case study time frame and to test whether this strategy serves to explain Brazil's NATO policy by applying it as an intervening variable to the systemic considerations from the previous sections. The analysis aims to examine whether Brazil's status strategy deviates or reinforces the systemic predictions of the Balance of Threat and Balance of Interests theories, providing a more complete picture of Brazil's motivation to denounce NATO.

5.3.3.1. Brazil's status in world politics: role conception and place in the status hierarchy

Brazil's *complexo de grandeza* – the Portuguese phrase for complex of greatness – has been a defining feature of the country's foreign policy, historically and especially since Cardoso displayed a more active foreign policy (Stolte 2015: 54). Larson and Shevchenko (2014: 48) explain that Brazil's quest to become recognized as a great power is based on the country's size, natural resources, and economic potential. Stolte (2015: 7) agrees and points out that Brazil has been following a tradition of "aspir[ing] to gain great power status", for example in the aftermath of WWII, when the country's policymakers were "especially concerned about Brazil's international prestige, therefore sought to establish Brazil as the first speaker at the UN General Assembly" (2015: 51). But similar to the question about how Brazil should achieve autonomy, there is no consensus about which path Brazil should follow to achieve its goal to become a great power (Soares de Lima/Hirst 2006: 24).

Defining great power in terms of capability, willingness, and status attribution by others, Volgy et al. (2014: 73-74) doubt that Brazil will achieve great power status in the next decades based on their assessment of Brazil's military spending, GDP, diplomatic contacts, as well as the country's cooperative or conflictual engagement outside of South America – criteria the authors of the study have defined as components of major powers

from a realist point of view. They believe that Brazil will therefore not reach major power status such as the US, the UK, France, Russia, and China (and at points in history Japan and Germany). Because of the gap between Brazil's goal and its actual position in the ranking of the criteria above, Brazil can be classified as an underachiever.

Nevertheless, Brazil is among the "strongest of the regional powers" (Volgy et al. 2014: 59). Given that states compare themselves to similar but higher ranked competitors in the international status hierarchy, Brazil's reference states are major powers – notably all permanent members of the UN Security Council, three of which are also part of NATO.

5.3.3.2. Brazil's status strategy: the gentle giant

During the case study timeframe, Brazilian policymakers had been actively trying "to raise Brazil's position in the global hierarchy of states" (Christensen 2013: 247). Given that Brazil is not likely to catch up with the major powers on the traditional status criteria listed above, they had to find creative ways to promote their country's status in different categories. By the end of the Lula era, Brazil seemed to be on the right path towards gaining recognition as a "grand country" (quoted in Stolte 2015: 54). In fact, when Brazil was announced to be the host of the 2016 Olympic Games, Lula famously declared that Brazil has finally moved from being a "second-class to a first-class country" (Stolte 2015: 38). While one may question Lula's conclusion, it is worth examining his strategy to raise Brazil's international profile, which had been a major driver behind his foreign policy.

As an emerging power, it would be counterintuitive to follow a social mobility strategy because following the established great powers would be a humiliating signal of subservience to them, "annulling decades of Brazilian diplomatic efforts to affirm its autonomy vis-à-vis the US" (Reis 2015: 244). Brazil therefore rejects a strategy similar to middle powers such as Australia and Canada that arguably gain status by associating themselves with US-led regimes (Burges 2013b: 298).

In addition, it is not feasible to expect that Brazil would suddenly achieve its goal to become accepted among the permanent members of the UN Security Council because the great powers have demonstrated little permeability into their status dimensions. It should also be noted that parts of Brazil remain underdeveloped, which makes it unfeasible to promote the country among the advanced economies. As Carranza (2014: 9) put it, "[i]t is difficult for a state to be recognized as a great power when millions of its citizens live below the poverty line". Since it seems unfeasible for Brazil to enter either the political great power clubs or the economic elite, Lula did not even attempt to follow a social mobility strategy by imitating the dominant states' values and ideology.

Instead – as the previous sections of this chapter have made clear – Brazil's leadership has often been "siding against the established powers [thereby reflecting] aspirations for enhanced global prestige" (Stephen 2012: 308). However, one should not take all soft-balancing and revisionist measures as an indication of a social competition strategy because close observation reveals that Brazil had been opposing great powers not with the aim to challenge them in their superior domains, but in order to display alternative leadership strategies that may lift Brazil's standing in new status dimensions. After all, as Flemes (2009: 163) notes, "[t]he Brazilian government and in particular the diplomats of the foreign ministry Itamaraty are aware, for instance, that Brazil still cannot compete with the established great powers". Because Brazil had demonstrated little to challenge great powers in geopolitical terms or to spoil the international security order such as North Korea has done, it can be concluded that Brasília also did not follow a social competition strategy.

This leaves the option to classify Brazil's status strategy as status creativity: to lift its status through reevaluating the meaning of negative characteristics and finding new dimensions in which the country is superior to others (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 40). Instead of changing the hierarchy, social creativity suggests achieving a higher place in a different ranking system, often entailing the creation and promotion of new norms and institutions, the development of distinct agendas, and the emphasis on the country's unique contribution to the international community and its distinct identity. This often

goes hand in hand with charismatic leaders who establish a high diplomatic profile (Larson/Shevchenko 2010: 75).

This strategy is especially attractive for emerging powers because by defining new dimensions, they hope to be granted status as they do not challenge, or dilute, the status of existing great powers (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 35). It is also a way to advance status without having to match great power capabilities or subordinate itself to other states. Although social creativity is a relatively inexpensive strategy to gain recognition, emerging powers still need to undertake some investments in hard power and prove leadership potential in traditional domains in order to be granted status by great powers who continue to value these attributes (Wohlforth 2009: 55).

Indeed, Brazil had been following a social creativity strategy: After the country opened up to the liberal international order under the Cardoso presidency, it displayed a foreign policy very independent from other major powers (Volgy et al. 2014: 75). Former Foreign Minister Amorim explained that while "[i]ssues related to international peace and security—some might say the 'hard core' of global politics—remain the exclusive territory of a small group of countries", Brazil was no longer willing to ask for "permission to act in international relations" (quoted in Stolte 2015: 55). Pecequilo explains (2010: 138) that "Brazil was no longer trying to 'belong' to the First World, but to reaffirm its place as a leader of the emerging nations".

By building coalitions, introducing norms, and taking leadership in international initiatives, Brasília established itself in status dimensions, such as international justice, diplomatic conflict resolution, and environmental leadership. In addition, Brazil was active in advancing its political power base as a regional leader and responsible actor in international security. Thereby, the country was able to reevaluate the meaning of negative characteristics and find a new dimension: Brazil exploited its lack of hard power to promote itself as a just, peaceful, and diplomatic mediator across the international political spectrum; the country also gained recognition as a bridge between the Global North and South in relatively new policy dimensions such as environmental leadership.

As Lula greatly diversified his country's foreign relations, Brazil was able to raise its profile as an important actor among non-major powers through actively participating in elite clubs of emerging countries (e.g., BRICS and IBSA), intensifying South-South relations (e.g., leading the G20 in the WTO Doha Round), and partaking in cultural and linguistic initiatives (e.g., the Community of Portuguese Language Countries - CPLP). By framing foreign policy issues such as international governance reform and trade disputes in terms of justice, Brasília was able to gain recognition by pushing the agenda of developing countries (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 50-1). Simultaneously, Brazil aimed to showcase a new development model at home through social programs, such as the anti-poverty scheme *Bolsa Família*, lifting tens of millions out of poverty. Thereby, Brazil became a model for developing countries on the one hand, and took on the special position as bridge country on the other one (Burges 2013a: 579).

Larson and Shevchenko (2014: 51) explain that "Brazil serves as a bridge between the industrial and the developing world in climate change negotiations", thereby maintaining importance to both the Global North and South. Brazil's role as a mediator between the poor and rich states, along with its natural endowment and biodiversity, enabled Brasília to become the facilitator and leader of several international environmental initiatives, such as the UN Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change. Leading by example, Brazil greatly expanded its protected areas, reduced deforestation in the Amazon, and pushed renewable energy production to make up over eighty percent of its domestic energy consumption. Former high-ranking diplomat Rubens Ricupero believes that "Brazil has everything to be an environmental power, which is, by the way, the only area in which our aspiration to be a great power is realistic" (quoted in Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 51).

Ricupero also explains that "Brazil wants to be recognized as a global diplomatic player" (quoted in Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 50). And similarly to utilizing its role as a political bridge between the Global North and South, Brazil had been "[c]apitalizing on [its] racial

and ethnic diversity, [providing a basis for] Lula's 'rainbow diplomacy'[26] [that] led to numerous diplomatic forays in Africa and the Middle East" (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 50). As Amorim put it, "Brazil's great skill is to be friends with everyone" (quoted in Franko 2014: 5). This allowed Brazil to take on a "moderating role in several cases of internal political instabilities, such as the case of Venezuela after the 2002 coup and that of the domestic socio-political instability in Bolivia in 2003" (Christensen 2013: 277). One should also add Brazil's attempt to broker a nuclear deal with Iran and mediate between Arabs and Israelis.

Burges (2013a: 593) explains that "Brazil's approach is essentially one of coalition formation, aimed at compensating for its deficiencies in respect of hard power military and economic credentials with its ample ability to generate ideas that are operationalized through diplomatic flair and a capacity to mobilize or derail initiatives requiring a larger southern voice". Dilma's Foreign Minister Patriota made clear that Brazil aims to showcase peaceful, diplomatic and cooperative alternatives to US- and European-style resolution of international disputes that often involve sanctions and at times even military force (Leahy 2013). By denouncing the use of force, engaging in diplomatic initiatives, while taking a leadership position in the Global South and acting as a bridge to the Global North, Brazil was able to differentiate itself from traditional spheres of power politics, offering value for both small and great powers, and taking on important roles in new status dimensions, for example as an environmental power.

At the same time, Brasília was taking on more regional and international responsibilities to prove its potential as a major power, employing a mix of traditional and novel leadership styles. Without reciting what has been described at length in the previous sections, one should not underestimate the importance of Brazil's quest for regional leadership as a step towards gaining great power status (Herz 2011: 173). For example, Flemes (2009: 168) points out that Lula created SADC to "consolidate the regional power

[26] Rainbow Diplomacy: "to cooperate with the largest possible number of countries and regions in the world" (Hale 2014: 5).

status of Brazil and support its ambitions to become a permanent member in the UN Security Council". Similarly, Patriota suggests that Brazil reinvented ZOPACS to increase external recognition, underlining that South Atlantic cooperation under Brazilian leadership should have "visibility before the entire world" (quoted in Abdenur et al. 2016: 1124). Carranza (2014: 1) also believes that Brazil used its "regionalist project (Mercosur, UNASUR) as a launching pad to gain admission to the great-power club". Stolte (2015: 58) agrees that Brazil's aimed to utilize "its regional neighborhood as a power base. […] Gaining Regional Power status has thus been rather a strategy to reach further objectives than a goal in itself".

While one may question Brazil's leadership abilities and its neighbors' willingness to sign on to Brasília's agenda, Stolte (2015: 68) explains that regional leadership played a large role in Brazil's strategy to gain recognition by the US: "Lula [was] keen to present Brazil as a responsible Regional Power and partner of the United States". Referencing cables of the US Embassy in Brasília, Stolte (2015: 68) highlights that "Lula reflected on his role as a guarantor of stability in South America, his desire to have a closer relationship with President Obama and the new U.S. Administration, and his ultimate goal of having Brazil recognized as a major world power".

Parallel to integrating the region under Brazilian leadership, Brasília aimed to establish itself as an actor in international economic cooperation and security policy, thereby mirroring developed countries' behavior, while aiming to redefine the way they are handled to showcase Brazil's distinct value for the international community. For example, Stolte (2015: 75) points to Brazil's demand-driven approach to international development assistance, "react[ing] to direct demands from the partner countries instead of imposing programs on them [… focusing] primarily on technical cooperation, sending Brazilian professionals to partner countries and receiving missions by them to demonstrate successful social programs and transfer their so-called social technology". Brazil applied a similarly pointed and demand-driven approach to its military aid, for example when its forces helped building up Namibian navy (Abdenur/Marcondes de Souza Neto 2013: 11).

By the end of Lula's term, the level of Brazilian development aid rose to impressive numbers: between 2005 and 2010, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency invested about $1.25 billion into humanitarian aid, scholarships, as well as R&D and technical cooperation (Ramalho 2015: 79). In fact, Brazil became the largest lender and donor in its region, even greater than the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (Christensen 2013: 276), helping the country to strengthen its regional influence and proving their ability to take independent action.

Brazil's greater engagement in UN Peacekeeping Operations also served the ends of proving international responsibility and showcasing different *modi operandi*. Christensen (2013: 278) explains that "sending troops to Haiti can be understood as a message to the United States that Brazil is able to share political and economic costs related to peace missions". Kenkel (2015: 107-8) believes that Lula saw his country's "ability to project readiness for increased international responsibility" as key for gaining more power in the UN because "[w]hoever defends new paradigms [development and security models] in international relations cannot be absent from a concrete situation".

In addition to proving its ambitions to shape international security regimes, Kenkel (2015: 109-10) explains that Brazil "attempt[ed] to develop a specific Brazilian, Southern, form of peacebuilding as a counterproposal to the liberal-democratic Northern model that pervades the UN approach today […] This model couples Brazilian penchant for negotiations and peaceful conflict resolution with the country's traditional focus, both internally and in foreign policy, on sustainable economic development". Amorim asserted that "this Stabilization Mission [MINUSTAH in Haiti] is different from previous ones, and in our own understanding, should be based on three pillars: the promotion of stability; the establishment of dialogue between the different political factions; and the institutional, social and economic empowerment of the country. There will be no reconciliation or peace in Haiti unless we adopt this integrated perspective" (quoted in Rodriguez 2015: 151). Based on this approach, Brazil applied its soft power and experiences from home to win over the local population as allies in implementing sustainable solutions to the countries problems.

For example, Brazil kicked off its engagment in Haiti with a football match – a "peace game" – between the Brazilian and Haitian national football team, which was considered to be a "masterpiece of soft power" to win support from the Haitian population for the Brazilian-led mission in their country (Rodriguez 2015: 151). In addition, Brazil was able to utilize its unique capabilities, such as pacifying slums and gang-controlled areas, and involving Brazilian NGOs to broker peace agreements between rival groups. According to Sergio Aguilar, this "Brazilian culture in peace operations" stands out through the emphasis on negotiations and the focus on building positive relations with the local society – often key conditions for building sustainable improvements in the area of public security and economic development – which also distinguished Brazil's engagement in Angola and East Timor (Rodriguez 2015: 152).

By focusing on poverty reduction, social justice, and public security, Brazil aimed to differentiate itself from traditional great power activities in the developing world: "Brazil did not intend to exert power [but to] demonstrat[e] its willingness and capability to contribute to global problem solving and international order", Stolte (2015: 7) explains. Thereby, Brazil distinguishes itself from other rising powers such as India that follows a model of military power (Carranza 2014). Brazil's "softer" approach to security and interference in foreign countries also helps to balance its general antagonism to foreign interventions on the one hand, and its non-indifference to humanitarian crises on the other one (Rodriguez 2015: 151).

To complement Brazil's social creativity strategy, the country invested in status symbols, which at least partly fall into what Pu and Schweller (2014: 151) categorize as conspicuous consumption to satisfy ideational needs because they serve officials to justify their country's status, they are not security related, and they are not cost-efficient. Furthermore, these status signals fall into the category of what Thompson (2014: 220) defines as "big S" – signals that concern fundamental questions of status hierarchy, rather than matters of minor diplomatic protocol. During the case study timeframe, Brazil had been engaging in conspicuous consumption of status symbols that signal the country's desire for a higher status in the diplomatic, cultural, and security realms.

In order to expand Brazil's diplomatic clout, the Lula Administration opened 77 new representations (Stolte 2015: 66). Although they were often understaffed, without a clear mission, and left without a budget after Brazil's economic crisis, Brasília was able to showcase its engagement in South-South relations by pointing to the fact that it established more representations than any former colonial powers in Africa. In addition, Stolte (2015: 66) points out that the Brazilian government applied for "candidacies for leading posts at international organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Food Organization (FAO)". While increasing international representation and taking leadership in international regimes serves the national interest in many ways, Brazil's effort to raise the profile of its diplomats should also be regarded as a way to increase the country's visibility on the diplomatic stage and to showcase its new status in managing global governance.

In addition, the Brazilian government was keen on hosting the most prestigious summits and events, including the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development (the largest UN conference ever at the time), the Catholic 2013 World Youth Day, the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and the 2016 Olympic Games. Not only did these occasions provide incentives for infrastructure development, but also for bringing influential people to Brazil and for becoming the center of media attention for years in a row.

Brazil simultaneously focused on upgrading its military capabilities in order to gain prestige among the great powers. Duarte (2015: 211-2) assumes that "Brazil may pursue ambitions to become a global maritime power, as a 'ticket' to an established role as a credible player in great politics". Most significantly, Brazil invested $3-4 billion for the development of a nuclear-powered submarine, supposedly to ensure security in the South Atlantic. [27] While an assessment of Brazil's maritime capabilities and possible challenges

[27] The exact amount spent on this project is difficult to determine because the deal with France to build the nuclear-powered submarine was a package deal to build four more conventional submarines and to buy 50 helicopters. In 2014, Brazil's Federal Court of Accounts (TCU) "analyzed the Navy's submarine development program (PROSUB) […] to build conventional submarines at a R$10,5 billion [currency:

goes beyond this case study, it is questionable whether this investment was the most economical option for Brazil to protect its coastline and natural resources in the Blue Amazon, rather than, say, amphibious assault ships.

Instead, one may assume that Brazil aimed to invest in the nuclear-powered submarine as a status symbol to join the elite club of countries that possess such capability, including the US, the UK, France, Russia, China, and India. As the chief of staff of Brazil's navy explained in 2008, "[t]hose who have nuclear submarines sit on the United Nations Security Council … We have to develop our own" (quoted in Brands 2011: 32). Even President Dilma referred to the fact that all permanent members of the UN Security Council possess this capability when she inaugurated the submarine's construction shipyard just outside of Rio de Janeiro in 2014 (Lisboa 2014).

Clearly, Brazil's 2014 economic crisis limited the country to invest in status symbols, but none of Brazil's new diplomatic representations were officially closed, all of the planned mega-events took place, and the military held on to its prestige projects. And while the Dilma Administration became less active in attempting to mediate international conflicts, Brasília did not indicate changing its course to represent itself as a pacific leader and bridge country.

Taken together, Brazil has been notably active in showcasing its potential as a responsible and capable stakeholder to the international community. It is beyond this study to evaluate Brazil's success in elevating its status, but one can conclude that the Lula and Dilma Administrations have followed a social creativity strategy. Hereby, Brazil was able to establish itself as a leader in novel dimensions, gaining recognition "based on new criteria of diplomatic skill, coalition-building success, and norm entrepreneurship" (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 52), always with the focus of its distinct position as a diplomatic mediator with a manifold identity.

Brazilian Real] cost, plus a nuclear unit (another R$8,9 billion) as well as a naval base and a shipyard to build and maintain said submarines (R$ 7,8 billion)" (Degenar Drumond 2015).

But if Brazil was aiming to gain prestige as a peaceful broker in international affairs, one may ask why the country has also copied the behavior of major powers by taking leadership in major military operations, hosting fancy mega-events, and investing billions of US Dollars into the development of its nuclear-powered submarine. In other words, if Brazil wants to engage in status creativity, why is it following some of the same old status strategies that states have been employing for centuries to become major powers?

Simply put, gaining prestige in a new status dimension is not enough to become a great power, which remains Brazil's end goal. Recognition as a diplomatic broker, bridge country, or environmental power serves as a stepping stone, but it cannot completely compensate Brazil's deficiencies in the hard power categories. As Wohlforth (2009: 55) explains, states need sufficient material capabilities to convince other powers of the states' higher status on a different scale.

Since Brazil's lack of military capabilities puts the country far behind the major powers, Brasília aimed to overplay the gap by investing in especially visible projects, such as taking on leadership in peacekeeping missions in which it vocally promoted its distinct way of managing conflict. While one may criticize Brazil's submarine investment on the ground of "bang for the buck" to manage Brazil's security concerns, it is hard to imagine a more visible project for Brazil to gain prestige among the world's major military powers.

5.3.3.3. Brazil's status creativity strategy and its policy towards NATO

This final section aims to analyze whether the country's denouncement of NATO is in alignment with Brazil's social creativity strategy, and if or how Brazil's status strategy serves as an intervening variable that influences Brasília's policy formulation towards the Alliance.

At first sight, it seems that by denouncing NATO, Brazil followed a social competition strategy towards the Alliance. This is because some of Brazil's actions could be classified as geopolitical competition, for example reviving ZOPACAS to deny access for NATO

to the South Atlantic. However, *competition* presumes a contest between rivals; but NATO is not engaging in any contest with Brazil in the South Atlantic. Brazil's claims for autonomy in the South Atlantic can be regarded as part of the country's security strategy, rather than a way to stage a geopolitical contest to gain prestige.

Instead, Brazil's opposition to NATO is grounded in the country's outlook on the organization's nature as a military alliance with a track record of engaging in offensive and illegal interventions, relying on military force, nuclear deterrence, and sanctions as a means of enforcing the interests of the North Atlantic countries. Led by some of the great powers in international politics, the Alliance represents the antipode of Brazil's goal of excelling as a bridge between strong and weak countries, acting as a mediator to ensure diplomatic and peaceful resolutions of international disputes.

Reciting a Brazilian diplomat, Kenkel (2015: 115) points out that Brazil denounces NATO's belief in the utility of military force to attain humanitarian goals: "Brazil has been very different, leading the county to seek to make its contribution in a form more coherent with its own capabilities and priorities: through development cooperation, poverty reduction and an emphasis on social justice rather than military alliances". Cervo and Lessa (2010: 6) agree that Brazil's conflict solution strategy "is the opposite of NATO's strategy of dealing with conflicts through the violence of sanctions or intervention, which has governed international relations since World War II and should be replaced for the sake of peace". Put simply, Cervo (2010: 8) believes that the Chinese-Brazilian settlement dispute strategies stand out because of their peaceful means of diplomatic negotiations, while NATO's is marked by violent means of intervention and sanctions. Burges (2013a: 594) also believes that Brazil's "approach to international issues differs markedly from that found in traditional powers in the North, which have a reputation for often using a blunt stick and a very small carrot to gain consent".

In addition to Brazil's opposition to NATO's conflict resolution strategies, Soares de Lima and Hirst (2006: 38) explain that Brazil even opposes the Alliance's prevention measures because "Brazilian political and intellectual circles do not value military

deterrence as a source of international and/or regional prestige. […] Brazilian diplomacy, which has been built up upon a culture of mediation and the pacific resolution of disputes, has reinforced a sense of territorial satisfaction".

However, these explanations seem hypocritical considering Brazil's policy towards other actors in international relations that rely on much more offensive and violent means for managing conflicts and enforcing their interests as NATO does. Considering Russia, for example, the Kremlin has annexed foreign territory in Crimea, supported violent rebels in the Donbass, and backed the inhumane Assad regime. Iran has been sponsoring the Houthi rebels aiming to overthrow the Yemenite government. And China has been inflicting on the territorial integrity of its neighbors in the South China Sea by claiming territory on dubious grounds. Though all of these measures deserve criticism by a state aiming to establish itself as a pacific leader, defender of Westphalian sovereignty, and denouncer of the coercive enforcement of interests, Brazil has mostly turned a blind eye to on its allies in Moscow, Teheran, and Beijing, singling out North Atlantic countries and especially NATO for its criticism.

This suggests that Brazil's status strategy and subsequent opposition to NATO is driven by more than the Alliance's image as an offensive actor, relying on military force, nuclear deterrence, and sanctions as a means to enforce its interest (because arguably Russia and China also fit this category). One could point out intervening variables related to status signaling at the unit and systemic level that help explain the specific denouncement of North Atlantic countries and NATO rather than a consequent criticism of countries that do not meet Brazil's declared pacific standards.

On the unit level, the Brazilian government clearly had an interest in signaling its independent rise as a great power towards various factions of the Brazilian population: the industrialists that were able to realize massive projects in new markets abroad (often funded by the state-owned bank BNDES); Brazil's diplomats committed to the "autonomy through diversification" strategy which mostly means breaking their strong ties with the US to engage in closer partnerships with other regions of the world; as well

as the lower and upcoming middle class electorate that were not only experiencing a new pride in their country, but also viewed Brazil's international rise as a promise for their own economic opportunities. Here, denouncing the way North Atlantic countries handle international conflicts was just a minor component of the Lula Administration's grand rhetoric, showcasing that Brazil was finally gaining an independent and important voice in international politics on its way to assuming its greatness – with the connotation that Brazil is achieving its goal without the help of the "gringos" that have followed a legacy of undermining Brazil's interests. In other words, denouncing the major components of the US-led world order added to Brazil's success story and sold well among the domestic signaling audience, whereas criticizing Russia, China, or Iran – let alone its friendly neighbor Venezuela – would not have had the same effect.

On the systemic level, Brazil was in fact utilizing its relations with Russia, China, Iran, and Venezuela to create new high-status clubs (BRICS, IBSA), establish itself as a global mediator (the Iranian nuclear deal), and building its continental power base (South American integration projects including Venezuela). Brazil does not view emerging powers, Latin neighbors, or the Global South as obstacles to assuming its greatness, but as necessary components of its status creativity strategy, rainbow diplomacy, and bridge-building activities. It is also a cost-effective strategy to form alliances with states that find themselves in the same dilemma of lacking international recognition (such as Russia after the Cold War), rather than continuously trying to gain access into rigid elite clubs. It would therefore be counterintuitive to denounce these actors in international politics, although they do not follow the high standards Brazil sets for evaluating North Atlantic countries' policies.

One can conclude that Brazil's status creativity strategy – the country's aim to gain status in new dimensions – provides a strong explanation for why Brazil opposes NATO. Thereby, status competition reinforces the positivist explanations linked to security and long-term profit, especially because status bears utility to enhance power by conferring privileges with the prospect of making Brazil more secure and prosperous.

It is evident that because of the ideational nature of status linked to state identity, status competition provides little room for positivist predictions of alliance formations: Without understanding the notion of the US and NATO in Brazilian domestic politics and foreign policy, it would be hard to foresee Brazil's opposition to the Alliance and simultaneous friendship with Russia on the ground of Brazil's concerns about conflict management strategies.

This also means that the consideration of status strategies towards NATO shed light on the Alliance's ideational component in the eyes of Brazilian policymakers that treat North Atlantic countries as scapegoats for Brazil's lack of international recognition, and reflect upon NATO as a proxy of these states. Moreover, the antagonism towards the North Atlantic Alliance reflects the frustration over Brazil's historical dissatisfaction with the US and the consequences of great powers' omission to confer status to Brazil.

5.3.4. Further explanations for Brazil's NATO policy

Although this chapter is concerned with the applicability of the variables threat, interests, and status for Brazil's NATO policy, it would be incomplete not to mention robust alternative explanations for the origins of Brazil's antagonism towards NATO to inspire further research into the multifaceted case.

Innenpolitik might play a more significant role because of the influence of domestic factions on foreign policy. Not only had the country been governed by a leftist administration during most of the case study time frame, but neocolonial and developmentalist elements are deeply ingrained in much of the foreign policy elite's thinking. Soares de Lima and Hirst (2006: 22) argue that "[f]oreign threats and risks are perceived to be driven basically by economic and not military/security motivations. The main external vulnerabilities are economic, and foreign policy has always had a strongly developmentalist component". Franko (2014: 1) agrees that in addition to "traditional security concerns, Brazil is particularly attentive to the returns from investments in technology and the social sector for national security". In this regard, economic returns play a significant role in Brazil's military-industrial complex, influencing the country's

foreign and defense policy. Frustrated with the refusal of the US to transfer military technology, for example, commercial interests may add to the opposition to NATO in Brazil's drive for developing an autonomous defense industry.

One may also consider a constructivist approach to the historically strained relations between Brazil and the North Atlantic countries because Brazil's threat perception towards the US and Europe is based on their engagement in South America and the South Atlantic, and therefore rooted in historical experiences. Starting from the time of its independence in 1822, Brazil has been concerned with outside powers undermining its territorial integrity, as Reis explains (2015: 232-4): Historical incidences of maritime confrontations occurred frequently, for example during the 1860s Christie Affair when Great Britain showcased the use of force, blockading the harbor of Rio de Janeiro out of frustration that Brazil continues to import slaves. The uninvited Gunboat USS Willington took a provocative voyage through the Amazon in 1900 without the authorization of Brazilian authorities. Disputes over fishing rights with France at the maritime border with French Guiana caused serious show of force during the 1960s Lobster War. And the 1982 Falkland War between the UK and Argentina proved that North Atlantic powers continue to enforce their interests through coercive measures in Brazil's backyard. Therefore, viewing NATO as a potential threat to its sovereignty can also be understood as a reflection of Brazil's historical experiences.

5.4. Conclusion

Of the two tested independent variables, Brazil's threat perception serves best to predict the country's alliance formation in regards to NATO. Given the country's sensitivity about sovereignty due to its weak position – its vast size and relatively few capabilities to protect itself – and its perception that North Atlantic countries undermine its strategic interests, it is rational for Brazil to engage in soft balancing to restrain the US and NATO, which could be predicted by Walt's Balance of Threat theory.

Brazil's interest in the status quo or revisionism does not serve as a reliable indicator for the country's NATO policy because the relatively short-term choice to engage in

opportunistic bandwagoning with either the revisionist or the status-quo alliance does not alter Brazil's intrinsic interests guided by its strategic position in the international system. Given Brazil's potential and self-conception, the country's greater goal remains the accumulation of power in order to become an individual pole in the international system. Since NATO is a US-led political-military organization at its heart, serving to uphold the unipolar order, opportunistic bandwagoning choices for economic profits do not greatly affect the cost-benefit calculation of Brazil's greater strategy towards NATO in international relations. In other words, the economic climate does not substantially Brazil's long-term interests as long as it does not change the country's strategic position as the regional hegemon in a relatively stable regional and world order. Brazil will most likely remain a "jackal" at heart, opposing NATO for its manifestation of the US-led world order, even though it recognizes the necessity to bandwagon with the status-quo alliance at times – something that the Balance of Interests theory would not predict because it is based on the assumption that states' strategies in international politics are guided by bandwagoning for profit, rather than balancing for security or even balancing for profit.

Brazil's status aspirations add important aspects to understand Brazil's greater goal. The country's struggle to elevate its ranking in the international status hierarchy suggests that Brazil values the utility of status in world politics. This becomes clear considering Brazil's goal of becoming a great power, for example by being accepted as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, without formulating specific objectives of what the country might do once it has obtained a higher status. As Stolte quotes an official of the US Embassy in Brasília "Brazil's objective in achieving a seat at the table on many global issues seems to stop at the seat itself" (Stolte 2015: 78). Therefore, one can consider Brazil's status aspirations as a means to gain power through the manifold utility of status, rather than as a means to engage in global governance reform. Status as an intervening variable therefore adds to the positivist and systemic considerations in that it provides yet another way of accumulating power and subsequent security without direct investment in military capabilities.

In the case of Brazil, status considerations do not actually deviate, but reinforce the country's threat perception and interests towards NATO: As a status underachiever, Brazil is not concerned with the threat of losing status, but with the obstacles that hinder the country from gaining recognition. Therefore, Brazil may regard the influence of the US and NATO in South America and the South Atlantic as a threat to its regional leadership, which Brasília views as an essential launching pad to become a great power, providing yet another reason to oppose the North Atlantic Alliance as a potential actor in Brazil's backyard. One can also add that Brazil's effort to signal its long overdue rise as a great power to its domestic audiences serves as a reinforcement of its vocal denouncement of US primacy and NATO as an organization that carries the connotation of US imperialism. In addition, one should mention the creation of new international clubs, such as BRICS and IBSA, as part of Brazil's status creativity strategy to provide the country with additional incentives to display itself as an opponent of institutions that uphold the current way of conducting world politics. Therefore, Brazil's status aspirations reinforce the country's systemic interests to denounce NATO.

Lastly, Brazil's status strategy offers valuable clues about NATO's ideational dimension, carrying a distinct connotation of the North Atlantic country's legacy of interfering in Brazil's sphere of influence, and serving as a proxy for the US-led world order. It is therefore striking that Brazil can commit itself to strategic partnerships with individual NATO members, including projects at the core of Brazil's defense strategy, while denouncing NATO as an organization in international politics. Thereby, Brazil aims to achieve security and status goals without damaging the profitable relations with the Alliance's member states.

The comprehensive analysis of Brazil's foreign policy over time provided the chance to discover changing patterns, such as before and after the 2014 economic crisis, as well as different standards applied to the conduct of specific actors, such as NATO and Russia. The evidence was able to reveal that Brasília's NATO policy during the case study time frame had been driven by the country's response to sovereignty threats, opposition to the US-led world order, and the aim to achieve a higher rank in the international status

hierarchy by differentiating itself from the traditional great powers. This also suggests that Brazil has been concerned with advancing its relative security by aiming to maximize its own power, while restricting the global unipole and its alliances: by building on an inexpensive security strategy, the prospects of a revised world order, and the utility of status to gain power on the one hand, and by soft balancing against the US and NATO to restrict their infringement on Brazil's security interests on the other one.

Evidently, the Brazilian Bossa Nova legend Tom Jobim was right when he constituted that "Brazil is not for beginners" – but it certainly makes for an interesting case study.

6. The origins of Colombia's NATO policy

Endowed with a strong democratic and capitalist tradition, a strategic geographic location, and vast natural resources, Colombia seems to have great potential for economic development and leadership in the region. But given the inability to control the country's vast territory – measuring over three times the size of Germany, and marked by mountain and jungle terrain – a violent struggle for power among and between government and non-government actors has led to one civil war after another since its independence. The most recent one lasted over five decades, cost over 220,000 lives (over eighty percent of whom were civilians), and displaced at least 6.5 million people.

A defense official proudly declared that *security* is deeply ingrained in Colombia's DNA.[28] The genes seemed to finally have kicked in when former President Álvaro Uribe built on US support to lead a successful military offensive against narco-terrorist and Marxist guerrilla groups, establishing a presence in formerly neglected parts of the country to finally attain the monopoly of force. Uribe's legacy led to what has been coined as the Colombian success story that marks the country's transition from an almost failed state to an example of achieving security and development, reaching its climax when President Manuel Santos signed a peace accord with the FARC to terminate the oldest and cruelest armed conflict in the whole of the Western hemisphere – which was also a significant step to finally overcome the Cold War legacy in Colombia.

The domestic developments have had a tremendous impact on Colombia's foreign policy because they allowed Bogotá to transform its virtually exclusive focus on the US as the main ally in the fight against drugs and guerrillas towards building new relationships with diverse actors to benefit from untapped opportunities for economic development and for gaining recognition for Colombia's achievements.

The following sections will discuss the details of Colombia's unique identity, foreign policy traditions, and evolving foreign and security policy strategy between 2001 and

[28] Interview with a Colombian defense official in Bogotá, May 2015.

2016 based on government documents, empirical evidence, and expert interviews. The results will serve as the basis for evaluating Bogotá's NATO policy by applying the alliance theories to be tested in this study, which will allow for further conclusions about their validity in the context of Colombia.

6.1. Colombia's place and role in the world

6.1.1. Colombia's self-conception

As one of the happiest nations on earth, Colombians are quite optimistic about the future; but given their country's conflict-ridden past, they are aware of their rocky path towards development. Since the country's founding, Colombian policymakers have been engaged in constant state building – with limited success: the country remains intrinsically fragile because of its political, legal, economic, social, and geographical setup. The political elite and the population are split between the left and the right, similar to the times of the Colombian Civil War in the 1860s, the Thousand Days' War at the turn of the 20th century, and the period of *La Violencia* during the 1950s. Corruption from the lowest to the highest levels of government remains a structural problem. By the 2020s, as Colombia's oil reserves are predicted to deplete, over a quarter of the country's exports will break away. Colombia does not only continue to rank under the top twenty most unequal countries, but also under the top twenty most dangerous ones considering the staggering murder rate, even after the peace agreement with the FARC. And the country is poised by rough geography and poor infrastructure that makes it three times as expensive to ship a product from the Caribbean city of Cartagena to the capital of Bogotá than from Cartagena to Shanghai.

If that was not enough, the legacy of terrorists and private armies that have been controlling large parts of the Colombian territory leaves the country considerably fragmented and the government with limited sovereignty over its own state (Ramírez Montañez 2017: 191, Richani 2007: 403, Diamint 2004: 50). One may trace the root of this problem back to the dividing geography of the mountains or to a weak national mythology without a central founding story that is supposed to tell you what it means to

be Colombian. Most prominent, however, is the explanation that the concentrated distribution of land has provided regional caudillos with political authority, with the ability to build private armies, and consequently with the sovereignty over large parts of the Colombian territory, later shared with guerrillas and the narco-bourgeoisie (Richani 2007: 405). James A. Robinson (2013: 44) compares these structures to colonial times, when the "national political elites residing in urban areas, particularly Bogotá, have effectively delegated the running of the countryside and other peripheral areas to local elites". He argues that "[d]rugs, mafias, kidnappers, leftist guerrilla groups, and 'rightist' paramilitaries certainly have exacerbated the country's problems, but the problems all have their source in the nation's style of governance". Referring to the words of the famous Colombian writer R.H. Moreno Duran, Robinson (2013: 44) notes that "in Colombia, politics corrupts drug dealing".

Though the sovereignty over Colombia's foreign policy seems to be relatively concentrated in Bogotá, one may claim that at times in the past the Colombian Coffee Federation has had more influence over the country's foreign relations than the Colombian government itself. Arlene Tickner (2007: 96) explains that Colombia has been a traditionally low profile actor in international relations during the 20th century. Initially, after the independence of Spain, Colombia was active in the international arena and confident because of its strategic geographic value between the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean, vast natural resources such as gold and emeralds, and the world's greatest biodiversity for a country of this size. But since the loss of Panama in 1903 (more about this event in the following section) – one of Colombia's most significant foreign policy failures – the "Syndrome of Panama" has diminished the country's confidence and led Bogotá to develop an introverted posture towards international politics.

Since then, the Colombian government has mostly been relying on its special relationship with the US, which is generally accepted among its population (Vargas-Alzate 2016: 44, Tickner 2007: 97) – unlike in most other Latin American countries, where commentators describe Colombia as the Israel of South America and depict Bogotá as an American Trojan Horse (The Economist 2010).

Positive domestic developments since the beginning of the 21st century revived the confidence of Colombian policymakers to move beyond the shadow of the US by repositioning its country on the international stage. As the Colombian military – with significant support of the US – was able to substantially weaken the Marxist guerrilla groups and to force the FARC into peace talks with the government, advancement in security brought about economic development, leading to an average of 4.3 percent GDP growth between 2007 and 2015, decreasing the unemployment rate, expanding social benefits, and a shrinking the poverty rate from 42 to 28 percent since 2008 (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017: 7). Suddenly, Colombia has developed from a conflict-ridden state at the edge of collapse into a promising economy, joining the CIVETS[29], a group of emerging economies coined by the finance industry similar to the BRICs.

These developments fueled the confidence of Colombian foreign policymakers, who view their country to be in the position to contribute to the international community through its unique experiences, having overcome the struggle for peace and gained significant attention for its economic potential. Thus, Bogotá has been searching for opportunities to become more active in global and regional governance, for example by actively "exporting security" to Central American states where Colombian forces provide services to strengthen their neighbors' security apparatus. Bogotá has also been engaged in the building of the Pacific Alliance, a free trade block with its economically liberal-minded neighbors Mexico, Peru, and Chile, representing a counter-model to the Brazilian-led rather-protectionist MERCOSUR.

Beyond its pro-security and pro-trade, Caribbean and Andean identity, almost six out of ten Colombians identify themselves first and foremost with Latin America as a whole and "believe the region should be prioritized in their country's foreign policy" (Onuki et al. 2016: 444). Bogotá's policymakers have built on their country's geographical, cultural, and ideological ties across the Americas to "[project] itself as a bridge country that employs a multiple links strategy to bring together diverse geopolitical interests,

[29] Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, and South Africa.

countries and institutions that are generally seen as leading in different directions – for example, NAFTA and Mercosur, or the United States and Cuba in the OAS" (Flemes/Castro 2016: 88). This also reflects the hemispheric outlook of Colombians who generally do not divide North and South America, but view the two continents as one unit, and thus reject the notion of Americans being citizens of the US rather than of any other nation in the Americas. In addition to the country's role as a hemispheric bridge, Colombia also utilized the Pacific Alliance to build a bridge between Latin America and Asia to foster trade, investment, and even political dialogue between the regions (Pastrana Buelvas 2016: 189).

To sum up, as Colombia continues to invest in state building at home, the country's role in the region and on the international stage is also evolving. The improving security environment and growing economy have fueled the country's confidence to shake up its image of being a drug exporter and banana republic, portraying itself as becoming a responsible stakeholder in international politics, reliable business partner, and example of positive change for other developing countries. With these goals in mind, Colombia has expressed eagerness to diversify its foreign relations without denouncing its special relationship with the US.

6.1.2. Classifying Colombia in the regional and international order

Placing Colombia into a suitable limited regional framework that meets the country's rapid development throughout the case study timeframe is difficult given its manifold geographic affiliations (a Latin American/South American/Caribbean/Pacific/Andean country), the country's tight relations with the US, as well as Bogotá's political projects to act as the bridge country of the Americas, while reaching out to emerging economies, and developing its relations with old European and new Asian partners.

In Colombia's regional security context, however, the main players are easily identifiable: Venezuela as the main threat because Caracas has been assisting Colombia's domestic enemies, has been ramping up its defense capabilities while portraying the Colombian government as a foe, and has been exposing the region to political instability

with potential consequences of mass migration; Ecuador as a limited threat because it has also provided safe haven for guerrilla groups; Brazil as the regional hegemon which provides challenges and opportunities; and the US as Colombia's traditional ally. Other countries in the region do not represent a major force in Colombia's regional security outlook, beyond pointed military cooperating (such as with Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador), as well as clashes over special interests (such as with Nicaragua over the San Andres and Providencia archipelago) and over ideological legacies (such as with Cuba).

Internationally, Colombia's security outlook is limited to specific regions where the country had been active in the past or where Bogotá has found partners to manage challenges at home. In Europe, for example, linguistic ties have made Spain the to-go-to partner to conduct joint military training, and a history of defense sector cooperation has made Germany a reliable partner in the maritime sphere. In Asia, South Korea has been Colombia's traditional ally, which stems from the participation of Colombia as the only South American country on the side of the Allied forces in the Korean War in the 1950s. While these contacts served as a starting point for the Santos Administration to diversify its foreign relations, they merely play a role in the regional context and in the hard security issues that Colombia has faced in the light of its internal war against the guerrillas and the external threat of the unpredictable sister nation Venezuela[30] next door.

Colombia's influence itself remains limited, even within its region (Forigua Rojas 2012: 318). As the country can be classified as one of four South American secondary powers (Flemes/Castro 2016: 79) – next to Argentina, Chile and Venezuela – Colombia "can disrupt the [regional] system, but not change it, through unilateral action" (Lobell et al. 2015: 148). Colombia can help "shaping the conditions of the Brazilian global rise" (Flemes/Castro 2016: 79), but as the sole regional power of South America, Brazil will remain the center of the system in which other powers balance around it. However,

[30] Both Colombia and Venezuela used to be part of Gran Colombia (together with Ecuador, Panama, northern Peru, western Guyana and northwest Brazil) after Simón Bolívar achieved independence from Spain.

Colombia bears more impact on the regional order than the middle powers Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, which can only affect the order by acting in concert (Lobell et al. 2015: 148-9).

Therefore, the case study will treat Colombia as a regionally centered secondary regional power that cannot possibly replace Brazil as the regional unipole. Colombia's strategy to improve its security and/or power in the given system shall be subject to the case study that tests Bogotá's threat perception, interests in the status quo or revisionism, and status strategy.

6.2. On Colombia's foreign and security policy

6.2.1. Colombia's foreign policy principles

Inspired by Colombia's commitment to international law and its role as a regional actor, the country's 1991 constitution includes the principle guidelines for the country's executive to manage external relations:

> "The foreign relations of the State are based on national sovereignty, on respect for the self-determination of the people, and on the recognition of the principles of international law approved by Colombia. In the same manner, the foreign policy of Colombia will be oriented toward the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean." (Republic of Colombia 1991: Art. 9)

Given the vagueness of these directions, Colombia's foreign policy has become very personalized and it is generally "regarded as improvising, lacking coordination, and based on no or limited information" (Monroy/Sánchez 2017: 250). Tickner (2007: 98) explains that decisions are made out of a small network directed by the President and points out that 72 percent of the Foreign Ministry's staff are political appointments rather than trained diplomats. Because of Colombia's war-ridden past, the Defense Ministry also plays a significant part in foreign policy decision making – not because it has been engaging in inter-state wars, but because Colombia has been depending on foreign

military assistance to achieve security at home (Diamint 2015: 56). The impact of the Congress and participation of society in foreign policy is low.

As the constitutional guidelines are rather slim for a comprehensive analysis, the following sections will provide evidence for the theoretical analysis later in this chapter by representing an overview of Colombia's foreign policy traditions and explaining recent developments during the case study timeframe.

6.2.2. Colombia's foreign policy doctrines and its steady alignment with the North Star

As the hemispheric hegemon and international unipole, the US has been playing a major role in Bogotá's foreign policy outlook for over a century. One could trace the roots of Bogotá's strategic partnership with Washington back to Colombia's independence from the Spanish Crown in 1819, but most analysts point to the loss of Panama in 1903.

Until then, Panama was a province of Colombia – a remnant of Spanish colonialism that remained under Bogotá's rule after the collapse of Gran Colombia. What triggered the separation of Panama was a disagreement between Bogotá and Washington over the construction of an interoceanic canal through the then-Colombian department. The Herrán-Hay Treaty of January 1903 between the Colombian and American governments fell short of the Colombian Senate's expectations, which did not agree to give up sovereignty over the canal to the US. In turn, Washington took advantage of Colombia's fragile domestic situation the at the end of its Thousand Days' War to support the Panamanian independence movement militarily, which allowed the US to negotiate directly with the new Panamanian state and to build the interoceanic canal.

The loss of Panama, one of the richest and most strategic regions of Colombia – a "geostrategic loss", as César Augusto Bermúdez Torres (2010: 189) called it – removed Bogotá's ability to manage interoceanic transit and turned Colombia into a rather introverted country. The event happened in times of US expansionism and confirmed that the US was the rising power of the region. With this notion in mind, Colombian

policymakers took the decision that it was in their best interest to align with the US, rather than standing up against the much greater power to the north.

It may seem counterintuitive that the US's "theft" of Panama led Bogotá to suddenly embrace its relationship with Washington, but it opened the Colombians' eyes about their own weight and the growing influence of the US in the region. The 1914 Urrutia-Thompson Treaty, through which the US compensated Colombia for the loss of Panama with a payment of $25 million, paved the way for diplomatic reconciliation and for the beginning of what President Marco Fidel Suárez coined the *respice polum* doctrine: to look to the North Star, symbolically referring to the US (Camacho Arango 2010: 176).

As a result, Colombia developed a one-sided special relationship with the US in which Bogotá submitted itself to Washington, carried by a domestic bipartisan consensus (Camacho Arango 2010: 177). In turn, the US sided with Colombia diplomatically, for example by backing Colombia's territorial claims over the San Andrés and Providencia islands against Nicaragua (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 196), and supported Colombia economically, displacing the British as the biggest investor (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 199). During the Cold War, anti-communist sentiments cemented Bogotá's commitment towards the US (Tickner 2007: 96) and Colombia became the largest recipient of US development aid and the second largest recipient of US military aid after Brazil (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 205).

It was not until the Presidency of Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-70) that Colombia took a stab at advancing its interests by diversifying its diplomatic and economic relations, for example by building partnerships with other Latin American countries and by becoming more engaged in the UN and among Third World countries (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 207). Tickner (2007: 97) argues that this "diversification was partial and temporary" and that "instead of reversing the relationship of dependency with the US, it simply reduced its intensity".

President Alfonso López Michelsen (1974-78), who already served as Foreign Minister under Carlos Lleras Restrepo, aimed to continue this diversification, developing the

doctrine of *respice similia*: to look at your fellow men. Driven by commercial interests, López Michelsen complemented Colombia's foreign policy portfolio by working with other emerging economies around the world, engaging in the newly founded Andean Pact (today known as the Andean Community) with Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile (member status until 1976) to link the sub-region to world markets in Europe and Asia (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 206-7, Camacho Arango 2010: 190). He also revived its relations with Cuba and supported Panama to sign the Torrijos-Carter Treaty that guaranteed the future return of the sovereignty over the Canal from the US to the Panamanians.

While Carlos Camacho Arango (2010: 197) warns that *respice polum* and *respice similia* are only labels and should not be used as tools of analysis, they serve as a valuable foundation for classifying the foreign policy among different administrations over time.[31] For example, when the Andean Pact did not substantially materialize, when Nicaragua claimed ownership over the archipelago of San Andrés and Providencia, and when the business of drug trafficking started to pose unprecedented threats, Julio César Turbay (1978-82) revived the *respice polum* doctrine to receive American support. In turn, he sided with Washington in international fora, for example by opposing Cuba's candidacy for temporary membership of the UN Security Council (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 210, Camacho Arango 2010: 192). And as the only President in Latin America, Turbay did not

[31] Classification of policies towards the US: closeness, equilibrium, and distance/tension

Tabla 1. La relación Colombia-EE.UU. a través del tiempo

<table>
<tr><td>Cercanía</td><td>Marco Fidel Suárez (1918-1921)</td><td>Enrique Olaya Herrera (1930-1934)</td><td>Eduardo Santos (1938-1942)</td><td>Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958-1962)</td><td>Julio César Turbay (1978-1982)</td><td>Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002)</td><td>Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Equilibrio</td><td>Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970)</td><td>Misael Pastrana (1970-1974)</td><td rowspan="2">Belisario Betancur (1982-1986)</td><td>Virgilio Barco (1986-1990)</td><td>César Gaviria (1990-1994)</td><td>Juan Manuel Santos (2010)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Distanciamiento-Tensión</td><td>Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934-1938 y 1942-1945)</td><td>Alfonso López Michelsen (1974-1978)</td><td>Ernesto Samper (1994-1998)</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Fuente: elaboración propia a partir de Cardona (2011, p. xvii)

(Sánchez Cabarcas/Monroy Hernández 2012: 324)

criticize the position of the North Atlantic countries during the Falklands War between Argentina and the UK.

In contrast, Belisario Betancur (1982-86) took Colombia's diversification to another level when he joined NAM and took a leadership role in the Caribbean, spearheading the establishment of the Contadora Group with Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela to deal with civil wars and communist revolutions in Central America – against the will of the US as the regional hegemon (Camacho Arango 2010: 193).

But not all presidencies fall into either of the two categories, as the Colombian government can do both strengthen relations with the US and reach out to new partners simultaneously, following the hybrid approach of *ad libitum alternare utrumque principium*: to alternate between both principles (Tickner 2003b: 172).

Juan Gabriel Tokatlian (2000b: 39) believes that after the transformations at the international level following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Colombian administrations have moved beyond these classifications, for example by developing a *respice varia et mutabilia* doctrine: looking at what is diverse and changeable. He goes on to explain that during the presidency of César Gaviria (1990-94), who opened his country economically, supported US President George Bush Sr.'s Initiative for the Americas, and established the Group of Three (Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico), was guided by *respice mercatum*: to look to the market – rather than at political ideologies and security issues that have dictated Colombia's external agenda in the past.

The section shows that Colombia follows a long tradition of aligning with the US and that the partnership with Washington has become a revolving tool for achieving Colombia's national interests, for example in search of political modernization, as a Cold War doctrine, and as a response to high levels of conflict and drug trafficking in the country (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 215). While some Colombian administrations have tried their hand at novel doctrines, the partnership with the US has continued to be the cornerstone of Bogotá's foreign policy.

6.2.3. Makers of the modern Colombian conflict

Before considering Colombia's foreign policy during the case study timeframe, the following section provides a brief overview of the most important non-state actors and their diffuse roles in the Colombian conflict, as well as the state of the country at the onset of 2001.

Colombia's bloody past was marked by the historical struggle for power between the conservative and liberal parties, which has resulted in recurring brutal conflicts and ended after the ten-year-long civil war of *La Violencia* in 1958 when the factions agreed to share power in the government (Richani 2007: 406). Since then, violent non-governmental actors with diverse sets of interests have started to emerge: guerrillas that have been aiming to overthrow the capitalist government, paramilitaries that have been protecting the riches of the old elite, and drug cartels that have been engaging in highly profitable illegal businesses. All of them are part of a fragile system that has threatened the collapse of the government, and they continue to play a major role in Colombian politics today.

The guerrillas

Similar to other Latin American countries, Colombia has experienced the development of Marxist guerrilla groups during the Cold War era, most prominently the FARC. Growing out of the "leftist peasant self-defence organizations aligned with the Liberal party, [the FARC was] founded in 1964 after the government ordered an attack on one of the partisan self-defence agrarian movements that had originated in La Violencia" (Restrepo/Spagat 2004: 7-8). The rebels aimed to "represent the rural poor against Colombia's wealthy classes and oppose U.S. influence in Colombia, the privatization of natural resources, multinational corporations, and rightist violence" (United Nations 2017), thereby employing tactics such as "confront[ing] security forces in rural areas, maintain[ing] urban terrorist cells and bomb[ing] strategic locations such as oil facilities and oil pipelines" (Ramírez Montañez 2017: 196).

The FARC became involved in drug trafficking after the Medellín and Cali Cartels – the leading drug mafias at the time – had dissolved in the mid-1990s and opened the way for more diverse actors to enter the drug business. Receiving revenues of up to $1 billion per year for growing, selling, and trafficking cocaine (as well as taxing such activities within their controlled territory), the narco business accounted for over half of the FARC's income, thereby enabling its rebels to keep up their resistance against the growing threat of paramilitary forces, and turning the FARC into one of the richest guerrilla armies and terrorist organizations in the world (Ramírez Montañez 2017: 195-6). However, the fusion of terrorist and narco activities also turned the FARC into a narco-terrorist organization, which provided a reason for the US to support fighting the guerrillas – not only in the war against drugs, but also in the light of Washington's war on terror (more about this relationship in the next section).

As the FARC suffered severe losses during the 2000s in light of a military offense – the force size dropped from 16,000-18,000 in 2007 to 7,000 in 2012 (Stanford University 2015) – the organization was pushed into a peace process with the government and ultimately dissolved to lay down its weapons and join the political process.

But the FARC was not the only guerrilla movement of the county. Founded in the same year with similar goals, the National Liberation Army (ELN) also engaged in kidnapping, extortion, and bombing before it entered the drug trafficking business. However, its origin differs in that it was created by urban intellectuals with support from the Cuban government (though the FARC had also received support from Cuba as a safe haven). Much smaller than the FARC – at most 5,000 combatants in 2010, which has dropped to less than 2,000 (Stanford University 2015) – the ELN has not been forced to dissolve and continues to operate as a guerrilla movement at the time of writing.

Even smaller than the previous two was the Popular Liberation Army (*Ejército Popular de Liberación* – EPL) and April 19th Movement (M-19). The EPL developed out of a branch of the Colombian Communist Party in 1967 to take on the violent fight for a socialist revolution, but demobilized partially in 1991 and only maintains a few dissidents

who continue their fight for the interests of the proletariat. Founded after the fraudulent elections of April 19th, 1970, M-19 became most famous for the siege of the Palace of Justice in Bogotá (supposedly with the support of the Medellín Cartel), which left about 100 dead, including eleven Supreme Court Justices. Consisting of up to 2,000 fighters at times, M-19 entered into a peace process and became a political party by the end of the 1980s (Stanford University 2015).

The paramilitaries

Paramilitaries have a long history in Colombia where the landowners have a tradition of building their own armies to protect their properties. As guerrilla groups emerged in the 1960s and the government became concerned that it could not guarantee the protection of their rural elites any longer, it passed a law in 1968 granting private citizens to organize in armed groups, thereby legalizing paramilitary units (Richani 2007: 406).

Eventually, the paramilitaries also entered the nacro business and built ties with existing drug cartels, which might have blurred their interests, but did not remove their focus on eliminating leftist guerrilla groups and their supporters systematically through cruel operations and death squats that resulted in thousands of civilian casualties. As the country suffered from high levels of instability during the 1990s, Jorge A. Restrepo and Michael Spagat (2004: 7) explain that "the paramilitary groups […] gathered under the umbrella alliance United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia (AUC), which was formally created in 1997 [but had effectively existed for much longer]".

Though paramilitaries were officially banned in 1988, they continued to enjoy a cozy relationship with the military due to their common enemy (Richani 2007: 407). This also helped the militias to grow and gain significant power, as Nazih Richani (2007: 409) points out: "In 1986 the AUC did not have more than 93 armed men, by the mid-1990s it had an army of 4,000 to 5,000 fighters, and by the end of the decade that figure had reached 8,000 combatants. In 2005 it had increased its power to 11,000 fighters supported by 18,000 logistics personnel". The AUC also "appropriated more than 40 percent of the

drug economy", gained support from "more than 35 percent of the elected congress", and "owned 48 percent of the country's most fertile lands".

By 2003, however, the AUC went into negations with the government, declared a unilateral ceasefire, and demobilized its fighters and support staff. Given their agreement with the Uribe Administration, the paramilitaries were exempt from being tried for war crimes when they confessed their offenses (Richani 2007: 408) – though in 2008 thirteen high-profile paramilitary leaders were extradited to the US. The agreement and subsequent reintegration process mark an example for further demobilization campaigns, such as later with the FARC.

<u>The narcos</u>

For many, Pablo Escobar counts as the most successful drug lord in history. He built Colombia's cocaine business from scratch and established his country as the number one drug exporter in the world. On the back of thousands of brutal deaths, he became not just a successful politician, but also one of the wealthiest persons on earth. After his death in 1993, his Medellín Cartel fell apart and much of the drug trafficking business was taken over by his competitors in Cali, who have supported the election campaign of then-President Ernesto Samper. The cartel's leaders, the Rodriguez brothers, were eventually arrested in 1995 and extradited to the US almost ten years later (Richani 2007: 409).

Of course, the existing economic structures, from the production to the distribution network, did not suddenly cease after the country's infamous drug cartels dissolved. Richani (2007: 409) explains that most of the business was taken over by smaller cartels and the AUC, which resulted in a "symbiosis and cooptation between the AUC and the new cartels" so that the narcos were able to achieve their interests (avoiding prosecution, non-extradition to the US, legalizing their wealth, and gaining political influence) through alliances with local elites. Similarly, the FARC entered the highly profitable nacro business, starting to support coca farmers who suffered from the government's fumigation campaign to combat coca production (Tickner 2003a: 83).

The 2004 demobilization of the AUC marked the beginning of the third generation of Colombia's narco business (after the Medellín and Cali Cartels, as well as the leadership of the AUC and FARC in the narco business): the *Bandas Criminales* or BARCIM. Without a centralized leadership as in the previous examples, these gangs have consisted mostly of former AUC fighters and have engaged in a diversified set of economic activities. Present in over 75 percent of the country with an estimated size between 3,400 to 10,000 personnel plus subcontractors (depending on the source), the BACRIM mainly operate in the drug trafficking business, but also make earnings through extortion, illegal gold mining, and domestic distribution of drugs (Ramírez Montañez 2017, Stanford University 2015).

Although the narco business has not been the origin of conflict in Colombia, it has intensified the struggle among the formerly existing and newly created factions so that the destiny of the whole country has been taken hostage by the drugs. Initially, Pablo Escobar's Medellín Cartel has regarded terror as a means to control its business activities, terrifying the Colombian people through random explosions and targeted assassinations in the streets of Bogotá, and even the bombing of a commercial airplane. As the business professionalized, the cartels became quieter, but even more powerful through their connections to the highest levels of the government, allegedly turning Colombia into a "narco-democracy", after the famous words of the US Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Director for Colombia Joe Toft who exposed President Ernesto Samper's ties to the Cali Cartel (Gutkin 1994). If that was not enough, drugs became the main source of profit for the enemies of the state and continue to be a top priority at the time of writing because the production of coca has risen to an all-time high.

On the bright side, it were the drugs that spurred international attention and initially incentivized the US to join Colombia's struggles, forcing the country's largest guerrilla group to end its violent battle to overthrow the government, which opened the way for economic development and for taking international responsibility, at least in theory.

This section about the actors and factors of the modern Colombian conflict leaves out many details about the societal, legal, and economic aspects of the conflict, from human rights abuses to "narconomics". But the overview provides an initial understanding of the net of factions and their complex interests, which remains important because the case study touches upon the intersections between domestic security and foreign policy as the basis of Colombia's external relations.

6.2.4. Setting the scene: Colombia on the brink of a failed state

The 1990s is a chapter many Colombians would like to erase from their history books, as Former Defense Minister and Ambassador to the US Juan Carlos Pinzón (2015b) recalls:

> "For Colombia, the 1990's were marked by mounting violence, as the government struggled to protect rural communities from ever increasing attacks by armed insurgents and drug traffickers. Some even considered the country on the verge of becoming a failed state; the economy was foundering, foreign investment had declined sharply, and security had deteriorated to the point where the majority of Colombians did not feel safe. In fact, they felt like hostages in their own homes. The security environment was one of constant anguish due to the terrorist bombing campaign initiated by the drug cartels and continued by Colombia's various armed Marxist insurgent groups."

The Presidency of Ernesto Samper (1994-98) added to the country's instability as his administration slipped into a political crisis that led to a temporary collapse of Colombia's special relationship with the US and deadlocked the government at home. After it became public that the Cali Cartel provided around $6 million to Samper's campaign, the Colombian government was discredited in the eyes of the international community, making it an enemy in the war against drugs, rather than an ally (Crandall 2001: 95). Washington voided Samper's visa to the US and decertified Colombia as a partner in the war against drugs, among countries such as Nigeria, Afghanistan, Burma, Iran, and Syria (Crandall 2001: 108-9). Latin American neighbors likewise discredited the Samper Administration and Europe was not eager to step into the place of the US,

though allegedly German intelligence officials (unsuccessfully) aimed to broker deals between the government and the Cali Cartel as well as the FARC (Farah 1996).

Internally, Samper faced a lawsuit (labeled "Processo 8000" after the case number) in which the Congress unprecedentedly opened a formal investigation against the President. Through clever political maneuvering, Samper managed to get his charges dropped, neither found guilty nor innocent. While the Colombian people took to the street, protesting against their corrupt leader, the President remained in office until his term ended in 1998 – in the words of the conservative party's Senate leader Jaime Arias, it was "the farce of the century" (Brown 1996).

6.2.5. Colombia's foreign and security policy from 2001 to 2016

6.2.5.1. Pastrana – seeking help from the North Star

As Samper was not able to restore the economy, improve the security situation, or significantly revive the relations with Washington by the end of his term in 1998, newly elected President Andrés Pastrana was determined to tackle Colombia's severe problems. First and foremost, he aimed to establish peace with the FARC by launching a "diplomacy for peace" initiative, thereby gaining diplomatic assistance of Latin American and European countries to facilitate negotiations under his leadership (Bermúdez Torres 2010: 215). Given that since 1982, every Colombian administration had been negotiating with the FARC, Pastrana – with a "sense of historic legacy" as the son of former President Misael Pastrana (1970-74) – aimed to be remembered as the leader who has achieved peace with the guerrillas (Monroy/Sánchez 2017: 259).

As forty percent of the country was controlled by non-state actors at the time, the Colombian government was viewed to be in a position of weakness (Long 2015). In a show of strength, the FARC killed some 130 servicemen in attacks on police and army bases just before the negotiations officially started (Britannica 2017). Nevertheless, Pastrana posed with the guerrilla leaders for pictures and made significant unilateral concessions. He offered a ceasefire and – without consulting his military leaders – agreed to grant the FARC a demilitarized zone in the strategically important area of El Caguán, a

territory roughly the size of Switzerland, rich in soil, containing a river and an airport formerly used by an army battalion. The talks started in 1999 with a scandal when FARC leader Manuel Marulanda failed to show up for the negotiation's opening ceremony in front of the international media; the empty chair (*la silla vacia*) became a symbol of the disastrous negotiations.

Pastrana maintained a weak posture as he continued the peace talks even though the FARC violated the ceasefire agreement constantly and prepared for continuing their struggles. For example, in 1999 "three Jordanian generals […] used drug money to buy [10,000] AK-47 automatic rifles for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia", delivered through three airdrops by low-ranking Peruvian paratroopers (Rotella 2000), which marked the "biggest injection of weapons to the rebel army in its 50 years" (McDermott 2014). In addition to rearming during the ceasefire, the rebels kept military and policemen hostage, and continued to kidnap and assassinate politicians and their families. When the FARC hijacked a commercial airplane to abduct Senator Jorge Eduardo Gechem, Pastrana finally terminated the peace talks and resumed the government's fight against the rebels. It is widely accepted that the FARC has used the roughly two-year long ceasefire to reorganize and rearm before they grew to unprecedented strength in the coming years.

Although the government fell into the trap of the guerrillas, Pastrana was able to intensify the relationship with Washington, initiating a close partnership in the war against drugs. As the "public enemy number one in the United States is drug abuse", as US President Richard Nixon (1971) historically declared, it has been in the great interest of the US to target the production and trafficking of narcotics. Although the US has supported Colombia in anti-drug operations against the cartels in the past, Pastrana imagined redesigning US support to become more comprehensive, announcing that drugs are "a social problem whose solution must pass through the solution to the armed conflict… Developed countries should help us to implement some sort of 'Marshall Plan' for Colombia" (quoted in Villar/Cottle 2011: 107). The President was calling out to the world, announcing that Colombia was facing enormous problems and that the country

cannot handle them itself, thereby turning his eyes back to the North Star as a source of stability.

Eventually, the Administration of US President Bill Clinton and the US Congress offered an aid package coined Plan Colombia to strengthen the state and respect for human rights, expand counter-narcotics operations, support alternative economic development to coca cultivation, provide equipment for the interception of drugs, and provide assistance to the National Police (Pastrana Buelvas/Gehring 2017: 37). The assistance initially amounted to almost $1 billion in July 2000, a significant amount considering that during the following years only Iraq, Israel, Afghanistan, and Egypt have received more aid (Isacson 2006: 1). As the donor country, the US also set the terms of spending its money, allocating eighty percent for security and defense, and the rest for social development (Pastrana Buelvas/Vera Piñeros 2016: 71). As Plan Colombia turned out different from Pastrana's proposal to invest comprehensively in the social and economic development of the country, former US career diplomat Ambassador Robert White remarked that "[Colombia] comes and asks for bread and you [America] give them stones" (quoted in Villar/Cottle 2011: 108). Tickner (2007: 91) titles Colombia's request for US involvement in its domestic affairs "intervention by invitation", through which Bogotá continues its submission to Washington.

The emphasis on security and defense was further brought into focus when the 9/11 attacks of Al Qaida changed the international security landscape and shifted Washington's threat perception towards terrorism. Tickner (2007: 100) explains that the event established a parallel between the Taliban that had been financed with money from illicit activities and the armed actors in Colombia that have greatly profited from drug trafficking. Suddenly, the Americans pointed to the FARC as a terrorist organization that threatened regional stability: the US State Department's counter-insurgency coordinator Francis Taylor declared the FARC to be the "most dangerous international terrorist group" in the Western Hemisphere (quoted in Tickner 2003a: 80).

The categorization as narco-terrorists did not only discredit the FARC in the light of the international community, but also put it in the focus of the American War on Terror. After the failed peace process in March 2002, US President George W. Bush requested Colombia to use parts of the military aid originally allocated for counter-narcotics operations for the fight against terrorism, blurring the distinction between drugs and terror, and removing previous restraints for the military to engage in counter-insurgency activities (Tickner 2007: 102).

Though Pastrana was not able to achieve peace or revive the economy, one can credit him for reinstalling hope in the Colombian people and for reviving the country's international image as a credible partner in the fight against drugs (Monroy/Sánchez 2017: 246). Interestingly, it was not for changes in the external security environment that Pastrana sought to revive the *respice polum* doctrine by which his Presidency can be classified (Cardona Cardona 2001: 54), but for the internal security challenges. As Tokatlian (2000a: 351) concludes, "foreign policies tied to peace were primarily the reflection of governmental policies and not the result of an international strategy on the part of the state".

6.2.5.2. Uribe – the man who saved Colombia

Álvaro Uribe Vélez took over Pastrana's office in August 2002 with a platform of democratic security, "an ambitious plan to gain control over lawless territories and provide security to all sectors of society based on an expanded military and police presence and the creation of networks of civilian support" (Restrepo/Spagat 2004: 3). Born into a landowner family in which his father was allegedly killed by the FARC (though never confirmed), the former Colombian Senator and Governor of the department of Antioquia aimed to extend security and the rule of law to rural parts that had not enjoyed protection by the state, considering "counterinsurgency as a task for the whole society, rather than a chore to be delegated to the military", which included the organization of peasant soldiers to protect their villages, as well as networks of civilian informants (Restrepo/Spagat 2004: 3).

Uribe's offensive strategy against the enemies of the state made the FARC return back to guerrilla tactics (Richani 2007: 403), which in turn required the government to advance its military capabilities. The new administration boosted the total size of the army from 203,000 to 283,000 personnel, leading to an increase of the defense budget by ten percent to up to four percent relative to the GDP, making Colombia one of the world's top ten spenders on defense relative to its economic weight (Robinson 2013: 43, Ruiz Vázquez 2012: 114).

Of course, these efforts were only possible through the assistance of the US, initiated with Plan Colombia under Pastrana and Clinton, and intensified under Uribe and Bush. By 2004, the Bush Administration aimed for an increase of troop and contractor levels from 400 each to 800 troops and 600 contractors respectively, which was later approved by Congress and kept up throughout the following decade (Tickner 2007: 104, Randall 2013: 17). In addition, Washington assisted Colombia in the economic sphere by granting duty-free access to the US for many Colombian firms through the 2002 Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA). Uribe and Bush also signed a free trade agreement in 2006, but the US Congress did not ratify it until over five years later when Uribe had left office because of human rights concerns about his Administration.

Tickner (2007: 107) explains that Colombia grew more and more dependent on the US as Colombian officials from the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Attorney General, Ministry of the Interior, and National Congress, among others, had to travel to Washington on a monthly basis in order to report back to US authorities. The security cooperation with the US continued throughout the rest of Uribe's two terms, reaching a high in 2009 with the US-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement that grants access for US troops to operate on seven Colombian bases and opened the way for integrating US forces into Colombia's military structure (US Department of State 2009), thereby leaving their footprints in doctrine, institutions, and equipment. For his commitment to Colombia's partnership with the US, Uribe was honored with the US Presidential Medal of Freedom.

As Bogotá became ever more focused on security and defense cooperation with the US to overcome domestic security problems, and foreign policy became an almost exclusive complement to the internal Democratic Security strategy, much of the foreign policy decisions were made by the Defense Ministry, which also limited Colombia's leeway to diversify its international engagement (Flemes 2012: 32, Illera Correal 2012: 124, Pastrana Buelvas 2011: 2). Flemes and Castro (2016: 82) add that Uribe displayed Colombia's internal conflict "as part of the 'global crusade', led by the United States, against terrorism and drug trafficking" in order to secure military aid from the US, thereby "terrorizing" and "narcotizing" Colombia's foreign policy. Consequently, Uribe had little interest in bolstering international law, prioritizing its relationship with Washington and national security instead, for example when Colombia supported the US invasion of Iraq without a UN mandate as the only South American country.

In 2008, Colombian forces violated Ecuador's territorial integrity by attacking FARC posts across its border (opposed by Colombia's Foreign Ministry), which resulted in the death of over twenty militants including FARC Secretariat member Raúl Reyes and provoked the Andean Crisis, a diplomatic dispute between Colombia on the one side and Ecuador as well as Venezuela on the other one (Castro Alegría/Gonzáles 2016: 298, Diamint 2015: 58-9). Venezuela and Ecuador sent troops to their borders, recalled their ambassadors, and issued arrest warrants against Colombian officials. The crisis grew even tenser when the Colombian military announced that laptops seized during the raid contained documents linking Venezuelan and Ecuadorian officials to the FARC. Eventually, the dispute terminated after one week at the Rio Group Summit where Colombia promised to withdraw its own troops from its borders.

Uribe had little interest in the then-ongoing continental integration process, mostly because of political differences and the goal of other South American states to delegitimize the hemispheric space in order to limit US influence (Frenkel 2016: 24), which led to the failure of creation of the FTAA in 2003 (Pastrana Buelvas 2011: 5). While South America became politically more integrated through the creation of UNASUR in 2004, Colombia was skeptical about such organizations as they serve as

platforms for criticism against the US (Flemes 2012: 32). Uribe even transferred his country's UNASUR presidency to Chile in 2007 and decided not to attend SADC's opening summit in Brazil in 2008 (Flemes 2012: 32, Flemes/Wehner 2012: 16).

Instead of partaking in South America's integration process, Juan Carlos Ruiz Vázquez (2012: 109) explains that Colombia's relations with its neighbors were mainly marked by defense issues. He presents the following non-exhaustive but illustrative list of security issues:

- The access of US troops to bases on South American soil;
- the bombing of the FARC camps in Ecuador;
- the dispute with Nicaragua about the sovereignty over San Andrés and Providencia as well as the territorial sea;
- the arrest of FARC leaders in Ecuadorian and Venezuelan territory;
- the murder of alleged paramilitaries in Venezuelan territory;
- Uribe's resistance to negotiating with the FARC over hostages, such as the French-Colombian politician Íngrid Betancourt who remained in captivity for over six years;
- the spying activities on Ecuador's President Rafael Correa;
- the extradition of paramilitary and guerrilla leaders to the US.

In addition to the disagreement over political and security issues with its neighbors, the Uribe Administration maintained a distrustful stance towards the regional hegemon Brazil. Beyond the countries' conflicting political and economic visions of South America, Brasília failed to recognize the FARC as a terrorist group (Flemes/Castro 2016: 82) and preserved its proximity to the Venezuelan regime that has provided a safe haven to FARC guerrillas (Pastrana Buelvas 2011: 6). However, the friendly detachment between Uribe and Lula did not mean that Colombia and Brazil were not cooperating in combating trans-national threats (Pastrana Buelvas 2011: 8) as well as in trade and investment – Brazil became the third largest foreign investor in Colombia by 2007 (Pedroso/Souza 2016: 517). The Brazilian authorities also offered to be a broker in

Colombia's conflict with the FARC, played a mediator role during the Andean Crisis, and provided logistical support for the release of victims kidnapped by the FARC (Pedroso/Souza 2016: 522-3).

Beyond the pragmatic cooperation with Brazil, Uribe also attempted advancing Colombia's relations with countries in the region and far-away parts of the world through fostering security and trade relations. For example, Bogotá was active in the US's Mérida Initiative to combat drug trafficking in Mexico and Central America, and Colombia's national police even participated in training activities in Afghanistan in 2007 (Tickner 2016: 7). Uribe also entered into negotiations on trade agreements with East Asian and Scandinavian states (Pastrana Buelvas 2011: 7). But given the low priority of such diplomatic and economic initiatives, one may conclude that Colombia's foreign relations under the Uribe Administration evolved around security issue within the Americas.

Uribe's approach to prioritizing domestic security over foreign relations was very popular because the population was able to benefit from increased security and the guerrilla groups were put under strong pressure, leading to a 79 percent approval rating by 2004 (Restrepo/Spagat 2004: 3). However, one may criticize the policy's focus on security, neglecting social and economic issues, as well as human rights standards. Most notably was the "false positives" scandal (*falsos positivos*) in which Colombian forces killed poor or mentally impaired people in order to present them as guerrillas killed in battle and collect benefits from the military for their "achievements".

Such human rights records did not shy the US away from the US from continuing their close security cooperation. Nor did some of the actors' alleged relationships with the narcos – the US government suspected Uribe himself to have had connections to Pablo Escobar and to have supported the interests of the cartels when he was serving as Mayor of Medellín and as Senator of Colombia in the 1980s and 1990s (Defense Intelligence Agency 1991: 10-11). In addition, the US even supported the negotiation process with the AUC paramilitaries (Tickner 2007: 104), which resulted in reduced sentences for drug traffickers and members of death squads that had been murdering innocent civilians

throughout rural Colombia. Although the US successfully requested extradition of a significant number of paramilitary leaders, and also supported the peace negotiations with the FARC a decade later, it is notable that at the time, the focus on fighting the guerrillas – as part of the US's extended global war on terror – topped the US's fight against drugs and compromised its human rights standards. As both Bogotá and Washington were working together on a trustful basis to fight the same enemies, Uribe was able to secure continued US support throughout his administration.

One may criticize Uribe's stubborn focus on hard internal security and his lack of interest to invest in Colombia's place on the international diplomatic stage, but by focusing on its relationship with the US – by looking towards the North Star – he was able to make Colombia a safer and more prosperous country. Remembered as the "the man who saved Colombia" (Wall Street Journal 2010), he paved the way for his successor to redefine the country's outlook.

6.2.5.3. Santos – reaching new heights

Growing up in an influential Bogotanian family, Juan Manuel Santos served in the Navy before studying business and economics in the US. He started out his professional life at the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia, gaining important experience at the intersection of local business and international trade early in his career. In 1991, he was appointed as Minister of Trade and later became Minister of Finance and Public Credit under the Pastrana Administration. Serving as Minister of Defense under Uribe since 2006, Santos became a key public figure in the successful fight against the FARC and gained substantial profile that helped him to succeed in the 2010 presidential elections.

Although he was a great supporter of his boss when he was a member of the Uribe Administration, Santos' liberal internationalist style of governance turned out to differ substantially from that of his rather realist predecessor (Illera Correal 2012: 124). Santos

became world famous for his engagement to secure peace with the FARC which soon became the top priority for his Administration.[32] Meanwhile, he transformed Colombia from an inward-looking country ever concerned with national security towards a confident and internationally active actor aiming to achieve its interest by shaping global governance.

Santos' goals were driven by both the evolving internal and external environments: Internally, he took the driving seat where Uribe left office, building on his success and upholding the military offensive to secure peace through strength (Long 2015). The military's success pushed the guerrillas into the corner, making peace their most viable option, and allowing Santos to negotiate from a position of strength (different from Pastrana, Santos did not grant a ceasefire until the full peace agreement was concluded).

Externally, the new President sensed a shift towards a multipolar world which led him to update his country's foreign policy (Pastrana Buelvas 2015: 25). Olga Illera Correal (2012: 123) points out that "in his inaugural speech, President Santos begins with the need to assume a more active international role 'after 40 years of being on the defensive', seeking to show a change in the 'attitude' towards the international system". In its outline of the principles of Colombia's foreign policy, the Foreign Ministry refers to Santos who explains that in order "to progress towards democratic prosperity a greater diversification of Colombian international relations shall be necessary both, in the multilateral environment and in the search of new partners and strategic alliances within international scope" (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2017).

Santos' actions underpin his proposition to turn Colombia into an outward-looking country, most clearly illustrated by his traveling activities. Whereas Uribe famously

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[32] One should note that in the Uribe Administration was not opposed to peace with the FARC either, but given the history of failed negotiations, the government was focused on achieving significant military success in order to be in a position of strength. By Santos' second term, Uribe eventually became the most vocal critic of Colombia's peace agreement with the FARC – not necessarily because he opposed the possibility of a negotiated settlement to end the war, but because he believes that Santos has lost at the negotiation table, resulting in too many concessions for the guerrillas that have terrorized Colombian society for decades.

organized over 300 town hall meetings (*consejos comunales*) in the most remote corners of his country in order to maintain direct contact with his people and the security situation on the ground, Santos invested his time in meetings with leaders around the world, aiming to advance the image of Colombia and secure foreign direct investments from developed and emerging economies.

The new external focus went hand in hand with the diversification of themes from internal security towards diplomacy, trade and investments, international military cooperation, and peace (Cepeda Másmela 2016: 428, Castro Alegría/Gonzáles 2016: 310, Illera Correal 2012: 124). Santos invested in diplomatic initiatives, establishing relations with diverse actors such as Montenegro and Saudi Arabia, and opening embassies in strategic countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates (Illera Correal 2012: 128). Economically, Santos was able to finalize important free trade agreements with the US, the EU, and South Korea, as well as to establish the Pacific Alliance with Mexico, Peru, and Chile as a liberal and outside-oriented counter-model to MERCOSUR. Given that some actors, such as European states, had been turned away from committing towards Bogotá's overall agenda because of the strong focus on domestic security and US influence in Colombia (Tickner 2003b: 180-1), Santos was able to initiate new partnerships through joint projects in the areas of energy, science, and technology, among others (Duarte García 2012: 351).

In addition, Santos aimed to gain international assistance for the negotiations with the FARC, thereby delegitimize the FARC's continued military engagement in the international arena and ramping up foreign commitments for the post-conflict scenario (Gehring/Pastrana Buelvas 2016: 13, Dießelmann/Hetzer 2015: 20). He invited diverse international mediators including Venezuela, Norway, and the Holy See, and was able to make the case for continued economic and military support from the US as well as the EU to build a stable post-conflict environment.

The thematic diversification revived the role of the Foreign Ministry, which had been unable to shape Colombia's foreign policy under Uribe because of the military's

predominance. Therefore, the Foreign Ministry started to engage in "institutional strengthening [by] increase[ing] engagement of specialized officers with technical and diplomatic training to assume opportunities and challenges offered by the international system [and by] expand[ing] its representation in strategic countries and entities that ensure Colombia's participation in international impact decision-making" (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2017).

As diplomacy became a focal point in Santos' policy outlook, he commenced his term with reversing the feeling of Colombian isolationism by engaging in the regional integration process (Pastrana Buelvas 2011: 3). *The Economist* (2010) remarked, "Mr Santos clearly reckons he has more to gain by being seen as a good South American". Hence, Colombia focused on advancing the strained relations with Brazil, Venezuela, and Ecuador, and started to engage in regional institutions, for example by appointing former Foreign Minister Maria Emma Mejia in the UNASUR Secretariat and by joining SADC (Betancourt Vélez 2016: 331, Semana 2011).

In regards to Brazil, the Santos and Dilma Administrations were able to deal with each other more pragmatically than their predecessors, entering into bilateral agreements on defense and counter-narcotics (e.g., establishing the Integrated Border Monitoring System – SISFRON), trade, agriculture, as well as technical and scientific cooperation (Pedroso/Souza 2016: 515, 520-1). The countries even started to cooperate in areas of historical rivalry, for example by undertaking joint initiatives to deal with coffee exports to Asia (Pedroso/Souza 2016: 516). Castro and Flemes (2016: 79) also conclude that Santos' approach to the region "reflects a more balanced positioning of Colombia between the US and Brazil".

However, Bogotá's relations with Washington continued to be a stone in the shoe of Brasília. As Brazil has welcomed Santos' aims to diversify its foreign relations (Flemes/Castro 2016: 83), Brasília also continued to oppose joint US-Colombian initiatives, for example the US-funded Regional Center for Strategic Studies in Security (*Centro Regional de Estudios Estratégicos en Seguridad* – CREES) integrated in

Bogotá's Superior War College (ESDEGUE), perceived as a counterpart to regional integration efforts, such as UNASUR's South American School of Defense (*Escuela Suramericana de Defensa* – ESUDE).

Similarly, Colombia's relationship with its immediate competitor Venezuela improved upon Santos took office, but continued to be limited by Bogotá's close partnership with Washington. Santos and Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez started cooperating on security matters, for example when Caracas limited the FARC to operate on its territory and deported guerrillas wanted for murder and other crimes back to Colombia. *The Economist* (2010) reported that Venezuela also "begun paying some $800 [million] it owes to Colombian exporters [and] even voted for Colombia to take up a rotating seat at the United Nations Security Council". Conversely, Santos offered concessions, such as "send[ing] Walid Makled, a Venezuelan accused of drug trafficking, to face charges in his home country rather than to the United States, where he is also wanted".

Rapprochement with Caracas did not only allow establishing more constructive relations in the region, but also helped Santos to further his goal of achieving peace with the FARC. His logic was that if Venezuela ceases its support for the guerrillas and does not continue to serve as a safe haven, the FARC would be forced to the negotiation table even faster.

However, it would be exaggerated to describe the pragmatic engagement between Colombia and Venezuela as a development towards a genuine partnership. Rather than investing in bilateral cooperation initiatives, Caracas invested in Russian missile technology, sharpened its aggressive tone towards Bogotá, and engaged in provocations at the border, thereby risking serious clashes between the Colombian and Venezuelan forces (a more detailed account follows in the section on Colombia's threat perception).

Towards Colombia's south, Santos was able to improve relations with Ecuador, where he faced an arrest warrant at the time he became President because of his involvement in the 2008 attack on the FARC camp in Ecuadorian as former Defense Minister. However, he was able to overcome his differences with Ecuador's President Rafael Correa when he

ordered his Administration to share more information about the 2008 incursion with the Ecuadorian government. Correa announced that relations were improving "now there was a serious and respectful government [in Colombia]" (quoted in Hinchliffe 2011), leading the countries to restore trade and reopen previously closed border crossings.

Santos' pragmatic engagement in the region and his country's international diplomatic diversification helped to decrease Colombia's dependence on the US, but neither strained Bogotá's relations with Washington, nor altered Bogotá's preference for a Pan-American outlook which favors the OAS over UNASUR as the regional organization of choice (Pastrana Buelvas 2015: 24).

Bilaterally, Santos and Obama agreed on the April 2012 U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security which includes a holistic approach to security, including fighting narcotics trafficking, combating crime, strengthening institutions, and fostering resilient communities (Randall 2013: 17-8). Though the US played no significant role in the government's peace negotiations with the FARC, Washington supported the overall effort by sending Bernard W. Aronson as US Special Envoy for the Colombian Peace Process (Pastrana Buelvas/Gehring 2017: 40), and by co-sponsoring the UN mission to monitor and verify the peace agreement as well as the Global Demining Initiative for Colombia (Tickner 2016: 11-12).

Internationally, Bogotá stepped up its involvement in economic and security cooperation within multilateral institutions. Accordingly, Colombia became more active in the UN, where it successfully applied to take on a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council in 2011-2012. The Santos Administration also advocated for increasing the number and the periods of the non-permanent seats, rather than extending the number of permanent members (Castro Alegría/Gonzáles 2016: 300). Meanwhile, Bogotá reached out to the OECD and initiated the accession process to join the organization as the second South American country after Chile, thereby showcasing the ambition to actively participate in international economic policy (Gehring/Cuervo 2016: 657).

Colombia's activities in international security exemplify the Santos government's approach to engage on many fronts at once. While improving political relations with its neighbors and extending cooperation with the US on internal security, Bogotá also reached out to multilateral organizations and overseas countries in order to participate in missions and exercises in its region and beyond. In 2015, the Ministry of Defense laid out comprehensive goals for becoming an international leader in security and defense policy, with a focus on the construction of hemispheric security and stability by strengthening cooperation in the fight against trans-national organized crime and emerging threats (Betancourt Vélez 2016: 335). Thereby, Santos aimed to gain clout in the international diplomatic and security community, and he found a way to keep his forces relevant even after their main mission – defeating the FARC – would fade.

In practice, the Santos government focused on two main initiatives: Exporting their forces' capabilities and experiences gained in over five decades of fighting guerrilla warfare, as well as taking on new tasks by participating in international peacekeeping operations. Both ideas underlie different rationales and were carried out to different extents during the case study timeframe. While sharing know-how serves to showcase and maintain Colombia's specialized capabilities, participating in multinational missions serves to gain large-scale profile by demonstrating Colombia's willingness and ability to make valuable contributions to international security in faraway regions.

Exporting security was not a novel idea of the Santos government. But whereas under Uribe, requests for security cooperation were treated on an ad-hoc basis rather than as a proactive tool to achieve strategic interests, Santos took the idea further, seeking cooperation with the US to establish a whole program that focuses on security assistance and capacity building in the Caribbean Basin and West Africa – the 2012 United States-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation.

Tickner (2016: 15) explains the logic behind the triangular cooperation: Colombia gains continued US military assistance, intelligence, as well as monetary and political commitments to the peace process; the US gains relatively inexpensive access to local

facilities and know-how, while outsourcing certain activities helps diminishing political risks associated with overseas engagement. Based on decades of US assistance that has led to the remarkable transformation of Colombia, former US Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken observed that "[w]e used to ask what [the US can] do for Colombia?' Now it is 'what can we do with Colombia?' " (quoted in Voice of America 2015). Former Commander of the US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) John Kelly explained "the beauty of having Colombia" like this: "When we ask [the Colombian military] to go somewhere else and train the Mexicans, the Hondurans, the Guatemalans, the Panamanians, they will do it almost without asking ... It's important for them to go, because I'm – at least on the military side – restricted from working with some of these countries because of limitations that are, that are really based on past sins" (quoted in Eventon 2015: 17).

Managed directly by the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia (APC), in coordination with the Foreign Ministry, between 2010 and 2015, the Colombian forces provided police and military training to 29,603 people of 73 countries as far as Eastern Europe and South-East Asia, focusing on a diverse portfolio such as demining, high mountain warfare, police intelligence, anti-kidnapping, and anti-extortion (Tickner 2016: 17). As Tickner (2016: 7) points out, the Colombian forces have developed a whole catalog of on-demand services in areas covering anti-crime operations, organizational development, and operational capacity.

In addition to sharing its specialized expertise, the Santos government also aimed to gain know-how in conducting multilateral operations in order to play a more significant role in peacekeeping. The country's commitment to UN missions is not new, having participated in the UN forces during the Korean War, having contributed significantly to the first UN peacekeeping mission in the Suez Canal and the Sinai Peninsula, and having sent police forces to MINUSTAH in Haiti. But in order to gain experiences in interoperability, so that Colombia can effectively plug its military forces into multinational force structures, Bogotá reached out to leading international peacekeeping actors, most notably the UN, the EU, and NATO (more about these efforts in the following section).

In 2015, the Colombian government signed a framework agreement with the UN, opening the possibility to send forces to UN missions, a year after it had concluded a similar Framework Participation Agreement with the EU. These agreements form the legal basis for participation in UN peacekeeping and EU-led civilian and military crisis management operations (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017: 4).

But unlike its strategy to gain recognition for exporting specialized capabilities, Colombia has not underpinned its goal of becoming a major peacekeeping force with a precise vision – and the contributions will likely depend on the political and monetary incentives[33]. While Santos has offered to contribute large numbers (up to five thousand Colombian forces), the military leadership imagines contributing with a smaller but highly professional force (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017: 10). In addition, one may note that Plan Victoria, the military's latest strategy, mostly neglects international efforts and continues focusing on the domestic security environment (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares 2017). Even the strategic military plan for 2030 (Plan Estratégico de las Fuerzas Militares 2030 – PEM 2030) does not specify Colombia's international engagement beyond aiming to make defense diplomacy an integral part of Colombia's foreign policy, to strengthen international alliances, and to update cooperation mechanisms (Fuerzas Militares de Colombia 2017). Therefore, one can notice a gap between Santos' ambitious peacekeeping promises and his forces' preparedness or willingness to undertake large-scale international operations.

Whatever the specific contribution may be, Santos has paved the way for his country to become a genuine actor in the international arena. Already at the beginning of his first term, Santos (2010: 23) has announced to go beyond Colombia's traditional foreign policy doctrines of *respice polum* and *respice simila*, as he aimed to give justice to the globalized world by looking at the whole – *respice omnia*. In turn, he was able to diversify Bogotá's external relations geographically and thematically, while normalizing

[33] Contributions to UN peacekeeping missions are reimbursed by the UN at a rate of $1,410 per person per month as of July 2017 (United Nations Peacekeeping 2018), while bilateral or triangular efforts depend on the fiscal arrangements of the cooperation agreement (Tickner 2016).

the relations with its neighbors by de-ideologizing Colombia's foreign policy, and treating both the Foreign and Defense Ministries as important actors in shaping the country's foreign policy. These initiatives went hand in hand with his main goal of achieving peace at home: by fostering Colombia's external relations, he was able to gain international support and recognition for his peace plan; he was also able to prepare for the post-conflict scenario by advertising Colombia's success story, the recently gained stability, and the great economic potential to promote foreign investments.

But one should not forget that Santos never broke his country's strong ties with the US and that Colombia remains significantly dependent on Washington in terms of trade and security. Therefore, it would be reasonable to conclude that under the Santos Administration, Colombia has turned one eye to the world, while the other continues to admire at the North Star.

6.2.5.4. Colombia's NATO policy

Having laid out the developments of Colombia's foreign policy during the case study timeframe, which had been greatly affected by the evolving internal security situation, this section aims to focus on Colombia's policy towards NATO, which shall be the basis for connecting the country's strategic goals with its posture towards the Alliance in the theoretical sections below.

Colombia is categorized as a supporter of NATO because it has been supporting the Alliance by promoting cooperation with Brussels since at least 2008 when the Uribe government approached NATO about its interest in adapting to internationally recognized NATO standards. At the time, the Bush Administration has already encouraged Colombia to apply its counter-narcotics experiences in Afghanistan. When then-Defense Minister Santos (2007) offered his advice on counter-insurgency in the *NATO Review* article "Afghanistan's challenges – lessons from the Colombian experience", he also hoped to contribute to ISAF, but could not send his soldiers abroad without a mandate, which would have required approval of Congress and the courts – a process that was ruled out because of domestic priorities (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017: 11).

Santos intensified the diplomatic outreach when he became President. In 2013, Colombia was able to conclude the Agreement on the Security of Information with NATO, which did not provide more than a basis for sharing certain types of information, but nonetheless served as a milestone towards closer cooperation.[34] The President's subsequent remarks of intending to join the alliance as a member caused great outrage in the region – illustrated by the opposition of Colombia's neighbors to Bogotá's engagement with Brussels: "Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Nicaragua described the agreement as 'madness' and as a 'threat for the region', and said that it violated the UNASUR Peace Treaty. While less dogmatic, Brazil's Defence Minister Celso Amorim also voiced his opposition to Colombia's agreement with an extra-continental military alliance" (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017: 11).

Nonetheless, the Colombian authorities intensified their contact with NATO bodies, including the International Staff, the International Military Staff, ACT, SHAPE (Colombia even sent a permanent liaison officer), the CCDCOE, the NDC, the NATO School in Oberammergau, and individual member states' delegations. Bogotá also supported NATO diplomatically as it voted for the Alliance's air-policing mission in Libya in 2011 when Colombia was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, siding with Brussels unlike the BRICS and even Germany, which abstained from voting.

As the partnership unfolded, Colombia has participated in a range of NATO activities, including the Building Integrity Programme, Ammunition Safety Group, Codification System, as well as training activities in NATO's educational institutions and exercises such as "Trident Juncture 2015". In the same year, the Colombian Navy even sent an Offshore Patrol Vessel – originally designed to intercept drug traffickers, but also suited

[34] It should be noted that the agreement never came into force: "In September 2013, Colombia's Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs sent a bill to the Colombian parliament, which ratified the agreement in 2014. In June 2015, however, the Colombian Constitutional Court declared the agreement to be unconstitutional because of a series of legal mistakes." (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017: 11)

to fight pirates – to operate alongside NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the EU's Operation Atalanta at the Horn of Africa.[35]

For its support and initiatives, Colombia was invited to become one of the few non-partner states that can participate in meetings of flexible formats, among China, India, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In December 2016, Bogotá and Brussels started negotiations about an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) to refine their future cooperation, which led to the promotion of Colombia as an official NATO partner in May 2017.

Unlike Santos' unfortunate remarks in the aftermath of the Agreement on the Security of Information about joining NATO, the Colombian government initially kept quiet about its achievement to gain partner status. In fact, the government did not publish a single press release or statement; with the exception of a note on NATO's website, it was not evident that the parties have signed the IPCP partnership agreement (which remains classified). Thus, Bogotá forwent the opportunity to promote its image in the international security arena in order not to stir further resentment against Colombia in the region, especially given the increasing aggression and unpredictability of the Maduro regime in the light of Venezuela's instability. Only a year later, just before Santos finished his second and last term, the President traveled to Brussels to announce his country's admission to the partnership program.

But even if Colombia initially kept quiet about the official partnership, the rationales for investing in closer relations with NATO were plentiful in the light of Santos' foreign policy strategy, where the Alliance functions as a military component of Colombia's diplomatic outreach. The partnership with NATO serves both of the goals highlighted above, to export security and become a contributor to peacekeeping operations: The Colombian forces aim to use NATO as a vehicle for showcasing their capabilities in

[35] Colombia did not integrate into NATO's multinational force because it lacked a judicial mandate to participate in official NATO operations. Set up as a training activity to gain experiences in multinational settings, a Colombian official recalled that the Navy gained valuable insights into joint commands, leadership, and tactics.

future operations, while gaining the opportunity to increase their interoperability by acquiring NATO standards. Colombia may also be able to tap into NATO's experiences in security sector reform and force transformation to adjust to the post-conflict environment by building an international force (Cancelado 2016: 165, Pastrana Buelvas/Vera Piñeros 2016: 81). Eventually, engaging with an alliance of 29 states also helps to diversify Bogotá's external relations without irritating the US as its traditional partner of choice. Building closer relations with European NATO states also provides additional access to new industrial partnerships and opportunities for technology transfer to enable the development of its own defense sector, previously limited by the US.

While the partnership has much to offer, it faces challenges beyond regional opposition. Domestic politics may hinder Colombia's participation in NATO-mandated missions. In the light of continuing internal security problems, the military may even raise the question of whether it is a smart move to send Colombian troops abroad. As a former Commander of the Colombian Army argued in an interview with the author, "we don't need a partnership with NATO and participation in peace operations – we have our own problems at home", also raising the concern that participation in missions abroad may "move Colombia into the focus of Islamic terrorism".[36] In addition, as some NATO members face threats to their own territorial integrity, they may raise doubts about the value of cooperating with Bogotá and about the Alliance's extra-regional involvement in general. They may also be discouraged from working with Colombia because of their unfamiliarity with the country and its forces.

As of the time of writing, however, Colombia and NATO have been moving closer together, making promises about the potential of their cooperation, and eventually committing to an official partnership – the first one between NATO and a South American country. The efforts to become a partner of NATO should be regarded as part

[36] Interview with a former General and Commander of the Colombian National Army in Bogotá, August 2017.

of Colombia's foreign policy development in the light of its advancing domestic situation, started under Uribe and continued throughout the Santos era.

6.3. Theoretical considerations

6.3.1. Colombia's NATO policy and the Balance of Threat theory

This section aims to determine whether Walt's Balance of Threat theory can explain Colombia's support for NATO. It is crucial to start by analyzing Bogotá's threat perception implied by its security policy and demonstrated by its practical engagement. Given Bogotá's threats and its external behavior during the case study timeframe, the analysis will prove whether Colombia's balancing or bandwagoning behavior can explain Bogotá's affinity for NATO.

6.3.1.1. Colombia's threat perception: a focus on the domestic space

At the turn of the 21st century, Colombia's single biggest focus was on internal security, where the government was challenged by rejuvenating guerrilla forces and an ever-stronger paramilitary movement. Julio César Ramírez Montañez (2017: 195) explains that most of the country's problems were linked to these narco-terrorist groups, violently controlling significant parts of the country where they have pushed drug production and trafficking to levels never experienced before. With these crimes came extrajudicial executions, violent displacement, money laundering, kidnapping, human and weapons trafficking, corruption, and ecological damage.

The Pastrana government reacted towards the guerrilla movements by ramping up Colombia's capabilities with the help of the US, resulting in what the Uribe Administration titled Plan Patriota that focused on neutralizing high-value targets, driving the guerrillas out of strongholds in the countryside, and reestablishing control in formerly lawless areas. By 2008, the FARC had adjusted its organization tactics, undertaking Plan Rebirth to retreat to the jungle, decentralize its leadership, and reinstall guerrilla tactics to harm the government without engaging in direct combat (Colby 2012). Before the Santos Administration initiated the peace talks, the government continued to put pressure on the

FARC by launching the Sword of Honor campaign in order to "expand the list of targets for security forces and the locations where they will engage guerrillas, with the goal of crippling the FARC both militarily and financially" (Colby 2012). When the government reached a peace deal with the FARC in 2016, it was able to significantly decrease the threat on its internal security on the guerrilla front, leaving behind the ELN that continues to operate as Colombia's second guerrilla group, as well as some FARC dissidents that joined the BACRIM or decided to continue their struggle as individual combat units. However, much of the government's focus shifted from the threat of terrorism to the challenges of reintegrating former guerrillas and conciliating the society.

The government followed a different strategy towards the paramilitaries, partly because they both had the same enemy and allegedly cooperated at times. The AUC, a group listed as a terrorist organization by the EU and US, did not aim to overthrow the government, but it was considered a destabilizing force and major threat to the rule of law as it rivaled with the government over control in significant parts of the county, engaged in drug trafficking and further illicit activities, and terrorized whole parts of the civilian population through massacres, forced displacements, homicides, kidnappings, and rape (OHCHR 2005).

In 2003, Uribe entered into negotiations with the AUC, followed by a demobilization process. While the threat of a major paramilitary organization faded, many former AUC members organized in the BACRIM, especially dangerous because of their substantial foundation of revenue and discrete armed structures, allowing them to achieve influence in politics and expanding Colombia's drug business (Hanson 2008). Since then, the dangerous crime syndicates have become the main threat to Colombia's internal security, also because they are the "principal criminal beneficiaries of the FARC withdrawing from the conflict and strategic territory across the country" (McDermott 2016). Therefore, the government's 2017 military strategy Plan Victoria focuses on the BACRIM as a major threat, aiming to target their activities in trafficking of drugs, arms, and people, as well as extortion and kidnapping, illegal mining, and related offenses by utilizing force and by investing in state-building activities.

Given the significance of domestic security in the Colombian calculus and the relative absence of external threats, Bogotá's external threat perception has been centered on foreign actors supporting the domestic enemies, especially on its neighbors, given their affinity for the guerrilla movements' Marxist objectives. Venezuela's and Ecuador's socialist regimes have granted a safe haven to what Colombians consider terrorists, allowing guerrillas to hide in and operate from their territory. Caracas even directly or indirectly supplied the FARC with weapons, which became evident when the Colombian forces discovered that the guerrillas had obtained arms previously sold to Venezuela, such as Swedish AT4 anti-tank rockets (The Associated Press 2009).

The unwillingness to support the Colombian authorities' law enforcement efforts has forced Colombia to undertake police operations in Venezuelan territory, for example when guerrilla member Rodrigo Granda was kidnapped in Caracas to be transferred and sentenced in Colombia. Such actions have resulted in continuous diplomatic clashes over standards of law enforcement and sovereignty, most notably during the 2008 Andean Crisis when Colombia undertook military operations across the Ecuadorian border.

Next to the guerrilla-related conflicts with the regime in Caracas, Venezuela started to become a major source of problems itself when it slipped into political and economic instability after the oil price collapsed and bankrupted the country in 2014. As a result of a humanitarian crisis, over one million Venezuelan refugees have fled to Colombia (Semana 2017). Not only was Colombia not prepared for the intake of this amount of persons – to offer basic services, food, and education – but the wave of migration has also been posing security challenges: as the border between Venezuela and Colombia has probably become one of the busiest in the world, Colombia struggles to barely monitor twenty percent, as a Colombian official revealed.[37] Though most people cross at well-guarded choke points such as between San Antonio del Tachira (Venezuela) and Cúcuta (Colombia), the problem of illicit flows of goods has increased dramatically, from the smuggling of weapons over direly needed food and daily life products to highly

[37] Remarks by a Colombian defense official during a closed-door briefing in Bogotá, September 2018.

subsidized Venezuelan gasoline[38]. As the situation in Venezuela continues to worsen at the time of writing, Colombian defense officials assess the risk of an implosion of its neighboring country and a consequent migrant crisis to be among Colombia's largest threats.

In addition, as Maduro's claim to power has been threatened by a political crisis, Colombian officials also fear that he may use external aggression as a means to legitimize his government – a common practice of authoritarian regimes aiming to strengthen their internal power, such as the case of Argentina before the Falklands War. Maduro has been accusing the Santos Administration and the Colombian oligarchs to be the source of many of Venezuela's problems: from attacks against the economy and the Venezuelan currency, over preventing the sale of medicine to Venezuela, to attempting to topple his government with the help of the CIA (CNN Español 2017). In 2015, Caracas accused Colombian paramilitaries, allegedly linked to Uribe, to have attacked Venezuelan soldiers and engaged in smuggling of gasoline and basic goods. As a response, Venezuela closed border crossings, forced tens of thousands of Colombians living in Venezuela to leave the country, and engaged in a show of strength by flying fighter jets along the border, continuously entering into Colombian airspace and eventually crashing one of its own jets (Brodzinsky 2015). Given the serious risk of a border skirmish, Colombian officials revealed that they are very careful not to give Maduro a pretext for engaging in any conflict.

Because of Maduro's aggression against its capitalist neighbor, Colombia is especially concerned about Venezuela's arms buildup, linked to its close relationship with Russia, which adds a geopolitical dimension to the multidimensional conflict with Caracas. Venezuela and Russia have deepened their relations since the 2000s, and Caracas became the second largest importer of Russian arms between 2012 and 2015, behind India

[38] "A 40,000-liter tank truck can be filled [in Venezuela] for $10 at the black market rate and sold in Colombia for around $20,000 – a profit of nearly 200,000 percent." (Gupta 2016).

(Sputnik 2015).[39] The strategic armament alliance with Russia is part of Caracas' revival of Cold War partnerships with authoritarian states around the world, including Belarus, China, Iran, Syria, and Vietnam.

On its part, Russia has gained real influence in the Caribbean in the triangle of Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua, as Carlos Alberto Patiño Villa (2014: 207) explains. These countries were among the few ones that rejected the UN decision to rule Russia's annexation of Crimea to be illegal. Moscow has used its allies in the region as launching pads to project power, for example when it sent a nuclear-powered warship through the Caribbean in 2008 and when it flew two supersonic bombers capable of carrying nuclear warheads over the disputed territory of San Andrés and Providencia in 2013. Russian troops have also participated in Venezuelan military exercises that stage wars against Colombia and the US (Ellis 2015) – all signs that Russia's aggression against US interests has arrived in Colombia's neighborhood (Helbig/Lasconjarias 2017: 13, Patiño Villa 2014: 208).

Despite Venezuela's arms buildup and Russia's cooperation with Colombia-critical countries of the region, Bogotá has not attempted to counter these developments through hard-balancing initiatives. Though Bogotá has ramped up its military throughout the case study period, most of the materiel and training serve fighting Colombia's domestic enemies by conducting counter-insurgency operations and intercepting illicit flows of goods, rather than matching Venezuela's hard power capabilities that include highly sophisticated Russian-made Sukhoi high-performance fighter jets and attack helicopters, as well as various types of offensive equipment, such as almost 700 battle tanks – the Colombian forces have none of them (Global Firepower Index 2018). Though many Colombians may be worried about a threat from Venezuela, neither Colombia's official strategies, nor the experts interviewed for this thesis cite a full-scale military confrontation with their neighbor to be a likely event. Rather, Colombia prepares to face

[39] Total arms sales between 2006 and 2014 amount to roughly for $14.5 billion, including 100,000 Kalashnikovs, 47 helicopters, 25 Su-30MK2 Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft, T-72B tanks, multiple rocket launchers, anti-aircraft defense systems, and transport trucks (Patiño Villa 2014: 206).

the risks associated with Venezuela' fragility: mass migration as a result of the humanitarian crisis, illegal trans-border activities, as well as limited diplomatic and military quarrels.

Beyond Venezuela, Colombia's external threat perception is marked by political and economic differences with regional actors. Flemes and Castro (2016: 86) argue that Brazil's norms and values that constitute the basis of its regional hegemony, including social market economy and non-intervention, do not correspond with Bogotá's agenda. In turn, Brazil's regional ambitions may pose a threat to for the Colombian government's room for maneuver in the region. But when assessing Brazil's physical threat, Colombian defense officials revealed that they are worried about Brazil's political and economic instability, rather than about its might.

In regards to Bogotá's relations with the region's socialist regimes in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, the Santos government has established pragmatic relations despite ideological differences and territorial disputes. Therefore, these actors pose only neglectable challenges to Colombia's security.

Given the relatively low-threatening regional environment – with the exception of uncertainty over Venezuela – Colombia continues to focus on domestic problems. And because Colombia has been making itself depended on the US in tackling these internal security problems, the dependence on Washington's goodwill itself can be considered a threat for Bogotá's government to continue advancing security at home.

This threat is twofold: on the one hand, the US may be able to influence Colombia's security policy to an extent that it can force its own political, economic, and security interests on Bogotá, leading to a loss of sovereignty, for example over controversial issues such as extraditions and aerial spraying of coca crops. On the other hand, changing political priorities in the US may prompt Washington to decrease its commitment to Colombian security, leading to funding shortages and limited operability of its forces. One may argue that current level of US military and police assistance of $150-200 million per year (Security Assistance Monitor 2018) barely covers less than two percent

of Colombia's total defense budget and that anything threatening Bogotá's ability to finance its forces may be considered to be a threat to Colombia's national security (i.e., an economic downturn). But Colombia relies on the US for more than just cash, especially on access to complex organizational structures that provide cutting edge training, technology, as well as intelligence supplied by US radars and satellites controlled exclusively by US officials.

Colombian policymakers had already been concerned with the Obama Administration's lack of attention for Latin America, given the US's turn to Asia, the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, and the reviving competitive relationship with Russia in Eastern Europe. In a 2013 speech at the OAS, then-US Secretary of State John Kerry emphasized that the US was abandoning its Monroe Doctrine, which had underpinned US leadership in the Western Hemisphere since the 1820s (Patiño Villa 2014: 197). Announcing that US engagement in the region will transform, he caused concern among policymakers who desire continued support by the North Star and those who fear that competing powers will fill the vacuum the US leaves behind, such as Russia and China (Patiño Villa 2014: 198).

Colombia has already reacted to counter the threat of abandonment by the US through Uribe's attempt to Colombianize the internal conflict outlined in the "Strategy to Strengthen Democracy and Social Development 2007-2013" (Tickner 2007: 106) and Santos' aim to diversify Colombia's foreign relations. Though the US has not abandoned Bogotá and promised continued support through Peace Colombia (the successor of Plan Colombia), officials remain worried about the uncertainty of the US President Donald Trump who may put assistance under further conditions or questions it all together.

6.3.1.2. Colombia's foreign policy strategy towards the US and NATO: bandwagoning, balancing, or neither?

As highlighted throughout the text, the US is Colombia's closest and most important ally. However, Bogotá is not bandwagoning with Washington because, in the absence of hostile intentions, the US does not pose a threat to Colombia. Consequently, Colombia's

rationale to cooperate closely with the US does not fulfill Walt's (1990: 17; 1988: 282) definition of bandwagoning as "align[ing] with the source of danger".

Instead, as both Bogotá and Washington face the threats of trans-national crime with the key aspect of drugs, terrorism, and instability, they have been forming a balancing alliance against Colombia's domestic enemies and crime syndicates. Patrick W. Quirk (2017: 50) calls the partnership an "internal threat alliance", in which the "weaker state's leadership […] seek[s] cooperation because it needs military or economic resources to thwart challenges to its existence, while the great power […] become[s] involved in order to safeguard interest linked to the regime's stability or survival". This argument fits the logic of David's (1991: 244) omni-balancing theory after which governments "align with states that ensure their [domestic] hold on power". Quirk (2017: 51) explains that while Colombia stood with the US to balance the external threat of communism during the Cold War, the alliance sustained in the recent period by focusing on common threats within Colombia: "political violence from guerrillas and narco-trafficking".

Tokatlian agrees that Colombia's alliance with the US is a reaction to the Colombian government's domestic threat to power. Already during the Pastrana Administration, He notes that the "Colombian state was fairly successful in terms of attaining the foreign resource extraction and political validation needed to enhance its chances of survival" (Tokatlian 2000a: 350). And until the end of the case study timeframe, Washington has continued to assist Bogotá improving its country's security, amounting to roughly $10 billion in military and economic assistance (Restrepo et al. 2016). Tokatlian (2010: 229) also points out that Uribe's invitation of US troops to Colombian soil fits into the category of omni balancing and cannot plausibly be explained by Colombia's external threat perception.

While one may argue that some of the internal Colombian factions, including politicians and security personnel, have formed bandwagoning alliances with the enemies of the state by appeasing the guerrillas to ensure their own survival or profit from the

cooperation, these actions ran counter to the government's strategy of balancing against the internal threats. Therefore, they do not skew the conclusion that the Colombian state has been balancing its internal threats throughout the case study period.

Even when Santos initiated peace talks with the FARC in 2012, he did not bandwagon with the threat because he continued to successfully fight the guerrillas, putting pressure on their leadership by expanding operations to cripple the organization militarily and financially as laid out in the Sword of Honor campaign. Therefore, unlike Pastrana who had given in to the threat by making valuable concessions to the FARC, Santos has continued his balancing activities until he reached a peace agreement – which had been his ultimate goal and should therefore be considered a political success.

Clearly, the government did not take the same approach towards the AUC, which had also been posing significant threats at the beginning of Uribe's first term, but could not easily be declared as an enemy of the state. At the time, David Spencer (2001: v) explains:

> "First, the paramilitaries represent some important sectors of society and enjoy more popular support from the Colombian people than the insurgents. Second, the paramilitaries have developed into a powerful irregular military force that is proving itself capable of challenging the guerrillas. Third, while they commit horrendous atrocities, they have been successful where the state has not."

Consequently, balancing activities against the paramilitaries were not part of Plan Colombia (Tate 2001) and were soon unnecessary because the paramilitaries took the opportunity to dissolve and achieve highly diminished legal sentences, while transferring the responsibility of eliminating the guerrillas to the Uribe government that had already started its offensive.

As many former AUC combatants switched allegiance to the BACRIM, which have become Colombia's most eminent domestic threat by the end of the case study timeframe, causing similar problems as the AUC and FARC had done, Bogotá shifted the

focus of its internal balancing alliance with the US from balancing against the guerrillas to balancing against the BACRIM. The basis of continued US support is sketched out in the post-conflict plan Peace Colombia that follows similar aims as its predecessor, such as "expanding state presence and institutions to strengthen the rule of law and rural economies" (The White House 2016).

Different from Bogotá's engagement with the Washington, Colombia's partnership with NATO cannot be classified as an internal threat alliance or omni balancing because neither is NATO willing (or able) to actively extend its extra-regional engagements, nor has Colombia been focusing on cooperation that aims to involve NATO in its domestic problems. Rather, the partnership aims to further the internationalization of Colombia's forces, and should therefore be distinguished from Colombia's bilateral engagement with the US. In this sense, Bogotá's partnership with NATO does not represent an intensification of its internal threat or omni-balancing alliance with the US, but rather a subtle effort to diversify its forces' activities and its foreign relations in order to achieve Santos' goals in the international arena.

In addition to the hard balancing activities against domestic threats, one may argue that Colombia has been utilizing its partnership with the US to hard and soft balance external actors. While Washington has not entered into a defense commitments with Bogotá (such as with NATO, Japan, and South Korea, among others) and the cooperation has been focusing on domestic threats, advancing security and stability at home has accelerated economic development that has helped making Colombia stronger – an effort one may classify as internal balancing against a potential aggressor such as Venezuela. In addition, by associating with the US and the liberal world order, Colombia has been establishing itself as a counter-model to Venezuela's push for a Bolivarian Revolution, thereby challenging Venezuela's claim to leadership in the region. The US has also assisted Colombia by discrediting Caracas in the international arena, by enacting sanctions against the socialist and authoritarian regime, and by keeping the option of a military intervention against the Maduro government on the table, as the Trump Administration has announced

(although it has continued to support Venezuela economically through the purchase of petroleum).

Analysts that focus on inter-state relations in the region have also argued that Colombia has also been soft balancing the regional hegemon Brazil, mainly because Brazilian hegemony may lead to a regional model that clashes with Colombia's interests in free trade and the promotion of free-market economy. Flemes and Castro (2016) argue that Bogotá has been aiming to utilize non-military tools in cooperation with others to delay, complicate, or increase the regional unipole's costs of using extraordinary power. They cite the establishment of the pro-trade Pacific Alliance as a soft-balancing tool to counter Brazil's protectionist integration project MERCOSUR, thereby engaging in exclusive institutional balancing by limiting Brasília's influence and challenging MERCOSUR's relevance (2016: 78). Bogotá has also engaged in inclusive institutional balancing by limiting the integration process of UNASUR and by defending US-led hemispheric institutions such as the OAS and the Inter-American Development Bank (2016: 83-84).

In addition, Bogotá has rejected Brasilia's candidacy for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and Santos has criticized some of Brazil's prestige projects, such as the MINUSTAH mission in Haiti as "pre-eminently military with too few elements of civilian reconstruction and too little participation of the Haitian government and people" when he spoke at the UN General Assembly in 2011 (Flemes/Castro 2016: 84).

Colombia has also countered Brazil's goal of building a regional order free of foreign interference by consolidating its relationship with the US, inviting American troops to operate on Colombian soil, which Flemes and Castro (2016: 79) classify as collateral hard-balancing because Colombia's actions were related to military activities but not primarily designed to balance Brazil's influence in the region. However, in order to call an action soft balancing, it needs to follow the causal mechanisms of balancing – the intent to restrict the unipolar leader's military prospects, which was not the rationale because Bogotá invited US forces to participate in the fight against the guerrillas, not to

undermine Brazil. Therefore, one needs to be careful classifying the internal balancing alliance between Colombia and the US as a soft-balancing tool against Brazil.

In a similar light, Colombia started cooperating with NATO, which was clearly rejected by Brazil. In this case, Flemes and Castro (2016: 84) believe that Bogotá established ties with the Alliance "as an instrument of institutional contestation aiming to balance the UNASUR's SADC, an institution promoting the construction of a regional security order independent from external actors". However, in its decision to push for closer cooperation with NATO, no evidence suggests that Bogotá aimed to challenge Brazil's goal of establishing regional autonomy, but rather to achieve Santos' foreign policy goals by internationalizing Colombia's military. In fact, Colombia even tried to downplay its practical cooperation with NATO, initially forgoing the chance to publicize its achievement to obtain official partner status in June 2017 because the Santos government feared stirring resentment in the region. Therefore, Colombia's engagement with NATO should also not be considered a soft-balancing tool to undermine Brazilian interests.

Given that Colombia's urge to build a partnership with NATO – an extra-territorial alliance not prepared to become involved in Colombia's internal conflict – can neither be explained by Colombia's strategy to balance internal, nor external dangers, the only valid explanation for Bogotá's outreach to NATO from a threat perspective is to hedge against the threat of being abandoned by Washington.

The logic of diversifying Colombia's external relations goes hand in hand with the evolving factors that influence a country's foreign policy decision making, according to Walt (1990: 29-32): the relative strength of states, the availability of allies, and the context in which decisions take place (whether in peace or wartime). By the end of the case study period, Colombia has grown stronger, has increased its circle of friends, and has achieved peace with its most dangerous enemy. These developments have broadened Bogotá's leeway for engaging with actors beyond the US, which led the Santos government to reach out to actors such as NATO and the EU in order to decrease its dependence on the goodwill of Washington.

However, Santos' diversification aims at Colombia's engagement in the international community, rather than at including new allies into its internal threat or omni-balancing alliance – which Bogotá has been trying to Colombianize, not to internationalize. Therefore, the argument that Colombia pushed for a partnership with NATO as a strategy to become less dependent on the US, and therefore more secure, only bears partial truth – especially because Bogotá continues to see its main threats within its country's borders, while the agreements with NATO do not indicate the Alliance's involvement in Colombia's internal conflict.

And even given the hypothetical scenario that Colombia was forming an internal threat or omni-balancing alliance with NATO, it should be made clear that the partnership would still not follow the Balance of Threat theory's logic because Walt treats states as black boxes and only considers threats from the external, not the internal environment. Even if one was able to clearly expose the FARC as a puppet of the Venezuelan government, which would turn an internal into an external threat, Walt's theory continues to fall short of explaining Colombia's rationale to cooperate with NATO because the Alliance is not contributing to any balancing activities against Caracas.

Therefore, given the evidence, the neorealist approach to link Colombia's alliance behavior to its external threat environment is not conclusive. Only if one includes Colombia's domestic situation is one to explain Bogotá's alliance with the US – but even then, Colombia's engagement with NATO is clouded with questions and cannot be deduced from Walt's theory.

6.3.2. Colombia's NATO policy and the Balance of Interests theory

The following section will determine whether Schweller's Balance of Interest theory can explain Colombia's outreach to NATO as a status-quo alliance. After classifying Colombia according to Schweller's animal categories and analyzing how Colombia's interests in the status-quo or a revisionist world order have evolved during the case study period, the section will determine whether Colombia's partnership with NATO can be classified as a bandwagoning-for-profit alliance.

6.3.2.1. 2001-2010: Colombia, a lamb on therapy

Historically, Colombia's engagement on the world stage has been very limited. Mostly relying on its special relationship with the US since the loss of Panama in 1903, Bogotá has also been aligning its interests with those of Washington. Therefore, by committing to Washington's agenda, Colombia has also been siding with the global alliance that upholds the status quo.

Deducing Colombia's interests from its partnership with the US may seem like a shortcut because Bogotá's interests actually derive from its cost-benefit analysis of the current unipolar world order. But given Colombia's historical weakness and its subsequent inability to significantly affect the regional, let alone the international system, the country has been concentrated on its development at home, leading Bogotá to follow an opportunistic bandwagoning-for-profit strategy with the US – without displaying significant interest in revising or maintaining the international system. Especially at the beginning of the case study, when Colombia was at the brink of collapse, external relations had been a means of solving internal problems, rather than an attempt to actively influence the international system.

Of the four animal categories Schweller (1994: 77) puts forth (a staunch status-quo-supporting "lion", a soft status-quo-supporting "lamb", a limited-aims revisionist "jackal", or an unlimited–aims revisionist "wolf"), Colombia fits best into the category of a "lamb": a weak state that bandwagons with the US to seek protection from the stronger side to undermine domestic rivals and gain economic assistance – and in turn qualifies as a soft supporter of the status quo.[40]

Given Colombia's willingness to give up autonomy by subordinating itself to the US's interests in order to overcome its domestic struggles, one may use the metaphor of an

[40] In this case – according to Schweller's, not Walt's definition – bandwagoning refers to entering into an alliance for obtaining profits, which means that Colombia's bandwagoning strategy towards the US does not infer that Bogotá gives in to a threat from Washington.

injured "lamb" that is seeking assistance from its old best friend who happens to be a "lion" and the only one in town capable and willing to provide subsidized care. In return, the "lamb" joins the "lion's" interest group to preserve its preeminent status. However, as the "lamb" was undergoing an eight-year-long therapy, it was not able to greatly assist the "lion's" goals beyond proclaiming that it supported its friend's actions.

In the real world, this meant that Uribe was not able to defend the status-quo order beyond supporting the global unipole vocally, such as when the Colombian government sided with Washington over the legitimacy to invade Iraq, simply because his priorities continued to be on the domestic front. Therefore, the Uribe government may be considered a peripheral, but nonetheless stable part of the status-quo alliance.

6.3.2.2. 2010-2016: Colombia, a lamb on the move

As Santos took over the presidency, the "lamb" had finally recovered. Able to crawl out of its sickbed, it gained somewhat autonomy from the "lion", but continued to support its old friend's agenda – not necessarily because of loyalty, but because the "lamb" believed that the "lion" and its support network could help the "lamb" to gain new strength. The "lamb" also used its new freedom to explore the town for novel and ancient partners that it had largely ignored because of its own health problems. By simultaneously supporting its old friend and making new acquaintances, the "lamb" hoped to benefit from its relations with the master of the town while creating the option to partner with a new generation of leaders in the future.

Given the advances in domestic security and economic development, Santos started out his term with more leeway in foreign policy than his predecessor, allowing him to redesign Colombia's foreign policy according to the country's interests beyond overcoming domestic threats. His administration focused on advancing Colombia's economic situation in order to gain power, basing its strategy on the assumptions of an evolving world order that continues to feature the US as the unipole, but moves into a multipolar direction. His administration decided to simultaneously maintain the close relations with the US (*respice polium*) as well as to reach out to old and new partners

(*respice omnia*), while supporting the institutions that further Colombia's interests in trade and security. In turn, Santos became a more active supporter of the status quo while establishing the option to rearrange its relations with the North Star once other stars shine brighter.

One should highlight the importance of economic themes on Santos' agenda. Given that Colombia is a typical trading nation, dependent on commodity exports, not large enough to build a self-sufficient economy, and governed by a legacy of free-market politics, the country benefits from the status-quo world order and their institutions that manage the international economy on the premises of free trade. Central to Santos' idea of *respice mercatum* (to look to the market) were the conclusions of the trade agreements with the US and the EU, as well as creation of the Pacific Alliance, which provides the "opportunity to increase […] exports, integrate […] industries and generate regional value chains" (Flemes/Castro 2016: 88). Strengthening trade relations was aimed to decrease Colombia's trade deficit, especially since Venezuela broke away as the main importer of Colombian goods. In addition, Mexico, Chile, and Peru share similar economic visions as Colombia, aiming to globalize their markets and promote foreign direct investments, especially from emerging economies in the Asia-Pacific region (Flemes/Castro 2016: 88)

While Santos has been aiming to internationalize its economy, Colombia has mainly remained a regional actor in security and politics. Given that the regional inter-state architecture is relatively safe compared to other world regions, Santos has worked to uphold the regional status quo. His government has increased support to stabilize Caribbean and Central American states, and settled most of the political conflicts with its neighbors. Colombia has also become more active in both of the region's political organizations UNASUR and the OAS, accepting both of their roles and aiming to find a balance between them. Thereby, he also hedged against potential turmoil that may affect Colombia's interest in economic development.

But even beyond its region, Colombia supported institutions that uphold the current political and economic world order, such as the UN in which Santos aims to play a larger role by contributing to peacekeeping operations. Colombia has also been a proponent of maintaining the UN Security Council's core power structure represented by the five permanent veto powers. Bogotá has merely lobbied for modifying the setup of the non-permanent seats – a strategy very different from those that aim to gain veto member status or dilute the power of the Security Council altogether. In addition, Bogotá has been supporting organizations that represent the interests of the powerful, including the OECD and NATO, which marks a clear statement that Colombia hopes to maintain the international distribution of power.

Of course, Colombia has also continued to benefit directly from its bilateral relationship with the US, cementing its beneficial commercial ties to consolidate itself as a (sub-)regional power (Sánchez Cabarcas/Monroy Hernández 2012: 327). By siding with the US, for example by supporting US claims in the WTO (Pastrana Buelvas 2011: 6), Bogotá supports its biggest sponsor economically, thereby not only proving its loyalty but indirectly furthering Washington's interests which may lead to more support in the future. This self-perpetuating model is based on the traditional *respice polum* doctrine and represents Colombia's interests in strengthening the status quo, yielding the largest profits in Bogotá's cost-benefit analysis.

However, in addition to the status-quo activities of strengthening structures that are already strong, Santos has not forgone his chance to build pragmatic relations with supporters of the revisionist camp, most notably in the economic field where China has become Colombia's second largest trading partner (behind the US), but also in the political arena where Colombia has invested in its relations with African nations.

Thereby, Santos aimed to position Colombia in a favorable spot within the existing system, marked by unipolarity and moving towards multipolarity, rather than trying to halt or accelerate this development. By building on his relations with Washington while reaching out to diverse actors around the world, Santos has created the option for

Colombia to align with the revisionist alliance if this was to win the upper hand in the potential shift towards multipolarity. In fact, creating options has become official government policy, as the Foreign Ministry proclaims in its foreign policy mission statement:

> "Colombia must promote a new foreign policy that seeks a diversification of interlocutors on the international scene, an expansion of its thematic agenda in its relations with the world, and a strengthening of the instruments to achieve it. [...] Such diversification would allow Colombia to take advantage of the options that open up in the transformation of the global and regional scenario […]."[41]

Nassim Taleb (2012) would explain that the creation of options makes Colombia more robust, if not anti-fragile in case of shifts in the international distribution of power. Taleb believes that the opposite of fragility (vulnerability from shocks) is not robustness, but anti-fragility, which describes the attribute of a system that gains from shocks. In the case of Colombia, Bogotá may benefit from a system change by taking a more prominent and favorable position in a revisionist alliance once the time is ripe. Without further speculation, this point aims to underline Santos' strategy to decrease his country's dependence on the status quo – dependence is an inherently fragile attribute – by creating the option for Colombia to take advantage of system change, rather than having to suffer from it. This opportunistic low-cost approach underlines Santos' strategy to establish alliances to further his country's interests: to bandwagon for profit.

This goes back to the simple logic that Colombia has little incentive to extend its *relative* power vis-à-vis its neighbors because the country is clearly limited by the vast power difference towards the regional unipole while being blessed by a relatively secure regional environment. This means that Colombia cannot possibly replace Brazil as the

[41] Original quote: "Colombia debe impulsar una nueva política exterior que busque una diversificación de interlocutores en el escenario internacional, una ampliación de su agenda temática en sus relaciones con el mundo, y un fortalecimiento decidido de los instrumentos para lograrlo. [...] Esa diversificación permitiría que Colombia pueda aprovechar las opciones que se abren en la transformación del escenario global y regional […]." (quoted in Fernández de Soto 2010: 73)

leading South American power, but that it also does not have to fear much aggression from its neighbors, which leaves Bogotá less concerned with its place in the regional power structure than with building opportunistic alliances to extract resources for internal security and economic development. In turn, Bogotá aims to maximize absolute power rather than relative security.

Besides, the case study reveals that Colombia was only able to become an active component of the status-quo alliance after Uribe saved his country from becoming a failed state, which opened the possibility for utilizing more resources for external relations and in turn to evaluate the country's options for its future foreign policy. This implies that it takes a certain level of strength to actively further one's interests and thereby reveal one's genuine nature. Following Schweller's metaphor, when the "lamb" was dependent on the "lion", it did not have a choice but to appease him. Only when the "lamb" grew strong enough to act somewhat autonomously, was it able to prove its commitment to its friend by continuing its support on the political stage while broadening its circle of friends by reaching out to further potential partners.

6.3.2.3. Colombia's interest in the status quo and its policy towards NATO

By committing to the international status quo, Colombia is part of a balancing alliance directed against those that aim to revise the current world order. Working with NATO, Bogotá supports this balancing alliance by strengthening the legitimacy and firepower of its institutions. In turn, Colombia benefits from a stronger NATO because the organization is an institution vital to uphold the liberal world order (Flockhart 2014: 22), and committed to international stability, precisely in the interest of Colombia as a trading nation. In addition, NATO is designed to "preserve and promote American primacy" (Schweller 2001: 181), a goal that Colombia supports in order to uphold Washington's commitment to economic and military assistance. Colombia also profits directly from NATO by gaining access to unique opportunities from educational programs to multinational military initiatives, while opening new channels for technology transfer.

Therefore, given Colombia's interest in the status quo as a means for power maximization, Bogotá's policy towards NATO clearly fits Schweller's Balance of Interests and bandwagoning-for-profit logic.

6.3.3. Colombia's NATO policy and status competition as an intervening variable

This section will determine whether Colombia has been following a social mobility, social competition, or social creativity strategy during the case study time frame, which serves as the basis to evaluate whether Bogotá's status strategy can help explain the country's NATO policy as an intervening variable.

6.3.3.1. Colombia's status in world politics: role conception and place in the status hierarchy

It only takes a short stay in Colombia to realize that the general population is extremely happy, yet very cautious – if not untrusting – in dealing with strangers (while a person with whom one shares the slightest connection is usually not considered to be a stranger). This goes back to the feelings of joy and security Colombians experience within their families and the violence they may encounter outside of their homes.[42] Although a thorough analysis of Colombian culture and its impact on the country's self-perception goes way beyond this chapter, the population's contrasting attitudes towards their surroundings is exemplary of the schizophrenic relationship with their country: most Colombians are extremely proud of their country and local heritage, yet some also tend to hide their passports in the airport security line because they fear to be judged by Colombia's negative image abroad.

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[42] This conclusion is similar to the concept of "a casa e a rua" by the Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta (1997), which describes Brazilians' feelings towards strangers. Guided by the belief that the street is a hostile and lawless space, Brazilians are very cautious of strangers. In turn, they are very protective of their homes that represent trust and intimacy with their families and friends. Similar applies to Colombians and other Latin American cultures.

"These times are over", announced then-Ambassador to the US Luis Carlos Villegas Echeverri (2015) at the Colombia Conference at Harvard, reflecting Colombia's official discourse that is marked by pride and optimism rather than the general population's love-hate relationship with their country. Tom Feiling (2013) remarks that the "Colombian elite's boundless appetite of foreign flatters […] goes hand in hand with the haughty dismissal of foreign critics". This goes back to the fact that even after the country's positive developments, Colombia continues to carry an image marked by drugs and violence (Dießelmann/Hetzer 2015: 19). Compared to Brazil's complex of greatness, this leads Colombians to suffer from a complex of insecurity – figuratively and literally – which they aim to overplay with the achievements they have produced.

On a positive note for Bogotá's self-confidence, Colombia was able to overtake Venezuela as its reference state in the international status hierarchy, comparable because of shared historical and cultural ties, geographical proximity, and political competition. Whereas in the past, millions of Colombians have found refuge from domestic violence in their neighboring country, making many Venezuelans look down on them, the tide has turned as the Switzerland of South America has transformed into the sick man of the hemisphere. So the saying goes, one man's failure is another man's success.

In addition to elevating its status in the region, Colombia has gained international attention for its positive development, especially for achieving peace with the FARC. Considering that in the 1990s, then-President Samper had his US visa voided for his entanglement with the drug lords, it is a remarkable success that President Santos was invited to Sweden to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016. The country has clearly reformed and the international community is slowly catching up with updating its image of Colombia. However, the country may still be regarded an underachiever in the status rankings because of its lasting violent legacy, leading to the awkward clash of insecurity and overconfidence in its discourse, as well as to a healthy dose of skepticism within the international community.

It is difficult to assess the Colombian policymaker's desired target in the international status hierarchy because Bogotá has not replaced Venezuela with a higher-ranked reference state, and Colombia simply plays in a different league than the regional hegemon Brazil. What is clear is that Colombian policymakers are fed up with their country's image. After decades of shame, they hope to leave their past behind and to be recognized for their achievements instead.

6.3.3.2. Colombia's status strategy: great leaps forward

As for any actor in international relations, status plays a role in Colombia's foreign policy because it adds value in the form of practical and ideational rewards. This is why one may believe that under Uribe, Colombia had engaged in a social conflict strategy: to "outdo the rival state in its area of strength – usually geopolitical power" (Larson/Shevchenko 2014: 39). However, while Colombia might have gained status by clashing with Venezuela at the time when Caracas was still the Zurich, and Bogotá was the Belgrade of South America, Uribe did not allow any foreign policy projects to get in the way of his domestic agenda. One may also accuse the Uribe Administration of spoiler behavior in regards to its neighbor's aim to build regional autonomy, but Bogotá's intention to cooperate with Washington can hardly be considered a strategy to challenge Brazil as the natural force of continental integration. Instead, when Bogotá was almost exclusively focusing on its domestic security, the government simply did not pay much attention to its image – nation building at home was trumping brand building abroad.

This notion changed when Santos took office, aiming to build on Colombia's achievements at home in order to reach its rightful place in the international status hierarchy. At the time, Colombia was an exemplary underachiever, as the country had experienced significant improvement in security and economic development, yet it has not had the chance to properly announce it to the world. Therefore, Santos saw it as one of his foremost duties to elevate Colombia's status by creating visibility for the country's success story, by building on the country's unique strengths, and eventually by associating with the developed world.

Concentrating the government's foreign policy communication in the President's Office (Dießelmann/Hetzer 2015: 7), Santos designed a social mobility strategy, to be fortified with elements of social creativity. This means that while Bogotá applied creative tactics to gain status, it did so in order to further Colombia's chances to gain traditional status markers – such as membership in elite clubs – which represents Bogotá's core strategy to rise on the international status ladder. Association with the higher status groups is a well-suited strategy for Colombia because the country's liberal values are compatible with much those of the developed world. In addition, Bogotá's alliance with Washington opens up opportunities to join elite clubs that may be less permeable for other emerging actors.

In order to attain sufficient status to be promoted into prestigious clubs, Colombia both imitated the dominant states' behavior and collected status makers, including state visits, strategic dialogues, summit meetings, and of course material capabilities. In addition, the Santos Administration engaged in creative ways to turn the meaning of negative characteristics into special assets, addressing Colombia's past problems, showing how the country has overcome them, and offering the country's know-how to the world. Thereby, drugs and violence – topics Colombians typically tend to avoid – became part of Bogotá's marketing strategy.

Most illustrating is the famous Netflix series "Narcos", which depicts the history of the Medellín and Cali Cartels, and is considered a disgrace by many Colombians who fear that the show projects a negative image of their country. However, given the government's success in overthrowing these syndicates, Santos and then-Defense Minister Pinzón decided to allow Netflix to film the series in Colombia as a showcase for what the authorities have achieved in the past decades (Pinzón 2015a).

Colombia's success story also made the headline of famous news outlets, such as *Time* magazine in which "The Colombian Comeback" made the cover page in April 2014, and in the *Financial Times* that has featured analyses about the "new" and "reborn"

Colombia, focusing on the country's victory against poverty, inequality, and corruption (Tickner 2016: 9).

In addition to projecting popular images, publishing articles, and touring university campuses to tell about the Colombian success story, the government used its successful struggle against domestic problems as a hook to intensify international military cooperation by sharing security know-how with countries that face similar security problems, for example in Central America, thereby turning Colombia into an "exporter" or "maker of security" (Cepeda Másmela 2016: 428, Tickner 2016: 9). Colombian troops are also eager to prove their strong counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism capabilities, for example in the in the annual "Fuerzas Comando", a Pan-American special operations competition sponsored by SOUTHCOM and won by Colombia nine out of the fourteen editions (by 2018).

On the diplomatic stage, Santos became the first President to call for a global debate on narcotics, to announce concrete proposals for countering drugs in the Western hemisphere, and (together with Mexico and Guatemala) to initiate a special session on the topic in the UN General Assembly (Tickner 2016: 10). Underlining the government's efforts, the Foreign Ministry proclaims that Colombia will continue to position its achievements as a benchmark in the struggle against the drugs and terrorism (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2017).

Even more important than the country's achievements were the country's prospects, especially in regards to finishing the longest lasting armed conflict in the Western hemisphere by securing peace with the FARC. In turn, what Pastrana once designed as the "diplomacy for peace" strategy (to utilize diplomacy as a means to achieve peace), Santos redesigned as a "peace for diplomacy" initiative (to utilize the peace agreement as a means to advance diplomacy).

Of course, peace with the FARC was one of Santos' main objectives and the involvement of foreign actors such as Norway and Cuba as "guarantor countries", as well as Chile and Venezuela as "accompanying countries", has advanced the negotiation process. But it is

remarkable to what extent Santos utilized the peace process to attract the attention and sympathy of foreign leaders who were able to associate themselves with Colombia's success, thereby jumping on the bandwagon and enjoy the fruits of the peace agreement.

And sure they did, most enthusiastically in Europe where the population is especially hungry for the topic. Peace with the FARC gained vocal "support" through state visits from many acting and former heads of government, such as Felipe González (Spain), Aníbal Cavaco Silva (Portugal), Tony Blair (UK), and Pope Francis (Holy Chair). German President Joachim Gauck "consider[ed] the peace process in Colombia to be extremely important and [that] there is much scope for exchanges between the two countries on this issue and the related challenges" (Birle 2016: 493). When Santos visited Germany in 2014, "Chancellor Angela Merkel described the peace process in Colombia as 'very brave', [offering] full support of Germany" (Birle 2016: 494). The German Parliament unanimous voted for a bill to support the Colombian government's efforts and the German Foreign Ministry even appointed the parliamentarian Tom Königs as a representative to assist the peace process (his actual involvement remained limited).

Santos utilized the topic of "peace" to be invited to foreign capitals where he sent out targeted messages to promote his country in the eyes of politicians and investors. Anna-Lena Dießelmann and Andreas Hetzer (2015: 14) explain that he stressed on the causal relationships between 1.) peace and economic development, as well as 2.) peace and the end of the business of drugs, which will also lead to environmental protection. He highlighted that the peace agreement serves as a model for other conflicts, contributes to food security in the world, and even lead to economic development in Europe (Dießelmann/Hetzer 2015: 14). Most significantly, Santos turned European support for the peace process into a moral obligation, presenting assistance for Colombia as a chance for peace in the world: "Now the Europeans have […] a unique opportunity to be protagonists in the ending of the last armed conflict of the whole Western Hemisphere"[43],

[43] Original quote: "Ahora los europeos tienen en el proceso de paz colombiano una oportunidad única de ser protagonistas en la terminación del ultimo conflicto armado de todo el hemisferio occidental."

conferring responsibility to Europe as a leading actor in international relations (Dießelmann/Hetzer 2015: 11).

The focus on peace provided Santos with the opportunity to make friends abroad, manage them to sign on to his agenda at home (both to pressure the FARC and to provide positive news for his domestic public), and to become celebrated as the Minister of Defense that turned into the President of Peace. But the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize did not only pay respect to Santos individually, but to the Colombian nation as a whole, managing to overcome five decades of war – a unique status symbol achieved by turning the downsides of war into the promises of peace.

It should be noted that the images of the Colombian "success story" and "opportunities for peace" often did not live up to reality. At points, they were simply exaggerated, for example when senior Colombian officials reflect on American military assistance with the conclusion that "the student has become better than the master" (Pinzón 2015a). At other times, Santos' arguments failed to address both sides of the coin, for example when he neglected the domestic opposition to his peace deal in his efforts to win foreign support for his peace plans.[44] And most significantly, the assertion of the Colombian success story may be doubted altogether given that the qualitative or quantitative situation of human rights and armed conflict did not improve during the Santos Administration (Dießelmann/Hetzer 2015: 19), and that the coca production has reached its all-time high by the end of the case study timeframe (Brodzinsky 2017), both according to UN figures.

The discrepancy between image and reality also suggests that the Santos administration has been doing an excellent job of raising Colombia's status by focusing on selective achievements that project a skewed image of the actual situation. While this can be

[44] The October 2016 referendum about the ratification of the peace accords with the FARC failed because 50.2 percent of the voters opposed the peace agreement. As the plebiscite was not legally binding, Santos pushed the peace agreement through the Colombian Parliament without retrying to gain approval from the public. The deal has remained unpopular, leading a fall of Santos' approval rating from 52 to 24 percent (Gallup 2017).

problematic because the creation of the image may came at the expense of the substance, it worked as a way to gain international attention that portrays Colombia in a positive light and yields respect for its achievements.

In addition to Santos' tactics to reframe negatively connoted themes, his government aimed to create value through Colombia's position as a bridge country between South and North America, acting as a mediator between the US and Brazil to balance their competing geopolitical and ideological interests. Eduardo Pastrana Buelvas and Diego Vera Piñeros (2016: 75) bring forth the example of the 6th Summit of the Americas in Cartagena where "Santos pretend[ed] that the US and Brazil do not collide, that there is no regional reading of the PA [Pacific Alliance] as a replica of NAFTA and an antagonist of South Americanism, [and] that Unasur does not substitute the pillars of the OAS". By paying respect to both sides, Bogotá aimed to gain recognition as a unique bridge between the two major powers of the hemisphere – similar to what Brazil attempted when it positioned itself to become the bridge between the Global South and the Global North.

Taken together, the Santos Administration's tactics to gain attention and value in the international community match Larson's and Shevchenko's (2010: 75) indicators of a social creativity strategy: the development of distinct agendas and the emphasis on the country's unique contribution to the international community (a force against drugs, a chance for peace, and a bridge between competing actors), the creation of new institutions (Pacific Alliance), and featuring charismatic leaders who establish a high diplomatic profile (Santos). It made sense for Colombia to elevate its status creatively because the criteria to join elite clubs were far-reaching when Santos entered office.

However, Bogotá's quest for status did not end there because it was ultimately designed for status mobility. In other words, Santos did not only aim to achieve status in niche dimensions, but to utilize the newly gained status in order to receive an entry card into established elite clubs, such as the OECD and NATO, which serve as traditional status markers in the international status hierarchy. While such organizations are not impermeable, they require high standards in established status dimension. Therefore,

Colombia's strategy (social creativity → social mobility → elite clubs → utility of status) also depended on the build-up of material capabilities and on matching the behavior of developed states as necessary criteria to be granted entry into selective groups.

Given the Santos Administration's big two themes, trade and security, Bogotá became active on the forefront of both topics in order to showcase Colombia's value in contributing to efforts that are dear to the hearts of established powers. Santos promised considerable contribution to international security when he signed agreements with the UN, the EU, and NATO. His government also provided aid after natural disasters in Haiti in 2010 and Nepal in 2015, as well as technical assistance to countries of the Global South, especially in the fields of disarmament, demobilization, and the reintegration of ex-combatants (Gehring/Cuervo 2016: 655). Santos proved his country's commitment to liberal economics by entering into several free trade agreements, and he showcased his country's ability to adjust to established norms of governance by adapting to international regulatory standards and undergoing security sector reform. In turn, Colombia was invited to join the OECD and to become one of NATO's partners across the globe, serving as status markers that highlighting Colombia's potential as a genuine global player (Castro Alegría/Gonzáles 2016: 311, Gehring/Cuervo 2016: 653).

It seems that reaching such status markers has become a goal in itself, especially given that the Colombian government continues to highlight their importance in official documents, but what remains is the question about their utility. Most analysts agree that Bogotá's status aspirations were driven by economic rationale because the Santos Administration believed that Colombia's image had to change in order to advance post-conflict economic development. Therefore, achieving membership status of the rich-country club OECD was one of the Santos Administration's major goals to project Colombia's image as a responsible trading partner and to prove its success story (Flemes/Castro 2016: 83, Castro Alegría/Gonzáles 2016: 307, Cepeda Másmela 2016: 428, Dießelmann/Hetzer 2015: 20). In addition to its affiliation with the OECD, Colombia's national development plan proudly highlights that the country counts as a member of the CIVETS, a "select group of nations […] perceived by the international

community as economies with high growth expectations" (Departamento Nacional de Planeación 2010: 1)[45]. Dießelmann and Hetzer (2015: 6) explain that economic development has become the Santos Administration's top theme for promoting the country abroad, which explains the use of status symbols for Colombia's marketing strategy. In other words, affiliation with elite clubs helps the government to project the image of Colombia as a mature economy, which will attract investments.

However, one should note that in order to gain the maximum benefits, Santos even played the double game of portraying Colombia as a mature middle-income country with functioning institutions and emerging economic opportunities on the one hand, and displaying Colombia as a developing country in need for economic assistance on the other one (Gomis 2016: 467-8). Thereby, he relied on the country's internal differences, such as the promising infrastructure for business development in the cities, and the government's inability to exert control over vast parts of the countryside in order to gain both foreign direct investments and foreign government aid. The Santos Administration's double game goes hand in hand with the paradox that Colombia is both a recipient and a provider of aid (Gehring/Cuervo 2016: 656).

One may find ample examples that complement Colombia's strategy to gain profit from status markers, but attaining affiliation with elite clubs is clearly a central strategy to gain status, which bears utility beyond advancing investments, such as increasing sovereignty over its foreign policy pursuits and advancing their effectiveness (Neumann 2014: 88, Clunan 2014: 283). If Colombia can increase its credibility among new partners, Bogotá becomes less dependent on Washington. In addition, if Colombia manages to translate the respect for its achievements into authority, Bogotá's foreign policy initiatives are taken more seriously. Simply speaking, Latin American countries may pay more attention to Bogotá's expertise in economics and defense if Colombia is affiliated with the OECD and NATO.

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[45] Original quote: "Pasamos además a formar parte, desde hace poco, de un selecto grupo de naciones, los CIVETS –Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egipto, Turquía y Suráfrica–, vistas en el planeta como economías con grandes expectativas de crecimiento para las próximas décadas."

The analysis has provided ample evidence that status has been playing a major role in Colombia's foreign policy strategy since Santos took office. Enabled by his predecessor's success, Bogotá has been gaining status in novel domains by turning around negative traits into respected assets. Colombia has gained authority over topics such as peace and the fight against guerrillas and drugs. Simultaneously, the country has adopted the behavior of established economies, from providing assistance to other governments to driving initiatives in international governance. In turn, Colombia has gained status markers that help Bogotá to attract foreign investments. While one may conclude that Colombia has been engaging in both social creativity and social mobility, the focus clearly rests on status mobility because Santos ultimately aimed to gain status in traditional domains. The authority his country gained in creative ways should be regarded as additional credit to achieve the threshold of becoming accepted among advanced economies.

6.3.3.3. Colombia's status mobility strategy and its policy towards NATO

Affiliation with NATO is clearly used to signal status both at the unit and systemic level to prove to the domestic and international audience that the Colombian forces are respected for their value by the world's most prestigious military alliance. Colombia's interest in gaining the official partner status may even satisfy Pu's and Schweller's (2014: 151) conditions for conspicuous consumption as it was motivated by the primary goal to satisfy ideational needs. This is because gaining NATO partner status itself is not designed to counter specific security threats and does not substantially broaden or deepen Colombia level of cooperation with NATO beyond the level Bogotá has already cooperated with Brussels before signing the agreement.

Of course, cooperation with NATO bears practical value for the Colombian forces, but current and former officials of the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry, and the President's Office in varying ranks from Desk Officer to Minister and General, have

assessed that gaining NATO partner status is a matter of prestige.[46] One official appraised the Alliance to be the "most proficient, efficient, professional, and capable force in the world" and that becoming an official NATO partner stands for what Colombia aims to achieve: to become a reputable actor in the international arena based on demonstrated success and future potential.

Gaining NATO partnership status may even be considered to be a "big S" question, according to Thompson (2014: 220) who defines them as fundamental questions of status hierarchy, such as questions about major fluctuations in the hierarchy (whereas "small s" questions are about "less earth-shaking manifestations"). This becomes especially true given Bogotá's social mobility strategy based on gaining entry into prestige clubs in various policy areas, making the partnership with NATO "one of Santos' highest strategic priorities in the sphere of international security", as an official remarked.

Given the centrality of achieving NATO partner status, it was very surprising that Santos kept quiet for over one year after his counterparts in Brussels signed the IPCP, which serves as the de-facto cooperation agreement in May 2017. If the world does not know about the partnership, it will not bear much value to advance Colombia's status. However, as Larson and Shevchenko (2014: 42) explain, a state's strategy can be driven by "different set[s] of causal dynamics". In the decision for postponing the announcement of the official partnership, security trumped status ambitions because a confrontation with Bogotá's neighbors in times of Venezuelan instability might be much more costly than the benefits of decorating Colombia's success story with yet another achievement.

In May 2018, towards the end of his presidency, Santos visited Europe to celebrate his last foreign policy achievement when he officially announced the official partnership between Colombia and NATO at the Alliance's new Headquarters in Brussels. On the same day, Colombia was also accepted as a member of the OECD. Santos constituted that

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[46] Interviews with various stakeholders in Bogotá between 2015 and 2018.

"being part of the OECD and NATO improves the image of Colombia and allows us to have much more play on the international stage" (quoted in Reuters 2018).

Given these remarks, one can confidently conclude that Bogotá's social mobility strategy was a driver behind Colombia's push for NATO partnership, enabling the country to rise up the ranks in the international status hierarchy through the affiliation with NATO that provides international recognition for the capability of Colombia's armed forces.

6.3.4. Further explanations for Colombia's NATO policy

Although the focus of the theoretical analysis lies on threats, interests, and status, it would be incomplete not to sketch out strong alternative explanations that drive Colombia's NATO policy.

First of all, *Innenpolitik* helps to explain Colombia's push to internationalize its military. Since 2001, the Colombian forces have grown from about 300,000 to over 480,000 active personnel (Pelcastre 2014, Saumeth 2015). Although this number includes the National Police of Colombia of about 190,000 policemen mandated under the Ministry of Defense as a branch of the country's armed forces, Colombia still possesses the third largest military in the Americas after the US and Brazil (Restrepo et al. 2016). In addition to its quantitatively large constituency among the population, the forces are deeply connected with the Colombian society because of their role in the five decade-long struggle against the FARC, reflected in their slogan: "we are in the hearts of the Colombians and will we stay there"[47].

Although no one doubts that the Colombian military will remain in the hearts of their people, the forces sooner or later need to adjust to the post-conflict environment.[48] Yet, the prospects for the Colombian military's future missions are divided between those who

[47] Original slogan: "Estamos en el corazón de los colombianos y ahí nos vamos a quedar."
[48] Between 2,000 and 3,300 elite forces have already terminated their service for Colombia to join private security firms and get deployed to the United Arab Emirates. About 800 of them have been sent to fight in Yemen as part of the Saudi-led coalition against the Houthi rebels (Tickner 2016: 15).

believe that the forces will be needed at home to stand up against the BACRIM and to continue their nation-building activities in the countryside, and those who aspire the military to transform into a internationally deployable force to serve Colombia's new foreign policy goals. For the latter, NATO is the partner of choice to help the Colombian forces to prepare for its new tasks. Therefore, Bogotá has already worked with the ACT in Norfolk, Virginia, to develop the 2030 military transformation plan that aims to adopt technology, doctrine, education, and force structure to Colombia's new realities.

No matter to what extent Colombia's military will be deployed internally or externally, the partnership provides hope that Colombia will internationalize its mission, which does not only serve as an honor to the ordinary soldier, but also as a way to maintain capabilities, gain novel combat experiences, and prevent massive cuts in troop size and defense budget. Simply speaking, achieving NATO partner status and all its benefits is helpful for the military to maintain a central role in Colombian politics, even if that role has already decreased since Uribe left office.

Bogotá's NATO policy may also be driven by Colombia's industrial sector, which aims to benefit from Colombia's force transformation and the prospects of more autonomy from the American defense sector. Eventually, the Colombian defense industry aims to export its products by building on affordable prices and special capabilities for asymmetrical fighting. Foreign observers have already noticed the "government['s] intentions to jumpstart local production of equipment via companies like Indumil (arms and ammo), CIAC (aviation), CODALTEC (digital), and COTECMAR (naval)" (International Trade Administration 2018). These firms can build on experiences of assisting the Colombian forces with capabilities for civilian rescue operations, coast guard activities, and the battle against organized crime, for example with LPR-40 MKII river patrol boats (already exported to Brazil).

General José Javier Pérez Mejía (quoted in Pelcastre 2014) noted that, "[a]s its military industry sells more goods and services on the international market, Colombia should forge 'broad alliances' when it comes to marketing products overseas". In this regard,

closer relations with NATO allows Colombia to market its goods among the Alliance's members and opens opportunities for joint ventures that allow new technology transfer.

In addition to the domestic interests of the military and defense industrial sector, Colombia's interest in cooperating with NATO can be explained by a constructivist approach. Miguel Gomis (2016: 266) explains that Colombia has simply not paid attention to Europe proportional to how European countries have supported Colombia, which goes back to Bogotá's focus on its alliance with the US and the related technification of the Colombian army and its intelligence services. Now that Colombia's main threat has ceased and Colombia's forces are professionalized, Bogotá can extend its relations with Europe to the defense sector, which leads to closer cooperation with the EU and NATO.

6.4. Conclusion

Since 2001, Colombia's foreign policy has developed from an intensification of its relations with the US based on common security threats towards a diversification both geographically and thematically. In turn, Colombia's pursuit of a NATO partnership became a prominent element of the Santos Administration's international security and defense policy.

Of the two tested independent variables, Colombia's threat perception does not serve to predict the country's alliance formation in regards to NATO. This is because Colombia already has a sufficiently strong balancing alliance against its internal threats. Inviting further partners to support Colombia's domestic security may dilute Bogotá's important alliance with Washington and may lead to a further loss of sovereignty over the country's politics (i.e., European governments may be less lenient towards controversial security issues). In short, there was no need to reform the arrangement of Colombia's omni-balancing or internal threat alliance.

In addition, NATO would not be available for contributing to Colombia's fight against the FARC or the BACRIM. Even if drugs and organized crime is a concern in the eyes of

European law enforcement officials, it is far from NATO's core business. Though the Alliance has been engaged in counter-insurgency Afghanistan, one can hardly define ISAF as a success. The European public and policymakers may see much value in assisting Colombia in its domestic struggle and they and do not share the US's regional security concerns. Thus, if Bogotá had pushed for a greater role of NATO in Colombia's domestic security, Brussels would have probably distanced itself from further cooperation with the Colombian troops.

Another factor why Colombia's policy towards NATO was not driven by Bogotá's threat perception is the country's position in a relatively secure region. Thus, the low-threatening inter-state environment only provides a slim basis for forming alliances based on the threat of inter-state conflict, i.e., to balance against a threat or to bandwagon with a threat. Thus, one may conclude that Walt's Balance of Threat theory does not provide a sound explanation for Bogotá's interest in becoming a NATO partner.

Considering Colombia's interest in upholding the status quo is more useful for explaining Bogotá's support of NATO as an element of the US-led world order to which Bogotá happily commits. As a relatively weak and secure state, Colombia's foreign policy has been driven by its bandwagoning-for-profit alliance with the US, which provides the broader basis for Bogotá's interest-driven strategy towards Brussels.

However, it is important to note that in order to support the status quo, it is not necessary to actively aim to cooperate with NATO. For example, another regional secondary power, ally of the US, member of the OECD, and former contributor to NATO in the Balkans – namely Chile – did not suddenly switch its policy from indifference of NATO (as Colombia under Uribe) towards the desire to actively work with the Alliance. Thus, the explanation of Bogotá's policy to actively approach NATO must take into account Colombia's internal development (which Chile did not undergo) as well as Bogotá's view on the evolving world order. As Colombia built up resources to become more active on the international stage, Santos aimed to intensify relations with actors around the world in order to profit from international trade and seek new partners in order to decrease its

dependence on the US. NATO should be regarded as the security and defense element of this strategy, proving Schweller's bandwagoning-for-profit logic correct in explaining Colombia's alliance behavior given the country's evolving interests in augmenting absolute power.

Colombia's interest in working with NATO was intensified by Bogotá's status concerns as an intervening variable. Based on Santos' desire to elevate his country's status through affiliation with elite clubs, his social mobility strategy added to Colombia's support of the status quo because Colombia's aim to become affiliated with the developed world also adds to the legitimacy of the international distribution of material capabilities, and thus defends the status quo.

While Chile might have followed similar status ambitions when it joined the OECD in 2010, Santiago follows different aims in its Pacific outlook and policies more complacent with its neighbors' demands for regional autonomy. Chile may also be more satisfied with its status, often referred to as the model South American country with the highest per capita GDP, comparably good governance, as well as a more advanced public infrastructure. Simply speaking, every case is different and it requires deep foreign policy analysis in order to evaluate a country's intentions. In the case of Colombia, they depended greatly on the improving domestic situation that has enabled Bogotá to become more active abroad.

In addition to Colombia's nature, the case study also reveals more about that of NATO. One may ask the simple question why Colombia aims to advance its status by becoming a NATO partner, if it already is the closest regional ally of the leading NATO member. Why is the club of NATO partners higher ranked than the club of US allies?

Firstly, while NATO is very selective in accepting new partners based on their contributions to the Alliance's political and defense apparatus, alliances with the US are often marked by real US financial and defense commitments as well as reciprocal subservience to US politics, especially evident when a range of small states joined the US coalition of the willing to support Washington's efforts in Iraq. Therefore, association

with NATO mostly adds value in the status domain of international security and defense, whereas commitment to the US may even downgrade a nation based on its loss of sovereignty.

Second, being a US ally is associated with submitting itself to the unipole whereas association with a unipole-led club adds value by influencing the organization's policy. This is because states have less room for maneuver in a bilateral arrangement with the unipole than in a multilateral setting – one of the arguments US President Trump puts forth to argue for bilateral instead of multilateral trade agreements. Broadly speaking, while entering into an alliance with the US may be equated with a loss of autonomy, being accepted as a NATO partner may equate a gain of influence. Of course, these classifications are subjective and greatly depend on the eye of the beholder, but for the case of Colombia it is hard to dispute that Bogotá gains status by decreasing dependence on the US and simultaneously advancing its relations with NATO.

To sum up this case study, Colombia has been engaging in a multifaceted strategy to overcome its security problems, further its economic interests, and moving towards its rightful place in the international status hierarchy. Hereby, Bogotá has been omni balancing with the US for internal security, bandwagoning with NATO for profit, and reinforcing its support of the status-quo Alliance by following a social mobility strategy.

Colombia's first Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez wrote in his autobiography "[w]hat matters in life is not what happens to you but what you remember and how you remember it". When looking back to Colombia's contemporary history, some may dismiss the country's success story because of its elements of magical realism, but one shall recognize Colombia's second Nobel laureate Manuel Santos for managing to secure a partnership with NATO – a real decoration of Colombia's achievements and proof of its value for the Western world.

7. *Cross-case analysis: Alliance theories reconsidered*

Theory	Balance of Threat	Balance of Interests	Status
Brazil	✔	✖	✔
Colombia	✖	✔	✔
Applicability	?	?	☺

The table shows that just one of the three tested variables can successfully make sense of both Brazil's and Colombia's policy towards NATO. While Walt's Balance of Threat theory proves valid for the case of Brazil and Schweller's Balance of Interests theory proves valid for the case of Colombia, only the desire for status helps to explain both of the states' alliance choices. The following section will discuss the shortcomings of threats and interests as independent variables, as well as the influence of status as an intervening variable by considering each variable separately and comparing them across the cases. This will serve to draw conclusions about the individual alliance theories and the nature of state cooperation.

7.1. Balance of Threat theory

As one of the most renowned concepts to predict alliance formation, the Balance of Threat theory is concerned how threats on the international level affect state behavior. Based on neorealism, the theory strictly relies on external threats, which decreases its utility when dealing with peripheral states that experience the greatest threat to their survival from the domestic arena.

The different dimensions of threats become especially visible in South America, a region in which states are threatened by significant domestic violence and trans-national criminal syndicates, while maintaining a realist international outlook on inter-state relations that occasionally results in border clashes and arms races.

This multifaceted threat environment reveals important insights into determining states'

threat perception. Given the power difference between Brazil and Colombia, it is clear that Brasília perceives its stakes to be at a higher level than Bogotá. This means that even though both countries experience similar domestic threats to the state (caused by criminal networks, systemic problems of bad governance, and a certain level of political instability), their threat perception differs significantly: While Colombia is concerned with internal stability and security in the region, Brazil maintains a global outlook concerned with threats to its interests in the international arena.

This is because powerful states follow an international agenda while weaker ones focus their resources at home, which explain why Colombia only developed a genuine interest to engage in the international sphere after it had increased its power by advancing economic development and domestic security. This is not only reflected by the states' military doctrines (Brazil aims to use its military for global ambitions and territorial defense, while Colombia mostly deploys its military domestically to fight internal enemies), but also by the states' alliance formation as proved in the study.

Furthermore, scholars relying on neorealism fail to explain the power dynamics in the region. For example, Flemes and Castro (2016: 89) classify Bogotá's alliance with the US as a "collateral-hard-balancing approach to Brazil" and mistakenly argue that a growing power difference between Colombia and Brazil (when Brazil was still "rising") led Colombia to soften its alliance with the US.

This argument is weak on many fronts: First of all, the power difference between Colombia and Brazil has historically been steadily high, to the extent that Colombia has not been in a position to feasibly catch up with Brazil while Brazil has not been posing a specific threat to Colombia because it lacks hostile intentions. In the first decade of the 21st century, when Brazil underwent a period of economic success while Colombia was still trying to get its house in order, the power difference grew, but Uribe did not make any efforts to accommodate Brasília by compromising its alliance with the US. Later, when Brazil slipped into an economic crisis (which put its role as a capable regional leader in question) and Colombia became a success story of development, the power

difference decreased, but Bogotá did not step up its balancing activities towards Brasília. Rather, Santos aimed to build a cooperative relationship, which does not reflect the logic Flemes' and Castro's thesis.

Lobell et al. (2015: 148) make a similar argument when they put forth the theory that in order "to assess the constraints and opportunities states encounter, we consider three factors: (1) hegemon's level of engagement in the region; (2) number of rising states in the region; and (3) the states that are waxing and waning". Applying this logic to South America:

> "A waning global hegemon [USA] and a waxing BRICS [Brazil] will mean a narrower range of strategies for the secondary and tertiary states [Colombia], [and that] the secondary and tertiary states will retreat from erstwhile accommodative strategies with the global hegemon. Given the trend, they will likely reject resistance strategies to the BRICS and even neutral strategies such as hedging or fence-sitting" (Lobell et al. 2015: 154-5).

This logic suggests that Colombia would loosen its partnership with the US and subdue itself to a bandwagoning alliance with Brazil – none of which has happened in the regional scenario. In fact, at the time when Brazil's power was rising, Colombia cemented its relations with the US and when Brazil was declining, Santos continued reaching out Brasília. Clearly, one also fails to explain the secondary's powers strategy towards the regional power when solely relying on the systemic level.

This is not to say that systemic theories do not hold true in case of other examples of regional dynamics and international alliance formation towards NATO, for example in the case of Mongolia's partnership with NATO, which is part of Ulaanbaatar's omni-enmeshment strategy to deter aggression from its neighbors by overlapping other actors' spheres of influences and entangle their interests (Goh 2007, Helbig 2015: 3). Another example would be the case of Afghanistan's cooperation with NATO, that may be classified as bandwagoning – of Kabul giving in to the US/NATO threat (though one could also argue that it is a result of the Afghan government omni balancing the Taliban).

Yet, this is a special case because the Alliance has already been present in the country and it is doubtful whether Kabul would have sought an alliance with NATO if it were not for its response to 9/11. Therefore, the decision to bandwagon with NATO can be explained by a concrete threat situation rather than Afghanistan's intrinsic motivation, which means the case does not provide significant insights for states' rationale to cooperate with NATO if they are not forced to do so by a NATO intervention.

Beyond the limitation of focusing solely on the systemic level, Walt's logic falls short to explain the interest in partnerships with NATO as part of a balancing effort because of the theory's focus on security, and therefore because of its understanding of alliances as "latent war communities" (Osgood 1968: 19). This is because partnerships might offer material value, but do not include any security guarantees (neither against external nor internal threats). Therefore, the value of partnerships to balance threats by forming external alliances is very limited. Even the argument that partnerships may help balancing threats internally by adding capabilities through military cooperation would need to follow the causal mechanism of the Balance of Threat theory in that an interest in a NATO partnership would be a direct response to an imbalance of threat. Thus, one can conclude that the Balance of Threat theory may hold true in the case of NATO denouncers who oppose NATO as part of their soft-balancing strategy directed at the global unipole (Brazil), but not for NATO supporters that aim to balance a specific threat by forming a balancing alliance with a third party (Colombia).

7.2. Balance of Interests theory

Schweller's Balance of Interests theory and his bandwagoning-for-profit concept serve as a solid foundation to understand Colombia's alliance choices as Bogotá continues to strive to profit from its relations with the US and subsequently with NATO. But as Brazil's evaluation of its role in the international system as a multipolar order differs vastly from that of Colombia, Brasília's calculation whether to align with the status-quo or revisionist powers also differs substantially.

Nonetheless, Schweller's theory seems to hold true in the case of Brazil's denouncement of NATO (as part of a Brasília's jackal bandwagoning with the revisionist coalition for opportunistic aims) until the government reconsidered its strategy in the wake of the country's 2014 economic crisis. Driven by the realization that the country's alliances with the revisionist powers turned out to be built on false assumptions (see: "5.3.2.2. 2014-2016: Brazil's economic crisis and the transformation of its interests"), Brazil initiated a process of rapprochement with the US and Europe while continuing its criticism towards NATO, which revealed Brazil's security interests to be the actual driver for denouncing the Alliance.

One may conclude, however, that the Balance of Interests theory helps explaining both Colombia's and Brazil's alliance formation in economic terms: But while Colombia bandwagons for profit with the US in nearly all policy areas, Brazil's approach to cooperation is more refined in that it bandwagons only in specific areas. Brasília's policymakers regard investment partnerships and even bilateral military cooperation as profitable, but they shy away from aligning with NATO.

Whereas Colombia evaluates its partnership with NATO mainly in terms of practical benefits without earthshaking strategic consequences, Brazil's global ambitions and views of NATO as an organization with diametrically opposed interests skew its calculation whether to cooperate with the Alliance. In other words, in a partnership with NATO, Brazil could gain some practical value from military cooperation, but would sacrifice the principles on which both its security (i.e., the principle of sovereignty) and claim for alternative leadership (i.e., its status creativity strategy) are based on. This suggests that one cannot make a cost-benefit analysis in order to predict Brazil's differentiated alliance formation without considering security and status dimensions. Otherwise, one would not be able to explain Brazil ambivalent posture towards the status-quo powers (working bilaterally with NATO states but denouncing their strategic goals).

Assessing a state's overall interest and ascribing a predefined alliance pattern is just too simple as it mixes dimensions of opportunistic short-term profit and intrinsic security

interests that may lead to divergent calculations of long-term rewards in the international system. Therefore, the Balance of Interest theory simply fails to consider that states can do both at the same time: simultaneously bandwagoning for profit with and balancing for security against the same actor in different dimensions (they can bandwagon to augment absolute power through cooperation, and balance to advance their relative positions in the security realm).

In addition, Schweller never offered a clear definition of revisionist and status-quo states, and never defined clear criteria to place states into his narrow animal categories. What if states' actions deviate from their intrinsic interests because of opportunistic endeavors, such as a "wolf in sheep's clothing" – or in Brazil's case, an "injured jackal" that aims to recover by floating along the comfortable status quo before turning upstream to eventually achieve its century-long goal of reshaping the global order, rather than being held back by it?

One can conclude that determining a state's interest in maintaining the status quo vs. revising the international order based on bandwagoning for profit is not a one-way street (a state can follow different strategies at once). The Balance of Interests theory is therefore only applicable if the relatively opportunistic economic interest to form an alliance for profit corresponds with the security interest led by systemic considerations that tend to be more expensive because they are the crux of a state's grand strategy towards the anarchic international system.

7.3. Status competition

Status proved to be the most reliable variable in order to explain the case states' NATO policies. It helps to make sense of Colombia's aim to become an official NATO partner as a status symbol to bolster the country's status mobility strategy. It also explains why Brazil denounces NATO's as a militaristic actor in order to augment its status as a pacific power.

Throughout the study, these status considerations have been evaluated separately from threats and interests. But status is an intervening variable – based on perception and identity, linked to contextual and subjective criteria at the state level that vary across cases – which impacts the states' rational considerations based on the structural distribution of power. Therefore, status bears low value to make positivist predictions, but it offers valuable clues about how it functions as a deflector or intensifier of states' rational decisions.

Colombia's social mobility strategy certainly added to the profits expected from bandwagoning with the US and NATO. This is because status bears utility and therefore includes a profit dimension (it lowers costs by conferring privileges, increasing decision-making autonomy, and providing legitimacy for certain actions). In this sense, Colombia's bandwagoning-for-profit strategy with the status-quo alliance is in alignment with its status mobility strategy because both strategies follow the aim to augment power.

Brazil's social creativity strategy also complements the country's strategy to soft balance NATO for security because it provides additional authority for Brazil as a pacific power to denounce the Alliance, thereby diminishing its legitimacy to act outside of its borders, which remains Brasília's main concern of Brussels. The study also concludes that Brazil's soft-balancing strategy towards NATO has a profit dimension because restricting NATO to act against Brazil's interests remains a relatively inexpensive strategy to mitigate the perceived threat of the Alliance. This cost-saving strategy is in turn complemented by the country's aim to gain status as a pacific power (rather than, say, a military power) because it limits Brasília's need for massive military expenditure.[49]

[49] One should not confuse Brazil's investments in defense, such as in its nuclear-powered submarines and its capabilities to participate in international peacekeeping operations, with the aim of becoming a military power. The study concluded that their main aim is to flank Brazil's social creativity strategy with elements of social mobility by acting like a great power (see: "5.3.3.2. Brazil's status strategy: the gentle giant").

Given these findings, the study suggests the following causal mechanisms:

Colombia: Bandwagoning for profit + social mobility → NATO support

Brazil: Soft balancing for security + social creativity → NATO denouncement

This seems to suggest that bandwagoning for profit corresponds with social mobility whereas soft balancing for security corresponds with social creativity (or social conflict in other cases, e.g., Venezuela).

However, there are no causal relationships between them. For example, states that enjoy a high level of status may tend to defend the status quo, but the status-quo alliance must not always score highest in all status dimensions. This relates back to the subjective dimension of status. For example, both Colombia and Brazil may look up to the US and Europe in the economic status dimension, but their views differ on the security side: While Colombian diplomats regard NATO as a leader in international security affairs, Brazilian diplomats regard NATO as an outdated and aggressive relic that has no place in modern international politics. Therefore, Colombia views a partnership with NATO as a status symbol while Brazil would view it as a subjection to traditional great power politics and thus as a denigration of its status. This discrepancy adds to the explanation of Brazil's ambivalent approach to bandwagon with the US and Europe after 2014 while continuing its confrontation with NATO based on the organization's image in the eyes of Brazilian policymakers.

This example shows that status is too subjective to subscribe a specific status strategy as complementation to a state's balancing or bandwagoning strategy. This goes back to the simple idea that status strategies are one of many ways states aim to augment their power, and should therefore be considered as part of a more comprehensive foreign policy strategy. From a realist perspective, such a strategy is primarily affected by the international distribution of power and determined by a cost-benefit analysis to take the most efficient measures to ensure survival. This means that whichever summand of the calculation offers the greatest benefits also affects the other variables and determines the strategy. While Brazil has primarily been concerned with soft balancing the US and

NATO, Colombia has been aiming to profit materially from its bandwagoning alliance with Washington and Brussels. Their status strategies merely complemented these concerns.

But it may also be the case that a state's status ambitions are diametrically opposed to its interests in security and profit, i.e., following a specific status strategy would compromise relative or absolute power. This may have been the case when Russia unsuccessfully fought the 18th century Crimean War against a coalition of France, Britain, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia, to preserve Russian rights over Orthodox religious sites (Wohlforth 2009: 44-47). Arguably, status may trump security and profits, especially when "big S" questions are at stake for revisionist powers.

In this case – when states value gains in status more than potential gains in security or profit – status ambitions would become an independent variable, serving as a source to predict state behavior rather than a deflector of it. However, concerning this study, it is unlikely that a state would sacrifice substantial losses in the security or profit realms for making status gains by undertaking a specific NATO policy. This only seems imaginable if the relations with the Alliance are the means to an end, for example a milestone towards potential membership – but this, again, would go back to the balancing or bandwagoning logics.

The discussion may lead to the assumption that it would be sufficient to assess the security and profit dimensions in order to understand a state's relationship with NATO. But in practice, status ambitions play a significant role in state behavior towards NATO because – emblematically speaking – they serve as a voltage transformer. This means that the security or profit dimensions may determine the general interest in supporting or denouncing NATO – the current – but the status ambitions affect the drive behind this position – the voltage. In other words, if no status considerations are at stake, a state may have a clear policy position towards NATO, but no drive to actively pursue it.

While Uruguay, for example, a general critic of the old imperial powers, may have voiced its concerns over specific NATO missions, it never followed the ambition to

actively denounce the Alliance as a way of shaping its country's international profile. Chile is generally aligned with the North Atlantic countries and has supported NATO in Balkans, but Santiago has had no valuable incentive to seek closer institutional relations with Brussels.

This explains why Colombia is the only *active* supporter of NATO in South America: It took about a decade of preparing, becoming acquainted, proving its value, and negotiating with NATO until Colombia was granted official partner status, which required substantial political will, financial investment, and strategic consensus. This drive can hardly be explained without considering the ideational value of Colombia's partnership to implement the country's status strategy.

Given the relationship between threats and interests as independent variables as well as status as an intervening one, it can be concluded that the structural considerations set the path and the ideational ones provide the motivation to follow it. This goes back to the limited material value of a partnership with NATO, which only unfolds if one looks beyond the structural components to discover the meaning of the organization in the eyes of individual states.

7.4. Security and power as drivers of alliance formation

As the theoretical considerations about the origins of state cooperation are based on the assumption of an anarchic international system, one of the most quintessential questions that remain is if states enter into alliances to ensure survival by maximizing their absolute power or by advancing their relative security. Walt's neorealist Balance of Threat theory is based on the assumption that states may either advance their own position or deteriorate the position of other states in order to maximize their security. Schweller's neoclassical Balance of Interests theory follows the belief of classical realists who argue that the maximization of one's own power is the best safeguard for survival.

The case studies suggest that Brazil's strategy towards NATO was mainly driven by the aim to advance its relative position vis-à-vis the Alliance by restricting its infringement

on Brazil's security interests, building on an inexpensive security strategy, and augmenting power through the utility of status. In contrast, Colombia has been concerned with maximizing absolute power rather than advancing relative security (on the international level), leading Bogotá to push for a partnership with NATO for the prospect of profit, rather than security.

What do Brasília's and Bogotá's strategies towards NATO tell about their logic of how to ensure survival on the system level? As touched upon in the analysis above, the difference lies in the nature of the states, relating to both internal stability and external ambitions:

In Brazil, power is relatively consolidated within its government. While the country has been experiencing political and economic crises as well as local drug wars, which have compromised some of the government's ability to act, Brasília has not experienced an imminent threat to its claim for leadership. In addition, Brazil has been acting on the premise of being the regional hegemon and a global power, therefore perceiving to have high stakes in the international order. This means that Brazil puts a high price on the external dimensions of security, which entails the comprehensive notion of maintaining autonomy in the political and economic sphere in order to be able to follow its distinct agenda and to develop internally through economic growth.

As a competitor in the international struggle for power, Brazil perceives advantageous both in maximizing its own power and in compromising the power of those states that supposedly restrain Brazil's ambitions on the international stage. However, given that Brazil is situated in a peaceful region without an imminent threat of war, it is doubtful whether relative security is an end in itself for a country with vast scope for economic development. In fact, Brazil engages in soft balancing against the US and NATO in order to set the right conditions for its power maximization strategy. Given Brazil's threat perception about foreign interference in South America and the South Atlantic, restricting the unipole's scope of actions through non-military means increases Brazil's security, which avoids investments in expensive hard-balancing activities. Therefore, gains in the

realm of relative security promise better potential to maximize power in the long term.

Colombia follows a different strategy, but with the same principal aim of augmenting power: for decades, the state had been experiencing a rather existential internal threat to its survival by the guerrillas that have contested the government's claim for power (especially during the beginning of the case study time frame), while the threat of external adversaries remained limited. In addition, despite Bogotá's sporadic contributions to international security and the country's linkage with the global economy as a trading nation, Colombia's stakes in the international compared to its domestic system remain relatively low. Therefore, systemic competition over relative power (and thus relative security) bears little value for a state that is concerned with practical questions of winning a war against a internal enemy – one for which it mostly needs to strengthen its own capabilities to ensure survival on the domestic front, rather than to be concerned with the power difference towards other states.

Unlike Brazil, which had been concerned with gaining relative security as part of its power maximization strategy, Colombia has been aiming to maximize its power in order to consolidate its security situation. This also means that Bogotá's aim to bandwagon with the US to gain resources to fight its domestic war follows the same causal mechanisms as the argument that Colombia has formed an omni-balancing alliance with the US to fight its domestic war (however, this causal mechanism does not exist in the case of its relations with NATO).

Now that Colombia has improved its domestic security (one may argue that the BACRIM are similarly violent as the guerrillas, but they do not pose the same existential level of threat to the government), Bogotá continues to intensify relations with actors around the world in order to profit from international trade and to decrease its dependence on the US. NATO should be regarded as the security and defense element of this strategy, proving Schweller's Balance of Interest theory applicable to explain Colombia's alliance-building strategy given the country's continued interests in maximizing absolute power. This is the case because the Colombian government neither shares Brazil's neocolonial

and developmentalist mindset, nor its external threat assessment about foreign influence in its region.

In addition, Colombia is less concerned with competing with its neighbors for relative power. Of course, the country is a competitor in the global market for investment, talent, and ideas, but these business aspects hardly affect Bogotá's regional outlook on relative security. This stems from the large power difference between Colombia and its neighbors: Venezuela has been become a quasi-failed state to the level that the country's collapse is a much greater threat to Colombia than the country's military strength; Brazil remains the undisputed regional unipole in South America; and the US continues to support Colombia as its closest ally in the region. This clearly organized power structure limits the upsides for Colombia from relative security gains vis-à-vis its neighbors.

Again, explaining the motivations of states to engage in a specific foreign policy strategy needs to be based on the nature of the entities, including their internal situation and their role in the external system. But while Brazil's and Colombia's strategy towards NATO are based on very different logics, this analysis can conclude that both share the ultimate goal of maximizing power based on the assumption that the countries have much room for advancing their power bases.

It is important to add that this conclusion is also based on the countries' behavior in peacetime, which permits them to maximize power to ensure survival in the long run, whereas a hot system-level war would force them to focus on situational security gains in order to survive in the short term. For example, had Colombia experienced an existential threat by Venezuela during the case study timeframe, Bogotá would have likely focused on mobilizing capabilities to defend itself (possibly with the help of the US), rather than shifting resources towards forming a partnership with NATO in order to establish itself as a contributor to international security.

In addition to considering the systemic pressures, one should note that while Brazil and Colombia have much potential for augmenting power, developed states may already have exhausted their opportunities to achieve security gains through power maximization and

therefore tend to be concerned with relative power differences in order to advance their security.

Thus, the question of whether states are concerned with relative security or absolute power depends on the states' assessment of which of the two strategies provides the greatest opportunities to maximize the chances of survival. This may lead to the premature conclusion that the more powerful a state, the less ability the state has to maximize the chances for survival through additional development (which at worst could lead to imperial overstretch for the unipole), and the more it is concerned with improving its relative security vis-à-vis its competitors.

Relating this aspect back to the study's aim to understand the motivation of states' NATO policies would suggest that weak states tend to take up the opportunity to enter into bandwagoning alliances with NATO for profit in order to augment their power and thereby their chances for survival. In contrast, powerful nations would denounce the Alliance in order to restrain the unipole's power and thereby advance their relative security by defending their position. While this logic applies to Colombia and Brazil, it does not necessarily hold true in other cases.

For example, NATO partners such as South Korea and Australia are neither weak, nor is their troop contribution to NATO operations motivated by gaining material benefits, but better be explained by strengthening their alliances with the US to balance external threats – very different from Colombia's goals behind their NATO policy.

On the side of NATO critics, the motivation of states to denounce the Alliance may stem from their desire to restrain it and thereby gain a relative security advantage, or from their interest in bandwagoning with a revisionist alliance. For example, India's criticism of the Alliance may be based on the country's security interests in South Asia, whereas Venezuela's overblown denouncement of NATO (or anything related to the US) may be explained by its revisionist ambitions fueled by spoiler tactics as part of a social conflict strategy.

These examples illustrate that states may support or denounce NATO for diverse reasons, making it unfeasible to explain the motivation behind their NATO policies by categorizing their desire as maximizing absolute power or advancing relative security.

Another important point arises when reflecting on the intervening variable of this study. Considering the desire for status to be a natural tendency of states suggests that its impact intensifies the tendencies of states to maximize power. This is based on the logic that status provides authority and thus power in specific domains, and thereby support both balancing and bandwagoning activities to increase relative and/or absolute power.

For example, advancing status may help to balance internally (mobilizing resources) because status provides authority and legitimacy to undertake certain actions in order to enforce the national interest. Status also helps soft balancing by providing authority to denounce a specific external actor. However, as a natural tendency of states (the assumption that all states always want to elevate their status), status ambitions do not necessarily follow Walt's causal mechanisms of balancing against a specific threat (unless the threat is directed against the state's status). Nevertheless, status ambitions do correspond with the logic of relative security: because of its hierarchical nature, state A may advance its status position if state B falls behind on the scale, which would constitute a loss of power for state B and therefore a relative security gain for state A. As such, Brazil's status creativity strategy fortified the country's diplomatic soft-balancing efforts to restrain NATO by denouncing the Alliance's legitimacy among Brazil's allies in the Global South.

Status concerns also supplemented Bogotá's bandwagoning-for-profit strategy based on maximizing Colombia's power: For NATO, aspiring partners prove the organization's relevance and attractiveness, thereby boosting its status, conferring legitimacy and consequently power as a respected actor and alliance of high-status states. In turn, the validation of NATO's status reinforces the value of a partnership with NATO as a status symbol, which helps Colombia to augment its own power.

The complementing effect of status to support bandwagoning and balancing activities

goes back to the role of structural considerations in the formation of status strategies: after determining self-conception and goals in the international status hierarchy, the internationals system sets the limits of what is possible to achieve and how to achieve it most effectively.

Therefore, the intervening effect of status mostly translates into intensifying the state's strategy based on structural considerations, thereby helping to maximize absolute power or relative security – excluding exceptional cases, namely when narrow status gaps lead to a status dilemma which results in a conflictual spiral that decreases security, or when status achievements add to a possible power curse that leads to phenomena such as overstretch or a vicious cycle of unilateralism (Gallarotti 2011).

Such scenarios link the concepts of power and security, as the basis of the realist ontology, to the theories tested in the case studies, which reveals that alliance formation is a very situational phenomenon, influenced by factors that go beyond the simplistic assumption of how systemic forces influence state behavior. In other words, states may aim to partner with NATO or to denounce the Alliance, no matter if they are weak or strong, concerned with relative security or absolute power, or aim to elevate their status by consensual or conflictual means. In order to thoroughly understand the motivations behind states' NATO policy, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive foreign policy analysis, including an insight view of the units, which helps to determine their threats, interests, and status strategies.

7.5. Alliance theory – limits and opportunities

As a discipline of social sciences, international relations theory operates in a cloudy space. Its concepts are based on not easily definable variables, which leaves questions of objectivity and predictability. This is because states' intentions and motivations are inherently difficult to unscramble and to put into categories to make positivist predictions.

This dissertation aimed to mitigate such effects of subjectivity and cloudiness by clearly

defining the variables and ascribing specific criteria in order to classify them. The analysis also discussed the interplay of the variables and the effect on their explanatory power, such as the role of status as an intensifier of state behavior derived from structural forces, thereby refining existing theories by adding criteria to determine its viability.

For example, the analysis concluded that the Balance of Threat theory is applicable to explain specific cases, such as the denouncement of NATO as part of a soft-balancing strategy and possibly even the cooperation with the Alliance as a result of bandwagoning (e.g., Afghanistan). However, since partnerships only entail cooperation and no security guarantees, they cannot be considered balancing alliances driven by the interest of mitigating threats. Thus, Walt's theory only remains valid for states that perceive a threat by NATO because cooperating with NATO does not help to balance against other threats (as partnerships are not designed to achieve membership and thus security guarantees, which had been the case for Central and Eastern European states after the Cold War).

Concerning the Balance of Interests theory, it is to not only essential to understand the potential benefits of bandwagoning with NATO in order to assess the profits, but also to understand the Alliance's perceived role as a defender of the supposed downsides of the current world order for rising powers. This goes back to NATO's image as an interventionist force that intrudes on the sovereignty of less powerful actors, and thus as an actor whose legitimacy should be fundamentally countered, rather than being endorsed by partnerships. Therefore, one needs to understand a state's full security assessment before being able to make a proper calculation of the costs and benefits of working with NATO – which may differ from a state's interest to bandwagon with the revisionist or status-quo alliance, and in turn leads a state to denounce NATO as an organization while continuing cooperation with the Alliance's members, as in the case of Brazil after 2014.

However, the analysis would benefit from more clearly defined concepts. For example, had Walt included the necessity of a mutual defense clause as a condition to categorize inter-state cooperation as an alliance (as he did not, see: "4.4.1. Defining alliances"), the study would not even have classified the partnership between NATO and Colombia as an

alliance, and would therefore not have disproved Walt's assumption of external threats being the drivers for states to enter into a partnership with NATO.

Had Schweller defined more specific criteria for placing states into animal categories beyond subjective judgment, the study might not have placed Brazil into the category of a soft supporter of the status quo after 2014 and therefore concluded that the Balance of Interests theory cannot explain Brazil's denouncement of NATO. Schweller himself has claimed that Brazil is "the most revisionist of all the emerging powers" (2011: 293), while later amending that as a rising power, Brazil is among the "conservative defenders of existing international security regimes, confronting a post-9/11 unipolar power" (2015). This discrepancy goes back to the poorly defined concept of revisionism and the lack of explanations about what constitutes the genuine national interest beyond linking it to further cloudy concepts like power and profit.

Despite these limitations, this dissertation has aimed to use such concepts as a basis for understanding the motivations of external states to cooperate with NATO – insights that could be extended by applying the same design to other states or by adding intervening variables that complement the set of drivers behind state behavior. This would help to further refine the conclusions and strengthen their explanatory power.

As such, additional investigation could focus on applying the given research design to states of other regions selected under the same case selection criteria. South Asia would serve for valuable case studies because the region entails India as an important NATO critic and Pakistan as an official NATO partner.

Instead of exchanging the case study states, one could also replace NATO with an international economic institution such as the OECD in order to help explain Brazil's and Colombia's alliance choices in the economic sphere. This could reveal both the differences between security and economic interests, as well as conclusions about the role of international economic organizations in the worldview of both states.

A further way to develop a better understanding of the states' interests and motivation for

their alliance choices is to assess relevant intervening variables on the state level. For example, Schweller (2004: 169) provides a number of factors that influence statecraft, including elite preferences and perceptions about the external environment as well as the policymaking process, domestic political risks associated with foreign policymaking choices, and risk-taking propensity of national elites. Taken together, these variables define the variable "state cohesion" which determines the government's ability to retract resources for foreign policy endeavors, such as increasing mobilization capacity for states to balance. For example, in the cases of Brazil (until 2014) and Colombia state cohesion was relatively high so that the countries' governments were able to follow through their NATO policies. In other cases, state cohesion might have limited their government's scope of action.

One can also link state cohesion to the state's desire for status: assuming that elevating status is an expression of a successful foreign policy, the status strategy may reinforce state cohesion by instilling confidence in the foreign policy among the elites as well as confidence in the government among the society. Russia under President Vladimir Putin would be a prime example because his foreign policy endeavors have arguably elevated Russia's status and gained him vital support from the Russian electorate. In turn, one could argue that greater state cohesion has allowed the Russian government to strengthen its balancing efforts against NATO, a spiral that may even lead to a security or status dilemma on the European continent.

It would also be interesting to investigate such effects in the case studies. Could foreign policy successes, such as the partnership with NATO, boost Bogotá's status and thereby help overcome the elite's differences over the peace agreement with the FARC – which, in turn, allows allocating more resources to accomplish foreign policy goals? And how did the interests of elites and their composition (fragmentation or consensus) contribute to an arguably over-expanded foreign policy to establish the country as an international security provider? In the case of Brazil, did a loss of status in the wake of its economic crisis decrease state cohesion and thus limit the country's motivation to follow through a revisionist agenda?

Besides such questions relating to variables on the unit level, one may also consider investigating further systemic influences: the dynamics of gaps between actual power and status (the impact of over- and underachieving); the effect of prospect theory (which assumes that states are more risk averse in the domain of gains, and more risk acceptant in the domain of losses); and whether states are "waxing" or "waning" (gaining or losing relative power). One could also try assessing further structural modifiers such as the offense-defense balance (whether offensive or defensive behavior provides better prospects for security) and the pressure of an imminent or ongoing war on alliance formation, as well as their effects on a state's motivation to pursue an active balancing or bandwagoning strategy towards NATO.

One can see that neoclassical realism provides a significant working surface for expanding and refining the research of this study in order to better understand the nature of state's NATO policy and their motivation for forming alliances in general. Much research is to be done to increase the comprehensiveness of alliance theories, which could greatly advance their value as viable forecasters of state behavior in practice.

8. Bridging the gap between theory and practice

8.1. A crystal ball for NATO's global relations

This study has addressed the empirical research gap of NATO's relations with South American states, thereby aiming to refine alliance theories based on the realist school of international relations. The case studies and subsequent theoretical discussions suggest that the impacts of threats, interests, and status need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, but the results nonetheless provide conclusions about their influence on alliance formation. Based on these findings, the following section will introduce a scheme that helps to understand the causal mechanisms that influence state behavior towards NATO.

<u>NATO policy prediction model</u>

<u>Instructions</u>

1. Determine the variables "external threat perception", "interest in status quo or revisionism", and "status strategy" for the case state (see: section "4.1. Research Design" for a description of how to define the individual variables).
2. Apply the variable "external threat perception" to (I.) Balance of Threat theory.
3. Check whether the case state fits the categories a, b, c, or d. If so, one can skip examining the Balance of Interests theory because imminent security threats and fundamental questions about the state's security in the international system prevail in the decision how to position towards NATO as a military organization.
4. If not, move on to apply the variable "interest in status quo or revisionism" to (II.) Balance of Interests theory to check whether the case state fits category e or f.
5. If case state fits neither category, this scheme cannot help predict alliance formation towards NATO.
6. If case state can be classified in categories a/b/c/d or e/f, consider (III.) status strategy (g, h, i) to determine its amplifying effect.

A. Determining variables

- External threat perception
- Interest in status quo or revisionism
- Status strategy

B. Applying variables to the theories

→ Determining the state's general strategy towards NATO

I. Balance of Threat theory:

a. States that form an alliance with the US to balance external threats (e.g., South Korea)
   - Strategy may range from supporting NATO as a US-led alliance (i.e., soft balancing[50] with the Alliance for security) to neutrality depending on the level of relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy
b. States that perceive to be threatened by NATO, an organization that supposedly challenges international norms such as sovereignty (e.g., Brazil)
   - Strategy may range from denouncing NATO as a threat to international security (i.e., soft balancing against the Alliance for security) to neutrality depending on (opportunity) costs of positioning against the Alliance
c. States that perceive an active security threat of NATO, but that are too weak to counter it (e.g., Afghanistan)
   - Associating with NATO to appease the aggressor (i.e., bandwagoning with the Alliance for security)
d. States that perceive an active security threat of NATO and that are capable and willing to counter it (e.g., Russia)
   - Opposing NATO (i.e., internal and/or external balancing against the Alliance for security)

[50] Note that NATO partnerships do not include a collective defense commitment and are therefore not designed for hard balancing.

II. Balance of Interests theory:

e. Status-quo states that achieve a net material profit by working with NATO (e.g., Colombia)
    - ➢ Strategy may range from supporting NATO as a status-quo Alliance (i.e., bandwagoning with NATO for profit) to remaining neutral depending on the level of relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy

f. Revisionist states that have a systemic interest in revising the unipolar order (e.g., Venezuela)[51]
    - ➢ Denouncing NATO as a status-quo Alliance (i.e., bandwagoning with the revisionist alliance for profit)

→ Determining the state's level of ambition to support or denounce NATO

III. Status strategy:

g. States that follow a social mobility strategy (e.g., Colombia)
    - ➢ Associating with the higher status group → amplifies support of Alliance

h. States that follow a social creativity strategy (e.g., Switzerland)
    - ➢ Differentiating from the higher status group → unspecified outcome

i. States that follow a social conflict strategy (e.g., Venezuela)
    - ➢ Challenging the higher status group → amplifies denouncement of the Alliance

C. Determining state behavior towards NATO

The given constellations lead to the following behaviors towards NATO:

a+g → ranging from neutrality to soft balancing with NATO for security → neutral up to heavy support of NATO (level of support depending on the level of relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy)

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[51] Option (f) is unlikely to occur because most revisionist states will already fall into categories (b), (c), or (d).

a+h → ranging from neutrality to soft balancing with NATO for security → neutral up to general support of NATO (level of support depending on individual status strategy and on relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy)

b+h → ranging from neutrality to soft balancing against NATO → neutral up to general denouncement of NATO (level of denouncement depending on individual status strategy and (opportunity) costs of positioning against the Alliance)

b+i → ranging from neutrality to soft balancing against NATO → neutral up to heavy denouncement of NATO (level of denouncement depending on (opportunity) costs of positioning against the Alliance)

c+g → bandwagoning with NATO for security → general up to heavy support of NATO

c+h → bandwagoning with NATO for security → general support of NATO (level of support depending on individual status strategy)

c+i → weak bandwagoning with NATO for security → loose support of NATO

d+h → balancing against NATO for security → denouncement of NATO

d+i → intense balancing against NATO for security → heavy denouncement of NATO

e+g → ranging from neutrality to bandwagoning with NATO for profit → neutral up to heavy support of NATO (level of support depending on relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy)

e+h → ranging from neutrality to bandwagoning with NATO for profit → neutral up to general support of NATO (level of support depending on individual status strategy and on relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy)

f+h → bandwagoning with revisionist alliance for profit against NATO → general denouncement of NATO (level of denouncement depending on individual status strategy and on relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy)

f+i → bandwagoning with revisionist alliance for profit against NATO → general up to heavy denouncement of NATO (level of denouncement depending on relevance of NATO for the state's international security policy)

Variations a+i, b+g, d+g, e+i and f+g N/A because status strategy is unlikely to be diametrically opposed to interests in security and profit, with the likely exception of "big S" questions.

This model gets the findings of this study in order. While it is not bulletproof, it can be used as a valuable tool to predict states' alliance formations towards NATO and to understand the motivations behind their policies. The greatest challenge to apply the model remains defining the variables, which requires a thorough foreign policy analysis of the case states.

The following table provides ten examples that showcase the model's viability. Please note that the table does not include clear-cut explanations of states' strategies to advance their security and/or power, but is based on preliminary predictions of their threat perceptions, interests, and status strategies (a thorough analysis would require further in-depth case studies similar to the ones of Brazil and Colombia earlier in this dissertation).

Country	**Classification in Categories (I.) or (II.)**	**Category (III.)**	**Behavior towards NATO**
Kazakhstan	(e) Bandwagoning with NATO for profit	(g) Status mobility strategy, seeking recognition through traditional status markers	e+g → Support of NATO (active official partner, steadily increasing security cooperation)
India	(b) and/or (f): Soft balancing NATO as an outdated Cold War organization to oppose Western imperialism and/or limited–aims revisionist ambitions to become a great power	(h) Status creativity strategy as rising and non-aligned power	b/f+h → Denouncement of NATO (e.g., criticism of NATO missions, questioning the organization's legitimacy)
Mexico	(e) Bandwagoning with US for profit	(g) Status mobility strategy, seeking recognition through traditional status markers	e+g → Neutrality because of low relevance of NATO for country's international security policy
Mongolia	(e) Bandwagoning with NATO for profit (practical security support and diversification of relations with China and Russia)	(g) Status mobility strategy, seeking recognition through traditional status markers	e+g → Heavy support of NATO (official NATO partner, mission support, and security cooperation)

Nigeria	(b) Soft balancing interventionist powers because of concerns of direct interference in Africa	(h): Status creativity as rising and non-aligned power	b+h → Soft denouncement of NATO (concerning rhetoric of NATO's profile in Africa)
Pakistan	(e) Bandwagoning with NATO for profit (especially security cooperation on Afghanistan and terrorism)	(h) Social creativity strategy as independent power in a strategic region	e+h → Support of NATO (official partner and intense military cooperation)
Saudi Arabia	(a) Balancing alliance with US against Iran	(h) Status creativity strategy as Islamic power	a+h → Soft support of NATO (e.g., bilateral staff talks)
Singapore	(e) Bandwagoning with NATO for profit	(g) Status mobility strategy, seeking recognition through traditional status markers	e+g → Support of NATO (mission support, military cooperation, and high-level staff talks)
South Africa	(b) Soft balancing interventionist powers	(h) Status creativity strategy as rising power	b+h → Soft denouncement of NATO (e.g., criticism of NATO missions)
Thailand	(e) Bandwagoning with US for profit	(g) Status mobility strategy, seeking recognition through traditional status markers	e+g → Neutrality because of low relevance of NATO for country's international security policy

It is notable that some of the cases underline the difference between the states' relations towards individual NATO members (especially the US) and NATO as an organization. For example, Nigeria has been forming a strong alliance with the US as part of its efforts to bandwagoning with the status-quo alliance for profit, including aid, economic cooperation, and security assistance. However, Abuja has been very skeptic of NATO because of the Alliance's activities in Africa, following the concept of "African Solutions to African Problems" and viewing "NATO as a possible instrument of control bent on the domination of international politics" (Akinterinwa 2013: 59, 51). The example shows once again that countries may soft balance NATO for security while bandwagoning with its members with for profit, especially common in countries of the Global South, as already became clear in the case of Brazil.

Of course, politics are dynamic and some of the required variables cannot always be defined clear-cut, which limits the applicability of the model. Take Egypt, for example: it is not clear whether Cairo is concerned enough with direct NATO interference in Africa and Middle East to subdue the country's interest in a bandwagoning-for-profit alliance with Brussels, especially given that it is already a major US ally. Moreover, it is not evident whether Egypt is engaging in a status mobility strategy by associating with the US or in status creativity as a responsible Middle Eastern power. And lastly, it is not even clear what kind of NATO strategy Cairo is following, ranging from political skepticism (El-Adawy 2018) to practical military cooperation (Magdy 2018).

In addition to the discrepancies between politics and practical cooperation, as well as the question of who is in charge to determine a country's NATO strategy, one should note that the smaller a state, the less likely it is to have a NATO policy at all. Given that important secondary states and US-allies such as Mexico and Thailand have not publically positioned themselves towards NATO, it is no wonder that small states concerned with domestic issues and mostly depended on their regional environment cannot even be categorized by the model designed to consider international politics (think of Lesotho or Samoa).

On the other end of the spectrum is the elephant in the room – not India, but China – a case that is too complex to simplify through the model and which essentially depends on its evolving relationship with the US. Scholars have been arguing for years whether to classify China as a status-quo or revisionist power, given the ambivalence between its behavior in trade and security, as well as the obvious interest in systemic change versus its support of status-quo institutions. In addition, China has been very pragmatic towards NATO, engaging in staff talks despite its natural suspicion of US military posture in East Asia. Beijing has also not opposed NATO's engagement with its neighbors, such as Japan, South Korea, and Mongolia. However, one should not come to the premature conclusion that China is a supporter of the Alliance. Fully understanding China's behavior towards NATO would require another thorough case study that pays particular

attention to China's role as the potential disrupter of the international system as well as to its "peaceful rise" strategy.

In this sense, one should also be aware that what used to be clear signs of NATO support do not hold valid any longer: many of NATO's official partners are not actually supporting the Alliance. This is because most countries were invited to join NATO's partnership programs (PfP, ICI, and MD) during the 1990s and 2000s because of regional affiliation rather than their individual commitment to the Alliance. Given that NATO has moved on to intensify its relations will partners willing and capable of contributing to overcoming common security challenges, without discarding the outdated partnership structure, the organization's official partner frameworks hardly represents the portfolio of actual NATO supporters.

With these boundaries in mind, and the tools to define the variables, one can apply this model to make theoretically informed conclusions of states' strategies towards NATO and to make sense of the dissertation's research question: why some states cooperate with the Alliance while others position themselves against it.

8.2. Takeaways for NATO

The model presents a way for NATO to better evaluate the nature of its international relations, but what does it mean for the Alliance's aim to build partnerships with external countries? The following section aims to answer this question by drawing on the organization's core task of advancing cooperative security, and assessing the opportunities for conciliating relations with denouncers as well as for strengthening bonds with neutral states.

Reasons for denouncing NATO are diverse, ranging from historical legacies to specific security interests. This analysis suggests that most of the reasons go back to the variables applied in the alliance theories: threat perception, interest in the status quo or revisionism, and status strategy. The study's results suggest that a state's international security strategy trumps the state's interest in the status quo or revisionism in its alliance

formation towards NATO as a military alliance. Therefore, in order to overcome opposition of the denouncers, NATO would have to address the presumed threat that the Alliance poses to the security of others.

Other than Russia, that has voiced its concerns of a direct military confrontation with NATO, states mostly feel threatened by NATO because of its image as an interventionist Alliance that may force its will on others. This becomes especially clear among countries of the Global South that chose to ally with individual Alliance members, but denounce NATO as an organization. This suggests a need for improving NATO's image, away from an interventionist force to a body that consults with external actors, finds compromises, and acts cooperatively, or at best stays away from out-of-area engagements.

It is not the goal of this chapter to design a public diplomacy or political communication strategy for the Alliance (NATO has already been working extensively to portrait a better image of itself), but to evaluate whether it is worth going further to enhance the relations with the denouncers. In other words, to what extent can NATO accommodate the interests of those states that wish NATO to forgo interfering outside of its territory without compromising the Alliance's mission to advance the security of its members?

This goes back to the question of whether cooperative security is the most effective way for NATO to live up to its "essential role in ensuring our common defence and security" (NATO 2010: Preface). While one should have no doubt that positive relations with external states are generally enhancing the security of the Alliance, the author would suggest that the main focus of cooperative security – and especially the function of building partnerships – is a means to an end to advance NATO's ability to fulfill its mission of crisis management, another core task that essentially describes the ability to undergo out-of-area missions.

Again, this is not to dismiss the positive effects of NATO's engagement with partners, providing tools to help them overcome their own security challenges, but as explained in Chapter 2, partnerships have mainly become a way for NATO to enhance operational

capabilities and to advance its legitimacy for out-of-area missions. Given Charles de Gaulle's mantra that "states have no friends, only interests", it would not make sense for NATO to compromise its vital security interest of acting outside of its borders in order to make more friends abroad.

Beyond this realist view, the Alliance's out-of-area engagement is based on its political understanding of sovereignty as vertical or contractual, based on the government's responsibility towards its people rather than the inviolability of borders. This goes hand in hand with the organization's commitment to principles of "individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law" (NATO 2010b: Abs. 2). Therefore, the Alliance's room for accommodating states that denounce NATO's out-of-area engagement is very limited. And because the issue of sovereignty is central for the denouncers that fear the global unipole to force its will on them, the clash between the security interests of the denouncers and of those of NATO cannot easily be overcome by incentivizing the critics with material rewards. Again, security trumps profits when it comes to fundamental questions of international politics and state survival.

Theoretically, NATO might be able to attain a better image if it exclusively focused on territorial defense, passing the task of out-of-area missions to other organizations such as the EU and UN. However, this would not only compromise the transatlantic bond, but also put in question the capacity to respond to crises because of the EU's deficient defense capabilities and because of the increased dependence on Russia and China for the approval of UN missions. After all, the Alliance's member states have had good reasons to sustain NATO as an internationally active security organization.

In addition to the demand that NATO should forgo unilaterally actions outside of its borders, denouncers have condemned the Alliance for its nuclear capabilities. This goes back to a broader international dispute about the legitimacy to possess such weapons, leading non-nuclear weapon states to criticize the NPT as an unjust "tool to freeze the distribution of power on the world stage" (Ramalho 2015: 72). While NATO itself has committed "to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons",

the Alliance has also made clear that "as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance" (NATO 2010: Preface). This, again, shows the fundamental clash of interests, which cannot be resolved without making major concessions, i.e., compromising the basis of NATO's defense strategy as a nuclear alliance.

Given these circumstances, one can conclude that the costs for accommodating the denouncers are too high, making it the best option for NATO to accept opposition to its legitimacy and to increase its resilience against international criticism. This in turn, would require the Alliance to strengthen its network of advocates around the world because they are the source of legitimacy for the organization to act outside of its borders.

In this regard, NATO should aim to build closer relations with neutral states – often US allies that are generally in favor of NATO's mission, but have not had ample reasons to form a relationship with the Alliance. A case in point was Colombia, which used to be a neutral state and realized the potential benefits of a NATO partnership in the wake of lifting its profile in international politics. Bogotá's aim to form a partnership with the Alliance was mainly driven by its status mobility strategy, collecting status markers such as membership in prestige clubs. This suggests the opportunity for NATO to improve cooperative security by focusing on currently neutral states that already bandwagon with the US for profit (which indicates that they have an interest in the status quo) and follow a social mobility strategy. In doing so, the Alliance does not need to make partnerships more profitable – they are already of high value – but to build on the opportunity that affiliation with the Alliance serves as a status symbol for those states that aim to take on a larger role as a responsible stakeholder in international security affairs.

Out of the ten examples above, one of the states that may fit the criteria of currently being neutral towards NATO, bandwagoning with the status-quo alliance for profit, and following a social mobility strategy is Mexico. A democratic regional power, important ally of the US (despite the dissonance since the beginning of the Trump Administration), close partner of the EU, and OECD member for almost 25 years, the country would offer

similar value for NATO as Colombia, including experiences in combatting organized crime and diplomatic support of another Latin American country.

Additional countries would be Malaysia (that had already sent 30 troops to support NATO in Afghanistan), Thailand, and the Philippines, which do not necessarily share NATO's values and human rights standards, but offer strategic benefits as partners in South East Asia (commitment to democratic values and human rights is no prerequisite for a partnership, but provide better reasons for justifying it). NATO could still engage with them on a lower level, similar to its relations with Singapore, facilitating relations with capable partners in a region that has become increasingly important, even to European allies.

These examples shall not suggest an expansionist forward-basing strategy (the US already maintains a massive footprint in the region), but to show the potential of expanding NATO's partnership portfolio, which would help the Alliance to gain potential contributors to its missions and diplomatic allies for its international engagement.

It is important to emphasize that NATO does not usually reach out to external countries to establish closer relations, which means that the initiative for cooperation mostly comes from the possible partner states. The author does not have information on whether the states mentioned above have already reached out to NATO, but what is obvious is that all of them already enjoy close security cooperation with the US. It is therefore in Washington's hands to decide whether it is in its interest to extend its bilateral partnerships to NATO (otherwise it could simply block any cooperation in the NAC), and to push its partners to do so as part of their commitment to international security.

One may ask why the US would compromise its influence in the bilateral relations by extending the partnership to its NATO allies, but, again, Colombia is the case in point that a country can enjoy close defense relations with both the US and NATO in different and clearly defined areas. While the US maintains significant influence in Colombia because of its bilateral security cooperation to counter internal threats, NATO assists in restructuring the Colombian forces, offering training in a multinational setting, and

building interoperability, while serving as a political status symbol. Following a similar approach with other US allies could prove equally successful.

In addition to the option of building closer relations with the help of Washington, NATO could utilize its track II channels, including the NDC and NATO Parliamentary Assembly, to reach out to potential partners, discuss shared interests and security challenges, and highlight the potential of a partnership for both sides in order to build trust among the parties. Relating back to the conclusion that a country's status strategy may serve as a driver to *actively* pursue a partnership with NATO, the Alliance should not shy away from praising potential partners and entering into formal agreements in order to provide them with the opportunity to highlight their status through association with NATO.

In this regard, engaging states that follow a social mobility strategy seems more straightforward than aiming to accommodate those states that bet on a social creativity strategy. This is because the act of redefining their image by stressing novel status categories can play out in very different ways, i.e., a state may stress its status as a pacific power or on its status as the protector of the interests of the Slavic people. Given the diversity of possible status creativity strategies, it is hard to prescribe a general response for NATO to make the organization part of advancing the state's status strategy rather than being the target of it.

Therefore, one should focus on the origins of why states chose to engage in a social creativity rather than a social mobility strategy. Arguably, states may choose not to relate with the higher-status group because of their self-conception of being very distinct, but this thesis would be questionable given that counties with societies very different from those of North Atlantic powers follow into their footsteps, such as Japan and Mongolia. Rather, states usually chose status creativity because of the low permeability of high-status clubs or because their prospects of being accepted as a great power in the future are already so high that they do not see the need to subordinate themselves to the established powers (apparent among emerging powers).

Take Nigeria, for example: While the country stands out as Africa's biggest economy, a major oil producer, and cultural hub, it is plagued by an image of terrorism, poverty, and lethal epidemics. Therefore, one may classify the country as a status underachiever. If that was not enough, the country probably views elite clubs as impermeable because of its slim chances of being accepted to join prestige clubs, such as OECD or the UN Security Council. In fact, the country does not even appear among those highlighted by fancy acronyms such as BRICS or CIVETS despite its significant prospects for economic growth, be it for its increasing population. Therefore, one may assume that Abuja does not even try to climb up the traditional status ladder, aiming to highlight its value in a different light, such as an independent African leader. However, even countries that follow a social creativity strategy aim to prove their value by acquiring accepted status markers (such as a nuclear-powered submarine in the case of Brazil). Assuming that NATO's threat to Nigeria is very limited (Abuja's outlook on NATO's out-of-area engagement is much less hostile than that of Brasília), the Alliance could incentivize the African country to overcome its light security concerns by offering status symbols, such as a special dialogue or privileged security cooperation. Of course, this is a hypothetical scenario, ignoring the historical, domestic, and regional context that would influence the decision to cooperate with NATO, but the example makes the point that the Alliance may also motivate moderate critics to support it by granting status markers.

The prospects of utilizing status symbols as incentives to influence a state's posture towards NATO may be less effective in case of states that do not actually see the need to make changes in its foreign policy in order to be granted concessions by members of the status elite. India, for example, can be expected to rise up to the level of a great power. From the perspective of a Western country, this may happen faster if the West grants status symbols to New Delhi. However, given the subjective nature of status, Indian policymakers may already view their country as a great power and would likely interpret an association with NATO to be subordination to Western interests. Therefore, very confident states may not be inclined to give in to status incentives.

Another factor to determine whether and how states can be incentivized with status symbols is the state's rank in the international status hierarchy. For example, considering Saudi Arabia to be the Arabic peninsula's hegemon, the country does not want to be treated on par with its neighbors, which is why the Saudis did not join ICI. Therefore, if NATO wants to gain stronger support of the Kingdom, the Alliance would likely need to offer a more exclusive bilateral cooperation format, which Riyadh could use to showcase its status as a valuable and strategic partner of the Western world – an important status for the Saudi leadership to downplay the West's criticism over human rights abuses.

Lastly, one may ask how expensive these measures are. While diplomatic relations often do not carry a specific price tag, one may conduct a quick cost-benefit analysis, which reveals that granting status can be a relatively cheap method of advancing cooperative security, depending on the conditions to expand the network of partners:

Potential costs	**Potential benefits**
o Investing administrative efforts to manage increased net of relationships; o sacrificing democratic values by strengthening official relations with authoritarian regimes; o risking political backlash from those states that view NATO's active cooperation with external states as offensive towards their interests; o risking to dilute the status of associating with NATO by granting partnership as status symbol to too many actors.	o Building trust, confidence, and mutual understanding of security challenges with third parties as the basis for gaining diplomatic legitimacy for out-of-area operations; o advancing interoperability on the basis of NATO standards, which opens the opportunity for mission support; o enhancing awareness of security challenges abroad; o gaining insights and influence through political dialogue; o learning from partners' experiences in past operations and sharing best practices; o opening the opportunity of intelligence sharing, joint capability development, as well as cooperation on science and security; o strengthening democratic reforms and good governance; o furthering arms control and disarmament.

The table presents an overview of potential costs and benefits that may or may not apply to a specific partnership. Under certain conditions, NATO could decrease the potential costs, but may sacrifice potential upsides. For example, by choosing to uphold its democratic values by limiting its future partnerships to democratic states, the Alliance may forgo potential benefits from security cooperation with strategic and capable authoritarian ones. Similarly, NATO would have to balance the cost of being viewed as an offensive actor (expanding footprint into the supposed sphere of influence of others), and its ability to attract political legitimacy for its out-of-area engagements in faraway regions.

Which of the routes NATO takes remains a political decision. But what the organization can take away from this study in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its efforts to build new partnerships are the following three points:

1. The basis of a state's decision whether to cooperate with NATO is formed by its security interests because fundamental threats to a state's survival and development prevail in the state's calculation of how to maximize power.
2. States that view their sovereignty threatened by NATO's out-of-area engagement will therefore not be inclined to change their opposition to the Alliance unless it fundamentally changes its nature, which would hurt the interests of its member states. Therefore, NATO should accept opposition to its mission as a feature of the international political system.
3. NATO can advance its mission to build cooperative security by engaging states that do not view the Alliance as a fundamental threat to its security through the extension of status symbols (e.g., special cooperation formats and public praise).

9. Conclusion

> "NATO's partnerships are, and will continue to be, essential to the way NATO works. The success of NATO's partnerships is demonstrated by their strategic contribution to Alliance and international security. […] Partners have made and continue to make substantial contributions to Alliance operations, missions, and practical cooperation activities. We reaffirm our commitment to expand political dialogue and practical cooperation with any nation that shares the Alliance's values and interest in international peace and security and will further develop our partnerships so that they continue to meet the interests of both Allies and partners." – NATO Brussels Summit Declaration 2018 (Art. 51)

When 29 nations come together to work out a common mission statement, they tend to produce rather broad declarations everyone can agree with. But when it comes to implementing them, the Alliance only goes as far as the lowest common denominator of its members' interests permits. Given the fact that NATO has actually put in practice its announcements to enhance its international partnerships – "to expand political dialogue and practical cooperation" – proves the enduring value of cooperative security as a core task to ensure the security of its member states.

This dissertation aims to support this task by providing insights into external states' policymaking towards the Alliance, answering the question of why some states support NATO while others denounce the Alliance. Based on a realist outlook on international relations, the study tests how the variables threat perceptions, interests in the status quo or revisionism, and status strategies influence alliance formation. By doing so, the analysis relies on qualitative case studies of the South American states Brazil and Colombia, a denouncer and supporter of NATO respectively.

Brazil has been a long-standing critic of NATO because its interest in enforcing sovereignty, centered on the inviolability of borders, clashes with the interest of NATO in maintaining the ability to defend the security of its member states outside of its own territory. Even though Brazil has been supporting the status quo by working closer with

the US and Europe since its economic crisis in 2014, the country continued to restrain the Alliance through soft-balancing activities. Brasília's vocal opposition to NATO missions has also been fueled by its desire to portrait itself as a pacific power that opposes NATO as a coercive tool to project American might. Taken together, by restricting foreign interference in its sphere of influence and denouncing NATO on the basis of its militaristic nature, Brazil has been aiming to set the conditions for autonomous development and an inexpensive security strategy, while advancing its relative security vis-à-vis NATO as a potential aggressor.

Its neighbor country Colombia follows a very different strategy towards the Alliance. As NATO's first official partner in Latin America, it aims to affiliate itself with the organization as a broader strategy to support the status quo that is shaped by unipolarity. However, the partnership with NATO does not represent an extension of its alliance with the US based on overcoming domestic security challenges, but should be viewed as a sign of Colombia's desire to gain a higher status in international politics through the association with elite clubs. In sum, Bogotá profits from bandwagoning with the status-quo alliance and from the utility of a higher rank in the international status hierarchy.

Both countries share the ultimate desire of maximizing absolute power (especially since there is much room for growth), which also shapes their calculation whether to cooperate with NATO: While Brazil may be able to gain practical benefits by cooperating with the organization, it would also have to sacrifice its approach to international security politics and its status strategy, as well as its goal of a multipolar world order, making it much more it profitable to oppose NATO as an illegitimate actor on the international stage. Since Colombia is already a close ally of the US and a supporter of the status quo that aims to associate with prestige organizations, the country can only gain from partnering with the organization.

The cases have revealed important insights into the applicability of prominent alliance theories, including Stephen Walt's Balance of Threat theory, Randall Schweller's

Balance of Interests theory, and status competition as an intervening variable that influences alliance formation.

Based on his neorealist focus on external threats, Walt's theory can explain Brazil's soft-balancing strategy NATO based on Brasília's sensitive outlook on sovereignty, but it fails to explain Colombia's desire to cooperate with NATO. This goes back to the nature of NATO partnerships that do not include mutual defense commitments and are therefore not designed to balance external threats. Therefore, the Balance of Threat theory may serve to explain opposition of the Alliance, but mostly fails to explain the support of it (with the rare exception of bandwagoning to appease a threatening NATO).

The ability of Schweller's theory to explain state behavior towards NATO is similarly limited. This goes back to the theory's failure to clearly define the interests in "status quo" and "revisionism", as well as the fact that states can simultaneously bandwagon with an actor for profit and balance against the same actor for security. And while this study agrees with Schweller that states ultimately aim to maximize their absolute power, his approach to alliance formation driven by the profits of a partnership tends to disregard the potential losses for security, which might come at costs that are higher than the benefits of cooperation. Because a state's policy towards NATO as a military alliance heavily depends on the compatibility of the Alliance's perceived goals with the state's strategy to enhance its own security, behavior towards NATO as an organization may differ from its behavior towards its individual members, especially in the areas of international trade and economics (such as in the case of Brazil after 2014). Therefore, Schweller's approach to calculating a state's overall interest in the status quo or revisionism and ascribing a predefined alliance pattern only holds true in the case of states whose security strategy towards NATO matches their economic relations with its member states.

A more reliable variable to explain state behavior towards NATO turned out to be a state's status strategy. While as an intervening and subjective variable, it does not serve to make positivist predictions of state behavior, it can generally be regarded as a

complement to a state's balancing or bandwagoning strategy. This is because a state's desire for status increases its motivation to actively support or denounce the Alliance, serving as a driver to invest in a partnership with it or to vocally speak up against it. For states that follow a social mobility strategy, a partnership with the Alliance may serve as a status symbol to showcase acceptance as a valued contributor to international security, which in turn confers privileges, autonomy, and legitimacy to act in the dimension of international security affairs. Similarly, for states that follow a social creativity or a social conflict strategy, denouncing NATO provides value by differentiating themselves from or standing up to the unipole-led Alliance, helping the states to signal specific characteristics, such as pacifism or strength.

The case studies' conclusions also reveal insights for NATO about where to expand political dialogue and practical cooperation. Unlike those who believe that NATO should focus on states that share common security challenges (e.g., terrorism, maritime security, non-proliferation), thereby building on the organization's operational capacity, the conclusions suggest that the question of whether states are willing to cooperate with the Alliance or not mostly comes down to their threat perception of NATO as internationally engaging actor.

Since NATO members will continue to see their security at stake outside of its own borders, it seems unlikely that the Alliance will be able to resolve the clash of interests with those states that generally oppose NATO's crisis management operations. This has become even more evident since Russia's aggression towards the Alliance undermines its ability to gain legitimacy for its out-of-area missions in the UN Security Council. Instead, NATO should focus on enhancing relations with states that do not see their security threated by the Alliance's core tasks, which suggests encouraging neutral or cautious states to cooperate with NATO by offering support to enhance their status through privileged partnerships that signal their value to the international community.

However, the ability to offer value will depend on the dynamics of the international system, most significantly on the rise of China, which may become a decisive factor in

how states position themselves towards the US-led Alliance. Given that the decision of whether to cooperate with NATO is generally driven by the desire to maximize power, the cost-benefit analysis of supporting the Alliance will also depend on China's response. If Beijing offers better alternatives to NATO, or even sanctions further alignment with the organization, states may become more reluctant to side with it. Therefore, NATO also needs to ask itself how to maintain its political value for external states in a changing world order.

The extent of NATO's investment in partnerships will ultimately depend on the political decision about the future of the Alliance: Should NATO shift its focus towards territorial defense, leaving crisis management in the hands of the EU on the one side the Atlantic and in those of a US-led coalition of the willing on the other side (which would greatly diminish the utility of partnerships and leave cooperative security as a side task)? Or should NATO keep the balance between its core tasks defined in its 2010 strategic concept, continuing its out-of-area engagements and strengthening its relations with states that are willing to support it?

The answers to these questions are greatly influenced by the politics of the member states and by the evolving transatlantic relationship. If nationalism spreads across Europe and if the US Administration continues to follow an "America First" approach to international politics, NATO will be less likely to defend its member states' shared interests and values abroad. But if the defenders of a multilateral world order – above all Germany – will be able to showcase the political value of acting in concert with NATO allies and of building mutually beneficial partnerships with countries across the globe, the Alliance shall be able to draw on the findings of this dissertation that can help the organization to strengthen its mission of being a force for security and stability around the world.

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Appendix

I. List of NATO partners

Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC):

Austria
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Finland
Georgia
Ireland
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyz Republic
Malta
The Republic of Moldova
Montenegro
Russia
Serbia
Sweden
Switzerland
Tajikistan
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkmenistan
Ukraine

Mediterranean Dialogue (MD):

Algeria
Egypt
Israel
Jordan
Mauritania
Morocco
Tunisia

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI):

Bahrain
Qatar
Kuwait
United Arab Emirates

Partners Across the Globe:

Afghanistan
Australia
Colombia
Iraq
Japan
Pakistan
Republic of Korea
New Zealand
Mongolia

International Organizations:

United Nations (UN)
European Union (EU)
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

(NATO 2015b)