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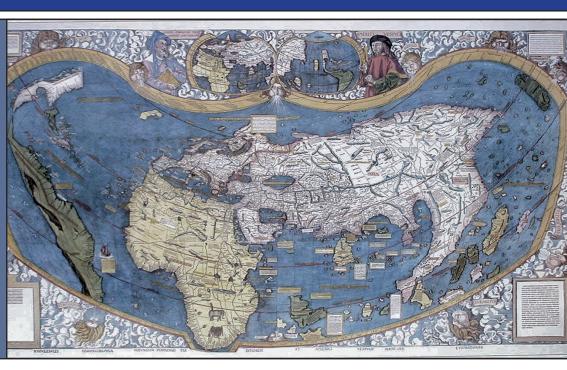
del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

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I Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore ha più di trent'anni di vita, essendo stato costituito nel 1983 sulla base del precedente Istituto di Scienze Politiche. Conta attualmente ventisei membri di prima afferenza; oltre ai Docenti e Ricercatori di ruolo ed ai Professori a contratto, svolgono la loro attività di studio e di ricerca nell'ambito del Dipartimento un numero rilevante di collaboratori a vario titolo (Assegnisti di ricerca, Borsisti post-dottorato, Dottori e Dottorandi di ricerca, Addetti alle esercitazioni, Cultori della materia).

Il Dipartimento costituisce una delle due strutture scientifiche di riferimento della Scuola di Dottorato in Istituzioni e Politiche. Inoltre il Centro di Ricerche sul Sistema Sud e il Mediterraneo allargato (CRiSSMA), costituito nel 1999, «collabora – in particolare – con la Facoltà di Scienze Politiche [oggi Facoltà di Scienze Politiche e Sociali] e con il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche».

Gli afferenti al Dipartimento appartengono a diverse aree scientifico-disciplinari – diritto, scienza politica, storia – orientate allo studio dei fenomeni politici, nelle loro espressioni istituzionali e organizzative, a livello internazionale ed interno agli Stati. Il fondatore del nostro Ateneo, Padre Agostino Gemelli, affermava nel 1942 che diritto, storia e politica costituiscono «un tripode» sul quale si fondano le Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, delle quali difendeva l'identità e la funzione. Circa vent'anni dopo, Francesco Vito, successore del fondatore nel Rettorato e in precedenza Preside della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche affermava: «Noi rimaniamo fedeli alla tradizione scientifica secondo la quale l'indagine del fenomeno politico non può essere esaurita senza residui da una sola disciplina scientifica. Concorrono alla comprensione della politica gli studi storici, quelli filosofici, quelli giuridici, quelli socio-economici». Per Gianfranco Miglio, la storia è il laboratorio privilegiato della ricerca politologica.

I Docenti e i Ricercatori del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore sono quindi tutti profondamente radicati nelle loro rispettive discipline, ma ritengono che il loro rigore metodologico, la loro specifica competenza, la loro capacità di comprendere i fenomeni oggetto dei loro studi siano arricchiti dal confronto interdisciplinare consentito dalla struttura scientifica alla quale appartengono. Vi sarà modo di verificare e approfondire anche in questi *Quaderni* il valore scientifico irrinunciabile del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche.

Come immagine caratterizzante dell'identità del Dipartimento, le cui aree scientifiche hanno tutte una forte dimensione internazionalistica, è stata scelta la mappa disegnata nel 1507 dal cartografo tedesco Martin Waldseemüller (1470-1521), di grande importanza storica essendo la prima nella quale il Nuovo Continente scoperto da Cristoforo Colombo è denominato "America". Nel 2005 tale mappa è stata dichiarata dall'UNESCO "Memoria del mondo".

La frase «*Orbem prudenter investigare et veraciter agnoscere*», che esprime lo spirito di libera ricerca nella fedeltà alla vocazione cattolica, utilizza alcune espressioni della seguente preghiera di S. Tommaso d'Aquino: «*Concede mihi, misericors Deus, quae tibi placita sunt, ardenter concupiscere, prudenter investigare, veraciter agnoscere, et perfecte adimplere ad laudem et gloriam nominis tui. Amen*». Tale preghiera, «*dicenda ante studium vel lectionem*», a sua volta forma la prima parte di una più lunga orazione «*Ad vitam sapienter instituendam*».

Il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche promuove:
– il coordinamento fra Docenti e Ricercatori per un efficace svolgimento della ricerca negli ambiti disciplinari di competenza;
– lo sviluppo della ricerca scientifica in ambito storico, politico, giuridico-internazionale e un attivo dialogo tra gli studiosi delle varie discipline;
– l'organizzazione di convegni, seminari e conferenze, attraverso i quali realizzare un proficuo confronto fra studiosi, l'avanzamento e la diffusione delle conoscenze nel campo delle scienze politiche;
– la realizzazione di pubblicazioni scientifiche, che raccolgano i risultati delle ricerche promosse e i contributi dei membri del Dipartimento e degli studiosi partecipanti alle attività seminariali e di ricerca organizzate dal Dipartimento stesso.

Proprio la rilevante e qualificata attività promossa dal Dipartimento ha indotto alla pubblicazione (a stampa e su Internet) dei presenti *Quaderni*, per ospitare atti e testi derivanti dalle iniziative promosse dal Dipartimento, nonché saggi e articoli dei suoi Docenti e Ricercatori, dei loro collaboratori a tutti i livelli e di autori esterni.

Da questo numero entrano in vigore alcune modifiche nell'organizzazione scientifica e redazionale dei *Quaderni*, rese necessarie dal loro crescente sviluppo. La pubblicazione degli articoli già da questo numero è soggetta a *Peer Review* anonima. Viene creato un Comitato di redazione il cui segretario sarà il Dr. Davide Borsani. Il Direttore ringrazia per il suo impegno il Prof. Gianluca Pastori, che ricopriva l'incarico di Capo redattore, ora abolito.

Il presente numero pubblica nella prima parte le relazioni pervenute e pubblicabili presentate al IX Convegno di studio sull'Alleanza Atlantica: *La lotta al terrorismo transnazionale: un ruolo per la NATO?* Nella sezione *Miscellanea* compaiono due articoli su aspetti del pensiero cristiano, cattolico e ortodosso, in campo politico.

Il prossimo Quaderno n. 12 verrà pubblicato nel corso del 2017.

International Relations Theory and NATO's Post-Cold War Path: an Ongoing Debate

di Luca Ratti

Abstract – *Dopo la fine della Guerra Fredda, prospettive analitiche differenti nello studio delle Relazioni Internazionali hanno fornito resoconti contrastanti circa l'abilità della NATO di sopravvivere al venir meno della minaccia sovietica, mantenendo al contempo un ruolo significativo nel sistema internazionale post-bipolare. Mentre i teorici liberali e costruttivisti hanno ritenuto che l'Alleanza avrebbe continuato a rivestire un ruolo importante, le valutazioni dei realisti sono state più pessimiste, mettendo in discussione la possibilità per la NATO di risultare rilevante in un sistema internazionale in rapida trasformazione. Le analisi neo-marxiste hanno ritratto l'Alleanza come strumento nelle mani di un gruppo di Stati capitalisti impegnati nel perpetrare strategie neo-colonialiste di sfruttamento al di fuori dell'area euro-atlantica. Le prospettive post-positiviste sono altresì risultate critiche, ritenendo che la rilevanza della NATO continui a fondarsi sull'abilità di riprodurre e rappresentare ancora l'Occidente come spazio geo-culturale nonché immagine della sicurezza. Un quarto di secolo dopo il crollo dell'Unione Sovietica, questo dibattito è ancora acceso. La conclusione del saggio è che, mentre la maggior parte dei membri dell'Alleanza mantiene un interesse per la sua sopravvivenza, dinamiche sistemiche di una certa portata hanno considerevolmente minato le visioni liberali e costruttiviste della NATO.*

NATO's post-Cold War trajectory and IR Theory

The aim of this article is neither to arrive to one single truth about NATO's theoretical character nor to endorse one specific account of its post-Cold War trajectory. Rather, I will discuss a variety of different analytical approaches, each with their own ontologies and epistemologies leading to alternative or mutually reinforcing evaluations of historical and social dynamics. I will also debate the merits and weaknesses of their accounts of NATO's evolution. Contending perspectives provide different evaluations of the Alliance's post-Cold War purpose and trajectory. Having survived the Cold War's end, the turbulent 1990s and the watershed of 9/11, NATO has continued to evolve in a multifaceted manner. It has been

variously described, a "security community", a "perpetual peace bloc", a "community organization", "constitutive entity", a "post-modern alliance", and a "social security enterprise"[1]. In the following sections I will discuss contending conceptualizations of NATO's identity and evolution from the end of the East-West division to the upcoming Warsaw summit.

Realism: NATO's uncertain future

Realism, as a theoretical orientation in the study of International Relations, supposedly values what is over what should be[2]. Realist scholars have long cast the Alliance as a relic from a classic, bipolar power struggle. In realist theory, alliances are principally seen as vehicles for the combining of military resources by a group of States in response to, or in preparation for, some assumed contingencies[3]. Those contingencies are usually defined by reference to an external threat posed by another State or group of States. Realism's common underlying assumption is that alliances are unlikely to outlive the threats they were created to address and enjoy a limited lifespan. Scott Bennett, having evaluated some 207 interstate alliances spanning the period from 1816 to 1984, found that the vast majority was temporary. They endured on average for just 12 years. Olson and Zeckhauser argued that an alliance thrives as long as it provides collective goods. However, smaller allies will free ride on the contributions of the larger[4]. Burden-sharing has been a recurrent issue in the history of the Alliance. Its emergence as a central theme in NATO's evolution dates back to early 1950s, when the U.S. began to demand from its

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[1] M. Weber – J. Sperling – M.A. Smith, *NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory: Decline Or Regeneration*, London – New York, 2012, p.29. See also C. Coker, *'NATO as a post-modern alliance'*, in S.P. Ramet – C. Ingebritsen (eds.), *Coming in From the Cold War: US-European Interactions Since 1980*, Lanham, MD, 2002, pp. 16-30.

[2] E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, New York, 1939, p.63.

[3] R. Jervis, *Realism, Neo-liberalism, and Co-operation*, "International Security", vol. 24 (Summer 1999), n. 1, pp.42–63; S.M. Walt, *Origins of Alliances,* Ithaca, NY, 1987; T. J. Christensen, *Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865–1940*, "International Organization", vol. 51 (Winter 1997), n. 4, pp. 65–97.

[4] M. Weber, *NATO after 9/11: Theoretical Perspective*, in E. Hallams – L. Ratti – B. Zyla, *NATO beyond 9/11: The Transformation of the Atlantic Alliance*, London – New York, 2013, p. 30.

European allies a mutual willingness to share the burden of common defence[5]. Its significance was hardly downgraded by the Cold War's end, although realists expected the allies to be unable to reconcile their different interests after the Soviet threat's disappearance with negative implications on the cohesion of the Alliance.

Nonetheless, the traditional realist literature has focused on alliance origins, while discarding the issue of alliance persistence after an initial catalyzing threat had disappeared. Following the Soviet Union's disintegration, realist scholars argued that NATO had outlived its original purpose and would struggle to retain a meaningful role. It would not necessarily be formally disbanded; it might «persist on paper» but it would «[cease] to function as an alliance». They also expected a resurgence of traditional interstate rivalries in Europe[6]. In the absence of an outside threat to provide for internal cohesion, NATO would gradually lose relevance and wither away. Centrifugal systemic pressures would undermine cohesion among its members and result in a transatlantic drift. The U.S. would recline on itself, gradually losing sight of dynamics in Europe. Washington would thus shift the focus of its foreign and security policy towards other regions, namely the Pacific, and concentrate on the containment of China's vigorous rise[7]. Germany, having achieved unification and no longer a bone of contention between the two blocs would also lose interest in the Alliance. In the realist view, Berlin would also be unwilling to antagonize the Russian Federation in the case of a new surge in East-West tension[8]. Britain and France would react to American disengagement and Germany's economic and political resurgence by deepening bilateral ties. This is a development that dates back to the early 1980s, when Mitterrand and Thatcher rekindled Anglo-French military cooperation, before reacting with concern at the end of the decade to Germany's quest for unity. According to realist tenets, London and Paris might also try to resume cooperation with

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[5] W.J. Thies, *Friendly Rivals: Bargaining and Burden-shifting in NATO*, Armonk, NY, 2003, pp. 64-72.

[6] J.J. Mearsheimer, *Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War*, "International Security", vol. 15 (Summer 1990), n. 1, pp. 5–56.

[7] J.J. Mearsheimer, *The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia*, "The Chinese Journal of International Politics, vol. 3 (2010), pp. 381-396.

[8] S.S. Szabo, *Can Berlin and Washington agree on Russia?*, "The Washington Quarterly", vol. 32 (2009), n. 4, pp. 23-41. See also A. Rahr, *Germany and Russia: A Special Relationship*, "The Washington Quarterly", vol. 30 (2007), n. 2, pp. 137-145.

Moscow as a counterweight to a united Germany's role in Europe[9]. The Alliance's remaining members would either bandwagon with the United States or renationalize their defense policy. For example, the countries of Eastern Europe might fall under the political and economic sphere of influence of Germany or become easy prey of Russian revisionist ambitions. Turkey might be tempted to revive its Ottoman past and adopt aggressive policies towards its neighbours.

In 1993 Kenneth Waltz emphatically warned that «NATO's days may not be numbered but its years are»[10]. In a similar fashion, John J. Mearsheimer expressed his doubts in an article emphatically titled: «Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War». In the absence of a clear external threat to the security of its members, the meaning of article 5 of the 1949 Washington Treaty would become somewhat vague. Realism points unambiguously to a pattern of increasingly difficult intra-alliance management and the emergence of transatlantic divergences. In contrast with bipolarity, under unipolarity, there is no rival State or alliance which acts as a single point of reference for internal cohesion. Threat perceptions in this situation «cannot be fully deduced from the system's structure» and, more so than under bipolarity, State priorities are influenced by «geographic variations, different perceptions of intentions, various domestic factors, and ideology»[11]. For these reasons, realist scholars also objected the alliance's enlargement to Eastern Europe and the admission of the former Soviet bloc States. Expansion towards Eastern Europe would provoke Moscow, create new unbalances and tension between the former Cold War enemies[12]. It might also lead Russia to set up other alliances or to deepen cooperation with China in order to balance

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[9] H. Larsen, *Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis: France, Britain and Europe*, London – New York, 1997, p. 145.

[10] K. Waltz, *The emerging structure of international politics*, "International Security", vol.18 (Fall 1993), n. 2, p. 76.

[11] M. Weber – J. Sperling – M.A. Smith, *NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory. Decline or Regeneration*, New York, 2012, p. 35.

[12] M.E. Brown, *The Flawed Logic of Expansion*, "Survival", vol.37 (Spring 1995), n.1, pp. 34–52; M. Mandelbaum, *Preserving the New Peace: the Case against NATO Expansion*, "Foreign Affairs", vol.74 (May–June 1995), n. 3, pp. 9–13; M. Mandelbaum, *The Dawn of Peace in Europe*, New York, 1996; P. Zelikow, *The Masque of Institutions*, "Survival", vol. 38 (Spring 1996), n. 1, pp. 6–18; D. Reiter, *Why NATO Enlargement does not Spread Democracy*, "International Security", vol. 25 (Spring 2001), n. 4, pp. 41–67.

the Alliance and to counter its expansionist policies. Furthermore, inviting new members would increase intra-alliance disputes and undermine NATO's cohesion. Ultimately, any attempt to artificially prolong NATO's span of life, including its eastern expansion, would only result in second best outcomes for its members[13].

Realists were also critical of NATO's involvement in protracted military operations outside of the Euro-Atlantic area[14]. They argued that the allies had no enduring reason to intervene outside of the borders of the Alliance's member States or maintain a strategic presence in the Middle East, Afghanistan or Central Asia. In 2002, almost all realist scholars in the United States, with the notable exception of Henry Kissinger, opposed the war against Iraq and the American attempt to involve the European allies in the conflict[15]. More recently, realists have been very critical of the deterioration in relations between NATO and Russia[16]. They have argued that the United States and its European allies share most of the responsibility for the crisis in Ukraine. Mearsheimer has portrayed NATO's attempt to deepen ties with Ukraine and the prospect of the Alliance offering membership to Kiev as the taproot of the trouble[17].

Nonetheless, realist theory also points towards an alternative understanding of NATO's post-Cold Wat trajectory[18]. The end of the Cold War did not change the anarchic structure of the international

[13] L. Ratti, *Post-Cold War NATO and International Relations Theory: The Case for Neo-Classical Realism*, "Journal of Transatlantic Studies", vol. 4 (2006), n. 1, pp.81-110.

[14] J.J. Mearsheimer – S.M. Walt, *An Unnecessary War*, "Foreign Policy", Jan./February 2003, pp. 51–59.

[15] J.J. Mearsheimer, *Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq war: realism versus neo-conservatism*, available at this link: https://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-american-power/morgenthau_2522.jsp.

[16] M. de Leonardis, *La NATO dopo il vertice di Newport e in attesa del nuovo Presidente americano: 'masterly inactivity'*, "Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche", a. V (2015), n. 8, pp.20-22. See also M. Mandelbaum, *Preserving the New Peace: the Case against NATO expansion*, "Foreign Affairs", vol. 74 (May-June 1995), n. 3, pp. 9–13. See also D. Reiter, *Why NATO enlargement does not spread democracy*, "International Security", vol. 25 (Spring 2001), n. 4, pp. 41-67.

[17] J.J. Mearsheimer, *Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault*, "Foreign Affairs", vol. 93 (September/October 2014), n. 5, pp. 1-12.

[18] A. Hyde-Price *NATO and the European Security System: a Neo-Realist Analysis*, in M. Webber – A. Hyde-Price (eds.), *Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance*, London – New York, 2016, p. 41.

system and most of the Alliance's members retain, for a number of reasons, an interest in NATO's survival. First, the disintegration of the Soviet Union did not bring about the end of Russian nationalism. If anything, the resurgence of Russia and its revisionist ambitions remain a fundamental source of instability in Europe and insecurity for many of Moscow's former satellites. NATO therefore continues to provide a forum in which threatened countries can balance together and with the United States against Russia. Secondly, during the 1990s and in the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. has benefited from the Alliance's endurance and involvement outside the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO's preservation against the risks posed by uncertainty and unpredictability was one of the main concerns of the administration of George H. W. Bush, as the U.S. government endorsed German unification between 1989 and 1990[19]. Its eastern enlargement also responds to this logic. Furthermore, in the aftermath of 9/11 Washington attempted to involve NATO in the stabilization of the Greater Middle East[20]. This demonstrates that the United States continues to regard the Alliance as useful platform for the maximization of U.S. interests and the projection of American power in Europe and in the world. In the early 2000s the administration of George W. Bush and a number of Republican senators called for the creation of a Global NATO through the incorporation of Australia, Japan, and South Korea into the Alliance[21]. These views also reflected U.S. concerns about the Pacific region and veiled attempt to involve NATO into this region. Washington might welcome an Alliance's role in Eastern Asia in light of the lack of a robust security framework for the containment of China in this region[22].

However, while retaining a degree of utility, NATO would no longer constitute an indispensable framework for action for Washington. On occasions, as it was the case in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2003,

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[19] J.A. Engel, *Bush, Germany, and the Power of Time: How History makes History*, "Diplomatic History", vol. 37 (2013), n.4, pp. 639-63.

[20] R.D. Asmus, *Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance*, "Foreign Affairs", vol. 82 (Sept./Oct. 2003), n. 5, pp. 20–31.

[21] I. Daalder – J. Lindsay, *Democracies of the World Unite*, "The American Interest", January/February 2007, pp. 5-15.

[22] S.M. Walt, *Is NATO irrelevant?*, "Foreign Policy", 2010, available at this link: http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/09/24/is-nato-irrelevant/ (downloaded on 03.06.2016) and D. Borsani, *'Back in Business?' Il Dibattito sulla NATO negli Stati Uniti*, "Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche", a. V, vol. 8 (2015), pp. 45-53.

in the process that led to the toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq between 2002 and 2003, and as it has been the case more recently in Syria and Iraq in the campaign against the Islamic State, the United States might prefer to work through "coalitions of the willing" as a viable alternative to the Alliance. *Ad-hoc* coalitions would provide Washington with the political legitimacy and strategic support for specific military operations without the constraints imposed by Alliance's rules and consensual practices. Similar arguments also apply to the other members of NATO[23]. Ultimately, however, the Alliance's members are likely to continue to retain an interest in its endurance. For Washington, it remains a provider of multilateral legitimacy and strategic projection. For the others, being part of the Alliance provides international prestige and visibility and an opportunity to discuss policies with the Americans multilaterally rather than bilaterally[24]. In other words, NATO membership is a guarantee of «a seat at the table»[25]. Hence, many of its medium and smaller members might continue to look at NATO as an opportunity for bandwagoning for profit with the U.S. If understood through these lenses, realist tenets provide at least a partial justification to explain NATO's post-Cold War survival.

Liberal theory: NATO as a "security community"

Liberal theories of International Relations have claimed significant analytical leverage when it comes to explain NATO's post-Cold War relevance. Their argument is that the competitive consequences of international anarchy have been moderated by the global historical trend towards institutionalization. Liberal scholars emphasize the role of liberal-democratic principles and values in shaping NATO's history, identity, and character. In the liberal view, since its establishment in 1949, besides its stated purpose of maintaining common security

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[23] S. Erlanger, *Tested by Russia, NATO struggles to stay credible*, "The New York Times", 01.06.2016.

[24] J. Sperling, *Neoclassical Realism and Alliance Politics*, in Webber – Hyde-Price, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-92.

[25] O. Croci, *All Quiet on the Western front: Italy and Transatlantic Relations*, in L. Marchi – R. Whitman – G. Edwards (eds.), *Italy's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-first Century: A Contested Nature?*, Abingdon, 2014, p. 58. See also J. Davidson, *America's Allies and War: Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq*, London – New York, 2011.

against external aggression, NATO has upheld notions of democracy and freedom, playing an important function in dampening and mediating conflicts. More specifically, the Alliance has proved itself as one of the most capable international regimes in building up peace and stability. Unlike realists, liberals enthusiastically argued that NATO would persist because of common democratic systems, parliamentary institutions, and market economies that link its members together and create a network of interdependence between them. The Alliance would become the living demonstration of the true power of liberal ideas over power balancing. According to John Ikenberry, NATO developed as a "binding institution", one that both committed the U.S. to Europe's defence and reassured the Western Europeans that Washington's huge power advantage would be channelled to their benefit[26].

During the Cold War, the Alliance helped to prevent conflict among its members in important ways: by increasing trust and transparency, by denationalizing defence policies and by «binding the United States to the continent». Even though elements of national policies persisted, such as on the issues of nuclear strategy or in the dispute over Cyprus between Greece and Turkey, the tensions and rivalries that they produced were minimized by the presence of a common institutional framework. In the early 1970s, NATO's institutional coordination extended to dialogue with the Warsaw Pact States in the CSCE process and to conventional arms control frameworks in the MBFR negotiations. More broadly, at the moment of the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949 and then during the period of East-West *détente*, NATO's planners identified two substantive political tasks for the Alliance. The first, articulated in article 5 of the Alliance's founding treaty first and then reiterated in the 1967 Harmel Report, coincided with the pursuit of a stable political order in Europe. The second was NATO's role as a vehicle towards forging a political community in the Euro-Atlantic area. This view was enshrined in article 2 of the Washington Treaty in 1949, in which the allies stated that they «will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them». The Federal Republic of Germany's admission into the Alliance in 1955 made

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[26] G.J. Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton, NJ, 2001, pp. 41, 72, 206, 248.

this task even more urgent in light of the concerns that it arose among its Western European neighbours. In this sense, NATO not only contributed to seal the transatlantic relationship but also to encapsulate West Germany in the post-war Western liberal system[27]. The Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation asserted in 1956 that «[w]hile fear may have been the main urge for the creation of NATO [...] a sense of Atlantic Community» was also present, premised on «common cultural traditions, free institutions and democratic concepts»[28].

These values, liberals argue, were reinforced throughout different moments of the Cold War and were not called into question by the Soviet bloc's collapse at the end of the 1980s. By contrast, at the end of the East-West division, NATO acquired renewed empirical and normative legitimacy. Its democratic character, rather than a common external threat, contributed to keep its members together. This optimism was grounded in the liberal assumptions about the nature of international institutions. In the liberal view, institutions are robust and sticky. Their development gives rise to "sunk costs", that is investment of time, material resources and political reputation. Once they have been established and expended, institutions create an incentive to persevere with an existing pattern of action. Consequently, there is a predisposition to retain and adapt established institutional structures rather than create new ones[29]. The Alliance has been retained and reformed after the Cold War and 9/11. This has occurred because none of the possible alternatives – a reinforced Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, a revamped Western EU or, more recently, the EU-based CSDP – have provided the reliable, precise, and extensive functions offered by NATO itself[30]. To have disbanded it and created an entirely new structure, meanwhile, would have been so dispendious of political and material resources as to have proven counter-productive. Furthermore, in the liberal view, the Alliance has

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[27] M.N. Hampton, *NATO, Germany and the United States: Creating Positive Identity in Trans-Atlantia*, "Security Studies", vol. 8 (Winter 1998/99-Spring 1999) nn. 2-3, pp. 235–269.

[28] M. Kuus, *'Love, Peace and NATO': Imperial Subject-Making in Central Europe*, "Antipode", vol. 39 (2007), n. 2, p. 273.

[29] R.B. McCalla, *NATO's persistence after the Cold War*, "International Organization", vol. 50 (Summer 1996), n. 3, pp. 445-475.

[30] M. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

claimed a leading role within a broader set of multilateral security arrangements, deepening ties to other international institutions, such as the UN, the EU, the OSCE, and the African Union[31].

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War and of 9/11, liberal scholarship also praised NATO's involvement outside of the borders of its member States. Since the end of the Cold War and, more powerfully since 9/11, NATO has become the instrument of the Western "democratic security community" in dealing with pressing transnational crises. After the Soviet bloc's collapse, the Alliance's member countries have started to regard each other as members of a "security community", which coalesce around liberal-democratic norms. Persisting power asymmetries have been mediated by norms of democratic decision-making, such as persuasion, compromise, and the non-use of force or coercive power[32]. Some liberals would even argue that, were it not for the opposition of autocratic regimes, between the late 1990s and early 2000s the Alliance might have gradually turned into the defensive arm of the United Nations, assisting it in the conduct of peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations outside of the Euro-Atlantic area.

Liberals also praised the alliance's role in establishing a network of technical and co-operation agreements with other States, including its former Cold War enemies[33]. Through these steps NATO has contributed to the spread of liberal-democratic principles, norms and values, encouraging political and economic reforms in former Soviet bloc States and reducing the dangers of regional instability. Unlike realists, liberals positively evaluated NATO's eastern enlargement. During the 1990, decision-makers in the Alliance's applicant and member countries, such as former Czech President Vaclav Havel, former U.S. president Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, presented the spread of liberal and democratic values as the driving motivation behind NATO enlargement. By contributing to the spread of democratic

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[31] C.A. Wallander, *NATO's Price: Shape up or Ship Out*, "Foreign Affairs", vol. 81 (Nov./Dec. 2002), n. 6, pp. 2–8.

[32] T. Risse-Kappen, *Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO*, in P.J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York, 1996, pp. 357–399.

[33] R.D. Asmus – R.L. Kluger – F.S. Larrabee, *Building a New NATO*, "Foreign Affairs", vol.72 (September/October 1993), n. 4, p. 23.

processes and free market economies, the Alliance established a relationship of interdependence between its current and future members, improving the political and business climate in the applicant States, where the prospect of NATO membership has been viewed by domestic and foreign consumers and investors as a "seal of approval" for political and economic reform. Finally, although reforming the economic structure of the new members and preparing them for membership has been financially costly in the short-run or has upset the Russians, in the long-run the expansion of the Alliance will help to prevent the outbreak of conflicts which would have much higher financial and human costs. Hence, in the liberal view, any responsibility for a resurgence in tension between NATO and Moscow lies in Russia's inability to embrace the liberal-democratic values at the core of the Alliance's policies and in the Kremlin's autocratic reversal of the liberal-democratic reforms and cooperation with the West of the 1990s, rather than in the expansionist character of NATO's strategy.

After the events of 9/11 the Alliance has demonstrated a willingness to reinforce cooperation with Moscow through the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council. This body stopped short of offering Russia full membership of the Alliance. However, it contributed to developing practical cooperation in a wide range of areas of common interest, such as crisis management, peacekeeping, and air defense, demonstrating that NATO was willing to reinforce mutual dialogue and cooperation. More recently, Washington and NATO's member States, although remaining wary of Moscow's conduct in Ukraine and Syria, have displayed an interest in resetting relations with Russia also through a revival of the NATO-Russia Council. This willingness demonstrates that NATO is not a traditional military alliance but a "security community" that privileges diplomatic engagement, dialogue, and socialization over realist logics of balance of power and containment[34].

NATO's trajectory after the Cold War and after 9/11 has at least in part validated these liberal arguments. The Alliance's liberal-democratic soul was strengthened by the tragedy of 9/11, which

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[34] B. Pohl, *NATO and Liberal International Relations Theory*, in Webber – Hyde-Price, op. cit., p. 121.

revitalized its efforts to take the shape of an institutional "regime", whose policy is guided by liberal-democratic principles, norms, and values[35]. The Alliance also continued to take in new members, creating incentives for democratic reform at home and responsible behavior abroad, encouraging political and economic reforms, stimulating the establishment of value-based practices for solving disputes and reducing regional instability in the young Eastern European democracies. In the liberal perspective, rather than a mere defense organization, NATO is therefore best conceived as a "security community" in the sense used by Karl Deutsch, where members are integrated through a very high level of interaction and mutual benefit and a means to create, at least on a regional basis, a "perpetual peace bloc". The Alliance has also reformed its command structures, undertaken strategic and doctrinal innovation, and pursued efforts to promote more efficient and effective economic and defence collaboration among its current and future members and NATO's partners. Smart defence and cybersecurity are the most recent among NATO's cooperative and innovative strategies. Also initiatives like the projected Transatlantic Trade and Economic Partnership are rooted in the liberal conception of NATO as not only a military but also a political and economic enterprise.

The Alliance has, in other words, demonstrated institutional breadth and elasticity. A plausible expectation of the fact that NATO is able to adapt is the likelihood that its members will continue to invest in the organization[36]. This is particularly true for NATO's new Eastern European recruits that have been reconnected with their Western role models after almost half a century of subjugation to Moscow. However, this argument is also validated by the conduct of NATO's older European members. Germany is a case in point here. While not always agreeing with U.S. policies, as in the case of the Bush administration's decision to intervene in Iraq in the early 2000s, Germany has remained a committed member of the Alliance. Furthermore, after a number of years of cuts in the military sector Berlin has recently increased its defence spending in fulfilment of

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[35] F. Schimmelfennig, *NATO and institutional theories of International Relations*, in Webber – Hyde-Price, op. cit., pp. 93-115.

[36] M. Weber, *op. cit.,* p.40.

American demands for a more proportionate division of the security burden between Washington and its allies[37].

The same is true for a country that for an extended part of the Cold War had an odd and partially conflictual relationship with the Alliance: France. After the end of the East-West division, Paris moved quickly to reinforce ties with NATO, participating in the 1990s in a number of peace enforcement and peacekeeping operations that were conducted by the Alliance in the Balkans. This cooperation was reinforced in the aftermath of 9/11 until in 2009 under the presidency of Nicholas Sarkozy France re-joined NATO's military structure after more than four decades of absence[38]. The case of France proves that Paris, although having encouraged during the 1990s the development of a European security and defence identity, views the Alliance not only as a defence organization but also as a community among like-minded liberal and democratic States. Also Italy, despite some of its political forces having manifested nationalist ambitions in the early 1990s, has continued to appeal to the Alliance's liberal-democratic values and solidarity to deal with regional crises in South-Eastern Europe and North Africa[39]. Ultimately, in the liberal views, functional efficiency and institutional adaptation provide the baseline set of reasons for explaining NATO's post-Cold War development, trajectory, and endurance. The multilateral practices developed by the Alliance have extended over decades, have proven adaptable, and in recent years have gained an additional edge in light of deepening defence austerity.

Constructivist theory: NATO as a "community of practice"

Constructivist scholarship also provides an optimistic evaluation of NATO's post-Cold War and post 9-11 trajectory. For social-constructivists, the Alliance is neither an expression of balancing behaviour, as for realists, nor of functional and institutional efficiency,

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[37] S. Wagstyl, *Germany to boost troop numbers for first time since cold war*, "The Financial Times", 10.05.2016.

[38] L. Ratti, *Stepping up to reintegration: French Security Policy between Transatlantic and European Defence during and after the Cold War*, "Journal of Transatlantic Studies", vol. 12 (2014), n. 4, pp. 4-18.

[39] R. Aliboni, *Neo-Nationalism and Neo-Atlanticism in Italian Foreign Policy*, "The International Spectator", n. 1 (January-March 2003).

as for liberal institutionalists. By contrast, social-constructivists portray NATO not as a conventional alliance defined by the existence of external threats but as an organization whose essential identity and history is understood as one of cultural commonality, shared democratic values and practices[40]. In other words, they regard the Alliance as a community among societies which share the same political identity and cultural practices. Constructivists also argue that democratic principles and values, such as democracy, respect for human and civil rights and individual freedoms, are the distinguishing features of the communitarian identity which is centered on NATO. In the preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty, the signatory States declared that they are determined «to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law»[41]. Helen Sjursen has pointed to norms of multilateralism, such as consultation, equality and non-hierarchical decision-making as distinguishing features of NATO's identity[42].

Hence, from a social-constructivist viewpoint, the transatlantic alliance is not a mere tool of statecraft or a "security community" in the liberal sense, in which the use of force by member States against each other is no longer conceivable, but a "constitutive entity", which can influence and shape States' perceptions and preferences. As argued by Thomas Risse-Kappen, we would miss the point about NATO if we were to conceive of it as "just another military alliance". The discursive pillar of its existence is Western civilian values and practices. In other words, social-constructivists regard NATO as a "communitarian entity", whose essential character and cohesion is based upon common cultural and democratic bonds. «Democracies», Thomas Risse-Kappen has argued, «externalize their internal norms when cooperating with each other». This web of social interactions has allowed NATO to survive the Soviet bloc's collapse, endure after the end of the East-West division, and retain a function in the post-Cold War and post 9/11 system. Its durability is the living demonstration

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[40] T. Flockart. *Understanding NATO through Constructivist Theorizing*, in Webber – Hyde-Price, op. cit., pp. 149-160.

[41] F. Schimmelfennig, *NATO Enlargement: A Constructivist Explanation*, "Security Studies", vol. 8 (1999), nn. 2-3, pp. 198-234.

[42] H. Sjursen, *On the Identity of NATO*, "International Affairs", vol. 80 (2004), n. 4, pp. 699-700.

of the causal preponderance of normative and social over material structures.

In the social-constructivist view, NATO's communitarian character has been reinforced by the Cold War's end. As Michael C. Williams has put it, against realist predictions of inexorable crisis and decline, the Alliance was «not rendered obsolete by the passing of the Cold War». By contrast, it continued to act as a "symbolic marker", allowing the U.S. and its European allies to counter the threats of fragmentation and of a return to the past[43]. For this reason, like liberals, social-constructivists were in favour of the Alliance's enlargement to former Soviet bloc States. In the social-constructivist perspective, expansion is a value-driven process and NATO is not a military alliance but a political and cultural organization[44]. Social-constructivists view the Alliance's expansion as a process of cultural socialization and explain the basic decision to expand NATO as a value-based action. They argue that the former Soviet bloc States' integration into the Alliance constitutes a successful case of socialization of former enemies to the values and norms of the Western international community. Since the early 1990s, NATO has designed specific instruments in order to prepare potential applicant States for membership. The Partnership for Peace Program (PfP), launched in 1994, allowed, through joint planning, exercises and other activities, Central and Eastern European countries and former Soviet Republics to become increasingly acquainted with the norms and functioning of the Alliance. In 1995 the Study of NATO enlargement established the criteria for being accepted as a candidate member. These criteria include respect for human and civil rights and reflect the Alliance's democratic character and communitarian identity. NATO also set up the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) as a body for consultation among the Alliance's member States and partner countries with the aim of discussing co-operation activities and current political and security questions. According to the social-constructivist viewpoint, these initiatives reflect the attempt of this institution to export its democratic norms and values and expand the security community, which is centered on the Alliance, beyond the borders of its member States. Unlike the realist research paradigm suggests, the *raison d'être* of this community are the same liberal and

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[43] M.C. Williams (with I.B. Neumann), *Culture and Security: Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security*, London, 2007, pp. 70-73.

[44] Schimmelfennig, *op. cit.,* p. 211.

democratic principles which govern the domestic political systems of its members rather than a sense of a common external threat.

Nonetheless, constructivist scholars acknowledge that the creation of new national identities, compatible with the principles of the institution, can be achieved only after a period of transition, during which the new norms and values are "digested" by the applicant States. In some cases, more intervention is necessary to restructure State institutions, as the bidding countries may not be able to comply immediately with the new norms. Additional initiatives designed to assist applicants to prepare for admission, such as the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which was established at the NATO Washington summit in 1999, reflected this constructivist argument. Membership of the Alliance is granted when and the principles and values which are shared by the members of the community have been internalized by the applicant State. The bid of former Soviet bloc countries to join NATO reflects their identification with Western values and norms. For the new members the practical impact of membership is likely to be less important than the symbolism: becoming members of the Alliance means to be recognized as "one of us" by their Western role models. In the social-constructivist view it was this symbolism that prompted former Soviet Republics, such as the Baltic States, to join the Alliance in the early 2000s, and more recently Georgia and Ukraine to lobby for membership of NATO rather than searching for protection against Russia or a desire to antagonize Moscow. When the candidate States have been socialized to the values and norms of this "liberal federation", they are admitted to the "democratic security community". Cooperation with NATO becomes a precondition for being recognized as a modern, mature Western subject, while accession is achieved not through negative categories of threat but when socialization to the values and practices of the Alliance has sufficiently progressed. As argued by Emanuel Adler, NATO has become a "community of practice" with the potential of "cognitive authority" over nonmember countries.

Relations with Russia make no exception. Social-constructivists emphasize the importance of social structures and inter-subjective perceptions in relations between the Alliance and Moscow. Following the decision to enlarge, NATO made huge efforts to stress its political function over its military one, demonstrating the intention to develop a positive relationship with the Kremlin and avoid exacerbating its sense

of exclusion[45]. In the second half of the 1990s Russia's involvement in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo constituted an important step towards improving mutual relations[46]. Nonetheless, Russian decision-makers have not been willing to internalize NATO's practices and deepen cooperation with the Alliance. These steps would have been required in order to bring about a socialization of the Russian identity to the values and principles which shape NATO's character and identity. The same is true in the case of a number of countries with which NATO has established ties outside of the Euro-Atlantic area. Through co-operation programs, such as the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and the NATO's Istanbul Co-operation Initiative established in the 1990s and in the early 2000s, the Alliance has established a number of partnerships with North African and Middle Eastern countries, providing technical assistance but also endeavoring to socialize their political and military leaders to NATO's cooperative practices. This is a process that is still ongoing and more interaction will be needed in order to socialize the partner countries. However, efforts to deepen these partnerships confirm that NATO cannot be conceived as a traditional military Alliance.

Empirical evidence in part validates constructivist views. The Alliance's membership has nearly doubled in size over the last two decades. Its partnerships initially started out as haphazard and focused on extending cooperation across the wider Europe (Partnership for Peace, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and tailored arrangements with Russia and Ukraine). However, since 9/11 they have extended well beyond to embrace Eurasia, North Africa, the Gulf and the Asia Pacific[47]. Constructivists accept that shared identities and a commitment to norms do not preclude the existence of disputes

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[45] On social-constructivist accounts of NATO–Russia relations see Williams – Neumann, *From Alliance to Security Community: NATO, Russia, and the Power of Identity*, "Millennium: Journal of International Studies", vol. 29 (2000), n. 2, pp. 357-387; J. Huysmans, *Shape-shifting NATO: Humanitarian Action and the Kosovo Refugee Crisis*, "Review of International Studies", vol. 28 (2002), pp. 599–618; E. Adler, *The Spread of Security Communities: Communities of Practice, Self-Restraint, and NATO's Post–Cold War Transformation*, "European Journal of International Relations", vol.14 (2008), n. 2, pp. 195–230.

[46] B. Crawford, *The Bosnian Road to NATO enlargement*, "Contemporary Security Policy", vol. 21 (August 2000), n. 2, pp. 39-59.

[47] T. Flockhart, *NATO's Global Partnerships – A Haphazard Strategy?*, in Hallams – Ratti – Zyla, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-96.

within communities or autocratic backlashes in some if their members. Indeed, in the post–Cold War period NATO has experienced a succession of deep disagreements. It is an open question as to whether 9/11 has accelerated this dynamic. The dispute over Iraq in 2002 was NATO's deepest rift since the Cold War's end and, arguably the worst since the Suez crisis of 1956. This led to a view among some that the constitutive norms of the Alliance had been violated to a dangerous degree and that the common identities among the allies would not suffice to guarantee NATO's survival as a community of States[48]. Some of its members, particularly, Turkey have embraced policies which cannot be easily reconciled with NATO's democratic identity and prevailing practices. Nonetheless, constructivist scholars also look at the strength and positive effects of shared practices. Over the course of its existence, NATO has consolidated habits of cooperation and self-restraint, with new members being socialized into such practices. These practices have proven capable of modifying disagreements and steering members towards consensus. The Alliance has also extended its operational functions beyond the military sphere. Its major missions in Kosovo and in Afghanistan have entailed a civilian dimension, giving rise to a distinct operational methodology – the so-called "comprehensive approach". By such means, the Alliance's identity as the constitutive pillar of a transatlantic security community – a "community of practice" – has been preserved.

Post-Positivism: NATO as a "social security enterprise"

Critical and post-positivist perspectives provide a quite different and more critical account of the Alliance's post-Cold War trajectory. Their explanations of NATO's evolution reflect the nature of these approaches and their concern to undermine mainstream narratives of international relations rather than the attempt to offer new explanatory paradigms. For post-positivist scholarship, theory is not an end in itself but an instrument to unmask, disempower, and deconstruct biased and hegemonic representations of the international system. It is also a tool to denounce and deconstruct cultural and linguistic myths which rely on racist conceptions of international relations and

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[48] M. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

fuel discriminatory endeavours and policies[49]. Critical approaches, particularly those that embrace a post-colonial perspective, view the Alliance as the expression of a Western hegemonic discourse, of a Euro-centric identity, and of Western arrogance. This is an identity that cannot be separated from the "cultural and symbolic power" that sustains it. Hence, for post-positivist analyses, NATO's character is not an ideational construction derived from its constitutive democratic values, norms, and practices. It is rather a reference point from which to legitimize its ongoing existence and the Western discourse of its primacy in international affairs. In other words, for post-positivist scholars NATO's «continued existence and political relevance [...] rests on a continued ability to re-produce and re-present "the West" as a geo-cultural space [and...] security referent object»[50]. Post-positivist research also argues that, since the disintegration of the bipolar structure of international politics, NATO has suffered a loss of purpose and has entered a period of functional and democratic deterioration. Hence, it members and planners have endeavoured to invent and identify new tasks and securitized new policy areas in order to preserve a meaningful role for this institution and justify its ongoing existence[51].

This view comes close to the critical theory of "securitization", which explores how meanings of security are created, evolve, and expand through discursive practices and in order to serve specific hegemonic purposes. It has been able to claim an ongoing role against a proliferation of alternative views, which challenge Western security narratives and hegemony. Its institutional evolution reflects this concern. NATO has found in three post–Cold War Strategic Concepts, that were embraced respectively in 1991, 1999, and 2011, ways to carefully and quite deliberately rationalize its continued existence in light of radically changing circumstances and scenarios. New threats have been invented, while issues that had no relationship

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[49] L. Hansen, *Poststructuralism*, in J. Baylis – S. Smith – P. Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, London – New York, 2008, pp. 166-180. See also D. Nabers, *A Poststructuralist Discourse Theory of Global Politics*, London – New York, 2015.

[50] A. Behnke, *NATO's Security Discourse after the Cold War*, London – New York, 2012, pp. 1-4.

[51] S. Castle, *Can NATO reinvent itself as a powerful force in the modern world*, "The Independent", 21.11.2002.

with NATO's original functions or did not impact on the security of its members, such as migration, gender, civil and human rights, have been progressively "securitized". This cultural practice has prolonged the Alliance's lifespan, justifying its survival, while excluding alternative narratives, which could challenge the hegemonic position of the West in the international system[52].

In other words, NATO has become a "postmodern alliance". By retaining and reforming it, Western elites have prolonged their false representations and contributed to the denial of alternative constructions, perpetuating bilateral dichotomies of binary pairs of internal and external, domestic and foreign, Western & non-Western, insiders and outsiders, which reflect biased and partial representations of international relations. NATO has thus become a "social security enterprise", that has allowed the West to preserve, reinforce, and expand its hegemonic position. In other words, the Alliance has served the purpose of fuelling Western hierarchical domination, acting as an instrument of political and cultural hegemony. Through NATO hegemonic elites in the U.S. and Europe have sustained their hegemonic discourses and legitimated the use of violence against alternative representations. This hegemonic discourse has found expression in U.S. and British calls for a "Responsibility to Protect", which justified their intervention and the use of force against the sovereign rights of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1990s[53]. After 9/11 it has led to appeals for a "War on terror" and "Regime Change", with which the West has legitimated interventions in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Horn of Africa. These interventions were conducted also with the contribution of countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan which, although not being members of the Alliance, belong to the Western cultural space and have embraced its cultural practices. American calls for a Global NATO also reflected this logic[54]. Ultimately, these representations have continued to

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[52] See E. Herschinger, *Constructing Global Enemies: Hegemony and Identity in International Discourses on Terrorism and Drug Prohibition*, London – New York, 2011.

[53] R. Knox, *Race, Racialisation and Rivalry in the International Legal Order*, in A. Anievas – N. Manchanda – R. Shilliam (eds.), *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line*, New York, 2015, pp. 179-81.

[54] A. McClintock, *The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term Post-colonialism*, in P. Williams – L. Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, New York, 1994, p. 297.

provide justification for the unleashing of unlimited violence against alternative views and sites of resistance in "subaltern" non-Western societies.

Post-positivist scholars are also very sceptical of any notion that Western elites have displayed a readiness to redeem themselves and to challenge the discriminatory and racist discourses that dominate their political representations. For example, in the post-positivist logic, President Obama's replacement in 2008 of the expression "War on Terror" with the "Long War" rather than softening down these dynamics and linguistic myths has aimed to provide additional justification for the Alliance's ongoing engagement and repressive policies outside of the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO has thus become a neo-colonial instrument through which Western elites continue to impose their political will on the rest of the world. For example, in 2011 these elites were quick to celebrate the Alliance's intervention in Libya as a success. However, the NATO campaign caused a number of civilian deaths and destroyed the nation's infrastructure, throwing the country into anarchy and leaving Libyans without a functioning central government[55]. Similarly, as they pushed on with NATO's eastern enlargement regardless of alternative representations, U.S. decision-makers have endeavoured to represent Russia as a threat in order to reinvigorate the Alliance's European role and remilitarize international relations in Europe. Finally, also NATO's involvement in 2016 in the assistance to migrants in the Mediterranean perpetuates the logics of Western cultural hegemony, of binary pairs, and of the resulting hierarchic representation of the international system. This operation "securitizes" the phenomenon of migration and has not prevented many of the Alliance's member and partner countries, such as Turkey, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, from embracing policies that humiliate migrants and violate their fundamental rights. The conduct of Turkey and Macedonia is a case in point. Furthermore, similar discriminatory practices have long inspired Washington's policy towards Mexican migrants without triggering any reaction from the other members of NATO. Ultimately, in this logic, NATO owes its endurance to the perpetuation of a hierarchic, masculine, Euro- and Western-centric discourse, which denies alternative views

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[55] H. Campbell, *Global NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya: Lessons for Africa in the Forging of African Unity*, New York, 2013, pp. 179-254.

and narratives. Its ongoing relevance and "out-of area" projection is therefore best understood as tools of Western arrogance rather than expression of the Alliance's liberal and democratic character.

Neo-Marxism: NATO as a club of "core States"

Neo-Marxist theory of International Relations postulates that economic and political activity are fundamentally intertwined. Economics is the basis of politics and the core activity of production also shapes the way in which human beings understand and reproduce the meaning of existence. As such, State policy is driven by the economic interests of the ruling economic elites, while conflict is a means toward further capitalist accumulation and the perpetuation of proletarian exploitation[56]. After the end of the Cold War, Neo-Marxist scholars were puzzled by the internal implosion of the Soviet system. Nonetheless, they excluded that the crisis of the socialist regimes would eliminate the contradictions of the capitalistic organization of economic production. By contrast, they viewed the Soviet bloc's collapse as a consequence of Western aggressive economic and rearmament policies. In the early 1980s the U.S. considerably increased its defence spending and together with the other NATO's members imposed heavy sanctions against the USSR and some of its satellite States with the aim of bringing about the collapse of the Soviet system. This external pressure had undermined Soviet economy and those of other socialist States, leading their leaders to divert resources from internal savings and from the production of civilian goods and services.

Nonetheless, in the Neo-Marxist view, the collapse of Soviet style planned economies did not eliminate the contradictions of the Western capitalistic system. By contrast, at the Cold War's end Neo-Marxist scholars predicted that the capitalist economies would now spread conflict from the core of the international system to the periphery, embrace expansionist and imperialist policies to acquire new markets, fill the power vacuum left by the Soviet bloc's collapse, and divert public attention from inadequate domestic investment and

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[56] V. Kubalkova – A. Cruickshank, *Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations*, London-Boston, 1980.

reforms and stagnant economic growth in their own countries[57]. In this perspective, NATO's post-Cold War trajectory has more to do with economic dynamics and the exploitation of the periphery than with alliance theory and balance of power logics. Neither can NATO be understood as the product of the Western identity, or with an enterprise bent on the promotion of individual freedoms. The Alliance is not an independent agent but a tool of the imperialist ruling classes. Hence, its post-Cold War survival is accounted for by the interest of the elites in the capitalistic States to perpetuate a hierarchic system, continue the exploitation of the periphery, and enforce and project their power. Capitalistic elites use NATO's military and financial capacities as a tool to seize as much territory and resources in order to increase accumulation, acquire new markets, and suffocate alternative forms of economic organizations and representations of development[58].

For Marxist scholars, NATO's intervention in the Balkans and eastern enlargement during the 1990s epitomized the Alliance's imperialistic ambitions after the end of the Cold War. First, in the early 1990s NATO's member States conducted military operations against the armed forces of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (SRY) in Bosnia. Then in 1999 they engaged in an intense bombing campaign against the SRY without a formal endorsement from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). These military enterprises and NATO's eastern expansion benefited the U.S. military-industrial complex, while distracting public opinion in the Alliance's member States from the contradictions of the capitalistic system and from the decay of Western economies. They also drained resources away from other forms of direct investments in NATO's members and applicant countries with negative effects on economic growth and the distribution of wealth. For Marxist scholars also NATO's eastern expansion and the U.S. proclaimed "War on Terror" after 9/11 were motivated by the same logic. Calls for enlargement and for the fight against transnational terrorism has provided the Alliance with a justification to boost investments in the defence sectors, conduct extensive military campaigns away from the Euro-Atlantic area, pursue regime change, and enforce capitalistic influence on the periphery.

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[57] J.S. Levy, *Domestic Politics and War. The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 79-99.

[58] A. Gamble, *Marxism after Communism: beyond Realism and Historicism*, "Review of International Studies", vol. 25 (1999), pp. 127-44.

Hence, the perpetuation of the Alliance after the end of the Cold War only confirms the expansive nature and contradictions of the capitalist system, increasing insecurity and conflict and feeding the resentment of the periphery, rather than projecting stability[59].

Since its inception in 1949, NATO was driven by the interests of U.S. capitalistic elites and of the military-industrial complex. In this logic there is significant continuity between the Cold War and post-Cold War dynamics that have shaped the Alliance. Article 2 of the Washington treaty reflected an early American interest in establishing a transatlantic economic area that would allow the free flow of U.S. investments, goods, and services towards the other members of the Alliance. In the aftermath of the creation of the European Economic Communities in the late 1950s, Washington called for the creation of an open Atlantic Community, fearing that some European countries might try to re-introduce protectionist policies, exclude the United States from the European markets, and establish preferential trade regimes with their former colonies in Africa and Asia. After the end of the East-West division, the Americans presented the Europeans with a blueprint for a Transatlantic Free Trade Area. These proposals were followed by the drafting of a treaty for a Transatlantic Trade and Economic Partnership, which, in the Neo-Marxist view, benefits North American corporations and would allow their goods and investments unrestricted access to European markets.

Unlike the realist and liberal research paradigms suggest, in this view NATO is neither a mere defensive military alliance nor a community among like-minded and liberal-democratic States. It is a tool of the ruling and imperialistic classes in the core capitalistic States. NATO is therefore best understood as a "Club of core States" rather than a "Democratic club" and a vehicle of Western elites for capitalistic accumulation, territorial control, repression, and suffocation of alternative forms of political organization, economic production, and development[60]. Exploitation of the periphery rather than systemic, utilitarian, or identity dynamics are the distinguishing features of its policy. Its "out of area" engagement in the early 1990s, enlargement to former Soviet bloc States, and involvement in the

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[59] R. Knox, *Civilizing interventions? Race, war and international law*, "Cambridge Review of International Affairs", vol. 26, n. 1, pp. 111-132.

[60] A. Gamble, *Marxism after Communism: beyond Realism and Historicism*, "Review of International Studies", vol. 25 (1999), pp. 127-44.

U.S. led "War on Terror" after 9/11 have all been driven by the same imperialistic agenda. More specifically, they are the brainchild of core capitalistic elites, the interests of which are represented by a transnational military-industrial complex that is rooted in the U.S. and influences policies in the other NATO's member States. American demands on its allies for biggest defence investments and NATO's decision to set a benchmark of 2% of the GDP of its member States for defence expenditures clearly reflect this logic. The same is true for Washington's calls in the early 2000s for the establishment of Global Partnerships by the Alliance with the U.S. non-European allies and for a Global NATO. For Neo-Marxist scholars, this project reflects the capitalistic elite's attempt to use the events of 9/11 as justification for reinforcing NATO's character as a global class alliance. Hence, it is expression of the attempt to reinvigorate the imperialistic policies that NATO itself has been serving since its inception in 1949, by including into the Alliance other capitalistic core States outside of the Euro-Atlantic area[61].

Ultimately, in the Neo-Marxist view, NATO remains a byproduct of the capitalistic system of economic production and therefore a source of conflict, exploitation, insecurity, and instability. Its policies are a manifestation of the expansive nature and contradictions of the capitalistic system. They have destabilized Europe and fueled global insecurity, continuing to cause resentment and triggering resistance in the periphery and within the Alliance's member States. To undermine the Alliance and the logic that secures its endurance remains therefore a primary concern of Neo-Marxist scholarship and of the transnational working classes.

Conclusions

This paper has reviewed the contribution of contending analytical perspectives in the study of International Relations to the debate on NATO's post-Cold War and post 9/11 evolution. Whereas realist analyses have cast doubts about the Alliance's ongoing relevance and effectiveness, liberal and constructivist accounts have identified in

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[61] G. Dempsey – S. Rizopoulos, *Alternatives to a NATO-dominated Balkans*, in T.G. Carpenter (ed.), *NATO's Empty Victory: A Postmortem on the Balkan War*, Washington, DC, 1999, pp. 139-54.

NATO's functional and institutional adaptability and in the Alliance's democratic character the variables behind its endurance and ongoing significance. By contrast, Neo-Marxist and post-positivist analyses have provided a critical evaluation of the Alliance's ongoing role, viewing it as expression of Western hegemonic elites, which use NATO as a tool to subjugate the periphery, securitize policy areas, and suffocate alternative representations. Its post-Cold War trajectory, from intervention in peacekeeping operations to enlargement and involvement in the War on Terror after 9/11, reflects these logics. In these critical views, rather than consolidating security and spreading liberal and democratic values, NATO has become a justification and an instrument for Western aggressive policies. The Alliance is also responsible for the resurgence of tension in relations between the West and Russia and for the interethnic conflicts that have exploded in the post-colonial periphery. More than two decades since the Cold War's end this debate is still raging. NATO has defied realist odds and retained a role in the post-Cold War and post 9/11 international system: the significance, implications, and consequences of its endurance remain, however, a matter for debate for historians and political scientists alike.

I *Quaderni* nascono per ospitare atti e testi derivanti dalle iniziative promosse dal Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, nonché saggi e articoli dei suoi Docenti e Ricercatori, dei loro collaboratori a tutti i livelli e di autori esterni.

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In copertina: Martin Waldseemüller (1470 ca.-post 1522), *Mappa della terra*, 1507. Edito a Saint-Die, Lorena, attualmente alla Staatsbibliothek di Berlino - © Foto Scala Firenze. *La mappa disegnata nel 1507 dal cartografo tedesco Martin Waldseemüller, la prima nella quale il Nuovo Continente scoperto da Cristoforo Colombo è denominato "America" e dichiarata nel 2005 dall'UNESCO "Memoria del mondo", è stata scelta come immagine caratterizzante dell'identità del Dipartimento, le cui aree scientifiche hanno tutte una forte dimensione internazionalistica.*

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