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**Does the Rise of Illiberal Allies Matter for the Durability of the NATO Alliance?  
Theory Testing Liberal and Realist Perspectives to the Cases of Poland and Turkey**

MA Thesis

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Tartu 2021

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## **Abstract**

Can illiberalism lead to problems for the durability of NATO? The objective of this thesis is to prove that illiberal states do not disrupt alliances, particularly the NATO alliance. I will compare competing hypotheses of alliance theory: the liberal explanation against the realist explanation. The hypothesis of this paper is that realist theory provides a better explanation to prove that alliances are not affected by illiberal states as long as they contribute to the security of the alliance. In order to investigate, I will conduct research through comparative case-based studies that analyze Polish and Turkish engagement with NATO. By investigating these relationships, I will find that the realist theory is better supported to these case states. In conclusion, alliances will endure because small states cannot secure themselves.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AK Parti / AKP	Justice and Development Party (Turkey)
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PiS	Law and Justice Party (Poland)
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YPG	People's Protection Units / People's Defense Units

## **Introduction**

The rise of the elections of more populist and illiberal political parties around the world has recently sparked debate on the workings of these new governments and how they are interacting with more established governments. This rapid increase of newly formed populist governments has the potential to majorly disrupt the status quo of international relations. Concerns are increasingly being raised across states and peoples due to the populist rhetoric and new government actions such as threatening and shaking up existing alliances, impeding state elections, and thereby causing the obstruction of liberties. These concerns call into question what effects such populist states may have on their existing alliances. Will this new form of government lead to the diminishment of an existing alliance or will it bring about no ill effects?

States that are involved in military alliances similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are generally not concerned with the specific political trends of another member deferring from the overall consensus of the alliance. This is due, in part, to the alliance's external security concerns collectively outweighing the norms and values of each individual member state. As states are much weaker on their own for a multitude of reasons, it is beneficial for a state to join or form an alliance in order to share the burden of protecting against outside security threats. As such, states join alliances in order to ensure the improvement upon their own state security. Ties to an alliance are maintained by the nature of each state involved being primarily concerned with maintaining continuous security provided only by the alliance. If a member state breaks away due to a political issue that conflicts with the alliance, for example, the alliance itself becomes weaker and loses some security along with the state. The alliance becomes more vulnerable and security threats are increased as a result of this loss. Considering these factors, it would be unadvantageous for NATO to lose its member states and, in turn, security over varying political values. States themselves are unwilling to risk the loss of other alliance members over non-security issues. Due to the symbiotic nature of an alliance such as NATO, each member state involved may retain their individual identity while simultaneously benefiting from the overall security that NATO provides.

With populism becoming increasingly prevalent across the world, new and even established governments are becoming motivated to induce changes in their state's norms and values that more closely align with their citizens' change in ideals. This populist movement comes from 'the people' and has been based upon a variety of lines with the major movements rallying around culture, class, race, or nationalities. These populist movements have generally taken the stance that the established governments they had been under were run by the 'elites' or the 'establishment', consisting of long-time government officials and mainstream media. The movement was based upon the logic that previous government had not been concerned with the concerns of ordinary citizens but with their own interests, including big-business corporations, migrants, and foreign states. Most new populist parties that have recently been elected had campaigned under the promises to fix these issues that 'the people' want resolved. However, in many circumstances these fixes only concern the populist majority of a state and not the minority, which can lead to a loss of state representation for groups. More extreme or longer serving populist governments can even lead to the loss of civil rights and liberties of the people.

Due to these societal transformations, states are becoming progressively more illiberal. As a result of this rapid rise in populism, we have seen conflicting views on major issues, especially those involving immigration and security. These controversies are significant focal points for these newly established populist governments. As many of these states are intertwined through existing alliances and treaties, the question persists if members will remain in their current alliances or decide to withdraw due to political or economic differences. NATO has generally been made up of democratic or liberal states and outwardly promotes democracy, currently having only a few emerging illiberal members. With these differences in mind, will illiberalism have a negative impact on the durability of NATO alliances?

The objective of this thesis is to illustrate that illiberal states will not have a negative effect on NATO's durability. In order to test this hypothesis, I will investigate alliance theory through both liberal and illiberal perspectives. I will analyze whether the political effect of the more illiberal alliance members Turkey and Poland on NATO validates one perspective



of alliance theory more than the other. To achieve this, this paper will use a comparative hypothesis research design using six focal points of alliance theory perspectives to the states' relations to NATO. This comparison will be based on the current illiberalist governments of the respective states of Poland's Law and Justice party and Turkey's Justice and Development Party. These comparisons are meant to provide evidence as to which theory provides a consistent explanation to these cases. This information will contribute evidence to which theory is better supported in the cases that will either confirm or deny my hypothesis that illiberal states such as Poland and Turkey will not have a negative effect on NATO's durability.

This work in studying the outliers of the NATO alliance is relevant, as these respective states are distancing themselves politically. Poland and Turkey, along with other NATO member states, have mixed concerns over security within the alliance. This topic of NATO members withdrawing their involvement within the alliance along with the topic of the United States making veiled threats about terminating their financial support to NATO were major talking points for politicians during recent elections in Europe. These instances coming into play could have a tremendous implication for NATO and its other members and would play into the scenario of other states leaving due to security or financial issues as well. By researching the effects of illiberalism on alliances, a conclusion can be drawn about how likely such a diplomatic change in the NATO alliance would be. This research will aid in demonstrating how alliances are maintained even through adversities such as these.

This thesis is structured into four chapters. Chapter 1, Liberal and Realist Alliance Theory. This chapter will cover the meaning of what makes a state 'illiberal' in addition to examining the modern scholarly definitions of both liberal and realist alliance theories. Along with the origins of both theories, this paper will cover the main aspects that frame both liberal and realist perspectives. Chapter 2, Research Design. This chapter will cover the research design that will be used. This paper will be using a comparative hypothesis research design with three main focal points of each perspective of alliance theory to compare the actions of both Poland and Turkey toward NATO. It will test if one theory

provides a more consistent explanation regarding both states. Chapter 3, Diplomacy in NATO/Theory Testing. Chapter three will cover the background of Poland and Turkey's connections to NATO to better understand the evolution of each state in regard to the NATO alliance. Along with this examination, Chapter 3 will be testing the three main focal points of each theory's perspective regarding both states for a comparison. Chapter 4, Illiberal Allies and NATO Durability in Comparative Perspective. This chapter will cover the findings of Chapter 3 and will compare these findings against the original hypothesis to test and understand if alliance durability in NATO would be affected by illiberal states.

## **Chapter 1: Liberal and Realist Alliance Theory**

### **1.1 Liberal vs Illiberal States**

Liberalism, modernly known as liberal democracy, is a political doctrine based on “not only free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property” (Zakaria 1997, p. 22). This particular ideology movement came about during the Age of Enlightenment during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when citizens wanted to replace the status quo of monarchies with representative democracies and benefit from the individual freedoms that came with them. Under a representative democracy, the elected government would use its authority to implement change by establishing laws and using other means to ensure a person’s right to life and liberties. The government’s role here is considered a ‘necessary evil’ as Thomas Paine describes it in his work *Common Sense*, as it can pose as a threat to individual liberty if taken too far by the authorities in charge. “Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil in its worst state an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries by a government, which we might expect in a country without government, our calamities is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer!” (Paine 1776, p. 4). In order to prevent this corruption from happening, the governments should be continuously regulated by the people so that no one party or leader is in a position of power for a prolonged period of time. This ensures that no one individual is representing the population as a whole for too long, thereby preventing the formation of tyranny. Term limits protect the essence of liberalism by limiting how much weight a single person holds over a population that enjoys individual rights brought about by liberal democracy. This liberal system also promotes economic freedom and growth through a laissez-faire economic system in which there is minimal government interference in the economic affairs of its citizens. This economic freedom has the added benefit of helping to ensure the prevention of tyranny; by keeping citizens’ taxes low, an abundance of government spending is prevented and keeps the power of the government in check. With the possibility of an abundance of wealth, governments are likely to issue reforms or policies that are particular to their government

and not necessarily concerned with the future of the state. More extreme versions of such issues involve getting into small wars or conflicts by the government wanting to promote its agenda by helping another state or peoples. Such acts have no real long-term benefits that concern the state immediately and are rather used to promote the government's do-gooding for domestic approval. The goals of the modern liberal governments, aside from protecting and ensuring freedoms, mainly concern the general welfare of its citizens in order to help eliminate poverty, eradicate disease, and fight against discrimination. This is commonly achieved through international organizations and non-governmental institutions that help keep the government from becoming solely a welfare-state. However, in times of crisis the state more often than not steps in to provide such services to the people. Liberalism is also wary of war and other major conflicts, as these issues have the potential to lead states to a circumstantial buildup of military power that can be difficult for a ruling party in government to rescind. It can be challenging to rescind this military buildup because of the international and domestic influence it can bring from demonstrating such military might. Such a militaristic state can lead to the oppression against the state's citizens that do not agree with those in power. For this reason, liberal democracies tend to keep civilian control over their militaries to help prevent such military power from being used for political gain. Instead of waging war for influence, control, or resources, liberal democracies would rather use diplomacy in order to get what they want. This soft power approach promotes state to state interactions and cooperation that can promote prosperity between states and peoples. By promoting such interaction and integration between states, the goal of liberalism is to eliminate the mistrust between states in order to minimize conflict. Kydd explains the rationale behind international conflict of a 'false start' nature in *Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation*. "At the heart of the security dilemma is mistrust, a fear that the other side is malevolently inclined and bound to exploit one's cooperation rather than reciprocate it. The Cold War, in particular, is often blamed on mistrust between the United States and the Soviet Union. Such explanations of conflict have a tragic character to them. States are held fundamentally willing to live in peace with each other if the other side is also willing, but, out of a false conviction that the other side is not, they take offensive measures and end up in conflict." (Kydd 2000, p. 325) By continual

cooperation through state-to-state interaction or through international organizations, states will begin to disregard their mistrust for states that are in cooperation with them, therefore promoting peaceful cooperation rather than conflict in order to achieve their goals. This mutual trust between states is how liberalism promotes democracy and peacefully achieves the goals between governments and between the people they represent.

Illiberalism, or an illiberal democracy, is a manifestation of liberalism. Chatterji discusses the evolution of illiberalism in a recent article. He argues that illiberalism is an extension of democracy, not a rejection of it. “This political illiberalism does not disavow democracy; rather it proposes the idea of an illiberal democracy, however bizarre it may sound. As the economic dominance of the West has come to a decline so has the attraction for its culture and its political ideas. Even in the western Europe, the cradle of liberal democracy, illiberal authoritarian, xenophobic populist movements have grown strong” (Chatterji 2020, p. 2). Chatterji is suggesting that a democracy does not necessarily have to be liberal, and he goes on to provide examples of European countries that have shifted away from their previously liberal ideals and towards an illiberal democracy. Although there are elections within an illiberal democracy, they are disputable and can be difficult for citizens to validate, as civil liberties can be deprived by the government. Illiberal democracies can derive from liberal democracies but, due to agendas or uncertain times, slowly evolve into demonstrating illiberal tendencies. “Democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been reelected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms” (Zakaria 1997, p. 22). Populism has been a major factor in the rise of illiberalism from the liberal sphere as populism stems from the democratic nature of voting where the majority wins. With the current times of the political left and right divide, ease of information, media manipulation, and migration heavily influencing public politics, populist leaders have promoted such illiberal tendencies and have won election victories using that platform which leads the state more and more into an illiberal democracy. “Signaling a process of political change, the rise of the nationalist and nativist radical right is increasingly fueling brazen attacks on the various institutions, rights and values undergirding constitutional liberalism across the West. Amongst others, these include attacks on checks and balances, where legislatures and

judiciaries are subject to power-hungry executive branches, along with wider societal counterpowers, including independent academia and media. To exercise ‘the will of the people,’ moreover, individual basic rights, including free speech and association, and related civil, human and minority rights, are equally prone to attacks. Admittedly, this development resembles general populist attacks on liberal democracy, whereby notions of popular sovereignty and democracy are accepted, provided they are understood as majoritarian power, whilst constitutionalism and liberal rights are rejected” (Hendrikse 2018, p. 170). These attacks on government institutions by populist parties can lead to the diminishment of civil rights and liberties for a state’s citizens as a whole. It can be difficult for the people to overturn or reform changes through legal democratic procedures if the power for such change is now placed at the will of the government. Illiberalism is also an interesting phenomenon as it is not just limited to describing liberal states that are becoming illiberal; authoritarian states that are either transitioning into democracies or establishing some pro-democratic policies demonstrate illiberalism in order to help them avoid a number of difficulties. These difficulties include further criticisms, sanctions, and investigations from other states or international organizations such as the United Nations. This allows the leadership in power to use both ideologies, liberal and illiberal, to get the best position for their government in both international and domestic circumstances. With such a position these states can achieve international cooperation on many issues and simultaneously continue to cut civil liberties of their citizens, all the while receiving little international backlash. The transition to or establishment of just enough neoliberalist policies may allow persons in power to keep their influence over the state. International dissidence can be limited in situations such as this, as the state is in this convenient ‘transition’ period. However, the intent of the respective state is not to fully transition but is a guise to maintain and secure the leadership positions of the people in power within the state and therefore the international community.

## 1.2 Alliance Theory

Alliance theory pertains to the reasoning behind states' motivations to form or join alliances. Such reasonings can be associated with different perspectives of alliance theory: liberal or realist perspectives. A liberal approach to alliance theory is affiliated to a more peaceful and diplomatic view of security. This approach involves a state looking to join an alliance with a similar political ideology and cooperating with other states through more economic or political circumstances. This liberal approach to achieving security calls for the members of the alliance to be interdependent on each other in a number of respects, such as politically or economically, so that their ties cannot be broken easily. It ensures, in a peaceful way, that it would be beneficial for all parties to stay within the alliance. The realist perspective of alliance theory takes a more militaristic approach. States essentially use their alliance with other states to protect themselves from the most critical risks or threats that the state may face. By sizing up potential threats to their state, a state will look for an alliance with other states that give them the best chance to survive potential conflicts. Such threats the individual states and alliances are securing themselves for in this realist sense are geopolitical threats. Political threats can be scrutinized based upon the state's or alliance's geographical location, the availability of natural resources, military capabilities, proximity to adversary states, and the number of states that are cooperating within the alliance.

By its core tasks and principles, the NATO alliance identifies itself as a political and defensive military alliance. By this, NATO uses its position to further promote both political ideologies to safeguard its members and maintain international stability. "NATO member states form a unique community of values, committed to the principles of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Alliance is firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to the Washington Treaty, which affirms the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security" (NATO 2010, p. 6). NATO also uses the military capabilities and collective defense policies it has in place to secure its borders and to deter against any threats that could potentially disrupt international security. "NATO

members will always assist each other against attack, in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. That commitment remains firm and binding. NATO will deter and defend against any threat of aggression, and against emerging security challenges where they threaten the fundamental security of individual Allies or the Alliance as a whole” (NATO 2010, p. 7). The following sections will describe both liberal and realist perspectives of alliance theory and will passively exhibit how both pertain to NATO, displaying how each could be argued to be the dominant theory regarding the NATO alliance.

### **Liberal Theory**

The liberal perspective to alliance theory regards the more theoretical aspects of an alliance. The main idea of the liberal perspective focuses on the political structures of the members of the alliance. If the members’ political structures are similar throughout the alliance, then the alliance should have stability and be able to survive. This cohesiveness is dependent on each member of the alliance having a political connection through their similar ideologies and shared values. This connection through these shared values and ideologies also creates trust within the alliance. It is beneficial for each state of the alliance to cooperate when each liberal state thinks and acts in a similar manner. “The assumption of U.S. policy makers that democracies are significantly less likely to fight each other has received strong support from international relations scholarship... the spread of democracy offers other benefits: Democracies engage in higher levels of trade with each other, democratic governments are less likely to violate the human rights of or commit genocide against their populations, and democracies are less likely to experience famine. NATO enlargement would thus be worth continuing if it could spread democracy in Eastern Europe” (Reiter 2001, p. 46). Each member trusts the actions of the other members to be in the interest of the alliance, as they are each working towards a common goal or for the common good of the alliance. These independent actions from members toward the common interests of the alliance increase the strength of the alliance and prevent stagnation. Action from individual members is encouraged, as members do not want to be



seen in comparison to the others as an inadequate member of the alliance that does not do its fair share in terms of political progress. “The Atlantic Alliance, in contrast, was intended to promote cooperation among its members that would be both intensive and extensive, as symbolized by the commitment in Article 3 to “continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid” and the inclusion of Article 2 with its provisions for cooperation in nonmilitary endeavors. Policy coordination among the members of pre-1939 alliances was often limited to fighting separate against the same foe. The Atlantic Alliance, in contrast, was formed by members sharing a common heritage, common values, and common interests, backed by a willingness to pool their resources in peacetime as well as wartime for the sake of defending and advancing those common values and interests” (Thies 2009, p. 288). As NATO encompasses many different aspects in its alliance through military affairs or political proceedings, members do not have to undertake the same tasks. A diverse composition of bureaucratic tasks allows for a wider variety of alliance interests to be looked after. If each state is engaged in their individual processes to better the alliance as a whole, the alliance will not only remain, but be strengthened and more prepared for potential conflicts as a result.

In terms of the perspective of liberal alliance theory, NATO was founded and has continually evolved from the post-World War II period. This was the perfect time to restructure the international system; this period at the end of the war made it easier for the powers left standing to influence the remaining states, as the war had devastated economies and the states themselves. It was easier for the western European states to integrate within this new alliance as most of the western states had similar ideologies and had already been allied during World War II. As Europe was politically and economically devastated from the war, many states were in need of resources and the immediate security that such an alliance would bring. This allowed the founder states of NATO to establish a security apparatus while also beginning to promote their norms and values to the new members. As these newly joined member states were recovering, rebuilding or remodeling their governments after the events of World War II, the NATO alliance had a unique opportunity to help rebuild and reshape these governments in a way that would be beneficial to both the individual state and to the alliance. The NATO alliance gave these member states the

ability to focus their resources on a variety of other needed areas during the post-war period while maintaining their security through burden sharing. “The ideological cleavage that characterized the early Cold War meant that the democratic states were more conscious of ideals and goals held in common than ever before, while the political popularity of the welfare state provided their leaders with powerful incentives to organize new forms of cooperation that would free up resources that might otherwise be spent on defense for more politically appealing uses” (Thies 2009, p. 124). This burden sharing allowed members to work to advance other areas for their state that would, in turn, benefit the rest of the alliance for the common good. “NATO members, in contrast, not only pooled their resources within the framework of NATO’s unified military commands, they encouraged their allies to grow stronger so they could do more for the common good” (Thies 2009, p. 135). The larger state members also pushed the smaller state members to develop areas in order to help the alliance’s common interest and to help equalize the burden shared on the larger states. For example, by increasing their own individual military capabilities, the smaller states could reduce their dependence on the larger states’ military while overall increasing NATO’s own capabilities.

The Cold War was a turning point for the NATO alliance, as member states were now ideologically aligned against threats of a political and military nature from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This bipolar landscape of the Cold War set the tone for how the alliance operated and grew. As the alliance had been sharing and promoting their democratic ideology along with their security, it had been ensured that NATO member states would not be threatening to each other and could therefore focus efforts and resources on opposing their rivals during the Cold War. The alliance could now look to influence other regions to prevent the spread of their rival’s ideologies all while promoting their own views. “Since they no longer viewed each other as rivals in a struggle for preeminence, the members of what became the Atlantic Alliance sought to encourage rather than frustrate each other’s plans to regain their military strength, to increase rather than restrict the power of their allies, and to push each other forward rather than hold each other back... In effect, bipolarity and the ideological split between east and west transformed NATO members from long-term rivals who formerly had sought to limit each

other's power and thwart each other's schemes into long-term partners who now encouraged each other to do more for the collective effort. Allies still tried to use each other, but the reasons why and the manner in which they did so changed profoundly over time" (Thies 2009, p. 124). As NATO members were generally democratic, it was an easy transition to rely on and trust the other democratic state members. This allowed the alliance to maintain its course, especially as NATO's rival was politically opposite from them. "NATO members achieved an unprecedented degree of integration and durability because, as liberal democracies, they instinctively sought the cooperation and approval of other liberal democratic states" (Thies 2009, p. 124). It was natural for the members of NATO to assemble, not only because their democratic values aligned but also because they shared a common threat.

After the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and as newly freed post-Soviet states began petitioning for membership, it was beneficial for NATO, with their ideological goals in mind, to accept these states. This is due to the fact that they were all transitioning from communist systems to independent democratic states. Therefore, it was in NATO's best interests to accept and guide these states to further promote the alliance's democratic ideology throughout the post-Soviet space. This would also help NATO to grow stronger as new member states also infused more resources and support into the alliance. In addition to this, promoting democratic values in these post-Soviet regions could help to reduce any future threats from any non-democratic entities. Thereby, even if a state was not a NATO member it would still be influenced by the members through different aspects of the alliance. These aspects include diplomatic or security ties and therefore shared connections to NATO. Most of these states are thereby known as NATO partner states. Although they are not official NATO members, they cooperate with NATO through various initiatives or directly with NATO due to a shared interest. These partner states include Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates from the initiatives of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Having these ties with such international organizations helps NATO to broaden its horizons and have the ability to establish relations and to promote its influence over non-aligned states.

In a military alliance such as NATO, each member is granted security by the collective. However, each individual member must accept that they are accountable for both their own actions and the actions of other members. As states generally want to avoid getting involved in or initiating a war themselves, they especially want to avoid getting dragged into the war of another member state. This desire for states to avoid war keeps alliances honest with each other through cooperation and dialogue. This open dialogue, in turn, builds trust between members. It gives an incentive as to not act rashly and to not inadvertently draw the whole alliance into a state-specific conflict. As NATO has been cooperating alongside each other for, in some cases, decades, NATO has been continuously promoting a collective ideology and sharing and achieving goals since its establishment. It has created a trust between members and an incentive to work towards the alliance rather than for their own agenda, which has helped to keep NATO from being involved in any major direct conflicts. NATO's collective ideology also prevents the separation of any members from the alliance. "NATO members do not push issues to the breaking point, do not deliberately provoke their partners in the hope that the latter could be saddled with the blame for the breakup, and do not conspire with outsiders to bring about a reversal of alliances" (Thies 2009, p. 130). The trust of the alliance must be continual as members of an alliance have contributions to NATO and are also aware of contributions made by other members. Thereby, members do not want themselves to be seen as a passive member by others, nor do they want to be contributing more than their fair share due to propping up any irresponsible members. This keeps members responsible to each other as they trust the other members to be pulling their weight and do not want to be the lesser member, which could harm their future position within the alliance.

Liberal theory would conclude that states that do not share ideals with others in the alliance will have negative effects on the alliance. Therefore, illiberal states acting on their own interests in such a liberal alliance will have negative consequences across the alliance as it disrupts the trust and collaboration with the other members. States that cannot be trusted to follow the same norms and values will promote dissidence within the alliance. This will have a domino effect, as states will begin to hold off on supporting other members if they are unsure that their cooperation in the present will be reciprocated in the future (Kydd

2000). This kind of effect would have massive implications and would likely quickly deteriorate any alliance.

### **Realist Theory**

The realist perspective to alliance theory concerns how states respond to potential external threats. The two main responses states have to threats in this theory are balancing and bandwagoning. In *The Origins of Alliances*, Walt simplifies the definitions of balancing and bandwagoning by stating the differences of alignment of a state participating in bandwagoning versus a state participating in balancing. As Walt puts it, “Balancing is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat; bandwagoning refers to alignment with the source of danger. Thus two distinct hypotheses about how states will select their alliance partners can be identified on the basis of whether the states ally against or with the principal external threat” (Walt 1987, p. 17). As the two options have vastly different outcomes for the security apparatus of states, it is important for how states act depending on their interests and situation. “In the simplest terms, if balancing is more common than bandwagoning, then states are more secure because aggressors will face combined opposition. Status quo states should therefore avoid provoking countervailing coalitions by eschewing threatening foreign and defense policies. But if bandwagoning is the dominant tendency, then security is scarce because aggression is rewarded” (Walt 1985, p. 4).

Balancing would increase a state’s security, as an alliance will generally not want to confront an opposing alliance that holds equal power. On the other hand, bandwagoning is not able to provide abundant security as powerful states tend to attract weaker bandwagoning states, thereby enforcing their own power and influence. This decreases the number of states in play, thus decreasing the amount of power available to the opposition (Walt 1987). Hereby, balancing is more common in the global security apparatus as states with global outreach are generally more powerful and are not overly concerned with other powers, but with other threats. Less powerful states are not focusing on global issues, but on their more immediate regional concerns to threats that tend to lead more to bandwagoning (Walt 1987).

Factors that can lead states to such alliance formations are aggregate powers, proximity of competing states, military capability, and aggressive intentions. Aggregate powers can be the cause of alliances forming, as these powers naturally have greater numbers involving manpower, natural resources, and technological advancements. These greater numbers that a state has can be seen as either a potential threat or possible ally from other states' perspectives (Walt 1985). The proximity of a powerful state to others is also considerably important, as states that are closer to such a power would inevitably be in the power state's sphere of influence while states farther away would not be threatened quite as much. A state's military capability will also lead states to alliance formations either to join the stronger state or join with many smaller states to equal the influence of the more powerful state. Similarly, aggressive states tend to lead to alliance formations, as states will feel threatened and act defensively to counter a state's aggression by forming an alliance with other similarly threatened states (Walt 1985).

### **Balancing**

Balancing is a more prevalent form of alliance theory than bandwagoning, as balancing helps keep threats and the alliances' power relatively similar to one another. It is in this manner that one alliance does not have a dominant control over the other. Balancing is also the more expected alignment formation because states do not want to be controlled in their alliances. Bandwagoning generally leads to a small state joining a larger state; the larger state is the member that tends to maintain the majority influence in the alliance. Balancing is used extensively by superpowers wanting to counter other superpowers in order to stop threats or try to limit a state from further expanding its influence. Two obvious examples of balancing are the United States and Russia during the Cold War. They were the more prominent members of their respective alliances, NATO and the USSR. At the same time, these two superpowers were spreading their influence on many states around the world while trying to limit the scope of the influence of others.

Balancing is also more correlated to stronger or more meaningful alliances. As superpower states attempt to counter and balance against other superpower states, the standoff will last some time and have a greater impact on the global order, giving opposing sides a meaningful alliance. Balancing is how NATO was established; in 1949, the United States and some western European states joined forces in order to organize against the Soviet Union. This long alliance has grown and has more significance than if the United States simply successfully defended western European states from the Soviet Union on its own at the time. “To the Alliance’s credit, in its first 40 years it succeeded in mounting a successful deterrent effort against Soviet attack, which ultimately resulted in the peaceful termination of the Cold War. And as a second, and less recognized achievement, NATO contributed to the end of the centuries long “civil war” within the West for European supremacy” (Warren 2010, p. 7). Not only did NATO prevent the USSR from expanding west, but it also prevented inter-European wars from occurring as they had so regularly done throughout European history. This alliance had given its members such a meaningful cause during the Cold War that it continued its use as a durable alliance even after the original threat that it had joined to defend against had passed.

### **Bandwagoning**

Being a more regional issue, bandwagoning tends to be used by small states in order to achieve security. Small states benefit and protect themselves by allying with the strongest state or alliance. Bandwagoning is likely to occur when a state either has no effective allies or has no allies at all within a close proximity and would no doubt be singled out by a stronger state (Walt 1987). This stronger state would almost always be threatening to the smaller state and would likely become aggressive to the small state if the smaller state could not offer any reasonable contributions to them. “Decisions to bandwagon show a low level of commitment and are relatively fragile. Indeed, one might say they are hardly alliances at all—just temporary responses to particular situations. The limited scope of most bandwagoning alliances reinforces the conclusion that they play a minor role in international politics” (Walt 1987, p. 152). In regard to this, it is assumed that these short-term alliances are not crucial to any actor besides the smaller bandwagoning state whose

only goal is to preserve itself. The best example of this short-term bandwagoning is Finland in their Continuation War, as they allied with Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union until the Moscow Peace Treaty was agreed upon. These bandwagoning alliances have little to no lasting ideological meaning for either state other than to avoid an attack or, in the smaller state's case, join in the hopes of sharing in the victory of the dominant power (Walt 1985). This being the case, bandwagoning is generally less prevalent during peacetime. However, bandwagoning can be put into practice whenever a state is uncomfortable with surrounding or geographically close states that are generally known to be aggressors.

Realist theory concerning the origins of the formation and expansion of NATO all stems from the Cold War period following World War II until 1991. As NATO and the West were concerned with the ever-expanding threat from the East, the USSR, most states that were admitted into the NATO alliance were admitted in order to balance against the Soviet Union up until the Soviet Union's official demise in December of 1991. The Cold War period was more complex as both sides, the East and the West, were at odds on multiple spectrums. First on the spectrum of discord involved military matters. Following World War II, both the East and the West had a residual buildup of military resources, the most threatening at the time being the state-of-the-art nuclear weapons. Militarily, both the East and West wanted the advantage of military superiority which they could achieve by expanding their respective alliance with nearby states. Second on the spectrum were the ideologies of both the East and West. The East was controlled by the communists, so they were attempting to influence other states to join their ideology in order to expand their world socialist system by force, in most cases. The West was decidedly against this communist system, as it was comprised of more liberal and capitalist states that wanted to expand the ideals of liberalism across the world. These goals were accomplished by both sides through the military power and the overarching threat that either side's nuclear arsenal posed. The main states of the East and West were the standing powers of World War II—the USA, UK, and Russia. Due to the fact that each of these states possessed nuclear weapons, neither side would attack the other directly in fear of mutually assured destruction. For this reason, both sides opted for political warfare and the use of proxy wars. These wars broke out across the globe with the Angolan Civil War, the Korean War,



and the Vietnam War being the most notorious. This interaction and coercion from both the East and West onto these distant third world states came in a variety of forms. These forms ranged from the deployment of troops and the supply of weapons to the support of authoritarian regimes across the world during this time period. These interactions from the East and West would expand the influence that the more powerful states had on the international system and would lead smaller states to join sides, if only for the time being, in order to ensure the survival of their states or government regimes during this period of uncertainty. “After all, the United States needed NATO only to maintain its superpower *status* in the competition with the Soviet Union, while Western Europe needed the United States to insure its *survival* during the cold war. In other words, there was a fundamental asymmetry in the degree to which both sides of the Atlantic were dependent on each other” (Risse-Kappen 1997, p.19).

Realist theory would conclude that, despite states’ opposition to foreign ideologies, states were more concerned with securing themselves against the opposing states’ military reach and capabilities. In order to secure themselves, they could bolster their own capabilities. However, as recent history has shown, this is sometimes near impossible for states to achieve with no wealth or resources. Therefore, states must seek out alliances in order to best secure their state’s position and ensure survival against conflicts for the immediate future. States have two options in terms of joining an alliance: they can either join alliances that are against the threat they perceive in order to balance the international order to deter an attack, or they can join with the state that they recognize as a threat. The goal of this alternative is to simply avoid an attack that the state could not possibly withstand otherwise. The state has the potential to survive in this alliance, but would no doubt be at the whim of the more powerful allied state.

## **Chapter 2: Research Design and Case Selection**

In order to test my hypothesis that illiberal states do not negatively affect an alliance, I will investigate alliance theory with both liberal and realist perspectives. In doing so, this will analyze whether Poland's and Turkey's illiberalist tendencies have an effect on the NATO alliance. This analysis should validate either the liberal or realist perspective of alliance theory to confirm or deny my hypothesis.

This investigation will be done through a comparative hypothesis research design. This design will concentrate on three focal points of liberal alliance theory and three focal points of realist alliance theory and will compare both perspectives to each state's diplomatic relation with NATO. This comparison will be based on the current illiberalist governments of the respective states, Poland's Law and Justice political party and Turkey's Justice and Development Party political party. These comparisons are meant to provide evidence as to which alliance theory's perspective maintains a consistent explanation that illiberalist governments and tendencies do not have negative effects toward the durability of the NATO alliance. This information will contribute evidence as to which theory is better supported in the cases that will either confirm or deny my hypothesis. The following six focal points will act to compare the components of the relationship between the states and NATO.

### **Liberal Perspective**

The liberal perspective of alliance theory takes into consideration that the states' shared ideologies and similar values make an alliance more cohesive. States want to keep and promote their ideals, and joining a like-minded alliance fulfills this goal. A like-minded state will be less inclined to leave an alliance that supports its ideology. Democratic states also want the approval of other democratic states as this approval shows support for and legitimizes their own democracy (Thies 2009). The liberal perspective of alliance theory

will be analyzed by comparing the aspects of more liberal tendencies – Renewal, Trust, and Operational Understanding – toward the case states of Poland and Turkey.

### 1. **Renewal**

This focal point will compare how the case states in this paper remain stable in terms of the continual democratic renewal that keeps their state aligned with the rest of the NATO members' ideologies and policies. This point of democratic renewal will cover the case states' governments, their governmental term limits, state elections, and the transition of governmental power. This will help determine how, domestically, as well as internationally, the state is akin to more liberal member states in the NATO alliance in regards to democratic stability.

### 2. **Trust**

This focal point will examine the trust in the alliance that concerns democratic liberal norms, shared values between democratic alliance members, and cooperation between alliance members. It will also discuss if liberal and illiberal states could share any of these values as they may or may not have similar governmental and non-governmental international organizations, or free civil institutions that make up the state's political society.

### 3. **Operational Understanding**

The operational understanding focal point will compare the leadership style of the illiberal case states to the more liberal NATO members. As democratic leaders share similar pathways to state leadership through campaigning and elections, they must have similar methods and techniques of leadership. Taking into consideration that democracies like to work together, how do liberal leaders deal with illiberal leaders and vice versa? Democratic leaders must deal with similar circumstances, such as foreign affairs, when in office. They must also avoid a negative public opinion in order to remain an elected official. Through

these understandings, this focal point can compare the operational methods of the case states with the methods of the more liberal members of NATO.

### **Realist perspective**

The realist perspective of alliance theory takes into consideration that states are more concerned with how to resolve their own security issues and that, to resolve these issues, they look for alliances that benefit them the most. They are not concerned with the dilemmas of other members that will not disrupt the alliance's security apparatus. "Because alliances are formed primarily to increase their members' security, anything that casts doubt on their ability to contribute to this goal will encourage the members to re-evaluate their position. Even if the level of threat is unchanged, an alliance will become more fragile if its members begin to doubt that the existing arrangements are sufficient to guarantee their security" (Walt 1997, p. 160) The realist theory involves the idea that the key to an alliance's durability is the requirement that states strive to maintain their own security. These security issues include a coherence against threats, maintaining alliance credibility, and maintaining hegemonic stability. The actions of Poland and Turkey towards NATO will be compared against these focal point issues in order to analyze if they are aiding or hindering the durability of the alliance against threats.

#### **1. Coherence Against Threats**

This point is to analyze whether external threats involving individual members of the alliance will keep these states united or cause them to separate in order to avoid conflict. An alliance that can unite around a cause, despite not every member necessarily being affected by it, can adequately prepare for and resolve any existing conflicts by force or deterrence. This unity between members demonstrates that the members of the alliance are committed to each other despite any differences in security. This point serves to compare the effects of both a lack of and an abundance of threats to the alliance in terms of keeping the alliance united and secure.

## 2. **Maintaining Alliance Credibility**

This point is to compare whether the case states hinder or have no negative effect on the credibility of the alliance. The credibility in this sense is the security objectives of the alliance and the alignment of these objectives with each member. This credibility also concerns the dependence of each state on the alliance. If a state is not willing or unable to contribute during a conflict, then the alliance has lost security. The same is true for the alliance's credibility; if the alliance does not assemble to aid a member should it be threatened or attacked, then it too has lost its credibility. Credibility must also be shared between members of the alliance. Each state must have the ability to voice its security concerns to the alliance. This consultation between members and the alliance is imperative to the integrity of the alliance, for if members do not feel like their concerns are comparable to the alliance, they could withdraw their membership which would weaken the alliance.

## 3. **Maintaining Hegemonic Stability**

This point of maintaining hegemonic stability in the alliance is to ensure that no one state has authority over another. This helps to make certain that states are not being taken advantage of by another member state for its own gain. Maintaining hegemonic stability also involves the concept that states are treated equally and that all standards are kept uniform across each state. This is also in place to prevent states from taking the burdens belonging to the alliance. No single state is totally dependent on the alliance either. These aspects of alliance stability will be used to compare the case states of this paper as well as to determine if the purported hegemonic stability of NATO keeps the members' relations at ease despite the illiberal tendencies the case states exhibit.

## **Expectations**

### **Poland**

I am expecting the findings on Poland to match at least the Renewal and Trust focal points of the liberal theory perspective as well as all three points of the realist theory perspective. Regarding the liberal perspective with Renewal, I expect Poland to match as Poland has a multiparty parliamentary democracy. There is a separation of powers with three branches of government and a presidential five-year term limit with a maximum of two terms. The strict term limits and a multiparty system present in Poland that can rotate different elected parties every few years leads to the conclusion that one political party could not easily or quickly take over government and change the laws of the state for its benefit. Other NATO member states have similar governmental structures and should have no issues with Poland's political structure regarding this point.

I expect the point of Trust to be validated in the testing as Poland is neighboring many other more liberal NATO members. NATO members, along with many other states, are also a part of the European Union (EU). These ties with NATO and the EU, both geographically and diplomatically, allow for the close contact between international organizations of both governmental and non-governmental origins. The cooperation required for these organizations and the interconnectedness that cooperation brings allows other member states to at least be aware of political change or policies that are taking place in Poland. Due to this awareness, any potential disagreements can be brought up with transparency within the EU or NATO.

As for Operational Understanding, I am reluctant to assume that Poland would stay the same, as it will most likely continue to become more illiberal in the future based upon its current governmental trends. However, the leadership has gotten along well with the United States which, as a prominent member of NATO, has some sway in the alliance.

In the realist perspective focal points, Coherence Against Threats will presumably be accepted. Poland has been very adamant regarding the alliance's eastern border security against the threats from Russia in the east. Poland has allowed for rotations of NATO

troops that are stationed within their borders and has recently made plans to build an additional NATO base for the United States to place troops. These plans were made in order to bolster future defense capabilities of NATO.

Maintaining Alliance Credibility should also be likely, as Poland is working with NATO and the United States particularly for their future NATO bases on Polish soil. However, Poland's interest in this additional security by way of NATO bases would seem to be more in favor of promoting strictly Polish or eastern European security rather than securing other NATO borders.

As for Maintaining Hegemonic Stability, I expect it to remain the same in Poland's case. Poland has no known plans to massively increase their military force or to acquire any further deterrents such as nuclear weapons. Therefore, the hegemonic balance of NATO is not likely to change dramatically anytime soon in Poland's case.

## **Turkey**

For the case of Turkey, it is plausible that one or two focal points of each theory will be accepted. Renewal, it is likely that the governmental stability will be present, but only in cases where the same party is in control. Turkey has a parliamentary republic but changes to the constitution under the Justice and Development Party have given the Executive branch greater power. There has been a recent divide between Turkey and NATO regarding democratic ideology and military policies. The Turkish government has cracked down against democratic trends by removing elected officials and consolidating power to the head of state. Due to Turkey's recent disregard for NATO's procedures and its actions promoting only the goals of the state, renewal will not validate Turkey's case.

I do not expect Turkey to be consistent with the point of Trust due to the recent discrepancies between NATO and Turkey regarding norms and institutions. With the crackdown on elected officials, the media, and the military leadership following the attempted coup d'état in 2016, that other alliance members will continue to trust Turkey to be partisan towards NATO and its democratic goals.

As for the point of Operational Understanding, there would be none or limited understanding between Turkey and NATO members. With the divide between NATO members, and Turkey's leadership style has been growing further apart, especially during and following the events of the Syrian civil war. These events showed the disparity between the goals of NATO members and the goals of Turkey relating to enemies, territory, and migrants. It would be difficult to argue that NATO and Turkey have operational understanding.

The realist perspectives point of Coherence Against Threats is likely to be supported. NATO has been involved in Turkey's regional sphere of influence for some time, from using Turkish bases during the Gulf War to cooperation opposing the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL/ISIS). From its geographic position in the Middle East, Turkey has been imperative in supporting US and NATO operations in conflict areas. Because of this, it is doubtful NATO would cut ties with Turkey anytime soon.

With Maintaining Alliance Credibility, this point would be difficult to oppose as Turkey has been involved in NATO strategic policy making during the recent conflicts in the Middle East and has not been left out of any strategies. Turkey has also invoked Article 4 – the most out of any alliance member, calling for the alliance to meet at their request to discuss the actions of NATO against a threat.

On the point of Maintaining Hegemonic Stability in the alliance, the geographic significance Turkey has in the alliance would argue that this gives them a greater position and greater leverage in the future within the alliance than other member states. However, this would only raise Turkey's significance in NATO on Middle East policies and actions and not over the alliance as a whole. Therefore, hegemonic stability should remain unchanged.



### **Chapter 3: Background of Poland's relation with NATO**

Due to its natural geographical location, Poland was strategically important during and after the World Wars. Being in the middle of the historically powerful states of Germany and Russia, Poland was constantly involved in conflict. This history of conflict left Poland to consistently look for ways to protect its territory (Walczak 2004). Toward the end of World War II, Poland ended up under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union that lasted until the official dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was under this influence that Poland became a member of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, commonly known as the Warsaw Pact, in 1955. The Warsaw Pact was a collective defense treaty between the Soviet Union and states of the Eastern Bloc socialist republics, which were also under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. The Warsaw Pact was established between these states in order to bolster their military capabilities after West Germany became a member of NATO. This pact was established in order to counter what the Soviet Union perceived as NATO expansion. The Soviet Union, wanting to limit the reach NATO could have in Europe and other areas, used these Warsaw Pact 'vassal' states in the Cold War to protect the Soviet Union while expanding its political influence to promote anti-west rhetoric to control these states. "First, the United Nation's system of sovereign and independent nation-states was not applied to countries like Poland, since like other Eastern and Central European nations, Poland was a part of the Iron Curtain and was subjected to the total domination of the Soviet Union, which held veto power within the UN Security Council; - Second, the delicate system of East-West Strategic balance, the United States and NATO on one hand and the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact on the other, made Poland a hostage, and its Eastern bloc affiliation ensured the stability of the whole configuration. Any attempt to change the Yalta-Potsdam territorial-political order would pose the threat of a conflict between the East and the West; - Third, the national level centered on the establishment of a Polish-German frontier, along the Oder-Nessie line. In the face of the ambiguous attitude represented by the western powers, it consigned Poland to "an eternal alliance" with the Soviet Union, her guarantor of security and territorial integrity" (Kuzniar 2002, p. 20). Because of its control by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Poland had been in constant opposition with NATO, by both militarily and political means, as a member of the

Warsaw Pact. This overwhelming control of the Warsaw Pact by the Soviet Union was the Soviet Union's international ideology of world communist expansion to create economic, trade, political, and common unity ties between communist nations (Walczak 2004). This forceful ideology from the Soviet Union gave no Warsaw Pact member any independency to make their own policies or initiatives until the end of the Cold War. It was not until the period of the Soviet Union's decline from 1989 to 1991 that the members of the Warsaw Pact overthrew their respective communist governments.

Following the withdrawal of Poland from the Warsaw Pact, Poland was left with new security dilemmas. Again, Poland was in the middle of two powerful states: A recently reunified Germany that was a member of NATO, a secure force for western Europe, and, to the east, Russia. Russia had had its own dilemmas during the period of Gorbachev and his perestroika reforms that many hardline communists within the political system did not appreciate. These hardline communists showed their discontent by opposing Gorbachev and attempting a coup d'état in 1991. This state of unsteadiness in Russia concerned many of the eastern bloc members, Poland included, regarding the possible future of Russian influence expansion.

Poland, along with other former east bloc members, worried of being caught by insecurities and isolated between major powers. These states looked for ways to integrate into the west and into NATO as they wanted to avoid being swept up by the Russian sphere of influence yet again. They felt that being under the influence of Russia would be dangerously similar to the oppression they had previously experienced under the Soviet Union. "Since Poland had been part of the Eastern bloc, Polish political elites feared that Russia, the Soviet successor state, would seek to keep Poland in its sphere of influence. As early as September 1989, Poland decided to pursue the policy of a "return to Europe." The shortest path would lead through Germany and continuing the reconciliation processes would be at the core of engagement. Consequently, after the Soviet collapse Poland began to see Russia as its main threat" (Zięba 2019, p. 197). However, NATO was slow to accept these former eastern bloc members as their governments and militaries had been in opposition to them (NATO) for around four decades. It was due to this long period of political strife that NATO was wary

of the potentially harmful intentions of these east bloc states (Walczak 2004). These concerns were valid as Poland had elected the former communist leader, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, to head its new government in 1989. This was similar to other eastern bloc states in which the established communist leaders transitioned into social democratic parties and were elected to high positions in their respective governments. Though this did not last for a long time, the transition period from these communist states to democratic ones was one of a few concerns that NATO had for eastern European states' accession into the west during this time. "First, in 1989-1991 NATO underwent an identity crisis as a military alliance being gradually deprived of its opponent in the form of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc. Second, transitional arrangements remained in force due to the fact that forces of the former USSR temporarily remained on the territory of the eastern Länder of the united Germany and on the territory of Poland and elsewhere in former Warsaw Pact (and Baltic) states. Third, the United States and its Allies tried not to irritate Russia with an excessively rapid eastward expansion of their multilateral structures. Fourth, the ethnic conflicts that broke out in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union destabilized the international situation and called for cooperation between the West and Russia. Fifth, Western elites were reluctant to perpetuate military blocs, as they believed in the concept of an era of democracy and peace, as put forward by liberal American political scientist Francis Fukuyama" (Zięba 2019, p. 198). As NATO had no major opposition after the Soviet Union's dissolution, there was little need for more allies during the 1990s. This period for eastern Europe was more concerned with the transition of governments and the development of the economy from the communist to the capitalist system.

When Poland was admitted into NATO in 1999, it instantly held a significance to the alliance through a geostrategic view. At the time, it bordered Russian allies in Belarus and Ukraine as well as Russia itself (Kaliningrad) and other non-aligned states, putting Poland at the forefront of NATO in the East (Zięba 2019). In the years following Poland's accession into NATO, NATO had expanded further east to the Baltics and south to Bulgaria. This expansion had also prompted Russia to act on balancing against NATO and had caused disputes in Georgia and Ukraine. Since then, Poland has been at the forefront of

NATO security due to its geographical position, hosting NATO exercises, bases, and security measures such as anti-missile shield technologies.

### **Background of Turkey's Relation to NATO**

Turkey was admitted as a member of NATO in 1952 for a multitude of reasons including its strategic location settled between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, its governments staunch anti-communist views at the time, and being a gateway to the Middle East. Furthermore, Turkey was brought into the alliance for the international peace-building process following World War II by the western states, primarily the United States. “The late 1940s and early 1950s were a time of great transition with old power balances erased after the Second World War and new realities emerging with rising superpowers and their global agendas. But, it was also a time of great vision—a vision that foresaw the gradual building of a liberal international order through the power of international institutions and the norms and values that were embedded in them. Therefore, bringing Turkey into the fold of a newly emergent transatlantic security community was not just the result of a shared perception of a common threat—a necessity of the moment—but it was also a wider acquiescence to an international normative order” (Aybet 2012, p. 1). By integrating Turkey into the alliance at this time, NATO expanded its security apparatus, helping to prevent the Soviet Union’s expansion into southeast Europe and the Middle East. The prevention of the Soviet Union’s expansion into the Middle East was more important, as the alliances’ intention was to facilitate cohesion from the vastly different cultures of the Middle East to the West.

Before becoming a NATO member, Turkey had been searching and preparing to join an international military alliance. Before being admitted into NATO and at the word of the United States getting Turkey fast-tracked into the alliance, Turkey enthusiastically allowed training, equipment, and weapons from NATO to be kept on Turkish territory. Turkey had been wary of communist insurrections and, although it had formal ties to the Soviet Union, Turkey was adamantly against its communist ideology. Turkey took the United States’

assurance of alliance admission seriously and was the second, after the United States, to answer the United Nations Security Council Resolution 82. This resolution was the demand United Nations for North Korea to end its invasion of South Korea. Turkey sent 5,000 troops to Korea to show that Turkey was committed to the principles that NATO was built on. The Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes stated, “It is only by way of a decision similar to ours, to be arrived at by other freedom loving nations, that acts of aggression can be prevented and world peace can be safe-guarded. A sincere attachment to the ideals of the United Nations requires a belief in this basic principle” (McGhee 1954, p. 623). This made it clear to NATO that Turkey was committed to becoming a member and would prove to be a productive member of the alliance during the alliance’s early stages.

Turkey’s role within NATO grew again in the late 1970s and 1980s after the fall of Mohammad Reza Shah from the Iranian Revolution. This revolution brought about the rise of anti-western sentiment in the Middle East. Being the regional power in the area, Turkey was also seen as an asset to NATO and could be used in roles other than combat operations in the region, such as peacebuilding (Aybet 2012). After the start of the Gulf War, Turkey was imperative to NATO as its proximity to the frontline allowed NATO bases to be used by the alliance to conduct operations into neighboring Iraq. In 2003, Turkey’s relations with NATO and its members began to deteriorate as Turkey refused to allow the United States to use the Incirlik Air Base during the invasion of Iraq. Later, in 2007, the United States denied Turkey’s request for support in dealing with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), which is deemed by many states as a terrorist group that operates in areas of Turkey and Iraq. Turkey had its own incursion against the PKK but was not supported by any NATO member, which damaged its relations among the members of the alliance (Aybet 2012).

Following the failed 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, relations between prominent NATO states and Turkey have been uneasy. NATO members have been questioning Turkey’s decision to purchase air defense missile systems from Russia. Such acquisitions of these systems will make Turkey more dependent on Russia than on NATO allies. The United States had even placed sanctions on Turkey for a short time to dispute Turkey’s relation

with Russia. Turkey's purchase of armaments from outside the alliance was meant to establish autonomy for Turkey so they would be less dependent on other states in the alliance. "The purchase that was intended to bring more autonomy to Turkey could paradoxically lead to a "dual dependence" on both Russia and NATO, defined by a vulnerability vis-à-vis Russia and an increasing need for assurances from NATO. This would be the exact opposite of the intended outcome" (Yegin 2019, p. 3). Furtherly, more recent disputes have come between the alliance on policies regarding NATO's goals in combating ISIL/ISIS and ending the Syrian civil war. "Unlike the United States, Turkey views the ISIS threat as secondary to the bigger, regional problems it faces. ISIS did not and does not impact the region directly, Turkish officials argue. The US-Kurdish Syrian Defense Forces alliance and its offshoot, including foreign fighters, are more directly Turkey's regional problem" (Beyoghlow 2020, p. 62). Furthermore, NATO and Turkey disagreed on the course of action to take during the 2020 Nagorno- Karabakh war. NATO called upon discourse to peacefully negotiate a resolution between Azerbaijan and Armenia along with each of their allies, and Turkey's blatant support of Azerbaijan by alleged military assistance did not follow NATO's more diplomatic course of action. By supporting Azerbaijan's recent victory of this conflict, Turkey has positioned itself as a growing regional power in the Caucasus gaining influence in Azerbaijan (Got 2020). This disparity between NATO member states' agendas and policies is showing a potential divide for future NATO policies.

## **Polish Diplomacy in NATO**

### **Theory Testing – Liberal Perspective**

#### **Renewal**

The president of Poland can be elected for up to two five-year terms. The President can also appoint a Prime Minister that must be confirmed by the lower house of the Polish Parliament, the Sejm. The Prime Minister has no term limits but must keep the support of the Sejm to hold office. In the Polish system, the Prime Minister is the executive power while the President's role is most associated with matters of defense and foreign policy. The 560 Polish Parliament members are elected to four-year terms. The Law and Justice Party has been in majority government and has held the presidential office, under Andrzej Duda, since 2015. President Duda has been elected to a second term in 2020, giving him five more years in office. The Law and Justice party also did well in the 2019 parliamentary elections in which they held the Sejm (lower house) but lost holding the majority of the Senate (upper house) by two seats. The party, however, still holds the most seats in the senate at 48. The party will hold this mostly majority government at least until 2023 when the next parliamentary elections will take place. With this information, it is safe to say that the people of Law and Justice leadership will be the ones who will deal with NATO – at least for the near future.

According to the Freedom House index, “Poland’s electoral framework and its implementation have generally ensured free and fair elections, though legal changes introduced in 2017–18 threaten to increase political control over election administration. Amendments to the electoral code signed by President Duda in January 2018 endangered the independence of the National Electoral Commission (PKW), which manages elections and oversees party finances, including the power to withhold state subsidies” (Freedom, Poland 2020, p. 3). There have also been multiple transitions of parties in power in Poland since the state’s transition to democracy in 1989. “The PiS victory in the 2015 elections ended two terms of governance by the PO, now in opposition. In the 2019 election, PiS won with the same slim majority in the Sejm, but lost control of the Senate. The

Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) returned to Parliament, while four parties—Razem (Together), Wiosna (Spring), Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość (Confederation Liberty and Independence), and Zieloni (the Green Party)—entered for the first time. However, opposition parties face potential long-term obstacles including propaganda by PiS-controlled public media and legal changes related to electoral administration” (Freedom, Poland 2020, p. 5). The elections in 2019 were the first to result in the majority government holding the Sejm and the oppositions controlling the Senate.

Voters in Poland are generally free from interference during their elections and all ethnic, religious, and other minority groups have full political rights. Election observers concluded that the elections were held in a professional and transparent manner with one of the few notable criticisms being that “The OSCE mission also noted that voters’ ability “to make an informed choice was undermined by a lack of impartiality in the media, especially the public broadcaster,” which the PiS had effectively transformed into a government mouthpiece during its previous term” (Freedom, Poland 2020, p. 3).

From this research and data that comes from Freedom Houses ‘Freedom in the World Scale,’ it is apparent that Poland would pass the point of renewal. Freedom House gave Poland the status of ‘Free’ in which it scaled 84/100. This score was broken down into Political Rights: 35/40 and Civil Liberties: 49/60.

## **Trust**

Civil liberties in Poland also score high within the Freedom House index. The Polish constitution guarantees the freedom of expression and forbids the act of censorship. The freedom of assembly is protected as well unless the assembly is of a large scale and goes against the beliefs of the government rallies or assemblies regarding LGBT rights. The media in Poland is generally privately owned as well as free and independent. There are state-run media broadcasters that support the government. The main public broadcaster has been accused of being a “mouthpiece” for the Law and Justice party, especially during the 2019 and 2020 elections.



The government has made attempts to control certain institutions, like the judiciary, in order for the ruling party to select judges. These attempts have been contested by opposing parties as well as the European Union. However, the government has essentially forced judges to resign and has replaced them with more persuadable party judges despite the objection of the opposing party. This blatant takeover of the judiciary from the executive branch does not bode well for free and independent institutions. Some members of government have resigned due to the backlash from this change, so the issue is well known and criticized enough for a demand to be made to revoke these laws in the future.

The Law and Justice party does suffer from cronyism, as members of the party have been appointed positions within the government that they are not qualified for. The government has lowered the standards of many governmental positions in this case. Religious freedoms are protected as well as freedoms of assembly. International organizations have had freedom to operate but are scrutinized if they condemn government policies. “Although NGOs have generally operated without government interference in Poland, public media and top government officials began systematically undermining the credibility of rights and governance-related groups in 2016, accusing many of lacking financial transparency and pursuing an opposition-led political agenda” (Freedom, Poland 2020, p. 9). Non-governmental organizations are free to operate in Poland, although they face backlash as well if they condemn policies of the government. New controversial laws from the government concerning public funding for NGOs have also recently been established. These laws involve the power of the government to more or less decide which NGOs can receive this public funding.

As Poland allows international organizations freedom to operate as it and is a part of both NATO and the European Union (two organizations that require much cooperation), it is clear that Poland and other member states regularly cooperate regarding policy and security matters. Poland is also a member of a number of international organizations that other NATO member states are involved in. By this, international organizations would surely act and appeal for similar issues the same way.

From this data, it is evident that liberal norms and values that other NATO members abide by are also predominantly respected in Poland. Therefore, trust would be an agreeable point with respect to the NATO alliance.

### **Operational Understanding**

The Law and Justice party, despite being elected recently, has changed the landscape of political power in Poland. This newly elected party has given the government more effective power with methods of taking control of public media, packing the judiciary with party members, and giving the government greater oversight on the election commission (Mounk 2019). Actions such as packing governmental branches with like-minded people in order to pass certain legislature with little resistance can be considered typical across political parties of democratic states. However, those actions and positions must also be reaffirmed by the next elected party which would likely change the landscape once again. With that said, the Law and Justice party is swiftly moving Poland toward an illiberal state with a hybrid of both democratic and autocratic tendencies. These hybrid tendencies can be difficult to resist, as the government benefits from a lack of political opposition. In current neo-populist states where the populist government gains support through reelections, the actions and legislature put into place are more likely to remain, leading to a future of a more illiberal and controlling state. “It takes time to dismantle a democracy. From Hungary to Turkey, populists who have won power in deeply divided societies faced serious opposition in their first terms in office. After they managed to gain reelection, that resistance started to crumble. By the time they had been in office for eight or 10 years, they had succeeded in capturing their countries’ institutions to such a degree that the opposition could no longer compete” (Mounk 2019, p. 6). With Poland on track for the Law and Justice party to be the leading party in government for ten straight years after winning the 2020 elections, it is unlikely these actions and reforms they have implemented will be reverted. The probability of more radical government revisions in the future increases. Although Poland currently bears a high score of democracy on the Freedom House index,

these more authoritative measures that are beginning to materialize could diminish the democratic tendencies of the state in the future.

With this current data, operational understanding would pass for Poland's case at present. However, the uncertainty and the political trends of the government could change the operational understanding between liberal states and the more illiberal autocratic government of Poland.

### **Theory Testing - Realist Perspective**

#### **Coherence Against Threats**

With the unpredictability of the United States and with past threats from President Trump to withdraw the United States from NATO, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki held the position that members questioning the collective defensive guarantee in the NATO treaty could be a threat to the future of the alliance (Reuters 2019). Members questioning or theorizing what they would do 'if' certain circumstances came about puts the alliance at risk because members could now rely upon the other members to do all the work for the alliance. That is not the way an alliance is meant to work, and Poland considers that this speculation from members could pose a threat to the future of the alliance.

Poland has recently become a critical member of the alliance due to as Russian aggression and a Russian takeover of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. This rapid military assault alarmed the international community and has NATO concerned not only about its own borders, but also the outcomes of further Russian expansion. Poland has increased its role in NATO by ramping up its military spending above NATO's requirement of 2.0% to 2.30% of Poland's GDP. Because of Poland's increase in defense spending, the threat of Russia in the east, and Germany's reluctance to increase military spending, President Trump transferred U.S. troops from Germany to Poland (Adamczyk 2020). This coherence was meant to strengthen NATO's eastern border against a rebirth of Russian aggression as well as reward Poland. Poland was to be commended by the U.S. for its response to President Trump's call for NATO members to increase their defense spending to 2% GDP as the NATO requirement dictates. For these reasons, Poland has also agreed to establish

new NATO bases that will accommodate these additional U.S. troops and materials. NATO itself is putting up \$260 million to provide these bases.

After Russia's takeover of the Crimea and its subsequent push into Ukraine's Donbass region, NATO officials had become aware of the recent complacency NATO had lured itself into and took steps to reinvigorate its own security. "NATO heads of state and governments have acknowledged that the North Atlantic Alliance is at a defining moment for the security of our nations and populations and that the Alliance was ready to respond swiftly and firmly to the new security challenges," defense officials wrote in the FY-20 budget request. "Russia's aggressive actions have fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace" (Sprenger 2019, p. 1).

NATO's refocusing on its own security after the Russo-Ukrainian War has brought states back to a coherent alliance. As a result of this concentration, the states have common strategic defensive goals to secure their eastern border. This cooperation and spending from states shows coherence against threats that validates this focal point.

### **Maintaining Alliance Credibility**

Maintaining alliance credibility connects back to the comments of Poland's Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, that the questioning of states about what they must do will weaken the alliance. With the NATO funding and additional U.S. troops Poland will house, there have been many meetings between the United States and Polish governments. "Our countries enjoy an unprecedented level of bilateral relations. President Trump visited Poland in 2017, and President Duda has visited the White House three times – in September 2018, June 2019, and June 2020. The presidents signed two Joint Declarations on Strategic Partnership, making clear that the United States and Poland will enhance co-operation and deepen our security relationship. Our partnership is critical because of growing security challenges, including aggressive Russian behavior in Europe and elsewhere" (U.S. 2020, p. 2). These meetings and partnerships were accomplished to promote the stability of and the beliefs

and goals of the U.S., Poland, and NATO through security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

Poland regularly hosts military exercises with NATO both in Poland and in the Baltics. These exercises are meant to provide experience for states and soldiers in handling potential conflicts, logistics, and training within NATO's borders. This experience provides state to state interaction as well as gives the states' military forces an opportunity to work alongside one another in preparation for conflict. These exercises also show if states are prepared and willing to fight for each other as the NATO treaty dictates. A state cannot be a member of an alliance if it shows no willingness or ability to provide for the common defense. These exercises also exemplify the solidarity within NATO and show that the members form a credible alliance as long as each state is capable and willing to provide support. From this data and by these reasonings, Poland provides evidence of maintaining the alliance's credibility.

### **Maintaining Hegemonic Stability**

NATO's current hegemonic position involves the premise that the United States forms the basis for NATO existence, as no other member state has the military power nor world political influence of the United States. No other alliance member has the same potential to act in a way that could compare to the United States' role in NATO. Because of this, each state does what it can to provide a manageable amount of security for the alliance. While the United States bears the brunt of the load, it does not officially issue orders to other alliance members. Recently, the United States has made veiled threats to withdraw from the alliance if other members did not start upholding agreements that NATO members have previously agreed upon. "President Trump suggested a move tantamount to destroying NATO: the withdrawal of the United States" (Barnes & Cooper 2019, p. 2). Poland, along with a few other states, responded by increasing its defense spending. Poland specifically negotiated for the construction of new NATO military bases to house United States military personnel. This would help secure military power for the defense of NATO while also

keeping the United States, the backbone of NATO, present in Europe. Member states do not mind if the United States is seen as the leader of NATO as long as they reap the benefits of the security that the United States brings to the alliance.

Though Poland has recently become a more prominent member of the alliance, it is in no position to disrupt the hegemonic stability of the alliance. Poland holds a geostrategic location that could give it an advantage or leverage should Poland choose to use it. However, the member state has been a faithful ally as a part of NATO, having no major difficulties with any other alliance members since joining in 1999. Poland's position in Europe may allow it to be more involved in strategic policy as the threat from Russia grows, but as Poland does not possess the same military capabilities as stronger members, it has no major sway in the hegemonic order. Though Poland is taking steps to acquire more advanced military equipment from both the United States and European markets (Goure 2019).

With the evidence provided concerning this point, Poland poses no threat in disrupting the hegemonic stability within the alliance. Poland's cooperation has proved to bring no contention between itself and other member states and has benefited the alliance greatly in terms of strengthening the security apparatus of Europe.

## **Turkish Diplomacy in NATO**

### **Theory Testing – Liberal Perspective**

#### **Renewal**

Turkey's Justice and Development party has been in power since 2002 with Recep Erdogan holding the Presidential office since 2014. The President of Turkey is directly elected for up to two five-year terms but can also run for a third if the parliament calls for early elections. In 2017, a constitutional referendum was passed instituting a new presidential system of government that expanded the powers of the presidential office and eliminated the role of the Prime Minister. With this new system it is possible for Erdogan to remain in office through 2028 if he wins future elections. Turkey's parliament, the Grand National Assembly, has 600 seats with five-year term limits following the constitutional referendum. The Justice and Development party holds the majority with 289 seats, with confidence and supply holding 49 seats, opposition holding 246 seats, and with 16 seats vacant since the elections. This is due to the deaths of members of parliament, reassignments, and loss of party membership (Grand 2020).

Critics of the Justice and Developments party's government and its policies are also subject to arrests. Even many politicians who are members of opposing parties have been jailed due to any number of accusations. These accusations include working with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which Turkey classifies as a terrorist group; charges include terrorism, and spreading propaganda (Freedom, Turkey 2020). The fact that opposing parties cannot criticize the majority government does not bode well for a stable parliament. Because the Justice and Development party has been in power since 2002, there has been no recent transitions of power. Also, with the president's newly legalized expanded powers the presidential position controls all executive functions with limited parliamentary oversight.

After the elections in Turkey, many participating observers criticized the election for a number of reasons, the most unusual being that it took place during a state of emergency caused by the attempted coup d'état in 2016. "Election observers with the Organization for

Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) criticized the poll, reporting that electoral regulators often deferred to the ruling AKP and that state-run media favored the party in its coverage. The OSCE additionally noted that Erdoğan repeatedly accused his opponents of supporting terrorism during the campaign. İnce, the CHP candidate, also criticized the vote, calling it fundamentally unfair. Demirtaş, the HDP's candidate, campaigned from prison, having been charged with terrorism offenses in 2016” (Freedom, Turkey 2020, p. 3). Many minority groups have also faced political discrimination within Turkey. Despite some ethnic minorities that have seats in the parliament there is little minority representation, and the recent attacks and accusations on opposition groups from the Justice and Development party have harmed political rights with these minority groups (Freedom, Turkey 2020).

This data coming from Freedom House's 'Freedom in the World Scale,' would attest that the point of renewal would not be validated for Turkey. Freedom House categorized Turkey as 'Not Free' and scaled it at 32/100, broken down into Political Rights: 16/40 and Civil Liberties: 16/60 in 2020.

## **Trust**

The Justice and Development party has exerted control over many state institutions, including the Supreme Electoral Council, the judiciary, the police, and the media. With this widespread control, they are able to use these institutions to subdue opposition groups and rally support among voters (Freedom, Turkey 2020). The mainstream media in Turkey is heavily influenced by the government, whereas the independent media is scrutinized and can face prosecution if their reporting goes against government policy.

Religious freedoms are recognized in Turkey, but the lack of non-Muslim institutions disputes that recognition. With the expanded powers of the Presidential office, the President can also appoint rectors to universities, and such institutions are advised to avoid researching sensitive topics (Freedom, Turkey 2020). Civil liberties are becoming increasingly limited in Turkey. Freedom of assembly is guaranteed under Turkish law, although many gatherings as such have been banned by the authorities under the grounds of



security. Freedom of speech has also been moderated, as many opposition politicians and citizens have been arrested for criticizing the government and its policies.

As there is a lack of international institutions or a limit to their democratic scope, international cooperation could not be argued for. Turkey is involved with NATO and other international organizations and had been flirting with the slight possibility of EU membership; it is doubtful their cooperation is based on liberal ideals and is more likely to be based upon trade and security.

With this data, the point of trust between Turkey and NATO could not be argued for very successfully. With its limited civil liberties and governmental takeover of major institutions, Turkey does not share the same norms and values that liberal states do. This can lead to the compromising of strategies and policies between Turkey and other NATO member states.

### **Operational Understanding**

The Justice and Development party has been in majority power in Turkey since 2002 with President Erdoğan holding the offices of Prime Minister and then President since 2003. This length of holding office has allowed President Erdoğan and the Justice and Development party to amass a great sum of influence and power in Turkey. The latest election and referendums have given the Presidency greater powers including the ability to directly appoint public officials, the right to intervene in Turkey's legal system, and the power to issue a state of emergency (BBC 2020).

After the attempted coup in 2016, President Erdoğan was criticized by the international community for the mass arrests and swift trials of those who were deemed to be part of the insurrection. This has led the government to arrest many critics of President Erdoğan and the Justice and Development party. Many opposition politicians who are against policy changes, have been arrested on far-fetched claims ranging from terrorism to spreading false propaganda. The BBC claims, "Since the thwarted coup, more than 50,000 people have been detained, including many soldiers, journalists, lawyers, police officers, academics and

Kurdish politicians. The authorities have sacked an estimated 150,000 public servants, and there are widespread complaints of AKP-inspired intimidation” (BBC 2020, p. 7). This abuse of power has been criticized by the international community and has also caused distress in Turkey, as citizens are against this abuse of power as well. The citizens’ response has been voting Justice and Development members out of mayoral offices in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir. Though this does not have a major impact on governmental policies, it shows the concerns of the people regarding the political control of the Justice and Development party.

Overall, the control of Turkey through political and forceful means does not bode well with NATO in comparison to liberal democratic states. With President Erdoğan able to run for presidential office again in 2023, the securing of a new term may allow him to remain in power until 2028. That will have given him 25 years in the highest position of Turkish government, which is very rare in liberal democracies. With this amount of time in office and with the Presidential powers to appoint officials and intervene legally, President Erdoğan may have the ability to strengthen the Justice and Development party for the future.

With this information, the point of operational understanding would be limited or void regarding a comparison between Turkey and the more democratic NATO members. The political structure and attacks on liberal ideals in Turkey do not match the goal of NATO members who would most likely not want to be associated with such attacks. For these reasons, the operational understanding between Turkey and NATO would be invalid for this case.

## **Theory Testing - Realist Perspective**

### **Coherence Against Threats**

Because Turkey is isolated from Europe and most other NATO member states, it is mostly removed from defensive European security threats and policies as well as the fears that come with them. “regional powers have been relatively unconcerned about the global balance of power. This indifference can be seen in several ways. First, if the regional powers were especially concerned about the global balance of power, we would expect all or most of them to ally against the superpower that was currently ahead. But that is precisely what has not occurred. Instead, each superpower has attracted a roughly equal number of regional allies, with each client seeking superpower support in order to deal with other regional states” (Walt 1987, pg. 159). As Turkey is isolated from its allies, the state must provide its own security. NATO, via the United States, has placed a nuclear weapon on military bases in Turkey for its security apparatus and to deter potential attacks from state actors. However, with the many conflicts in the Middle East that involve non-state actors, Turkey must defend itself or rely on its regional non-NATO allies to protect the state from these independent and isolated threats. “Middle East states have been far more sensitive to threats from proximate power than from aggregate power: threats from states nearby are of greater concern than are threats from the strongest powers in the international system” (Walt 1987, p. 158). As the U.S. and NATO have been heavily involved in the Middle East over the past 20 years, Turkey was able to have the security of its ally’s presence in the region and was also able and willing to provide support for its NATO allies with operations into the Middle East.

However, with the recent rise of ISIS and ISIL in 2011 as well as the start of the Syrian Civil War, Turkey and NATO have had different stances regarding these conflicts that showed a separation in their policies and goals relevant to these matters. Firstly, Turkey bolstered its own security by purchasing S-400 air defense systems from Russia. This purchase by Turkey came with problems in its own right. Along with being a Russian weapon, Turkey must have worked with Russia to get the s-400 weapon systems online, presumably in defense positions that would be near or with NATO defense equipment or

installations. This could give Russia an intelligence advantage over NATO systems in Europe. The system could alert Russia to any aircraft in its range, giving it another advantage as well. Turkey, at the time, was also involved with the construction of the United States' new F-35 fighter plane program. The program would be undermined if caught on the Russian weapons system and could give Russia information on it (O'Hanlon & Taspinar 2020). This purchase, along with subsequent issues, caused the United States warn of their issue of sanctions on Turkey if Turkey followed through with the implementation of activating the S-400s. This issue has caused much distress between Turkey and NATO, especially involving the United States. The second conflict between Turkey and NATO regards the differences between their goals and strategies for ISIS/ISIL and the Syrian Civil War. The United States had allied itself to independent groups throughout its time there and has been supporting groups like the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and the People's Protection Units against the ISIS and ISIL forces in northeast Syria (Reuters 2019). The United States' continued support of these groups directly oppose the Turkish stances of these groups, as Turkey deems them as terrorist groups. It does not help that these groups the United States is supporting are also tied to groups such as the Kurdistan Workers Party, better known as the PKK, that is deemed as a terrorist group by many states including the United States and Turkey (O'Hanlon & Taspinar 2020).

Despite these differences, both Turkey and the United States as well as the NATO alliance are committed to combating ISIS/ISIL. As the group is not totally defeated, the conflict is ongoing. There are still many fighters throughout the Middle East and Africa with over 10,000 fighters still estimated to be in Syria and Iraq (Berman 2020). Turkey and the United States, along with NATO, all share the common goal of pushing ISIS/ISIL out of Syria in order to protect their allied members.

Despite sharing the major goal of combating ISIS/ISIL, it is somewhat difficult to argue that Turkey and NATO members are coherent against all the threats they face in the Middle East. However, they are united against ISIS/ISIL and no state has withdrawn from NATO during this period. Therefore, there is an argument for the case.

## **Maintaining Alliance Credibility**

In Turkey's case for maintaining alliance credibility, Turkey has invoked Article 4 the most out of any alliance member. "The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened" (NATO 1989, p. 2). Most recently and in February of 2020, Turkey called for Article 4 amid a military offensive by Syria, Russia, and Iran and their local allies against Syrian opposition forces, some groups backed by Turkey along the Syrian-Turkish border. "Turkey has also been the most geographically threatened member of the alliance and must consult and use diplomacy to garner support from the alliance in order to counter these threats" (Walt 1987, p. 158). By answering these calls, the alliance continues to keep its credibility. The alliance members may disagree on each other's issues, but they will remain united. If a state leaves due to differences, all states will lose security. This threat of a massive loss in security will keep each state united to the core cause.

This phenomenon of states' wants and needs to have a security apparatus keeps the alliance credible. "This is because NATO has been but one aspect, albeit a central one, of a wider Western grand strategy. Formulated at the end of the Second World War, this grand strategy rested on the establishment and maintenance of a world order based on the Wilsonian principles of peace and stability, democratic governance, and free market economies. This, in turn, depended on two things: the rehabilitation of Europe and the containment of the Soviet Union, which existentially opposed the ideas behind this new world order. The establishment of postwar institutions, from the Bretton Woods system to NATO and the European communities, formed the skeletal framework for operationalizing this vision. Thus, the security community has always been more than NATO" (Aybet 2012, p. 1). This international need for security spheres keeps alliances united. States that have been in an alliance for a long period of time would likely have changed more dramatically and rapidly if they had not been a part of an alliance. As NATO has longtime members such as Turkey and the United States, disagreements over policies that the two states have now do not outweigh the security that their alliance has provided them in the past and will continue to provide. These such circumstances act to keep the alliance credible.

With the data on Turkey's calls of Article 4 along with the cooperation on many issues and conflicts, Turkey does not pose a threat to the credibility of the NATO alliance.

### **Maintaining Hegemonic Stability**

Although the United States can be seen as the hegemonic power of NATO, NATO itself is a separate organization. However, as the United States provides the most support in the alliance in terms of military force and world influence, it can be considered the leading force of NATO. The United States, though a powerful member, does not force beliefs and actions upon members of the alliance. This is highlighted as the United States and Turkey disagreed over strategies and allies during the conflict in Syria. The United States did not force Turkey to accept particular groups as allies nor did it succumb to Turkey's request to denounce its ally. It is clear that states respect the sovereignty of other member states within the alliance.

Turkey is immensely important to NATO strategies and policies concerning Russia because Turkey has a direct knowledge of politics in the Middle East. Even with this leverage, Turkey has not publicly attempted to leverage NATO to its cause for personal gain. It has, however, threatened stability at times with the purchase of S-400 air defense systems from Russia, as the use of these systems would have provided Russia with intel on European security defense. These weapons systems have not been activated or used by Turkey for their security defense; the United States threatened sanctions on Turkey for dealing with Russia, one of NATO's greatest threats. This data leads to the conclusion that Turkey does not disrupt the hegemonic stability of NATO.

## **Chapter 4: Illiberal Allies and NATO Durability in Comparative Perspective**

This chapter will compare the findings from Chapter 3 and compare these findings against the hypothesis that illiberal states will not compromise the durability of NATO.

### **Poland - Renewal**

For the theory testing of Renewal, sources such as Freedom House, gave us data on the political rights and civil liberties in Poland. This data was comprised of information regarding the electoral process, political pluralism, and participation, functioning of government, freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights within Poland. With each of the aspects mentioned above being available to citizens in Poland along with would prove the focal point of Renewal to be accepted.

### **Turkey - Renewal**

For the theory testing of Renewal, sources such as Freedom House, gave data on the political rights and civil liberties in Turkey. This data was comprised of information regarding the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, functioning of government, freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights within Turkey. Freedom House's ranking Turkey a 'Not Free' state along with the limitation or suppression of each of the aspects listed above to the citizens of Turkey would prove the focal point of Renewal to be rejected.

### **Poland - Trust**

For the theory testing of trust, sources such as Freedom House provided relevant information on political rights and civil liberties. These were found to be free from suppression and available to citizens in Poland. Shared values and norms between Poland and other NATO states along with regular international and NATO cooperation between

Poland and other member states would lead to trust being accepted between Poland and NATO members. This would prove the focal point of Trust to be rejected.

### **Turkey - Trust**

For the theory testing of trust, sources such as Freedom House provided information on political rights and civil liberties. These were found to be limited or absent to citizens in Turkey. Shared values and norms between Turkey and NATO members were limited or absent due to many political and civil liberties being suppressed in Turkey. Other members of NATO not having the amount of power within their state that Turkey has leads to the rejection of trust between states in liberal theory. This would prove the focal point of Trust to be rejected.

### **Poland - Operational Understanding**

With this current data, operational understanding would pass for Poland's case at present. As Poland has a relatively fair democratic process according to Freedom House, Poland shares political structures and ideals with other democratic members. Poland shares many goals and ideals with other NATO members.

### **Turkey - Operational Understanding**

With this information, the point of operational understanding would be limited or void regarding a comparison between Turkey and the more democratic NATO members. The political structure and attacks on liberal ideals in Turkey do not match the goal of NATO members who would most likely not want to be associated with such attacks. For these reasons, the operational understanding between Turkey and NATO would be invalid for this case. This would prove the focal point of Operational Understanding to be rejected.

### **Poland - Coherence Against Threats**

From the recent conflicts near NATO borders that have taken place, NATO members have reinvigorated themselves through a common strategic defensive goal to secure their eastern border. This cooperation and spending from states shows coherence against threats that validates this focal point.



### **Turkey - Coherence Against Threats**

Despite having a common goal of combating ISIS/ISIL, it is hard to argue that Turkey and NATO members are coherent against the threats they face in the Europe and the Middle East. There are too many varying strategies and goals between Turkey and NATO members for this point to be accepted.

### **Poland - Maintaining Alliance Credibility**

From this data and by these reasonings, Poland provides evidence of maintaining the alliance's credibility. As Poland and many members partake in exercises and communication as well as the future plans to increase NATO troops in Poland, Poland passes this point.

### **Turkey - Maintaining Alliance Credibility**

With the information of Turkey's calls of Article 4 and the cooperation on many issues and conflicts, Turkey does not pose a threat to the NATO alliance's credibility.

### **Poland - Maintaining Hegemonic Stability**

With the evidence shown concerning this point, Poland poses no threat in disrupting the hegemonic stability within the NATO alliance. Poland's cooperation has proved to bring no contention between itself and other member states and has benefited the alliance greatly by strengthening the security apparatus of eastern Europe.

### **Turkey - Maintaining Hegemonic Stability**

With the information regarding this point, Turkey poses no threat to disrupting the hegemonic stability of the NATO alliance. Turkey's consistent dialogue brings little to no contention to other states regarding hegemonic stability and has benefited the alliance greatly by strengthening NATO security and peacebuilding processes in the Middle East.

## **Conclusion**

The rise of illiberal states will not change how states interact with each other in an alliance. The establishment of an illiberal state can lead to many changes in domestic politics that can harm the democratic process. Though illiberal states can end up impeding elections and obstructing civil liberties, their interactions and commitment to their existing alliances will not falter.

States within alliances are more concerned with their own security than sharing the norms and values with other states in the alliance. As states are much weaker on their own for a multitude of reasons, it is beneficial for a state to join or form an alliance in order to share the burden of protecting against outside security threats. As such, states join alliances in order to ensure the improvement upon their own state security. Ties to an alliance are maintained by the nature of each state involved being primarily concerned with maintaining continuous security provided only by the alliance. If a member state breaks away due to a political issue that conflicts with the alliance, for example, the alliance itself becomes weaker and loses some security along with the state. The alliance becomes more vulnerable and security threats are increased as the result of a member leaving. Because of the threat of a weakened alliance that arises when a member leaves, a state will not risk upsetting members over non-security issues. As a result, the alliance will be kept at its full potential.

As the populist movement becomes increasingly prevalent across the world, more governments are motivated to change their state's norms and values in order to more closely align with these shifts in their citizens' ideals. As these ideal changes come from 'the people,' they have a variety of lines with the major movements. These populist movements have generally taken the stance that the established governments they had been under were run by the 'elites' or the 'establishment,' consisting of long-time government officials and mainstream media. The movement was based upon the logic that previous government had not been concerned with the concerns of ordinary citizens but with their own interests, including big-business corporations, migrants, and foreign states. However, as populist parties take the majority of states, longer serving or more extreme populist governments can quickly lead to the loss of civil rights and liberties of the people.

Due to these societal and governmental transformations, states are becoming progressively more illiberal. As a result, the world has seen conflicting views on major issues, especially those involving immigration and security. These controversies are significant focal points for these new populist governments. These issues, however, do not lead populist states to cause chaos in the international system. They want a stable international environment as much as democracies do. Both liberal and illiberal states want security. As many states are involved in security alliances similar to NATO, they are bound together with states that may not be as close as they used to be. Democracies want their security more than they want to spread democracy.

Alliances are so important to states because smaller states cannot secure themselves. These states would prefer to have security over democracy in an alliance, as long as security is achieved. For this reason, liberal and illiberal states work together to accomplish common goals through these security apparatuses. Due to the threat they face without allies, states will work peacefully and without argument in order to achieve this goal of security.

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