



# LUND UNIVERSITY

## Transatlantic Transitions: Responses to the Russian Threat in the Baltic Sea Region, 2014-2020

Wieslander, Anna

2024

*Document Version:*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Wieslander, A. (2024). *Transatlantic Transitions: Responses to the Russian Threat in the Baltic Sea Region, 2014-2020*. [Doctoral Thesis (compilation), Department of Political Science]. Media-Tryck, Lund University, Sweden.

*Total number of authors:*

1

### General rights

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

### Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

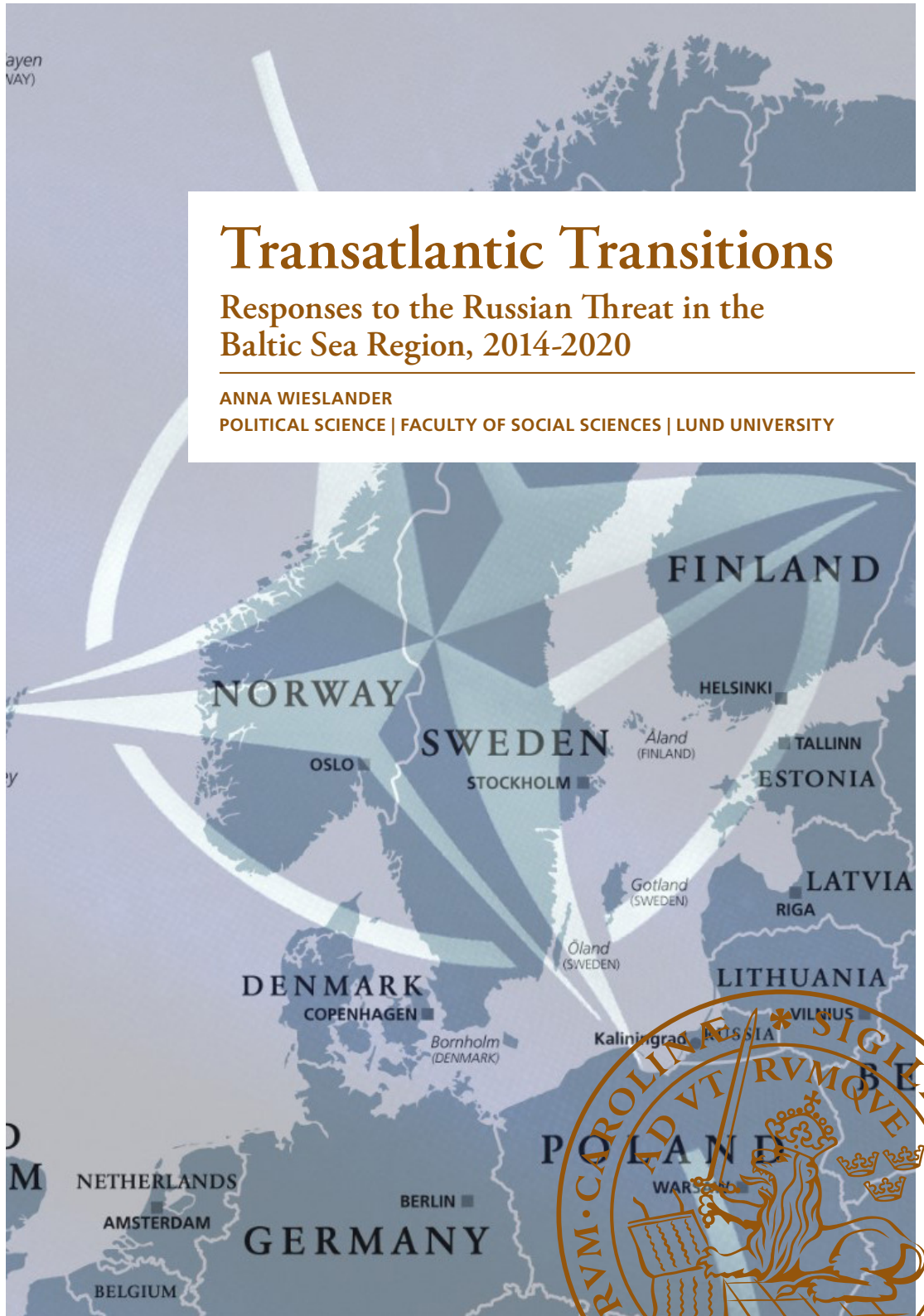
PO Box 117  
221 00 Lund  
+46 46-222 00 00

# Transatlantic Transitions

## Responses to the Russian Threat in the Baltic Sea Region, 2014-2020

ANNA WIESLANDER

POLITICAL SCIENCE | FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES | LUND UNIVERSITY



The overall aim of this thesis is to explore alliance formation and management in a regional setting, by analyzing responses to the Russian threat in the Baltic Sea region during the years 2014-2020. In particular, the study develops the concept of an *informal ally* and sheds lights on alliance formation and management from a small state perspective by drawing on structural realism, with its focus on systemic incentives and threat levels, and neoclassical realism, that allows for domestic factors.

The thesis investigates the American engagement in NATO after the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, and its effect upon Baltic Sea security and the alliance. Furthermore, the study demonstrates how Sweden and Finland, as close partners, were integrated into collective defense to the extent that they became informal allies in 2016. Still, Sweden and Finland did not formally join NATO at that time. The study sheds light on domestic factors that in the Swedish case can explain lack of policy flexibility despite recognition of the Russian threat to national security.

**ANNA WIESLANDER** is an acknowledged security policy expert and former civil servant at the Swedish Ministry of Defence and Swedish Parliament. She serves at the Atlantic Council of the United States, is Chair of the Institute for Security and Development Policy, an Adjunct Professor at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany and a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of War Sciences. This is her PhD Dissertation in Political Science from Lund University.



## Transatlantic Transitions



# Transatlantic Transitions

Responses to the Russian Threat  
in the Baltic Sea Region, 2014-2020

Anna Wieslander



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Doctoral dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University to be publicly defended on September 9, 2024, at 10-12 am at the Eden Auditorium, Department of Political Science.

*Faculty opponent*

Professor Anders Wivel

Department of Political Science

University of Copenhagen

**Organization:** LUND UNIVERSITY

**Document name:** Doctoral Thesis

**Date of issue:** September 9, 2024

**Author(s):** Anna Wieslander

**Sponsoring organization:** -

**Title and subtitle:** Transatlantic Transitions: Responses to the Russian Threat  
in the Baltic Sea Region, 2014-2020

**Abstract:**

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore alliance formation and management in a regional setting, by analyzing responses to the Russian threat in the Baltic Sea region during the years 2014-2020. In particular, the study develops the concept of an informal ally and sheds lights on alliance formation from a small state perspective. In line with a realist approach, the study takes the impact of the international system on the regional setting as its point of departure in assessing small state responses to a great power threat.

Through its case-study design, the thesis investigates the American engagement in NATO after the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, and its effect upon Baltic Sea security and the alliance. Furthermore, the study demonstrates how Sweden and Finland, as close partners, were integrated into collective defense to the extent that they became informal allies in 2016. Still, Sweden and Finland did not formally join NATO at that time. The study sheds light on domestic factors that in the Swedish case can explain lack of policy flexibility despite recognition of the Russian threat to national security.

Theoretically, the study draws on structural realism and neoclassical realism while contributing to alliance theory by introducing the notion of informal ally and by presenting an analytical framework to trace how such a status emerges. Moreover, the thesis shows how integration strategies can be evaluated, thereby facilitating the study of small state responses to a great power threat. Empirically, the study presents rich material on a formative period for NATO and the Baltic Sea region.

**Key words:**

Alliance formation, alliance management, alliance theory, informal alliance, informal ally, integration, balance of threat, balance of power, unipolarity, small states, structural realism, neoclassical realism, NATO, Baltic Sea region, partnership, United States, Sweden, Finland

**Language:** English

**Number of pages:** 208

**ISBN:** 978-91-8104-104-0 (print)

**ISSN and key title:** 0460-0037,

**ISBN:** 978-91-8104-105-7 (electronic)

Lund Political Studies 217

Recipient's notes

Price

Security classification

I, the undersigned, being the copyright owner of the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation, hereby grant to all reference sources permission to publish and disseminate the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation.

Signature

Date 2024-07-18

# Transatlantic Transitions

Responses to the Russian Threat  
in the Baltic Sea Region, 2014-2020

Anna Wieslander



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY



Cover design by: Jacob Wieslander Örnfeldt

Coverphoto by: Peter Hermes Furian/shutterstock.com

Copyright: Anna Wieslander

Paper 1 © Anna Wieslander, *Reassuring Allies or Balancing? A Unipolar Response to the Russian Annexation of Crimea*. Unpublished manuscript.

Paper 2 © Anna Wieslander, *What Makes an Ally? Sweden and Finland as NATO's Closest Partners*. 2019. *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 17(2): 194-222.

Paper 3 © Anna Wieslander, *The Hultqvist Doctrine – Swedish Security and Defence Policy after the Russian Annexation of Crimea*. 2022. *Defence Studies*, 22(1): 35-59.

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Political Science

ISBN 978-91-8104-104-0 (print)

ISBN 978-91-8104-105-7 (electronic)

ISSN 0460-0037, Lund Political Studies 217

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University

Lund 2024



Media-Tryck is a Nordic Swan Ecolabel certified provider of printed material. Read more about our environmental work at [www.mediatryck.lu.se](http://www.mediatryck.lu.se)

**MADE IN SWEDEN** 

*To Eino, Hugo, Jacob and Hjalmar*



# List of Scientific Papers

- Paper I**      *Reassuring Allies or Balancing? A Unipolar Response to the Russian Annexation of Crimea*  
Wieslander, Anna. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Paper II**      *What Makes an Ally? Sweden and Finland as NATO's Closest Partners*  
Wieslander, Anna. 2019. *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 17(2): 194-222.
- Paper III**      *The Hultqvist Doctrine – Swedish Security and Defence Policy after the Russian Annexation of Crimea*  
Wieslander, Anna. 2022. *Defence Studies*, 22(1): 35-59.



# Acknowledgements

The standing joke in my family when I grew up was that I had three siblings: my big brother Peter, my younger brother Carl Johan, and my father's PhD dissertation. It was my mother's subtle way of expressing the burden that pursuing a dissertation puts on a family, but also that once it is achieved, the credit is one for the team. I could not agree more. For us, the burden has been the evenings, weekends, and holidays that I spent on scientific work to get this mastodont project done, but I heard no complaints from my family, just cheering all the way. Therefore, I want to start by acknowledging the love, patience and unconditional support from my husband Eino, and my sons, Hugo, Jacob, and Hjalmar, for making this thesis a reality. This one is for us! Included in this circle is my mother Lisbeth Wieslander, who, with her vivid intellect, curiosity, and energy always reads, watches, and comments on everything I do and who guards the legacy of my father, University President and Professor Hans Wieslander (1929-2017) who earned his PhD at the Department of Political Science at Lund University in 1966. He inspired me to take on this challenge in the first place and, throughout the years, encouraged me to continue. My brothers have been keen supporters, as has my mother-in-law, Riitta Stenius, who relentlessly has helped us at home throughout the years.

The journey towards this dissertation started many years ago, and it has been a long and winding road to complete it. A major benefit of the trip has been the many brilliant, inspiring, and encouraging people that I have met along the way. Throughout this adventure, the Department of Political Science in Lund has served as my academic home. I was accepted as a PhD student in 1993, with Professor Christer Jönsson as my first supervisor. We shared an interest in "bridging the gap" between research and practitioners. Already in fall 1993, I was fortunate to receive a University of California grant from Lund University and was accepted to University of California at Berkeley at the graduate level, where I studied for - nowadays iconic - Professors Kenneth Waltz and Ernst B. Haas, who challenged me to excel, alongside Professor of Linguistics George Lakoff and Professor Steven Weber, which resulted in my

first published peer review article: “Metaphors, Thought and Theory: The Case of Neorealism and Bipolarity” *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, 1995, 98 (2):129-156.

Back at the department in Lund, I served as a teaching assistant at the newly established Master of European Affairs Program, and in parallel, Christer Jönsson engaged me in a research project on the regionalization of Europe with an empirical focus on the emerging Öresund Region. I am grateful to the generous funding from the Erik Philip Sørensen Foundation, which enabled me to publish three articles: “Myten om regionernas Europa” pp. 139-145 in Idvall, M. and Salomonsson, A. (eds.) *Att skapa en region. Om identitet och territorium*, Oslo: Universitetsforl., 1996; “Att bygga Öresundsregionen. Från 1960-talets utvecklingsoptimism till 1990-talets lapptäcksregionalism” pp. 77-125 in Tägil et al. (eds.) *Öresundsregionen – visioner och verklighet*, Lund: Lund University Press, 1997; and “Building the Øresund Region”, pp. 239-255 in Hedegaard, L. et al. (eds.) *The NEBI Yearbook 1999*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, 1999. By then, I had moved to Stockholm to work at the Ministry of Defence while part-time enjoying the stimulating environment at the Swedish Institute for International Affairs (UI), where I had been accepted to the Special Research Program (SFP) with generous funding from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It is with gratitude that I recall this period, during which I had the opportunity to formulate and present an analytical framework for my PhD thesis. At that time, I planned it as a monography focused on the formation of the transatlantic community (“Securing Communities”, Lund, March 27, 1998). At UI, I especially enjoyed the inspiring leadership of Professor Bengt Sundelius and the vibrant discussions with my roommate Annika Björkdahl, a fellow PhD student from Lund, nowadays Professor. Our collaboration was constructive in several ways. Together, we launched the female network Logika for young professionals in 1998, an enduring network that celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in September 2023. In the fall of 1998, I was offered a junior management position at the Ministry of Defense, and after that, my working career and building a family with Eino put the dissertation process on hold. It was not until I returned to UI as Deputy Director in 2012 that the idea of taking up the work started growing, cheered on by the Research Director Johan Eriksson, who had also been a fellow at UI many years earlier. When I finally contacted the Department of Political Science in 2016, I greatly appreciated the warm welcome back. Christer Jönsson had retired, and Associate Professor Magdalena Bexell took on the task as my supervisor, a role that she has performed with constant encouragement, patience, and great respect for the fact that I have full-time jobs to prioritize. By 2016, I had recently published three articles focusing on NATO and regional security: “A

new normal for NATO and Baltic Sea Security”, UI Brief (2) 2015; “NATO, the U.S. and Baltic Sea Security”, UI Paper, (3) 2016; and “‘Extended Cooperative Security’ in the Baltic Sea Region”, *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, 25 (1): 134-144, 2016. These articles were important building blocs for the compilation thesis that I decided to aim for, empirically reflected in **Paper I**. Another central step for **Paper I** was the invitation by Johns Hopkins University SAIS Professor Dan Hamilton and the Director of the Polish Institute for International Affairs, Dr. Slawomir Debski to contribute to the anthology *Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality* (2019). Dan Hamilton provided valuable comments to my draft, and I was delighted to present my chapter “Why European Unity and Freedom Still Matter to the United States” (pp. 201-210) at the book launch in Brussels on October 28, 2019. I also used the analysis as a foundation for my inauguration speech at the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences in October 2020 (published in *The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences Proceedings and Journal* (1):7-14, 2021). Finally, a speaker’s invitation to the European Conference at Harvard University in March 2023 gave me an opportunity to have a fruitful exchange with Professor Stephen Walt on unipolarity and alliance formation.

My dissertation was further supported by an invitation in 2017 by Professor Sten Rynning and Professor John R. Deni to contribute my research on informal allies and partnerships to a special edition of the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* ahead of NATO’s 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The article benefited greatly from constructive comments and discussions at the ISA Panel “*The Atlantic Alliance at 70: Insight and Evaluation*” in San Francisco on April 7, 2018, as well as from additional readings and thoughtful feedback to my draft article by the special editors Sten Rynning and John Deni, as well as from Professor Julian Lindley-French, former Deputy Secretary General of NATO Alexander Vershbow, Ambassador Veronika Wand-Danielsson and the anonymous peer reviewers of the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*. This support and feedback resulted in **Paper II**, which was published in 2019: “What Makes an Ally? Sweden and Finland as NATO’s Closest Partners”, 17(2): 194-222. I am also grateful to the Wallenberg Offices, who generously funded the open access of this article in 2022.

My second academic home has, in the past years, been the dynamic international environment at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany. Since 2018, I have been invited as an Adjunct Professor, giving lectures and acting as a seminar leader in academic courses. The alumni scholarships I received in 2020 and 2022, which allowed me to stay at the Center, write, and use the library for five



weeks at a time, were crucial to the dissertational work. This has been invaluable time, especially for the Summary Paper and **Paper III**. A big thank you goes to all my friends at the Center for their continuous support and hospitality, including taking me on various skiing trips and dinner parties: Professor James Wither, Dean Andrew Michta, Director Barre Seguin, Professor Matt Rhodes, Professor Tova Norlén, Professor Rachael Gosnell, Dr. Katrin Bastian, Tamir Sinai, and Chris and Melinda Burelli.

**Paper III** developed from a Conference Paper for the Riga Conference in 2017, which the Director of the Latvian Institute for International Affairs, Professor Andris Sprūds (nowadays Defense Minister of Latvia), invited me to contribute with. I was delighted to share my analysis of the transformative regional security landscape and how it shaped defense policies at the time in my article “A Brusque Swedish Awakening: Adopting Security Policy to Baltic Sea Challenges” pp. 92-103, LIIA Report, Riga. I want to extend my thanks to those who took the time to read various versions of the manuscript for Paper III and who challenged and supported me to develop it further: James Wither, Sten Rynning, Dr. Robert Dalsjö, and the anonymous peer reviewers through Defence Studies. It has been rewarding to learn that the article clearly fills a research gap as it nowadays is used as course literature in Political Science both at Uppsala University and at the Swedish Defence University.

My colleagues at the Atlantic Council, both in Washington DC and at the Northern Europe Office in Stockholm, are important members of my extended academic family, providing excellence internally and an outstanding network internationally. Without their support and engagement, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation. I especially want to thank CEO Fred Kempe and former Vice CEO Damon Wilson for creating such a research-friendly environment and for always believing in me. I also salute the talented and loyal co-workers who have been with me in Stockholm since 2017 and who have supported me in various phases of the dissertation: Elin Schiffer, Eric Adamson, Jesper Lehto, Louise Blomqvist, and Emily Palmqvist. Onwards and upwards, as we say at the Atlantic Council!

Last but not least, I sincerely want to thank those who participated in my final seminar in Lund on December 4, 2022, for providing challenging and valuable feedback: Associate Professor Magdalena Bexell, Professor Douglas Brommesson, Professor Kjell Engelbrekt, PhD Candidate Jana Wrangé and my reviewers, Professor Karin Aggestam and Associate Professor Rikard Bengtsson, who also generously shared their thorough and thoughtful comments in written format afterward.

In 2016, in parallel to picking up the work with the dissertation, I also started with long-distance running. Since then, I have completed three marathons. Even though I have three children, just like my parents, I would not call this dissertation my fourth baby. But it certainly feels like completing my fourth marathon. Many thanks to all who have been part of this race!



# List of Tables in Summary Paper

<b>Table 1.</b>	Partner cooperation process toward collective defense	p. 78
<b>Table 2.</b>	Evaluation of integration into collective defense	p. 80



# Abbreviations

AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
EOP	Enhanced Opportunities Partnership
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IT	Informational Technology
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NFIU	NATO Force Integration Units
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
NRF	NATO Response Force
NRFA	NATO-Russia Founding Act
NSS	National Security Strategy
PfP	Partnership for Peace

RAP	Reassurance Action Plan
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SAP	State Armament Program
Sifo	Swedish Institute for Opinion Surveys
SOM Institute	Society, Opinion and Media Institute
UK	The United Kingdom
US	The United States of America
USD	United States Dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force
WTO	World Trade Organization

# Table of Contents

- List of Scientific Papers..... 9**
- Acknowledgements ..... 11**
- List of Tables in Summary Paper ..... 17**
- Abbreviations..... 19**
- Table of Contents..... 21**
- 1. Introduction ..... 23**
  - 1.1. Setting the Scene for Transatlantic Transitions..... 23
  - 1.2. A Realist Perspective: Ontology, Research Gaps, and Central Definitions ..... 27
  - 1.3. Research Puzzle and Guiding Questions..... 33
  - 1.4. Contributions of the Dissertation and Structure of the Summary Paper ..... 36
- 2. Previous Research ..... 39**
  - 2.1. Alliance Theory..... 39
    - 2.1.1. Realist Approaches ..... 39
    - 2.1.2. Liberalist and Constructivist Approaches to Alliance Theory ..... 41
    - 2.1.3. Informal Allies and Alignment ..... 42
    - 2.1.4. Small States in Alliance Theory ..... 44
    - 2.1.5. Introducing Unit-Level Factors That Shape State Behavior..... 46
  - 2.2. Regional Aspects of Security ..... 47
    - 2.2.1. The Systemic Setting and Regional Security ..... 47
    - 2.2.2. Hard Security and the Baltic Sea Region..... 48
    - 2.2.3. Cooperative Approaches to Regional Security ..... 49
  - 2.3. Summary of Previous Research ..... 50



<b>3. Theoretical Approach .....</b>	<b>51</b>
3.1. Schools of Realism.....	51
3.2. Small States and Structural Realism: Balancing Against Power or Balancing Against Threat?.....	54
3.3. Neoclassical Realism .....	57
3.3.1. Is Neoclassical Realism Compatible with Structural Realism?.....	57
3.3.2. Are Domestic Variables Occasional Abnormalities or Regular Interventions?.....	60
3.4. Summary of Theoretical Approach.....	62
<b>4. Research Design, Method, and Material .....</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1. Epistemology and Soft Positivism .....	63
4.2. Case Study Selection and Case Analysis .....	64
4.3. Elite Interviews and Triangulation.....	66
<b>5. Thesis Contributions and Paper Overview .....</b>	<b>71</b>
5.1. Main Contributions .....	71
5.2. How Do Systemic Forces Affect Alliance Formation and Management in a Regional Context? .....	73
5.3. Under Which Conditions Does a Country Become an Informal Ally? Which Indicators Reveal the Formation of Such a Status? ..	76
5.4. In Light of an External Threat, Why Do Some Small States Choose Not To Formally Join Alliances? .....	79
<b>6. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>83</b>
6.1. Revisiting the Research Questions.....	83
6.2. Reflections on the Dramatic Developments Since 2022 and Avenues for Future Research.....	86
<b>References .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Appendix. List of Interview Questions, 2020 (in Swedish) .....</b>	<b>103</b>
Frågor för intervjuer svensk säkerhetspolitik.....	103
<b>Scientific Papers.....</b>	<b>105</b>

# 1. Introduction

In order to set the scene for the title of the dissertation, “Transatlantic Transitions”, I start this chapter with a broad survey of the developments that have triggered my research. I then elaborate upon my ontological stance from a realist perspective, identify the research gaps that the dissertation primarily addresses, and define the key concepts. Thereafter, I present the research puzzle and the guiding questions for the thesis. At the end of the chapter, I explain the structure of this summary paper in order to facilitate further reading.

## 1.1. Setting the Scene for Transatlantic Transitions

The research puzzle of this dissertation originates from an ambition to explain the security dynamic in the Baltic Sea region as it evolved when the Russian threat re-emerged in 2014, with a focus on state responses, alliance formation, and alliance management. Security in the Baltic Sea region is fascinating since it is connected to the much broader chessboard of international affairs. Theoretically, Baltic Sea security embraces the premise of structural realism that great powers dominate the strategic setting and that small powers have to relate to that dominance. Throughout history, a core question in the region has been: who balances Russia? Sometimes, balancing has been done “internally” by states in the region. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Sweden was a great power of enough size to balance Russia. Then came Great Britain, who was replaced by Germany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the end of World War II, for the first time, a great power at a far geographical distance from the region, namely the United States of America (US), entered the region’s balancing acts. In other words, nowadays, in times of tensions with Russia, the other Baltic Sea states are dependent on an external ally, geographically afar, for their security. If tensions with Russia rise to levels at the risk of military conflict or war, the other Baltic Sea states will count firsthand on American support and presence to deal with the situation, by unilateral action as well as through NATO (North

Atlantic Treaty Organization). Hence, security in the area cannot be studied by looking merely at regional actors; it has to be connected to a broader transatlantic, even global, setting. The title of this dissertation, “Transatlantic Transitions”, reflects this relationship. Consequently, the study theoretically assumes that the international system and its impact on the regional setting must be the starting point for assessing regional security dynamics in light of a great power threat.

After the end of the Cold War, cooperation flourished across the Baltic Sea, and the region gradually became one of the most peaceful spots in the world. Russia participated in international collaboration at all levels of society and on a broad range of issues, directly with other Baltic Sea states and with NATO through the Partnership for Peace (PfP), such as military exercises, de-mining, and search and rescue activities. Sweden and Finland also joined PfP and became members of the EU (European Union). The EU gradually engaged in soft regional security as it developed an integrative agenda addressing the Baltic Sea region in fields such as infrastructure, environment and education, which also included cooperation with Russia. When Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and a united Germany became NATO allies, the regional security setting fundamentally changed. Inevitably, NATO became a part of regional security affairs through its collective defense mechanism, encompassing all states in the Baltic Sea region except Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Collective defense was, however, not on the agenda in NATO in the post-Cold War period: crisis management outside of NATO territory and cooperative security with partners dominated the activities of allies. An early indication that this era was coming to an end was the Russian cyberattack on Estonia in 2007 and Russia’s war in Georgia the following year. Later on, in the spring of 2013, Russian aircraft practiced bomb attacks close to the border of a military non-aligned Sweden. According to NATO, these were nuclear bomb attacks (Holmström 2016, Stoltenberg 2016, 19). Regardless, apart from the Baltic states and Poland, who advocated that NATO should start looking at defense plans for their territories, these developments did not alert the US or NATO. Despite the American decision to phase it out, the mission in Afghanistan continued to have the highest priority. A NATO exercise in 2013, designed to signal reassurance to the Baltic states and Poland, only attracted a modest participation of American troops (Dempsey 2013), which was a sign that the US assessed the region as a low-tension area. Meanwhile, NATO still planned to cooperate with Russia on the disposal of chemical weapons from Syria.

Therefore, the Russian annexation of Crimea in early March 2014 marked a clear shift in Baltic Sea security dynamics. Although the Alliance had followed

the Russian political and military activities toward Ukraine closely in the winter of 2014, the annexation of Crimea took NATO and its allies by surprise. It led to a sudden deterioration in the security environment between Russia and NATO in general, and in the Baltic Sea region in particular. Trust was broken, which caused an unwanted and unpleasant situation for allies and partners. The Cold War was 25 years away, and a new generation of decision-makers, diplomats, experts, and military had entered central positions; a generation that was used to dialogue and collaboration, not competition and conflict; who defined partners, not adversaries; and who negotiated win-win solutions, not win-lose. Despite earlier indications of a more assertive Russia, the attack on Ukraine had not been anticipated. The situation brought a new set of questions to policymakers and defense planners: What exactly did a threat from a state adversary consist of? Few had given it any serious thought at the time. The Baltic states and Poland were exceptions, but they mainly had been dismissed as paranoid by other allies and partners, who resumed business as usual with Russia just a few months after it had invaded Georgia in 2008.

In 2014 it became necessary for allies and partners to assess whether a friend had really become a foe, whether it was temporary or more permanent (“a storm or climate change” as a NATO diplomat put it), and finally, how to respond to these changing circumstances. There was generally no enthusiasm in Western capitals to re-evaluate the relationship with Russia - but in the end, it turned out to be inevitable. It should be noted that at the time of the annexation, Russia had by far the largest delegation of all partner nations at the NATO headquarters in Brussels. The Russian diplomats had lunch in the same restaurant and exercised in the same gym as NATO officials. With the annexation of Crimea, this era ended. NATO froze all military cooperation, and the Russian delegation gradually decreased substantially.

From 2014 onwards, Russia occupied Crimea and conducted a proxy war in Donbas, while simultaneously using a range of hybrid warfare measures toward allies and partners, such as territorial intrusions, electronic jamming, disinformation operations, cyberattacks, migration flows, chemical weapons, and energy security. NATO had to assess what this meant for its relationship with Ukraine, which was a partner but not an ally, and what the implications were for the security of its allies. Relatively soon it became clear that the Baltic Sea region had become a high-tension area at the heart of global power competition.

While the empirical data collection for this dissertation ends in December 2020, its publication in 2024 marks the ten-year anniversary of the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine. In February 2014, the Euromaidan protests in Kiev

turned into deadly clashes between the protesters and the state. President Viktor Yanukovich was overthrown and fled to Russia, and soon after, Russia initiated its illegal annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas. Although Russia later signed the Minsk Agreements, which called upon immediate cease-fires, it continued to pursue its armed conflict in Ukraine. In 2021, Russia's assertive and threatening behavior reached a new level. In April, Russia conducted massive troop build-ups along the Ukrainian border as part of an "exercise" which ended after a month, and then again, with no withdrawal of troops this time, from September onwards. Additionally, in December 2021, Russia proposed draft treaties on the security architecture in Europe that resembled Cold War thinking in terms of spheres of interest. The initiative alarmed countries who feared limited maneuver space, including the option to join NATO in the future. (Pifer 2021) On February 24, 2022, after almost six months of troop build-up along the Ukrainian border, Russia escalated its confrontation and aggression to the level of a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As a consequence, Sweden and Finland sent their application letters to NATO on May 18, 2022, as the countries had decided to move hand in hand and shift their status from informal to formal allies. Finland then became an ally on April 4, 2023, while Sweden had to wait until March 7, 2024. Since this dissertation deals with the period 2014-2020, it does not cover this phase of alliance transitions for Sweden and Finland. However, to capture these dramatic developments, I will return in the concluding chapter with reflections and ideas for future research.

On the one hand, it might appear unjustified that the dissertation empirically ends before the historical shift of the formal alliance entrance of Sweden and Finland took place. On the other hand, the thesis clearly demonstrates that alliance formation does not start with the application letter but is a much more complex integration process. As I will show, this argument has broad implications for studying international security. Furthermore, with regard to practice, I have noticed at conferences that I have attended recently that there is a growing number of politicians, civil servants, and experts who pose the question: Did the West do enough to stop Russia in 2014, or could we have done more? Underpinning these concerns is a growing recognition that Russia's war on Ukraine did not start in 2022; it began in 2014 and that Russia's warfare encompasses not only Ukraine but the West (see Petersson 2023). At the Munich Security Conference in February 2024, I listened to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz rhetorically asking the audience: "Are we doing enough?" referring to Ukraine. He emphasized that if NATO's deterrence and defense were not credible, and if military support to Ukraine failed, the threat from Russia could spread. French President Emmanuel

Macron made a similar assessment on March 14, 2024, on French television; if Russia wins, the French people cannot feel safe anymore (Vinocur 2024). Overall, this dissertation, with its focus on balancing behavior, alliance formation, and state responses to an external threat, provides fresh insights into this contemporary debate. Arguably, the period of 2014-2020 warrants more research attention than has been given so far, and my dissertation addresses this gap. Consequently, as the threat from Russia continues to grow in Europe, with repeated warnings from politicians, military, and intelligence services on the risk of the war spreading to the West within coming years, the thesis contributes to an increasingly topical field of research within IR (International Relations).

## 1.2. A Realist Perspective: Ontology, Research Gaps, and Central Definitions

In the following, I first elaborate upon my ontological stance, that is, what I set out to examine and how I view the fundamental nature of reality. I then identify the research gaps that the dissertation primarily addresses and offer definitions of key concepts.

Why do I turn to realism in the conduct of this dissertation? Because the state and alliance responses I study are shaped in an environment in which military power and threats are central to security. It is the responsibility of states to secure their territory, population, and institutions to withstand the risk of coercive power by a state adversary, and states are responsive to shifts in the relative distribution of material capabilities. Failure to adopt can ultimately risk the survival of the state. Neither of the main alternative theoretical schools in IR, that is, liberalism, with its emphasis on institutions and norms, nor constructivism, which puts attention to the distribution of ideas and identity, place enough focus on the state as an actor nor on military power and military threats, to sufficiently guide the research puzzle of this dissertation.<sup>1</sup> Hence, theoretically, the dissertation mainly strives to explore, apply and develop realism further. While I expand on my epistemological and methodological

---

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on the ontology and epistemology of international politics with regard to realism, liberalism, and constructivism, see Wendt, Alexander. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, pp. 4-7.

position in Chapter 4, I offer introductory reflections on my relationship to realism in the following.

For quite some years, from the mid-1990's onwards, as I worked as a civil servant at the Ministry of Defense and as Secretary of the Swedish Defense Commission, the applicability of realism to the study of IR was less obvious. The transatlantic community had adhered to the strategy of a "Europe Whole and Free", which left external threats aside and philosophically rested heavily on a Wilsonian and Kantian tradition, assuming that a linear development of civilization could, in the end, lead to "perpetual peace". Sceptics such as Schlesinger (1991) had a more cyclical thinking of history, in which rivals to the superpower inevitably would arise. Most of the Central and Eastern European states that regained their freedom after the end of the Cold War were also convinced that Russia would rise again, even if Russia at the time was weakened to the extent that it could not prevent their Western orientation. These states saw a window of opportunity and took it by applying for NATO and EU memberships (Wieslander 2019b, 202-203). However, this realist line of thought did not dominate international politics. After the end of the Cold War, the focus was on non-state actors and threats to security that did not stem from a state adversary. That focus also influenced research agendas. As Ripsman et al. (2016, 157) argue, "constructivism emerged as a major ontological and epistemological approach to the study of international relations. For the past twenty years, proponents of constructivism and related ideational or cultural theories have claimed that those theories offer superior explanations for observable political behavior than do materialist alternatives, such as structural realism and neoliberalism." That did not mean that realism took a "strategic time-out" in IR, but it did not dominate the field in the same manner as before.

However, by the time I resumed my PhD studies in 2016 to complete this dissertation, the re-emergence of a competitive international system and great power rivalry had caused a revival of realist analysis, in which I have anchored my research. During this work, I have with gratitude recalled the graduate class I took for Professor Kenneth N. Waltz, "the father of structural realism", in 1993 during my time as a PhD scholar at the University of California at Berkeley. The class improved my understanding of realist theory construction, its limits, and advantages. A couple of key points have particularly influenced my thinking. I can still hear Professor Waltz's voice, repeating one of the fundamentals of structural realism: "States. Seek. To Survive." Waltz underlined that, firsthand, states did not seek power and expansion, as classical realism presumed. The primary driving force for a state, no matter the size of its

greatness, was to survive as a sovereign body. The distinction between classical realism and structural realism, which applies for defensive and offensive structural realism as well, is important since it has ontological implications in that international politics, then, is about “the struggle for survival” rather than “the struggle for power” (Kuick 2010). This, in turn, allows for including both great power and small power perspectives within the realist framework, which is a core ambition of this thesis. Furthermore, Waltz was careful to distinguish between reality and theory; he repeatedly underlined that a theory can never encompass the whole of reality. His theory could not explain nor predict everything, and it was not a theory of foreign policy. Nevertheless, the lack of applicability of structural realism to sufficiently explain and predict international affairs has been one of the major themes of critique against it. The parsimony of structural realism has stimulated scholars to explore how to add variables and elements while maintaining the foundation of the theory. From this, neoclassical realism has emerged. I elaborate on this development in more detail in Chapter 3, and apply neoclassical realism to my analysis as well structural realism.

In Chapter 2, I provide an account of the current research status on state and alliance responses to a great power threat and how it relates to alliance theory, small state strategies, as well as to notions of regional security. Here, I will only briefly capture fragments of previous research as they relate to the research gaps addressed in my analysis. Alliance theory goes back as far as ancient Greece and work by Thucydides, and most of the research literature on alliances is firmly embedded within realism. This dissertation mainly addresses two gaps in alliance theory: the lack of attention paid to informal allies, and the lack of attention paid to small states.

Firstly, alliance theory tends to neglect the distinction between formal and informal alliances and, thus, between formal and informal allies. Mostly, the formality requirement is taken for granted, which I argue weakens the explanatory power of alliance formation and management. Walt (1997) is an exception, and my work is congruent with his approach. Walt defines an **alliance** as “a formal or informal commitment for security cooperation between two or more states. (...) the defining feature of any alliance is a commitment for mutual support against some external actor(s) in some specified set of circumstances” (157). The informal alliance can be based “either on tacit understandings or some tangible form of commitment, such as verbal assurances or joint military exercises” (157).<sup>2</sup> Rynning and Schmitt

---

<sup>2</sup> While building on Walt, Rynning and Schmitt (2018, 2) settle for a slightly leaner definition of alliances that allows for both formal and informal versions. Hence, they define an



(2018, 12) also emphasize the role of multinational military exercises in (informal) alliance formation. Snyder (1990, 104-105) defines an alliance as a formal mutual defense pact but also introduces a broader concept to which alliances are merely a “sub-set”, namely that of **alignment**, which is “a set of mutual expectations (...) that they will have each other’s support in disputes or in war”. Other sub-sets mentioned by Snyder include ententes or unilateral declarations. Wilkins (2012, 59) further develops this line of reasoning by suggesting subtypes of alignment including alliances, strategic partnerships, coalitions, security communities and non-aggression pacts. This broader approach is necessary, he argues, “to comprehend the empirical realities of the contemporary world and reconsider distorted notions of the past.” (2012, 58). As pointed out by Kinne (2018), a growing characteristic of international relations is that security and defense partnerships are short of formal alliances. Consequently, in this dissertation, I take on the task of theoretically exploring yet another subtype of alignment, that is, **informal alliances**. I do this by introducing the concept of **informal ally**, which I define as ‘a country that has not formally signed an alliance treaty, but who is perceived by the members of a formal alliance as a trustworthy country that in case of a major crisis or war would, without hesitation, align on their side to meet the threat in concert’ (Wieslander 2019a, 196). Put differently, there is a ‘credible commitment’ (Morrow 2000, 67) from both sides to aid each other in case of war, despite a lack of treaty. This works as a deterrent in peacetime, i.e., a state who is considering war is less likely to attack because it expects that its target would receive aid. Those scholars who want to restrict the concept of alliances to treaty-based arrangements tend to emphasize the qualitative difference that such formality brings (Reiter 1996, 59). However, as Walt points out, “the presence of a formal agreement often says relatively little about the actual degree of commitment.” (1997, 157). A recent example is the American support to Israel in countering the missile attack from Iran on April 13, 2024, despite the lack of any formal mutual defense pact. Undoubtedly, Israel is an “informal” ally of the United States. Furthermore, I propose a process to evaluate the formation and existence of an informal ally, which contributes to a rather extensive gap in alliance theory, also when it comes to applying theory to NATO and its partnerships, where the scholarly literature tends to be

---

alliance as “a formal or informal association of states for the (threat of) use of military force, in specified circumstances, against actors external to the alliance.”

descriptive or prescriptive. The framework helps to distinguish between a partner and an informal ally.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, alliance theory tends to pay little attention to small states, a shortfall that this dissertation seeks to address. To bridge the great power - small power perspective in a regional setting, I apply Walt's balance of threat theory which posits that states respond to imbalances in threats, not just capabilities (see Chapter 3). My research then sheds light on how threat asymmetry is calibrated within an alliance, in other words, a form of alliance management from a small state perspective.

Theoretical attempts to address small states and alliances have been made by Reiter (1996) and Bailes et al. (2016).<sup>4</sup> Similarly to Reiter, I build on structural realism, but in contrast to his approach, I focus on informal alliances and put heavier weight on the strategic setting of a small power, that is, the international system defined by **anarchy** and **polarity**. Anarchy is the *constant* element of the structure of the international system, and polarity is the *variable* element. Anarchy, i.e., absence of government (Waltz 1979, 102), means that the international system lacks a higher central authority to enforce rules over individual states. In the realist sense, anarchy does not prevent cooperation (as exemplified by alliances) but cooperation does not rule out the fact that fundamentally, states are condemned to self-help in order to survive and the system is marked by competition. Security, then, becomes vital: "Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit and power." (126). As emphasized by Pedi and Wivel (2022, 129), international anarchy has major consequences for small states with the risk of war as the "ultimate arbiter", implying that military capabilities affect its maneuver space and capacity to act according to national interests. **Polarity** is the distribution of power between the great powers of the system, which is defined by their number: unipolarity, bipolarity, or multipolarity. Combined capabilities and how they are used to serve national interests define the great powers of a system. Their rank depends on the size of the population and

---

3 The subtype of a **coalition** is closely related to this discussion, although too narrow for present purposes, since it refers to the immediate task of warfare operations that are about to start or already have started (Morrow 2000) towards a specific threat only (Weitsman 2014) and is not intended to last after the mission is completed (Henke 2019).

4 Reiter builds on structural realism and introduces beliefs based on historical experiences of formative events such as world wars, as crucial in determining the alliance choices of small states, while Bailes et al. use liberalism and social theory to introduce the concept of "alliance shelter" but fail to account for how small states respond to a threat from a great power.

territory, resource endowment, military strength, political stability, and competence (Waltz 1979, 131).

A **great power** has the potential to shift the polarity of the system. It follows that the extensive discussion in IR on how to measure power and rank states in terms of size (in absolute or relative terms) lacks relevance when dominating systemic forces are at play, as is the case in this thesis. Therefore, I refrain from reproducing this debate.<sup>5</sup> To illustrate, even if Sweden would be labeled a “middle-size” state compared to Estonia, measured by various indicators, neither country could handle the threat from an aggressive country such as Russia, armed with nuclear weapons, on its own. Put differently, for analytical purposes in this dissertation, the term **small states** refers to those states that are not great powers with the capacity to shape the system’s polarity. I use the terms “small state” and “**small power**” interchangeably. Power asymmetry is at the core, where power refers to the potential position in the international system in relative terms. Hence, such a definition is congruent with scholars who define a small state as “the weaker part in an asymmetric relationship, which is unable to change the nature or functioning of the relationship on its own” (Bailes et al. 2014, 9, Pedi and Wivel 2023) if one accepts that it is the systemic forces that creates this limitation.<sup>6</sup>

---

5 For an extensive analysis of power asymmetry, various approaches to measuring power, and how to define small states, see Kuick (2010, 12-22). For an early account of the relational definition of a small state, see Bjøl (1971, 29).

6 Structural realism has been criticized for not distinguishing between various types of states, in fact, treating all states “through the lens of a satisfied, status quo state” that merely wants to maintain its position in the international system. It is “simply not true that the first concern of *all* states is security” Schweller argues (1994, 85-86). Some states want to improve their position in the system, not just preserve. They want to profit. To achieve this, they must gain relative to others. Classical realists have various names for these states – “imperialistic” (Morgenthau), “revolutionary” (Kissinger), “dissatisfied” (Carr), “have-nots (Mattern), “revisionist” (Wolfers) (Schweller 1994, 85 f.n.). The latter, “revisionist”, is probably the most commonly used in the contemporary debate, also picked up by Schweller. The difference between **revisionist states** and **status quo states**, who accept the system as it is, goes back to the major difference between classical realism and structural realism, as mentioned above, where the former views international politics as the strive for power and expansion, and the latter as the strive for survival and security. Offensive (structural) realism builds on this assumption as well. The great powers are seen as driven by the ultimate goal of hegemony, hence always seeking relative power over their rivals. Such powers are best countered by containment, while those powers striving to preserve the status quo can be engaged with cooperative measures (Tang 2008, 151). Waltz admits that states may seek profit and power but claims that survival must first be assured. He argues that the situation determines whether an offensive or defensive strategy best serves a state’s security (2004, 6). Arguably, then, the difference is not whether states primarily seek survival or not but *how* states seek to ensure their survival. In short, from a structural

This dissertation engages with regional security studies as it empirically addresses the security dynamics in the Baltic Sea region (Jervis 1982, 1985; Buzan 1983; Buzan and Wæver 2003). The **Baltic Sea region** is defined as comprising the Baltic Sea and its bordering states Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland, Sweden and, in addition, Norway.<sup>7</sup> Within regional security studies, the dissertation fills research gaps in two major ways. First, by addressing how the systemic forces affect the regional setting through alliances. Recent anthologies dealing with alliances in a Baltic Sea context have lacked ambitions to develop theoretical contributions or analytical frameworks (Dahl and Järvenpää 2014; Hamilton et al. 2014; Friis 2016; Dahl 2018; Olsen 2018). Secondly, it fills a gap by relating regional security dynamics to a great power threat, an aspect that has been missing in contemporary work (Kirchner and Dominguez 2011 and 2014; Legrenzi and Lawson 2018; Ljung et al. 2012; Sperling 2014).

### 1.3. Research Puzzle and Guiding Questions

At the heart of the research puzzle of the dissertation is, as the title implies, the process of alliance transitions triggered by the rise of a threatening great power. ‘Transatlantic transitions’ is an expression that aims to capture the process of reshaping and managing alliances in light of the rise of such a threat, with an empirical focus on how Russia affected security in the Baltic Sea region. My research approach is informed by deductive theorizing but also involves inductive elements in the sense suggested by Ripsman et al. (2016, 117), in that it initially relies on “surface-level knowledge” of empirical cases. The empirical observations that have informed my research puzzle are centered around the following developments:

- For NATO, the Russian annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas resulted in a return to collective defense after having focused on international missions and crisis management outside of NATO territory for decades. The US, that under the Obama administration had indulged in a “pivot to Asia” to counter its relative power decline

---

realism perspective, states should always pay close attention to any great power that conducts balancing behavior in terms of strengthening its military capabilities or/and forming alliances since it might, through these efforts, succeed in shaping the polarity of the international system. I adhere to this approach.

7 This is congruent with the Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

versus China, once again engaged in the security of Europe, especially in the military field in terms of troops, exercises, and prepositioning of materiel, albeit growing from a low level. Politically, American signals were less apparent, as illustrated by President Obama calling Russia a “regional power” (Borger 2014) and letting Germany and France take the lead in solving the Russia-Ukraine conflict through the Normandie Format. When President Trump took office in January 2017, he soon raised political tensions across the Atlantic, not least in relation to Germany, but maintained military engagement in Europe and even strengthened it. For the Baltic Sea allies who relied on the US for their security and stability, American engagement and its leadership in NATO was crucial, and a key concern was whether the US could be counted upon and how to assess the ambiguous American signals. These developments provide the setting for **Paper I**.

- The Baltic Sea region gradually became a concern for the US and NATO as it was at the immediate frontline to Russia, in contrast to the Cold War, when it served as a buffer zone between NATO and the Warsaw Pact with neutral Sweden and Finland in between. As the Baltic states, Poland, and former East Germany had become allied territories, the stakes for the US and NATO got higher. From this perspective, the Russian military build-up in Kaliningrad and the Arctic posed severe challenges to deter and defend against Russian aggression. Sweden and Finland, though not members of NATO, shared the same security setting and had abandoned their neutral stance when they joined the EU in 1995. They had already cooperated extensively with NATO in the PfP and international missions. In light of Russia’s assertive behavior, the collaboration deepened even further and became tailor-made for the Baltic Sea region. To efficiently counter the Russian threat, all Baltic Sea states needed to cooperate closely, regardless of Alliance membership. NATO had to figure out if and how it was possible for partners to engage in collective defense measures, which had never been done before. This dilemma sets the scene for **Paper II**.
- Repeatedly, Sweden and Finland were referred to as “allies” by representatives from NATO countries, while the two countries themselves emphasized that they were not members of any military alliance. Instead of applying for NATO membership, they indulged in a rather complicated networking endeavor in order to develop close cooperation with NATO and a range of countries in security and

defense, the closest being among themselves. In light of the Russian threat, a question that circulated in many allied capitals was why Sweden and Finland chose these alternative integration paths instead of joining the Alliance? These contradictions inform the framing of **Paper III**.

Theoretically, the dissertation starts by examining how systemic forces may affect security in a regional setting marked by power asymmetry between great and small powers, as well as a threatening great power. It adheres to the premise that any analysis of small state security should start by identifying the type of international system in which the small state operates while recognizing that it is not always that the systemic forces affect the strategic setting to the extent that it makes a difference for small states. This premise could be one reason for few contemporary studies in this field. In more peaceful times, security challenges to small states might merely “originate in the geopolitical vicinity of the small state”, rather than from the international system (Bailes et al. 2014, 7). At such times, small powers can exercise power and seize opportunities internationally (Long 2022, 60-61). However, when the systemic forces are marked by tension and competition, and a great power acts aggressively, the weakness of the small state in terms of material and especially military capabilities, including nuclear, becomes more prominent, and its asymmetric disadvantage to the great power more apparent. In a unipolar system, small states can be regionally vulnerable if the hegemon refrains from balancing a rising power and the regional states are not powerful enough to balance against it on their own. Consequently, realism can make an important theoretical contribution to small state studies and vice versa (Pedi and Wivel, 2023). Accordingly, the dissertation is designed to first address the impact of systemic incentives on the regional setting regarding alliance formation and alliance management, thereby creating a framework for the focused study of small states’ responses, including allowing for mediating variables that can explain deviating balancing behavior.

Specifically, this study aims to address the research question: *How do systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional setting with regard to small state responses to an external threat?* The thesis applies balance of threat theory to bridge great power and small power responses and to capture alliance formation and management in a regional setting, opening for the emergence of informal allies and alternative versions of integration strategies when certain conditions apply, as well as threat calibration as a means of small power alliance management. Where structural realism is too sparse to explain balancing deviations in small state responses to systemic

incentives, the dissertation turns to neoclassical realism that accounts for domestic conditions that hinder policy flexibility. The thesis is guided by a set of theoretically intriguing questions that stem from the ambition to focus on the systemic setting and explore its impact within a regional setting:

- How do systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional context?
- Under which conditions does a country become an informal ally? Which indicators reveal the formation of such a status?
- In light of an external threat, why do some small states choose not to formally join alliances?

To explore the research puzzle empirically, the dissertation applies case study analysis on the deteriorated security situation in the Baltic Sea region from 2014 to 2020, caused by Russia's assertive behavior, most prominently expressed by its illegal annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas in 2014. The case study design is described and motivated in detail in Chapter 4.

## 1.4. Contributions of the Dissertation and Structure of the Summary Paper

The contributions of the dissertation are described at length in Chapter 5. In sum, they include investigating how the systemic environment impacts alliance formation and management in a regional setting, marked by power asymmetry and a threatening great power, with the aim to pay attention to shortfalls in alliance theory and the study of informal allies and small powers. Building on a definition of alliances that allows them to be either formal or informal, the dissertation makes a major conceptual contribution to IR by introducing the term “informal ally”, and by presenting an analytical framework to trace under which conditions such a status emerges, thus addressing a gap in the research on informal alliances (Lanoszka 2022, 15). Furthermore, the dissertation proposes a framework for evaluating integration strategies into collective defense along three dimensions – openness, inclusiveness, and comprehensiveness – in combination with a screening dimension from dependency on a great power and its institutional structures. Thereby it facilitates the study of small states and their behavior in relation to alliances when a threat from a great power emerges.

An additional theoretical contribution to the contemporary academic debate is its introduction of mediating variables in accordance with neoclassical realism, in order to explain and predict a small state's balancing behavior. In addition, the dissertation presents substantial empirical data on a formative period for NATO and the Baltic Sea region during the years 2014-2020 through its case study design, document analysis, and elite interviews.

The compilation thesis consists of three scientific papers (see p. 9) and a summary paper, which is structured as follows. Chapter 2 offers a literature review of related research, which positions this study in the research field by identifying the limitations of existing research and theoretical approaches. In Chapter 3, I advance my main theoretical contributions to contemporary academic debates and develop the theoretical arguments further. In Chapter 4, I discuss the research design, method, and material with a focus on case study analysis, elite interviews, and triangulation of material. In Chapter 5, I present the structure, method of analysis, and key findings of each scientific paper and summarize the main contributions of the thesis. I then conclude by revisiting the research questions and reflect on how the dramatic developments since 2022 could be captured by future avenues for research.





## 2. Previous Research

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an account of current research on state and alliance responses to a rising great power threat and how the scientific literature relates to alliance theory, small state strategies, and notions of regional security, with a focus on the Baltic Sea region. The chapter identifies the limitations of existing research and the theoretical approaches employed, positioning this study in the relevant research fields.

### 2.1. Alliance Theory

#### 2.1.1. Realist Approaches

Alliance theory examines how and why alliances are shaped, managed, and sustained. The research literature on alliances and their formation is extensive, and a majority of the work falls within the realist school in IR. Realist alliance theory rests on propositions stating that alliances originate when a group of states share a common external threat and dissolve when the threat vanishes. Building on work by Liska (1962) and Waltz (1979), alliance theory tends to rest on a balance of power approach, adapted by Walt (1987, 2009) to a balance of threat model, which I elaborate upon in Chapter 3. Alliance theory has been labeled “one of the most underdeveloped areas in the theory of international relations” (Snyder 1990, 103). Central work on alliance theory includes contributions by Walt (1987, 2009) and Reiter (1996) on the origins of alliances, attempting to explain why states seek allies. Poast (2019) introduces a theory of alliance negotiation, that is, the process leading up to countries becoming formal allies by putting joint war planning at the center. Henke (2019) explores the utility of diplomatic networks in the building of military coalitions, which relates to **Paper III**, although she explicitly excludes the creation of military alliances “that are intended to last beyond a specific mission” (2019, 8) in her empirical data. Scholars such as G. Snyder (1997) and Weitsman (2004, 2014) have focused on the management of alliance

relations, once introduced by Shroeder (1976) and more recently also discussed by Lanoszka (2022), while Rynning (2005) and Lindley-French (2023) have applied classical realism and Hyde-Price (2016) has engaged with structural realism to explain the endurance of alliances, using NATO after the Cold War as case study.

A group of scholars has explored how polarity affects the efficiency of alliance formation and management, given the anarchic international setting. Christensen and J. Snyder (1990) have examined multipolarity using World War I and II as empirical cases. They found that when perceptions of offensive advantage dominated, states tended to form tight alliances marked by unconditional balancing (“chain-ganging”). When defensive advantage dominated, states showed limited liability and tended towards free-riding, letting others take the hit and the cost (“buck-passing”). Mearsheimer (2001) associates bucket-passing firsthand with balanced multipolar systems in which great powers are geographically insulated from the aggressor, while Schweller (2004) frames buck-passing as a form of underreaction to threats, by which a state attempts to free ride on the balancing efforts of others. G. Snyder (1984) uses the terms “entrapment” versus “abandonment” to account for similar reasoning on balancing efficiency. As does Walt, Snyder warns against an exaggerated belief in written treaties: “In a multipolar system, alliances are never absolutely firm (...) therefore, the fear of being abandoned by one’s ally is ever-present.” Entrapment happens when a nation is “dragged into a conflict over an ally’s interests that one does not share, or shares only partially” (466-477). These dilemmas do not occur in bipolarity, Waltz (1979) argues, since superpowers are not dependent on allies for their survival and smaller allies cannot possibly confront the opposing superpower alone. There is less work done on how unipolarity affects alliances, which is relevant for this study, but Walt (2009, 94) posits that in a unipolar world, alliances will be a reaction to the dominant power: “either to constrain it or exploit it”. The unipole, on the other hand, has greater freedom of action than great powers in bipolarity or multipolarity and can “pick and choose” its allies and partners, which is of relevance to the theoretical propositions in **Paper I**. Since the end of the Cold War, which was characterized by bipolarity at the systems level, Waltz (2000), and more expansionist realists like Mearsheimer (2001), have predicted that slowly, as systems incentives translate into behavior, rivals will balance against the United States. Wohlforth (1999) stipulates that potential balancers will refrain from doing so as long as they benefit from the status quo. Whether balancing occurs is an empirically testable prediction derived from structural realism and previewing findings in this thesis it appears to contain value. Slowly, the unipolarity of the post-Cold War era is transforming into another

kind of order, but whether that order will be bipolar, multipolar or something else is widely debated (see **Paper I** for an overview of the contemporary academic debate on polarity).

### **2.1.2. Liberalist and Constructivist Approaches to Alliance Theory**

While realist alliance theory builds on assumptions that alliances are formed and sustained when a group of states shares a common external threat and disintegrate when the danger diminishes, liberal IR scholars emphasize the importance of norms and values as the glue that keeps an alliance together (e.g. Parsi 2006, 8, Sloan 2018, Petersson 2019) and vice versa, that the breakdown of liberal democracy within an alliance could trigger its dissolution (Wallander 2018). The dynamics of the alliance come from within rather than from the outside. Research in this vein often addresses the situation after the end of the Cold War in attempts to explain why alliances entered to counter the Soviet threat still prevailed when the threat had vanished. In *Why NATO Endures*, Thies (2009, 294) argues that an alliance of democracies has ‘hidden strengths’ and ‘self-healing tendencies’ that cause it to prevail, such as “the attraction felt by democracies to working closely together with each other and the internal workings of democracies that enhance their suitability as long-term allies.” Flockhart (2024, 472) emphasizes the dual roles of NATO, both as a military alliance and as a “community of shared values” and the ability of the alliance to switch between those roles as decisive for its resilience. Thies’ argument resembles the notion of a “security community” as initially proposed by Karl Deutsch et al. (1957) and defined by Adler and Barnett (1998, 30) as a group of states that enjoy “dependable expectations of peaceful change” in their relation with one another. They also suggest that shared identities underpin security cooperation, thus offering a bridge to a third theoretical approach to the study of alliances, namely constructivism. Constructivists put collective identity – who we are and who the others are - at the core (Bremberg 2012, 43). They argue that common identity, rather than external threats, best explains the post-Cold War alliance patterns, such as, for instance, NATO enlargement (Gheciu 2005; Lašas 2012; Riim 2006; Schimmelfennig 1999). A key aspect for constructivists is that identity is constituted in relation to difference, to a common perception of an ‘other’ (Campbell 1992, 8). Accordingly, Sjursen (2004) argues that a distinction must be made between on one hand a community of values linked to particular experiences and a particular context, and on the other hand, a community based on democratic

principles. The alliance is thus not primarily kept together by democratic norms but by a sense of shared history and fate.

As I explain in section 1.2, the ontology of this dissertation rests on realism, and the main ambition is to explore, apply, and develop realism further. Liberal and constructivist approaches are less relevant to my research scope since they do not focus on the state as an actor nor on military power and military threats to an extent necessary to guide the research puzzle of the thesis. However, they are not completely absent. In the analysis in **Paper II**, elements from all these three approaches - realist, liberal, and constructivist - are applied in an attempt to explore what makes an ally. A similar approach has been used by Kim (2010) while studying how South Korea has adapted to new strategic challenges by transforming and reinventing its alliance with the United States.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Webber and Hyde-Price (2016) take on a comprehensive analysis of NATO through a range of theoretical perspectives that include realism, liberalism, and constructivism, among others. Addressing the question of NATO's agency, NATO is described as such a complex feature that it cannot "be understood by drawing upon the resources of any one theoretical approach in IR or comparative politics" (Hyde-Price 2016, 34). Their approach is driven by the lack of theoretical attempts to address NATO. Rather, literature on NATO developments tends to focus on key episodes, such as international operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan or Libya, enlargement or partnerships, that is, a set of arrangements through which NATO has co-operated with non-members. In analyzing NATO as an actor, I mainly draw on Weitsman (2003) and Keohane (1993), arguing that the alliance primarily serves as an arena to calibrate state interests, reduce transaction costs, and monitor and facilitate the exchange of information.

### **2.1.3. Informal Allies and Alignment**

Scholarly work on alliance theory rarely distinguishes between formal and informal allies. Most literature tends to take the formal status for granted, with a few exceptions like Walt (1997, 157), as discussed in Chapter 1. As Morrow points out (2000, 76), the question looms "as to why some sets of interests are formalized, and others are not". For most scholars, if a country has not formally joined an alliance, i.e, signed an alliance treaty, it is simply not part of it (Reiter

---

<sup>8</sup> "In those attempts, we can discover strategic elements that are realist (utilizing the United States as a strategic balancer between China and Japan), liberal (going beyond military alliance), and constructivist (joining the community-building), p. 277.

1996, 58, Morrow 2000, 63-65, Poast 2019, Lanoszka 2022, 13-18). Kjellström Elgin and Lanoszka (2023, 36-38) consider the option of the informal alliance but dismiss its application due to a perceived difficulty to define at what point defense cooperation qualifies as an alliance, a dilemma, which I address in **Paper II**. Although I recognize that informal or formal manifestations of alliances make it difficult to isolate them as objects, I argue that it is possible to make such a distinction by applying my analytical framework, which allows for a reasonable determination of the point in time when the status of informal ally occurs (see Chapter 5).

As I elaborated upon in Chapter 1, a related concept to informal ally is that of “alignment”, foremost developed by Snyder (1990, 104-105), which he defines as “a set of mutual expectations between two or more states that they will have each other’s support in disputes or wars”. For the purpose of this dissertation, the distinction between “commitment” and “expectations” is central, making Snyder’s broad concept of alignment less useful. Rather, I treat informal alliances and informal allies as a sub-set of alignment. Korolev (2019) has explored alignment by assessing the level of defense cooperation between Russia and China. Alignment has also been applied to the less theoretically developed field of partnerships. Lunde Saxi (2022, 57) finds the notion of alignment useful as an analytical tool as it provides a greater degree of nuance between alliance and partnership. From an alignment perspective, Pesu and Iso-Markku (2024) similarly analyze Finland’s relationship with NATO from 1992-2022. There is extensive literature on NATO and partnerships, albeit with few theoretical ambitions. Mostly, the literature is of descriptive or prescriptive character, covering issues such as the role of partners in NATO-led international missions, the NATO-Russia relationship, NATO’s relationship with the EU and the “European neutrals”, and how partnerships can become more strategically relevant for NATO (see e.g. Edström et al. 2011; Aybet and Moore 2010; Smith 2006; Fröling and Schreer 2018; Cottey 2018; Flockhart 2014; Wieslander and Kjellström Elgin 2021). However, there are some attempts towards more theoretically informed studies, such as Ratti (2013) using realism to account for the NATO-Russia relationship and Dinev Ivanov (2017) on the correlation between institutionalization and compliance in NATO’s partnerships. Other contributions of more theoretical relevance for this dissertation are Petersson (2018) applying a “realist-idealist lens” to explain Sweden’s partnership with NATO and Forsberg (2018) putting emphasis on psychology and domestic politics to deepen the understanding of Finland as a partner to NATO.

#### 2.1.4. Small States in Alliance Theory

As Rothstein elegantly outlined, small states can make two fundamental choices: either “draw on the strength of others” or “remove or isolate itself from power conflicts” – put shortly, *align or hide* (1968, 37). Reiter (1996) draws on this proposition in his theory on alliance choices for small states, as he proposes two options: alliance or neutrality. States that seek neutrality through isolationism and/or non-alignment are at the mercy of great powers to accept such a status, thus pursuing a risky path (Rothstein *ibid.*). In a world of growing international interdependence, small states have instead tended to seek solutions through external engagement and partnerships (Bailes et al. 2014, 32). This tendency, in turn, affects a state’s degree of autonomy, which some small state scholars have examined in relation to integration, treating integration and non-alignment as competing but not mutually exclusive small state strategies (Tamnes 1986; Petersson 2012; Archer 2014; Hedling and Brommesson 2017). This scholarly work has been a valuable foundation for the analytical framework that I develop to examine levels of integration into collective defense. I apply the framework in the analysis of Sweden’s defense doctrine in **Paper III**.

Other scholars, using Sweden as a historical case study, have focused on how a small state can navigate the power field of surrounding great powers by choosing non-alignment in order to preserve state survival (Westberg 2015 and 2016; Kronvall and Peterson 2005; Engelbrekt et al. 2015). As Osgood argues: “Every state must have an alliance policy, even if its purpose is only to avoid alliances” (1968, 17). With reference to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Sweden, Elgström (2000) suggests five strategies for small, non-aligned states: *balancing* - policymakers try to be equally close to, or far away from, all great powers; *appeasement* - granting unilateral concessions to a threatening power; *courting* - rapprochement to a friendly great power; *distancing* - a state actively attempts to prevent undesired outcomes and promote desired ones by distancing itself from the great powers; and *hiding* - a state passively awaits external impulses. However, as Westberg (2016) concludes, it has in contemporary times been difficult to apply non-aligned strategies to Sweden since the country has moved a long way from neutrality by joining the EU and building its security on a solidarity doctrine aiming to give and take military support in case of war. While developing my analytical framework for **Paper III**, I reached a similar conclusion, namely that previous non-aligned strategies were of limited value. Instead, looking at how small powers navigate for survival in general proved more useful. Here, the underlying assumption of the analysis resembles that of Bjøl (1971, 32-34) and Kronvall and Peterson (2005) in that it emphasizes the

strategic setting of a small power. As Bjøl points out, since the environment matters more to small powers than great powers, the analysis of small state security should start “by an identification of the type of international system in which it has to operate”. This assumption also motivates the focus on the effect of unipolarity on regional security in **Paper I**, thus setting the scene for further analysis in **Paper II and III**.

In prior research on alliance formation and management, small states have been an underdeveloped theme. Reiter (1996) takes on the challenge by developing a theory of learning to account for small states’ alliance choices. Building on structural realism, he adds the assumption that states are guided by beliefs that are more important than external factors, such as threats or capabilities in determining state behavior. Small states will decide upon alliance or neutrality based on lessons learned from formative events in the past, concretely from their experiences of world wars. Reiter’s theoretical approach resembles that of mediating variables in neoclassical realism (see Chapter 3). However, for this dissertation, it is still of limited applicability since he restricts his theory to formal alliances and learning from formative events to the years following a world war, which is too distant in time for the empirical focus of this thesis. Bailes et al. (2016) also address the shortfall by introducing the concept of “alliance shelter”. Building on liberalism and historical sociology, the concept strives to complement standard alliance theory by rejecting the dichotomy between domestic and international spheres, as well as the realist presumption that states are functionally undifferentiated regardless of size. Notwithstanding, the suggested propositions are of limited applicability to this dissertation since they do not specifically deal with the threat posed by a great power but are broader in scope.

Morrow (1991) develops a rational choice approach to what he labels “symmetric” versus “asymmetric” alliances to account for a more refined analysis than merely capability aggregation and threat deterrence. In that approach, he distinguishes between “major” and “minor” powers and analyzes their trade-offs between autonomy and security. If a state aligns with a major power it gains a large increase in security at a large cost in autonomy. If it aligns with another minor power it gets a small gain in security at a small cost of autonomy (913-914). The choice for Sweden and Finland to either align with NATO led by the US or with each other clearly illustrates this proposition. Morrow gives a couple of examples of autonomy concessions for small states in return for security: military bases that provide strategic locations for power projection or agreements that allow for domestic policy interference. Morrow’s theoretical framework resembles the integration/screening spectrum in my



analysis but is limited to analyzing formal alliances. It has more recently been refined and applied by Béraud-Sudreau and Schmitt (2024) to account for small states' decision to develop an arms industry by distinguishing between liberal and coercive asymmetric alliances.

Small state strategies on how to reduce vulnerabilities have been theoretically explored by liberalist and constructivist approaches with regard to international organizations (Wivel 2005b), as well as international finance and trade (Katzenstein 1985). Furthermore, attempts have been made to apply a more comprehensive analytical framework to study small state security strategies by integrating the military/strategic, economic and other non-military dimensions (Archer et al. 2014). More broadly, scholars have also focused on the politics of small states in their attempts to influence regional and global affairs and to secure space for political maneuver (Baldacchino and Wivel 2020). Long (2022) focuses on the nature of the asymmetrical relationship between small and great powers and how it shapes the foreign policy strategies of small states. These studies are, however, not of direct relevance to this thesis since they do not address small state responses to an emerging great power threat.

### **2.1.5. Introducing Unit-Level Factors That Shape State Behavior**

Structural realism gives little guidance to explain the behavior of a small state that faces an external threat since it does not deal with the level of foreign policy. Neoclassical realism contributes to this gap by recognizing that both systemic imperatives and domestic political factors, so-called unit-level factors, shape state behaviour (Mearsheimer 2009, 245-246, Lobell et al. 2009, 282). The state is “the manager of the nation’s resources for competition in the anarchic international environment” (Brawley 2009, 97). Neoclassical realism expects policy to deviate from the requirements of systemic imperatives under domestic circumstances that impede policy flexibility, and this is examined by introducing mediating variables to the analytical framework. Still, neoclassical realism would expect states to have strategies consistent with balance-of-power logic, that is, not fail to balance against (or bandwagon with) a hostile power, or else it will be punished by the systemic forces (Lobell et al. 2009, 282). An unsettled question within neoclassical realism is the status and scope of the mediating variables and their contribution to an overarching theory, a topic further explored in Chapter 3.

There is a similar tradition among small states scholars to include unit-level factors to explain the relationship between the relative distribution of power in

the international system and the foreign policies of states (Lundqvist 2017, 54). The tradition includes scholarly work on the impact of internal political party considerations (Dalsjö 2006; Doerer 2008; Malmberg 2001), the need for leaders to maintain power in the face of domestic problems (Doerer 2011), the impact of institutionalized ideas as guiding principles (Möller and Bjereld 2010), and previous experiences of armed conflicts and perceptions of strategic exposure (Edström and Westberg 2020). It is noteworthy that none of these studies explicitly relates to neoclassical realism. Consequently, the dissertation contributes to bridging research between great power and small power scholars in the field of IR, by further examining mediating variables that affect small state strategies and anchoring that work within neoclassical realism.

## 2.2. Regional Aspects of Security

### 2.2.1. The Systemic Setting and Regional Security

Regional aspects of security have attracted much of scholarly interest since the end of the Cold War, building on influential theoretical work on the rise of regional security orders by Robert Jervis (1982, 1985) and on “regional security complexes” by Barry Buzan (1983). While Jervis offers explanatory power by identifying independent variables that, in the light of severe external threats, produce sustained cooperation among states, Buzan’s notion of regional security complexes, especially as further developed with Ole Waever (2003), is mostly descriptive in character. The latter includes key concepts of the analytical framework, such as “security interdependence”, indicating that states in a region have primary security concerns tightly linked to each other. The concept of security interdependence is relevant in this dissertation as a point of departure for describing the security setting in the Baltic Sea region.

Another group of scholars has focused on different modes of regional security governance (Kirchner and Dominguez 2011 and 2014; Sperling 2014). Englebret (2018) identifies four geopolitical approaches that could be applied to regional security analysis. Much of the contemporary work on regional security has been related to external threats that do not originate from other states, such as civil wars with diffusional consequences or regional water conflicts (Legrenzi and Lawson 2018; Ljung et al. 2012; Buzan 1983). In that aspect, the applicability of these studies to this dissertation is limited since its focus is on state responses to a threatening great power.

### 2.2.2. Hard Security and the Baltic Sea Region

Studies conducted with a focus on hard security in the Baltic Sea region were rare prior to the developments in Ukraine, one exception being Ljung et al. (2012), who analyzed the security and defense situation for the Baltic states by applying the notion of “security complex” as developed by Buzan (1983). At that time, the authors clarified that it was largely non-military threats, such as cyber and energy, that concerned the Baltic states but noted at the same time that tensions were on the rise and that the Baltic states had started to re-orient their Armed Forces toward territorial defense. Their fruitful application of security complex theory led the authors to conclude that “the interplay between external influences that amplify local problems, and local problems that shape and constrain external entanglements and influences is clearly the key issue of the security situation of the Baltic Sea area” (Ljung et al. 2012, 116). Winnerstig (2012) has conducted an extensive analysis of the application of the security complex notion in the Baltic Sea area setting. However, the value of the concept for the region has also been questioned due to the extent of driving factors emanating from outside of the region, e.g., the influence of the US (Christiansson 2012).

A more recent study of the maritime security dynamics of the Baltic Sea region has been conducted by Lundqvist (2017), who applies a conceptual framework of structural realism that follows Knudsen (1988 and 1999) “for structuring the analysis of relations between a small state and a nearby great power engaged in power rivalry with a more distant great power” (Lundqvist 2017, 257). Lundqvist uses five variables to frame the discussion: 1) level of great power tensions, 2) pressure on small neighbors, 3) foreign policy orientation of small states, 4) geographic location of small states, and 5) existence of multilateral frameworks for security cooperation. To conclude, the rise in the level of great power rivalry and their fear of the regional great power can explain both deepened Swedish-Finnish naval cooperation as well as deepened US/NATO partnership. This alignment is congruent with my findings in **Paper III** on the importance of systemic imperatives and threat levels. Related work within the realm of applied research has been done by Wieslander and Lundquist (2021) with a focus on the strategic interests and military activities of the UK, France and the United States in the Baltic Sea region, and the Arctic, and Klein et al. (2019), Dalsjö et al. (2019) and Wieslander et al. (2023) exploring the deterrence and defense of the region from an alliance perspective. Åselius (2018) provides a historical analysis of hegemonic rivalry in the region.

Several anthologies, from 2014 onwards, focus on the security situation in the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe and its implications for security and

defense policy (Dahl and Järvenpää 2014; Hamilton et al. 2014; Friis 2016; Dahl 2018; Olsen 2018). A common point of departure is Russia's aggressive actions, which have triggered deterrence and defense measures in order to respond to rising levels of tensions. These anthologies fall into the applied research category, with no explicit ambition to develop theoretical contributions or analytical frameworks or to provide unique empirical material such as surveys or interviews. Overall, these anthologies present expert insights and tend to be more descriptive than explanatory in character. Some are also prescriptive in that they contribute policy recommendations. In sum, the main value of these anthologies for this study lies in their contribution to a detailed and continuous picture of developments in the Baltic Sea region and its surroundings, which are of importance for security and defense policy studies in a transformative era. The empirical contributions of this dissertation feed into this category of literature as well.

### **2.2.3. Cooperative Approaches to Regional Security**

The assertive behavior demonstrated in 2014 was more broadly perceived as attempts by Russia to actively challenge the prevailing European security order, which Russia had been a part of and which most European states wished to preserve. In recent years, some research has focused on state responses to the rising Russian threat from a cooperative stance, exploring possible paths for dialogue and de-escalation of tensions. Makarychev and Sergunin (2017, 466) explore “those elements which are missing from Russia's soft power toolkit in relation to the Baltic Sea regional agenda, and how its socialization potential could be improved.” Those elements include using sub-national actors such as regional and local governments and civil society initiatives, including cross-border and transnational projects (2017, 476-477). Ekengren (2018) follows a similar path in elaborating on the possibility of continuing the security community building in the region, regardless of the geopolitical tensions that have arisen. The way forward, he argues, would be to shift the basis of cooperation from national interests to “concrete problem-solving projects with sectoral partners in the north-west regions of Russia” (2018, 12). In both cases, the space for state-driven dialogue and cooperation to reduce tensions is regarded as limited, possibly contra-productive. If trust is to be restored, it has to be a “low politics and bottom-up approach to security building” (2018, 11). Another set of research has focused on the response of the Nordics to the Russian threat, examining how a more congruent threat perception has led to growing similarities in foreign and security policies

(Bengtsson 2020) as well as converging national role perceptions among the Nordic states (Brommesson et al. 2023).

## 2.3. Summary of Previous Research

The review of previous research shows that the present dissertation fills certain important research gaps in the contemporary development of IR theory. Although there is extensive research literature on alliances, their formation and management, there is a clear shortfall when it comes to theorizing and studying the distinction between a formal and an informal ally. The dissertation addresses this gap by developing a concept and an analytical framework to determine the existence of an informal ally. There is also little theoretical work on what distinguishes a partner and an informal ally, which the thesis expands upon. Furthermore, the dissertation takes on the underdeveloped theoretical field of small states in alliance theory by exploring responses to systemic imperatives and strategies to navigate in light of a threatening great power in the regional context. Therefore, the dissertation also addresses the less explored field of how systemic forces affect regional security through alliances.

# 3. Theoretical Approach

In this chapter I follow up on the realist introduction in Chapter 1 and further discuss how the contemporary academic debate on realist theory relates to key findings of the thesis. I start with a brief overview of different schools of realism before I recall the research question of the dissertation: *How do systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional setting with regard to small state responses to an external threat?* Using this question as a point of departure, I explore small states and structural realism from a balance of threat perspective, and then turn to neoclassical realism, as the thesis demonstrates that mediating variables can also affect alliance formation. I indulge in the debate on whether neoclassical realism is actually compatible with structural realism, as claimed by its advocates. Furthermore, I address the main question aiming to develop neoclassical realism as a theory: are domestic variables occasional abnormalities or regular interventions? I end the chapter by summarizing my reflections and findings.

## 3.1. Schools of Realism

In order to locate my approach within the broader theoretical setting, I refer to the three (or 3.5) schools of realism in IR, following Quinn (2018). First, there is classical realism building on the scholarly work of Hans Morgenthau and E. H. Carr, and its modern version that Quinn labels classical realism “redux”. Classical realism was developed after World War II to serve as an alternative to liberalism, emphasizing the primacy of power and state rivalry to that of law, institutions, and quests for peace. Classical realism applies a bottom-up perspective to international politics, where aggregated observations at state and statesmen level are assumed to generate the outcomes of war and peace. This version of realism merges objectivism and subjectivism and claims that “the distribution of power can only be understood with reference to power’s purpose” (Rynning 2011, 37). Classical realism redux pledges a return to these

methodological and normative characteristics of classical realism and rejects positivist scientific aspirations.

The second school of realism is the most influential one, namely structural realism,<sup>9</sup> founded by Kenneth Waltz. The core feature of structural realism is that it is a theory of a system with anarchy as the organizing principle. As I describe in Chapter 1, structural realism differs from classical realism in that it assumes that first hand, a state, no matter its size, strives to secure its existence, rather than project power. It is not the struggle for power that characterizes the international system, it is the struggle for survival. States seek to survive, which means that their aspiration for power will be related to that ambition, not to an inherited wish for expansion. Following Quinn's categorization, structural realism is identical with neorealism. Waltz preferred "neorealism" to the term "structural realism" (1990, 29). Keohane (1986) took the reverse position while Buzan et al. (1993, 9) attempted to reserve "neorealism" for Waltz's "narrow theory" and use "structural realism" as a label for a broader IR theory that they proposed. In the contemporary debate, however, structural realism is mostly used as a synonym for neorealism, as suggested by Quinn. Another consequence of Quinn's categorization is that both "defensive" and "offensive" realism fall within structural realism, while sometimes there is a tendency to split the two into separate groups. Quinn places more expansionist offshoots represented by scholars such as Mearsheimer (2001, 2009) and Layne (2012) among those who accept the core of the structural realism framework but propose refinements of their own. Waltz himself saw little purpose in defining structural realism as either offensive or defensive and argued that the strategic choice of a state depended on the situation (2004, 6).

The parsimony of structural realism limits its explanatory and predictive scope, which has generated a lot of scholarly critique. Many scholars have been inspired to add variables and elements while maintaining the foundation of structural realism in order to strengthen its explanatory power and problem-solving utility. This has often been driven by a wish for the theory to be

---

9 As my previous research has shown, structural realism is the most influential theory not only because of its explanatory power and the foundation it has provided for further theory development, but because it is built on well-structured cognitive metaphors that carry scientific connotations: "The choice of metaphors in line with the character of the theory reveals high skills on part of its constructor. This is not to argue that the metaphors were deliberately chosen, but rather that Waltz's choice of metaphors contributes to the power of his theory. The entailments of the metaphors help creating a coherent theory." Wieslander. Anna. 1995. "Metaphors, Thought and Theory: The Case of Neorealism and Bipolarity" *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, 98 (2). pp 129-156, p. 140.

applicable at the foreign policy level in order to explain, predict, or prescribe, since structural realism, in a Waltzian sense, is not a theory of foreign policy.

Roughly, scholars have developed structural realism along two paths: either by expanding non-structural variables into the system, or by “opening up” at the unit level, i.e. the state, thereby departing from the assumption of states as unitary actors. Scholars who have indulged in work at the systemic level include Buzan et al. (1993) focusing on interaction, Jervis (1978) adding technology and geography to polarity as variables, van Evera (1985, 1998) adding social and political order and diplomatic factors, Reiter (1996) adding beliefs and Christensen and Snyder (1990) adding perception and misperception of the strategic incentives to account for offensive or defensive advantages. Other scholars put emphasis on the domestic level, where intervening variables are assumed to filter systemic pressures to produce foreign policy outcomes. States are not unitary actors but for instance divided in their elite perceptions (Snyder 1991), in their political ambitions and goals (Schweller 1994) or between elite and society (Schweller 2004).

From this latter approach, the third school of realism has emerged, namely neoclassical realism, with attempts by Ripsman et al. (2016) to create one coherent “neoclassical realist theory of international politics”. Neoclassical realism expects foreign policy to deviate from the requirements of systemic imperatives under domestic circumstances that impede policy flexibility. In its efforts to create a theory of IR, neoclassical realism strives to identify mediating variables that routinely disrupt systemic-incentivized behavior and encourages deviation (Ripsman et al., 2009, 281, Meibauer 2019).

My theoretical approach builds on structural realism, in particular as developed by Waltz and Walt. Where structural realism is too sparse to provide explanatory leverage, I turn to neoclassical realism to allow for mediating variables that can explain small state foreign policy behavior while recognizing both systemic imperatives and domestic politics. Such a theoretical approach is possible, I claim, since structural realism and neoclassical realism are compatible, a stance which I develop further in section 3.3.1. However, I first turn to structural realism and discuss my application of balance of power versus balance of threat theory in the thesis.



### 3.2. Small States and Structural Realism: Balancing Against Power or Balancing Against Threat?

In order to answer the research question of the thesis, *How do systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional setting with regard to small state responses to an external threat?* I explore how balance of threat theory can be used to address the lack of attention paid in structural realism to both informal allies and small states. Mainly, its value lies in bridging perspectives that can be applied to a regional setting marked by power and threat asymmetry. Consequently, I find balance of threat theory useful for several reasons. In **Paper I**, balance of threat theory proves valuable to accommodate the discrepancy between what is threatening to a hegemon, with overwhelming power, versus small powers with limited resources and maneuver space. In **Paper II**, the importance of the threat level to become an informal ally is a key finding, in congruence with balance of threat theory.

Great powers are the ones that count in determining the structure of the system and structural realism says little about small states, other than that they have to adapt to the system incentives. As small states, their space to maneuver will be much more limited than for greater powers in the system. In his balance of power theory, Waltz stipulated that under anarchy, the organizing principle of the system, states seek ultimately to survive, by balancing against concentrations of power thus avoiding dominance: “Because power is a means and not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions (...) If states wished to maximize power, they would join the stronger side (...) This does not happen because balancing, not bandwagoning, is the behavior induced by the system” (1979, 126). That contemporary Russia chooses to align with China rather than with the most powerful state, namely the US, illustrates this balance of power behavior. Nevertheless, balance of power is a difficult and costly endeavor for states, especially in unipolarity due to the power asymmetry in the system. As Layne (2006, 29) points out, it is vital to differ “between the intentions driving states’ strategies and the outcomes those policies produce. Balancing (which is behavior at the unit level) should, therefore, not be conflated with the actual attainment of balance (which is a systemic outcome).” For a more detailed account of various kinds of balancing behavior, see **Paper I**.

Building on the work of Waltz, but partly also challenging it, Stephen Walt has convincingly argued that although the distribution of power is a crucial factor that states pay attention to, it is the threat level that determines a state’s

decision when it comes to alliance formation (1987, 5; 2009, 89). He identifies four factors that affect the level of threat: aggregate power of a state, its geographic proximity, offensive power and aggressive intentions. This in turn informs a state's decision on with whom to form an alliance to balance against that threat. As Walt emphasizes, all four variables are not equally important in alliance formation: aggregate power and perception of intent are the primary factors. "Simply put, aggregate relative power tells foreign policy decision-makers which actors matter, whereas intentions tell them how they matter" (Wivel 2008, 297). Building on Walt's analysis, Reiter (1996, 49-50) distinguishes between direct and systemic threats, pending on the ambitions of the threatening state. A direct threat is "a specific demand of a state with the implicit or explicit promise of military action if the demand is not met" while a systemic threat is "a situation in which a local power appears to be posing a general threat to the nations of the region, such that it seems to have broad ambitions for greater political power and/or territory (...) Such a threat concerns all powers in the region – even those with no direct disputes with the threatening power – because they may be drawn into a future, systemwide war."

Given systemic imperatives, the question emerges of whether small states balance against power and threats too? This question has intrigued scholars, who have examined alternative paths for small states within the limits of constraints of the systemic environment (Väyrynen 1997: 43, Hey 2003:187). Structural realism, with its focus on systemic imperatives, predicts that in case of an external threat, most states, including small powers, would strive to find allies to counter the threat in concert through a *balancing* strategy. Walt predicts that "the greater the threat, the greater the probability that the vulnerable state will seek an alliance" (1987, 26). To a lesser extent, states would align with the threatening state through *bandwagoning* with an ambition to appease the dominant power or to benefit from its victory, or a combination of both (Walt 1987). The claim that bandwagoning is rare has been challenged by Schroeder (1994) who argues, using a broad historical survey, that states have either bandwagoned with or hidden from threats far more often than they have balanced against them. Schweller (1994) agrees and claims that bandwagoning behavior is prevalent among revisionist states, because their alliance behavior is driven more by profit than security. Powell argues from a rational-unitary-actor approach that balance-of-power sometimes forms, but there is no general tendency. Nor do states generally balance against threats. They wait, bandwagon, "or much less often, balance." (1999, 196)

Small state scholars have criticized Waltz and Walt for being too narrow in merely suggesting balancing or bandwagoning as options for a threatened state. Reiter (1996, 50-51) argues that neutrality is yet another option, “not every state need to be classified as on one side or the other”. Balancing, bandwagoning and neutrality have been explored in studies of small states since the 1950’s, with pioneer work done by Baker Fox (1959) on diplomacy in World War II. To mitigate the risk of over-dependence on a great power and loss of autonomy, especially when not faced with an immediate security threat, small states sometimes indulge in *hedging* as a form of alignment option, i.e. implementing mix strategies of cooperative and confrontational elements towards great powers in order to divert risk. (Kuik 2010; Ciorciari and Haacke 2019).<sup>10</sup> A recent categorization of the “strategic menu” for small states to gain influence and security by Pedi and Wivel (2022, 135-141) also includes hedging, in addition to *hiding* – committing to impartiality to great power politics (compare to “neutrality” above), *shelter seeking* – reducing vulnerability to an external shock by having a great power providing protection through e.g. an alliance (compare to “balancing” and “bandwagoning” above), and finally, *offensive pragmatism* – employing offensive strategies to maximize influence in a setting where global institutions are effective and there are strong incentives for cooperation, hence a strategy less executable in the current global environment.

Furthermore, balance of threat theory has been criticized for having a vague distinction between “power” and “threat”, since three of four variables, that is, aggregate power of a state, its geographic proximity, and offensive power, are closely correlated with military power (Layne 2006, 20-21). In particular, this applies to unipolarity, when the hegemon has such superior capabilities “that they ‘drown out’ distance, offense-defense, and intentions as potential negative threat modifiers” (Elman 2003, 16). In multipolarity, balance of threat theory is more applicable, as intentions become important given that the distribution of power is more equal among great powers. However, as I conclude in **Paper I**, balance of threat theory is useful to analyze the overlooked perspective of small powers in the international system also during unipolarity, since small powers never can dismiss geographic proximity, and often have first hand historical experience of the great power’s intent.

---

10 Hedging has mostly been applied to analyse small state strategies in Southeast Asia, although Gyllensporre (2016) attempts to explain Sweden’s strategy of international crisis management in terms of hedging.

Consequently, my theoretical approach can capture both great power and small power perspectives on threats and provide a comprehensive framework for such analysis, for instance in a regional setting. Even if the unipole does not indulge in balance of power against a rivaling great power at the systemic level, it can conduct “regional balancing” to protect its allies against a regional threat, as Walt suggests (2009). Such balancing can be done as part of alliance formation and alliance management, as **Papers I** and **II** illustrate.

To sum up, for the purpose of exploring alliance formation and management in a regional setting marked by power asymmetry, I find balance of threat theory useful for several reasons: it is applicable on both great and small powers, it has explanatory value for foreign policy choices of forming alliances, and it allows for an analysis of alliance formation that goes beyond formality. Furthermore, it helps shedding light on how threat asymmetry is calibrated within an alliance, a form of alliance management from a small state perspective. In short, balance of threat theory is a nuanced approach to structural realism which allows for in-depth analysis in some rather unexplored areas of alliance theory. Next, I turn to neoclassical realism and discuss its compatibility with structural realism and the status and scope of mediating variables and their contribution to an overarching theory.

### 3.3. Neoclassical Realism

In my thesis the application of elements from neoclassical realism demonstrate that mediating variables can also affect alliance formation. In the following, I enter more deeply into two main debates within neoclassical realism that are of particular relevance to my theoretical approach. First, the compatibility of neoclassical realism with structural realism, and secondly, whether domestic variables are occasional abnormalities or regular interventions.

#### 3.3.1. Is Neoclassical Realism Compatible with Structural Realism?

Neoclassical realism has been accused of mixing two-level analysis, state-level and systems-level in an incoherent manner. Can domestic variables be introduced while neoclassical realism remain compatible with structural realism? Here we enter a core discussion within contemporary realism. My

stance is that, indeed, the realist framework holds, and neoclassical realism complements structural realism.

A central aspect of the debate is the need for reduction in theory-making. Waltz wanted to create a theory of international politics, namely structural realism, that addressed the issue of war and peace without building on aggregated observations of states and statesmen, i.e. the unit-level, in contrast to classical realism. His aim was to reduce the number of factors that actually mattered for the construction of theory and then adapt the reach of the theory accordingly (a theory can never explain everything). Such a reduction enabled him to deduce patterns of state behavior. Waltz, therefore, focused on the system level. The system and its structure (unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar) create the environment for states, not the other way around. Under anarchy, the system's organizing principle is that states ultimately seek to survive by balancing against concentrations of power and thus avoiding dominance. States are assumed to be rational actors operating in response to system incentives, which can explain their pattern of behavior at the aggregated level – not at the individual level. Structural realism also contains predictive elements. States will gravitate consistently over the long term in line with the incentives. Those states who severely oppose gravity will fall out of the system and lose their sovereignty. Those who act sub-optimally to a lesser extent but still are making poor choices will face painful costs, which will socialize them into correcting behavior.

Neoclassical realism accepts that structural realism provides the primary explanatory framework for international relations but introduces unit-level factors to account for divergencies in state behavior to the system incentives. Immediately, then, the question of sufficient theoretical reduction arises. Neoclassical realism attempts “to explain variations of foreign policy over time and space” (Wivel 2005a, 361) by adding “neorealist assumptions on structure and material capabilities with intervening variables mediating the impact of systemic stimuli.” (Meibauer 2019) However, to blend structural and unit-level factors is academically controversial and goes back to Waltz's critique of classical realism. To do parallel studies, which build on traditions such as Kenneth Waltz's (1959) “Man, the State and War”, in which he applies three “images” of analysis, and Graham T. Allison's (1971) three models, all applied on the Cuban Missile Crisis as a case study, is broadly accepted. To add intervening variables, however, is much more disputed, as it risks widening and blurring the theory to the extent that its explanatory and cumulative power vanishes.

Quinn challenges neoclassical realist scholars and argues that too many variables have been identified. He counts seven various variables, each subject to empirical case studies. The compatibility with structural realism is at risk, and it is “precisely the kind Waltz condemned” as a dysfunctional feature in IR before introducing structural realism. It risks giving in to “endless accumulation of ad hoc variables that supposedly account for every difference in case outcome” (2018, 5). Narizny (2017) opposes as well and criticizes neoclassical realism for “incorporating domestic variables that are inconsistent with realist assumptions.” (Fiammenghi et al. 2018, 193) Narizny argues that it is not possible to combine analytical priority of systemic pressures with “open-ended engagement with domestic politics”. The necessary deductive foundation is lacking. Neoclassical realism thus “hinders the production of knowledge about both systemic pressures and domestic politics” (Fiammenghi et al. 2018, 199). Quinn argues that neoclassical realism only functions if it can posit a stable account of what optimal behavior would look like, against which actual behavior may be evaluated. Hence, both Quinn and Narizny apply consistency standards that seem to go beyond even those of Waltz.

In their reply to Narizny, Ripsman et al. claim that even though states are security-seeking actors above all, sometimes leaders that face losing power would trade off security interests to solidify domestic power “if they believe the damage to national security will not be too great” (Fiammenghi et al. 2018, 198). Structural realism does not say that all states behave rationally all the time. A state can be irrational and perform poorly and calculate that the cost will be above the level of total state destruction. Ripsman et al. provide a valid argument against Narizny’s pitch for liberalism. They argue that it is not very useful as a foreign policy theory, especially not for smaller and weak powers, because it ignores regional distributions of power, which are often of great concern to them. Neither is it good at explaining the behavior of non-liberal states, and it does not reduce mistrust between liberal and non-liberal states because the latter do not comply with rules of transparency or shared norms. Neoclassical realism is more generalizable in explaining interstate behavior across different political regime types, levels of interdependence, and thickness of regional multilateral institutions.

Overall, neoclassical realism claims it can add intervening variables without blurring the theory, because it keeps the three core assumptions of structural realism: anarchy, rational actor, and focus on material capabilities, thus remaining true to the paradigm, its ontology, and epistemology. Anarchy imposes inescapable constraints upon states. However, they are not strictly determinative. They leave space for ideas and domestic policy processes to

intervene in the causal path toward foreign policy choice. Structural realism also recognizes that states are rational to various extents. But then, structural realism is not interested in intervening variables at a detailed level, while neoclassical realism is.

I also conclude that the realist framework holds, in that neoclassical realism complements structural realism. A major reason is that both schools of realism land in the conclusion that states who consistently fail to adhere to constraints given by the system “will find themselves at a disadvantage and ultimately select themselves out of the system” (Meibauer 2019). The geostrategic context is defined by anarchy and the relative distribution of capabilities. Neoclassical realism would assume that when (bad) ideas interfere substantially and continuously in decision-making, the system punishes these states. From this perspective, neoclassical realism is, in fact, more of “neo-structural realism”, as Rynning (2011, 34) puts it.

### **3.3.2. Are Domestic Variables Occasional Abnormalities or Regular Interventions?**

While the compatibility between structural realism and neoclassical realism fairly easily can be addressed by exploring the foundations of realist theory, a trickier aspect of my theoretical approach is the second theme posed by Quinn, namely, are the mediating variables occasional anomalies, or can neoclassical realism be claimed to form a model of recurrent intervening variables that could provide a theoretical framework? Neoclassical realism would need a ‘yes’ to that question in order to live up to its ambition to provide a theory of foreign policy based on structural realism. Rynning (ibid.) warns against such ambitions, arguing that this only will result in “the classical conundrum of studying human motives in a social scientific fashion.”

Ripsman et al. make an attempt to derive a grand theory in “Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics” (2016) by organizing the intervening variables into four general categories: leader images, strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutions. These can affect the state’s foreign policy responses at three stages: perception, decision-making, and policy implementation. The intervening categories can also affect international outcomes and structural changes, especially when the international system is “permissive” (2016, 58-60). Ripsman et al. label this Type III neoclassical realist theory in contrast to Type I and II. Type I is a theory of sub-optimality that explains why sometimes, under unusual circumstances, there are exceptions from structural realist expectations. Type II goes beyond explaining

anomalies to include a “broader range of foreign policy choices and grand strategic adjustment”, but it still lacks the stringency needed for a theoretical framework (2016, 29).

Noteworthy for this dissertation, with its focus on a security environment characterized by a high threat level, is that the authors point out that structural realism usually applies when states are faced with a clear and impending threat: “When states confront restrictive strategic environments, systemic (material) variables largely override ideational variables in determining states’ foreign and security policies. Moreover, where such restrictive environments persist for long periods, we would expect to see broad continuities in the types of external strategies that states pursue, regardless of ideological differences within and between states” (158).

Building on my findings, it appears plausible that one can introduce domestic variables as “occasional anomalies”. My results are in line with previous neoclassical realist research, mainly Brawley (2009) on “entrenched national strategies from past periods”, to some extent also Dueck (2009), on “ideological constructions within which national foreign policy must be justified”. However, I am more cautious when it comes to creating a grand scheme or a theory of foreign policy out of neoclassical realism due to the risk of it being too vague in scope and duration. The theoretical framework provided by Ripsman et al. contains such a risk. In my case, structural realism offers a framework against which to measure deviation. My research suggests that a country can act “rational enough” in line with structural realism. The way structural realism has developed, applying “hyperrationalism”, as Kirsner (2015) puts it, is actually not congruent with its initial design. For Waltz, the rational actor was a theoretical preposition of a general kind. Empirically, “[i]t means only that some do better than others” (Waltz 1979, 77; Feaver et al. 2000, 165-169).

To conclude, neoclassical realism seems to give a framework for deeper understanding and further explanation (Gvalia et al. 2019). Rather than going for a grand scheme, the theoretical focus of developing neoclassical realism compatible with structural realism should be to carefully carve out the added value of intervening variables and clarify when such variables are applicable.



### 3.4. Summary of Theoretical Approach

The theoretically intriguing questions addressed in this thesis relate mainly to structural realism and neoclassical realism, both underpinned by positivistic scientific aspirations. The thesis applies structural realism and in particular, balance of threat theory to bridge great power and small power responses and to capture alliance formation and management in a regional context, opening up for the emergence of informal allies and alternative versions of integration strategies when certain conditions apply, as well as threat calibration as a means of small power alliance management. Where structural realism is too sparse to explain balancing deviations in small state responses to systemic incentives, the dissertation turns to neoclassical realism that accounts for domestic conditions that hinder policy flexibility.

With regard to structural realism, findings in this thesis stipulate that balance of threat theory is useful to analyze the overlooked perspectives of both informal allies and small powers in the international system. Balance of threat theory can capture both great power and small power perspectives on threats and provide a comprehensive framework for alliance formation and alliance management in a regional setting.

As for neoclassical realism and its compatibility with structural realism, I conclude that such a balancing act is possible, because both structural realism and neoclassical realism build on the assumption that states who consistently fail to adhere to systemic constraints will be punished. Furthermore, the approaches are coherent in that the geostrategic context is defined by anarchy and the relative distribution of capabilities.

I am more wary on the question of mediating variables as regular interventions rather than occasional abnormalities and the prospects for one grand neoclassical realist theory. My conclusion is that the theoretical focus of developing neoclassical realism compatible with structural realism should be to identify the added value of intervening variables and clarify the conditions under which the variables are applicable. It is noteworthy for this dissertation, focusing on a security environment characterized by a high threat level, that neoclassical realists posit that systemic variables tend to override ideological differences within and between states when states face a clear and impending threat. In short, in such an environment, structural realism seems to apply, which adds limits to the ambition of one grand scheme. In Chapter 6, I discuss further how a future research scheme could develop this proposition.

# 4. Research Design, Method, and Material

This dissertation builds on qualitative analyses of case study evidence. In this chapter, I first develop my epistemological stance before I elaborate on case study analysis as a research design and motivate my choice of case study in relation to the theoretical ambitions of the thesis. For the qualitative data collection of the dissertation, the main methods used are document review combined with elite interviews by using triangulation. In the following, I will also discuss the advantages and shortfalls of elite interviews and how the use of a triangulation strategy can mitigate these methodological challenges.

## 4.1. Epistemology and Soft Positivism

I have developed my ontological stance in Chapter 1. When it comes to epistemology, I adhere to a form of “soft positivism” (Ripsman et al. 2016, 105-107) in that I believe it is possible to attain objective knowledge of the world and that theories can be tested in contrast to post-positivists and critical theorists, who reject this possibility. As a researcher, I attempt to explain outcomes of individual cases through qualitative methods that allow for causal inferences about observable phenomena that can be verified. Empirical analysis is, therefore, central to my research.

Positivism is “soft” in that I acknowledge limits to testing and verifications in the social sciences since human subjectivity and interpretation make these processes more complicated than in natural sciences and regularities less frequent. In addition, it follows that it is not possible to prove or disprove theories in social sciences nor to claim a complete, one hundred percent explanation. Rather, it is about probability, and my research ambition is, therefore, to draw plausible conclusions in accordance with empirical evidence.

## 4.2. Case Study Selection and Case Analysis

Case studies, as a research design in IR, serve to test and develop theory (Bennett 2010:21-22). By focusing on one or a few cases, the research design allows for both describing a phenomenon in-depth and for making broader generalizations on causality without losing nuances in theories. In particular, case study analyses “provide unique opportunities on their own for understanding, conceptualizing, developing and testing new theories” (Ruffa 2020, 1135). The thesis applies alliance theory focused on balance of threat that allows for the examination of informal allies and small state responses in accordance with structural realism and complements neoclassical realism when structural realism is too sparse. Thus, the dissertation is designed to first address the impact of systemic incentives on the regional setting and alliance management, thereby setting the framework for the focused study of small states and integration strategies such as informal ally, as well as domestic variables that can explain deviating balancing behavior.

The challenge with case study research design is to choose the case and design the analysis so that it serves to advance theory and not merely describe the phenomenon of interest. That way, the most commonly discussed limitations of case study analysis, connected to selection bias and lack of representativeness, can be mediated. When the aim is conceptual or theoretical development, it makes sense to explore in-depth by choosing relevant cases and qualitative methods rather than a representative sample that accounts for statistically sound inferences (Bremberg 2012, 82). In contrast to statistical methods, case study analysis says little about the frequency with which certain conditions and their outcomes occur. On the other hand, case studies provide more knowledge about the conditions under which specific outcomes arise and through which mechanisms this happens. As Bennett (2010, 43) pointed out, the goal of a case study selection is often to provide “the strongest possible inferences on particular theories or of using deviant cases to help identify left-out variables”. Both of these ambitions are congruent with the aims of this thesis.

Another critique against case study analysis is that it is a research design that belongs to historians rather than political scientists. Regardless, even though case study analysis involves process tracing, a technique often used for diplomatic or political history, it can be applied to IR given that it starts with explicit theoretical assumptions and aims to generalize and draw disciplined explanations (Levy 2001, 40). Following Levy (2008), the case study in this thesis is designed to meet three criteria: a set of events must be bounded both

by space and time and focus on a phenomenon that allows to observe the theory at play at the smallest unit of analysis possible. As this dissertation is focused on state and alliance responses to an external threat, the Baltic Sea region has been chosen as a case study as it contains fascinating puzzles that serve to contribute to developing IR theory. The overall time period for the case study is 2014-2020, and the geographical space is the Baltic Sea region, as defined in Chapter 1. To allow for setting appropriate limits in time, space, and level of abstraction, I decompose the Baltic Sea region into a set of various sub-case studies (Diop and Liu 2020) throughout the dissertation. This way, it is possible for me to apply different aspects of my research agenda related to the development of alliance theory and neoclassical realism. Together, these sub-cases provide explanatory insights into the evolution of the security dynamics in the Baltic Sea region during a transformative era.

After the end of the Cold War, the long-lasting peaceful setting left the region out of strategic focus for both the US and NATO. Both were taken by surprise by the Russian annexation of Crimea in early March 2014, which marked a clear starting point for the sub-case study in **Paper I**, which explores the interface of the systemic and regional settings through the response of the US and its Baltic Sea allies to the emerging threat, until the end of 2015. Furthermore, there is a high level of security interdependence in the region, combined with an interesting mix of alliance membership, which allows for theoretical observations of alliance formation and management. At the time when the empirical work of this thesis was conducted, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany were NATO members, alongside Norway and Denmark, which fundamentally affected the regional context. Sweden and Finland had become members of the EU but not of NATO. This complexity contributed to making Sweden and Finland interesting as a sub-case study in **Paper II** from the perspective of closest partners from 2014 to 2016, and to explore the proposition that they in fact had become “informal allies” to NATO, in a Baltic Sea setting. In this sub-case, Sweden and Finland are analyzed in one context as a pair, based on factors such as their similar relationship with NATO, geographic position, bilateral defense cooperation, and security interdependence. In order to allow for an in-depth analysis of a state response and to test the proposition made by neoclassical realism that domestic factors can serve as mediating variables that hinder policy flexibility, **Paper III** uses Sweden solely as a sub-case study through the period 2014-2020.

### 4.3. Elite Interviews and Triangulation

A key feature of this dissertation is its contribution building on elite interviews, a material that is used in all papers. Elite interviews are widely used in social sciences and the approach to what constitutes an ‘elite’ differs among scholars. More broadly, the term has been used in a relational sense to ‘citizens’. However, to make it relevant for the study of politics, the elite needs to be executors of power (Harvey 2011, 432-433). As Zuckerman (1972) has pointed out, there is even a power hierarchy within the elite based on how influential an individual is. Accordingly, following Natow (2020, 160), I define an ‘elite’ as “an individual who holds or has held some powerful position that has afforded the individual unique knowledge or information from a privileged position”. Through these interviews, it is possible to gain insights into practices and sensitive information which otherwise could not be obtained given the secrecy involved. This situation applies to politics in general, where secrecy is often related to the process of policy formation – the negotiations, the persons involved, the arguments, and the trade-offs are commonly dealt with more or less covertly. It is particularly true within the scope of this dissertation, namely security and defense, where diplomatic practices and secrecy legislation put further limitations on official information. While there is a tendency in political science research to consider primary documentary sources, such as government reports and decisions, departmental papers, and legislative records, as reliable and preferred sources of historical information, it must be recognized that these are by no means “unassailable”, as Davies (2001, 74-75) notes. They tend to be incomplete, with the risk of being misleading; they encompass only what could be agreed upon and carry elements of self-justification. Consequentially, elite interviews provide a necessary supplement to documentary records.

For the elite interviews, I have applied semi-structured or informal methods, allowing the respondents to express their views and explain their thinking (Harvey 2011, 433; Davies 2001, 76). It also gives more space for me as a researcher to be surprised by a response and to not only receive confirmatory information. I have used a mixture of semi-structured interviews and guided conversations. Most interviews have had an informal character and, in that sense, been more of “guided conversations”. Some of my interviews followed predetermined questions that covered certain topics in a defined order (see Annex I), but I also allowed myself to alter that order when appropriate for the dynamics of the interview and to do follow-up questions and comments. I strongly adhere to Harvey (2011, 433-434), who lists a range of related

circumstances that increase the possibility for successful elite interviews, with an emphasis on solid preparations *beyond* the formulation of questions, including building trust with the respondents, do the homework on background and context, and to adjust manners, words, and behavior to the atmosphere of the interview.

As part of the empirical material, I have conducted 38 interviews with government and alliance actors - civil servants, diplomats, former ministers, and members of parliament – of various nationalities and at different points in time between 2014-2020, pending the timeframe set when deciding the boundaries of the relevant case study. A few I have interviewed more than once. In the dissertation, I refer to sources representing Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, the UK, the US, Canada, and NATO. The interviewees were chosen to provide a fair and balanced representation of actors relevant to the Baltic Sea region and within NATO. Because of the delicacy of the material exchanged, most interviews were conducted “on background” or “off the record”, which means that my interview partners granted me permission to use the information but not to reveal information that could identify them by name. Therefore, I have not worked with recorded interviews but relied on my notes. Obviously, the human brain is not equivalent to a recorder when it comes to reproducing the exact wording, but I trained to become a journalist before this world became digital, which means that I have solid note-taking techniques and feel confident that my written records are sufficient. In addition, I have benefited from doing face-to-face interviews which allow for building trust, encompassing cultural differences, and in general, making the respondent give more detailed information which contributes to the quality of the interview results (Harvey 2011, 435-436). The interviews were conducted in English or Swedish, and all quotes from the Swedish respondents presented in the thesis were translated into English by me.

In the same manner, as governmental documents can entail a range of flaws, as mentioned above, there is an apparent risk that the information which the elite individual gives in interviews is biased, self-justificatory, or incorrect. To counter such a risk, the researchers must know about the elites interviewed. In conducting the interviews, I have an advantage in my working experience, both as a journalist, civil servant and speech writer in the government offices and the Swedish parliament. By showing the elite that I understand ‘their world’, I have been able to build confidence and get access to people in high-level positions, which is regarded as critical for successful elite interviewing (Harvey 2011, 433-434). The political world is a culture in which facts matter,

but the words that describe these facts are equally important: spoken, those chosen, and those left out. By having worked in a political environment myself, I have had an advantage during interviews, that is, to get more detailed information or clarity regarding ambiguities by commenting or asking more close-ended questions, thereby mediating inaccuracies and potential bias. It has also helped me to analyze the results of the interviews afterwards. Still, I cannot entirely dismiss the common methodological challenge that, as an interviewer, I might have been too respectful or too compliant with the responders, thus letting them control the interview and answer mostly what they wished to respond, or that I have done my homework poorly and have not been able to counter incorrect statements during the course of the conversation. I am also aware that I have been a kind of actor myself in some of the processes described in this dissertation, which can affect both the responses of interviewees and my analysis of these responses towards being more in congruence with the results that the processes aimed at achieving. As a think tanker, my task is to inspire decision-makers with policy proposals based on intellectual independence and a solid research-based analysis of international developments. However, I do not participate in formal decision-making processes within governments or international organizations, such as NATO. Hence, I am not an actor in the processes under study when it comes to deciding upon policy. My research often carries a prescriptive character, which is congruent with theoretical work. As pointed out by van Evera (1997, 91), “all policy proposals rest on forecasts about the effects of policies. These forecasts rest in turn on implicit or explicit theoretical assumptions about the laws of social and political motion. Hence, all evaluation of public policy requires the framing and evaluation of theory, hence it is fundamentally theoretical.” Recent research on the role of external experts in assessing the risk of war in light of Russia’s escalation prior to February 2022 demonstrates how anticipatory expert analysis can inform effective foreign policymaking (Michaels 2024). In relation to this dissertation, as an expert, I have expressed proposals in articles through commenting in media and various speaking engagements with ensuing questions and answers. For instance, in the formative phase described in **Paper I**, in which NATO focused more on the strategic setting in the Baltic Sea, I was invited to speak on “Shaping NATO’s future: a partner perspective” at a dinner conversation at the big security policy conference Brussels Forum in March 2015; to speak on NATO and EU engagement with non-member states at a conference at Wilton Park, UK, in October 2015, where several NATO officials and diplomats participated; and to give a presentation on Baltic Sea security at a “brown bag lunch” with deputy heads of missions at NATO HQ in December 2015.

To address these methodological challenges, I have adopted the technique of using multiple methodological resources, so-called triangulation. Thereby, it becomes possible to achieve a fuller picture of the phenomenon scrutinized and to double-check and confirm facts stated by those who have been interviewed. Initially a sociological method, Webb et al. (1966) introduced it to provide a cross-reference between interview data and archival records in order to work around limitations of the prevalent survey-based research firsthand using interviews in a confirmative manner. As the triangulation strategy has developed, interviews have also been used for additive purposes. What is crucial, according to Davies (2001, 75), is to create a process of “interpretation, collation and analysis” that is transparent and explicit. Natow (2020) identifies several ways that researchers can triangulate data: 1) multiple data sources, 2) multiple methodologies, 3) multiple data analysis techniques, 4) multiple researchers, and 5) multiple triangulation techniques (Natow 2020, 161-162). In this dissertation, I have used multiple methodologies, and I have applied more than one type of qualitative data collection procedure. I have used a commonly applied procedure within IR, combining document analysis with elite interviews for confirmative and additive purposes. Cross-reference for both corroboration and addition thus occurs both in between *interviews*, as well as between interviews and other *primary sources*, such as institutional communiqués, governmental statements, reports, speeches, and parliamentary records, as well as *secondary sources* such as news articles, policy analyses, academic analyses, and blog postings (Natow 2020, 166; Davies 2001, 78).

Apart from interviews, the primary sources consist of official documents retrieved from the web-based archives of the corresponding institutions, such as strategies, evaluations, speeches and press releases. For the US, these include the White House, State Department, Department of Defense, and US Army. Primary sources from NATO include strategic concepts, ministerial statements and communiqués, speeches by the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General, press releases, reports, articles, defense expenditure figures, and documents. I have also taken advantage of lectures at Georgetown University by former high officials in the Obama administration and statements made during panel discussions on the record at various security policy conferences I have attended in Europe. Primary sources from Sweden, and to a lesser extent Finland, are reports from official governmental inquiries from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, speeches and op-eds by various ministers and parliamentarians, government proposals to Parliament, reports from the defense commission, government declarations, as well as evaluation reports and annual reports from official government agencies. I have also used public polls from the Pew Research Center, German Marshall



Fund, SvD/Sifo, the SOM Institute and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

Secondary sources that I have consulted include news articles from well-established outlets such as AFP, Reuters, BBC, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Svenska Dagbladet, SVT, TT, Dagens Nyheter, Hufvudstadsbladet, and YLE, as well as more narrow outlets such as Daily Beast and Defence News, most of them retrieved on-line. All have been in English or Swedish, which means that I have not had to rely on external translation. I have also used policy and research analysis both in the form of reports and articles as well as shorter blog posts from various universities and institutions in Europe and the US, most of them also retrieved online from their official websites.

Throughout the documentation and analysis of the different sub-cases, the interviews conducted have served a confirmative and additive purpose by verifying propositions or describing issues, processes, and situations that are not captured in the official records. This fallacy that can originate from national security concerns that makes the information classified, or from disagreements between allied member states, or from the fact that no official decision has yet been taken. In all of these cases, the primary sources from official institutions or their highest representatives must be complemented and put into context. The interviews provide useful nuances to officially expressed ambitions. What all my primary sources have in common is that they represent a state or alliance perspective. There is, of course, a risk that the interviewee pursues more of a personal than an official state agenda through the answers given, which I have attempted to mitigate by using cross-references with other primary or secondary sources to the extent possible and also cross-references with other interviewees, as well as recurrent informal talks on a background basis. In addition, secondary sources have been consulted to give historical background, to cross-check and give details and data, and to provide quotes from official state representatives as they have been referred to in these materials.

# 5. Thesis Contributions and Paper Overview

In the following, I summarize the main contributions of the dissertation before I present the focus, method of analysis, and main results of each paper that constitute the thesis. Together, the three papers contribute to our understanding of how systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional setting with regard to small state responses to an external threat. Empirically, the three papers shed light on the complex security dynamics of the Baltic Sea region during 2014-2020, dominated by Russia's assertive behavior and the lack of trust between Russia and Western allies and partners. The research is guided by questions formulated with the ambition to start with the systemic setting and explore its impact within a regional setting:

- How do systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional context?
- Under which conditions does a country become an informal ally? Which indicators reveal the formation of such a status?
- In light of an external threat, why do some small states choose not to formally join alliances?

The theoretical aspects are dealt with in Chapter 3 and the choice of research design and methods of data collection are elaborated upon in Chapter 4.

## 5.1. Main Contributions

Anchored in the realist school of IR, this dissertation theoretically contributes to our understanding of how systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional setting, particularly regarding small state responses to a threatening great power. Applying a definition of alliances that allow for the emergence of informal allies, captures how alliances are shaped and

managed in light of such a threat. The dissertation addresses shortfalls in contemporary IR regarding informal allies and small states in alliance theory, as well as in exploring the impact of systemic forces on regional security in light of a great power threat. It demonstrates how balance of threat theory, which allows for both informal and informal alliances, is useful in bridging great power and small power perspectives in a regional environment marked by power asymmetry, as well as in analyzing small power strategies. Within alliance theory, the thesis develops the concept of an informal ally and proposes an analytical framework to account for the process that leads to such a status, thus addressing a major theoretical shortfall in distinguishing between a partner and an ally. In the thesis, I demonstrate that contrary to the dominating perception in IR, alliance formation does not start when the official letter of application is sent, or the formal treaty is signed. Rather, it is a process in which features of integration have to be traced and evaluated in relation to the systemic setting and threat levels.

The dissertation also develops small state perspectives on alliance formation and management. I argue that under certain conditions, states can become informal allies as a balancing strategy against a threat in a regional setting and that mediating variables can help explain such a choice. In this perspective, the dissertation relates to the contemporary academic debate by introducing mediating variables in accordance with neoclassical realism to explain and predict state behavior, particularly when they deviate from structural realist assumptions. The study provides cumulative theoretical work on mediating variables, a research field where the challenge is not to widen and blur the theory to the extent that its explanatory and cumulative value disappears. While I find structural realism and neoclassical realism theoretically compatible, I am more cautious about whether mediating variables can be seen as regular interventions to the extent that they can shape a 'grand theory'. Rather, I argue that the theoretical focus of developing neoclassical realism should be to carefully identify the added value of intervening variables and clarify when the use of such variables is applicable.

Empirically, the dissertation provides substantial empirical data on a formative period for NATO and the Baltic Sea region in 2014-2020 through its case study design, documentary analysis, and elite interviews (presented in section 4.3). Next, I present the three papers of this dissertation, previewing its key empirical contributions in more detail.

## 5.2. How Do Systemic Forces Affect Alliance Formation and Management in a Regional Context?

**In Paper I**, I turn to the first guiding question to explain how systemic forces in a unipolar system affect balancing behavior and alliance management in a regional context. The hegemon leads the regional defense alliance in place, and the smaller states in close vicinity to the threatening great power depend on the hegemon for their security. Apparently, the gap is wide between what is threatening to the hegemon, who has the capabilities to balance the world on its own, versus small states with limited national resources and space of maneuver. In order to calibrate these asymmetric threat perceptions, allies use the alliance as a platform.

In 2014, when Russia illegally annexed Crimea and started a war in Donbas, the world was still unipolar, with the US as the dominant superpower. The US acted ambiguously to the Russian threat, with a rather slow and reluctant response and a clear distinction between military and political engagement. For the Baltic Sea allies, who relied on the US and its leadership in NATO for their security and stability, it was a key concern whether American engagement could be counted upon and how the ambiguous American signals should be assessed. In the analysis, I position the US as the unipole in relation to Russia as the rivaling state and assess how the US perceived Russia, using documentary analysis and interview material. I then evaluate the American balancing behavior in response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas, using the Baltic Sea region as a case study. The case study also addresses the response of the allies in the region and how they worked through the alliance in order to achieve balancing behavior more in line with their perceived level of threat.

**Paper I** is an unpublished paper and, as such, contains new theoretical analysis and findings, while it empirically builds on three of my previously published research articles with added interview material. Therefore, the paper includes some identical text to these articles:

- Wieslander, Anna. 2016a. NATO, the U.S. and Baltic Sea Security, *UI Paper*, No. 3, February.
- Wieslander, Anna. 2016b. 'Extended Cooperative Security' in the Baltic Sea Region, *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, 25 (1):134-144.

- Wieslander, Anna. 2019. “Why European Unity and Freedom Still Matter to the United States”, pp. 201-210, in Debski, Slawomir and Hamilton, Daniel S. (eds.) *Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality*, Warsaw and Washington DC: The Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Transatlantic Leadership Network.

The following research questions guide the empirical analysis in **Paper I**:

- 1) How do systemic forces affect the response to an aggressive great power in a regional context?
- 2) What are the consequences for the alliance?

With regard to the first question, I assess the position of the US as the unipole and how that affected its response to the Russian threat in the Baltic Sea region. From the analysis, it becomes clear that the US marginally adapted to the rise of a regional power, but not to the rise of a threatening great power, that is, a power that is able to make a systemic impact by itself. This adaptation explains why the US acted rather reluctantly to the Russian threat and why its political and military engagement differed. The US did not commit to a balance of threat adjustment as requested by the small powers in close vicinity to the aggressor because it did not assess Russia as a threat at the time. In terms of internal or external balancing behavior, the US engaged in neither. On the margins, the US rotated troops and provided an extra billion to the European command in 2015 and 2016. Overall though, while Russia increased its military expenditure as a percentage of GDP between 2011 and 2016, the US decreased its share. The American defense budget was also reduced in real terms. The budget reflects the assessment in the American National Security Strategy 2015, where Russia’s aggression in Ukraine was seen as a challenge against international norms (10), to be addressed primarily through sanctions. Neither did the US indulge in external balancing in terms of taking on new allies in order to counter the Russian threat. There was no major shift in the US national security strategy to adopt and forge new liaisons with great powers who could help balance Russia. The US counted on its position as the unipole. The option to make Ukraine an ally in order to stop further aggression by Russia was completely off the table, despite the Bucharest summit promise from 2008 that Ukraine would become a member of NATO.

In a famous article, Mearsheimer (2014) concludes that the US was too active in Ukraine, pursuing a policy based on support for democracy, market economy, and the rule of law. This pursuit triggered Russia to balance against the US by invading Ukraine in an attempt to secure it within its sphere of interest. Hence, the West is to blame for Russia’s war on Ukraine. It is

interesting to note, that Mearsheimer, albeit a leading realist, seem to argue without applying a systemic level analysis. Instead, he focuses on the unit level. By addressing the systemic forces at play and analyzing the US from its position in the international system, I come to a different conclusion: the US did not do too much; rather, it did too little. By failing to recognize Russia as a rival, the US also failed with its balancing behavior, which could have included internal balancing, beefing up military capabilities targeted to balance Russia, or external balancing, such as aligning with other great powers or letting Ukraine become an ally. The rather modest American democratic and military support to Ukraine, and the international sanctions on Russia, were dismissive from this perspective, I argue.

To put my argument differently, the US did not react to the Russian aggression to Ukraine as a unipole threatened by the rise of a rival. Rather, it reacted as an alliance leader, tied by its commitments to collective defense, or as Walt would describe it, as a unipole protecting its allies from a regional power. The US had to strike a balance between what to do to support Ukraine, apart from military measures that were off the table, and what to do to assure the security of allies at the Eastern flank. In balancing between resolving and avoiding growing tensions, NATO settled for some modest reassurance measures and a show of force on its territory. For the Baltic Sea allies, who were close to the Russian threat, these measures were unsatisfactory and left them vulnerable.

Turning to the paper's second research question and the consequences for the alliance, NATO became a central forum to calibrate these asymmetric threat levels. I claim that systemic constraints initially inhibited alliance management, increasing the vulnerability of the Baltic Sea allies. However, they successfully worked through NATO to achieve a balancing behavior that gradually accommodated their security concerns. In other words, systemic forces affected alliance management in a regional context. The alliance managed to combine the deviating approaches through calibration, thus providing a framework for security in a region that depends on external great powers for its stability.

**Paper I** contributes to IR by addressing a less explored field concerning how systemic forces affect security in the regional context. Regional aspects of security have attracted much scholarly interest since the end of the Cold War, building on influential theoretical work on the rise of regional security orders by Jervis (1982, 1985) and "regional security complexes" by Buzan (1983), later developed together with Wæver (2003). However, less focus has been put on external driving forces with Lundqvist (2017) as a recent exception. The paper also highlights how balance of threat theory is useful in bridging great

power and small power perspectives and in analyzing small power politics. Empirically, the paper contributes substantial material, not least through its interviews, on allied responses to the Russian aggression on Ukraine in 2014-2015 in the Baltic Sea context.

As **Paper I** reveals, in order for NATO to handle the Russian threat in the Baltic Sea region, with its high degree of security interdependence, it was in NATO's interest to bring close partners Sweden and Finland into the realm of collective defense. Thereby, NATO 'extended' the realm of cooperative security to unprecedented levels of closeness to allies. This extension was more problematic than first met the eye, I argue. It implied that NATO had to adapt to a range of non-members, including Sweden and Finland, who were able but not willing to join the alliance, and others, like Ukraine and Georgia, who were willing but not allowed to join the alliance. The threat was the same, but the responses by NATO differed.

### 5.3. Under Which Conditions Does a Country Become an Informal Ally? Which Indicators Reveal the Formation of Such a Status?

As illustrated with the case of Sweden and Finland compared to other partners, differentiation in alliance management had implications for alliance formation in an informal dimension. This dilemma is the stepping stone for **Paper II** leading to the second guiding question: under which conditions does a country become an informal ally? Which indicators reveal the formation of such a status? In **Paper II** I develop a framework to analyze the process of informal alliance formation further and problematize the distinction between an ally and a partner. Although not formal members of NATO, Sweden and Finland were both increasingly described as "allies" by various government representatives of member states. That intrigued me to pose and attempt to answer the question: what makes an ally?

The aim of **Paper II** is to shed light on the shady landscape when close partners become so close that they, in fact, are viewed as allies rather than partners. It provides new insights into how and why such a shift occurred, using Sweden and Finland as a case study. The article contributes to research on what constitutes an ally by introducing the concept of 'informal ally', in contrast to 'formal' ally. I advance that an **informal ally** is defined as 'a country that has

not formally signed an alliance treaty, but who is perceived by the members of a formal alliance as a trustworthy country that in case of a major crisis or war would, without hesitation, align on their side to meet the threat in concert'. This definition is constructed to handle potential problems of measuring how and when the informal ally status occurs by relating it to the perceptions of formal allies and to mutual trust and readiness rather than to advanced technical defense arrangements such as joint command and war plans.<sup>11</sup>

I examine the concept of informal ally through an analytical framework that is guided by three critical questions, deriving explanatory factors from realist, liberal, and constructivist theories:<sup>12</sup>

- 1) Do Sweden and Finland share security interests and threat perceptions with NATO?
- 2) Do Sweden and Finland share a commitment to NATO as a transatlantic institution?
- 3) Do Sweden and Finland identify themselves as being part of a Western community of mutual trust, in which peace is kept among members and in which Russia is seen as "the other"?

The framework allows for evaluating the process of ever-closer partner cooperation and its shifting focus from cooperative security to collective defense, as summarized in Table 1. Through the analysis of my elite interviews, the paper also makes an empirical contribution to the research literature on how the contemporary security policy elite views NATO and partners.

---

11 For an alternative method to measure the degree of security cooperation between states, see Korolev, Alexander. 2019. "On the Verge of an Alliance: Contemporary China-Russia Military Cooperation", *Asian Security* 15 (3): 233-252.

12 On the complementarity of constructivism to realism and liberalism, given that one uses a scientific approach to social inquiry, see Waltz, Kenneth N. 2004. Neorealism: Confusions and Criticisms. *Journal of Politics and Society*, 15 (1): 2-6.



	PHASE I → Wales Summit Sept 2014	PHASE II 2014-2015	PHASE III 2016-2017
Threat perceptions	Non-state	State – storm or climate change?	State
Institutional Commitment	Partly	Partly	Partly
Western Community vs Russia	West	West	West

*Table 1. Partner cooperation process toward collective defense*

**Paper II** describes a partner cooperation process that prior research has not illuminated in detail before. Throughout the analysis, the realist approach, in line with balance of threat theory, carries the most weight in explaining what pushed Sweden and Finland into their unprecedented status in relation to NATO. The key factor was a threat to national sovereignty and the will, capacity, and necessity to deal with that threat in concert. This factor emerges as the critical explanatory factor for the shift from partner to informal ally. Consequently, treaty or no treaty appeared less relevant. Sweden, Finland, and NATO acted according to realist assumptions regarding the balance of power and threat (see Chapter 3). The main difference to partners such as Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, but also Australia and New Zealand was that they did not perceive Russia as a threat to their state sovereignty. The main difference to partners such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova was that the alliance did not need them to defend the Baltic and Polish allies. There was no shared interest or need. However, the other explanatory factors, institutional commitment, and identity, matter as well, albeit to a lesser extent. The political energy invested by Sweden and Finland in order to confirm institutional commitment was necessary to achieve a high degree of institutionalization without being fully inside. Furthermore, taking clear positions on Russia spurred a sense of loyalty and trust. Hence, in NATO, both were perceived as part of the ‘Western camp’ alongside formal members of the alliance. The analysis demonstrates how NATO, from 2014 onwards, pragmatically moved partner collaboration with Sweden and Finland from the realm of ‘cooperative security’ to ‘collective defense’ through inclusion in working groups, committees, ministerial meetings, tabletop exercises, advanced military exercises, and war games.

I posit that four central elements are identified that need to materialize in order for a close partner to transition into an informal ally: (1) a *common threat* to national sovereignty and a realization that defense against that threat is needed

in concert; (2) a certain *degree of institutionalization*, despite lack of a formal treaty. In this case study, it was crucial to allow Sweden and Finland to take part in the working procedures of the alliance on an equal footing with allies; (3) a *high degree of political will and energy* on the partner side to pursue a closer relationship; and finally, (4) the existence of an *identification* with the institution: a sense of trust and belonging to a community. To illustrate, Sweden and Finland defined themselves and were perceived as part of the West with its norms, values, and practices.

Accordingly, there is reasonable support to argue that Sweden and Finland, since the second half of 2016, gained status as informal allies. As such, Sweden and Finland were perceived by allies as trustworthy. In case of a major crisis or war, they would, without hesitation, align on side of the alliance to meet the threat in concert. **Paper II** clearly demonstrates that alliance formation does not start with an application letter but is a much more complex integration process, a conclusion that has implications for IR theory, as I return to in Chapter 6.

However, I also argue that the informal ally status has key limitations. In the case of Sweden and Finland, the status merely applied to the Baltic Sea region and lacked formal access to NATO decision-making and joint operational planning. Furthermore, it implied a transparency deficit since the status was not officially recognized. Lastly, it was a fragile position that depended on the circumstances.

## 5.4. In Light of an External Threat, Why Do Some Small States Choose Not To Formally Join Alliances?

In **Paper III**, I dive deeper into the process of becoming an informal ally instead of formally joining an alliance and explore the logic of such a response using Sweden as a case study, taking into account domestic factors as intervening variables. The paper addresses a puzzle posed by structural realism: that systemic forces would work to encourage Sweden to align in the face of the threat from Russia, which emerged in 2014. Still, Sweden resisted NATO membership and settled for an informal ally status, which **Paper II** illustrates. The paper addresses the third guiding question: in light of an external threat, why do some small states choose not to formally join alliances?

Building on research on neoclassical realism and small state strategies, I construct and apply an analytical framework to explore what kind of policy Sweden was pursuing: was it, as officially claimed, a traditional, “non-alignment policy”, or rather a more novel type of integration policy? The framework also allows for an evaluation of integration into collective defense in three dimensions – openness, inclusiveness, and comprehensiveness – in combination with a screening dimension from dependency on a great power and its institutional structures (see Table 2). Following neoclassical realism, the study furthermore identifies domestic conditions hindering policy flexibility.

	<b>Continuity</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Doctrine components</b>		
Strong defense	low	high
International defense cooperation	low	high
Rule-based order	high	low
<b>Integrational components</b>		
openness	low	high
inclusiveness	low	high
comprehensiveness	low	high
<b>Screening components</b>	low	high

*Table 2. Evaluation of integration into collective defense*

The analysis reveals that Sweden responded to a great extent to the systemic imperatives by shifting its policy towards deeper integration with a broad range of other states and NATO. Sweden drew on their strength for its own protection, according to balance of power logic. The remnants of a non-alignment policy were so few that they could be considered dismissive, regardless of the official emphasis on this dimension. The Swedish policy could, therefore, best be understood as an integration policy into collective defense.

On the other hand, the resistance to formally joining NATO could only be explained if domestic circumstances were reviewed, as neoclassical realism suggests. Sweden was lacking policy flexibility due to certain conditions, which are identified in the paper: internal party politics, historical lessons from the past, and public opinion considerations. Put differently, Sweden did not fail to balance against hostile powers, but did so with a particular balancing

strategy drawn from a range of acceptable alternatives, of which the alliance alternative would be the most obvious and commonly applied.

The analytical framework presented in **Paper III** provides a valuable contribution to understanding and explaining small state strategies in times of growing great power tensions. The Swedish case clearly shows how small states can use integration both for deterrence and confidence-building measures to increase their security without necessarily taking the step of formally joining an alliance. Thus, my study also contributes to theories of alliance formation. Furthermore, the paper contributes to the inductive development of neoclassical realism regarding its predictability since the mediating variables are assumed to disrupt systemic-incentivized behavior and encourage deviation routinely. In this case, the variables are “entrenched national strategies from past periods”, as suggested by Brawley (2009), and, albeit to a lesser extent, “ideological constructions within which national foreign policy is justified”, as proposed by Dueck (2009). Empirically, particularly through its elite interviews, the paper contributes to a knowledge build-up on the implementation of Swedish security policy since the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea, which caused a major distraction to the post-Cold War European security order.

In sum, the three papers of this dissertation provide both theoretical and empirical contributions to IR as a distinct research field. Within alliance theory, the thesis develops the concept of informal ally, as well as small state perspectives on alliance formation and management. Furthermore, the dissertation relates to the contemporary academic debate by introducing mediating variables in accordance with neoclassical realism to explain and predict state behavior. The dissertation also contributes to the discussion within structural realism on whether states balance against power or threats and relates that debate to small state strategies and regional security, thereby attempting to bridge great power and small power perspectives in a novel way. Empirically, the extensive case study analysis of the security dynamics in the Baltic Sea region allows for in-depth empirical contributions and cumulative knowledge advancement. In the next chapter, I conclude and reflect further on how the key contributions of the dissertation can be used in future avenues for research, given the dramatic developments since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.



# 6. Conclusion

## 6.1. Revisiting the Research Questions

The research puzzle of this thesis stems from an ambition to explain the security dynamics in the Baltic Sea region as it evolved when the Russian threat re-emerged in 2014. Security in the Baltic Sea region is characterized by power asymmetry. Hence, it cannot be studied by looking only at regional actors. The study of security has to be framed into a broader setting of international politics, which is reflected by the title of this thesis, *Transatlantic Transitions*. Consequently, the study theoretically assumes that the international system and its impact on the regional setting must be the starting point for assessing regional security dynamics in light of a great power threat. The thesis applies alliance theory focused on balance of threat that allows for the examination of informal allies and small state responses in accordance with structural realism and complements with elements from neoclassical realism when structural realism is too sparse to capture deviations in state behavior. Empirically, the dissertation applies case study analysis of the deteriorated security situation in the Baltic Sea region from 2014 to 2020, caused by Russia's assertive behavior, most prominently expressed by its illegal annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas. In order to allow for setting appropriate limits in time, space, and level of abstraction, I decompose the Baltic Sea region into a set of sub-case studies, dealt with respectively in **Papers I, II and III**. This way, I can apply different aspects of my research agenda related to the development of alliance theory and neoclassical realism. Taken together, these sub-cases provide explanatory insights into the evolution of the security dynamics in the Baltic Sea region from an alliance perspective during a transformative era.

In this section, I return to the guiding questions of the thesis to summarize their answers and main findings. At the core of the analysis is the overall research question: *How do systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional setting with regard to small state responses to an external threat?* The analysis is then guided by three main theoretical questions formulated with

the ambition to start with the systemic setting and explore its impact within a regional setting:

- How do systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional context?
- Under which conditions does a country become an informal ally? Which indicators reveal the formation of such a status?
- In light of an external threat, why do some small states choose not to formally join alliances?

In responding to the first question, asking how systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in a regional context, the analysis reveals that systemic forces affect alliance formation and management in various ways, given the power and threat asymmetry in the region. Unipolarity can affect regional security in that the dominating position of the hegemon can hinder it from applying balancing behavior if it does not recognize the aggressive great power as a rival at the systemic level. This situation leaves the small powers in the region in a vulnerable spot since their own balancing is insufficient to counter the rivaling state, which has both capabilities, proximity, and intent to pose an existential threat to them. Accordingly, a conclusion for small states is that unipolarity can be dangerous not only because of power asymmetry but because of threat asymmetry. In order to safeguard their national interests in the face of such a threat, small states need to be active, and an alliance can serve as an arena for threat calibration. The case study in **Paper I** illustrates how US hegemony affected its response to the Russian threat in the Baltic Sea region, in that the US marginally adapted to the rise of a regional power but not to the rise of a threatening great power with the capability to alter the international system. This dynamic explains why the US acted vaguely to the Russian threat and why its political and military engagement differed. By focusing on the systemic forces at play and analyzing the US from its position in the international system, I conclude, in contrast to realists such as Mearsheimer, that the US did not do too much in response to Russia. Rather, it did too little. The US engaged in neither internal balancing, such as investing in military capabilities targeted to balance Russia, nor external balancing, such as aligning with other great powers or having Ukraine join NATO. The US did not commit to a balance of power adjustment at the systemic level as requested by the small powers close to the threatening great power because it did not assess Russia as a systemic rival at the time. However, systemic forces affected alliance management in a regional context in that the US reacted as an alliance leader, tied by its commitments to collective defense to protect its allies from

a regional power. This situation resulted in NATO settling for some modest reassurance measures and a show of force on its territory. These measures were unsatisfactory for the Baltic Sea allies with proximity to the Russian threat. The case-study analysis reveals how NATO became a central forum to calibrate these asymmetric threat levels. The Baltic Sea allies worked through the Alliance in order to achieve a balancing behavior that accommodated their security concerns.

As to the second question, examining under which conditions a country becomes an informal ally and which indicators reveal the formation of such a status, four core components emerge as decisive: 1/ the existence of a *common threat*; 2/ a certain *degree of institutionalization*; 3/ a *high degree of political will and energy* on the partner side to pursue a closer relationship; and 4/ the existence of an *identification* with the institution, a sense of trust and belonging to a community. The critical explanatory factor is the emergence of a threat to national sovereignty and the will, capacity, and necessity to deal with that threat in concert. The case study in **Paper II** concludes that the realist approach, and particularly the balance of threat theory, carries the most weight in explaining what pushed Sweden and Finland into their unprecedented status in relation to NATO. Sweden, Finland, and NATO acted according to realist assumptions as they shared both a threat assessment and an interest to deal with that threat in concert, which meant that the lack of a formal treaty became less relevant. The move to informal ally status was facilitated by Sweden and Finland having an institutional commitment and already belonging to the ‘Western camp’ alongside formal members of the Alliance. Accordingly, there is reasonable support in the thesis to argue that Sweden and Finland, since the second half of 2016, gained status as informal allies. As such, Sweden and Finland were perceived by allies as trustworthy. In case of a major crisis or war, they would, without hesitation, align on the side of the Alliance to meet the threat in concert. The informal ally status came with restrictions. It was geographically limited to the Baltic Sea region. I also conclude that it was a fragile position that depended on the circumstances. Being a close partner to NATO was uncontroversial when the cooperation took place far away, but as it moved closer to territorial defense, it became more complicated.

Taken together, the analysis stemming from the first two guiding questions demonstrates the value of alliance theory focused on balance of threat in bridging great and small power perspectives in a regional setting. In addition, balance of threat theory provides explanatory value for foreign policy choices of forming alliances and helps shed light on how threat asymmetry is calibrated within an alliance, a form of alliance management from a small state



perspective. Furthermore, it allows for an analysis of alliance formation that goes beyond formality. However, in order to fully explore the third question of why some small powers, in light of an external threat, choose not to formally join alliances, I relate to the contemporary debate within realism by including domestic factors as mediating variables to account for deviating state behavior. Building on neoclassical realism and research on small state strategies, I use Sweden as a case study in **Paper III** to examine paths of integration and screening into collective defense for the period 2014 - 2020. Did Sweden conduct a “non-alignment policy”, as officially claimed, or rather, in practice, a kind of integration policy? The analysis reveals that Sweden, to a large extent, responded to the systemic forces by shifting its policy towards deeper integration with several other states to draw on their strength for its own protection, according to the balance of power logic. The remnants of a non-alignment policy were only marginal despite the official emphasis on this dimension. Accordingly, the Swedish policy could best be understood as an integration policy into collective defense. On the other hand, resistance to fully joining NATO prevailed and could only be explained if domestic factors were analyzed. I conclude that Sweden lacked policy flexibility due to internal party politics, historical lessons from the past, and public opinion considerations. In other words, Sweden did not fail balance against a hostile power, but it did so with a particular balancing strategy from a range of acceptable alternatives, of which an alliance would be the most obvious and commonly applied.

## 6.2. Reflections on the Dramatic Developments Since 2022 and Avenues for Future Research

This thesis paves the way for an analysis of security dynamics in transatlantic relations also after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. A common theme in European debate is that there is a “before and after” February 24, 2022, indicating that Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. To some extent, this claim is valid. Russia’s attack was in its military scale, violence, and brutality at levels not seen in Europe since World War II. In response, the West started to provide substantial military support to Ukraine, heavily sanction Russia, boost defense spending as well as defense material production. For Sweden and Finland, the full-scale invasion led to a re-evaluation of their informal alliance status and decisions to apply for NATO membership. At the same time, this thesis highlights that the Russian aggression toward Ukraine as a sovereign state did

not start in 2022 – it began in 2014. The publication of this dissertation in 2024 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine, the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea, and the war in Donbas. Increasingly, this aspect is heard in European debate as well, paired with self-reflections on whether the West at that time did enough to stop Russia. The dissertation, with its focus on the systemic setting and how it affected state and alliance responses to the Russian threat, provides fresh insights into which balancing behavior that did – and did not – occur, and what lessons the West can draw from it. From this study, it becomes clear that the unipole’s lack of response to the threatening great power, both in terms of internal and external balancing, increased the vulnerability of the small states in its vicinity. It is reasonable to argue that it also contributed to a deteriorated security environment in general. As I point out in Chapter 1, more research attention ought to be devoted to this past decade, not merely to the past two years. As Russia’s aggressive ambitions and systemic aspirations do not seem to wane any time soon, there is a growing sense of urgency in knowledge build-up in the field, especially when it comes to analyzing how shifts in the international system between 2014 and 2024 affected alliance formation and management. These shifts went from unipolarity to a disputed structure of possible bipolarity/multipolarity/partial unipolarity.

Another theme that arguably requires more research is Sweden and Finland’s transformation from informal to formal allies. Why did Sweden and Finland apply for NATO membership instead of deepening their informal alliance arrangements? Here, IR suggests a range of possible explanations. Was it due to an external military shock, as suggested by Bailes et al. (2016), or had it more to do with an immediate security risk, which tends to limit policy options (Kuick 2010:112-116) or put more moderately, a “geopolitical shift and growing insecurity in northern Europe” (Brommesson et al. 2023)? Or had a shifting state identity already paved the way for a quick foreign policy turnaround, as hinted by Kjellström Elgin and Lanoszka (2023) as well as by Lundqvist (2022)? From a balance of threat perspective, it is logical to refer to Sweden and Finland’s decision to the fact that Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 provided for an unprecedented level of threat for countries neighboring Russia, both in terms of clarity and imminence. As I discuss in Chapter 3, findings in this thesis support arguments that the threat level determines a state’s decision regarding alliance formation. Walt himself argues this case in an article in *Foreign Policy* on May 18, 2022, the day the applications are handed over to NATO. Walt points out that Russia’s aggregate power, proximity, and offensive capability were old news even before February 2022. However, its offensive intentions became clear with the full-

scale invasion, which provided the “tipping point” for Sweden and Finland. A weakness in Walt’s reasoning is that he cannot account for the shift from informal to formal allies since his definition of alliances does not include such a distinction. Walt partly works around this fallacy by claiming that Sweden and Finland shifted, not from being informal allies, but from being “strict” neutral, which is incorrect. Pesu and Iso-Makku (2024) suggest that it was the threat combined with rational arguments such as access to joint planning and nuclear shield in light of an identified “deterrence deficit” that triggered Finland to abandon the informal ally status, but they refrain from analyzing the systemic setting in which the shift occurred.

It would therefore be fruitful to do further research, starting with the strategic setting in 2022 (in contrast to 2014) both from a balance of power and a balance of threat perspective, and apply my framework of integration versus screening to shed further light on small state responses and alliance formation. A central question would be to explore why the intervening variables no longer inhibited compliance with systemic imperatives. How did this foreign policy shift come about, and what does it say about the explanatory power of structural realism versus neoclassical realism and of alliance formation processes? Structural realism would suggest that the answer lies in shifts in the international system. Furthermore, as neoclassical realism proposes, the mediating variables will likely be overruled when states face a clear and immediate threat.

Another related theme that Russia’s war on Ukraine has highlighted is that a state can find itself in a situation in which it wants to join an alliance but is not welcome to do so. This rejection was, for instance, the case with the Ottoman Empire before the Great War, where it sought alliance first with Great Britain, then with France, but was rejected in both cases (Dogachan 2018). Similarly, Sweden rejected Finland to form an alliance during World War II. As polarity in the international system is shifting, small powers might, to a larger extent, find their maneuver space limited, including access to formal alliances, while the need for deterrence and defense remain high (Pedi and Wivel 2022). This tendency could challenge the prevailing notion that alliances must be treaty-bound in order to be efficient and “real” in terms of security guarantees. A small state that has to navigate for survival in the marginal space that is created by the great power configuration and its institutional setting will need to assess if it is in a strategically exposed geopolitical position, if it will require assistance in a future war and if it needs to prepare for that in peacetime, and then conduct integration strategies to make it happen. Given the structure of the international system at the time, opportunities and challenges will vary.

Hence, the systemic setting should be the point of departure for any such research endeavor.

Under which conditions can a state reach the status of an informal ally? In the case of Ukraine, the country was not allowed to join NATO prior to Russia's full-scale invasion since the US did not indulge in external balancing. Structural realism would suggest that out of state survival, Ukraine could have made concessions, for instance, on territory to Russia to avoid war or tried to negotiate a neutral status. Ukraine could also have sought to bandwagon with Russia in an attempt to protect its national security and state survival. Instead, Ukraine appears to have pushed itself into a status of informal ally with NATO, which it was previously unable to obtain (see **Paper II**). This informal ally process and status could be explored through my analytical framework and its four core components: the existence of a *common threat*; a certain *degree of institutionalization*; a *high degree of political will and energy* on the partner side to pursue a closer relationship; and finally, the existence of an *identification* with the institution: a sense of trust and belonging to a community. It could also be fruitful to explore the possibility of merging that framework with the analytical framework I have presented in **Paper III**, allowing for an evaluation of *integration* into collective defense in three dimensions – *openness*, *inclusiveness*, and *comprehensiveness* – combined with *screening* components. An additional hypothesis to test would be if 'informal ally' only applies in a limited geographical setting. Other case studies to solidify the value of the suggested frameworks could include the remaining so-called "European neutrals" (Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland) or Georgia and/or Moldova. Finally, the method of combining the balance of power with the balance of threat theory to bridge great power and small power perspectives could be applied in another regional setting, for instance, the Black Sea region. In all, there are rich opportunities for further theoretical and empirical advancements based on the analysis presented here.



# References

- Adler, E. and Barnett, M. 1998. "A Framework for the Study of Security Communities." in Adler, A. and Barnett, M, (eds.). *Security Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allison, Graham T. 1971. *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Little Brown.
- Archer, Clive. 2014. "The Nordic States and Security", in. Archer, C. Bailes, A.J.K. and Wivel, A. (eds.) 2014. *Small states and International Security: Europe and beyond*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Aybet, G. and Moore, R. (eds.) 2010. *NATO in Search for a Vision*. Georgetown University Press.
- Bailes, A.J.K, Rickli Jean-Marc and Thorhallsson, Baldur. 2014. "Small states, survival and strategy." pp. 26-39, in Archer Clive, Bailes A. J.K., and Wivel Anders (eds.) *Small States and International Security: Europe and beyond*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Bailes. A.J.K., Thayer, B. and Thorhallsson, B. 2016. "Alliance Theory and Alliance "Shelter": The complexities of small state alliance behavior." *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 1 (1): 1-18.
- Baker Fox, Annette. 1959. *The Power of Small State: Diplomacy in World War II*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Baldacchino, Godfrey, and Wivel, Anders. 2020. "Small States: Concepts and Theories." in Godfrey Baldaccino, Godfrey and Wivel, Anders (eds.) *Handbook on the Politics of Small States*. Cheltenham: Edwar Elgar.
- Bengtsson, R. 2020. "Nordic security and defence cooperation: differentiated integration in uncertain times. *Politics and governance*, 8 (4). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v8i4.3338>
- Bennett, Andrew. 2010. "Case study methods: Design, use and comparative advantages." pp. 19-48, in Nahmias-Walinsky, Yael (ed.) *Models, Numbers and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.
- Béraud-Sudreau, Lucie and Schmitt, Olivier. 2024. "Alliance politics and national arms industries: creating incentives for small states?" *European Security*, published online January 23. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2024.2304294>

- Brawley, Mark R. 2009. "Neoclassical realism and strategic calculations: explaining divergent British, French, and Soviet strategies toward Germany between the world wars (1919-1939)." in Ripsman, Norrin, Taliaferro, Jeffrey and Lobell, Steven (eds.) *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bjøl, E. 1971. "The small state in international politics.", pp. 29-39 in Schou, A. and Brundland, A. O. (eds.) *Small states in international relations*. Wiley.
- Bremberg, Niklas. 2012. *Exploring the Dynamics of Security Community-Building in the Post-Cold War Era: Spain, Morocco and the European Union*. Stockholm Studies in Politics 145, Stockholm University.
- Brommesson, D. Ekengren, A. Michalski, A. 2023. "From variation to convergence in turbulent times – foreign and security policy choices among the Nordics 2014-2023." *European Security*, published online June 13.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2023.2221185>
- Borger, Julian. 2014. "Barack Obama: Russia is a Regional Power Showing Weakness over Ukraine." *The Guardian*, March 25, 2014.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/25/barack-obama-russia-regional-power-ukraine-weakness>
- Buzan, Barry. 1983. *People, State and Fear*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Buzan, Barry, Jones, Charles and Little, Richard. 1993. *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Buzan, Barry and Waever, Ole. 2003. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Campbell, David. 1992. *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Christensen, Thomas J. and Jack Snyder, Jack. 1990. "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity". *International Organization*, 44 (2): 137-168.
- Christiansson, M. 2012. "The Military Balance in the Baltic Sea Region: Notes on a Defunct Concept." pp. 133 in Fels, E. Kremer, J-F. and Kronenberg, K. (eds.) *Power in the 21st Century: International Security and International Political Economy in a Changing World*. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer.
- Ciorciari, J. and Haacke, J. 2019. "Hedging in international relations: an introduction." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 19 (3): 367-374.
- Cottey, A. (ed.) 2018. *The European neutrals and NATO: non-alignment, partnership, membership?* Cham Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Dahl, Ann-Sofie and Järvenpää, Pauli (eds.) 2014. *Northern Security and Global Politics: Nordic-Baltic Strategic Influence in a Post-Unipolar World*. Routledge Global Security Studies, London/New York: Routledge.

- Dahl, Ann-Sofie (ed.) 2018. *Strategic Challenges in the Baltic Sea Region: Russia, Deterrence and Reassurance*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Dalsjö, Robert. 2006. *Life-Line Lost: The Rise and Fall of "Neutral" Sweden's Secret Reserve Option of Wartime Help from the West*. Stockholm: Santérus.
- Dalsjö, Robert, Berglund, Christofer, Jonsson, Michael. 2019. *Bursting the Bubble. Russian A2/AD in the Baltic Sea Region: Capabilities, Countermeasures, and Implications*. FOI Report, Stockholm, March 2019. <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4651--SE>
- Davies P.H.J. 2001. "Spies as informants: triangulation and the interpretation of elite interview data in the study of the intelligence and security services." *Politics* 21 (1): 73-80.
- Dempsey, Judy. 2013. "What NATO's Steadfast Jazz Exercises Mean for Europe". *Carnegie Europe*, October 31. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=53467>
- Deutsch, K. W., Burrell, S. A., Kann, R.A., Lee Jr., M., Lichterman, M., Lindgren, R. E., Lowenheim, F. L. and Van Read Wagenen, R. W. 1957. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dinev Ivanov, Ivan. 2017. "European Security at Crossroads after Ukraine?" in Moore, Rebecca and Coletta, Damon (eds.) *NATO's Return to Europe: Engaging Ukraine, Russia, and beyond*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Diop, K.A.S. and Liu, Ersi. 2020. "Categorization of case in case study research method: new approach." *Knowledge and Performance Management*, 4 (1): 1-14.
- Doeser, Fredrik. 2008. *In Search of Security After the Collapse of the Soviet Union: Foreign Policy Change in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, 1988–1993*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet.
- Doeser, Fredrik. 2011. "Domestic politics and foreign policy change in small states: The fall of the Danish 'footnote policy'." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 46 (2): 222-241.
- Dogachan, Dagi. 2018. "Balance of Power or Balance of Threat: Revisiting Ottoman Alliance Politics before the Great War." *Open Political Science* 1: 143-152.
- Dueck, Colin. 2009. "Neoclassical realism and the national interest: presidents, domestic politics, and major military interventions." in Ripsman, Norrin, Taliaferro, Jeffrey and Lobell, Steven (eds.) *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Edström, H., Haaland Matlary, J. and Petersson, M. (eds.) 2011. *NATO: The Power of Partnerships*. Palgrave MacMillan.



- Edström, H. and Westberg, J. 2020. "Between the eagle and the bear: Explaining the alignment strategies of the Nordic countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." *Comparative Strategy*, 39 (2): 191-208.
- Elgström, Ole. 2000. *Images and strategies for autonomy: Explaining Swedish security policy strategies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academi.
- Elman, Colin. 2003. *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Ekgren, Magnus. 2018. "A return to geopolitics? The future of the security community in the Baltic Sea Region." *Global Affairs*, published online Nov 1, pp. 1-17. Accessed 2022/11/13 <https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/23340460.2018.1535250>
- Engelbrekt, Kjell, Holmberg, Anita and Ångström, Jan (eds.) 2015. *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i Europa och världen*. Stockholm: Norstedts juridik.
- Engelbrekt, Kjell. 2018. "A brief intellectual history of geopolitical thought and its relevance to the Baltic Sea region." *Global Affairs* 4 (4-5): 475-485.
- Feaver, Peter, Hillmann, G., Schweller, R. L., Taliaferro, J. W., Wohlfort, W. C. 2000. "Correspondence: Brother Can You Spare a Paradigm (Or Was Anybody Ever a Realist?)." *International Security*, 25 (1): 165-9.
- Fiammenghi, David, Rosato, Sebastian, Parent, Joseph, Taliaferro, Jeffrey, Lobell, Steven, Ripsman, Norrin, Narizny, Kevin. 2018. "Correspondence: Neoclassical realism and its critics." *International Security*, 43 (2): 199-203.
- Flockhart, Tine. 2014. "NATO and EU: A "Strategic Partnership" or a Practice of "Muddling Through"?" pp. 75-89 in Odgaard, L. *Strategy in NATO: Preparing for an Imperfect World*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Flockhart, Tine. 2024. "NATO in the multi-order world" *International Affairs* 100 (2): 471-489.
- Forsberg, T. 2018. "Finland and NATO: Strategic Choices and Identity Conceptions." pp. 97-128, in Cottey, A. (ed.) 2018. *The European neutrals and NATO: non-alignment, partnership, membership?* Cham Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Friis, Karsten (ed.) 2016. *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Früling, S. and Schreer, Ben. 2010. "Creating the Next Generation of NATO Partnerships." *The RUSI Journal*, 155 (1): 52-57.
- Gheciu, Alexandra. 2005. *NATO in the "New Europe": The Politics of International Socialization after the Cold War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gvalia, Giorgi, Lebanidze, Bidzina, and Siroky, David S. 2019. "Neoclassical realism and small states: systemic constraints and domestic filters in Georgia's foreign policy." *East European Politics*, 35 (1): 21-51.

- Gyllensporre, Dennis. 2016. "Den vetenskapliga analysen av svensk säkerhetspolitik: Dags för vitalisering och realism?" *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift* 118 (4): 471–496.
- Hamilton, Daniel S., Simonyi, Andras, Cagan, Debra L (eds.) 2014. *Advancing U.S.-Nordic-Baltic Security Cooperation: Adapting Partnership to a New Security Environment*. Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations.
- Harvey, W.S. 2011. "Strategies for conducting elite interviews." *Qualitative Research* 11 (4): 431–441.
- Hedling, Elsa and Brommesson, Douglas. 2017. "Security Through European Integration or Flexible Autonomy: Ambivalence in Sweden's Position on the Eastern Partnership?". *Global Affairs*.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23340460.2017.1416308>
- Henke, E. Marina. 2019. *Constructing Allied Cooperation. Diplomacy, Payments, and Power in Multilateral Military Coalitions*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Hey, J. A. K. 2003. "Introducing small state foreign policy", pp. 1-11 in Hey, J. A. K. (ed.) *Small states in world politics: Explaining foreign policy behavior*. Lynne Rienner.
- Hyde-Price, Adrian. 2016. "Theorising NATO", pp. 22-40 in Webber, Mark and Hyde-Price, Adrian (eds.) *Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance*. London: Routledge.
- Holmström, Mikael. 2016. "Russia Practiced Nuclear Attacks on Sweden" (Ryssland övade kärnvapenanfall mot Sverige). *Dagens Nyheter*, February 2.  
<https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/ryssland-ovade-karnvapenanfall-mot-sverige/>
- Jervis, R. 1978. "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 30 (1): 167-214.
- Jervis, R. 1982. "Security Regimes." *International Organization*, 36 (2): 357-78.
- Jervis, R. 1985. "From Balance to Concert: A Study of International Security Cooperation." *World Politics*, 38 (1): 58-79.
- Katzenstein, P.J. 1985. *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Keohane, Robert. (ed.). 1986. *Neorealism and Its Critics*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Kim, Sung-han. 2010. "From blood alliance to strategic alliance: Korea's evolving strategic thought toward the United States." *Korean Journal of Defence Analysis*, 22 (3): 265-281.
- Kinne, Brandon. 2018. "Defense cooperation agreements and the emergence of a global security network." *International Organization* 72 (4): 799-837.
- Kirchner, E. and Dominguez, R. 2011. *The Security Governance of Regional Organizations*. London: Routledge.

- Kirchner, E. and Dominguez, R. 2014. "Security Governance in a Comparative Regional Perspective." *European Security*, 23 (2): 163-78.
- Kjellström Elgin, Katherine and Lanoszka, Alexander. 2023. "Sweden, Finland the Meaning of Alliance Membership." *Texas National Security review* 6 (2): 34-56.
- Klein, R., Lundqvist, S., Sumangil, E., Pettersson, U. 2019. *Baltic Left of Bang: The Role of NATO with Partners in Denial-Based Deterrence*, Washington DC: National Defense University Press nr 301, s 20 s, 1-20.
- Knudsen, O.F., 1988. "Of Lambs and Lions: Relations Between Great Powers and their Smaller Neighbors." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 23 (2): 111-122.
- Knudsen, O.F., 1999. "Security on the Great Power Fringe: Dilemmas Old and New." pp. 3-19, in Knudsen, O.F. (ed.) *Stability and Security in the Baltic Sea region: Russian, Nordic and European aspects*. London: Frank Cass.
- Korolev, Alexander. 2019. "On the Verge of an Alliance: Contemporary China-Russia Military Cooperation." *Asian Security* 15 (3): 233–252.
- Kronvall, Olof and Petersson, Magnus. 2005. *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i supermakternas skugga 1945–1991*. Stockholm: Santérus Academic Press.
- Kuick, Cheng-Chwee. 2010. *Smaller states' alignment choices: A comparative study of Malaysia and Singapore's hedging behavior in the face of a rising China*. The Johns Hopkins University ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Lanoszka, A. 2022. *Military Alliances in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, Medford: Polity Press.
- Lašas, Ainius. 2012. *European Union and NATO Expansion: Central and Eastern Europe*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Layne, Christopher. 2006. "The unipolar illusion revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment." *International Security* 31 (2): 7-41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137515>.
- Legrenzi, M. and Lawson, F. H. 2018. "Regional Security Complexes and Organizations" in Gheciu, A. and Wohlforth, W. C. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Security*, online publication April 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198777854.001.0001>
- Levy, J. S. 2001. "Explaining Events and Developing Theories: History, Political Science, and the Analysis of International Relations", in Elman, C. and Elman, M. F. (eds.) *Bridges and Boundaries*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Levy, J.S. 2008. "Case Studies: Types, Designs and Logics of Inference." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 25 (1): 1-18.
- Lindley-French, Julian. 2023. *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization: The Enduring Alliance* (third edition). London and New York: Routledge.
- Liska, George. 1962. *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Ljung, Bo, Malmlöf, Tomas, Neretnieks, Karlis, Winnerstig, Mike (eds.) 2012. "The Security and Defensibility of the Baltic States – A Comprehensive Analysis of a Security Complex in the Making", *FOI Report*, Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency.
- Lobell, Steven, Ripsman, Norrin and Taliaferro, Jeffrey (eds.) 2009. *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lobell, Steven E., Ripsman, Norrin M., Taliaferro, Jeffrey W. 2016. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Long, Tom. 2022. *A Small State's Guide to Influence in World Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lunde Saxi, H. 2022. "Alignment but not Alliance: Nordic Operational Military Cooperation." *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, 13: 53-71.
- Lundqvist, Stefan. 2017. *Continuity and Change in post-Cold War Maritime Security: A Study of the Strategies Pursued by the US, Sweden and Finland 1991-2016*, Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press.
- Lundqvist, Stefan. 2022. "A Convincing Finnish Move: Implications for State Identity of Persuading Sweden to Jointly Bid for NATO Membership." *Studies in European Affairs*, (4): 73-109.
- Malmborg, Mikael af. 2001. *Neutrality and State-Building in Sweden*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Makarychev, Andrey and Sergunin, Alexander. 2017. "Russia's role in regional cooperation and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)." *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 48 (4): 465-479.
- Mearsheimer, John. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Mearsheimer, John. 2009. "Reckless States and Realism." *International Relations*, 23 (2): 241–256.
- Mearsheimer, John. 2014. "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault." *Foreign Affairs*, August 18, 2014. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault>.
- Meibauer, Gustav. 2019. "Interests, ideas and the study of state behavior in neoclassical realism." published online August 15 by Cambridge University Press, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210519000214>
- Michaels, Eva. 2024. "Caught off guard? Evaluating how external experts in Germany warned about Russia's war on Ukraine." *Intelligence and National Security*, Published online April 4. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02684527.2024.2330133>.
- Morrow, James D. 2000. "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3 (1): 63-83.

- Möller, U. and Bjereld, U. 2010. "From Nordic neutrals to post-neutral Europeans: Differences in Finnish and Swedish policy transformation." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 45 (4): 363-386.
- Narizny, Kevin. 2017. "On Systemic Paradigms and Domestic Politics: A Critique of the Newest Realism." *International Security*, 42 (2): 155-190.
- Natow, R. 2020. "The use of triangulation in qualitative studies employing elite interviews." *Qualitative Research*, vol 20 (2): 160-173.
- Olsen, John Andreas (ed.) 2018. "Security in Northern Europe: Deterrence, Defence and Dialogue." *Whitehall Paper no 93*, London: RUSI.
- Osgood, Robert. 1968. *Alliances and American Foreign Policy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Parsi, V. 2006. *The Inevitable Alliance: Europe and the United States beyond Iraq*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pedi, Revecca and Wivel, Anders. 2022. "What Future for Small States After Unipolarity? Strategic Opportunities and Challenges in the Post-American World Order." pp. 127-147, in Græger, N. Heurlin, B. Wæver, O. and Wivel, A. (eds.) *Polarity in International Relations: past, present, future*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pedi, Revecca and Wivel, Anders. 2023. "The power (politics) of the weak revisited: Realism and the study of small-state foreign policy." in Kolnberger, T. and Koff, H. (eds.) *Agency, Security and Governance of Small States: A Global Perspective*. London: Routledge. E-book printed 22 September. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003356011>
- Pesu, Matti och Iso-Markku, Tuomas. 2024. "Insufficiency of informal alignment: why did Finland choose formal NATO membership?" *International Affairs*, 100(2): 569–588.
- Petersson, Bo. 2023. "Felslut och önsketänkanden. Om Rysslandsforskarna, Putin och utvecklingen fram till kriget." *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, 125(1): 25-40.
- Petersson, Magnus. 2012. "Sweden and the Scandinavian Defence Dilemma." *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 37 (2): 221-229.
- Petersson, Magnus. 2018. "'The Allied Partner': Sweden and NATO Through the Realist-Idealist Lens", pp. 73-96, in Cottey, A. (ed.) 2018. *The European neutrals and NATO: non-alignment, partnership, membership?* Cham Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Petersson, Magnus. 2019. *NATO and the Crisis in the International Order: The Atlantic Alliance and its Enemies*. London: Routledge.
- Pifer, Steven. 2021. "Russia's draft agreements with NATO and the United States: Intended for rejection?" *Brookings*, December 21. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/russias-draft-agreements-with-nato-and-the-united-states-intended-for-rejection/>

- Poast, Paul. 2019. *Arguing About Alliances. The Art of Agreement in Military-Pact Negotiations*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Powell, Robert. 1999. *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Quinn, Adam. 2018. *Realisms*. The Oxford Handbook of International Security.
- Ratti, Luca. 2013. "‘Resetting’ NATO-Russia Relations: A Realist Appraisal Two Decades after the USSR." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 26 (2): 141-161.
- Reiter, Dan. 1996. *Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances and World Wars*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Riim, Toomas. 2006. "Estonia and NATO: A Constructivist View on a National Interest and Alliance Behavior." *Baltic Security & Defence Review*, 8: 34-52.
- Ripsman, Norrin, Taliaferro, Jeffrey, and Lobell, Steven. 2016. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rothstein, Robert L. ed. 1968. *Alliances and Small Powers*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Ruffa, Chiara. 2020. "Case Study Methods: Case Selection and Case Analysis." In the SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations. pp. 1133-1147, London: SAGE Publications. Accessed 2022/02/07 <https://methods.sagepub.com/book/research-methods-in-political-science-and-international-relations>
- Rynning, Sten. 2005. *NATO renewed: The Power and Purpose of Transatlantic Cooperation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Rynning, Sten. 2011. "Realism and the Common Security and Defence Policy." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49 (1): 23-42.
- Rynning, Sten and Schmitt, Olivier. 2018. "Alliances" in Gheciu, A. and Wohlforth, W.C. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Security*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, March. Pp 1-16 (653-667).
- Schimmelfennig, Frank. 1999. "NATO Enlargement: A Constructivist Explanation." In Chafetz, G. Spirtas, M. Frankel, B. (eds.) *The Origins of National Interests*, London: Frank Cass.
- Schlesinger, James. 1991. "New instabilities, New Priorities." *Foreign Policy* 85: 3-24.
- Schroeder, Paul W. 1976. "Alliances, 1815–1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management." pp. 227–262, in Knorr, Klaus (ed.) *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Schroeder, Paul W. 1994. "Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory." *International Security*, 19 (1): 72-107.
- Schweller, Randall L. 1994. "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Re-visionist State Back In." *International Security*, 19 (1): 108-148.

- Schweller, Randall L. 2004. "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing." *International Security* 29 (2): 159-201.
- Sjursen, Helene. 2004. "On the Identity of NATO." *International Affairs*, 80 (4): 687-703.
- Sloan, Stanley. 2018. *Transatlantic traumas: has illiberalism brought the West to the brink of collapse?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Smith, M. A. 2006. *Russia and NATO since 1991: From Cold War Through Cold Peace to Partnership?*, London: Routledge.
- Snyder, Glenn. 1984. "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36 (July): 461-495.
- Snyder, Glenn 1990. "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist first cut." *Journal of International Affairs*, 44 (1): 103-123.
- Snyder, Glenn. 1997. *Alliance Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Snyder, Jack. 1991. *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Sperling, J. 2014. "Regional Security Governance.", pp. 98-119 in J. Sperling (ed.) *Handbook of Governance and Security*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Stoltenberg, Jens. 2016. "Secretary General's Annual Report 2015". *NATO*.
- Tamnes, Rolf. 1986. "Integration and Screening: The Two Faces of Norwegian Alliance Policy, 1945-1986." in *Årsbok for Forsvarshistorisk forskningscenter*, National Defence College Norway.
- Tang, S. 2010. *A theory of security strategy for our time: defensive realism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thies, Wallace. 2009. *Why NATO Endures*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1985. "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War." In Miller, S. (ed.) *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to methods for students of Political Science*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1998. "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War." *International Security* 22(4): 5-43.
- Vinocur, Nicholas. 2024. "Macron calls Russia threat 'existential' ahead of meeting with Tusk, Scholz", *Politico*, March 15, online at <https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/brussels-playbook/macron-calls-russia-threat-existential-ahead-of-meeting-with-tusk-scholz/>
- Väyrynen, R. 1997. "Towards effective conflict prevention: A comparison of different instruments." *International Journal of Peace Studies* 2(1): 1-18.
- Wallander, Celeste A. 2018. "NATO's Enemies Within." *Foreign Affairs* 97(4): 70-81.

- Walt, Stephen M. 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaka: Cornell University Press.
- Walt, Stephen. M. 1997. "Why alliances endure or collapse". *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 39 (1): 156-179.
- Walt, Stephen M. 2009. "Alliances in a Unipolar World." *World Politics* 61(1): 86-120.
- Walt, Stephen M. 2022. "What Are Sweden and Finland Thinking?" *Foreign Policy*, 18 May, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/18/nato-sweden-finland-russia-balance-threat/>
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1959. *Man, The State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1990. "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory." *Journal of International Affairs* 44(1): 21-37.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1991. "America as a model for the world? A foreign policy perspective." *Political Science and Politics* 24 (4): 667-670.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 2000. "Structural Realism after the Cold War." *International Security* 25(1): 5-41.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 2004. "Neorealism: Confusions and Criticisms." *Journal of Politics and Society* 15(1): 2–6.
- Webb, E., Campbell, D., Schwartz, R. and Sechrest, L. 1966. *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences*. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company.
- Webber, Mark and Hyde-Price, Adrian (eds.) 2016. *Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance*. London: Routledge.
- Weitsman, Patricia A. 2004. *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Weitsman, Patricia A. 2014. *Waging War: Alliances, Coalitions, and Institutions of Interstate Violence*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Westberg, Jacob. 2015. *Svenska Säkerhetsstrategier 1810–2014*, Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Westberg, Jacob. 2016. "Säkerhet utan alliansfrihet: svenska alliansstrategiers teori och praktik." *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* 118 (4): 411-444.
- Wieslander, Anna. 2019a. "What Makes an Ally? Sweden and Finland as NATO's Closest Partners." *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 17 (2): 194-222.
- Wieslander, Anna. 2019b. "Why European Unity and Freedom Still Matter to the United States.", pp. 201-210, in Debski, Slawomir and Hamilton, Daniel S. (eds.) *Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality*, Warsaw and Washington DC: The Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Transatlantic Leadership Network.



- Wieslander, Anna and Lundquist, Viktor. 2021. *The UK, France and the United States in Sweden's vicinity: strategic interests and military activities*. Report, August 17, Washington, DC: Atlantic Council.
- Wieslander, Anna and Kjellström Elgin, Katherine. 2021, "Making NATO's Partnerships More Strategic: Sweden and Finland as Partner Models for Development." in Blessing, J. Kjellström Elgin, K. and Ewers-Peters, N (eds.) *NATO 2030: Towards a New Strategic Concept and Beyond*. Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins University.
- Wieslander, Anna, Adamson, Eric, Lehto, Jesper. 2023. *Securing Northern Europe Within NATO. Sweden and Finland as New Allies*. Report, January 6. Washington DC: Atlantic Council.
- Wilkins, Thomas. 2012. "'Alignment', not 'alliance' – the shifting paradigm of international security cooperation: toward a conceptual taxonomy of alignment." *Review of International Studies* 38 (1): 53-76.
- Winnerstig, M. 2012. "Defense Integration in the Baltic Sea Security Complex: A Conceptual Approach." pp. 61–77, in Volker, K. and I. Kupce (eds.) *Nordic-Baltic-America Cooperation: Shaping the US-European Agenda*. Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University.
- Wivel, Anders. 2005a. "Explaining why State X made a certain move last Tuesday: the promise and limitations of realist foreign policy analysis." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8 (4): 355-80.
- Wivel, Anders. 2005b. "The Security Challenge of Small EU Member States: Interests, Identity and the Development of the EU as a Security Actor." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 43 (2): 393-412.
- Wivel, Anders. 2008. "Balancing against Threats or Bandwagoning with Power? Europe and the Transatlantic Relationship after the Cold War." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21 (3): 289-305.
- Wohlforth, William C. 1999. "The stability of a unipolar world." *International Security* 24 (1): 5-41.
- Zuckerman, H.A. 1972. "Interviewing an ultra-elite." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 36: 159-175.
- Åselius, Gunnar. 2018. "Continuity and change: lessons from 1,000 years of geopolitics in the Baltic Sea area." *Global Affairs* 4 (4-5): 467-473.

# Appendix. List of Interview Questions, 2020 (in Swedish)

## Frågor för intervjuer svensk säkerhetspolitik

Den så kallade Hultqvist-doktrinen bygger på en balansgång mellan utökat internationellt samarbete multi- och bilateralt, och bibehållen militär alliansfrihet. Därtill har den en stark komponent av att hävda internationell rätt och kritisera den som bryter mot den (läs Ryssland).

- Vad är doktrinen styrka för svensk säkerhet?
- Vilka spänningar rymmer den?
- Vilka externa drivkrafter/hänsynstaganden finns bakom utformandet av Hultqvistdoktrinen?
- Vilka inrikespolitiska drivkrafter/hänsynstaganden finns bakom utformandet av Hultqvist-doktrinen? (t.ex. regeringssammansättning, partiinterna faktorer, personliga övertygelser, intressegrupper)
  - Skulle doktrinen vara annorlunda med en annan socialdemokratisk försvarsminister eller alternativ regeringssammansättning?
- Hur trovärdig uppfattas doktrinen externt?
- På vilket sätt fungerar doktrinen avskräckande?
- På vilket sätt fungerar doktrinen förtroendeskapande?



# Scientific Papers



## **Lund Political Studies**

1. Ruin, Olof. Kooperativa förbundet 1899-1929. En organisationsstudie. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1960.
2. Vallinder, Torbjörn. I kamp för demokratin. Rösträttsrörelsen i Sverige 1886-1900. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1962.
3. Petersson, Hans F. Power and International Order. An Analytic Study of Four Schools of Thought and Their Approaches to the War, the Peace and the Postwar System 1914-1919. Lund: Gleerups, 1964.
4. Westerhult, Bo. Kronofogde, häradsskrivare, länsman. Den svenska fögderiförvaltningen 1810-1917. Lund: Gleerups, 1966.
5. Wieslander, Hans. I nedrustningens tecken. Intressen och aktiviteter kring försvarsfrågan 1918-1925. Lund: Gleerups, 1966.
6. Söderberg, Olof. Motororganisationerna i Sverige. Bakgrund, grupperingar, aktiviteter. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1966.
7. Sjöblom, Gunnar. Party Strategies in a Multiparty System. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1968.
8. Hydén, Göran. TANU Yajenga Nchi. Political Development in Rural Tanzania. Lund: Uniskol, 1968.
9. Lindeberg, Sven-Ola. Nödhyll och samhällsneutralitet. Svensk arbetslöshetspolitik 1920-1923. Lund: Uniskol, 1968.
10. Westerhult, Bo. Underdåniga påtryckningar. Fögderitjänstemännens intressebevakning från 1800-talets början till år 1918. Lund: Gleerups, 1969.
11. Bergquist, Mats. Sverige och EEC. En statsvetenskaplig studie av fyra åsiktsriktningars syn på svensk marknadspolitik 1961-62. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1970.
12. Lundquist, Lennart. Means and Goals of Political Decentralization. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1972.
13. Bjurulf, Bo. An Analysis of Some Aspects of the Voting Process. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1972.
14. Stenelo, Lars-Göran. Mediation in International Negotiations. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1972.
15. Lindquist, Stellan. Linkages between Domestic and Foreign Policy: The Record of Ghana. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1974.
16. Bjurulf, Bo. A Dynamic Analysis of Scandinavian Roll-Call Behavior. A Test of a Prediction Model of Ten Minority Situations in Three Countries. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1974.
17. Hermerén, Henrik. Regeringsbildningen i flerpartisystem, Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1975.
18. Johannesson, Conny. Studier över Svenska metallindustriarbetarförbundets förhandlingsorganisation vid förbundsförhandlingar – med samordning. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1975.
19. Peterson, Carl-Gunnar. Ungdom och politik. En studie av Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Ungdomsförbund. Stockholm: Frihets förlag, 1975.
20. Bryder, Tom. Power and Responsibility. Contending Approaches to Industrial Relations and Decision Making in Britain 1963-1971. Lund: Gleerups, 1975.
21. Jönsson, Christer. The Soviet Union and the Test Ban: A Study in Soviet Negotiation Behavior. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1975.

22. Kronvall, Kai. Politisk masskommunikation i ett flerpartisystem. Sverige – en fallstudie. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1975.
23. Liljequist, Gunnar. Distribution av kommunal service. Lund: Liber, 1977.
24. Lartey, George W. The Fourth Dimension: the argument against the theory of evolutionary stages of social development. Malmö: Gotab, 1977.
25. Weston, David. Realism, Language and Social Theories. Studies in the Relation of the Epistemology of Science and Politics. Lund, 1978.
26. Hagström, Bo. 1971 års länsförvaltningsreform. En utvärdering. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1978.
27. Skogmar, Gunnar. Atompolitik. Sambandet mellan militärt och civilt utnyttjande av atomenergi i amerikansk utrikespolitik 1945-1973. Malmö: Stenvalls Förlag, 1979.
28. Sannerstedt, Anders. Fri konkurrens eller politisk styrning? 1963 års trafikpolitiska beslut – debatten om innehåll, tillämpning och effekter. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1979.
29. Lidén, Anders. Security and Recognition. A Study of Change in Israel's Official Doctrine 1967-1974. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1979.
30. Magnusson, Håkan. Kommunerna och den regionala planeringen. En analys av länsplaneringen och den fysiska riksplaneringen. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1980.
31. Stenelo, Lars-Göran. Foreign Policy Predictions. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1980.
32. Lundell, Bengt. MBL utan avtal. Kommunerna och MBL. Helsingborg, 1981.
33. Norrving, Bengt. Kommunerna och bostadsförsörjningen. En analys av bostadsplaneringen. Lund: Liber, 1981.
34. Linderoth, Sven. Från konkurrens till monopol. En studie av lokal politisk och ekonomisk journalistik. Malmö: Dialog, 1981.
35. Forje, John. The One and Indivisible Cameroon: Political Integration and Socio-Economic Development in a Fragmented Society. Lund, 1981.
36. Adebo, Tarekegn. Ideological Trends in the Political Thinking of the Developing Regions: The Case of Sub Saharan Africa. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1982.
37. Elgström, Ole. Aktiv utrikespolitik. En jämförelse mellan svensk och dansk parlamentarisk utrikesdebatt 1962-1978. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1982.
38. Lindkvist, Kent. Program och parti: principprogram och partiideologi inom den kommunistiska rörelsen i Sverige 1917-1972. Lund: Arkiv för studier i arbetarrörelsens historia, 1982.
39. Bergström, Tomas och Lundell, Bengt. Från MBL till MBA. Kommunerna och MBL. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1982.
40. Hörberg, Thomas. Prediktion, osäkerhet och risk i internationella förhandlingar. En studie av svenskt förhandlingsbeteende vid förhandlingarna med Sovjetunionen 1940-41 om ett handelsavtal. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1983.
41. Geraedts, Henry. The People's Republic of China: Foreign Economic Relations and Technology Acquisition 1972-1981. Lund: Forskningspolitiska institutet, 1983.
42. Jerneck, Magnus. Kritik som utrikespolitiskt medel. En studie av de amerikanska reaktionerna på den svenska Vietnamkritiken Lund: Dialogos, 1983.
43. Stenelo, Lars-Göran. The International Critic. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1984.
44. Bergström, Thomas och Lundell, Bengt. Lokalt medbestämmande. Kommunerna och MBL. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1984.

45. Sjölin, Mats. Kommunalpolitiken i massmediernas spegel. En studie av dagspressen och lokalradions bevakning av fem kommuner. Lund: Dialogos, 1985.
46. Albinsson, Per. Skiftningar i blätt. Förändringar inom Moderata Samlingspartiets riksorganisation 1960-1985. Lund: Kommunfakta Förlag, 1986.
47. Jonsson, Rolf. De okända förhandlingarna. Statens förhandlingsråd och regeringens MBL-förhandlingar. Lund: Dialogos, 1986.
48. Polak, Jiri. Dependence Patterns in the Soviet Bloc: The Case of Romania and East Germany. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1986.
49. Lundell, Bengt. Kommunerna och MBL. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1986.
50. Rothstein, Bo. Den socialdemokratiska staten. Reformen och förvaltning inom svensk arbetsmarknads- och skolpolitik. Lund: Arkiv, 1986.
51. Pierre, Jon. Partikongresser och regeringspolitik. En studie av den socialdemokratiska partikongressens beslutsfattande och inflytande 1948-1978. Lund: Kommunfakta Förlag, 1986.
52. Schmidt, Stephan. Pionjärer, efterföljare och avvaktare. Innovationer och deras spridning bland svenska primärkommuner. Lund: Kommunfakta Förlag, 1986.
53. Westerlund, Ulf. Superpower Roles. A Comparative Analysis of United States and Soviet Foreign Policy. Lund: Department of Political Science, 1987.
54. Lundquist, Lennart. Implementation Steering. An Actor-Structure Approach. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1987.
55. Stenelo, Lars-Göran, red. Statsvetenskapens mångfald. Festskrift till Nils Stjernquist. Lund: Lund University Press, 1987.
56. Nilsson, Ann-Sofie. Political Uses of International Law. Lund: Dialogos, 1987.
57. Bergström, Tomas. Konkurrerande eller kompletterande demokrati? Om företagsdemokrati i de svenska kommunerna. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1988.
58. Lindell, Ulf. Modern Multinational Negotiation: The Consensus Rule and Its Implications in International Conferences. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1988.
59. Stenelo, Lars-Göran, red. Makten över den decentraliserade skolan. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1988.
60. Lundquist, Lennart. Byråkratisk etik. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1988.
61. Petersson, Harry, red. Vem styr förändringarna inom sjukvården – politikerna eller de medicinska professionerna? En studie av subspecialiseringen inom ortopedin. Lund: Kommunfakta Förlag, 1989.
62. Jonsson, Rolf. Fackligt inflytande och politisk demokrati. En analys av regeringens MBL-förhandlingar. Lund: Kommunfakta Förlag, 1989.
63. Johannesson, Bengt. Kommunal bostadspolitik. Lund: Kommunfakta Förlag, 1989.
64. Aronson, Torbjörn. Konservatism och demokrati. En rekonstruktion av fem svenska högerledares styrelsedoktriner. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1990.
65. Petersson, Bo. The Soviet Union and Peacetime Neutrality in Europe. A Study of Soviet Political Language. Göteborg: MH Publishing, 1990.
66. Lundquist, Lennart. Förvaltning och demokrati. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1991.
67. Höjelij, Stefan. Sovjetbilden i nordisk press. Svenska, norska och finländska reaktioner på sovjetiskt agerande. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1991.



68. Jansson, Per. Säkerhetspolitikens språk: Myt och metafor i svensk säkerhetspolitisk diskurs 1919-1939. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1991.
69. Johansson, Jörgen. Offentligt och privat i regionalpolitiken. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1991.
70. Lundquist, Lennart. Förvaltning, stat och samhälle. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1992.
71. Håkansson, Anders. Konsten att vinna ett val. En studie av fram- och tillbakagångar för socialdemokraterna i kommunalvalet 1988. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1992.
72. Ternblad, Klas. Planering i norm och handling. Studier av en epok av landstingsplanering. Lund: Wi, 1992.
73. Persson, Stefan. Dödlägen i internationella förhandlingar. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1992.
74. Sannerstedt, Anders. Förhandlingar i riksdagen. Lund: Lund University Press, 1992.
75. Lundquist, Lennart. Ämbetsman eller direktör? Förvaltningschefens roll i demokratin. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1993.
76. Gynnerstedt, Kerstin. Etik i hemtjänst. En studie av förvaltnings- och professionsetik. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1993.
77. Schartau, Mai-Brith. The Public Sector Middle Manager: The Puppet who Pulls the Strings? Lund: Wi, 1993.
78. Sjölin, Mats. Coalition Politics and Parliamentary Power. Lund: Lund University Press, 1993.
79. Stenelo, Lars-Göran och Norrving, Bengt, red. Lokal Makt. Lund: Lund University Press, 1993.
80. Iwanaga, Kazuki. Images, Decisions and Consequences in Japan's Foreign Policy. Lund: Lund University Press, 1993.
81. Tita-Ghebdinga, Legala. African and O.A.U. Diplomacy on Dual Paradigms of Self-Determination 1945-1985. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1993.
82. Lundquist, Lennart. Statsvetenskaplig förvaltningsanalys. Problem, trender och program. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1994.
83. Blom, Agneta P. Kommunalt chefskap – en studie om ansvar, ledarskap och demokrati. Lund: Dialogos, 1994.
84. Agevall, Lena. Beslutsfattandets rutinisering. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1994.
85. Andersson, Jan A. Nordiskt samarbete: aktörer, idéer och organisering 1919-1953. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1994.
86. Bengtsson, Hans. Förskolereformen. En studie i implementering av svensk välfärdspolitik 1985-1991. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1995.
87. Uhlin, Anders. Democracy and Diffusion. Transnational Lesson-Drawing among Indonesian Pro-Democracy Actors. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1995.
88. Kinnvall, Catarina. Cultural Diffusion and Political Learning. The Democratization of China. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1995.
89. Westlind, Dennis. The Politics of Popular Identity. Lund: Lund University Press, 1996.
90. Stubbergaard, Ylva. Stat, kris och demokrati. Lapporörelsens inflytande i Finland 1929-1932. Lund: Arkiv, 1996.
91. Sendabo, Teferi. Foreign Aid and State Sovereignty: The Ethio-Swedish Aid Co-operation. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1996.

92. Mattson, Ingvar. Förhandlingsparlamentarism. En jämförande studie av riksdagen och folketinget. Lund: Lund University Press, 1996.
93. Larsson, Per. Regimförhandlingar på miljöområdet. En studie av förhandlingarna om LRTAP-konventionen. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1996.
94. Stenelo, Lars-Göran och Jerneck, Magnus, red. The Bargaining Democracy. Lund: Lund University Press, 1996.
95. McKnight, Utz Lars. Political Liberalism and the Politics of Race. Beyond Perfectionism and Culture. Lund: Lund University Press, 1996.
96. Steiner, Kristian. Strategies for International Legitimacy. Lund: Lund University Press, 1996.
97. Lundquist, Lennart. Fattigvårdsfolket. Ett nätverk i den sociala frågan 1900-1920. Lund: Lund University Press, 1997.
98. Andersson, Ronny. Medborgarna, politikerna och sjukvården. En studie av attityder och demokrati. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997.
99. Kronsell, Annica. Greening the EU: Power practices, resistances and agenda setting. Lund: Lund University Press, 1997.
100. Thunborg, Annika. Public and Non-Profit Interaction: U.S. Assistance to Eastern European Media 1989-1995. Lund: Lund University Press, 1997.
101. Johansson, Karl Magnus. Transnational Party Alliances: Analysing the Hard-Won Alliance Between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European Parliament. Lund: Lund University Press, 1997.
102. Badom, Ted Gogote. Foreign Intervention in Internal Wars. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1997.
103. Söderholm, Peter. Global Governance of AIDS: Partnerships with Civil Society. Lund: Lund University Press, 1997.
104. Lundquist, Lennart. Demokratins väktare. Ämbetsmännen och vårt offentliga etos. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1998.
105. Gustavsson, Jakob. The Politics of Foreign Policy Change. Explaining the Swedish Reorientation on EC Membership. Lund: Lund University Press, 1998.
106. Hall, Patrik. The Social Construction of Nationalism: Sweden as an Example. Lund: Lund University Press, 1998.
107. Sönne, Maria. Administrative Reforms and the Quest for Foreign Investment in China – The Case of Shenzhen. Lund: Lund University Press, 1999.
108. Aggestam, Karin. Reframing and Resolving Conflict. Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations 1988-1998. Lund: Lund University Press, 1999.
109. Tallberg, Jonas. Making States Comply: The European Commission, the European Court of Justice, and the Enforcement of the Internal Market. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1999.
110. Hall, Martin. Constructing Historical Realism: International Relations as Comparative History. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1999.
111. Spång, Mikael. Justice and Society: Problems of Reformist Politics. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 1999.
112. Svedberg, Erika. The "Other" Recreated: A Relational Approach to East-West Negotiations. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2000.

113. Ericson, Magnus. *A Realist Stable Peace: Power, Threat and the Development of a Shared Norwegian-Swedish Democratic Security Identity 1905-1940*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2000.
114. Bengtsson, Rikard. *Trust, Threat, and Stable Peace: Swedish Great Power Perceptions 1905-1939*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2000.
115. Stoltz, Pauline. *About Being (I)here and Making a Difference? Black Women and the Paradox of Visibility*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2000.
116. Bäckstrand, Karin. *What Can Nature Withstand? Science, Politics and Discourses in Transboundary Air Pollution Diplomacy*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2001.
117. Lundquist, Lennart. *Medborgardemokratin och eliterna*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2001.
118. Hedin, Astrid. *The Politics of Social Networks: Interpersonal Trust and Institutional Change in Post-Communist East Germany*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2001.
119. Sundström, Mikael. *Connecting Social Science and Information Technology. Democratic Privacy in the Information Age*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2001.
120. Jönsson, Christer, Jerneck, Magnus och Stenelo, Lars-Göran, red. *Politik i globaliseringens tid*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2001.
121. Gustafsson, Rune. *Syntes och design. Den intellektuelle politikern som konstnär*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2001.
122. Danjoux, Olivier. *L'Etat, C'est Pas Moi*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2002.
123. Jönsson, Kristina. *Translating Foreign Ideas into Domestic Practices. Pharmaceutical Policies in Laos and Vietnam*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2002.
124. Bengtsson, Marie. *Stat och kommun i makt(o)balans. En studie av flyktingmottagandet*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2002.
125. Björkdahl, Annika. *From Idea to Norm. Promoting Conflict Prevention*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2002.
126. Badersten, Björn. *Medborgardygd. Den europeiska staden och det offentliga rummets etos*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget natur och kultur, 2002.
127. Boussard, Caroline. *Crafting Democracy. Civil Society in Post-Transition Honduras*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2003.
128. Janson, Per. *"Den huvudlösa idén": Medborgarlön, välfärdspolitik och en blockerad debatt*. Lund: Arkiv, 2003.
129. Santesson-Wilson, Peter. *Studier i symbolpolitik*. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2003.
130. Johnson, Björn. *Polycyspridning som översättning*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen och Arbetslivsinstitutet, 2003.
131. Sundström, Mikael, Rosén, Malena och Hall, Martin. *En guide till mellanstatliga organisationer*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2004.
132. Sjövik, Kristian. *Demokrati bortom nationalstaten?* Lund: Department of Political Science, 2004.
133. Hellström, Lennart. *Brandts politiska tänkande. En studie i kontinuiteten i Brandts politiska tänkande*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2004.
134. Lindberg, Staffan. *The Power of Elections – Democratic Participation, Competition and Legitimacy in Africa*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2004.

135. Bexell, Magdalena. Exploring Responsibility. Public and Private in Human Rights Protection. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
136. Jerre, Ulrika. Conflicting Logics? Implementing Capacity and EU Adaptation in a Postcommunist Context. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
137. Rindefjäll, Teresia. Democracy Beyond the Ballot Box. Citizen Participation and Social Rights in Post-Transition Chile. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
138. Fernandez, Christian. Medborgarskap efter nationalstaten? Ett konstruktivt förslag. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
139. Nilsson, Tom. Till vilken nytta? Om det lokala politiska deltagandets karaktär, komplexitet och konsekvenser. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
140. Stripple, Johannes. Climate Change after the International: Rethinking Security, Territory and Authority. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
141. Erlingsson, Gissur. Varför bildas nya partier? Om kollektivt handlande och partientreprenörer. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
142. Strömvik, Maria. To Act as a Union. Explaining the Development of the EU's Collective Foreign Policy. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2005.
143. Niklasson, Tomas. Regime Stability and Foreign Policy Change: Interaction between Domestic and Foreign Policy in Hungary 1956-1994. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2006.
144. Hellström, Anders. Bringing Europe Down to Earth. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2006.
145. Melander, Fredrik. Lokal Forskningspolitik: Institutionell dynamik och organisatorisk omvandling vid Lunds Universitet 1980-2005. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2006.
146. Hegeland, Hans. Nationell EU-parlamentarism. Riksdagens arbete med EU-frågorna. Stockholm: Santérus Academic Press, 2006.
147. Lundquist, Lennart. Att hantera humanvetenskapens tudelning. Malmö: Liber, 2006.
148. Ahmens, Anette. A Quest for Legitimacy. Debating UN Security Council Rules on Terrorism and Non-proliferation. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2007.
149. Alasfoor, Reyadh. The Gulf Cooperation Council: Achievements and Challenges. A Political Analysis to the Study of Regional Integration of the GCC States. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2007.
150. Hedlund, Maria. Demokratiska genvägar: Expertinflytande i den svenska lagstiftningsprocessen om medicinsk genteknik. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2007.
151. Bolin, Anna. The military profession in change – the case of Sweden. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2008.
152. Broman, Matilda. Taking Advantage of Institutional Possibilities and Network Opportunities. Analyzing Swedish Strategic Action in EU Negotiations. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2008.
153. Kalm, Sara. Governing Global Migration. Lund: Department of Political Science, 2008.
154. Rosén Sundström, Malena. Förankring av socialdemokratisk EU-politik. Med rum för demokratisk debatt? Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2008.

155. Dannestam, Tove. Stadspolitik i Malmö. Politikens meningsskapande och materialitet. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2009.
156. Knaggård, Åsa. Vetenskaplig osäkerhet i policyprocessen. En studie av svensk klimatpolitik. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2009.
157. Uçarlar, Nesrin. Between Majority Power and Minority Resistance: Kurdish Linguistic Rights in Turkey. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2009.
158. Conrad, Maximilian. Between Communication and Community. EU Constitution-Making, a European Public Sphere and the (Un-)likelihood of Transnational Political Debate. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2009.
159. Scuzzarello, Sarah. Caring Multiculturalism. Local Immigrant Policies and Narratives of Integration in Malmö, Birmingham and Bologna. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2010.
160. Strömbom, Lisa. Revisiting the Past. Israeli identity, thick recognition and conflict transformation. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2010.
161. Fägersten, Björn. Sharing Secrets. Explaining International Intelligence Cooperation. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2010.
162. Karlsson, Rasmus. Three essays on our planetary future. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2010.
163. Lundquist, Lennart. Flocken i massamhället. Den politiska ordningens villkor och uttryck. Lund: Arkiv, 2011.
164. Lundquist, Lennart. Slutet på yttrandefriheten (och demokratin?). Stockholm: Carlssons, 2012.
165. Wahman, Michael. Uniting Against Autocrats. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2012.
166. Hultén, John. Ny väg till nya vägar och järnvägar. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2012.
167. Mukhtar-Landgren, Dalia. Planering för framsteg och gemenskap: om den kommunala utvecklingsplaneringens idémässiga förutsättningar. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2012.
168. Lund, Emma. Hybrid Governance in Practice – Public and Private Actors in the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2013.
169. Gustafsson, Nils. Leetocracy: Political participation, social network sites and inequality. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2013.
170. Persson, Anders. Defining, Securing and Building a Just Peace: The EU and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2013.
171. Melander, Stina. Kassakultur i förändring. Samspelet mellan organisationskultur och administrativa reformer på Försäkringskassan. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2013.
172. Hildingsson, Roger. Governing Decarbonization: The State and the New Politics of Climate Change. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2014.
173. Narby, Petter. Time of Crisis: Order, Politics, Temporality. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2014.
174. Petterson, Jonna. Incalculable Community. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2015.

175. Rennick, Sarah Anne. *The Practice of Politics and Revolution: Egypt's Revolutionary Youth Social Movement*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2015.
176. Fredén, Annika. *Strategic Voting under Coalition Governments*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2016.
177. Edenberg, Emil. *Nothing more to see: Contestation of belonging and visibility in Russian media*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen och Malmö: Institutionen för globala politiska studier, 2016.
178. Nielsen, Tobias D. *Words Matter in the Woods: Discourses on Deforestation in Global Climate Politics*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2016.
179. Ingesson, Tony. *The Politics of Combat: the Political and Strategic Impact of Tactical-Level Subcultures, 1939-1995*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2016.
180. Altermark, Niklas. *After Inclusion: Intellectual Disability as Biopolitics*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2016.
181. von Schéele, Cecilia. *The Void. Urban wasteland as political space*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2016.
182. Gustafsson, Sofie. *Medborgarskapande på olika villkor. Självbilder, skolkoder och syn på kunskap i den svenska gymnasieskolan*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2016.
183. Knotz, Carlo. *Getting Tough on Unemployment: Essays on the politics of unemployment benefit reform in affluent democracies*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2016.
184. Nilsson, Klas. *The Money of Monarchs: The importance of nontax revenue for autocratic rule in early modern Sweden*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2017.
185. Nyberg, Linda. *Market Bureaucracy: Neoliberalism, Competition and EU State Aid Policy?* Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2017.
186. Andersson, Per. *Essays on the Politics of Taxation*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2017.
187. Gusic, Ivan. *War, peace & the city: Urban conflicts over peace(s) in postwar Belfast, Mitrovica and Mostar*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2017.
188. Fred, Mats. *Projectification | The Trojan Horse of Local Government*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2018.
189. Waaranperä, Ulrika. *Histories of land. Politicization, property and belonging in Molo, Kenya*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2018.
190. Engstrand, Sandra. *State Learning and Role Playing – International environmental cooperation in the Arctic Council*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2018.
191. Chaib, Josef. *Experts, Evidence, and Other Knowledge: The Government of Welfare Collaboration*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2018.
192. Boyer, Kurtis. *An Autocracy of Empathy: A Relational Approach to Understanding our Failure to Recognize the Moral Significance of the Nonhuman*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2018.
193. Hedling, Elsa. *Blending Politics and New Media – Mediatized Practices of EU Digital Diplomacy*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2018.
194. *Vänbok till Ole Elgström. The EU and the emerging global order*. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2018.

195. Östbring, Björn. Migrationspolitiska dilemman. Om idealism och realism i liberal politisk teori. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2019.
196. Orange, Mia. Sustaining Authoritarianism: Clientelism and Repression in Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Tanzania and Kazakhstan. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2019.
197. Möller, Ina. The Emergent Politics of Geoengineering. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2019.
198. Lindberg, Mårten. Why Sweden suspended military service: tracing the policy process, 1990 to 2009. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2019.
199. Lindberg, Helena G. The constitutive power of maps in the Arctic. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2019.
200. Lorentzen, Jenny. Normative Encounters between the 'Global' and the 'Local': Women, Peace and Security in Mali and Rwanda. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2020.
201. Justesen, Lisa. The emerging outer space order. Professional orders, heterarchy, hypermodernity and political reason. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2021.
202. Strandgaard, Jakob. Normative recursion – on recursive grounding and the capacity for radical critique in formal pragmatics, recognition, social freedom and justification. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2021.
203. Andersson, Rikard. Bridges, Walls, Doors: On democracy and Nature. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2021.
204. Roed, Maiken. Interest Group Influence on Political Parties in Western Democracies. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2021.
205. Ikenze, Sarai-Anne. Policy Choices in African Structural Adjustment: An Exploration of Sectoral Continuity. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2022.
206. Cristiano, Fabio. The Blurring Politics of Cyber Conflict: A Critical Study of the Digital in Palestine and Beyond. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2022.
207. Ølgaard, Daniel Møller. The Technopolitics of Compassion: A Postphenomenological Analysis of the Digital Mediation of Global Humanitarianism. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2022.
208. Davidsson, Simon. The Development of Parliamentarism in Western Europe. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2022.
209. Rogers, Katren. After Asylums and Orphanages. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2022.
210. Kristinsson, Thorsteinn. Webs of World Order: A Relational Theory of Rising Powers and the Evolution of International Order. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2022.
211. Gustafsson, Daniel. The Present People. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2023.
212. Viksand, Sindre Gade. A World of Persons. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2023.
213. Isaksson, Elias. Between Growth and Sustainability: Exploring the Construction of Sustainable Mobility in Swedish Transport Policy. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2023.
214. de Leeuw, Georgia. The comfort of alignment: Mining, green steel, and killjoy desires in Sweden/Sápmi. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2024.
215. Nicoson, Christie. Peace in a Changing Climate: Caring and Knowing the Climate-Gender-Peace Nexus. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2024.

216. Karlsson, Caroline. *The Prohibitive Condition: The Performativity of the Incest Taboo and its Incestuous Reminders*. Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2024.
217. Wieslander, Anna. *Transatlantic Transitions. Responses to the Russian Threat in the Baltic Sea Region, 2014-2020*. Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, 2024.







