

Dependence on the US for EU defense

Bachelor thesis

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- *“The Cardinal Rule of Relationships: In any relationship, the person with the most power is the one who needs the other the least” – Rollo Tomassi (2013)*

1. Abstract

The main focus of this thesis is the dependence on the United States for the defense and security of the European Union. The main research question is: ‘to what extent does the internal and external balancing by the E.U. member states against emerged threats and challenges in the last decade influence the level of U.S. inclusion in E.U. defense?’. The analysis is based upon the theoretical framework of the international relations theory of neorealism. NATO was the sole external balancing option for decades, now alternative balancing options are emerging in PESCO and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2). The level of US inclusion in European defense is determined by the degree of relevance and indispensability of NATO.

In the current form, the EI2 seem to remain a cooperation platform aimed at increasing participants willingness to deploy their armed forces. This could alter after Brexit to better accommodate the UK in involving them into EU defense. Although PESCO has some long-term future potential of becoming Europe’s primary external balancing option, the NATO alliance appears to remain the unrivaled alliance for the ‘narrow purpose’ of collective defense. However, for an alliance of collective interests an external balancing option in PESCO has been born.

2. Background: Introduction to the research problem

The NATO military intervention in Kosovo in 1999, the air campaign known as Operation Allied Force (OAF) made clear to the Europeans they had to rethink their understanding of the role of NATO, their primary vehicle for European defense and security matters for more than half a century, and the EU in their policies towards crisis prevention, crisis management, peacekeeping and war. Despite OAF being a multilateral campaign, the strategy and operational approach were predominantly reflecting US power and interests. The US had the military and intelligence capabilities and was initiating the rules of engagement and combat. “The Europeans were only on the sidelines” (Larivé, 2014, p 83). The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) put into existence by the Maastricht Treaty was unable to formulate a political will and a unified line of conduct. One of the main reasons for this failure was the

lack of cohesion caused by the institutional design of the CFSP being intergovernmental. Each EU Member State had its own strategies, outlooks, preferences and interests (Larivé, 2014). “The perceived presence of the US as a competent and competing international actor, which would intervene in the crisis, took the urgency away from the EU developing a common European military response towards Bosnia” (Dover, 2005).

An in Washington popular conception identified as “decoupling”, states that a strong and capable Europe in the field of defense can free the US from its commitments on the European continent and other regions of the world. “The approach calls for a greater burden sharing and a better division of labor between the two sides of the Atlantic” (Larivé, 2014, p 91). One of the most pressing issues of burden-sharing entails the providing of capabilities and the contribution to interventions. Kupchan (2008) argues that the EU can only become a credible partner to the US when it invests in developing capabilities, stating that “capabilities buy and justify influence”. There are even voices in Washington that go further and call for ‘offshore balancing’, stating that burden-sharing will not do and America should push for burden-shifting, shifting some burdens completely to the Europeans, in particular Europe’s own territorial security (Larivé, 2014).

However, the position of the US toward the development of a European security mechanism of any kind has always been very clear, being that every attempt to undermine NATO will be met with intolerance from Washington. “American literature on the CSDP, informed by neorealism, has been claiming since the end of the 1990s that the CSDP was in fact a balancing tool against American power and would seek to undermine NATO. This body of literature has had and continues to have powerful impact on policy makers in Washington”(Larivé, 2014, p 94). The main consideration in Washington reflecting on European CSDP development, from the Bush Sr. administration to the Obama administration, has been the question how it could possibly undermine NATO. The European integration process on the issue of defense and security has always been welcomed by the US on the condition of institutionalizing within the NATO framework. (Larivé, 2014).

While the interests of Western European States and the United States were ‘automatically’ aligned during the Cold War, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and especially in the last decade interests of the two entities are diverging. The following developments changed the international environment for EU member states substantially what may have led and may lead to a reevaluation of security needs:

- the progress in the integration process of European states into a European Union sharing increasing common foreign policy doctrine
- frustration over American unilateralism during the Clinton (Balkan-wars in the '90) and Bush Jr. (2003 Iraq crisis) administrations
- the current and upcoming US pivot towards east-Asia
- repeated expressed doubts by current US president Trump of American commitment to NATO
- the diverging and increasing tension in EU-Turkey relations
- the leaving of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit)
- the post-Cold-War recovery and emergence of a dominating and aggressive Russia
- willingness of European Union Member States Austria, Ireland, Sweden and Finland to contribute to European military cooperation, while persevering to stay outside NATO

First written into the failed to be ratified 'European Constitution' and consequently later into the Treaty of Lisbon of 2009, was the enabling of the framework for 'permanent structured cooperation' (PESCO). PESCO entailed the structural integration pursued by 25 of the 28 national armed forces of the European Union and is incorporated in the Union's previously mentioned 'Common Security and Defense Policy' (CSDP). During the Obama Administration PESCO remained dormant, it was termed by President Jean-Claude Juncker as the Lisbon Treaty's "sleeping beauty". Two major events led to the activation of PESCO. On the one hand, there was the referendum on 23rd of June 2016 in which the UK electorate voted to withdraw from the Union. The UK was historically an opponent of defense cooperation outside NATO, and with the UK leaving the EU, a formidable force against such cooperation left the field. On the other, was the election of Donald Trump into the presidency of the United States. Trump ran his campaign on the platform of criticizing NATO allies and suggested on multiple occasions that the US would not honor to back the mutual defense clause.

The European Intervention Initiative (EI2) is the new kid on the block when it comes to 'European alliances'. The EI2 was launched on 25th June 2018. Nine ministers of defense signed a 'Letter of Intent', founding the 'alliance'. Strictly speaking is this initiative not to be characterized as a new alliance, it is rather a cooperation platform. The founding members of the initiative deemed it necessary to stress in the founding document "EI2 does not entail the

creation of a new [...] force”, “EI2 will rely on existing structures” and “EI2 intends to contribute to on-going efforts [...], notably PESCO [...] and may reinforce [...] NATO...” (Letter of Intent, 2018). “EI2 aims at facilitating the emergence of a European strategic culture and at creating the pre-conditions to conduct coordinated and jointly prepared future commitments, on the whole spectrum of possible crisis” (Ministry of Defence, France, 2018). Although the EI2 is “seen by euro sceptics as an embryo for some kind of European armed force” (The Telegraph, 2018), according to diplomats EI2 is the political solution for the post-Brexit reality in which Europe is continuing pursuit to guarantee its own security without falling back on the US via NATO. With the UK leaving the EU, membership of PESCO is no longer an option.

2.1 Formulation of the research question

‘Security’ is of great social relevance, it is with reason the second layer in the well-known Maslow (1943) hierarchy of needs only after ‘physiological needs’. It is therefore of importance to get a good idea of the latest developments in the arrangements that contribute to the security we as Europeans participate in, PESCO, EI2 and NATO.

The main research objective of this bachelor thesis is to investigate the lasting role of and dependence on the United States for European defense and security. Are the Europeans, in the words of Angela Merkel, “truly taking their fate into own hands”? Is the US truly fading to the background in the securing of territorial integrity on the European continent? In order to get an answer to these questions I formulated the following descriptive research question: ‘to what extent does the internal and external balancing by the E.U. member states against emerged threats and challenges in the last decade influence the level of U.S. inclusion in E.U. defense?’. Supporting sub-questions are: “What are the characteristics, capabilities and tasks concerning PESCO, EI2 and NATO?” and “In what ways can (and/or are) the PESCO and E.I.I. alliances undermine or bolster the NATO alliance?”. The basic mechanic behind the answering of the research question is investigating what the relative position of NATO is to PESCO and the EI2, since within the context of this thesis US inclusion equals the relative position of NATO.

3. Theory and previous observation points

The four main approaches within the field of International Relations theory are liberalism, Marxism, constructivism and realism. This thesis can be considered to belong to the latter, and to be even more accurate, the neorealist approach. The neorealist approach entails the lens

through which the different alliances will be looked at. Therefore, this section opens with a discussion of neorealism and the balancing of EU member states. The following subsections within this chapter will be addressing the 'Basic Force Model', this model provides key factors for comparison between the power of states or collectives, suitable within the realist tradition, addressing the elements of 21st century warfare C6ISR capability and hybrid warfare, and after that, the four criteria the United States applies historically to European balancing behavior.

3.1 Theory: Neorealism and the balancing of EU member states

Neorealism build upon the basic thought of classical realism, that independent states exist and operate within a system of international anarchy. The main focus of realism is de behavior of states, their pursuit for maintaining and increasing power and security and for these ends their trust in the deployment or threat of their military capabilities (Rothman, 2011). The early realist Morgenthau (1993) stated that states' main concern is their survival and the pursuit of national interests, wherein he talked about 'interests defined as power', the things that could add to the power potential are important to a state. Neorealism breaks however with the classical tradition by excluding giving account of human nature and by ignoring the ethics of statecraft. The leading neorealist thinker Kenneth Waltz states that "the best international relations theory is one that focuses centrally on the structure of the system, on its interacting units, and on the continuities and changes of the system" (Jackson & Sørensen, 2015, p. 75). Wherein classical realism the international decisions and actions of state leaders are the center of attention, in neorealism the central analytical focus lays with the structure of the system that is external to the actors. The key assumption in neorealism states that power is the most important factor in international relations. And there are two ways in which states balance power: on the one hand there is the internal balancing of power, meaning expanding a state's capabilities by increasing economic growth and/or increase its military spending and on the other hand there is the external balancing of states when entering alliances to check the power of more powerful states (Waltz, 2000).

The NATO alliance was the product of a bipolar system in which states flocked to one or the other great power or pursued a policy of neutrality and avoid committing to the NATO or Warsaw Pact alliances. By committing to one of the alliances a state ensured its central values of state security and survival. The Cold War was according to Waltz (1979) a period of international stability and peace, because the great powers on both sides were committed to maintain the system in order to maintain themselves. The states associated with the great

powers were constrained by the course of action by the great powers, act accordingly and would jeopardize state security and survival if they would set out a deviant course. However the international state system changed with the end of the Cold War from a bipolar into a multipolar one. Where states before were limited to internal balancing as only option during the Cold War due to the lack of options, with the emergence of a multipolar system, states regained the option of external balancing.

Jackson & Sørensen (2015) point out three important concepts within neorealism used by Waltz. First there is the concept of 'state sovereignty', which means that a state is in a position to decide for itself how to deal with internal and external problems and balance against them accordingly. The second concept used by Waltz is the concept of 'national interest'. Waltz expects each state to plot the course, it thinks will best serve its interests. Another important concept within neorealism in the light of this thesis is 'hegemon behavior', and in particular that of the United States. Jackson & Sørensen (2015) point out that "the goal for a country such as the United States is to dominate the entire system, because only in that way could it rest assured that no other state or combination of states would even think to go to war with it" (Jackson & Sørensen, 2015, p. 80).

Neorealist thinker, Mearsheimer (1993), characterizes Waltz' conception of neorealism as 'defensive realism' because the neorealism expressed by Waltz sees excessive power as counterproductive and therefore does not strive for excessive power beyond that which is necessary for state security and survival. Mearsheimer disagrees with Waltz and postulates that states are more aggressive than how Waltz portrays them because of their pursuit for hegemony as ultimate assurance that no other state or combination of states would go to war against them. Therefore Mearsheimer coined his theory contra to that of Waltz 'offensive realism', which entails that states are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals, with hegemony as final goal (Mearsheimer, 2000). Jackson & Sørensen (2015) point out that Mearsheimer acknowledges that the world is too big to pursue global dominance, because of the oceans being huge natural barriers, and can therefore only become the hegemon in the own part of the world. But regional hegemons will try to prevent other powers becoming a hegemon in their part of the world, for the emergence and existence of a peer competitor may try to interfere in the regional hegemon's sphere of influence and control.

Via the NATO alliance the United States has acquired a regional hegemon position in the western hemisphere and Europe. Neorealist theory postulates that the United States is expected to hold on to this hegemon position and won't accept any attempt to undermine it. China is expected to become a regional hegemon in Asia, while an unchecked Germany will become a regional hegemon in Europe (Jackson & Sørensen, 2015). The United States' interests are on the one hand, containing the hegemonic potential of Germany by, while stimulating its internal balancing, limiting its external balancing option to the NATO alliance. In other words, increasing the strength of the own hegemonic vehicle of NATO. By doing so it can pursue simultaneously the pivot to East-Asia to keep China in check.

3.2 Theory: The Basic Force Model

In order to be able to come to an appreciation of the different characteristics of the alliances of interest in this thesis, the 'Basic Force Model' will be used introduced by Stephen Krasner (1983). Heywood (2013) points out the value of this model by stating: "for realist theorists, power in international politics boils down to military capacity. Realists have therefore favored a 'Basic Force Model' of power, on the grounds that military capacity enables a country both to protect its territory and people from external aggression, and to pursue its interest abroad through conquest and expansion." The key factors of the model are:

- The size of the armed forces
- The effectiveness of the armed forces in terms of moral
- Training
- Discipline and leadership
- Access to advanced weaponry and equipment

In the 'conceptualization and operationalization' subsection of the data section (chapter 5) of this thesis, an operationalization of these key factors into measurable observation points will be provided for.

3.3 Theory: C6ISR capabilities & Hybrid Warfare

The previously discussed Basic Force Model is suitable to determine just that as to which the term refers, 'the basic force' of the military capacity of an entity like a state or an alliance. However, an assessment of merely the basic force of the different alliances would not acknowledge the changed nature of the (potential) battlefield of the 21st century. Slaughter (2011) points out that conflicts in the 21st century will be very different from the ones in the previous century, among the major (in terms of neorealism relevant) powers warfare is more

likely to be fought on the digital frontier or by special forces conducting limited operations. In which the latter is characterized by its information-intensive nature. But even when escalated armed conflict between major powers would occur, the one best in reducing the ‘fog of war’ for the own side and increasing it to the adversary’s side has a significant if not decisive advantage (Guha, 2010). Hoffman (2007) stresses the changed nature of conflict itself, conflict is no longer either ‘big and conventional’ or ‘small or irregular’, non-state actors and nation-states are expected to employ combinations of warfare types. Failure to successfully employ own and counter adversary’s hybrid tactics will be “a recipe for defeat” (Hoffman, 2007, p. 5). Therefore, an analyses of C6ISR capabilities will be added, as well as the capability to deploy or counter hybrid warfare.

3.3.1 C6ISR capabilities

The most commonly used term by academics, governments and militaries when it comes down to military information systems is ‘C4ISR’. The terms ‘C5ISR’ and ‘C6ISR’ are also in use, but basically refer to the same concept. ‘C6ISR’ is used in this thesis since it is the most comprehensive of the three. C6ISR is an umbrella term that refers to “systems, procedures and techniques used to collect and disseminate information. Each [of the elements the term consists of] is a field of expertise unto itself, but they work synergistically to provide warfighters and [governmental and military] decision-makers with actionable information to help them do their jobs ” (Novel Engineering, 2017). The elements that the term C6ISR consists of entail (Dekker, 2002):

- **Command**; authority and responsibility
- **Control**; exercising authority over subordinates
- **Communications**; providing accurate, timely information upwards towards a mission director as well as downwards to lower staff and operational units to allow for a common operating picture (COP) to be maintained
- **Computers**; computers are the common interface relied upon to gather, sort and analyze pertinent information
- **Cyber-Defense**; the mitigation of multiple threats to communication and computer systems operated by military, civilian and commercial organizations
- **Combat systems**
- **Intelligence**
- **Surveillance**
- **Reconnaissance**

3.3.2 Hybrid Warfare

“Conventional, twentieth-century military doctrines aimed at wars against nation-states and industrial-era mass armies are effectively dead. Even the best traditional militaries, such as the U.S. and Israeli armies, face formidable difficulties when confronted with irregular, well-motivated, and foreign-supported forces, which enjoy media battlefield advantages. The Israel-Hezbollah conflict was not so much a defeat for Israel as it was a defeat of the old-style warfare by the new” (Cohen, 2007, p. 55). This citation captures the central idea of the case that Cohen (2007) makes for retiring the 20th century way of analyzing threats and strengths of armies. Other scholars contradict this idea, stating that “the rise of hybrid warfare does not represent the defeat or the replacement of the old-style warfare or conventional warfare by the new. But it does represent a complicating factor for defense planning in the 21st century” (Hoffman, 2007, p. 43). Mazarr (2007) points out that conflict in the 21st century will not so much be guided by traditional principles of warfare, conflicts will increasingly be something vaguer, more interdisciplinary, more to do with psychology and identity than sheer power capabilities of military forces. “The form warfare takes could still extend to state-on-state conflict, but it could also include terrorism, insurgency, information war, and much else.” (Mazarr, 2007, p. 8). Hybrid warfare is not so much a different sort of warfare, it is a convergence of different ways of undermining or attacking the adversary into a multi-modal fashion. The term ‘hybrid’ reflects both the organization as well as the means. Organizationally, there may be a hierarchical political structure coupled with decentralized cells or networked tactical units. In terms of means, future adversaries (states, state-sponsored groups, or self-funded actors) will employ high-end equipment such as encrypted command systems, man-portable surface to air missiles and other modern military capabilities, but also promote protracted insurgences that employ ambushes, improvised explosive devices and coercive assassinations. States could blend high-tech capabilities like anti-satellite weapons with terrorism and cyber-warfare. Moreover, states could shift and deploy conventional units into irregular formations and adopt new tactics. Warfighting, peacekeeping, reconstruction, international aid, information operations and anything else pertinent to stability cannot be separated into different elements anymore, they melted into one another and influence each other’s success. They are no longer successive stages or phases of an operation, they have converged in time and space (Hoffman, 2007).

3.4 Theory: Targeted-balancing Theory

Lobell (2018) acknowledges the critique by realists and non-realists whom challenge the claim of aggregate-power realism that states balance against shifts in overall material and military capabilities and that states balance more against threats rather than capabilities. However, he expresses that there is no need to abandon this concept of balancing. Conventional military balancing, or hard balancing, through internal and external balancing options is a real thing. But this conventional military balancing concept needs to be expanded into “a more granular and finely tuned theory of balancing, which I term targeted-balancing theory” (Lobell, 2018, p. 593). By only using the conventional military balancing approach scholars run the risk of incorrectly code cases of balancing as examples of under- and non-balancing.

“A granular theory of balancing demonstrates that foreign policy leaders regularly disaggregate military and material capabilities into separate components, or elements, to identify which states, if any, threaten their security. They, in turn, target-balance against the threatening elements of a potential adversary’s military portfolio”(Lobell, 2018, p. 594). Walt (1987) was one of the leading scholars who exceeded the concept of mere concentrations of military and material power when addressing the balancing of states. According to Walt states balance against a threat, a product of aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capability, and perceived aggressiveness. Lobell (2018) deems it important to keep the basic contention that states balance in essence against material and military capabilities, but expands this by including the concept of leaders targeting certain adversary’s threatening elements to balance against. “Target-balancing entails military buildup through internal resource extraction or the formation of alliances against the threatening element(s) of another state’s power”(Lobell, 2018 p. 596). Lobell reinforces the nuance made earlier by Posen (2006) that balancing is against the threatening elements of another state and different than other forms of resistance to domination or occupation, including soft balancing, preemptive strike, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions.

3.5 Previous observation points: The four D’s

At the end of the decade in which the Cold War had ended and new parameters had to be instituted about cooperation for European security, American secretary of State Madeleine Albright remarked the following at the North Atlantic Council ministerial meeting in Brussels on December 8th, 1998: “we [United States] enthusiastically support any such measures that enhance European capabilities”. But she also stressed the three standards for judgement the

United States would apply in determining its position to European initiatives, safeguarding that the NATO alliance as extension of American foreign policy and way of maintaining the position of hegemon. These standards came instantly known in the political and diplomatic world as the “three Ds”, Hunter (2002) argues that it is more suitable to describe American criteria to talk about “the four D’s”; de-linking, decoupling, discriminating and duplicating. At the North Atlantic Council US secretary of State Albright (1998) stated: “The key to a successful initiative is to focus on practical military capabilities. Any initiative must avoid preempting [NATO] Alliance decision-making by de-linking ESDI from NATO, avoid duplicating existing efforts, and avoid discriminating against non-EU members”.

Albrights’ de-linking corresponds with Hunters de-linking and decoupling concepts, but the latter introduced the decoupling concept to stress a nuance. The first ‘D’, de-linking relates to the idea of autonomous European action. During the Cold War, there was no such thing as ‘autonomous action’. The European states were frustrated about their own ‘political/military maneuverability space’ during the Kosovo conflict. And wanted more room for European autonomous action. The US however was alarmed by this idea, European autonomous action as such was not possible. It would draw heavily on NATO assets, in major part US assets, and therefore wanted no decision-making outside the NATO structure. Keeping US and EU action in that sense linked (Hunter, 2002). Furthermore behind the US concern of de-linking was the concern that “somehow actions by either the United States or its European allies would lead the security of the two sides of the Atlantic to be decoupled” (Hunter, 2002, p. 34). In other words, that action by the US or the Europeans could potentially harm the interests of the other or that the risks and benefits distribution gets distorted, disrupting the invested interest and willingness of alliance member states to fully back alliance commitments.

The third ‘D’ is about discrimination, in the light of this thesis against non-PESCO or non-EI2 members of NATO. In the time of the Albright remarks the discussion was about NATO-WEU relations. The main security vehicle is the NATO alliance and the United States intends to maintain this. But in the NATO alliance there are members like Norway, Iceland, Canada, Turkey and the United States that do not participate in the other two alliances. The US want to safeguard that the PESCO or EI2 framework will not be used to discriminate against NATO-only members. Hunter (2002, p. 38) states: “In one form or another, virtually all of the NATO states that do not belong to the EU have made clear their concerns about being sidelined in the event of a military action within the framework of the ESDP”. The fourth and final ‘D’ concerns the concept of duplicating and this entails the duplication, or in other words creating

a second set of the same capabilities. The (US perceived) problem of duplication is twofold. On the one hand it is a budgetary argument, in 2017 only five NATO member states met the two percent of GDP requirement: Estonia, Greece, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States (McCarthy, Defense Expenditures Of NATO Members Visualized, 2018). So, the US is against European states trying to create a second set of capabilities and by doing so allocating scarce already insufficient resources, that they can also obtain via the NATO alliance. On the other hand, there is the argument that duplicating erodes the 'indispensability' of the US, and leads to the US seeing its control diminishing.

4. Research Design

The research design used in this thesis is a cross-sectional within-case method of causal interpretation, 'the congruence method' described by George and Bennett (2005). "The essential characteristic of the congruence method is that the investigator begins with a theory and then attempt to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case" (George & Bennet, 2005). For this case study approach is chosen because the data that will be analyzed for the answering of the research question entails qualitative data within the particular case of US inclusion in EU defense policy. There is no availability of statistical quantitative data, the data and the subsequent analyses are all of qualitative nature. The carrying theory in this thesis is that of neorealism. The independent, conditioning and dependent variables are all measured within this research design within the same time frame

There are however some potential threats to this cross-sectional research design. First of all, it is difficult to determine whether the variables are completely covered by the observation points I will acquire, especially when I do not find evidence for a certain aspect, running the risk on a false negative (Type II error). Secondly, the framework of neorealism assumes national sovereignty and states acting in their national interest. This rules out the possibility of the internal and external balancing actually being against the national interest, but pressured to do so by a third party. And thereby overlooking an explanatory variable (non-spuriousness). A third potential threat lurks in the possibility that some variables relate to each other in a different way (direction) than is initially foreseen. One of the key measures in attempt to counter these threats is to look past the actual observation points by delving into explanatory memoranda for instance. So, even when the 'what question' is only of interest to the descriptive research, nevertheless looking at the 'why' or 'how' aspect. These can reveal other actors, considerations or intentions that are not or wrongly covered within the model.

The three alliances will be appreciated and compared. The NATO alliance constitutes ‘the base line’, this alliance represents the involvement of the US into European security. The other two external balancing options, the PESCO and the E2 alliance, will be assessed whether their characteristics entail a weakening or strengthening effect on the NATO alliance.

5. Data

In this section the concepts used in this thesis will be conceptualized and then operationalized. The second subsection discusses the nature of the data that is collected in this study. And the section ends by discussing how the data is used and processed to come to the answering on the research questions.

5.1 Conceptualization and operationalization

The interest of this thesis is in the level of US inclusion in EU defense, as a consequence of the (foreign) policy undertaken by the EU member states. So the dependent variable in this study is “level of US inclusion in EU defense”. Since this is a study based on the congruence method, data of a qualitative nature will be collected and processed. But also the value of the dependent variable will be a qualitative characterization. George and Bennet (2005) point that a correspondence must be established a level of concreteness and differentiation with which the variance in the dependent variable will be measured. The tradeoff between providing enough options to be able to say meaningful different outcomes on the one hand, but keeping the number of options limited to avoid creating a false precision had led to providing the independent variable with four options. These options entail the following possible values; ‘consolidated’, ‘unaltered’, ‘on decline’ or ‘on demise’. Reflecting four degrees of inclusion, ranging from increasing involvement via maintaining the status quo towards (relative) decreasing involvement and even demise. The ‘level of US inclusion in EU defense’ is directly correlated to the position of (the US in) NATO.

The independent variable in this study can also be derived from the formulation of the research question. It entails the foreign policy of the EU member states in terms corresponding with neorealist theory, the internal balancing on the one hand and external balancing on the other. Internal balancing entails the expansion of capabilities. This can be expansion in terms of equipment, setting up new or expand the funding for centers of excellence, setting up or expanding the possibilities for military chain of command, etcetera. External balancing is all about selecting and joining a military alliance/framework in order to balance against a threat by teaming up with other states. In this case the external balancing is

limited by three options, the PESCO, the EI2 and the NATO alliance. It is recognized that strictly speaking PESCO and EI2 should not be characterized as alliance, but rather as platform or framework. *But for the purpose of this study it suffices to handle the three as “alliances” in the sense of ‘three different external balancing options’.*

The influence coming from the US itself constitutes a conditioning variable in this study. This is not a variable that is investigated in terms of acquiring and processing data to determine its value. US foreign policy entails strongly discouraging internal balancing of the EU member states towards weakening the NATO alliance as European external balancing option and stimulating the internal balancing of the member states towards the strengthening of the NATO alliance as European external option. So the values of this variable are dichotomous, stimulating or discouraging, and assumed as corresponding with theory and the previous measured observation points (see 2.5). Not measured by new observation points.

Based on this theory of neorealism, the following model was constructed (Appendix 6; graph 3) to reflect the independent variable of ‘balancing behavior of EU member states’ affecting the dependent variable of ‘level of US inclusion in EU defense’. The independent variable of ‘balancing behavior of EU member states’ is portrayed with only two outgoing arrows, suggesting that this variable itself is not affected by another variable. This reflects and corresponds with the aforementioned concepts of ‘state sovereignty’ and ‘national interest’. The EU member states themselves determine their balancing behavior, as sovereign nations in their own national interests. The external balancing behavior is reflected by the variable ‘external balancing’ and is all about the choice of ‘alliance’. The internal balancing behavior by the EU member states as a collective are reflected by the variable of ‘internal balancing’. When an increase in capabilities of for instance PESCO members can be characterized as ‘decoupling’, ‘discrimination against non-PESCO members’, ‘duplicating’ or an ‘increase of capabilities outside NATO structure’, this increase is considered to have an undermining effect on the NATO alliance. These three characterizations are subset-variables of the umbrella variable of ‘weakening factors’. When an increase of capabilities by PESCO-members can be characterized as ‘burden-sharing’, ‘burden-shifting’ or an ‘increase of capabilities within NATO structure’, then this way of ‘internal balancing’ is considered to bolster the NATO alliance and therefore constitute the umbrella variable of ‘strengthening factors’ for the latter three subset-variables. When taking stock of both the effect of the ‘weakening factors’ as ‘strengthening factors’ variables on the NATO alliance, a conclusion

can be drawn towards the dependent variable of ‘US inclusion in EU defense’ for the US inclusion corresponds directly by the role of the US within NATO.

The above mentioned ‘weakening factors’ and ‘strengthening factors’ are qualitative appreciations of the characteristics of the different external balancing options, the alliances. The alliance characteristics themselves are selected based on the ‘Basic Force Model’ (discussed in section 3.2) added with the aspects ‘C6ISR’, ‘Hybrid Warfare’ and ‘Perceived Threatening elements to the alliance’. The concepts being part of the basic force model are: ‘the size of the armed forces’; ‘the effectiveness’; ‘training’; ‘discipline and leadership’ and ‘access to advanced weaponry and equipment’. The size of the armed forces is operationalized into 17 observation points, being (in aggregate numbers); the military budget, main battle tanks, aircraft carriers, amphibious warfare ships, cruisers, destroyers, frigates, corvettes, nuclear submarines, non-nuclear submarines, military aircraft, attack helicopters, nuclear weapons, military satellites, active military personnel, reserve military personnel and paramilitary. The effectiveness entails ‘political effectiveness’ (further operationalized as percentage of gross domestic product spend on the military budget), ‘strategic effectiveness’ (the level of integration of strategic objectives with those of their allies and persuading them to adopt consistent strategic objectives) and ‘operational effectiveness’ (further operationalized into ‘strategic enablers’, ‘deployability rate’ and ‘interoperability’). The concept of training is operationalized to the observation points of ‘level of shared operational training’ and ‘level of shared exercises’. Discipline and leadership is operationalized into ‘conscription/professional army’, ‘level of integrated (military) structure’, ‘level of shared doctrine’. And the fifth and last concept within the basic force model which entails advanced weapons and equipment is not further operationalized, but providing a comprehensive overview of the level of advanced weapons and equipment brought into the alliance by its members. The aspects ‘C6ISR’, ‘Hybrid Warfare’ and ‘Perceived Threatening elements to the alliance’ are also not further operationalized due to the word limitation on this thesis, this is not expected to threaten the validity of the conclusions.

5.2 Data sources

The first concern in this subsection entails case selection and sampling. For the data collection and answering of the research question(s), I will look at the EU member states as a collective. I will not single out states or groups of states, unless an explicit beneficial reason to the quality of the research to do so emerges. The research entails looking at collectives and aggregates. The collective of PESCO as a whole and its actions, the EI2 as a whole and its

actions and NATO as a whole and its actions and the total sum of ‘undermining’ and ‘bolstering’ factors are of interest to this thesis.

All the data that will be collected is of qualitative nature. These qualitative data will be derived from existing sources and no original data will therefore be collected. The sources will entail the information provided for by official websites by the EU, NATO, national governments, etc. But it can also derive from statements by officials, politicians or experts from the defense community. All data used in this thesis is of non-classified or declassified nature. Meaning that it is sometimes not possible to get the latest and most accurate data, but an estimate has to suffice. For the purpose of this study, this is not expected to affect the validity of the outcomes.

5.3 Data analyses approach

In order to get an answer to the research question “to what extent does the internal and external balancing by the E.U. member states against emerged threats and challenges in the last decade influence the level of U.S. inclusion in E.U. defense?” two supporting sub-questions were formulated: “What are the characteristics, capabilities and tasks concerning PESCO, EI2 and NATO?” and “In what ways can (and/or are) the PESCO and EI2 alliances undermine or bolster the NATO alliance?”. The first sub-question is about describing the different alliances. The second sub-question is about providing a qualitative appreciation of the different characteristics. The earlier concepts of ‘weakening factors’ and ‘strengthening factors’ with their underlying operationalizations derived from literature will be allocated to come to this qualitative appreciation. The structure of the following sections of this thesis are corresponding with this research approach. First on each of the concepts of the ‘expanded’ basic force model data is collected and following an appreciation of this data will be added. The basic mechanic behind the answering of the research question is investigating what the relative position of NATO is to PESCO and the EI2, since within the context of this thesis US inclusion equals the relative position of NATO.

6. The NATO alliance

The 69 year old North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance constitutes currently 29 countries (see appendix 1). Since the NATO alliance forms the baseline upon which the other alliances will be appreciated in terms of weakening or strengthening the NATO alliance, the subsections of this chapter will only contain elaborations on the characteristics on which the

other alliances will also be analyzed, the following chapters will henceforth have an additional classification subpart.

6.1 Aspiration of the alliance

“NATO’s purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means” (NATO, 2019). The origins of NATO can be found in the perceived threat its members had to externally balance against the Soviet power in the aftermath of the Second World War, but endured when the Soviet Union collapsed in the late 1980s, “During the cold war years, NATO was a military alliance with a political foundation. [...] With the collapse of the military and political threat to alliance partners, the political principles that united NATO members now remain the element that holds the alliance together. That suggests the need for NATO to reverse priorities – to become a political alliance with a military foundation” (Daalder, 1999, p. 24). This shift can be recognized in the way NATO portrays itself today. On the website of the treaty organization can be read: “NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict” (NATO, 2019).

Daalder (1999) points out the three purposes of NATO in the 21st century. First and foremost, NATO is an *alliance of collective defense*, a military alliance whose sole purpose is to defend the territorial integrity of its members. “NATO’s purpose [is to] reassure current and prospective members that the allies will defend them if attacked”, a strict policy of collective defense would “[...] reassure Russia of NATO’s essentially defensive character” (Daalder, 1999, p.9). Second, NATO can be an *alliance of collective security*, “an institution whose main purpose is to promote the values of the Atlantic community of market democracies throughout Europe in an effort to promote the stability and security that derives from being part of the transatlantic security community” (Daalder, 1999, p.8). Third, NATO can be an *alliance of collective interests*, “an organization whose main purpose is to defend against threats to common, European and American, security interests no matter where these threats come from” (Daalder, 1999, p.8). The first one of these three purposes is evidently the most clear, securing the territorial integrity of the Member States, it entails the hardcore business of any military organization. The other two purposes, “promoting values” and “defending interests”, are inherently more ambiguous and hence more political. And consequently, offer more room for divergence between the different members.

6.2 Size of the armed forces

For the purpose of this study, the alliances as a whole are evaluated and compared. However it is important to note and realize the vast differences in equipment (assets), military personnel and financial support the different members bring into the alliance (see appendix 1 for a detailed overview of military assets and expenditure of NATO members). Here I will highlight a few aggregates to characterize the size of the different branches of the alliance. The data on the budget and the military assets are extracted from the ‘military balance sheet’ of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2018), the data on the numbers of military personnel is extracted from the ‘military balance sheet’ of 2015 (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015). The discrepancy between the year of measurement of the assets and the personnel is an unfortunate, unavoidable technicality due to availability. But for all countries in this study the same (bias) and it is not expected to cause problems for the purposes of this research.

- NATO-budget: 906,498 billion US dollar.
- NATO-Land forces: 16.006 main battle tanks
- NATO-Navy: 16 aircraft carriers, 385 warships, 148 (nuclear- and conventional) submarines
- NATO-Airforce: 6356 military aircraft, 3613 attack helicopters
- NATO-personnel: 3.206.570 active, 2.134.960 reserves, 791.000 paramilitary

6.3 Effectiveness

The indicator for *political effectiveness*, the percentage of gross domestic product spend on the military budget, is for NATO a hot topic. The 2% of GDP pledge made by the allies is pointed out by many as “absurdity” (Major, 2015), or “poor way to measure burden-sharing” (Dowdy, 2017), but in this study it’s a sufficient tool for comparison between the alliances. For the NATO alliance as a whole this comes down to 2.4% (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2018). The *strategic effectiveness*, defined as “integration of strategic objectives with those of their allies and persuading them to adopt consistent strategic objectives” in NATO is somewhat problematic. Many European allies deviated from the US in strategic considerations during the NATO involvement in Kosovo, the war in Afghanistan, and the war in Iraq, but the allies constantly need to deal with “the dual concern of either being trapped into the hegemonic partner’s policies, or being abandoned by the hegemon” (Press-Barnathan, 2010, 271). *Operational effectiveness* in NATO is relatively adequate, but due to the input by

the United States as main provider of strategic enablers (air-to-air refueling, intelligence, command & control and strategic reconnaissance) and their relative high deployability rate of 29% (Dowdy, 2017). The interoperability within NATO remains a hot topic and was once again highlighted by a recent joint exercise in Poland where US Army troops discovered their fuel nozzles were incompatible with Polish tanks. Today, the interoperability is due to the combined character of missions much more important than during the parallel fighting scenario's during the Cold War and significant improvements have to be made (Binnendijk, 2017).

6.4 Training

Since its inception in 1949, training and exercising has been a cornerstone of the NATO alliance. Through shared training and exercises "... NATO is ensuring that its commands and multinational forces remain ready, responsive, adaptable and interoperable, despite differences in tactics, doctrine, training, structures and language" (Education and Training, NATO, 2018). The education, training, exercise and evaluation processes are managed by NATO's two Strategic Commands, the Allied Command Operations (ACO) and the Allied Command Transformation (ACT).

Seven education and training facilities are currently in place. Next to these seven education and training facilities, NATO also comprises of 24 'Centres of Excellence'. These are nationally or multinationally sponsored entities that aim to enhance training and education, assist in doctrine development, identify lessons learned, improve interoperability and capabilities, and test and validate concepts through experimentation (Education and Training, NATO, 2018). In all, the conclusion can be derived that NATO constitutes a relatively high level of shared operational training.

The acquired knowledge during the educational and training part is further developed by practical application during shared exercises. These exercises test the acquired knowledge during scenario-based live or computer-assisted simulations, involving a multitude of NATO-member partners. NATO has been conducting alliance level exercises since 1951. Since the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, the number of exercises has been increased, while the level of shared exercising was relatively high already during the course of the alliance. At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO leaders have agreed on a strengthened deterrence and defence posture which includes explicitly military exercises that demonstrate

the capabilities for deterrence purposes (Exercises, NATO, 2018). In all, the level of shared exercises by the NATO alliance has to be considered high.

6.5 Discipline and leadership

First, this discipline component, operationalized as conscription. Of the 29 NATO countries, only 2 have a currently ongoing conscription (Turkey and Greece), Iceland has no armed forces at all, and 4 do have a form of draft system, but less than 20% of the whole eligible age group is recruited (Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania and Norway) (CIA, 2019). The NATO alliance as a whole can therefore be considered to constitute a collective of professional and therefore disciplined armies.

NATO's Command Structure is under authority of the Military Committee, this committee composes of the Chiefs of Defence of all NATO-members and this committee is considered to be the highest military authority in NATO. The command structure consists of two strategic commands: Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT). The ACO is under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), and is responsible for the planning and execution of all NATO military operations. The ACT is under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), and is responsible for education, training, exercises and promoting interoperability throughout the Alliance (The NATO Command Structure, 2018). Although discussed very concise, it can be concluded NATO shares a relatively high level of integrated military structure. However, within the boundaries set by each member maintain its sovereignty.

The NATO alliance uses a common doctrine, with the main purpose to "...provide Alliance forces conducting operations with a framework of guidance to achieve a common objective. Operations are underpinned by principles describing how they should be planned, prepared, commanded, conducted, sustained, terminated and assessed.[...] Doctrine describes how Alliance forces operate but it is not about why they operate, which is the realm of policy" (NATO Standard Allied Joint Doctrine, 2017, p. 1). The NATO doctrine is be considered as an overarching doctrine over the member states national doctrines. One of the pursuits attempted by the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation is to streamline the different national doctrine into an increasingly unambiguously shared doctrine. In all, the NATO alliance possesses a relatively high level of shared doctrine.

6.6 Advanced weaponry and equipment

The NATO alliance possesses a number of high-end weaponry and equipment. The most striking are discussed below, this list is certainly not exhaustive. Most of them, but not exclusively, are brought into the alliance by the United States. In terms of air power, the alliance can field two kinds of fifth generation fighters, the F22 raptor and the F35 Lightning II joint strike fighter. But the 4th generation Eurofighter Typhoon fielded by the UK, Germany, Italy and Spain (and the similar French Dassault Rafale) is still considered by the defense community to be an elite air-superiority fighter. France, Germany and Spain are skipping the 5th generation fighter, and are currently working together on a 6th generation fighter project. The US B2 Spirit bomber, is a heavy strategic bomber, featuring low observable stealth technology designed for penetrating dense anti-aircraft defenses. The US, UK and Norway field the P-8A Poseidon patrol plane which is a very capable submarine hunter. In combination with frigates fielded by the US, Italy, France, Spain, Denmark and Norway equipped with active low-frequency variable-depth sonars, the anti-submarine warfare potential of the NATO alliance is relatively high (Pickrell, 2019). The US ‘M1 Abrams’, the German ‘Leopard 2’ and the Turkish ‘Altay’ are state of the art “3rd Generation Advanced/Next Generation” main battle tanks belonging among the world’s elite (McFadden, 2019). The US produced Patriot surface-to-air missile system and THAAD for intercepting ballistic missiles are high-end weapons platforms only rivaled by the Russian superior s-400 missile system (Defense World, 2018).

Last, but not least, the NATO members possess large amounts of nuclear weapons (7625, see appendix 1). “Nuclear weapons are a core component of NATO’s overall capabilities for deterrence and defence alongside conventional and missile defence forces” (NATO’s nuclear deterrence policy and forces, 2018). The United States is the main provider of nuclear weapons under the ‘NATO nuclear sharing concept’, but the nuclear deterrence potential is also constituted by the independent strategic nuclear forces of the UK and France. The NATO nuclear sharing concept in NATO’s policy of nuclear deterrence entails the stationing US nuclear weapons on the territory of fellow NATO members, which can be delivered to target by the host nation via that nations fighters with a nuclear sharing role.

6.7 C6ISR Capabilities

In February 2017 NATO members established the consensus that within the realm of C6ISR capabilities, the top priority is the protection of the communication systems owned and operated by the alliance. In July 2016, the members of NATO already recognized cyberspace

as a domain of operations where the defensive mandate of NATO applies in which the alliance has to be able to defend itself as effectively as it does in the air, on land and at sea. At the Brussels Summit in 2018, NATO-members agreed to set up a new Cyberspace Operations Centre as part of NATO's strengthened command structure (Cyber Defence, NATO, 2018). A key component of NATO's C6ISR capabilities concerns the fleet of Boeing E-3A Airborne Warning & Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft it operates. The AWACS provide the alliance with air surveillance, command and control, battle space management and communications and is one of the few military assets that is actually owned and operated by the alliance as collective instead of being facilitated by one of its members (AWACS, NATO, 2019).

A more precarious element within C6ISR capabilities concerns intelligence. "While all countries have their own sources and methods for the production of intelligence, it is not always easy for them to share their intelligence with allies. Sometimes this is due to security concerns, sometimes to internal procedural requirements, and sometimes to technological constraints" (Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, NATO, 2018). Therefore NATO declared on 10 February 2016 establishing a permanent joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance system that brings together data and information from NATO systems like the AWACS and a wide variety of national assets from the space, air, land and maritime domains. The system was operational and tested in 2018 and will be undergoing technical trials every two years in order to demonstrate and assess the progress on NATO's C6ISR capabilities (Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, NATO, 2018).

6.8 Hybrid Warfare

Hybrid methods of warfare, such as propaganda, deception and sabotage have always been a threat to the NATO alliance, since it were common tactics exploited by the Soviet Union. However, the landscape of hybrid warfare has changed in recent years in the sense of increased speed, scale and intensity, facilitated by rapid technological change and global interconnectivity. Since 2015, NATO has a strategy on its role in countering threats by hybrid warfare, triggered by the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia. Although the primary responsibility to respond to hybrid warfare attacks remains with the targeted nation, a hybrid warfare attack is considered an attack against an alliance member that can trigger Article 5 of the Washington Treaty that would authorize collective use of force against the adversary initiating the hybrid warfare attack (NATO's response to hybrid threats, NATO, 2018). However, the problem here is that for invoking article 5 to be applicable there need to be unanimous consensus that an attack is taking place. And the very ambiguous nature of hybrid

warfare makes it difficult to detect and define. “A key strength of hybrid tactics, therefore, is that they can progress incrementally towards a threatening situation while remaining under the Article 5 threshold.[...] a form of strategic competition targeting the political, economic, and societal vulnerabilities in the West, while remaining concealed and below the threshold of conventional response, is the only viable option for Russia today to achieve its goals” (Miranda Calha, 2015, p. 3). For this reason NATO has set up a Hybrid analysis branch within the Joint Intelligence and Security Division at NATO headquarters to improve the alliance’s understanding and analysis of hybrid threats and provide military and government officials with improved situational awareness on possible hybrid threats (NATO’s response to hybrid threats, NATO, 2018).

6.9 Perceived threatening elements to the alliance

The number and nature of threats to the territories and populations of the NATO alliance members are numerous and diverse. Maritime threats, keeping sea trade routes open and safe, combat piracy and aid in the refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean (NATO’s maritime activities, NATO, 2018). The constant struggle against international terrorism (Countering Terrorism, NATO, 2018). The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, nuclear) constitutes a serious threat to the alliance due to its potential severe consequences (Combined Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Task Force, 2015). Ballistic missile threats from the middle east and Asia (Ballistic Missile Defence, NATO, 2019). Cyber threats and attacks are occurring more frequent, and are becoming more sophisticated and damaging (Cyber Defence, NATO, 2018) . Hybrid threats from east (Russia) and the south (unstable northern African states) (NATO’s response to hybrid threats, NATO, 2018).

7. The PESCO alliance

The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) alliance constitutes 25 participating countries, all EU-members (see Appendix 2). The three countries that did not want to participate in the PESCO alliance are Denmark, Malta and the United Kingdom (see appendix 8^{1,2,3}). Another remarkable aspect worth mentioning about the PESCO alliance is the participation of four EU Member States that describe themselves as neutral: Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden. These countries have joined based on a “opt-in, opt-out” basis, in order to be able to on the one hand have a seat at the table of European defense (and benefit from non-combat developments), especially since these countries are not included via the NATO

alliance into European defence due to their neutrality and on the other hand can maintain their status of neutrality in their foreign policy.

7.1 Aspiration of the alliance

For the data on the aspirations of the PESCO alliance, the Council Decision of 11th December 2017 ‘establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of participating Member States’ will be allocated (Council, 2017/2315).

7.1.1 Derived data

The establishment decision of PESCO by the European council states that PESCO is a project based permanent structured cooperation between EU Member States that “[...] provides a crucial political framework for all Member States to improve their respective military assets and defence capabilities through well-coordinated initiatives and concrete projects based on more binding commitments” (Council, 2017/2315, ANNEX I). What PESCO (for now) is not is “a readiness force, a standing force nor a stand by force” (Council, 2017/2315, ANNEX:12), it is an alliance of cooperating EU Members. So an alliance in terms of being an external balancing option to increase capabilities, but not (yet) in the sense of being a military alliance. The mutual defense clause between EU Member States is part of the EU treaty (Art. 42(7), TEU), and not part of the PESCO statute. PESCO has to be seen as an integral part of the Union and therefore “there should be consistency between actions undertaken within the framework of PESCO and other CFSP actions and other Union policies”(Council, 2017/2315, Preamble). For the purpose of this study a level of synonym between EU (CFSP) and PESCO is used. Although being a European Union cooperation, it is on an individual project base open for third parties to join if they receive an invitation by the Council to partake (Council, 2017/2315, Art. 2(h)).

In the light of this study, with respect to the relationship with NATO the council decision mentions several things. First, it stresses that “Enhanced defence capabilities of EU Member States will also benefit NATO. They will strengthen the European pillar within the [NATO] Alliance and respond demands for transatlantic burden sharing”(Council, 2017/2315, ANNEX I). The word ‘also’ seems to play an important role here. The PESCO alliance is first of all for European purposes, a European Union affair. However, when it comes to matters of EU defense, the US and many European Member States who don’t want to run the risk of the US reducing its commitments (to NATO) are very sensitive to developments. To appease these actors, it is stressed that this is not just about increasing EU capabilities outside NATO, but

that this also is about strengthening NATO by Europe getting more equipped to the task of burden sharing. The document continues by postulating an ambition/speculating about a possible future (underlining done by the author of this study): “PESCO is a crucial step towards strengthening the common defence policy. It could be an element of a possible development towards a common defence should the Council by unanimous vote decide so (as provided for in article 42.2 TEU). A long term vision of PESCO could be to arrive at a coherent full spectrum force package[...]” and “[...]could work towards [...] adding top-down coordination and guidance[...]” (both, Council, 2017/2315, ANNEX I). This openly expresses the possibility of PESCO growing into a single European army and/or adding a military command structure to the PESCO alliance. But yet again, the wary actors fearing an undermining of NATO get appeased by adding: “[...] in complementary with NATO, which will continue to be the cornerstone of collective defence for its members” (Council, 2017/2315, ANNEX I). To end this subsection, I provide a quote that also is derived from the ‘ANNEX I – Principles of PESCO’ (Council, 2017/2315) stressing the importance of PESCO for common security and defense: “We consider an inclusive PESCO as the most important instrument to foster common security and defence in an area where more coherence, continuity, coordination and collaboration are needed. European efforts to this end must be united, coordinated, and meaningful and must be based on commonly agreed guidelines”. To note, no NATO caveat was add to this notion of importance of PESCO.

7.1.2 Classification in terms of strengthening/weakening factors

A constant expressing of how important NATO is to European security and defence can be observed. The document on establishing PESCO (Council, 2017/2315) mentions in multiple ways that the capabilities that will be established or expanded are also there to possibly serve under NATO framework, furthermore all new equipment is required to be in line with “technical and operational standards[...] acknowledging that they need to ensure interoperability with NATO” (Council, 2017/2315, ANNEX II). Even the ambition to strengthen NATO by burden sharing is explicitly mentioned. So, there seems no threat of increasing capabilities that could not be allocated to NATO purposes. The possible threat of “discriminating against non-PESCO members” is addressed by making it possible for third parties to join individual projects, although a certain level of discrimination is unavoidable due to third parties not being part of the political Union structure. The only weakening factor in terms of ‘aspirations of the PESCO alliance’ vis-à-vis the NATO alliance, is a certain level of decoupling. NATO as alliance of collective defense and security is recognized, but the

view of NATO as alliance of collective interests is jeopardized. PESCO is there for European ‘coherence, continuity, coordination and collaboration’ and a strong PESCO is there to serve interests defined by the Council for the European Union collective. However, capabilities (for now) remain nationally owned and could be allocated by the owners to NATO’s missions. So, this ‘undermining’ if named so is a mere political one, not a militaristic one.

7.2 Size of the armed forces

The ‘neutral states’ will most likely remain noninvolved in operations of expeditionary nature, but do have to answer to their obligations under the mutual defense clause that was introduced in 2009 under Article 42 (7) of the Treaty of the European Union, “[...]the Other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all means in their power [...]” (TEU, 2012), so for this study the whole of the alliance is taken into account. Although, strictly speaking this not necessarily has to mean that the neutral states have a military obligation, in this study “all means in their power” is translated into including their military capabilities and therefore in the assessment of the size of the PESCO alliance, all EU Member States are included.

7.2.1 Derived data

The size difference with NATO is substantial. This is mainly due to not having relatively large NATO members in the PESCO alliance like United States, United Kingdom and Turkey. The PESCO members that are not also represented in the NATO alliance, do bring in ‘new’ personnel and equipment into the collective defense of Europe, but do not (even close) fill in the gap that the void of not including these NATO members has caused (appendix 2, Table 2 and 3) shows an overview of what the individual member states of the PESCO alliance potentially can bring into the alliance). According to data from the ‘military balance sheet’ of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2015, 2018), the aggregates (same selection as the previous discussed NATO alliance) on the PESCO alliance entail:

- PESCO-budget: 196,968 billion US dollar.
- PESCO-Land forces: 4982 main battle tanks
- PESCO-Navy: 4 aircraft carriers, 147 warships, 48 (nuclear- and conventional) submarines
- PESCO-Airforce: 2162 military aircraft, 1058 attack helicopters
- PESCO-personnel: 1.337.470 active, 1.133.550 reserves, 644.250 paramilitary

Horvath (2011) points out that from the almost 1,5 million military personnel the EU has, just a small percentage can be deployed for expeditionary purposes, not more than 10 to 12 percent. So, 150.000 to 180.000 troops. Biscop (2019) stresses the need for rotation, he points out that most European States deploy troops abroad for periods up to 4 months, so that if you want to maintain military presence of one soldier abroad you need actually three: “one who is preparing to deploy, one who is deployed in theatre, and one that has returned for recuperation and retraining” (Biscop, 2019, p. 137). He continues by pointing out, under this logic, that the EU are actually capable of deploying no more than 50,000 to 60,000 troops and that a large share of these numbers is capable for only less intensive missions and are not deployable for combat operations. Biscop ends this train of thought by pointing to the dependence on the US of the EU Member States: “[...] Europeans can only do so if the US provides the strategic enablers to make deployment possible. Moreover, Europeans count on the US to provide the strategic reserve for their deployments.[...] Once Europeans have 60.000 deployed, that’s more or less it.[...] there are no deployable reserves” (Biscop, 2019, p.141). So even if the EU Member States would be willing to contribute troops to a particular cause, independently of the US is in terms of size not really possible. Once the EU passes the threshold of 30.000 troops (according to Biscop (2019) it is good military practice to keep as many troops as one sends out ready in quickly deployable reserve), the EU becomes dependent on the US for strategic backup (reserves).

7.2.2 Classification in terms of strengthening/weakening factors

The non-NATO-PESCO members are bringing in relatively substantial equipment and personnel, but all of a conventional nature (see appendix 2, Table 3). They are not possessing any strategic enablers or advanced weaponry, so these countries do not cause an increase in capabilities outside the NATO structure that could create a more attractive alternative to the NATO alliance. The NATO alliance remains far superior to the NATO members in PESCO on this account. The addition of the non-NATO PESCO members are potentially facilitating the European NATO Members in PESCO to be better equipped for the purpose of Burden-sharing vis-à-vis the United States. What is pointed out by Biscop (2019) in the previous section is that burden-sharing is at the moment the best scenario concerning strengthening NATO by alleviating the Americans. The scenario of burden-shifting in which the Europeans would act without US involvement, is even without taking strategic enablers into the equation, not feasible with just 30.000 troops available for maintaining troops (using own European strategic reserves).

7.3 Effectiveness

The indicators for effectiveness were operationalized as political effectiveness, strategic effectiveness, and operational effectiveness (see 5.1).

7.3.1 Derived data

For the PESCO alliance as a whole the political effectiveness expressed as the average percentage of GNP spend on the military budget comes down to 1,37% (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019). Without three significant players in terms of size of their armed forces and strategic considerations, the US, UK & Turkey, a more coherent and thus higher strategic effectiveness could be expected. However, this is not the case. Countries like Poland are very keen on keeping fully aligned with the U.S. and therefore hinder all attempt to come to a convergence of European strategic objectives excluding the interests of the US. Moreover, without the US and the UK, Germany and France become the dominant actors in defining the strategic objectives, what concerns especially the eastern and somewhat southern Member States (Billon-Galland & Quencez, 2017). The strategic effectiveness is therefore problematic. The solution to this problem is a project based cooperation between Members in which countries are free to commit themselves to one or multiple of these projects. Furthermore, non-rivalry statements or articles concerning PESCO and NATO are constantly added into official documents and statements. Operational effectiveness is a hot topic in PESCO. European operations in Mali, Libya and Kosovo showed European forces being heavily depended on US strategic enablers. Especially in the area of C6ISR capabilities and air-to-air-refueling capability (European Defense Matters, 2019). To combat this problem, 17 of the current 34 PESCO projects are in the realm of C6ISR increasing Europe's capabilities. To tackle the air-to-air-refueling capability problem, 8 additional A330 MRTT aircraft are ordered and come into deployment between 2020 and 2022. The fleet of European owned air-to-air-refueling aircraft are in the hands of seven NATO-PESCO members and NATO-member Norway (European Defence Agency, 2018). The deployability rate for the PESCO alliance (EU) as a whole comes down to 10-12%, according to Biscop (2019). The interoperability of the PESCO alliance deploying 178 major weapon systems compared to 30 major weapon systems of the US seems to remain an issue (Bendimered, 2019). But new PESCO projects like 'Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle/ Amphibious Assault Vehicle/ Light Armoured Vehicle' coordinated by Italy could on the long term replace current weapon systems and reduce the current number significantly.

7.3.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The lower political effectiveness, the somewhat equal strategic effectiveness and the lower operational effectiveness compared to the NATO alliance are not suggesting any attractive rivalry by PESCO. The pooling of resources, reducing the fragmentation and working towards a reality of operating fewer weapon systems increasing the interoperability and last but not least, expanding the air-to-air-refueling fleet significantly can be considered strengthening factors to the NATO alliance because of the increasing burden-sharing potential of European NATO members.

7.4 Training

Fifteen of the twenty EU-battlegroups consist of only PESCO members cooperating with another (EEAS, 2017), and therefore the EU battlegroups are considered a form of ‘level of shared exercises’.

7.4.1 Derived data

The level of shared training is currently low, training of new personnel takes place in national or NATO facilities. However, five of the thirty-four current PESCO projects are aimed at increasing the level of shared training: European Union Training Mission Competence Centre (EU TMCC), European Training Certification Centre for European Armies, Helicopter Hot and High Training (H3 Training), Joint EU Intelligence School and the EU Test and Evaluation Centres (PESCO Secretariat, 2019). The installation of European training facilities and centres of excellence will lead to an increasing level of shared exercises. For now, the experience of multi-national exercises is acquired within the framework of NATO, the deployment of the different EU battlegroups since 2007 and the 34 missions the EU has conducted or is conducting under the CSDP since 2003 (EEAS, 2017). Although, the (potential) deployment of EU battlegroups and the missions strictly are not labeled ‘exercise’, it does entail operational experience. The battlegroups have not been deployed in a conflict situation and are primarily an opportunity of gaining multinational experience (Reykers, 2017).

7.4.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

Since the EU battlegroups are also open to non-PESCO members like Turkey, Norway and after Brexit the UK, there is no discrimination against non-PESCO members when it comes down to exercising/deployment of the battlegroups. The yet to become operational training facilities constitute somewhat of a duplication on the already existing NATO training

facilities and centres of excellence. However, on the one hand there becomes fewer duplication on the national level and these facilities bring options to non-NATO members and on the other hand, the burden-sharing potential of European Member States is likely to increase. In the long term, the creation of training and exercise facilities could contribute to a divergence from NATO, but for now and the foreseeable future it appears to entail more strengthening potential to the NATO alliance than that it constitutes a weakening one.

7.5 Discipline and leadership

This subsection starts by addressing the discipline component, but is mainly about in what manner is PESCO channeling input into output.

7.5.1 Derived data

First, the discipline component, operationalized as conscription. Of the twenty-five PESCO countries, only four have a currently ongoing conscription (Austria, Cyprus, Finland and Greece) and three do have a form of draft system, but less than 20% of the whole eligible age group is recruited (Estonia, Lithuania and Sweden) (CIA, 2019). All, of these countries have to uphold a level of escalation readiness of the general public due to their status of neutrality or experiencing a direct threat of interstate aggression. Nevertheless, these seven countries can be considered to be minor actors within the PESCO alliance, based on their relative size (appendix 2). The PESCO alliance as a whole can therefore be considered to constitute a collective of professional and therefore disciplined armies.

PESCO itself does not have a military structure, since PESCO is a platform for cooperation. For the military structure a look is taken at the military structure of the EU. This is a relatively weak structure. For each military mission, the Council nominates the operational headquarters (OHQ) for the execution on the strategic level which also direct the subordinate force headquarters (FHQ) for the execution of the actual operation on the ground/sea. For operational headquarters there are four options: the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) of the EEAS' Military Staff (EUMS) in Brussels, by the end of 2020 capable of running executive operations up to the size of one battle group (2500 troops), the use of the NATO Command capability, the Allied Command Operations (ACO) in the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, national headquarters of some Member States (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain) or the activation of a European Union Operations Centre (EUOPCEN), a non-standing, ad-hoc headquarters (EEAS, 2015). The CSDP command structure involves the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security

Policy at the top, in authority over the Military Staff and the Military Committee (consisting of the national chiefs of Defence) (EEAS, 2017).

Procedures and standards for the military strategic, operational and tactical level that surpass national doctrines have been adopted from NATO, to remain aligned with NATO interoperability. There are a few exceptions like within the ‘EU beyond line of sight (BLOS) Land Battlefield Missile systems’ PESCO project in which a common European doctrine on BLOS firing is envisioned. In all, the PESCO alliance possesses a relatively high level of shared doctrine because of the vast amount of NATO Members within PESCO, though slightly less than the NATO alliance itself because of the influx of non-NATO-Members.

7.5.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The professional disciplined nature of the PESCO armies strengthens the NATO alliance because it is more up to the task of burden-sharing due to this quality. The avoidance of installing a strong standing military command or establishing a European military doctrine that could conflict with that of NATO bears witness to the pursuit of avoiding duplication or production of a rival to NATO. With incremental improvements within the realm of discipline and leadership, while explicitly avoiding creating weakening factors to the NATO alliance, the European partners become more able to increase their share of burden-sharing and thus it strengthens the NATO alliance.

7.6 Advanced weaponry and equipment

The PESCO-non-NATO-Members are not bringing any significant advanced weaponry and equipment into the alliance. For elaboration on the already discussed Eurofighter Typhoon, French Dassault, P-8A Poseidon, French nuclear capability among other equipment brought into the alliance by European NATO members, see ‘6.6 Advanced weaponry and equipment’.

7.6.1 Derived data

Within PESCO there are currently five projects that entail providing PESCO Members with cutting edge state of the art advanced weaponry and equipment, next to the already discussed (see ‘6.6 Advanced weaponry and equipment’) project (outside PESCO) by France, Germany and Spain on developing a 6th generation fighter. These projects are: Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle/ Amphibious Assault Vehicle/ Light Armoured Vehicle, Indirect Fire Support Capability (Euroartillery), EU Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) Land Battlefield Systems, Deployable Modular underwater Intervention Capability Package (Divepack) and

lastly the development of European Attack Helicopters Tiger Mark III (PESCO Secretariat, 2019).

7.6.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

All of these projects are somewhat a duplication of already existing American technology, therefore the main threat to the NATO alliance would not entail the development of superior technology within PESCO that could create a preference for acting outside NATO. However, it does constitute a substantial growth in capabilities outside the NATO structure for the European NATO members, leading to be less dependent on the US providing assets. NATO was consulted about these projects, and welcomed these for the reason that these projects are all run by PESCO members that are also part of the NATO alliance and all weapons created by these countries remain in national ownership and could also be allocated to NATO operations. Therefore constituting an indirect increase in NATO capabilities that leads to better burden-sharing potential by European NATO members.

7.7 C6ISR Capabilities

In the realm of C6ISR capabilities, a significant number of developments are taking place. While these are officially welcomed and encouraged by NATO through NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, “I have welcomed EU efforts on defense many times, because I believe that projects such as military mobility, European Defence Fund, PESCO, all of that can contribute to fairer burden-sharing within NATO. It can complement NATO and it can also help to develop new NATO capabilities and also address the fragmentation of the European defense market. So this is something I have welcomed many many, times,” (Banks, 2018), in terms of analysis in the light of this thesis developments could be marked as weakening to the NATO alliance.

7.7.1 Derived data

Of the currently thirty-four projects pursued by EU-Member States driven PESCO, a stunning number of seventeen are in the realm of increasing European C6ISR capabilities; Joint EU Intelligence School, Integrated Unmanned Ground System (UGS), Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection (HARMSPRO), Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance, European Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems – Male RPAS (Eurodrone), Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS), ‘Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Surveillance as a Service (CBRN SAAS)’, Geo-Meteorological and Oceanographic (GEOMETOC) Support Coordination element (GMSCE),

European secure software defined radio (ESSOR), Cyber Threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform, Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security, Strategic Command and Control Systems for CSDP Missions and Operations, European High Atmosphere Airship Platform (EHAAP) – Persistent Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capability, One Deployable Special Operations Forces (SOF) Tactical Command and Control (C2) Command Post (CP) for Small Joint Operations (SJO) – (SOCC) for SJO, Electronic Warfare Capability and Interoperability Programme for Future Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR) Cooperation, EU Radio Navigation Solution (EURAS) and lastly the European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network (EU-SSA-N) (PESCO Secretariat, 2019).

7.7.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The vast amount of projects on C6ISR capabilities is most likely leading to a degree of duplication of NATO capabilities (more accurate American capabilities open to NATO) and certainly an increase of capabilities outside the NATO structure. Both qualifications recognized as weakening factors to the NATO alliance. New weapons developed under PESCO would remain owned by individual countries that subsequently can also contribute these weapons to NATO operations. The ability of European Members of NATO becoming more able to increase the degree of burden-sharing and is thus strengthening the NATO alliance.

7.8 Hybrid Warfare

The EU and its Member States recognize that the threats they face are increasingly taking non-conventional forms, these hybrid threats pose a significant potential to destabilize and endanger European society and undermine core European values (EEAS, 2018).

7.8.1 Derived data

The ‘Joint framework on countering hybrid threats’ (European Commission, 2016) issued by the European Commission states that while countering hybrid threats primarily lies with the Member States themselves, many EU Member States face common threats, which can also target cross-border networks or infrastructures, and these threats are likely to be addressed more effectively by a coordinated response at the EU level by using EU policies and instruments. The European Commission announces in this joint communication to build upon existing strategies and policies and foster close cooperation between all relevant actors and create synergies between all relevant instruments: the European Agenda on Security, the

upcoming European Union Global Strategy for foreign and security policy and European Defence Action Plan, the EU Cybersecurity Strategy, the Energy Security Strategy and the European Union Maritime Security Strategy. The proposed EU response focuses on five elements: improving awareness, building resilience, preventing, responding to crisis and recovering.

Furthermore, two institutions have been created to facilitate in the action against hybrid threats. First, there is the creation on 6th April 2016 of the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, a post within the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN) of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels. This Cell is tasked with gathering information and intelligence from Member States to inform decision-makers both in EU institutions and Member States. Secondly, 11th of April 2017, the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats was created in Helsinki to establish a research institution that can make sound analysis, organize trainings and exercises for EU Member States and NATO Allies and other participating countries (EEAS, 2018).

7.8.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The establishment of the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell is a clear example of an increase of capabilities outside the NATO structure by European States and because of this reason it could be marked as a weakening factor to the NATO alliance. To remedy this potential erosive element vis-à-vis the NATO alliance, a second institution was created, the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki. This Centre facilitates the cooperation between the EU and NATO and keeps overarching EU-NATO interest coupled. Furthermore, the potential discrimination against non-PESCO-NATO members like Norway and after Brexit the UK is remedied.

7.9 Perceived threatening elements to the alliance

The PESCO alliance is a strictly European oriented alliance vis-à-vis the NATO alliance that, although also oriented primarily at the European theater, is in no small degree because of the interest of the US and Turkey much broader.

7.9.1 Derived data

The European concerns consists mainly of four elements. First, the US commitment to Europe's security as credible and equal partner. This concern is twofold. On the one hand, there is the doubt whether the US would act in the defense of Europe. And the second one is whether the European states would continue to enjoy a degree of self-determination and be

recognized as equal partners like the unanimity consensus decision rule in NATO would suggest. They won't appreciate getting their 'marching orders' from Washington. The unilateral course of action of the US by the withdrawal of the Paris climate agreement, stepping out of the Iran nuclear deal and withdraw from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, the US is diverging US and European interests without recognizing the interests of their 'equal European partners' within the NATO alliance. For the doubt whether the US would commit itself to the defense of Europe, there seems to be no empirical evidence other than remarks made by president Trump. The US has strengthened its military presence in Europe. There are today more American troops stationed in Europe than under the Obama administration. Moreover, "...the budget to reinforce military capabilities under the European Deterrence Initiative has almost doubled from 3.4 billion dollars (2017) to 6.5 billion dollars (2019). [...] Prepositioned stocks for a division-sized force are again filling depots in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany" (Zandee, 2019, p. 175). But simultaneously, the White House is pressuring the European States by the yet to be installed 'Costs plus 50 rule' which obliges countries hosting American troops to pay for all the costs plus 50 percent for the protection offered by the Americans. For Germany, currently contributing one billion dollars which reflects 28 percent of the costs, this rule would imply an increase of several billions dollars (Ellis, 2019). Washington, while guaranteeing EU defense, is causing annoyance with its partners, pushing Europe to no other choice than to increase its own defense investment. The question is whether the Europeans would do this under the American dominated NATO umbrella or within another external balancing option.

Secondly, there is the perceived Russian threat by especially the Baltic states and Poland. They strongly argue for concentrating new investments on EU defense on territorial defense capabilities. Thirdly, the southern European States are mainly worried about the spill-over effects from instability and conflict in the Middle-east and Africa in the form of migration waves, terrorism and organized crime. "Their security mindset is different, less oriented on building up heavy armed forces and more on expanding naval, coastguard and border protection capabilities" (Zandee, 2019, p. 176).

The fourth concern to European allies is the changing nature of Turkey. Turkey has developed into a semi-autocratic state, which has more and more diverging interests compared to that of the EU members of NATO. There is also a marked tension between America and Turkey caused by the Turkish procurement of the Russian s-400 missile system, the refusal of delivering a hundred F-35 fighters by the US to Turkey as response, the labeling of YPG as

‘terrorists’ by Turkey and ‘allies’ by the US, the agreement on Turkish-Russian combined naval exercises on the Black Sea, the fact that many Turkish officers have been ordered to return from positions within the NATO command chain and ended up in court accused of supporting the 2016 coup and President of Turkey Erdogan openly questioning Turkey’s continuing NATO membership if US sanctions are not lifted. In the meantime, several European countries like Germany and the Netherlands are wrongly triggered by experiencing Turkey’s ‘long arm’ of influencing Turkish minorities within their borders (Zandee, 2019). Europe is forced to think about the future relations it wants to have with Turkey. Whether that is to keep itself coupled in its position to Turkey with the American ally, or would decouple itself from the US and pursues an own relationship with Turkey in a potential PESCO-Turkey partnership, possibly angering the US.

7.9.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The substantial non-overlap of these four European concerns to those of NATO can be considered weakening to the NATO alliance. Only the second concern, being the eastern threat coming from Russia is in full consonance with NATO.

On the first element, America twisting Europe’s arm to invest, this could end up in two ways. It could lead to an increase of capabilities within the NATO structure enabling Europe to increase its level of burden-sharing within the NATO alliance. Or it could very well be an incentive to increase the capabilities outside the NATO alliance. Ensuring a more independent position, less sensitive to new American pressures. The second element, the eastern threat posing from Russia, is in full consonance with NATO. The European and American interests are strongly coupled on this element, the threat consists of potential escalation in large-scale military force and NATO is the primary vehicle to reinforce the deterrence capabilities and defense posture.

The third element, the southern threat, is somewhat problematic to NATO. “It will remain difficult for the [NATO] Alliance to play a major role in addressing the main security concern for its southern member states. The leading actors in border protection and the fight against terrorism are civilian institutions (police, customs, coast guard, et cetera) and hard military power is of little use” (Zandee, 2019, p. 177). These southern states seem better off to look for European balancing options. It was the political motive to fly the NATO flag in the Mediterranean, rather than military requirements, that led to the NATO operation Sea Guardian in 2016. Resources could have more easily been added to the already deployed EU

Naval Force Mediterranean Sophia, which has started a year earlier (Zandee, 2019). This NATO operation seems to imply coupled interest between the NATO partners, where in practice security interests between the US and southern European partners seem not aligned/coupled. Furthermore, an increase in European capabilities outside the NATO structure to balance more appropriate against southern threats would be recognized as a weakening factor to the NATO alliance.

The last element, the future relations with NATO member Turkey, seems problematic in multiple ways. In itself, a breakaway of Turkey from NATO would weaken the alliance substantially. A significant member in terms of number of forces would leave and the outside borders of the NATO territory would significantly be redrawn. On the ‘Turkey’ issue, there is substantial decoupling of interests between the US, the European allies and Turkey.

8. The EI2 alliance

The EI2 alliance constitutes ten participating countries, currently all EU members (see appendix 3, Table 4). Three of these countries can be considered ‘special cases’ that are somewhat different from the other eight, namely Denmark, the UK and Finland (see appendix 8). Denmark and the UK are both NATO members that are restricted (each for their own reasons) to contribute to EU defense within the EU, hence PESCO, structure. Finland is the only non-NATO Member of EI2.

8.1 Aspiration of the alliance

On 25 June at the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council, the defense ministers of initially nine EU member states signed a Letter of Intent (Letter of Intent, 2018) to establish the European Intervention Initiative (EI2). The nine original participants welcomed Finland to become the tenth participant on November 7th, 2018.

8.1.1 Derived data

The idea of for the EI2 alliance was presented by French President Macron in his Sorbonne speech on 29th September, 2018. He started out by expressing he witnessed a “gradual and inevitable disengagement by the United States” (Macron, 2018). And expressed the importance of NATO and the laying of the foundations of Europe’s autonomous operating capabilities by creating PESCO and the European Defence Fund. After these important acknowledgements, he continued: “What Europe, Defence Europe, lacks most today is a common strategic culture. Our inability to work together convincingly undermines our

credibility as Europeans. We do not have the same cultures, be they parliamentary, historical or political, or the same sensitivities. And that cannot be changed in one day. But I propose trying, straight away, to build that common culture, by proposing a European intervention initiative aimed at developing a shared strategic culture. [...] operational anticipation, intelligence, planning and support. At the beginning of the next decade, Europe needs to establish a common intervention force, a common defence budget and a common doctrine for action” (Macron, 2018, p. 3).

The Letter of Intent (2018), the founding document of the EI2 alliance, describes the alliance as “a flexible, non-binding forum of European participating states which are able and willing to engage their military capabilities and forces where necessary to protecting European security interests, without prejudice to the chosen institutional framework (the EU, NATO, the UN or ad hoc coalitions)” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p.2), with its main objective to “foster our capacity to better anticipate, prepare, plan and act together when and where necessary” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p.2). Cooperation according to this document will in four main fields:

1. Strategic foresight and intelligence sharing
2. Scenario development and planning
3. Support to operations
4. Lessons learned and doctrine

Concerning the relationship to NATO, the document states that it will not duplicate NATO efforts, but will add to them. It acknowledges NATO as the cornerstone of the collective defence, while also stressing that the initiative (EI2) is there to “consolidate European strategic autonomy and freedom of decision and action” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 2). Article 11 of the document states that “EI2 will not earmark national forces for its own response purposes” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 2).

The Italians were initially also invited by the French to participate in the EI2, but had serious doubts about the complementariness of the alliance in their relationship to NATO and PESCO and fear an unwanted level of duplication and fragmentation. Italian minister of defense Elisabetta Trenta declared against the Italian newspaper La Repubblica that Italy is not dismissive of the EI2 proposal, but they want a better understanding of the EI2 first (D’Argenio, 2018).

One of the aims of the EI2 alliance was to (be able to) act quickly, flexible, pragmatic and ambitious (Letter of Intent, 2018), and it is almost a given that this manner of acting will be compromised by the extent the number of participants will grow. That's why the number of participants is kept low. However, this caused some level of "discrimination against non-EI2-NATO members", like Poland and Lithuania. These countries were willing to join, but were not invited by France, "German officials thus described the initiative as divisive" (Koenig, 2018, p. 2).

8.1.2 Classification in terms of strengthening/weakening factors

The Sorbonne speech of Macron (Macron, 2018) as well as the founding document, the Letter of Intent (2018), both recognize the importance of not undermining the NATO alliance, but rather reinforcing it. Since, there is only one relatively small member of EI2 that is not also a NATO-member, namely Finland, in combination with the fact that forces will not be earmarked as "EI2" and thus every improvement/increase in capabilities also potentially would benefit NATO, there is no explicit weakening NATO risk in terms of "increase of capabilities outside NATO". The aim of EI2 increasing the level of burden-sharing or even burden-shifting of tasks from the US to European allies is likely to move in a NATO alliance strengthening direction.

Like previously stated, there is a broad consensus of not undermining NATO by the participants, however this consensus is purely based on the premise that undermining entails "duplication" and therefore duplication is avoided. When "decoupling" is taken into account as weakening factor, the NATO alliance is certainly being undermined. The EI2 recognizes NATO as an *alliance of collective defense*, but certainly deviates from the explanation that NATO is an *alliance of collective interests*, Macron and the founding document explicitly state the importance of "European strategic autonomy and freedom of decisions and action" (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 2). European security interests are formulated and pursued, what can be seen as a form of decoupling. NATO remains in this view an alliance of common interests, but not so much 'collective interests' where the interests are defined as valid for the whole collective. And the discrimination against Poland and Lithuania can also be seen as weakening NATO in the light of this thesis.

8.2 Size of the armed forces

The number of participating countries in the EI2 alliance is considerable lower than in the other two previous discussed alliances. However, in terms of forces and military budget it

does not deviate much from the PESCO alliance. This is mainly due to the participation of the United Kingdom in the EI2 alliance, the second largest participant in NATO.

8.2.1 Derived data

The only member of the EI2 alliance that is not also represented in NATO is Finland. So, for the original nine of the EI2 alliance it would constitute a “NATO-light-version”, Finland although modest is the only member that brings “additional equipment and personnel” into the alliance (a complete overview of the EI2 alliance can be found in appendix 4). According to data from the ‘military balance sheet’ of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2015, 2018), the aggregates (same selection as the previous discussed NATO and PESCO alliances) on the EI2 alliance entail:

- EI2-budget: 201,320 billion US dollar.
- EI2-Land forces: 1409 main battle tanks
- EI2-Navy: 3 aircraft carriers, 109 warships, 35 (nuclear- and conventional) submarines
- EI2-Airforce: 1440 military aircraft, 803 attack helicopters
- EI2-personnel: 791.660 active, 705.110 reserves, 249.050 paramilitary

Biscop (2019) points out that would the PESCO or EI2 truly integrate towards a single European army, the current budgets (of both alliances almost three times that of Russia) would suffice to acquire all the capabilities that an autonomous European strategy requires. “Many Member States hang on to useless units and obsolete equipment, which can no longer be deployed but continue to cost money. Duplication and fragmentation: those are the reasons that [PESCO and EI2 members] can spend € [x] billion per year on defence and still are not capable of mounting autonomous operations. Unfortunately, a large share of that € [x] billion is just money wasted” (Biscop, 2019, p. 154).

8.2.2 Classification in terms of strengthening/weakening factors

Finland as non-NATO member could strengthen NATO by making the Europeans more equipped to be taxed with tasks in the context of burden-sharing. Duplication is certainly a ‘problem’ in terms of the high share of total budget that goes towards duplicated assets, however this is a mere fact just as it is the case within NATO, the duplication is not a weakening factor against the NATO alliance in the sense that it duplicates new capabilities that rival with existing NATO capabilities.

8.3 Effectiveness

For the founders of the EI2, increasing effectiveness was one of the leading reasons for creating the alliance. The empirical data on the effectiveness of the EI2 is yet to be seen, due to the young age of the alliance. The data constitutes “aims and ambitions”, however the argument can be made that the expected effectiveness is likely to surpass that of the PESCO alliance since the EI2 was born out of the frustration about the lacking and slow pace of integration and increase of effectiveness of PESCO.

8.3.1 Derived data

The EI2 countries are on the one hand cooperating to avoid the 2% fetish that seems to take NATO debates hostage (Biscop, 2019) and try to do more with the same or decreasing budgets, while on the other hand are selected on the basis of their willingness and ability to act (Letter of Intent, 2018). So the percentage of alliance GDP allocated to the military budget as measurement of *political effectiveness* seems to be somewhat problematic. For the ten members of the EI2 alliance as a whole this comes down to 1,43% (CIA, 2019). The *strategic effectiveness* cannot yet be expressed in empirical terms. However, born out of the disappointment of lack of success by the Brussels institutions with horizon-scanning responsibilities (the European External Action Service, EU INTCen and EU Military Staff) (Whitney, 2018), the EI2 with “cross-fertilization of operational anticipation, intelligence, planning and support” (Macron, 2018) seems likely to sort out a strategic effectiveness that surpasses that of the problematic NATO or PESCO on this area. The *operational effectiveness* has to be judged in a similar way. However, it is expected that the EI2 surpasses for the nearby future the level of strategic enablers of the PESCO alliance due to the assets of the United Kingdom. However, the PESCO initiatives are expected to remedy the strategic enablers gap. The level of the deployability rate is expected to be in the proximity of the other European countries, however since the EI2 have been selected on ability and willingness of deployment, it is expected that the EI2 will surpass the 10-12% somewhat contributed to the PESCO alliance by Biscop (2019). The interoperability of EI2 is expected to be slightly less as problematic as the PESCO alliance and is likely to increase in a higher rate than PESCO, but remains an issue due to the significant number of different weapon systems (McCarthy, 2018).

8.3.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

In terms of political effectiveness and strategic effectiveness there is certainly decoupling taking place from the United States. When ‘coupled’ to the US, European Members are

pushed even to the extent of threatening with the earlier discussed ‘Costs plus 50’ rule to increase their defense budgets to 2%. The EI2 however is a way to structurally establish a lower percentage than this ‘American goal’ of 2%. On strategic effectiveness, the EI2 is born out of frustration of the formulation of strategic objectives being American dominated and wanting to establish a common European strategic culture and providing Europe with autonomous operating capabilities, so on this aspect decoupling is certainly taking place. An increasing operational effectiveness however would benefit the NATO alliance, since the European Members would increase their burden-sharing potential within NATO.

8.4 Training

The Basic Force Model element of training was operationalized by on the one hand ‘level of shared operational training’ and on the other the ‘level of shared exercises’.

8.4.1 Derived data

The EI2 seeks to develop a European strategic culture through operational cooperation and enhanced interactions between the participating countries’ armed forces, not through common education and training (Nováky, 2018). So EI2 is not planning opening any trainings facilities to rival those of the EU (PESCO) or NATO. In terms of shared exercises, the EI2 aims to increase the interactions and participation of EI2 armies in multinational exercises. But not under a EI2 flag, but rather increase the participation willingness in NATO or EU exercises. Therefore the levels of shared operational training and shared exercises for EI2 is de facto zero.

8.4.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

With respect to the training element of the basic force model, EI2 entails no weakening factors to the NATO alliance. The aspiration of the EI2 platform to encourage participating countries to partake to a higher degree in common training and exercises under EU and NATO flag would only strengthen the NATO alliance by increasing the burden-sharing potential of the European Member States.

8.5 Discipline and leadership

The Basic Force Model element of discipline and leadership was operationalized by three sub elements, ‘conscription/professional army’, ‘level of integrated (military) structure’ and ‘level of shared doctrine’.

8.5.1 Derived data

First the discipline component, operationalized as conscription. Of the participants of the EI2, only Finland has currently ongoing conscription. Denmark and Estonia do have an active draft system, but less than 20% of the whole eligible age group is recruited for military service (CIA, 2019). The impact of the influx of these three relative minor participants of the alliance (appendix 4), is very limited. Therefore, the EI2 alliance as a whole can be considered to constitute a collective of professional and therefore disciplined armies.

Article 13 of the ‘Letter of Intent’ (2018) explains that the European Intervention Initiative will be resource neutral and rely on existing structures and a network of liaison officers in the various military structures of the participating states. Article 17 points out that there will be “a light EI2 Permanent Secretariat in Paris based on French personnel and on the existing network of national liaison officers in the various military structures of the French MoD [i.e. Ministry of Defence] (possibly complemented by national voluntary contributions), to oversee policy and objectives, and to coordinate actions along the different lines of cooperation” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 3). So, the level of integrated (military) structure is very low. At the moment there is no separate common doctrine between the EI2 members, however to learn lessons and develop doctrine is one of the four (see ‘8.1.1’) key ambitions of EI2. The main goal of EI2 is to increase willingness for intervention and increase deployability rates, if developing doctrine proves to be a fruitful instrument, it will be allocated.

8.5.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

In the Letter of Intent (2018) the founders of the EI2 explicitly expressed the goal of not duplicating any existing structures. That’s way for the functioning of the EI2 is chosen to work from the French Ministry of Defence and not establish a new command and control facilities. The only sliver of duplication is the intent to develop ‘own’ doctrine, but it is not to be expected at this point it would conflict with NATO doctrine.

8.6 Advanced weaponry and equipment

Since the UK, France, Germany and Spain are represented in the EI2, many of the previously discussed (see 6.6 and 7.6) advanced weaponry and equipment are available to the EI2.

8.6.1 Derived data

The main difference between EI2 and PESCO is the presence of the UK in EI2, which constitute an armed forces nation with expeditionary and nuclear strike capability. The UK is determined to protect the position of NATO as primary vehicle for collective defense, but is

also willing to project its capabilities of force through its own Joint Expeditionary Force framework or work with EI2 partners to intervene in threatening situations to European defense (Reynolds, 2019).

8.6.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The EI2 is not a platform for increasing capabilities outside the NATO structure and does not aspire any duplication of NATO assets. The EI2 seems to be a way to include Denmark and UK in EU defense in an European platform, outside the NATO structure. But within this European platform they are both strong proponents of favoring only strengthening additions to NATO and oppose any attempt to undermine, duplicate or diverge from NATO. In all, the presence of Denmark, Finland and the UK adds significant numbers of advanced weaponry and equipment to the European potential of burden-sharing in EU defense.

8.7 C6ISR Capabilities

In the realm of C6ISR capabilities the EI2 is not really applicable. EI2 is not about developing new C6ISR capabilities or exercising with them. The development of new C6ISR capabilities for EI2 countries takes place on a national basis (as in the UK) or within the context of the PESCO projects.

8.7.1 Derived data

The letter of Intent (2018) expresses in article 7 the aspiration of better intelligence sharing and improving support to operations. But this does not constitute the development of new C6ISR capabilities, but rather getting a higher efficiency and effectiveness out of existing systems by breaking down barriers between allies.

8.7.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The aspiration to improve cooperation on intelligence sharing and improving the supporting role (C6ISR can play) to operational activities would also benefit NATO. There are no capabilities being created outside the NATO structure.

8.8 Hybrid Warfare

The EI2 platform, in this thesis designated as ‘alliance’, does recognize the hybrid warfare threat to EU defense.

8.8.1 Derived data

In the letter of Intent (2018) article 1 mentions the “... display of force on its [Europe] territory, including stemming from intimidation strategy...” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 2), in

article 7 the aspiration to enhanced interaction between Member Nations on ‘strategic foresight’, ‘intelligence sharing’ and ‘scenario development’ are mentioned, which not explicitly but certainly indirectly also refers to the threat stemming from hybrid warfare. However, the EI2 is not about creating any new capabilities or duplicating NATO assets. Article 12 states “...encourage the efficient deployment of existing and future military capabilities and units...” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 3).

8.8.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The EI2 poses no weakening threat to the NATO Alliance in the realm of hybrid warfare. There is no duplication taking place and there are currently no ambitions of creating new capabilities outside the NATO structure. The EI2 Members recognize the hybrid threat and are aspired to increase the willingness to improve the ability to act against it, but by means of making use of efficient deployment of existing and future (developed on a national, NATO or PESCO platform) military capabilities and units. In all, this strengthens the NATO Alliance by increasing the willingness to act within NATO itself or in a different framework, taking responsibility for an increasing share of the burden.

8.9 Perceived threatening elements to the alliance

The EI2 is not established with the explicit purpose of balancing against a specific threat, it is rather to increase the willingness and encourage to act against the threats imposed on the EI2 members themselves or as members of the NATO or EU collective.

8.9.1 Derived data

In the Letter of Intent (2018) article 1 a summation is given of the threats Europe faces as background strategic context of the establishment of the EI2: “...an increasing terrorist threat, major migration crises, persistent vulnerabilities in its Southern region, from the Mediterranean to the Sahel-Sahara region, enduring destabilization in the Middle East, resumption of open warfare on its doorstep and displays of force on its territory, including stemming from intimidation strategy, on its Eastern Flank and increasing natural disasters” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 2). These threats are highly similar to the threats acknowledged in the NATO context (see 6.9) or the PESCO context (see 7.9). What is striking is article 3 of the EI2 founding document, which states “... in order to consolidate European strategic autonomy and freedom of decision and action...” (Letter of Intent, 2018, p. 2). This statement indirectly formulates the threat of lacking self-determination or being dominated by most likely the US in European affairs. It is not a threat in the same sense as the previously mentioned threats

that cause direct harm to people and property, but it does express a value (autonomy and self-determination) that is held dearly and has to be protected against harm.

8.9.2 Classification in terms of weakening/strengthening factors

The strong overlap between the threats perceived by the EI2 Members and the NATO Members as a whole, are positive to the interests/strength of the NATO alliance. It makes it more likely that EI2 Members would increase their efforts to increase their share in burden-sharing. The latter expressed aspiration of European strategic autonomy and freedom of decision and action is somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand it could be interpreted as an aspiration in which European Members would step up to the plate to increase their efforts even to the level of burden-shifting in which they can execute (NATO and other framework) operations without US involvement, if so this would constitute a significant strengthening of the NATO Alliance. On the other hand, it could witness a strong weakening factor to the NATO alliance by being evidence of a high level of decoupling in which European considerations are made without taking those of the US into account.

9. Analyses

This section of the thesis will address the sub questions first to subsequently answer the main research question coming ultimately to a value for the dependent variable via the congruence method.

What are the characteristics, capabilities and tasks concerning NATO, PESCO and EI2?

The Basic Force model shows the absolute domination of NATO because of the input from the US in terms of sheer size, budget and capabilities compared to the other two external balancing options (see appendix 3, Table 5). While the current budgets of both PESCO and EI2 should be sufficient to balance against the main perceived threat Russia without the US, the current lack of capabilities and strategic enablers, leads to PESCO and EI2 both not on par with Russia.

The EI2 does not resemble an alliance collective what terms like “European Army” would suggest when the EI2 was founded. It does not aspire to develop new capabilities, found centres of excellence or establish collective bases. It is a (political) platform that signals an aspiration towards European strategic autonomy and aims to encourage European States to increase their willingness to intervene in potential conflicts and actually deploy their armed forces in an efficient fashion. The capabilities of EI2 is merely the summation of that of its

members. The PESCO alliance however does establish training facilities, found centres of excellence, creates new capabilities and invests in strategic enablers like C6ISR capabilities to meet the needs of 21st century warfare. Although, weapons produced via the PESCO projects will be owned by individual countries that could also deploy them in the context of other frameworks like NATO.

An analyses of the perceived threats that corresponds with the tasks between the three external balancing options shows mostly a similar pattern, all three perceive as the two main threats to Europe, the eastern threat coming from Russia in the form of hybrid warfare or even potential inter-state escalation and the southern threat coming from an unstable North Africa (terrorism, migration related issues). But also the additional threats like cyberattacks, hybrid warfare (other than Russia), proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological). The PESCO members are besides to the aforementioned similar threat perceptions also worried about a withdrawal of the US from NATO what would change the EU defense landscape substantially and are worried about the future relations of Turkey towards the EU, the US and NATO. Although the US and Turkey not directly impose a threat on the EU themselves, their behavior could change the external balancing needs of the PESCO members. The EI2 members add explicitly the threat to the aforementioned shared ones, threats coming from natural disasters and the threat of infringement on European self-determination and European autonomy. Although the last threat is more an aspiration to acquire than something that is already present but threatened to be taken away.

In what ways can (and/or are) the PESCO and EI2 alliances undermine or bolster the NATO alliance?

The PESCO alliance undermines the NATO alliance mainly by just being there. While there were no other options than NATO before, the EU option as military external balancing option for EU Member States has emerged. In the current shape it is no match to the possibilities the NATO alliance offers its members, but the EU option could be nurtured into a full blown primary choice in the middle till long-term future. When you analyze the PESCO alliance in its current form, it would more likely strengthen than harm the NATO alliance. The weakening factors posed by decoupling, some duplication in the realm of C6ISR, facilities and (counter) hybrid warfare capability and the increase of capabilities outside NATO are expected to have a smaller negative impact than the positive impact on the other side

strengthening the NATO alliance by increasing the potential of the Europeans in burden-sharing.

The EI2 undermines the NATO alliance on two accounts. First, there is the issue of membership. In the selection of its members, some discrimination against NATO members that wanted to join but were refused has taken place. And the second is while acknowledging the importance NATO as alliance of collective defense, a total distancing of NATO as allegiance of interests. The notion of Europe enjoying an own common strategic culture and having autonomy in its decisions about actions and pursuable interests was unthinkable during the Cold War. But overall, the EI2 appears to become primarily a vehicle to bolster the NATO alliance by strengthening the burden-sharing potential of the Europeans.

To what extent does the internal and external balancing by the E.U. member states against emerged threats and challenges in the last decade influence the level of U.S. inclusion in E.U. defense?

NATO remains the most important external balancing option for EU Member States for their collective defense. However, other external balancing options are valued as well. Moreover, there is also internal balancing (expanding capabilities) taking place in a different one than the NATO external balancing option, namely the EU-PESCO option. Although, the proceeds of the internal balancing efforts in PESCO could also be beneficial to NATO. For this internal balancing into PESCO some duplication of NATO efforts have to be tolerated by the US, but are rewarded by an increase in Europe's potential of burden-sharing in EU defense. The strong emphasis on NATO as alliance of collective defense is witness to the 'coupling' nature in US-EU relations. However, NATO as alliance of collective security and alliance of collective interests are fading due to decoupling between the EU and the US on issues surpassing territorial defense. The end of NATO as 'end all be all' covering all three forms of alliances (defense, security and interests) and the rise of other external balancing options (mainly PESCO) for which internal balancing is taking place, the congruence method (see appendix 4) leads to the analyses that the found data is most consisted with the "level of US inclusion in EU defense" being on decline. Since the NATO external balancing option is cherished, protected and expected to remain the main vehicle for an alliance of collective defense, a conclusion suggesting NATO being on demise would not be justified. Nor is it justified to suggest nothing has changed or everything outside NATO is mere of symbolic nature.

11. Conclusion and discussion

In the current state of the alliances, the NATO alliance is unmatched and unrivalled in terms of the sheer size numbers of personnel and (advanced) equipment, the command and control infrastructure and capabilities. And the NATO alliance enjoys this status because of the backing of the United States. The other alliances are in this stadium just not equipped to balance out against a potential adversary like the Russian Federation. However, if not only the current state of affairs is taken into account but also the prospected courses of the alliances the matter becomes more nuanced. As so far, the PESCO as well as the EI2 alliances have no ambition to rival NATO in terms of NATO's status as an *alliance of collective defense*. All of the PESCO and EI2 member states that are also a member of NATO stress that NATO remains unquestionably the primary vehicle for guaranteeing the territorial integrity of their countries. So, in terms of a narrow explanation of the “external balancing” option of the EU Member States what comes down to plain securing the territorial integrity and hence the continuation of the state, NATO is the clear outcome.

However, when a more broad explanation to the term “external balancing” is given, this is not the case. The idea of PESCO and subsequently EI2 can be seen as alliances born out of an European need for more external balancing options on the area of an *alliance of collective security* and an *alliance of collective interests*. These pursuits of “promoting values” (alliance of collective security) and “pursuing interests outside the own realm” (alliance of collective interests) are of lower or later stadium concern and are by most EU member states considered as not worth compromising on the strength of the *alliance of collective defense*. This corresponds with the well-known pyramid of needs by Maslow (1943), where collective defense can be seen as analogical to the “safety” layer, whereas the promotion of values and interests are more analogical with higher layers as “belonging”, “esteem” or even “self-actualization”.

The ‘labelling game’ is for hawks in Washington to label every European initiative as “undermining NATO”, while for European hawks to label every European initiative as a “harmless necessary duplication that is not undermining NATO”. The “truth” is a political one, an outcome of an intense political sparring match among allies, a European defense politics variation on the well-known prisoner's dilemma. The Nash equilibrium would constitute a state in which the Europeans develop their PESCO and EI2 alliances to highly integrated and advanced levels in order to be equipped to facilitate to large extends their own security and defense needs, while maintaining the defense pact of the NATO alliance and

continue to fulfill a supporting secondary role to NATO. The lost for the Europeans is no full self-determination, their benefit the backing of the US and not having the costs of doing it all themselves. The lost for the Americans is a relative reduction of US political inclusion in EU defence, their benefit is a continuation in European defense politics and freeing US assets to be allocated in the US pivot to east-Asia and henceforth spending less on European security.

A position of NATO as *alliance of collective defence, security and interests* has passed, the European countries have grown and matured since the Cold War and want to determine to a large extent their own faiths and futures. But in terms of military capabilities, Europe is far from ready to stand on its own feet and the NATO alliance remains indispensable for collective defense. The position of NATO however and henceforth the level of US inclusion in EU Defence is 'on decline'. From now on forwards the Europeans will expand their capabilities and will be able to do an increasing number of tasks with less leaning on US assets. The seeds of real external balancing options have already been planted. But it shall take a while to grow into solid oak. Since the values of the dependent variable reflect a trend, the outcome of 'in decline' seems defensible despite NATO being bolstered in multiple ways.

There are some points of discussion that have to be taken into account. First of all, the current world of affairs is taken into account by determining the degree whether an alliance would suffice. And for now that is for instance Russia standing de facto alone and Turkey being a key member of NATO. However, if the Turkey-EU tensions and Turkey-US tensions escalate, while the Turkey-Russia relations converge and Turkey defects to a potential alliance with Russia, the world is a whole different place. Another not unthinkable scenario would be a discontinuation of Brexit. If the UK would remain in the EU and would be able to be involved in EU military operations and PESCO, a significant need for EI2 would disappear.

The numbers in this study were gross aggregates. It is not expected that the tenor and conclusions of this thesis would be very differently, but a more nuanced appreciation of military tactical capabilities and a better approximation of "real" strengths and weaknesses could be more insightful. Tanks, fighters and C6ISR capabilities among others are not all the same and directly comparable.

And lastly, the Russians have a substantially smaller military budget when using a common U.S. dollar metric. But if you translate the aforementioned 70,0 billion US dollar (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2018), Russia spends in comparable purchasing

power parity (PPP), the “real number” for Russia is around 187,0 billion US dollar (Forest, 2016). However, it does not affect the conclusions of this study.

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13. Appendices

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Table 1: NATO Alliance

Country	Alliance	Military budget *	Main battle tanks	Aircraft carriers	Amphibious Warfare Ship	Cruisers	Destroyers	Frigates	Corvettes	Nuclear Submarines	Non-nuclear Submarines	Military Aircraft	Attack Helicopters	Nuclear Weapons	Military Satellites	Active Military Personnel **	Reserve Military Personnel **	Paramilitary **
Albania	NATO	0,163	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8000	0	500
Belgium	NATO	5,04	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	88	8	0	0	28800	5000	0
Bulgaria	NATO	0,736	80	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	42	15	0	0	31300	3000	0
Canada	NATO	15,6	120	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	95	115	0	1	63000	30000	4500
Croatia	NATO	0,774	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	11	0	0	15650	0	3000
Czech Republic	NATO	2,09	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	32	0	0	23200	0	0
Denmark	NATO	4,81	55	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	45	15	0	0	16100	45700	0
Estonia	NATO	0,52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6600	12000	15800
France	NATO	53,1	200	1	4	0	11	11	0	10	0	395	293	300	8	202700	72300	103400
Germany	NATO	43,9	410	0	0	0	0	11	5	0	5	245	43	0	7	178600	27900	500
Greece	NATO	5,64	1354	0	0	0	0	13	4	0	8	244	48	0	0	141350	220500	4000
Hungary	NATO	1	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	18	0	0	27800	44000	12000
Iceland	NATO	0,039	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	250
Italy	NATO	24,3	160	2	3	0	4	10	5	0	6	258	211	0	6	174500	18300	182350
Latvia	NATO	0,21	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5310	7850	0
Lithuania	NATO	0,436	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18500	6700	11300
Luxembourg	NATO	0,255	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	900	0	600
Montenegro	NATO	0,08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1950	0	10100
Netherlands	NATO	10,7	18	0	3	0	4	2	0	0	4	74	48	0	0	35410	4660	5900
Norway	NATO	6,98	52	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	6	63	26	0	0	23950	38590	0
Poland	NATO	10,4	926	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	5	113	106	0	0	105000	0	73400
Portugal	NATO	2,63	56	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	2	42	18	0	0	30500	211950	44000
Romania	NATO	2,88	437	0	0	0	3	0	4	0	0	94	22	0	0	69300	50000	79900
Spain	NATO	15,1	343	1	3	0	5	6	0	0	3	166	81	0	2	121200	15450	76750
Slovakia	NATO	1,06	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	29	0	0	15850	0	0
Slovenia	NATO	0,455	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	0	0	7250	1760	5950
Turkey	NATO	10	2504	0	0	0	0	18	6	0	14	335	339	0	2	355200	378700	156800
United Kingdom	NATO	61,8	227	1	6	0	6	13	0	11	0	278	285	225	7	150250	82650	0
United States	NATO	625,8	8850	11	42	22	65	21	27	70	0	3680	1830	7100	123	1348400	857950	0
Totals Alliance	NATO	906,498	16006	16	61	22	101	139	62	91	57	6356	3613	7625	156	3206570	2134960	791000

Source: 'Military balance sheet' of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2018)

* in billion US dollar

** Source: 'Military balance sheet' of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2015)

Table 2: PESCO Alliance

Country	Alliance	Military budget *	Main battle tanks	Aircraft carriers	Amphibious Warfare Ship	Cruisers	Destroyers	Frigates	Corvettes	Nuclear Submarines	Non-nuclear Submarines	Military Aircraft	Attack Helicopters	Nuclear Weapons	Military Satellites	Active Military Personnel **	Reserve Military Personnel **	Paramilitary **
Austria	PESCO	3,32	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	24	0	0	22400	152200	0
Belgium	PESCO	5,04	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	88	8	0	0	28800	5000	0
Bulgaria	PESCO	0,736	80	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	42	15	0	0	31300	3000	0
Croatia	PESCO	0,774	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	11	0	0	15650	0	3000
Cyprus	PESCO	0,432	482	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	15000	50000	750
Czech Republic	PESCO	2,09	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	32	0	0	23200	0	0
Estonia	PESCO	0,52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6600	12000	15800
Finland	PESCO	3,72	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107	12	0	0	21500	227500	2700
France	PESCO	53,1	200	1	4	0	11	11	0	10	0	395	293	300	8	202700	72300	103400
Germany	PESCO	43,9	410	0	0	0	0	11	5	0	5	245	43	0	7	178600	27900	500
Greece	PESCO	5,64	1354	0	0	0	0	13	4	0	8	244	48	0	0	141350	220500	4000
Hungary	PESCO	1	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	18	0	0	27800	44000	12000
Ireland	PESCO	1,22	14	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	24	6	0	0	9100	2480	0
Italy	PESCO	24,3	160	2	3	0	4	10	5	0	6	258	211	0	6	174500	18300	182350
Latvia	PESCO	0,21	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5310	7850	0
Lithuania	PESCO	0,436	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18500	6700	11300
Luxembourg	PESCO	0,255	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	900	0	600
Netherlands	PESCO	10,7	18	0	3	0	4	2	0	0	4	74	48	0	0	35410	4660	5900
Poland	PESCO	10,4	926	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	5	113	106	0	0	105000	0	73400
Portugal	PESCO	2,63	56	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	2	42	18	0	0	30500	211950	44000
Romania	PESCO	2,88	437	0	0	0	3	0	4	0	0	94	22	0	0	69300	50000	79900
Slovakia	PESCO	1,06	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	29	0	0	15850	0	0
Slovenia	PESCO	0,455	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	0	0	7250	1760	5950
Spain	PESCO	15,1	343	1	3	0	5	6	0	0	3	166	81	0	2	121200	15450	76750
Sweden	PESCO	7,05	132	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	5	134	0	0	0	29750	0	21950
Totals Alliance	PESCO	196,968	4982	4	13	0	27	66	41	10	38	2162	1058	300	23	1337470	1133550	644250

Table 3: PESCO Non-NATO Members

Austria	PESCO (Non-NATO)	3,32	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	24	0	0	22400	152200	0
Cyprus	PESCO (Non-NATO)	0,432	482	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	15000	50000	750
Finland	PESCO (Non-NATO)	3,72	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107	12	0	0	21500	227500	2700
Ireland	PESCO (Non-NATO)	1,22	14	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	24	6	0	0	9100	2480	0
Sweden	PESCO (Non-NATO)	7,05	132	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	5	134	0	0	0	29750	0	21950
Totals	PESCO (Non-NATO)	15,742	784	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	5	302	62	0	0	97750	432180	25400

Source: 'Military balance sheet' of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2018)

* in billion US dollar

** Source: 'Military balance sheet' of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2015)

Table 4: E12 Alliance

Country	Alliance	Military budget *	Main battle tanks	Aircraft carriers	Amphibious Warfare Ship	Cruisers	Destroyers	Frigates	Corvettes	Nuclear Submarines	Non-nuclear Submarines	Military Aircraft	Attack Helicopters	Nuclear Weapons	Military Satellites	Active Military Personnel **	Reserve Military Personnel **	Paramilitary **
Belgium	E12	5,04	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	88	8	0	0	28800	5000	0
Denmark	E12	4,81	55	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	45	15	0	0	16100	45700	0
Estonia	E12	0,52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6600	12000	15800
Finland	E12	3,72	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107	12	0	0	21500	227500	2700
France	E12	53,1	200	1	4	0	11	11	0	10	0	395	293	300	8	202700	72300	103400
Germany	E12	43,9	410	0	0	0	0	11	5	0	5	245	43	0	7	178600	27900	500
Netherlands	E12	10,7	18	0	3	0	4	2	0	0	4	74	48	0	0	35410	4660	5900
Portugal	E12	2,63	56	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	2	42	18	0	0	30500	211950	44000
Spain	E12	15,1	343	1	3	0	5	6	0	0	3	166	81	0	2	121200	15450	76750
United Kingdom	E12	61,8	227	1	6	0	6	13	0	11	0	278	285	225	7	150250	82650	0
Totals Alliance	E12	201,32	1409	3	16	0	29	54	10	21	14	1440	803	525	24	791660	705110	249050

Table 5: Totals Alliances & The Russian Federation

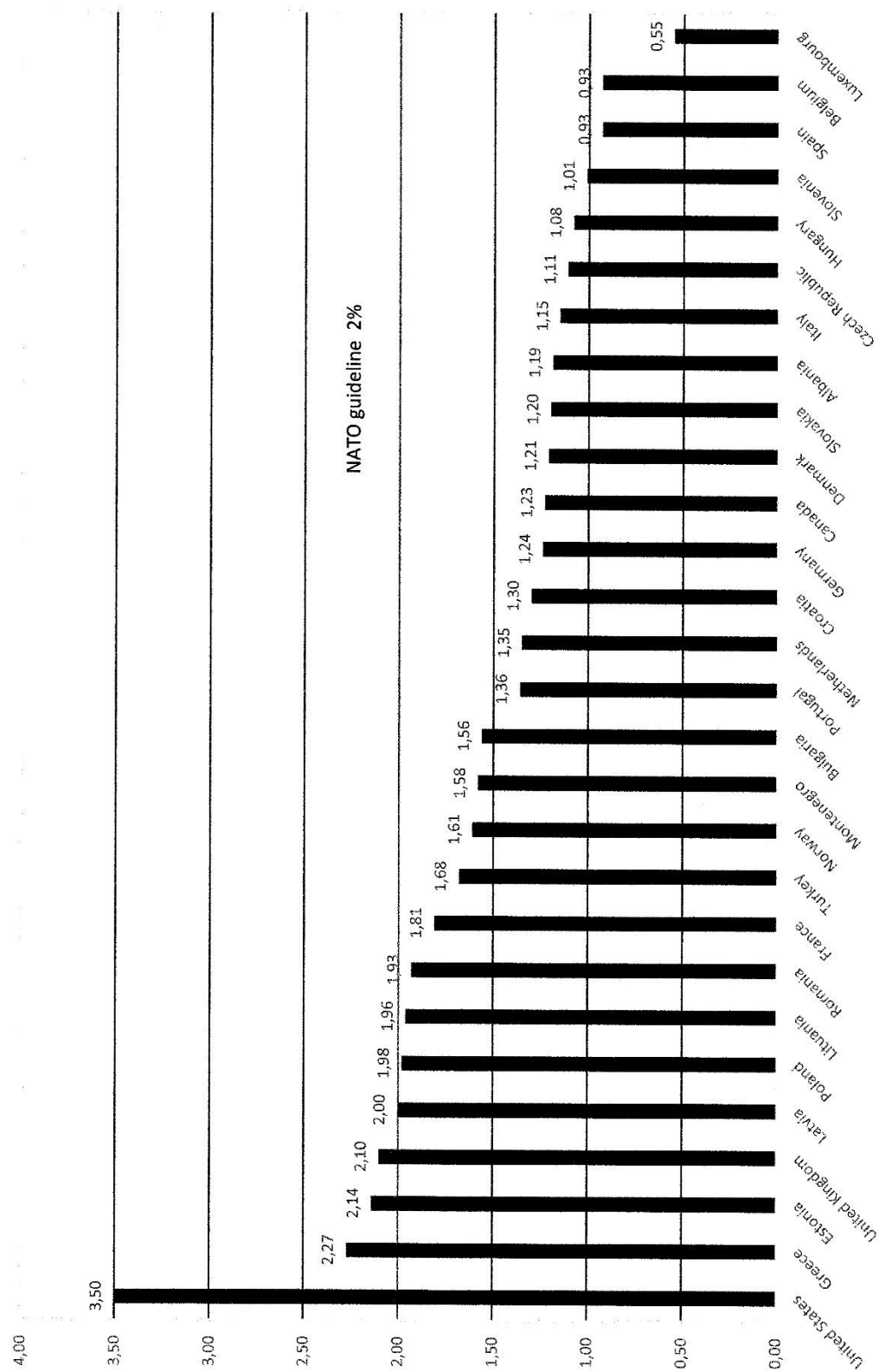
Totals Alliance	NATO	906,498	16006	16	61	22	101	139	62	91	57	6356	3613	7625	156	3206570	2134960	791000
Totals Alliance	PESCO	196,968	4982	4	13	0	27	66	41	10	38	2162	1058	300	23	1337470	1133550	644250
Totals Alliance	E12	201,32	1409	3	16	0	29	54	10	21	14	1440	803	525	24	791660	705110	249050
Totals	Russia	70,0	15398	1	52	5	12	10	78	39	22	3547	1438	7700	74	900000	200000	554000

Source: 'Military balance sheet' of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2018)

* in billion US dollar

** Source: 'Military balance sheet' of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2015)

Graph 1: NATO Defence expenditure as a share of GDP (%)



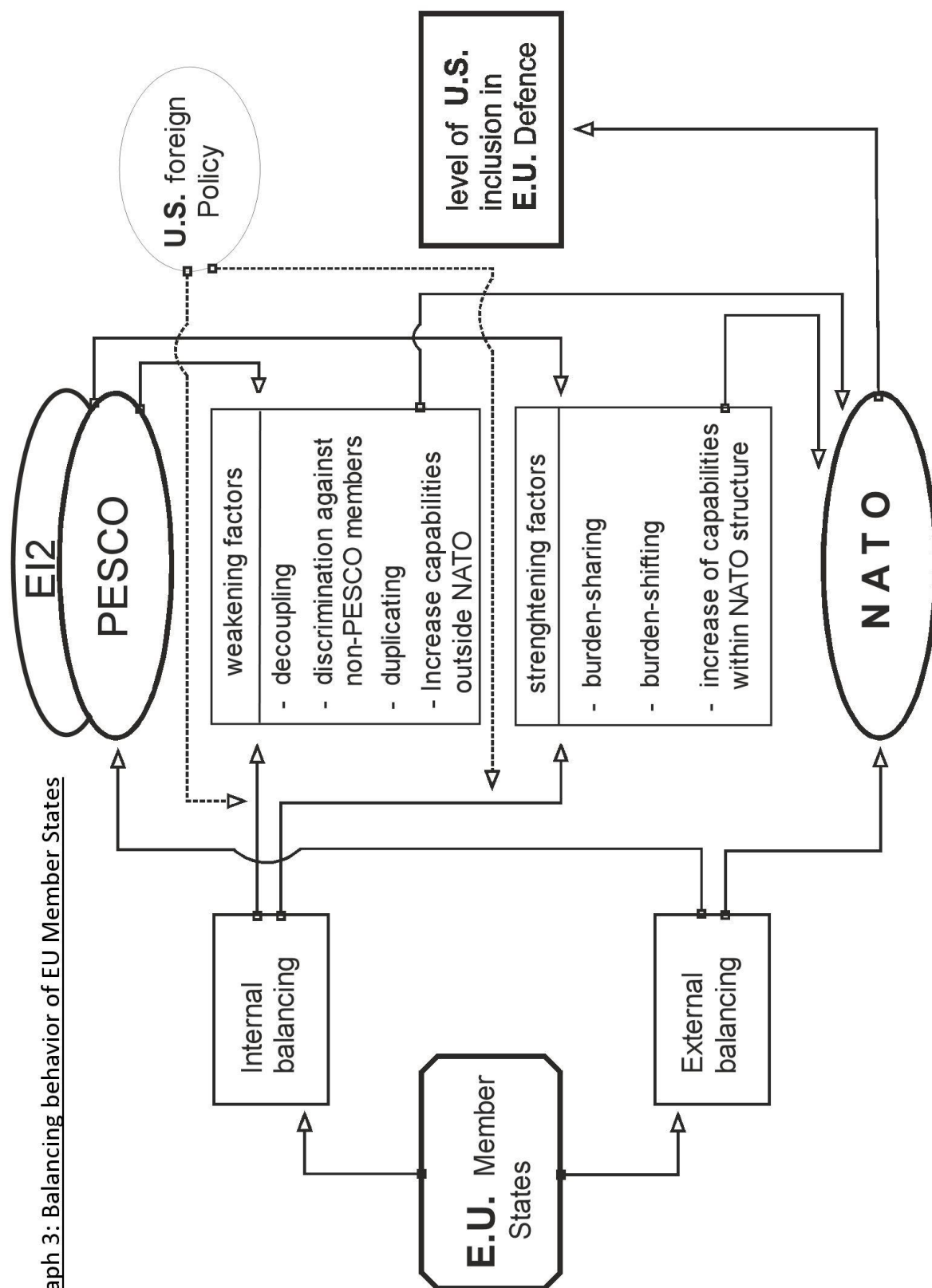
Figures for 2018, based on 2010 prices and exchange rates.

Source: NATO Public Diplomacy Division: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011-2018), Communique PR/CP (2018)091

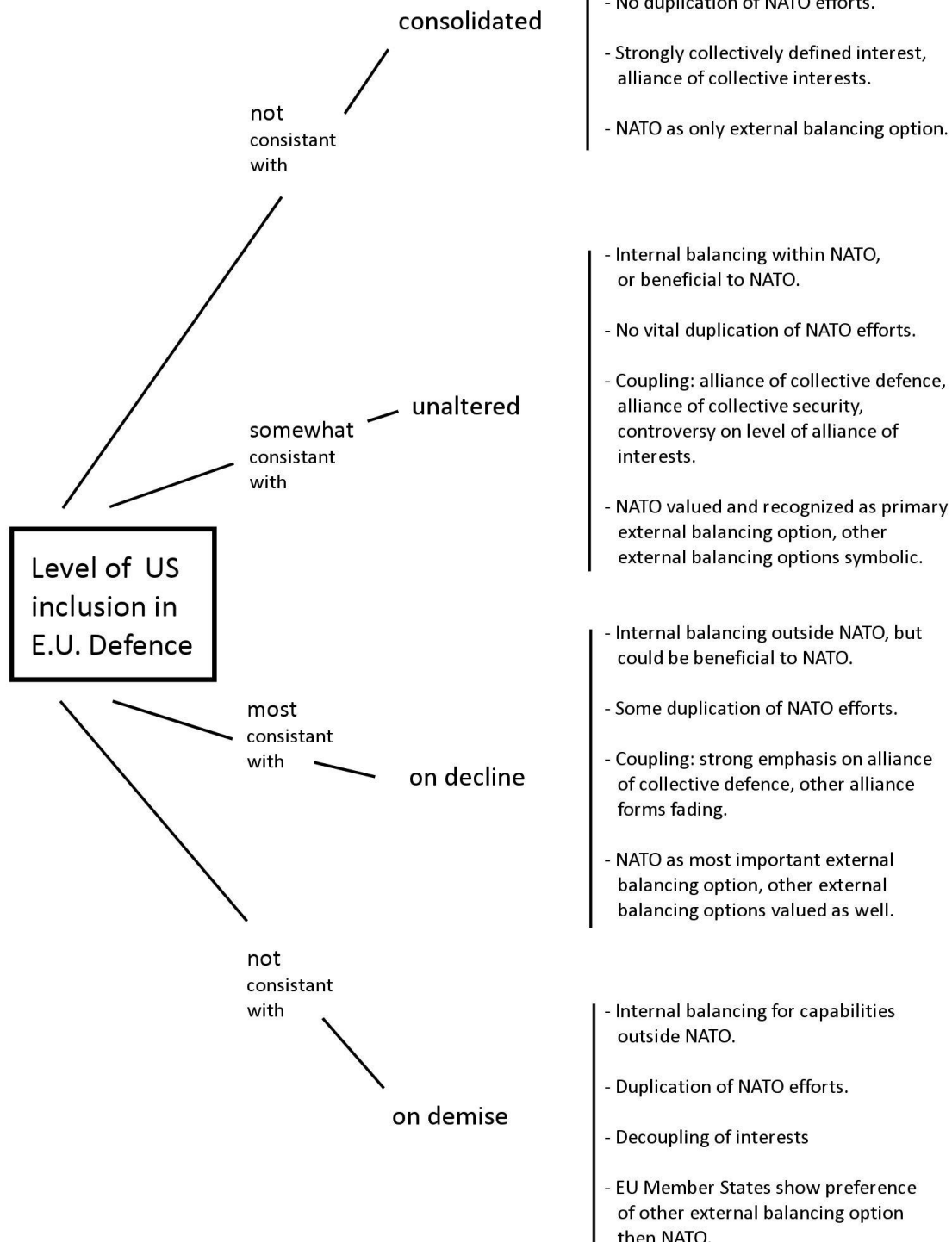
Graph 2: EU Member States Allocation to PESCO projects.

Country	European Medical Command	European Secure Software-defined Radio	Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and support to Operations	Military Mobility	European Union Training Mission Competence Centre	European Training Mission Competence Centre	Energy Operational Function	Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package	Maritime (Sea)- Autonomous Systems for Mine Countermeasures	Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection	Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance	Cyber Threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform	Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber-security	Strategic Command and Control (C2) System for CSDP Missions and Operations	Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle / Amphibious Assault Vehicle / Light Armoured Vehicle	Leading Participant (L)	Participant (P)	Observer (O)	Non-Participant (N)
Austria	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	4	0	13
Belgium	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	1	5	4	7
Bulgaria	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	3	3	11
Croatia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	5	0	12
Cyprus	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	6	1	10
Czech Republic	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	3	3	11
Estonia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	2	4	11
Finland	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	3	1	13
France	O	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	4	1	4	8
Germany	L	P	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	5	3	3	6
Greece	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	2	6	1	8
Hungary	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	3	2	12
Ireland	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	9	1	7
Italy	P	P	P	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	6	10	0	1
Latvia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	1	0	16
Lithuania	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	1	1	2	13
Luxembourg	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	2	2	13
Netherlands	P	P	L	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	1	6	2	8
Poland	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	2	0	15
Portugal	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	9	5	3
Romania	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	5	0	12
Slovakia	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	1	4	0	12
Slovenia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	2	5	10
Spain	P	O	P	L	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	3	7	5	2
Sweden	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	3	0	14
Total of participating states	8	7	13	24	14	3	4	7	7	4	7	8	7	4	3	2	5		

Source: Council of the European Union; Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/6393



Graph 4: Congruence Method Diagram



Appendix 8 - Background 1: Individual States

1. Denmark The Danish voted ‘no’ in the Maastricht referendum in June 1992. Subsequently, Danish parliament negotiated opt-outs in four domains, defense being one of them. Due to the Danish defence opt-out, Denmark cannot participate in the “elaboration and the implementation of decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications” (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2018). Therefore, Denmark is unable to participate in EU military operations or in the cooperation or development and acquisition of military capabilities within the EU framework. However, Denmark is involved in European defence via the NATO alliance, as well as the EI2 alliance and furthermore contributes to European defence by participating in the EU’s new Defence Fund, which ensures funding for research and development enabling Europe to keep up with technological developments (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2018).
2. Malta Malta is concerned that participating in the PESCO alliance could potentially be conflicting with its country’s constitutional neutrality, and therefore wants to wait and see how PESCO develops first (Costa, 2017).
3. The United Kingdom The UK is restricted from participating within the EU, and therefore PESCO, framework since it is expected that the UK will no longer hold EU-membership due to the Brexit as of October 2019.
4. Finland Finland was the tenth member to join the EI2 alliance and can somewhat be considered a special case. Although Finland describes itself officially as neutral, de facto it is not. It views also neutral Sweden as an essential security partner, but also the UK, US and Germany. Furthermore it considers the Dutch close partners on EU security and defense policy. The Finnish key foreign, security, and defense policy assessments portray Russia as the most threatening actor it faces. Finnish politics remains divided over whether to apply for NATO membership (Dennison , 2018). But in the meantime pursues its external balancing by participating in PESCO and EI2.

Appendix 9 - Background 2: Russia

The Russian Federation can be considered as the successor and heritor of the Soviet Union. Although the world stage of international power politics have changed and the Russian Federation does not enjoy the same super power status as its predecessor, Russia is considered by the west the main non-EU-state actor that potentially causes an inter-state war threat to European security. Finland perceives an inter-state war initiated by Russia as one of the most significant threats it faces. Seven other EU Member States share this view, being Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Romania and Latvia (although mainly a view shared by Latvian leaders, the Latvian public continues to be split on the issue due to a quarter of the population being Russians). The perception of Russia as a threat to peace and stability by the EU and these countries in particular increased substantially following the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Dennison, 2018). It is included in this study to provide a means for comparison of the different alliances to determine to what extent the alliances as external balancing option are sufficient to counter this inter-state war threat.

Russian aspirations

The Russian National Security Strategy (2015) points out the aspirations of the Russian Federation. For the purpose of this study, aspirations that reflect predominantly domestic issues are ignored. First, Russia stands for the protection of compatriots abroad. Secondly, it is the perception of Russia that the United States and its allies are seeking to retain their dominance in world affairs and are therefore opposing Russian influence. Russia's ambition is to break these perceived containment politics. Third, Russia is seeking a leadership role in exploiting the resources of the world's oceans and the Arctic in particular. Fourth, processes of militarization and arms-races are perceived by Russia in regions adjacent to Russian territory (Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian and Asia-Pacific). Russia feels a need to counterbalance against these processes. Fifth, a threat to national security is seen in the buildup of military potential of the NATO alliance, the further expansion of the alliance and the location of NATO's military infrastructure increasingly closer to Russia's borders. Sixth, Russia wants to counteract the western creation of a "Russia as an enemy" image in Ukraine. Russia sees the United States and the European Union as active supporters of an anti-constitutional coupe d'état in Ukraine. Seventh, Russia wants to counteract the practice of overthrowing legitimate political regimes and stop the provoking of intrastate instability and conflicts. Eighth, Russia

wants to consolidate and strengthen its strategic partnerships with China and India. And lastly (of the selected points), Russia pursues a mutually beneficial cooperation with European states and the European Union and “the formation in the Euro-Atlantic region of an open system of collective security on a clear treaty and legal basis (p. 25). In summary, Russia perceives the United States as an active cause of instability in the world. European Union Member States are not considered opposing forces on their own against Russia, but as opposing Russia in support of and as ally of the US. Russia sees an active role for itself in adjacent areas where ‘compatriots’ are residing, and international law is violated (Ukraine). As long as US and EU’s sanctions against it continue, it aims for increasing cooperation and trade with foremost China and India to strengthen its economy and subsequently its armed forces, as it perceives nothing to gain from participating or creating an arms-race or spiral of aggression on its western borders.

Size of the armed forces

Before providing an overview of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, an important side note has to be made. The European Union Members States are all relatively small in size, for Germany for instance does it not make any sense to distinguish between troops in Bavaria and Nordrhein-Westfalen. Russia however is a vast country. It will always have to disperse its capacity over different vast remote areas. But for the sake of this study’s purpose, the aggregates of the Russian Federation will be used nevertheless (Appendix 4). The data is derived from the ‘military balance sheet’ of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2015, 2018):

- Russian-budget: 70,000 billion US dollar.
- Russian-Land forces: 15.398 main battle tanks
- Russian-Navy: 1 aircraft carrier, 157 warships, 61 (nuclear- and conventional) submarines
- Russian-Airforce: 3547 military aircraft, 1438 attack helicopters
- Russian-personnel: 900.000 active, 2.000.000 reserves, 554.000 paramilitary

Effectiveness

The percentage of gross domestic product spend on the military budget as indicator for *political effectiveness* entails for Russia 4.24% (CIA, 2019). The *strategic effectiveness* as defined in this study is for Russia high, since it is not tied up in alliances like in NATO, PESCO or EI2, its initial set of strategic objectives are therefore invariable. The *operational*

effectiveness of Russia is relatively high, Russia's strategic enablers are limited in terms of expeditionary capabilities beyond its borders, but are adequate for use within or near to Russia's borders, Russia is able to support large-scale forces at land, sea and air and has sufficient strategic and tactical transport assets. The deployability rate of Russia for 2016 was assessed at 16-20% (Persson, 2016). Issues surrounding interoperability are mainly between the different branches of the armed forces (TASS, 2018), so the interoperability in comparative terms relatively high.

Training

Russian military deployments to the Ukrainian border during in 2014 showed evidence of substantial logistical achievements, from years of training large-scale, long distance deployments, "Russia showed its ability to maintain large formations in the field after rapid deployments and sustain them over extended periods with little obvious degradation in performance"(Giles, 2017, p. 2). Giles (2017) continues to point out that Russia has been making the most of the training opportunities provided by operations in Ukraine and Syria, by applying a roulement (short tours of three to four months), to maximize exposure to operational conditions and as a testing ground for new systems. The roulement provides the Russian armed force with practical experience in a more effective way than exercises. Experience through massive exercises like the western oriented "Zapad 2017" or eastern "Vostok 2018" however remains an important pillar of Russian training (Higgins, 2018). Giles (2017) concludes by stating that Russia had made substantial improvements to increase its armed forces combat readiness, but that all observations should not lead to an overestimation of Russian military capabilities.

Discipline and leadership

First, the discipline component, operationalized as conscription. Russia currently has an ongoing draft system in which males are liable for one year of compulsory military service up to the age of 27. And conscripts with minimal 6 months of training do get deployed to combat zones (CIA, 2019). However, the professionalization of the post-Soviet Russian armed forces has led to a situation in which the number of professional soldiers is now well in excess of the number of conscripts (Giles, 2017). However, the substantial minority share (precise estimate unknown) of conscripts leads to the conclusion of classifying Russia's armed forces as a mostly professional and therefore mainly disciplined army.

The limitations in modernizing Russian armed forces after the dissolve of the Soviet Union, Russia was leaning heavily on its aging nuclear forces to defend the state. This exposed large flaws in its military during the Georgian-Russian war of 2008. 'The New Look program' was a comprehensive and massive effort to change the Russian military from a Cold War-style mobilization force to a more ready, modern and professional military able to respond to 21st century conflicts. Partially manned Soviet style divisions were reorganized into fully manned brigades, officer ranks were trimmed from 350.000 to 150.000, the six military districts were reshaped into four joint strategic commands, which controlled all military assets in their areas in peace and war (Stewart, 2017). This effort led to a highly streamlined military structure from 2012 onwards.

Russia's Military Doctrine, lastly updated in 2014, added some new elements that were not included in the 2010 version. Among these was 'the right to a nuclear response to a non-nuclear attack that threatens the existence of the state', 'mobilization readiness of the state' so that state, societal and individual efforts can be unified and the 'ability to inflict unacceptable damage to any adversary at any time'. Next to seeking military dominance in escalated conflict, Russia's warfighting strategy includes use of indirect action and asymmetric responses, using technical and psychological operations to disrupt technical systems, influence public opinion and erode opponent's resolve. (Stewart, 2017).

Advanced weaponry and equipment

The Russian Federation as potential adversary of the EU member states in the European theater is certainly a force to be reckoned with. And this is certainly in part due the Russian investments in advanced weaponry and equipment. Air defense and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities on both flanks of Europe (Kaliningrad and Crimea) is of great concern for Europe and the NATO alliance according to former Air Force Gen. Breedlove stating that "Russia has created a very dense pattern of anti-access and area denial" (Tilghman, 2016). A concern shared by a General of the Norwegian Air Force saying: "With the new evolving [Russian] systems around us, we could easily be denied access to our own air space" (Seligman, 2017). Another area of concern includes the newer Russian rocket artillery systems, Giles (2017, p. 4) points out: "[they] have a much greater range than their Western equivalents, which gives Russia the option of mounting artillery bombardments without concern over counterbattery fire". A third area in which Russia has acquired an advantaged position is that of communications. On the one hand, the Electronic Warfare (EW)

capabilities of Russia have increased significantly allowing them to effectively jam GPS systems, while on the other hand Russia “introduced new stand-alone communications and data networks with a reported low probability of intercept, reducing their vulnerability to countermeasures or exploitation by Western adversaries” (Giles, 2017, p. 4). Fourth, Russia is about to include in its Air Force the much delayed T-50/PAK-FA fifth generation fighter, closing a critical capability gap with the ability to provide situational awareness to friendly forces (Rogoway, 2018). And lastly, this subsection won’t be complete without mentioning the vast nuclear arsenal Russia has to its disposal. Russia is currently modernizing its nuclear capabilities, which involves the development of several new systems specifically designed to counter the deployment of a US-NATO missile defense architecture in Europe or elsewhere (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2018).

C6ISR Capabilities

Russia began the first decennium of the 21st century with dated Soviet-era equipment. Especially the shortfalls in modern command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment and capabilities were particularly notable during the 2008 “five-day war” with Georgia. Russian forces achieved their objectives, but after-action analysis showed all kinds of severe failings (De La Pedraja, 2019). The State Armaments Program of 2015, and the subsequent 2020 plan, significantly bolstered Russian C6ISR capabilities. Russia deploys now one of the newest and most capable air defense equipment including radar, surface to air missiles, command and control, and electronic warfare equipment. In 2008 prior to the Georgian conflict, Russia was lagging in the area of drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, UAVs). But it has done some serious catching up, by introducing a class of mini-UAVs for use by the military and is currently developing larger, more capable systems for tactical and strategic use as well as unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) able to rival with US Predator drones. (Stewart, 2019). The C6ISR capabilities are not yet on par with that of its US rival, but Russia is increasingly closing the gap.

Hybrid Warfare

“Moscow continues to prioritize modernizing its military forces, viewing military power as critical to achieving key objectives and global influence” (Stewart, 2019, p. 42). But in addition to these traditional military capabilities Russia acknowledges the importance of hybrid warfare capabilities in 21st century conflict and invests heavily in hybrid warfare

capabilities as well as counteracting on those of potential adversaries. For Russia hybrid warfare includes cyber, indirect action and 'Maskirovka'. Since 2010 the Russian military is investing in its "information confrontation" concept, which includes ensuring information superiority during peacetime and wartime. This concept includes control of the information content as well as the technical means for disseminating that content. Russian propaganda strives to influence, confuse, and demoralize, often containing a mixture of true and false information to seem plausible and fit into the preexisting worldview of the intended audience. The targeted audience ranges from the own population, selected populations of other countries, domestic and foreign political elites and the West writ large. This goal is achieved via the deployment of hacktivists, trolls and bots (Haines, 2015).

The concept of indirect action means the pursuit of achieving Russia's national objectives through a combination of military and non-military means while avoiding a full blown, direct, state-to-state conflict. "In Ukraine, indirect action manifested itself in non-military measures first [...] like restricting food-imports to Russia, but then broadening to wider actions involving financial, economic and information warfare. Later, this was followed by unconventional military action Russian Spetsnaz and other non-attributable military units In Crimea and east-Ukraine" (Stewart, 2019, p. 42). The Russian military lastly depends heavily on deception (Maskirovka), to obscure intentions and conceal military movement. Maskirovka promotes surprise, maintenance of combat capability and survivability. In 2014 in Ukraine media reported "little green men" in Crimea, wearing military uniforms without insignia identifying their origin. Russian President Putin insisted that they were "self-defense groups" and "volunteers". By the time Russia admitted them being Russian troops, the ground reality was already in Russia's favor, making international intervention an unlikely scenario to unfold. (Stewart, 2019). In all, Russia is a leading player in developing the offensive and defensive capabilities of hybrid warfare.