COOPERATION, NO COOPERATION, THEORETICAL INSIGHTS FROM POST-COMMUNIST EUROPE

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Abstract

The Visegrád group was launched on February 15, 1991. A similar grouping was created between the Baltic States in 1994. No such grouping emerged between Bulgaria and Romania. Using the lenses of neorealism and neoliberalism, this thesis seeks to understand why the Visegrád group came to be and why such a group did not emerge between Bulgaria and Romania, despite the similarities between the two groups. The thesis argues that the threat perception from the Soviet Union was much stronger in the original three Visegrád countries than it was in Bulgaria, while nevertheless present in Romania. With regards to neoliberalism, the thesis tries to argue that the common desire for absolute economic gains from a possible EU accession pushed the countries to cooperate. The thesis reaches the conclusion that it was the original threat perception against the Soviet Union that was the main factor for cooperation and that neoliberalism has only minor explanatory power in this situation.

Keywords: Cooperation, Neorealism, Neoliberalism, Visegrád Group, Bulgaria, Romania

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Every written work tells a story and this thesis is no exception. In the same way that every story is fleshed out, in part, by the main characters within it, so is this thesis made possible by the help and dedication of important characters. One such character is prof. Michael Merlingen who, despite the many opportunities, never gave up. Zsuzsana Tóth, who never stopped reading everything I wrote, and the army of supporting characters like my family, but also Tamàs Peragovics, Veronika Czina and Joseph Larsen who finally forgave me for not inviting them to a BBQ, which is part of a different story.

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Introduction – Questions, Definitions, Cases, Limitations

International cooperation today, under the umbrella of various international regimes, is considered among the main features of the post-Second World War international order. It existed even during the symbolically charged period of the Cold War between the East and West. It is no surprise, therefore, that after the Cold War, the level of cooperation not only continued but was also intensified. The addition of a new set of countries, freed from the restrictions of their previous form of government and no longer constrained by the ideological clash between the East and the West, looked for a different path to their development. With the original threats of the Cold War finally gone, cooperation was blossoming with a strong aspiration for joining existing Western international institutions like the European Union, NATO, the Council of Europe and others, by a large part of the Eastern European states, both old and new. Reasons for such a desire abound, ranging from absolute economic gains, to the search for security against other powers.

On May 1, 2004, the nations of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia achieved their long sought dream of joining the European Union (EU). Two and a half years later, on January 1, 2007 they were followed by Bulgaria and Romania, thus completing the fifth enlargement of the EU, nearly doubling the number of member states and stretching its border from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea. At the same time, the successor states of the Former Yugoslavia (excluding Slovenia), namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia have all expressed their strong desire to accede to the EU as well, with Croatia actually already set to join the Union on July 1, 2013.

These achievements, however great they may be, should be nevertheless set against the immediate uncertainties that emerged right after the collapse of the communist system in

those countries. The Soviet Union was still present and to some extent uncertain on how to proceed. While it showed some acceptance towards letting the former satellites go, it returned to a more hardliner approach when it was the composing members of the Union, namely Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, that tried to break free from Moscow. Against the backdrop of these developments on February 15, 1991, the Visegrád group was created, compromising Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary and Poland. The group was an 'alliance' for the purpose "*to eliminate the remnants of the communist bloc in Central Europe; to overcome historic animosities between Central European countries; the belief that through joint efforts it will be easier to achieve the set goals, i.e. to successfully accomplish social transformation and join in the European integration process.*"[1] Such forms of cooperation and to a certain extent, of regional integration, did happen in other micro regions in Europe. The Baltic Council of Ministers, established in 1994, had the goal to pursue cooperation among the governments of the three Baltic States for example.

If we consider the Visegrád group as one group of countries and the Baltic States as another, this leaves the countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Former Yugoslavia without a grouping of their own. What is most interesting is that even though the Baltic cooperation grouping was created almost three years after the Visegrád group, both groups nevertheless acceded to the EU at the same time. While the two countries, Bulgaria and Romania, which did not form such a grouping, acceded later. In a sense, it can observed that the Visegrád group (and the Baltic States) adopted a positive-sum-game approach to their mutual relations, while Bulgaria and Romania did not and did not engage in a similar form of cooperation. This discrepancy is of course quite relevant to us today. While the lack of cooperation between the two Balkan countries might have been of less importance, the fact that the four Visegrád countries outperform to a significant degree their Balkan counterparts does beg to

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1. The Visegrad Group, (1991, February 15), *History of the Visegrad Group,* February 15, 1991 http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/history (accessed May 26, 2013).

question the emergence of such cooperation in Central Europe and the lack of such cooperation in South Eastern Europe.

Of course, before moving forward, it is important to define what our understanding of cooperation is. After all, one can hardly imagine two neighbouring countries not to be involved in some form of cooperation and this is true for Bulgaria and Romania. The concept of cooperation understood in this paper is that of an institutionalised cooperation, a regime. Stephen Krasner defines a regime as "explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given issue-area of international relations."[2] By principles we understand "beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice."[3] Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye also share a similar understanding of regimes which represent sets of government arrangements that include networks of rules, norms and procedures that regularise behaviour and control its effects.[4] Last but not least, and to stem possible criticism, international regimes do not imply the existence of an international institution.[5] Under those definitions, we can see the Visegrád group as regime and seek to see reasoning for its emergence.

To understand the emergence of the Visegrád group and the lack of such a group between Bulgaria and Romania, this thesis will rely on the explanatory powers of neorealism and neoliberalism. From a traditional point of doing research, this question can be reduced to the great debate of theoretical relevance for international relations today – can neorealism or neoliberalism explain international relations better. In that sense, the actual questions this

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2. Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as intervening variables," in *International Regimes*, edited by Stephen D. Krasner. Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. *Power and Interdependence.* 3rd. Longman, 2001.
5. Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of international regimes.* Camebridge University Press, 1997.

thesis will seek to address is why cooperation emerged between the Visegrád countries but not between Bulgaria and Romania? Using the lenses of neorealism and neoliberalism, it will also seek to contribute to the theoretical debates in international relations. From a wider applicability perspective, the thesis remains relevant for other groups of countries that are seeking European integration. Exploring the factors that lead to cooperation and the fact that both the Visegrád and Baltic countries acceded quicker than Bulgaria and Romania, can be useful for other countries in the region, namely the Western Balkans, to reconsider their policies towards one another. Furthermore, considering that the region is under-researched, a factor much more relevant with regards to Bulgaria and Romania, the thesis will hopefully entice interest in the two regions.

It has to be recognised that this question can be asked about other micro regions in Europe. The Baltic States, the countries that currently form the European Neighbourhood and others, are just a few examples where cooperation to the level of the Visegrád countries is lacking and in some cases, like the Caucasus' countries relations tend to be on the brink of war. As Seawright and Gerring correctly argue, in choosing cases one also sets out an agenda for studying those cases and therefore because "*case selection and case analysis are intertwined to a much greater extent in case study research than in large-N cross-case analysis.*"[6] The case selection takes into account this consideration and is not simply based on a personal choice. There would be little value in looking at two different cases to try to explain their different outcomes. Instead similar cases need to be used to try to seek why the variance of cooperation exists.

The Visegrád countries, Bulgaria and Romania have a lot of similarities. Both groups were independent prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and therefore engaged, as far as

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6. Jason Seawright, and John Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research," *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008), p. 294.

possible, into a foreign policy prior to the dissolution. They all share a similar historical experience, namely a communist regime and a constricted sovereignty under Soviet dominance. Furthermore, both groups of countries embarked on a policy of democratisation and a return to market economy. They all sought integration within the Western European institutions after the collapse of the communist system. Unlike the Baltic States, they all had a history of statehood prior to the collapse of Communism. In that sense, it can be argued that the Visegrád Countries and Bulgaria and Romania were faced by a double transition – to democracy and to a market economy. While the Baltic States had to dedicate a significant amount of time to state building. Looking at Yugoslavia and its successor states is also complicated due to the fact that the region descended into war after the collapse of the communist system. Furthermore, Yugoslavia was never really under the same Soviet domination as the other countries.

The thesis will be organised in two chapters. The first chapter will focus on neorealist factors that have shaped the emergence of the Visegrád group and the lack of such a group between Bulgaria and Romania. In order to do so it will look at the threat perceptions that existed in both groups of countries that can account for the discrepancy. The first section of the chapter will give a literature review of the realist school of thought and it will focus on neorealism. It will identify threat perception as an important variable that shapes state behaviour and allows for cooperation. The neorealist hypothesis that will be formulated is that the threat perceptions of the Soviet Union fuelled to a large extend by the recent and not so recent history, and that shifting security concerns and the initial reluctance to expand security guarantees by the west pushed the Visegrád countries to cooperate together. Considering the lack of cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania, the hypothesis will be further elaborated, stressing its falsifiable condition, namely that the lack of a threat perception in at least one of the two countries will preclude a push towards cooperation. The

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subsequent two sections look at the threat perception within the Visegrád group and within Bulgaria and Romania respectively.

A similar approach is undertaken in the second chapter of the thesis, but with a focus on neoliberalism. A literature review of the liberal school is offered, showing that the main insights will be taken from the neoliberal branch. The key variables that are indentified are common interest in absolute gains and trust. Applying those, the following hypothesis will be formulated: the common interest between the three countries, in the search of the same absolute gains from joining the western institutions and the lack of trust between them, pushed for their subsequent cooperation and the creation of the Visegrád group. Similarly to the neorealist chapter, the hypothesis is further elaborated with the inclusion of its falsifiable conditions, namely that the two countries did not indentify a common interest in which to pursue absolute gains and/or the existence of mutual trust between the two countries, which would nullify the need to create a regime.

The last chapter of the thesis will be the conclusion, where the main findings from the previous chapter will be summarised and discussed and a clear answer to the two questions, why cooperation did/did not emerge and which theory best explains this emergence will be answered.

Before proceeding with the next chapter, the methods used to build up the respective cases will be explained, as well as the limitations. The thesis will try to rely on primary sources such as interviews, newspaper articles, memoires, as well as public documents. Those primary sources will be further complemented with secondary sources available in the wider literature. A number of interviews with people who have witnessed the events immediately after 1989 have also been conducted. At the same time it should be noted that since the thesis covers five, now six countries, research is somewhat hindered by the fact that each of those

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countries has its own language. Due to the author's poor language skills the thesis will rely on English translations and sources. As such this thesis should be considered prospective and that its conclusions are to some extent limited by the inaccessibility of sources. Nevertheless it does offer the background needed to carry further research in the field.

Chapter 1 – A Neorealist Perspective

Section 1.1 – Neorealist Theoretical Framework

Realism is one of the two oldest and major schools of thought on international relations. Its origins can be traced back to the time of Thucydides, who was chronicling the events of the Peloponnesian War between the great city states of Athens and Sparta. At its very core and common through its various theoretical strands, the realist school has four fundamental assumptions. The international system is anarchic, that is there is no central authority to enforce state behaviour. The states present in the system are the most important actors in the system and really the only ones that actually matter. Furthermore, states are rational and unitary. Their actions are motivated by self interest and are sensitive to relative gains. Lastly, states' primary concern is survival and they seek to expand their military power to achieve survival. Cooperation among states is not impossible, but highly unlikely as states are concerned about their relative gains *vis-à-vis* other states.

Considering its more than two-thousand five hundred year long history, one should not be surprised that the understanding of realism have evolved and been regrouped in a series of theories. As such we can consider the work of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and much more recently, that of Hans Morgenthau and H.E. Carr as classical realism. The classical realist school of thought argues that human nature is the main cause of conflict and war between states.[7] Unlike neorealists, classical realists do not see states as "hyper-rational automatons."[8] For classical realists state behaviour is shaped by the lessons of history, ideas, ideology. Their choices are influenced by fear, vulnerability, but also hubris.[9]

7. Jonathan Kirshner, "The tragedy of offensive realism: Classical realism and the rise of China," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 1 (2010).
8. Ibid., p. 57.
9. Ibid.

The major revision of realism came from Kenneth Waltz in his seminal work *Theory of International Politics (1979).* His reconceptualisation of realism gave rise to neorealism or structural realism. The major departure from classical realism is that the theory moves away from its focus on human nature as the main cause of state behaviour. Instead, he argues that it is the structure of the international system, the anarchy, that is the major factor that shapes state behaviour.[10] The international system is considered a zero-sum game, locked in a perpetual prisoners' dilemma.[11] States can not be certain of other states future intentions, and thus the allies of today can be the enemies of tomorrow. Furthermore, states are said to jealously guard their rank in the international system, in a sense due to their pursuit for survival,[12] - the balance of power. Prominent members of the neorealist school include Robert Jervis, Stephen Walt, Joseph Grieco, and John Mearsheimer. The neorealists also tend to be further divided along the lines of defensive and offensive realism.

Under offensive realism, advanced by John Mearsheimer, states are still primarily concerned with survival, but he sees states achieving this through power maximisation.[13] Mearsheimer was one of the main scholars advocating that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War will lead to a return to traditional power politics in Europe and war. The counter to offensive realism is defensive realism advanced by authors like Stephen Walt, Waltz himself and Stephen Walt, who all stress that survival is the main concern of states and relative security can be achieved through the offence-defence balance.

Rooting our analysis in neorealism's defensive strand and the balance of power concept, despite the fact that as Waltz said, "[i]f there is any distinctively political theory of international politics, balance of power theory is it. And yet one cannot find a statement of

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10. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics.* McGraw-Hill, 1979.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990).

the theory that is generally accepted",[14] the concept remains quite relevant to this day. The fundamental principles of the theory stress that whenever a state accumulates more power than its peers, other states will work together to match the first state's capability and thus balance it.[15] For the sake of being thorough in our literature discussion, it should be motioned that the concept of balancing has been expanded to include the possibility of bandwagoning, which stresses that sometimes states will bandwagon with the stronger state, instead of balancing against it.[16] This in itself implies that if balancing is the dominant strategy, aggressors will face a strong opposition and statesmen should avoid embarking on bellicose behaviour.[17] A predominant bandwagoning strategy implies, however, that "[g]reat powers must strive to maintain their credibility so that fear does not lead their allies to realign. Threats and intimidation are more likely to work, and empires will be both easier to amass and more likely to disintegrate."[18]

Therefore, "according to structural balance of power theory, the uncertainties inherent in anarchy encourage balancing behaviour. Bandwagoning is risky because it requires trust."[19] Empirical research on the matter seems to suggest that states are engaged primarily in balancing rather than bandwagoning.[20] This implies that is safer to join the weaker side, in the event the powerful state becomes aggressive. At the same time, however, the weakest states often have no choice but to bandwagon since they lack anything to contribute to their cause, and it is not illogical to assume that sometimes a state may be forced to bandwagon,

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14. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979, p. 117.
15. Harrison Wagner, "The Theory of Games and the Balance of Power," *World Politics* 38, no. 4 (1986).
16. Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of alliance formation: the case of Southwest Asia," International Organiastion 42, no. 2 (1988).
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 278
19. Ibid., p. 279
20. Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of alliance formation: the case of Southwest Asia," International Organiastion 42, no. 2 (1988).

when other options are unavailable, despite the fact that bandwagoning is not their first choice.[21]

Yet this line of thought creates problems, considering that the alliances created against Germany for example, were much stronger than Germany itself.[22] While balance of power theory can explain why the coalition against Germany dissolved between the Allies, Germany was defeated; it can not properly explain why "Germany attracted such widespread opposition, given that it was ultimately weaker than the coalition it fought."[23] In order to overcome this predicament, Walt refines the theory and argues that state balance threats, and while power does play a role in the states' calculations, power is just only one variable among others.[24] The other variables include geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions,[25] rooted in past experience. As such it is in the balance of threat that our research will be focused. Nevertheless, a last factor must be accounted for, namely that both Walt's and Waltz's work is focused on Great Powers and for good or bad none of the five countries covered here would qualify as such. Reconciling this problem can be gleaned through the work of Asle Toje, who in his work on the EU also happens to look at the behaviour of small states/powers. In it he reaches a conclusion that they "must operate within the regular power spectrum with the capacity to persuade, reward, deter and coerce" and "will seek to enlist other powers to offset their relative power inequality."[26]

Section 1.2 – The Emergence of the Visegrád Group from a Neorealist Perspective

Therefore, from our theoretical framework and realist literature overview, we would conclude that the threat perception of the Soviet Union, fuelled to a large extend by the recent

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21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 280
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Asle Toje, "The European Union as a Small Power, or Conceptualizing Europe's Strategic Actorness," *Journal of European Integration* 30, no. 2 (2010).

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and not so recent history, shifting security concerns and the initial reluctance to expand security guarantees by the west pushed the Visegrád countries to cooperate together. While at first this might seem like a straightforward process, it is not exactly the case. There is no denying that Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland all shared a degree of mistrust towards the Soviet Union, a certain level of animosity and most importantly, they considered it a threat to their successful restoration of independence, freed from the Soviet imposed regimes during the Cold War. Furthermore, as Géza Jeszenszky, the Hungarian Foreign Minister from 1990 until 1994, aptly recalls the immediate purpose of the Visegrád was the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.[27] There was still Soviet presence in all these countries and the "Soviet leadership still hoped that a looser, "democratized" association could be salvaged from that alliance of the unwilling."[28] As the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung noted on February 15th, "Separately, the Central European countries are weak; united they are indomitable, and Gorbachev was the first to note that."[29] But this, while only one part of our hypothesis, causes a further puzzle. Since they were trying to break free from domination, what is it that led to the initial breakdown of the Bratislava summit (April 1990) and the quite successful Visegrád summit (February 1991)? This second question represents our second part of the hypothesis. It has the implicit suggestion that the Visegrád cooperation might not have been the first choice of action for the three countries and instead they had to deal with other constraints before cooperating.

The reality on the ground was that prior to the Bratislava summit, the Soviet threat perception was indeed present, but they opted for different approaches to deal with and in one case had a very serious action constraint posed by other threats. It is these discrepancies that

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27. Géza Jeszenszky, "Visegrád: Past and Future" *Hungarian Review* 2, no. 4 (2011).
28. Ibid., p. 1.
29. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on the formation of the Visegrads, February 15, 1991, quoted in Jeszensky, "Visegrad: Past and Future," (2011).

prevented them from actively cooperating in the security sphere and thus spur further cooperation at a later stage.

If one has to scale the level of a threat the three countries felt from the Soviet Union, certainly Poland would be on the top of the list. Looking at just the 20th century, the country was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1939 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and as we know was subjugated to an oppressive communist regime for the second half of the century. The bitter history is further charged by the Katyn massacre in 1940, where around twenty thousand Polish military and intellectuals were killed by the Soviet secret police, exemplifying the history of repression and suffering that Poland endured at the hands of the Soviet overlords.[30] A sense of victimisation exists in Poland, at the hands of the Soviet regime. But the Polish threat perceptions of the Soviet Union do not date simply from the Second World War and communism. The country's perception of Russia as an aggressive and violent force can be traced back to the time of the Russian Empire,[31] the partitions of the country and the violent repression of the Polish uprising. Of course, in the interest of fairness and for the proper understanding of Polish behaviour, one can not omit the other country towards whom Poland shares a similar level of distrust and threat perception, Germany. And, at the Bratislava summit, Poland was faced with the daunting task of having to balance against the Germans rather than the Russians. Nevertheless as early as 1989, the Polish government expressed its position that "our goal is the liquidation of spheres of influence in Europe. We want a Europe of states that are sovereign in international politics and

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30 Masha Lipman, "Can Russia and Poland Forget Centuries of Animosity in a Single Weekend?" *Foreign Policy*, 2010, available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/04/16/can_russia_and_poland_forget_centuries_of_animosity_in_a_single_weekend?wp_login_redirect=0, (accessed May 15, 2013).
31. Ibid.

independent internal policy."[32] Showing the perception that the Soviet Union had exerted too much influence in the country.

The possibility of German reunification posed a considerable security threat as well.[33] As Janine Wedel argues, "the principal anxiety that Poles share is over the sanctity of Poland's border."[34] Furthermore, a recently declassified CIA Intelligence report that looked at a possible German Reunification, already in 1971, stresses the tenuous relationship between Poland and East Germany, the fact that East Germany entertained territorial aspirations against Poland and that Poland was aware of those pretentions.[35] In a recent interview, Condoleezza Rice recalls that the US looked very favourably on the possibility of a German reunification at the first signs of the system collapsing, way before it came on the table.[36] The sanctity of the border was further echoed by the then Polish President Wojciech Jaruzelski: "The recognition of the Oder-Neisse is a matter of life and death for Poland."[37] This reality was also expressed by George Kennan, The Father of Containment, who noted that two major factors will keep tying Poland to the Soviet Union; on the one hand the Warsaw Pact's

32 . Małgorzata Niezabitowska, spokesperson for the Polish Government, quoted in Richard Weitz, "Pursuing Military Security in Europe," in *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe*, by Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye and Stanley Hoffmann, 342-380, Harvard University Press, 1993.

33. To recall the historical background, at the end of Second World War, at the Potsdam Conference (July-August 1945), the allied power reached the agreement, among others, that the Polish borders would be extended to the Oder-Neisse line formed by the two rivers.33(see Bernard A.Cook, ed. , *Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopeda*, (Garland Publishing, 2001)). The extension of the border was carried out at the expense Germany. With the subsequent reduction of the Polish border on the east, the entire country was de-facto moved westward. The subsequent Potsdam Agreement stipulated that the Polish control and administration of those territories is only provisional, until such a time that a suitable government, representing the whole of Germany is able to finalise the agreement in the framework of a Peace Treaty. (Three Heads of Government of the USSR, the USA, and the UK, "Potsdam Agreement," *Potsdam Conference,* Berlin, 1945, full text of the agreement accessible at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/truman-potsdam/ (accessed May 11, 2013)).

34. Janine R. Wedel, "German Reunification, Polish Vulnerability," *The CS Monitor,* March 9, 1990, http://www.csmonitor.com/1990/0329/ewede.html (accessed May 15, 2013).

35. Central Intelligence Agency, "Polish Fears of German Reunification," *Making the History of 1989*, Item #324, http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/324 (accessed May 15, 2013).

36. Der Spiegel, " Condoleezza Rice on German Reunification: 'I Preferred To See It as an Acquisition'," *Der Spiegel,* September 29, 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/condoleezza-rice-on-german-reunification-i-preferred-to-see-it-as-an-acquisition-a-719444.html (accessed May 15, 2013)

37. Quoted by Wedel, "German Reunification, Polish Vulnerability," (1990)

guarantee of Soviet Troops on Polish soil and on the other, the border issue.[38] Kennan has further added that the Poles were extremely anxious about the border issue, since they find it "unnatural and extreme," "a matter of life and death," and a possible return of the territories to Germany would mean that Poland would cease to be a viable state.[39] Even a few years prior, Poland had already expressed its opposition to the idea of a unified Germany, "the unification of Germany is not on the agenda in the historically anticipated future."[40]

In line of the information, while Poland was trying to disentangle itself from the Soviet sphere and balance the Soviet threat, it had to first sort out the German threat that was more pressing at the time. The fact that the Soviet leadership was looking at reshaping the Warsaw Pact and the three Visegrád countries were moving a few steps ahead of it,[41] allowed Poland to eventually successfully balance against both. Poland used the Warsaw Pact to balance Germany and appease, for the time being, Russia.[42] At the first Bratislava summit, Poland was of the opinion that it should continue to support its alliance with the Soviet Union.[43] After all, only two months earlier, Gorbachev voiced fresh concerns over German reunification.[44] Not only that but he also sought to reassure the Poles, who were rebuked by West Germany to take part in the talks, by arguing that the German question should not be settled by three or four countries and impose the decision on the rest.[45] Nevertheless, the

38. Debra J. Allen, *"The" Oder-Neisse Line: The United States, Poland, and Germany in the Cold War,* Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003

39. Ibid., p. 203.

40. John Tagliabue, "One Germany? Poland and Soviet Say No," *The New York Times,* September 7, 1987, http://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/07/world/one-germany-poland-and-soviet-say-no.html?src=pm (accessed May 15, 2013).

41. Joseph Spero, Bridging the European divide: Middle power politics and regional security dilemmas, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.

42. Richard Weitz, "Pursuing Military Security in Europe," In *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe*, by Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye and Stanley Hoffmann, 342-380, Harvard University Press, 1993.

43. Andrew Cottey, "The Visegrad Group and Beyond: Security Cooperation in Central Europe," in *Subregional Cooperation in the New Europe*, ed. Anderw Cottey, (Macmillan Press, 1999).

44. Francis X. Clines, "Upheaval in the East; Gorbachev Voices New Reservations on German Unity," *The New York Times,* February 21, 1990, http://www.nytimes.com/1990/02/21/world/upheaval-in-the-east-gorbachev-voices-new-reservations-on-german-unity.html (accessed May 15, 2013).

45. Ibid.

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Polish position assumed its true nature, as soon as the German question was solved, with Foreign Minister Skubiszewski calling for the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact's military organ, in the same month the treaty on Germany was signed.[46] Poland, concerned with the security pressures emanating from the Soviet Union, started calling for an immediate Soviet pullout of the country,[47] with the head of the working group on Soviet Military Withdraw and the Director-General in the Central Planning Office opposing any possible extension on Soviet troop presence on Polish soil.[48]

In the case of Czechoslovakia, the events of the 'Velvet Revolution' allowed the country to quickly rid itself of the various communist elements that were present at some of the highest levels of government.[49] This represented a structural change and a refocusing of threat perception and the imposition of the Soviet hegemony upon the country. Just like in the Polish situation, the Soviet Union represented a threat that needed to be balanced against. The country was worried about Soviet developments, the possibility of Gorbachev losing grips on power and more conservative forces pushing for a crackdown on Czechoslovakia and the former satellites.[50]

Czechoslovakia also shared a not so friendly history with the Soviet Union, while not sharing a direct border and not being under Russian control in the previous centuries, the events surrounding the Prague spring were still a fresh memory in the Czech conscience. While not alluding directly to it, when Czechoslovakia defined the possibilities of a fresh intervention in their country, it was precisely from the past memories that the fear of this

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46. Krzysztof Skubiszewski, 1990, quoted in Weitz, "Pursuing Military Security in Europe," 1993
47. Joanna A. Gorska, *Dealing with a Juggernaut:Analyzing Poland's Policy Toward Russia, 1989-2009,* Lexington Books, 2010
48. Ibid.
49. Cottey, "The Visegrad Group and Beyond (1999).
50. Dan Fisher, "Prague Leader Sees Need to Swiftly Establish Democratic Structures : Czechoslovakia: Havel does not explain the reasons for his unease. But there is concern that Soviet events may spin out of Gorbachev's control," *The LA Times,* January 13, 1990, http://articles.latimes.com/1990-01-13/news/mn-116_1_soviet-union (accessed May 15, 2013).

possible line of action emanated. In a sense, the country was invaded by the same alliance it, itself was part of.

Still, the initial policy of the country seemed to run counterintuitive to realist understandings. Instead of overt balancing with the west, the country pushed for the development of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)[51] "into a pan-European collective security body,"[52] thus making a push for collective security for Europe. The idea involved both NATO and the Warsaw Pact disappearing and being replaced with a new collective structure based on the CSCE.[53] This seemed at odds with the general position that the country expressed no willingness to seek, let alone accept, security guarantees from the Soviet Union, which is reflected in the main actions its elites have pursued since the revolution of 1989.[54] A sense of irrationality could be discerned, perhaps due to the uncertainties of the time. The Czech proposals were quickly rebuked, however, as Fisher notes "the Havel-Dienstbier initiatives are not universally welcomed. The United States and its West European allies, for example, are unhappy with their talk about a bloc-free Europe, which would mean farewell not only to the Warsaw Pact, but also to NATO."[55] The Czech's desire for reorientation towards the west and the latter's coldness culminated in NATO's blunt response to the then President Vaclav Havel's push for joining the alliance, a month prior to the Visegrád Summit. "NATO rolled out the red carpet for Havel, the first president of a former Communist country to visit the alliance headquarters. But it told him Czechoslovakia can`t join NATO and shouldn`t rely on the West for its defence."[56] Havel

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51. The precursor of the OSCE
52. Cottey, "The Visegrad Group and Beyond (1999).
53. Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell, "Piecing Together the Democratic Peace: The CSCE, Norms, and the ''Construction'' of Security in Post–ColdWar Europe," *International Organization* 53, no. 3 (1999).
54. Richard Smoke, *Perceptions of security: public opinion and expert assessments in Europe's New Democracie,* Manchester University Press, 1996.
55. Fisher, "Prague Leader Sees Need (1990)
56. R.C. Longworth, "Nato Turns Away Czechoslovakia`s Bid To Join Alliance," *Chicago Tribune,* March 22, 1991, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1991-03-22/news/9101260253_1_nato-material-privations-czechoslovak-president-vaclav-havel (accessed May 15, 2013), p. 1

again stressed the country's fear of the Soviet Union, "he made it clear that a major source of fear lies in the Soviet Union and its slide back toward 'a centralist authoritarian system.'"[57] NATO officials further stressed that cooperation with the Central European states would anger Moscow and urged Czechoslovakia to seek other interlocking relationships.[58] Interestingly enough, the Czechoslovak president also admitted that the push for reform of the CSCE was a mistake, as "there are more twists and turns along the paths of history than we thought of"[59] and the country would be building up its own defences.[60]

The initial failure of Bratislava and the success of Visegrád can be best explained with regards to Hungary. While the country was represented by the still ruling communist party, which showed support for the maintenance of the Warsaw Pact, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, which inflicted a resounding defeat in the general elections held just a day before the summit, were of the opinion that Hungary should rapidly leave the Pact.[61] That is not to say that the mistrust towards the Soviet Union was purely the product of the switch between communists and democrats, or was purely the result of changing the system away from communism. Similarly to Czechoslovakia, the memories of the violent crushing of the Hungarian revolution still reverberated through the positions of the country. During the first session of the democratically elected parliament, the deputies debated the redefinition of the 1956 events as a war of independence that was crushed by the Soviet Union.[62] In June 1990, the new Hungarian Prime Minister, József Antall called for the abolition of the Warsaw Pact, with a concrete focus on the parts of the alliance that violate the national sovereignty of its

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57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Vaclav Havel, quoted by Longworth, "Nato Turns Away Czechoslovakia (1991).
60. Ibid.
61. Cottey, "The Visegrad Group and Beyond (1999).
62. Carol J. Williams, "Parliament's First Order of Business: Recasting Hungary's History," *The LA Times,* May 2, 1990. http://articles.latimes.com/1990-05-02/news/mn-162_1_open-session (accessed May 16, 2013).

members.[63] Antall was referring to the provision in the treaty that allowed for Hungarian forces to be used outside Hungary and the possibility to deploy armies of the other pact members in Hungary.[64]

As we can see so far, there was a general sense of threat on behalf of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland towards the Soviet Union, a sense of threat reinforced by the collective and individual historical experience. Most importantly, we also see that the Visegrád cooperation was not the first order of business for any of the three countries. As such while they shared the threat perception of the Soviet Union, their initial policy options varied. To a certain extent by the lack of active cooperation during the cold war itself. Poland, while mistrustful of the Soviet Union, sought not to antagonise it completely, because of the German question. Czechoslovakia had embarked on an anomalitical behaviour, which while ultimately failed, also exemplified that the three countries were on their own.

The convergence of threat perception among the three countries was further accelerated by the developments within the Soviet Union itself, who in a sense gave the final push towards cooperation. It seemed that the security window for the coveted disentanglement from the USSR was not going to be open for a long time.[65] "Conservative forces within the Soviet Union, advocating continued Soviet sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe, gained increasing power."[66] The USSR was also not afraid to flex its muscle by refusing to dissolve the Warsaw Pact and by threatening oil and gas supplies that

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63. The New York Times. "Evolution in Europe; Warsaw Pact Under Fire." *The New York Times.* June 7, 1990. http://www.nytimes.com/1990/06/07/world/evolution-in-europe-warsaw-pact-under-fire.html (accessed May 16, 2013)
64. Ibid.
65. Martin Dangerfield, "The Visegrad Group in the Expanded European Union: From Pre Accession to Post-Accession Cooperation," *East European Politics and Societies* 22, no. 3 (2008)
66. Cottey, "The Visegrad Group and Beyond", (1991), p.71

Central and Eastern Europe were much dependent on, to assert its influence.[67] All this reinforced the perceived threat the Soviet Union represented for the different countries.

In March 1990, the first cracks within the integrity of the Soviet Union started to appear when Lithuania passed the Act of the Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania and propelled the country towards the path of independence from the Soviet Union. In the immediate aftermath, the USSR declared the act illegal, imposed economic sanctions and demanded the act be repealed. The attempts of the USSR to re-assert control over the Baltic republic culminated in the January Events of 1991, during which Soviet troops invaded Lithuania and stormed the Parliament and the Vilnius TV Station. Soviet presence continued for a while afterwards. Similar events also took place in Latvia during the Barricades standoff in January 1991 as well. In the direct aftermath, Czechoslovakia called a meeting with Hungary and Poland to discuss the situation.[68] The instant result was that the countries jointly condemned the Soviet actions, which echoed their fears, when pleading for western guarantees. Following the events in the Baltic republics, the three countries also issued an ultimatum stating that should the USSR not dissolve the pact; they would withdraw from it unilaterally.[69] While the attempts of the Soviet Union to regain control of its territories ultimately failed, the matter of fact was that the possibility of a Soviet intervention in Central and Eastern Europe, should the satellites drift away, seemed to have become a real possibility.

Between the January events and the ultimatum, the three deputy defence ministers gathered in Poland in September 1990 to supposedly discuss education, culture, training, and

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67. Ian Traynor, "Moscow Defers Critical Summit", The Guardian, (24 October 1990), quoted in Cottey, "The Visegrad Group and Beyond", (1991)

68. Audrey Woods, "Soviet Crackdown in Vilnus Condemned." *Associated Press News Archive,* January 14, 1991, http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1991/Soviet-Crackdown-in-Vilnius-Condemned-With-AM-Soviet-Baltics-Bjt/id-cc56c8ac2f283a7e271e782908f053d7 (accessed May 16, 2013)

69. Ibid.

military chaplain's work.[70] While the meeting was shrouded in secrecy, the Czechoslovak Deputy Minister eluded that the three countries would cooperate in expanding their ties, but not form a direct military alliance against Moscow, interestingly the three delegations had a meeting with the Polish defence minister, contradicting the initial announcement it was a low key meeting.[71] In October, the three countries met again, this time at a Deputy Foreign ministers level, in order to create regular consultative committees, to facilitate the solutions of common problems, with one of the working groups tasked with drafting a potential declaration of the three countries.[72] By the time of the January ultimatum, as Spero argues, the group had become a "union designed to overcome Moscow's gravitational force."[73] Following the declaration, Hungary and Czechoslovakia signed the first, among the three countries bilateral military agreement, meant to obtain security guarantees.[74] The subsequent Visegrád declaration signified the creation of a new security entity in Central Europe.[75] Ten days later, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, reflecting the initial goal of the three countries.

As this section clearly shows, the original assumption of the potential behaviour of the three countries is correct. The section clearly outlined the threat perception the three countries felt towards the Soviet Union, how they originally tried to seek independent paths to counter that threat and the constraints they had to deal with in their respective paths. In the end, while they succeeded in dismantling the Warsaw Pact and thus remove Soviet influence from their countries, the Visegrád cooperation seemed a secondary option. This can account for the subsequent rapid decline of the group that followed in the next year of its existence, a preposition that will require further research.

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70 Joshua Spero, "The Budapest-Prague-Warsaw triangle: Central European security after the Visegrad summit," *European Security* 1, no. 1 (1992)
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 62
74. Ibid.
75. Spero, "Triangle" (1992)

Poland had to, at the beginning, balance two threats. In the face of a possible revisionist Germany supported by its allies, Poland opted, initially, to balance with the Soviet Union. The initial Czechoslovak behaviour is somewhat at odds with our expectations, at least in the beginning, and should be treated as a temporary anomaly. Czechoslovakia was looking at balancing the Soviet Union by embedding it into a pan-European security collective. This anomaly was quickly rectified, however, when the country recognised that in effect that balance of power was still dictating European politics. The subsequent refusal of the western alliance to extend its protection on the country pushed it towards its central European partners. Hungary was in-between system changes. It was only after the overriding threat for Poland disappeared, the first balancing choice of Czechoslovakia failed and Hungary completed its systemic changes that the countries' threats perceptions started to converge. The aggressive behaviour employed by the Soviet Union further exacerbated the perceived need by these countries to balance it through second rank options, that is, by cooperation with each other. We can clearly see that neorealist theory is still quite relevant in explaining state behaviour.

Section 1.3 – The lack of a Group between Bulgaria and Romania from a Neorealist Perspective

With the case of Bulgaria and Romania our hypothesis does not change and remains that the threat perception of the Soviet Union, fuelled to a large extend by the recent and not so recent history, shifting security concerns and the initial reluctance of the West to expand security guarantees, pushed Bulgaria and Romania to cooperate together. After all, judging from the findings from the previous section, we would presume that Bulgaria and Romania would face the same factors that affected the relationship of the Visegrád countries. They both were Soviet satellites and both overthrew the communist system in their countries and embarked on the path to western style democracy. Yet what we already know from previous

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sections is that cooperation between the two countries did not emerge. There were no summits, let alone an institutionalisation of relations similar to the one that was created by the Visegrád countries after the Visegrád Summit, in other words no Sofia or Bucharest group. For this reason, our hypothesis should be further elaborated, stressing its falsifiable condition, namely that the lack of a threat perception, in at least one of the two countries, will preclude a push towards cooperation and balancing against the common threat. Looking at the perceptions of Bulgaria and Romania should normally account for their lack of cooperation.

Starting with Bulgaria, the country seems to have exhibited a diametrically opposed threat perception *vis-a-vis* the Soviet Union. In fact, in the aftermath of 1989, Bulgaria never defined the Soviet Union as a threat. When asked about the threat perception of the Soviet Union, the former Bulgarian Foreign Minister, who was also a member of the Grand National Assembly at the time, Solomon Passy, only said that the country was under pressure from the Soviet Union until the country applied to join NATO.[76]

After the collapse of the communist regime, which resulted from a palace coup,[77] it was the newly renamed communist party that stayed in power. This in itself had a big impact on Bulgaria's foreign relations. Unlike the Visegrád countries, "Bulgaria did not harbour the virulent anti-Soviet feelings that characterized most of the other countries."[78] The extent of Bulgaria's lack of animosity towards the Soviet Union and the soviet system is further exemplified by the remarks made by the then Bulgarian Foreign minister, Lyben Gotsev, who "as of late November 1990 ... argued that the Warsaw Pact was still useful and predicted that

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76. Dr. Solomon Passy, interview by author. *President and Founder of the Atlantic Club Bulgaria, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman of Parliamentary Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee* (May 15, 2013).
77. Jon Elster, *The roundtable talksand the breakdown of Communism,* University of Chicago Press, 1996.
78. Ibid.,p. 16.

it would survive in the 'coming two or three years.'"[79] In retrospect, as Bechev argues, Bulgarian foreign policy "continued to share well into the 1990s the Gorbachevian vision of European security. Successive governments backed by the Socialists cooperated with NATO, but never put forward the membership option driven by their desire to preserve the generally cordial links with Russia."[80]

Even after the resignation of President Petar Mladenov in July 1990, due to his suggestion of using tanks to disperse a protest in the centre of the city,[81] the collapse of the socialist government in November the same year[82] and despite the fact that both were replaced by members of the opposition, did not alter dramatically Bulgaria's foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. A small readjustment did emerge during the official visit of the new President to Czechoslovakia, where he declared that Bulgaria will join Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary in leaving the Warsaw Pact, but the reality was that the alliance was already moribund.[83] "The truth is that while Bulgaria and Russia/Soviet Union relations had their ups and downs, as is the case in bilateral relations between all countries, Bulgaria never had the need to feel threatened by it. There were no troops stationed in the country and even

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79. "Bulgaria's Foreign Minister Says Warsaw Pact Still Useful," Reuters (Sofia), 14 November 1990, quoted in Zoltan Barany, *The Future of NATO Expansion: Four Case Studies.* Cambridge University Press, 2003.

80. Dimitar Bechev, "From Policy-Takers to Policy-Makers? Observations on Bulgarian and Romanian Foreign policy Before and After EU Accession," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 10, no. 2 (2009).

81. Reuters, "Evolution in Europe; Bulgaria's Leader Quits Post Over Crackdown on Protest," *The New York Times.* July 7, 1990. http://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/07/world/evolution-in-europe-bulgaria-s-leader-quits-post-over-crackdown-on-protest.html?src=pm (accessed May 15, 2013).

82. Carrol J. Williams, "Regime Falls as Ex-Communists Quit in Bulgaria," *The LA Times,* November 30, 1990, http://articles.latimes.com/1990-11-30/news/mn-5770_1_communist-party (accessed May 15, 2013).

83. United Press International, "Bulgaria Will Leave Warsaw Pact, President Declares," *The LA Timea,* February 1, 1991, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-02-02/news/mn-395_1_warsaw-pact (accessed May 15, 2013).

during Communist times, Bulgarian and Soviet leaders enjoyed a very warm and friendly relationship."[84]

Reasoning for this lack of threat perception should be found in history. Sofia was Moscow's closest ally during the Cold War, entertaining the idea in the early 60s of a possible political unification between Bulgaria and the USSR.[85] Political and cultural traditions between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union predate the communist era.[86] The close friendly relations are underpinned by language, religion and history.[87] The two countries' languages are closely related and are both part of the Slavic language group. More importantly, the two countries use the Cyrillic alphabet, which originated in the First Bulgarian Empire and was progressively spread around the Balkans and towards the Russian lands. Boris Yeltsin emphasised 'ancient Rus' had borrowed from Bulgaria the Slavonic alphabet presented to the world by the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius',[88] while the Russian Patriarch Kirill reminded that the Bulgarian church ('the most ancient amongst Slavonic churches') had sent priests and books to Kievan Rus', which were 'the first holy texts of the newly- Christened Russian people'.[89] At the same time both countries share the same religion as well. Perhaps the most important factor that defines the close relationship between the two countries is their common history. Unlike, however, the common history between Poland and Tsarist Russia/Soviet Union, Bulgaria's historical past is much more positive cordial.

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84 Bisserka Benisheva, interview by author, *Ambassador of Bulgaria to Hungary, Former Ambassador of Bulgaria to Ireland, Former Director-General for European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria* (April 25, 2013)

85. Elster, *The roundtable*, 1996.

86. Tamás Szemlér, "Friends will be friends? Bulgaria, Russia and the Eastern ENP Partners," In *EU-Russian relations and the Eastern Partnership - Central-East European Member-State Interests and positions*, edited by Gabor Foti and Zsuzsa Ludvig, 132-164. Institute for World Economics, MTA, 2009

87. Ibid.

88. Şener Aktürk, Natalia Ulchenko, Kyril Drezov, and Simona Soare, "Russia's Relations with Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania." *Russian Analytical Digest.* no. 125, Center For Security Studies, Zurich

89. Ibid.

Russia played a centrally positive, non-threatening role in the history of Bulgaria. The country spent nearly five centuries under the occupation of the Ottoman Empire and the preservation of the Bulgarian culture and identity was based around the Orthodox religion. Russia on the other hand saw itself as the guardian and saviour of the Orthodox states in the Balkans. Russian armies reached Bulgaria on three occasions during the series of various Russo-Ottoman wars, in 1773, 1810 and 1828. It was, however, only during the 1876-78 war, after the Bulgarian national revival that the liberation of the country was achieved, which was the primary goal of the war. Regardless of the geopolitical motives of Russia, Bulgaria saw and still sees the country as its liberator from Ottoman yoke. This simple fact still resonates today with the celebrations of the national day, which commemorates the signing of the Russo-Turkish San Stefano Treaty. The memories of the liberation war are regularly brought up by high ranking officials from both sides and there are around four hundred monuments related to war.[90]

While relations did cool at the beginning of the 20th century, with the political establishment in Bulgaria being divided between Russophiles and Russophobes, the general population remained favourable towards Russia. Even during the Second World War, when Bulgaria had to join the Axis under the pressure of the advancing armies, the then Tsar informed Hitler that the country can not contribute to the war against Russia, simply because the Bulgarians retained a deep attachment to the country.[91]

If we consider that the Bulgarian perceptions of the Soviet Union are diametrically opposed to the perceptions of the Visegrád countries, Romania offers a more nuanced perception. In public opinion polls, most Romanians are said to have identified Russia and

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90. Ibid.
91. R.J. Crampton, *A short history of modern Bulgaria,* CUP Archive, 1987

Hungary as the two sources of external threat.[92] While the former State Secretary for Defence Policy quickly dismissed those as threat perceptions that have to do more with historical animosities than realistic fears,[93] it creates an issue, while threat perceptions even unrealistic ones create the need for a form of balancing.

The remarks by then Hungarian Prime Minister, József Antall, that he was the Prime minister of fifteen million Hungarians, which included the Hungarians living abroad,[94] held undertones of significant territorial claims. Especially if we consider also, that in 2012 a member of the ruling party quite openly remarked that only in a few years time Hungary will be strong enough to take the region back.[95] As such, Romanian perceptions of a possible Hungarian threat over the issue are quite relevant to the country's foreign policy. Romanian requests to be included in the then upcoming Visegrád summit that founded the Visegrád group were also rejected.[96] Relations were further strained by the Hungarian redeployment of some of its forces from the western border to the eastern frontier with Romania,[97] which seem to have coincided with the rising ethnic tension in Romania's Transylvanian region, where the Hungarian minority is actually concentrated. The rebuke has been interpreted in Romania as a "Hungarian attempt to prolong Romania's isolation."[98] Furthermore, a glimpse of the country's threat perceptions can also be gleaned from an interview with the then Defence Minister, Constantin Spiroui, who noted that "threats may come primarily from unexpected consequences arising from East European reform process."[99]

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92. Barany, *The Future of NATO Expansion* (1990)

93. Ibid.

94. Daniel Nelson, "Post-Communist Insecurities and the Romanian Case," In *Romania After Tyranny*, by Daniel Nelson, Westview Press, 1992.

95. "Revisionist Remarks only harm Hungarian Minority," *Buda post - a Hungaria Press Review.* August 12, 2012, http://budapost.eu/2012/08/revisionist-remarks-only-harm-hungarian-minority/ (accessed May 16, 2013).

96. Rompress report, included in Walter Bacon Jr., "Security as Seen from Bucharest," In *Romania after Tyranny*, edited by Daniel Nelson, Westview Press, 1992.

97. Nelson, "Post-Communist Insecurities, 1992

98. Bacon Jr., "Security as Seen from Bucharest,", 1992, p. 193

99. Constantin Spiroiu, Defence Minister of Romania, quoted in Nelson "Post-Communist Insecurities", 1992.

In 1990, the Chairman of the 'Vatra Romaneasca', Radu Ciontea noted that "[a] majority of Romanians in Transylvania fear that Transylvania will be annexed to Hungary as a result of external and internal collusion."[100] Gyula Horn, Former Foreign Minister of Hungary and Former Chair of the Hungarian National Assembly's Foreign Affairs committee remarked in an interview about the poor state of the two countries' relations that "there is a Romanian delusion that Hungary is agitating against Romania."[101] Further discussing the creation of a new treaty on friendship between the two countries, which Hungary unilaterally abrogated in 1989, Horn remarked that the Romanian side was extremely concerned with the provisions of the treaty that would have allowed for border revisions between the two countries.[102] While Gyula Horn outright rejects the Romanian position, it nonetheless further stresses the threat that seems to have been felt in Romania about its neighbour in the post 1989 revolution.

On the other side of the border, we can see some sense of a threat perception emanating from the Soviet Union with whom Romania also shares some similarities, like religion and common history. Romania received some nominal *independence* at the end of the Russo-Turkish war in 1829, while it was still composed of two separate principalities, Walachia and Moldavia. But this never created a sort of eternal friendship that could fully dispel possible perceptions of threat, and the country actively fought against the Soviet Union during the Second World War. During the communist period, the relationship between Romania and the Soviet Union was that of an odd-man-out in the Soviet camp.[103] In a sense Romania was the France of the Warsaw Pact, refusing to allow military exercises on its territory, not really participating in such exercises in other Warsaw Pact countries,

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100. FBIS, *Eastern Europe Report,* April 16, 1990, p. 7, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA336375 (accessed May 16, 2013).
101. FBIS, *Eastern Europe Report,* 11 December, 1992, p. 12, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA334230 (accessed May 16, 2013).
102. Ibid.
103. Bacon Jr., "Security as Seen from Bucharest,", 1992.

diversifying and strengthening its own military industrial complex.[104] In the 1970s, Romania identified the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact member sates as the most likely eventual adversaries,[105] clearly strengthening the threat perception of the Soviet Union. Even with the advent of Gorbachev to power, the Romanian government was openly critical towards the Soviet Policies of Perestroika.

Yet despite these aspects, Romania signed a new friendship treaty with the Soviet Union, showing, that it was either unwilling or unable to engage in a form of balancing against. A clear example for this type of behaviour was the lack of support for an independent Moldova. During the Moldovan crisis in 1990/91, the government of Prime Minister Ion Iliescu stopped short of supporting Moldovan independence, not to upset the Soviet Union, which was in the process of restructuring itself.[106] The friendship treaty itself was also quite controversial, despite the fact that treaties have little power in a realist world. The treaty recognised the existing border between the two countries, thus reinforcing the lack of overt support for Moldovan independence, but also included a provision to preclude "the entry in hostile alliances or the use of one's territory for an attack on the other."[107] While the Soviet Union did exert such pressure on all post communist countries, they all resisted the Soviet pressure.[108]As such from the events above, Barany is right in pointing out that, while the other post communist countries looked west, Romania kept looking East in the early period after the revolution (1990-93).[109]

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104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ronald Linden, "A Foreign Policy of Bounded Change," In *Romania after Tyranny*, edited by Daniel Nelson, Westview Press, 1992.
107. Nelson, "Post-Communist Insecurities, 1992
108. The Washington Post, "Former Satellites Balk At Soviet Treaty Terms;Anti-Alliance Clause a Sticking Point," *High Beam Research,* August 17, 1991, http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-1080304.html (accessed May 16, 2013)
109. Barany, *The Future of NATO Expansion* (1990)

From the above discussion, the Bulgarian and Romanian accounts show a different attitude with regards to threat perception. While Bulgaria clearly did not have the feeling of an imminent threat from the Soviet Union, Romania was compounded with an initial double threat perception, stemming from pre-1989 events and immediately afterwards. While the country chose not to balance against the Soviet Union can be seen as a rational choice in the face of a strong Hungarian threat perception. Nevertheless, cooperation of the Visegrád type between Bulgaria and Romania did not emerge, because while on the one hand Bulgaria did not feel a threat emanating from the Soviet Union, while on the other, the double threat faced by Romania pushed the country into cooperating with the Soviet Union.

Chapter 2 – A Neoliberal Perspective

Section 2.1 – A Neoliberal Theoretical Framework

Liberalism – the other major theory of international relations and also to a certain extent the antithesis of realism has seen its rise in importance in the second half of the 20th century. At the same time however, as one of the major members of the liberal school of thought, Michael Doyle, contends, what we "call liberal[ism] resembles a family portrait of principles and institutions, recognisable by certain characteristics – for example, a commitment to individual freedom, government, through democratic representation, rights of private property, and equal opportunity."[110] While the school has less divergent theories springing from its core essence, it has a somewhat larger scope of activity. It can be divided into two main strands. The first strand of liberalism focuses on the domestic factors, or what other systemic theory considers the blackbox, while the second strand, which will be used in this thesis, focuses on systemic factors.

Looking back, as Andrew Moravcsik argues, "liberal IR theory elaborates the insight that state-society relations-the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded-have a fundamental impact on state behaviour in world politics."[111] A fundamental difference between the liberalist and realist schools is that under liberalism, states tend to be utility maximisers and are more concerned with absolute gains than relative gains, which renders cooperation more plausible.

Further elaborating, Moravcsik also lays the foundation of liberalism on three main assumptions. First he stresses the importance of societal actors: "The fundamental actors in international politics are individuals and private groups, who are on the average rational and

110. Doyle, Michael. "Liberalism and the World Politics Revisited." In *Controversies in International Relations Theory*, by Kegley Jr. and Charles, 83-106. St. Martin's Press, 1995, p. 84

111. Moravcsik, Andrew. "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997), p. 513.

risk-averse and who organize exchange and collective action to promote differentiated interests under constraints imposed by material scarcity, conflicting values, and variations in societal influence."[112] Secondly he emphasises the importance of representation in the formation of state preferences: "States (or other political institutions) represent some subset of domestic society, on the basis of whose interests state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics."[113] Finally he adds a significant importance to the notions of interference and the international system: "The configuration of interdependent state preferences determines state behaviour."[114] This implies that states, while trying to pursue their ideal policies, are nevertheless constrained by the different preferences that other states might have.[115]

The third assumption of Moravcsik is intricately linked with the ideas of Doyle's ideals of the democratic peace, which forms a very important strand in the general liberalism school of international relations. Doyle sees liberalism as a "distinct ideology and set of institutions that has shaped the perceptions of and capacities for foreign relations of political societies that range from social welfare or social democratic to laissez faire."[116] From his research he concludes that democratic states do not go to war against other democratic states, but tend to against non-democratic states.[117] This conclusion is linked to the notion of Kant's perpetual peace.

Stepping aside from the Kantian heritage of liberalism, Keohane and Nye sought to elevate liberalism to a more systemic level, on par with structural realism.[118] By using realist assumptions, Keohane and Nye tried to challenge the rather pessimistic view of the world

112. Ibid., p. 516.
113. Ibid., p. 518.
114. Ibid., p. 520.
115. Ibid.
116. Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1983).
117. Ibid.
118. Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*. 2001.

that Waltz and others were advancing. In that sense neoliberalism shares many similarities with neorealism, namely it is also a systemic theory, and it places an emphasis on the states as the main actors in international relations, although not the only ones, and treats them as rational unitary actors. The fact that neoliberalism is considered the counterpart of neoliberalism in the great theoretical debate in international relations is why neoliberalism is chosen as the representative of the liberal school in this thesis. If one can attribute the reasons for the rise of neoliberalism, it would be the rising interdependence and the relative stability created by the American hegemony in the aftermath of the Second World War.[119]

As such neoliberalism looks at barriers states might face that prevent them to engage in international cooperation.[120] For neolibealism states are rational egoists, concerned only with their own absolute gains and losses, and unlike neorealism, it is an interest based theory.[121] While cooperation can be imposed by a regional hegemon,[122] for our research we are primarily concerned with the negotiated emergence of cooperation. Since for neoliberals states are not concerned with relative gains, the main problem faced by states is the lack of information and trust that locks them in a prisoner's dilemma.[123] As such, neoliberals argue that international regimes emerge to address this prisoners' dilemma and help states realise their preferred outcome.[124] Those two principle variables in neoliberal cooperation literature are the main variables that will be looked at underpin and our current research. At the same time, we have to keep in mind that trust should be considered a secondary variable that provides complementary explanations.

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119. Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "Neoliberalism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith, 116-134. Oxford University Press, 2007.
120. Ibid.
121. Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, *Theories of international regimes,* 1997.
122. Oran R.Young, "Regime Dynamics: the Rise and Fall of International Regimes," *International Organisation* 36, no. 2 (1982).
123. Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, *Theories of international regimes,* 1997.
124. Ibid.

Section 2.2 – The Emergence of the Visegrád Group from Neoliberal Perspective

Taking our theoretical framework further, we can conclude that the common interest between the three countries, in the search of the same absolute gains from joining the western institutions and the lack of trust between them pushed for their subsequent cooperation and the creation of the Visegrád group. There should be little doubt that the original idea for closer cooperation between the future Visegrád countries could easily be traced to January 25 1990. The date when the then President of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel gave his impassionate speech to the Polish Parliament (the Sejm). In it, he emphasised the common ideals that have characterised the new post-communist regimes, namely the so-called "Return to Europe," to which both Czechoslovakia and Poland have pledged a sort of allegiance.[125] It should be noted that when speaking of the Return to Europe, the implication is not a return to the cultural heritage, but more precisely embracing the economic principles to stimulate economic development in the Post-communist countries. As such it should be understood as economic development, catching up economically and technologically with the western countries.[126] Of course the expression of a return to Europe was not the only main feature that Havel emphasized in his speech to the Polish parliament. He also mentioned the need to coordinate those efforts with Hungary as well,[127] where he will be headed on the very next day. Most importantly, he stressed that "We [, Czechoslovakia and Poland plus Hungary,] should not compete with each other to gain admission into the various European organizations. On the contrary, we should assist each other in the same spirit of solidarity with which, in darker days, you protested our persecution as we did against yours."[128]

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125. Vaclav Havel, "Speech in the Polish Parliament (Sejm), January 25 1990," in *The Visegrad Group - A Central European Constellation*, edited by Andrzej Jagodziński, International Visegrad Fund, 2006.

126. For the Constructivist understanding of Return to Europe see Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Constructivist approaches to European integration," Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, 2005.

127. Since he was on a State visit to Poland at that time, Havel was mainly speaking about Polish and Czechoslovakian relations. The fact that he mentioned Hungary is important as it will be the third member state of the Visegrad group and it shows it was already part of the initial Czechoslovak idea.

128. Havel, Speech, 1990.

The Havel speech to the Polish Sejm already sets the parameters up for a possible neoliberal understanding of the emergence of the Visegrád group. Assuming that integration with the west was the ultimate goal of the three countries, European integration would either have to be unavailable to them or would have taken an inefficient amount of time to achieve, had they pursued it separately. Both of those possibilities reflect, from a game theoretic perspective, a suboptimal outcome, hence the need for cooperation through the creation of the Visegrád group. Dealing with the issue head-on, Heinz Kramer argues that the economic downturn and implications it has for the development of the Maastricht treaty, meant that the European Community (EC) was mostly looking inward than outward.[129] "The Twelve's initial reaction to the historic changes east of the former 'iron curtain' was more a conglomeration of discrete activities than the result of a well-developed coherent strategy. The Member States proved unable to overcome their political differences over the appropriate course of action."[130] France was expressing the most reservations with regards to integrating the east within the current structures, expressing worries of the effects this might have on the intra-EC balance of power.[131] Even Britain, which saw the integration of the east as a way to dilute the deepening of the EC, was more preoccupied with the effects the collapse of communism might have on its transatlantic relations.[132]

Péter Balázs, who was heading the various Hungarian delegations of the country in its attempt to join western institution shared that at the beginning the three countries were not really welcome in the western institutions, which preferred to give their new eastern partners at best an observer status.[133] Balázs further mentions that individually the three countries were small and did not present much of an incentive to the west to be integrated; but together

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129. Heinz Kramer, "The European Community's Response to the 'New Eastern Europe'," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31, no. 2 (1993).
130. Ibid., p. 221
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid.
133. Péter Balázs, interview by Author, *Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Former Hungarian European Commissioner for Regional Policy* (April 30, 2013).

they represented a country of the size of one of the larger member states, which was hard to ignore.[134] Jiri Dienstbier, the Former Czechoslovak Foreign Minister has also expressed such views. As Valerie Bunce summarises, the assumption of the time was that together the three countries would be a much more effective lobby for European integration than going it alone.[135] This view to aggregate together was also implied by the EC, although in a slightly different direction. "The European Community had made it clear in its communications to the Visegrád states that their future membership in the Community – and the preliminary stage of Associate membership in the Community – rested heavily on their ability, among other things, to demonstrate that they could cooperate with one another."[136] This creates a paradox between the position of the Member States and the Community that seems to have fuelled the subsequent decline of the group, due to fears it was being pushed upon them as a substitute for actual integration.[137] From the above we can already see that empirics suggest that it would have been harder to integrate with the West.

While the availability of primary sources seems quite thin, there is no denying that the return to Europe played an important role in the foreign policy of the three countries, with authors agreeing that it was one of the most important features that pushed for the creation of the group in the first place.[138] For Poland, as well as others, the return to Europe implied on the one hand the reestablishment of traditional links with the western countries and on the other the integration of the country within the West European and Transatlantic structures.[139]

134. Ibid.
135. Valerie Bunce, "Visegrad Group: Cooperation and Integration," In *Mitteleuropa: Between Europe and Germany*, edited by Peter Katzensteing, Berghahn Books, 1997.
136. Ibid.
137. In that sense Peter Balazs also mentioned that, such fears were one of the reasons why the group was never fully institutionalised and remained in an informal structure. Similar fear s were echoed by Vaclav Klaus, formed president of Czechoslovakia, who considered the group a western creation to prevent the country from joining the EC/EU.
138. Jeffrey Simon, *Czechoslovakia's "Velvet Divorce," Visegrad Cohesion and European Faultlines,* Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1993.
139. Wtodek Aniot, Timothy A. Byrnes, and Elena A. Iankova, "Poland: Returning to Europe," In *Mitteleuropa: Between Europe and Germany*, edited by Peter Katzenstein, Berghahn Books, 1997.

As the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski explained, the integration of Poland with the West is of great importance to the country, for its national security and economic prosperity.[140] The desire of the country to return to Europe helps it increase its sense of security, bridge the gap that exists between it and its western counterparts and very importantly, helps keep the country on the path to fully institutionalising democracy,[141] something also applicable to both Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The importance that Poland attached to the European integration is also further explored by Lech Walesa, the Former President of Poland.[142] It should be seen as no surprise that the second trip abroad for the Former President was to Visegrád in February 1991.[143]

In the case of Czechoslovakia, the notion was not only spearheaded by Vaclav Havel, but also by its foreign minister Jiri Dienstbier,[144] who also adopted it as a core element to the country's foreign policy. Dienstbier placed great importance to cooperation with Warsaw and Budapest, fulfilling a bridging role between the east and the west, a policy that continued until the end of 1991.[145] Interestingly, it is also reflected in the initial attempts of Czechoslovakia to reform CSCE into a pan-European Security structure.[146] These attempts of Havel and Dienstbier and the subsequent failure can be better explain from our neoliberal framework. In a nutshell, the Czechoslovak ideas would have created a structure where collective security will be managed by all the member states and would reduce the need for the two antagonistic alliances, as both superpowers would be present. The subsequent failure of those ideas to materialise is embodied in the remarks of Havel who, when explaining why

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140. Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, referred to in Aniot, Byrnes and Iankova, Poland, 1997.

141. Aniot, Byrnes and Iankova, Poland, 1997.

142. Jerzego Eislera, *Roads to Freedom - the road to a common Europe,* Lech Walessa Institute, 2008, in Polish, translated via googletranslate, available at http://www.bibliotekalw.pl/9,29.

143. It should be noted that his first trip abroad was to the Vatican, since the Pope, Jean-Paul II was Polish.

144. Karel Tesar, "Security, Diplomacy and Policy Making in Post Cold-War Prague," *Harmonie Paper,* Vol. 12. The Centre for European Security Studies, 2000.

145. Simon, "Velvet Divorce", 1993

146. See previous section on the initial position of Czechoslovakia.

the ideas, advanced by the country, were not feasible, acknowledged that "there are more twists and turns along the paths of history than we thought of then."[147] The twists and turns represent the yeas of distrust that have existed between the two sides that can not be overcome in a day. As such, the failure of the proposal can be attributed to the animosity and lack of trust that still existed, something that the Visegrád countries seems to have overcome in the creation of the group.

In that sense, when discussing the creation of the group, Dienstbier recalls that even during the communist days, the underground movements of the countries were in contact with each other, knew each other and, therefore, built trust between each other. "The new cooperation, however, was made easier for us by the years of personal contacts between the dissident movements whose members, first in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and soon afterward in Hungary, assumed political power."[148] Interestingly, it should be noted that the recollection of the Czechoslovakian foreign minister is somewhat disputed by Bunce. In her work she is very careful to explain that in the case of Czechoslovakia and Poland, dissidents that did know each other did come to power, unlike in the case of Hungary. Nevertheless she also mentions that the Free Democrats in Hungary that represented the dissidents' movement in the country held a reasonable representation in the parliament.[149] While this does not disprove the existence of trust between the three governments, it adds a level of nuance, considering the subsequent ups and downs of the group. The Former Polish Ambassador to Turkey, Andrzej Ananicz, also stresses that part of the success of the cooperation was that the new democratic authorities in the three countries either knew each other from their dissidents or at least had heard of each other. This, however, creates a problem for our hypothesis, as neoliberalism presupposes that regimes emerge to realise a common interest due to a lack of

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147. R.C. Longworth, "Nato Turns Away Czechoslovakia, March 22, 1991, p. 1
148. Jiří Dienstbier, "Visegrad - the First Phase," In *The Visegrad Group - A Central European Constellation*, by Andrzej Jagodziński, International Visegrad Fund, 2006, p. 41.
149. Bunce, "Visegrad Group", 1997.

trust, thus overcoming a prisoners' dilemma. From these statements, it would seem that a prisoners' dilemma was missing between the Visegrád countries.

Despite this setback, the last aspect that should be mentioned is the position of Hungary towards Europe. Just like in the case of Poland and Czechoslovakia, Hungarian political parties wholeheartedly used the argumentation that the country need to return to Europe.[150] As András Bozoki and Eszter Simon explain, the participants, namely the opposition in the round table talks about the transition of the country to democracy, stressed the importance of the return to Europe.[151] From the beginning the idea of membership to the EC was quite present and even more popular than the idea of acceding to the transatlantic structures.[152] In that sense Antall, the then Hungarian Prime Minister, was of the clear opinion that the integration of Hungary in the EC and the accession to the transatlantic system of alliances was of strategic importance.[153] In his speech to the Hungarian Parliament in 1990, after his nomination as Prime Minister, he stressed that one of the main objectives facing the country at the time is the accession to the European community,[154] a fact that he reiterated on numerous occasions during his premiership. The strong European outlook is also apparent in his position that the strong European perspective of the country will not detract it from pursuing transatlantic cooperation as well.[155] From his various speeches and interviews one can also find that, even before the possibility of an associate agreement was even on the table, he was already arguing for it.[156]

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150. Peter Gedeon, "Hungary: German and European Influences on the Post Socialist Transition," In *Mitteleuropa: Between Germany and Europe*, edited by Peter Katzenstein, Berghahn Books, 1997.
151. Andras Bozoki and Eszter Simon, "Hungary sicne 1989," In *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*, edited by Sabrina Ramet, Camebridge University Press, 2010
152. Ibid.
153. Géza Entz, "József Antall and Konrad Adenauer" *Hungarian Review* 3, no. 3 (2012).
154. Géza Jeszenszky, *Selected Speeches and Interviews (1989 - 1993),* József Antall Foundation, 2008
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.

The developments' outline with regards to the Visegrád seems to be not fully in line with our original neoliberal hypothesis. All three countries, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland have expressed their preference for integrating with the west, which can be seen as their common interest. At the same they were soon forced to realise that the doors to the west were not fully open and on their own they would probably not be able to apply enough lobbying for the EC to change its stance. At the same time, the Community itself was also exerting a form of suggestive pressure that the countries should cooperate together as a practice round to an eventual accession to the Community itself. While up to this point, things are in line with our understanding the next findings are more problematic. We saw that the democratically elected governments of the three countries had close ties before the collapse of the communist system and had built a sense of trust between each other. This fact was particularly true for Czechoslovakia and Poland, but also for Hungary to a slightly lesser extent. All these developments show the common interest between the three countries. However, the trust they shared should have made the creation of the Visegrád group unnecessary. The Visegrád declaration on February 15, which was the founding document of the group, coupled with the subsequent Krakow declaration a few months later in the same year, both reiterate and stress the founding principle of the group – cooperation towards a collective integration into the European Community.

Section 2.3 – The lack of a Group between Bulgaria and Romania from a Neoliberal Perspective

Similarly, as with the previous subsection on Bulgaria and Romania in the neorealist chapter, the hypothesis we use remains the same that the common interest between the three countries and the trust they shared allowed for their subsequent cooperation and the creation of a group. The similarities and logic for this were also already mentioned previously. Furthermore, considering again that no summit, no Sofia or Bucharest group, took place or

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was formed, the hypothesis should be further elaborated with the inclusion of its falsifiable conditions, namely that the two countries did not indentify with a common interest in which to pursue absolute gains and/or the existence of mutual trust between the two countries, which would nullify the need to create a cooperation group. It should be noted that, unlike in the previous sections covering the two countries and the Visegrád group, in this situation a longer timeframe would be needed to be looked at. The reason for this is that under neorealism, the primary possible threat perception for both groups of countries was the Soviet Union, which disbanded and left a buffer zone between the group of countries and itself. At the same time with regards to neoliberalism, the quick emergence of the Visegrád group forces the research into a short timeframe. In the case of Bulgaria and Romania this timeframe can be expanded to cover a longer period of time, since the western reorientation of the two countries took longer to materialise, something that was already established in the previous chapter. The section will look to see whether the two countries expressed the same interest towards western integration for absolute economic gains that is regardless of whether the other country would gain more in relative terms. At the same time the section will also seek to gauge the pre-existence of trust between the two countries that could account for the lack of institutionalised cooperation.

As already outlined, the initial position of Bulgaria at the beginning did not change much and continued to share the Gorbachevian vision[157] and the very first post-communist government was staffed with members of the Communist party. The first real shifts emerged with the advent of the new President Zhelyu Zhelev, who announced the basic principles of Bulgaria's foreign policy, finally breaking with the past and opening up the country to the west[158] to guarantee its future development. The policies of the country started seeking

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157. Bechev, "From Policy-Takers to Policy-Makers?", 2009.
158. Oscar W. Clyatt, "Bulgaria's Quest for Security after The Cold War," *McNair Papers No. 15,* Washington D.C.: The Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1993.

capital, markets and integration within the European economic and security structures.[159] In the early stages of the country's reshaped policy it was pushing not to be relegated to a second grade group and be treated in the same group as Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.[160] The country's quest for the return to Europe has been also emphasised by the then Prime Minister Andrej Lukanov.[161] In a private interview with Filip Dimitrov who was Prime Minister after Lukanov (1991 – 1992), Aneta Spendzharova informs us that the Dimitrov government was also pursuing western integration, due to the need of capital to boost economic development.[162]After the turbulent early post-communist years, the country's reorientation towards the west and the need to catch up with it has been of primary importance. Nevertheless an initial lag in reorienting the country towards the west with regards to the Visegrád group has emerged.

With regards to Romania, the reorientation of the country was also slow and cautious, even slower than the reorientation in Bulgaria. As Linden portrays, after the advent of the National Salvation Front to power, the main orientation of the regime was slow, or of controlled change.[163] While there is no denying that the new regime was also jumping on the return to bandwagon Europe, for the same reasons as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, it was seeking to achieve this in gradual and deliberate manner, so as not to bring the country into chaos.[164] While the government was looking for western support, it was doing it much more slowly than other Eastern European countries, namely the other five already mentioned. "The new Romanian government wanted the investment and the loans and trade,

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159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
161. Sharon L. Wolchik and Jane Leftwich Curry, *Central and East European politics: from communism to democracy,* Rowman & Littlefield, 2011
162. Aneta Spendzharova, *When Does the Law Rule? The Politics of Banking Sector Legal Reform in the Post-Communist Region After 1989,* ProQuest, 2007.
163. Linden, "A Foreign Policy of Bounded Change," 1992.
164. Ibid.

of course, but not at the price of moving more quickly than it felt prudent."[165] As Bacon Jr. argues, Romania soon came to realise, as well, that economic security can be best achieved through western economic assistance.[166] The need to integrate with the west is also emphasised by the then President Ion Iliescu, who, recalling the period, emphasised the need for the economic integration of the country with the west.[167]

Furthermore, the previous section outlined the historical foreign policy of Romania during communism and stressed that the country expressed a great deal of mistrust towards its Warsaw Pact allies, including Bulgaria. Considering the fact that the early governments of the two countries were primarily staffed from members of their old communist parties, the original mistrust must have prevailed. There seems to be no information that dissidents of the two countries had regular meetings before the revolutions like in the Visegrád countries.

We can see that both countries were interested in the return to Europe path to development. Considering the historical background and their initial transition, a sense of mistrust has existed between the two countries it seems a pattern of noncooperation was inadvertently setup by the European Community itself back in 1990. As Bechev argues, " 'the beauty contest' on the way to Brussels rendered any tandem initiative difficult."[168] This is different from the initial situation of the Visegrád countries, where cooperation was encouraged as a precondition of a possible association. As both countries were working on their progress towards EU and NATO accession, they both used every possible opportunity to show their resentment to this notion. Nevertheless, in the interest of fairness it would be safe to argue that Bulgaria showed much more public dissatisfaction with the idea of being bundled together with Romania in the accession progress. While true that in the mid-1990s it

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165. Ibid., p. 215.
166. Bacon Jr., "Security as Seen from Bucharest," 1992
167. Ion Iliescu, *Romania in Europe and in the world,* Bucharest, 1994.
168. Bechev, Dimitar. "From Policy-Takers to Polic-Makers?" (2009)

was Romania which was more upset with the fact that both countries were always looked at together, due to the deep economic crisis in Bulgaria, the situation quickly reversed afterwards with Bulgaria taking the hawkish lead for looking at both countries separately.[169] The problem can best be attributed to the fact that Bulgaria started negotiations on an association agreement before Romania, but concluded it after Romania.[170]

"Since the early 1990s Bulgarian politicians – pointing to Sofia's superior record in democratization and, after 1997, in economic restructuring - have pushed hard to dispel any notion that Bulgaria should be put in the same category with Romania in international talks."[171] A pointing example of this disapproval would be the state visit by the Romanian Prime Minister, Adrian Nastase to Bulgaria in August of 2001. During the talks both countries agreed that accession to the western led organisations is their top priority. They will assist each other in pursuing those goals and achieve them in tandem. Yet at the same time in the Bulgarian parliament, the agreement was quickly denounced by the opposition parties. The Union of Democratic Forces (SDS) announced that this plan is against national interests and it also amounts to a change of policy, since the SDS has always maintained that access to the EU and NATO should be judged based on each country's own merits and performance.[172] Reflecting the attitude in Bulgaria that Romania was slowing down its progress. As Barany argues, "Romania has […] been irked by the repeated declarations from Sofia that Bulgaria did not want international organizations to consider it in the same category as its neighbour to the north, given that both in terms of democratic consolidation and economic transition Bulgaria was far ahead."[173]

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169. Ibid.
170. Milada Vachudova, *Europe Undivided:Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism* Oxford University Press, 2005.
171. Barany, Zoltan. *The Future of NATO Expansion* (2003), p. 188
172. BTA. *Romanian Premier in Bulgaria, as Bulgarian Opposition Criticizes link with Romania on joining EU, Nato.* Newsline, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2001
173. Barany, Zoltan. *The Future of NATO Expansion* (2003), p. 141

From the information presented so far, we can see some troubles with the neoliberal explanation for the lack of emergence of cooperation. While both countries attributed strong interest to the integration in the western structures, to a return to Europe, they nevertheless preferred a 'go it alone' approach to cooperation. The mutual interest and the seeming lack of trust should have created a cooperation regime under our neoliberal understandings. That is, to overcome the security dilemma in overcoming the trust deficiency a regime should have emerged between the two countries. A reason for this lack of emergence seems to be the original disparity that was created in their transition. While the original Visegrád countries had an almost tandem-like switch, the disparity between Bulgaria and Romania, and the Romanian policy of a much gradual reorientation from East to West, compared to Bulgaria or the four Visegrád countries for that matter seems to have created a perception of disparity between the two countries.

Conclusion – Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The thesis looked at why the Visegrád group emerged in the immediate aftermath of the events surrounding 1989 and why such cooperation did not emerge between Bulgaria and Romania. Furthermore, the thesis also wanted to offer its contribution to the debate between the realist and liberal schools of international relations. The thesis identified the variables of threat perception towards the Soviet Union, the seeking of absolute gains from cooperation and integration with the Western institutions and trust as the intervening variables that have pushed for or pulled from cooperation.

In the chapter on neorealist explanations, the thesis looked at the existence of a threat perception towards the Soviet Union within the Visegrád countries and within Bulgaria and Romania. With regards to the Visegrád countries, a threat perception towards the Soviet Union was immediately found. Nevertheless, cooperation did not emerge straight away. In the case of Poland, the country experienced two overarching threat, linked to the historical past of the country. The fear of the implications of a unified Germany will have for the Polish-German border. The thesis showed the country exhibited considerable concerns about a possibly revisionist Germany. Coupled with the lack of immediate assurances from Germany or its allies they will not push for a revision, the threats perception of Poland were ranked Germany first, Soviet Union second. What is most interesting is that the Soviet Union, seeking its own interests, was ready to back Poland against German pretences. As such the immediate position of Poland was to balance against Germany with the tacit support of the Soviet Union. This is perfectly in line with our neorealist understandings of state behaviour. In fact, the rapid change of position after the Polish-German border concerns were rectified, further adds to the explanatory powers of neorealism, which stresses that after the need of cooperation is gone, cooperation will fester and die. This reality is further exemplified by the

rapid switch to balancing against the Soviet Union through cooperation with the Visegrád countries to dismantle the Warsaw Pact and remove Soviet Troops from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.

In the case of Czechoslovakia, the threat perception was also apparent, yet the country did not immediately choose to overtly balance against the Soviet Union either. Instead it sought to embed into a pan-European security system through a reform of the CSCE. This in itself poses challenge to our neorealist understandings. This is in a way due to the fact that the realist school has a predominance to deal with great powers rather than small ones, and all the countries covered in this thesis can be considered small powers. Nevertheless, this behaviour is in line with the behaviour of small powers as explored by Toje: "A small power will often seek to minimize the costs of conducting foreign policy and increase the weight behind its policies by engaging in concerted efforts with other actors. This leads to a generally high degree of participation in and support for international organizations. Formal rules are actively encouraged to curb great power independence and increase their own power and influence."[174] Therefore, the original decision of Czechoslovakia is more in line with a neoliberal understanding of International Relations, where a state tries to maximise its absolute gains in the realm of security through cooperation. The refusal on behalf of the western powers, however, is better understood with neorealism than with neoliberalism. Nevertheless, it should be noted that with regards to the original proposals to reform the CSCE, that while neoliberalism can explain it, our neoliberal theoretical framework does not. Future research would require a revision of the framework to broaden its scope. Still, the fact that the plan failed lends credibility that it was an anomalistic behaviour that was quickly rectified.

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174. Toje, "The EU as a Small Power, (2010).

Hungary's threat perception was also in line with our expectations. However, its initial ambivalence in its position was due to the fact that in the early stages the country was still represented by the Communist faction and thus overtly balancing the Soviet Union would have seemed illogical. Moreover, until the actual switch of a new government, the country would not have had much to fear. The threat perception against the Soviet Union in all three countries was fuelled in part by the possible reprisal the Union might take against them from breaking free. As such, since Hungary had not broken fully free in the early days there would have been not much to fear. However after the transition to a new government and to a new political and economic system, the threat perception assumed its role to guide the country's immediate foreign policy.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the subsequent decline of the group is only partially in line with our neorealist understandings. Neorealism would predict that after the threat is gone, cooperation will disappear. Yet while this did happen (the Soviet Union was dismantled), cooperation subsequently declined. The fact that it did not fully disappear is more in line with neoliberalism, which predicts that regimes do not tend to die out.

With that in mind, however, when exploring neoliberal reasons for the emergence of the Visegrád group we saw that that the existence of trust, while a secondary variable is in fact technically contradictory to neoliberal understandings of why cooperation regimes emerge. Such regimes emerge to solve a prisoner's dilemma type situation. Nevertheless, it will be wrong to dismiss neoliberalism simply on the basis of the existence trust. After all, the desire for absolute gains through western integration was present in all three countries, which is one of the requirements for cooperation. The neoliberal indictment really comes from ranking the preferences for cooperation. The primary goal, as we have seen in the empirical sections, was the dismantling of the Soviet Influence within the region, hence to balance against the Soviet Union, with western integration being a very close second. Trust in fact is

helpful for neorealism as with the existence of trust reduces the fear for relative gains between the countries.[175] As such, in the case of the emergence of the Visegrád group it can be argued that it was the threat perception with regards to the Soviet Union that was the primary catalyst for cooperation.

Looking at the developments in Bulgaria and Romania, neorealism seems to also have better explanatory powers than neoliberalism. In the case of Bulgaria, it was found that the country did not conceive the Soviet Union as a threat, unlike the Visegrád countries. The thesis formulated a historical background of the country to show that the historical relationship between Bulgaria and Russia/Soviet Union would be the main reason for this. Historical experiences play an important role in formulating threat perceptions. With the case of Romania the threat perception is more ambivalent, but nonetheless present. Yet considering that Bulgaria felt no threat, even if Romania did feel a strong threat against the Soviet Union, neorealism would still predict no cooperation. The thesis also found, with regards to Romania, that, just like Poland, the country was balancing two threats at the same time, that of Hungary and that of the Soviet Union.

Neoliberalism seems most deficient at explaining the lack of cooperation between the two countries. Just like the Visegrád countries, Bulgaria and Romania sought absolute gains through western integration. From a neoliberal perspective and from the findings with regard to the Visegrád group, cooperation would have allowed the two countries to exert more pressure on the West for integration and also showed their ability to cooperate, as the EC 'suggested' the Visegrád countries should do. This causes a problem that neoliberalism does not seem able to deal with. The only logical explanation that can be advanced for why cooperation did not really happen is the perception of the two countries that the other one would slow the former down in its quest for western integration, which would have resulted

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175. Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger, *Theories of international regimes,* 1997.

in a pareto inefficient outcome. However, this line of logic suggests that the two countries were actually more concerned with relative gains *vis-a-vis* one another. Something that neoliberalism dismisses as irrational behaviour, but neorealism takes for one of the fundamental logics behind state behaviour.

Overall the thesis would conclude that neorealism offers a better explanation for the emergence of the Visegrád group and the lack of such a group between Bulgaria and Romania. This is not to say that neoliberalism is inept at providing an explanation. Instead it requires the support of neorealism to account for some of the variable discrepancies. While neorealism was not fully able to account for everything that happened, it nevertheless had a bigger explanatory power. As such the thesis would conclude that the threat perception was the overarching reason for the emergence Visegrád group, while the lack of such a perception in Bulgaria precluded such a regime emerging between it and Romania. Furthermore, the lack of initial cooperation seems to have precluded cooperation in the future.

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