On NATO's Identities and Temporalisations

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Current IR theories bring ontological and temporal complications into the IR studies due to incompatibilities between the very act of theorising and the purely intersubjective nature of the IR field. In the absence of direct correspondence of IR entities, phenomena and events in the self-standing objectivity, the IR theorising, even in contrast to social sciences, tends to become its own ontological anchor. It tends to "precede" the pre-theoretical, intersubjective, immediate givenness and to attempt to fit it to its pre-postulated axiomatic grounds, constructs and narratives, thus altering and re-shaping it. This includes narrating geneses and their imposition on post-genetically given study objects, thus ensuring the coherence of the theoretical construct yet extending the alteration toward the temporality of study objects. However, it is possible to conduct the IR study on the ground of the pre-theoretical, intersubjective immediacy of the entity, phenomenon and event in their synthetic unity, as a phenomenological inquiry. This article attempts to outline such a study on NATO, focusing on its substance (identity) and the temporality in its relationship with its immediate intersubjective environment including its transformations. In this sense, NATO's adjustment to the post-bipolarity through a double-identity and double-temporalisation setup appears to have been obstructing a new adjustment dictated by further changes in the interstate intersubjectivity. The systemic crisis created by Russia's ongoing aggression toward Ukraine, which was facilitated by this obstruction, is likely to provide it with an end as well, the form of which being dependent on how the current war ends.

Keywords: *NATO, alliance, security community, phenomenology, post-bipolarity*

Introduction

What was NATO when it was first instituted? How NATO continued to exist when the interstate environment in reference to which it came into being "radically changed"? How has it been evolving face to the even newer changes in its environment which seems to have reached to the stage of systemic crisis with the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

These questions are certainly not novelties, including the last one that is related to the ongoing war. Answering to them comprehensively requires study on and deliberation on the IR phenomena such as "alliance" and to an extent, security-community for the substance of NATO as studied entity; "international system" or "international structure" for the general framework for interstate interactions as NATO's environment. Moreover, the axiomatic ground and methodology of conducting the study is to be determined. Given the existence of a multiplicity of works on more general, axiomatic and methodological matters and on the specific

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questions about NATO, why a new study should be attempted if not for make a rather *technical* contribution to these already present works on a specific part of theirs?

The shorter answer is: Because the existing works are inherently problematic in the sense of bringing serious complications into the study of the IR entities, phenomena and events. This is not because they are prone to commit "errata" in the conduct of the IR study but, more fundamentally, because the study they define and conduct is not in accordance with the nature of the IR entities, phenomena and events.

Current IR studies reflect their own, preceding axioms, constructs, prioritisations of theoretical nature onto the study. In other words, they "theorise". They construct narratives on the specific IR entities, phenomena and events on theoretical grounds they *precedingly* build. However, the IR field presents a unique character which is not entirely fit for such an approach, contrasting not only to the sphere of positive sciences but also-and-even to that of the social sciences, from where the IR theorising imports its various theoretical grounds mainly. Positive sciences fully and social sciences significantly anchor themselves to self-standing objectivity (the latter through the objective presence of their main actors which are true individuals and their groupings). This makes, in these fields, theory's assessment against the independently accessible objectivity possible.

Yet, the IR field is purely intersubjective, including its actors/subjects, such as the State: Even true individuals like decision-makers gain such meaning with their appresentative/ representative links to purely intersubjective actors. In the IR field, the entities, phenomena and events have no immediate correspondence in the objectivity. The IR theorising's ontological overlook of intersubjectivity as the very nature of the IR field makes it exogenous to its study objects. This often results in the imposition of the preceding theory onto the givenness of the IR entity, phenomenon and event as "explanation" and "explanatory ground" of the IR theorising precedes the givenness. This exogenously brought precedence consists of axioms, theoretical constructs and genetic narratives of the entities, phenomena and events. The IR study therefore becomes, fundamentally, the act of fitting the otherwise intersubjective, immediate givenness of the IR entity, phenomenon and event into the IR theory's preceding framework. This is not only of ontological but also of temporal character as the IR theory's narrated geneses are imposed on the immediacy of the givenness, which is by nature post-genetic.

Moreover, the IR theorising propose a multiplicity of study grounds and *a priori* proposals, thus producing manifold constructs and narratives, which contradict to the *singularity* of the intersubjective, immediate, pre-theoretical givenness of the IR entity, phenomenon or the event. Due to the lack of an ontological anchor to the self-standing objectivity, this multiplicity remains under-challenged in contrast to theories within the sphere of positive *and* social sciences. The IR theory survives more easily than its "positive" or "social" counterparts, not because of its exceptional robustness but because its constructed grounds are not easily challenged by independently accessible objectivity, which simply does not exist in the IR field.

Studies related to alliance and security-community as phenomena and to NATO as entity related to them are not different in this regard. They reflect the ontological and temporal complications of the IR theorising. These shall be referred-

to in the initial part of the first section. Against this background, a proposal shall then be outlined for anchoring the study to the immediacy of the givenness itself and for proceeding toward the description of the study object's intersubjective, pre-theoretical, immediate, singular givenness in the second sub-section. This proposal shall be based on notions and tools the Husserlian phenomenology offers, with adjustments from the Heideggerian phenomenological ontology.

The second section shall deal with NATO in its given ontological states/ identities as alliance and as security-community and in its temporal states/ temporalisations in relation with the intersubjective environment of the interstate interactions in which they are given.

The first sub-section is reserved to a phenomenological description of NATO's ontological and temporal givenness within bipolarity as its genetic environment as well as in its transformation into the early phase of the post-bipolarity. Here, NATO's alliance identity and security-community *function* in its original environment as well as their change into a double-identity and double-temporalisation which made it valid and viable during the post-bipolar period will be debated. The second sub-section shall focus on inquiring NATO in relation with the transformation of the interstate environment from the earlier post-bipolarity into the current, "late" phase of it. The third sub-section shall outline NATO's current ontological and temporal challenges that are related to the said changes, as "centrifugality" and "friction", which may have reached to their critical stage with the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Ontological Complications of the IR Theorising and the Proposal of Phenomenology

IR Theorising's dealing with the Alliance and the Security-community

The study of the phenomena of alliance and security-community has been conducted on theoretical grounds, with their complications outlined in the introduction. These complications vary in forms and degrees, depending on the particular theoretical construct that is adopted in the study.

According to the realist/structural realist approach, the alliance's –and the security-community's, however this entity is often overlooked by the realists- nature, foundation, maintenance, alteration and termination are matters of power-relations between States, the subject-nature of which is pre-recognised/assumed and the (depiction of) behaviour patterns of which is imported from microeconomy as *a prioris*. Power as substance of interstate interaction finds a specific, *a priori* definition in line with these pre-recognitions and engender further specific definitions related to it such as that of threat and of interest, The alliance as phenomenon is defined on these pre-postulated grounds, this framework of the realist/ structural realist narrative precedes the immediate, intersubjective, singular encounters with the phenomenon through the related event, and fits the encounter to the said framework (see Waltz 1979, pp. 114-128, 165-167, Morgenthau 1948, pp. 137-157,

Fedder 1968, Liska 1962, pp. 26-27, Walt 1987, pp. 17-50, Snyder 1997, Schweller 1994).

Therefore, the phenomenon of alliance appears when the sources of threat or objects of interest, expressible in terms of power and survival –also related to power, become compatible between States-actors. Compatibility/incompatibility are expressible in reference to the same concept of power-relations and fundamental behaviour patterns of a "microeconomic" agent. Here, theorising uniformises state- actors at the ontological level, on these pre-postulated grounds. The individuality of the state-actor is certainly not denied, but appears in ways that are also pre-defined, *a priori* to immediate, living encounter with singular entities, phenomena and events. Individuality is expressed through the same power-parameters, the "amount" of power accompanied by elements that influence this amount, for example geographical/ geopolitical ones. On the other hand, when this kind of reductionism becomes or threatens to become too evidently in conflict with the immediate givenness of entities, phenomena and events, the theoretical effort happens to formulate remedies to protect the construct itself –and not the givenness, which is the study object–. An interesting example to that is Waltz' differentiation between the theory of international politics and the "theory of foreign policies" –based on the actors' *internal compositions*-, which results in transferring the individualities of the state-actor to a vague sphere, effectively purifying the construct from incompatibilities (Waltz 1996).

On the same matter of alliance as phenomenon, other theoretical variants replace this ground with other pre-postulates, for example through underlining interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1989, Nye 2002, Deutsch 1957) or through adding and accentuating a self-preserving and self-promoting "institutional identity" (Keohane and Martin 1995, Keohane 1988, Wallander and Keohane 1995), producing different narratives with similar effects.

The constructivist line of thought, however, amplifies the ontological complications of the IR theorising, ironically due to its more rigorous "ontological effort". Intersubjectivity constitutes the fundamental diagnosis of constructivism as regards the nature of the IR field -however the term itself is not often employed- (see Onuf 1989, pp. 35-64, Onuf 2013, pp. 3-20, Wendt 1999) and replaces the postulates of realist/structural realist approaches which *do not exclude assumptions*, for example, of the subject-character of the State and its general uniformisation within a "system" that is defined on the ground of interconnected parameters that are mentioned above (Waltz 1979). Whereas the realist assumptions –in the sense of assuming the validity of what is immediately, pre-theoretically given- create a possibility of partial reconciliation between the intersubjective, immediate, singular, pre-theoretical givenness of the IR entity, phenomenon or event and the theoretical construct, the constructivist ontology works against it. The constructivist intersubjectivity, instead of being itself the study ground of the IR entities, phenomena and events, becomes the object of a preceding theoretical ground and ensuing genetic narrative, therefore subject to ontological complications at a very fundamental level. This preceding "genetic" ground mainly consists of proposals of sociology/socio-psychology, norms and discourse analyses and so on, exogenous to the *given*, lived, immediate intersubjectivity of the IR entities, phenomena and events. Wendt's "thin

constructivism" also constitutes, in this context, an attempt to remedy this radical nature of constructivism's ontological intervention to the benefit of what is given, for example when drawing attention to "legitimacy" of referring to a constructed entity (the State) as "actor" (see Wendt 1999, pp. 193-245). However and even there, the study concentrates on social dynamics in their construction of their object, therefore only partially "thinning" the ontological intervention of constructivism which is always present and effective.

Constructivism's amplification of the IR theorising's ontological complications is more visible in its dealing with the concept of security community, which is – almost- a direct product of its understanding of the IR. In fact, the genesis and the continuation of a security community may also be "explained" on the ground of realist/structural realist or liberal understanding of international relations. Still, the constructivist work in general sense comes forward in the study of the security community, by *narrating ontology* in contrast to the reductive/assumptive approach of the realist/structural realist thought (see Wendt 1999, pp. 201-233, Kratochwil 2011, p. 161, Kratochwil 1989, pp. 24-25, Kratochwil 2011a, Adler and Greve 2009, Kratochwil 2018, Pouliot 2008, Adler 2008). Here, the narrated ontology's parameters vary from language/ discourse to culture/norms/values, social practise and so on, practically depending on the researcher's "axiomatic preferences". In any case, the study presents a genetic character, not only displaying the security community's social construction/coming-into-being but also constructing the security community (or alliance) itself.

It is not easy to state that the existing "anti-narrative" attitude in the IR field resolves the ontological complications of the IR theorising either. The post-structuralist understanding has apparently its own *a priori*, pre-determinedly critical –sometimes almost moral- position in deconstructing the narrative, with the result of building an alternative one, with complications of the same nature. The post-structuralist approaches do not take only the "criticised" narrative but also the givenness that the narrative relates itself to, as malleable material of the de-centering/ deconstruction (see for example Teorell 2018, pp. 218-232, Ashley 1984, Ashley 1996, Der Derian 2009, pp. 43-62, Bartelson 1995). Here the "metanarrative" is dismantled *directionally*, in pursuance of an "aim" rather than research, on the grounds of pre-determined, pre-selected, in fact pre-judged concepts such as sovereignty, freedom, oppression, pluralism and so on.

A Phenomenological Proposal

The current IR studies' approach to IR entities, phenomena and events is fundamentally "genetic" not only in the sense of privileging their coming-into-being over their post-genetic immediacy of givenness but also of re-shaping them in order to fit them, through narrative, into the theoretical framework that is precedingly built on grounds that are basically exogenous to the IR sphere.

Then how one may define a way of studying the IR, which would be "immune" to IR theorising's ontological complications? Are there concepts and a method that would permit to approach, without a pre-made axiomatic and genetic background, to the entity, phenomenon and event as they are given pre-theoretically, immediately,

intersubjectively, singularly, yet also in its intersubjectively meaningful unity of givenness, both as to its substance and its temporal states (as to its past, present and anticipated/contingent future)?

Phenomenology offers useful concepts and tools in this regard. The *reductions* may be applied in this direction and serve to reach to the entity, phenomenon and event "as is", as given, as appears pre-theoretically, immediately yet meaningfully, putting into perspective all "altering" act and preceding content, may they be of predicative, doxic, emotional and most importantly, theoretical nature (Husserl 1982, pp. 71-81, Husserl 1983, pp. 57-59, 220-221, Brainard 2002, pp. 68-74). In other words, within the purely intersubjective sphere of the IR, the entity's, phenomenon's, event's own, pre-theoretical, intersubjective givenness may be discerned in putting these *a priori* constructs and their *a posteriori* contents into brackets.

The more general type of reduction, the universal/phenomenological one, aims at putting into perspective the *attitude* of the subject/observer/researcher in its relationship with the "world", more precisely with the object of its attention/ object with becomes defined rather in line with the author's own axioms and theoretical construct and thus not on what is given pre-theoretically. It thus shows and labels the doxic, emotional, predicative and more importantly for our work, theoretical/ genetic aspects of the grasp of the study object (Husserl 1983, pp. 51-55, Luft 1983). As such, the universal reduction itself constitutes a particular attitude for the researcher, as rather "introspective" phenomenological attitude, in contrast to what Husserl calls the "natural attitude" to which the theoretical/genetic acts belong. The phenomenological attitude constitutes the methodological ground of this study proposal. However, the focus on the study object at hand, NATO as entity and alliance/security-community as phenomena it is related-to, requires the *eidetic reduction* as it directly involves the study object as it is intersubjectively given and not solely the subject's act of grasping it. This reduction bears upon the experience of *something* as its "*generic way of presenting itself, its Erscheinen*" (see Taminiaux 1988, p. 62). The bracketing here would mean putting into perspective any preceding theoretical/genetic construct and any judgement and predication that are issue of it.

Here the eidetic reduction to NATO as entity gives neither a temporally "frozen" picture at its immediacy nor an isolated appearance of some substance/ content, but a meaningful whole which is ontologically bound to phenomena as meaning-grounds as well as to a past, present and (contingent/anticipated) future, forming a synthetic unity. The *appresentation* depicts the link between the elements of this synthetic unity, be they of ontological or temporal nature. The eidetic reduction gives these elements as irreducibles, which are bound to each other appresentatively. This also means that in case the eidetic reduction shows some element as reducible to a theoretical proposal/judgment/predication, therefore to something exogenous to the givenness, it is bracketed/put into perspective as such. The appresentative links make the synthetic unity of the study object on its *own* ground of appearance/ givenness.

The study object's given synthetic unity is individual and generic at the same time, due to the appresentative link between the phenomenon and the entity/event. The event or entity appresents phenomenon as their meaning ground, which is of

central importance to our study. In a purely intersubjective field, meaningfulness is not a contingent feature of an appearance but the very condition of its possibility, since the appearance is nothing but a meaning there since it has no direct correspondence/ presence in the objectivity. Phenomenon becomes individualised in its synthetic unity with entity or event and forms a singular, intersubjective, immediate, pre-theoretical givenness. Entity or event appears meaningfully on the "generic" ground of the phenomenon in the synthetic unity. The eidetic reduction therefore gives the study object's phenomenal/generic and individual aspects as its substance, while putting into perspective the ontologically and temporally exogenous reflective/ theoretical interventions to it.

As to temporality, the eidetic reduction gives the study object in a temporal coherence of its past, present and future that are appresentatively linked to each other. The Husserlian concepts of retention-protention, recollection and anticipation are particularly expressive in this context, yet not without their own –remediable-complications. Retention-protention expresses the grasp of the study object's *actuality* (see Husserl 1964, pp. 39-50, Kortooms 2002, pp. 177-179, Rodemeyer 2006, pp. 73-176). The present-as-moment is the temporal equivalent of a dimensionless "dot" and as such, is not given to experience in isolation. The present (of something, including the experiencing subject itself) is a *continuing* moment, which becomes possible in its unity with the immediate past and immediately upcoming future, the former in its retention and the latter in its protention (Carr 1991, pp. 24, 40-45), which appresent each other. Still this progressive "now" extends further into its past and its future. Husserl uses the terms of recollection and anticipation for these extensions (Marion 1998, pp. 77-97, Carr 1991, p. 24, Rodemeyer 2006, pp. 12-13) yet reduces both to the volitional act of the subject and not to the givenness of the "object" itself, thus separating the subject from the study object quite *unfittingly* to his own phenomenology. Here, Heidegger's temporality terms (*extases*) of having-been (with), dwelling-with and to be-with (Heidegger 1982, pp. 266-267, Heidegger 1996, pp. 111-112, Heidegger 1985, pp. 238-239) better expresses the inseparability and non-precedence to each other of the *intentio* and *intentum*, of the subject-act and the givenness. Also, in the case of the relationship between recollection and retention, Bernet's inquiry on their separability/ inseparability is of note (Bernet 1994, p. 248). Furthermore, we need to reiterate here that the intersubjective givenness is ontologically separated from volition, here as related to recollection and anticipation: Presenting the access to the temporal states of the study object as volitional is equivalent to reproducing the theoretical/ genetic approach which is exogenous to givenness. This exogeneity is displayed through the eidetic reduction of the study object which includes volition in temporalisation, as it leads to a narrative and a construct about the object rather than to its givenness. On the other hand, the eidetic reduction which puts into brackets "volition" as a narrative element displays directly and automatically the immediate and unifying appresentative nature of the relationship between the temporal states of the givenness, which integrates them to each other, the recollection to the retentional "now" and vice-versa, the anticipation to the protentional "now" and vice-versa.

Now, the entity that constitutes the study object is NATO and its ontological ground is given through the phenomena of alliance and security-community, which

may both be reduced to two forms of interaction with a collectively defined Otherness. Otherness is immediately apparent as regards the phenomenon of alliance, since it more often than not takes a dialectical form. As regards the security-community which involves preventing confrontation *among* its members, the dialectic and therefore the Otherness is vague and potential, rather than immediate. This is consequently undermentioned in the security community literature but not entirely ignored, as it is inherent to, constitutive to the ground phenomenon of interaction according to which the security-community as phenomenon and as given entity becomes possible (see Bellamy 2004, pp. 31-39, 52-63, Adler and Greve 2009, Neumann 1999, pp. 207-228). However, the problem with the security-community theorising appears as Otherness does not clearly taken into consideration in approaching to the phenomenon and the entity, as theory tends to formulate a "they-less We" as community, a quite clear ontological complication. However, the eidetic reduction gives the Other/the relationship with the Other appresentatively as part of the synthetic unity of this paper's specific study object.

Lastly, the intersubjectivity/intersubjective environment reference is necessarily inherent to the synthetic unity/meaningful appearance of the entity/phenomenon/ event that is being studied. As such, it may neither be amorphous –therefore without appearance and meaning- nor a theoretical construct/narrative (since it would be reduced to exogenous genetic proposals and not to the immediacy of the givenness). Therefore it needs to be a collective reference to the (IR) intersubjectivity. Given the context of this paper, such a reference is equivalent to the general appearance of the shape of the interstate interactions, to the pre-theoretical, immediate, collective knowledge of the common environment of the IR, which is equivalent to true subjects' collective knowledge of the fundamental parameters of their common world. Here, the structural realist polarity terminology appears to be useful to express that referentiality. The said reference equates in fact to Waltz's understanding of the "international structure", but at a pre-theoretical, immediate level. Structural realism's *assumptive* character, as mentioned before, makes the theoretical construct/explanatory narrative, therefore the exogenous content, *a posteriori* to given referentiality, therefore unable to alter it.

NATO's Ontological and Temporal States

NATO as Alliance and as Security-Community during the Bipolarity and the Earlier Post-bipolarity

NATO's coming-into-being is related to the intersubjective *reference* to bipolarity as the defining character of the interstate interactions. Until the emergence of bipolarity-as-reference at the end of the IInd World War, the said reference consisted of the intersubjective recognisance of a multiplicity and relative equivalence of major actors with flexible alignment practises, expressible as multipolarity (Waltz 1979, pp. 129-130). This included bi-polarisation as a contingent form of multipolarity, in contrast to bipolarity, which proved to be issue of a different reference (Waltz 1979, pp. 167-168, De Keersmaeker 2018, p. 16-21). Bipolarity's

uniqueness consisted of the Otherness' gaining a rigid and precise content in radical contrast to the alignment flexibility that characterised the preceding multipolar intersubjectivity, including bipolarisation. The Other of bipolarity, as a precise/ concrete entity, appeared to be inherent to the very reference to the intersubjectivity of interstate interactions instead of being an identity flexibly attributed to such and such entity *within* and as *issue* of multipolarity. In other words, bipolarity appeared as the intersubjective reference to a central *dialectic* of two precise actors (see Sayle 2019, pp. 1-17, Waltz 1979, pp. 168, 170-173).

On this referential ground, *collective defence* as immediate and fundamental form of relationship with the precise, concrete "Other" engendered a non-flexible form of alliance that would be coherent with the nature of the interstate intersubjectivity. NATO (as is the case for the Warsaw Pact) was established as such an alliance entity that referred to/was reducible to bipolarity. The constituent-Other, the dialectical counterpart of what NATO represented, was precisely the USSR and its dependencies in line with the very substance of bipolarity. NATO appeared (was established) meaningfully on the ground of the specificity, anticipated continuity and nature of relationship with *this* Other, which presented a synthetic unity with the bipolarity-reference, which made the bipolarity-reference possible as such. Thus NATO radically differed from the multipolar-era alliances, which were much less rigid and far from constituting entities themselves due to the flexible nature of multipolar alignment.

Moreover, as issue of its fundamental rigidity and precision as alliance established in reference to bipolarity, NATO displayed a *function* of security-community as well, in the sense of the mitigation of confrontations and the maintenance of peace among members. The term function expresses here the precedence of the phenomenon of alliance to the phenomenon of security-community in the case of NATO, in the ontological sense. The "alliance" here refers to bipolarity and "security-community" stems from the "alliance", not directly of bipolarity, therefore comes-into-being as alliance's function. As a function of something else, NATO-as-security community differed from the security-communities of the multipolarity, like the Concert of Europe or the League of Nations, which were not built upon or preceded by an alliance. Moreover, being issue of the alliance and not directly of the member States, the security-community function protected the alliance first and foremost, by protecting peace and harmony among its members. Here it is of note that in term of efficiency, NATO's security-community function, engendered and ensured by its preceding, rigid, bipolar-type alliance identity, appeared to be much more than proper security-communities of the multipolar era (see also Waltz 1964 and Snyder 1984). Among the examples to the said efficiency, one may cite the Suez Crisis (Nichols 2011) or the Greco-Turkish confrontations on the Cyprus and the Aegean demarcation issues, which were kept from deteriorating into fractures and confrontations among allies, thus jeopardising the alliance (also see Eznack 2012).

NATO's genesis appresents the passage from multipolarity to bipolarity, as transformation in the interstate intersubjectivity which made the appearance of NATO valid and meaningful. This appresentation includes the anticipation of the bipolar dialectic's *not* being a temporary phenomenon, and as such its continuation

of enabling NATO as it was. (See also Webber et al. 2012, pp. 1-20) Here NATO's anticipatory horizon would consist of contingent forms that the said central dialectic might take, like cold war-proper or *détente*. However the very existence of the dialectic appresended, *ipso facto*, its own end, invalidation as contingency, it would be equivalent to the disappearance of NATO's meaningful existence, again due to the irreducibility of the dialectic in NATO's givenness. In other words, NATO and the bipolar dialectic were mutually inherent, constituting the irreducible elements of each other.

And yet, the USSR and its alliance network disintegrated. The successor of the USSR materially emerged with loss of allies and territory, of political-economic stability and with military degradation in comparison to its predecessor (see Herspring 1995, Tikhomirov 2000). Still, the material change of NATO's dialectical counterpart did not equate to the automatic invalidation of the *material grounds* of the dialectic itself: It is hardly possible to state that the USSR's successor was not "powerful enough" to materially maintain the dialectic in place as the valid intersubjective reference of interstate interactions. This "objectivity" in terms of power-relations seems to have confused for example Waltz, as he drew attention to the preservation of Moscow's largely intact nuclear (and even conventional) power-base and depicted the situation rather as the continuation of bipolarity in a newer form (Waltz 1993). Others who theorised on the ground of power-relations seems to have omitted this argument and put forward others that were more fitting to the preceding construct selectively, for being able to declare a structural realist type of unipolarity (see Krauthammer 1991, Wohlforth 1999).

It seems that the bipolar dialectic's disappearance, while naturally being related to it as well, does not totally reflect the transformation of the balance of power. Beyond what the material transformation dictated, the Russian Federation herself positively/validatingly referred to the unipolar "givenness", as observed in her discourse and policies of democratisation, economic liberalisation and in her display of willingness to adhere to "Western" institutions (Tsygankov 2016, pp. 59-96, Melville 2018, Rumer 2007). Russia's very *identity* and not *power*, as the precise and constituent "Other" for NATO, disappeared. In other words, the bipolar dialectic was intersubjectively invalidated beyond the material criteria required by the related IR theorising.

As to NATO, the end of the bipolarity *apparently* meant an ontological impasse and a temporal destabilisation related to it. Much doubt was expressed as to the viability of the NATO at the time of the transition (Mearsheimer 1990). Still NATO was not annulled or reduced to an institutional "husk". Here the application of the narrative of institutional self-preservation to NATO would be valid in the latter case, if the entity's ontological ground was truly suppressed. Instead, institutional reflexes appeared to be rather *auxiliary* to main ontological and temporal facts (see also Walt 1997, de Wijk 1997 and Goldgeiger 1998).

Perhaps NATO's "viability problem" was after all an illusion of the IR theorising, unattached to its intersubjective, immediate, pre-theoretical givenness, an illusion stemming from the omission of the *temporal features* of the passage into post-bipolarity. The givenness of the transformation, of the invalidation of the bipolarity's central dialectic, was actual (retentional-protentional). The actuality did not/ had no

reason to equate to the total "erasure" of bipolarity reference from every temporal state of interstate interaction related to NATO. The bipolar dialectic was retained in the intersubjective reference to the interstate environment and therefore within the synthetic unity of the entity, in the form of *invalidation in the actuality*, yet as something which had been valid and which presented the contingency of becoming valid on the anticipatory horizon. This stems from the appearance of the post-bipolarity itself as a sort of "non-bipolarity" instead of a self-standing, independently given reference –in contrast to multipolarity or bipolarity itself when they were actual. As such the post-bipolarity included the bipolarity-reference in its synthetic unity, *ipso facto* in NATO's synthetic unity in its relationship with the international environment. As such, it is not surprising to witness the long debate about the existence/inexistence, nature and durability of the "unipolarity" (Ikenberry et al. 2011, pp. 1-32, Jervis 2009, Beckley 2018, Pape 2009, Monteiro 2014, Mearsheimer 2018, Brooks and Wohlforth 2011, Layne 2012), as unipolarity was not pre-theoretically, immediately, singularly, intersubjectively self-evident and identifiable. The post-bipolarity, not having taken an independent shape of its own, remained ontologically and temporally linked to bipolarity and entities that referred to bipolarity, such as NATO, found their ontological viability on that ground, with changing "temporalisations".

Still, the transition itself meant the actual diminishment of the USSR's successor's bipolar identity, with the apparent and even pioneering consent of the Russian Federation herself, as displayed by a multitude of occurrences in the "West"-Russia relations as depicted above. However, it also appeared that, again in accordance with the same ontological/ temporal state-of-affairs, the identity of the bipolar-Other was *partially* transferred to Moscow within the transition into the post-bipolarity, even as the very condition of possibility of such transition. This may be exemplified by the preservation of the *liberum veto* in the UN Security Council, of Moscow's bipolarity-like counterpart status in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europ[1] and of bipolar-like *balance* and *reciprocity* norms and practises in the field of nuclear arms.

In other words, the transition would warrant neither the suppression of NATO's reason of being nor the preservation of its identity and temporalisation as it had been when bipolarity was actual. Apparently, from this impasse stemmed the re-temporalisation of NATO in two temporally separated identities, one appearing at the living actuality and one temporalised on the anticipatory horizon of contingencies. The original alliance as identity was intersubjectively attributed to the anticipatory horizon, thus preserving its contents such as the Article V or the joint command structure. As to actuality, NATO's security-community *function* seems to have emerged as identity in a *sui generis* form (Adler and Greve 2009, Williams and Neumann 2000). These two identities coexisted in their temporal separation (see also Adler and Greve 2009, Morgan 2003, Wallander 2000).

Accordingly, the "Otherness" element of the NATO's synthetic unity gained a dual identity and temporalisation, which also made NATO's new security-commutity identity *sui generis*: A security community-with-"Other" constituted the

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[1]https://www.osce.org/library/14087?download=true.

actual part of NATO with "Otherness" being identified among the asymmetrical "new threats" ranging from the terrorist groups and organised crime to the "rogue states" (see Webber et al. 2012, pp. 27-28 for the Strategic Concepts of 1991, 1999 and 2010). If these new threats were not themselves novelties, they nevertheless became valid "Others" that completed and validated the sui generis security-community identity of NATO's actuality (see also Adler and Barnett 1998, pp. 30-34, Mitzen 2016, Moustakis and German 2009, pp. 21-26). NATO's secondary function during bipolarity thus appeared as its identity in the actual post-bipolarity. Having been originally designed against exogenous threats, NATO's established structures and capabilities could fit in this *sui generis* security-community identity with adaptations, while it continued to be viable as regards the alliance identity which was temporalised on the anticipatory horizon (also see Kay and Petersson 2014). Adaptation to the *sui generis* security-community identity included revisions of doctrine and capabilities that were built for bipolarity (Da Mota 2018, pp. 146-149, Webber et al. 2012, pp. 22-30, 153-159), not without problems between the US and the EU-members or even between the Europeans themselves, for example in relation with burden-sharing (Terriff 2013). Still, NATO could act on more than one occasion as *sui generis*, outwardly (having its own Others) security-community (Burton 2018, pp. 62-74 for the Kosovo and 113-123 for the Afghanistan interventions). It is of note that the sole recourse to the Article V in the history of NATO occurred after the 9/11 attacks, as a *sui-generis* security-community act (Webber et al. 2012).

As to Moscow's otherness that was placed on NATO's anticipatory horizon, it is of note that Russia also gradually tended to refer to herself as such, again partially and as temporalised on a similar anticipatory horizon (see Prizel 1998, pp. 239-299, Gardner 2013, pp. 51-71). This took different forms, contents and discursive rationalisations (see O'Loughlin et al. 2017), which may be exemplified by the efforts to deepen the CIS or the invention of the "near-abroad" *in reference to* Russia-"West" relations (see also Selden 2016, p. 105). The tendency toward being/becoming the counterpart of the West *en bloc* was also expressed in the fundamental policy papers of the Federation (Melville and Shakhleina 2005[2]). However, the CIS' debatable progress and efficiency (see Torjesen 2009, p. 154, Vinokurov 2007 but also Willerton and Beznosov 2007) or the practical limits of the Russian involvement in the separatist near-abroad crises (see Jackson 2003, pp. 81-111, 112-139, Kennedy 2016, Lemay-Hebert 2008) apparently retrained this tendency in the-then actuality and extended it toward an anticipatory horizon of its own.

As result, NATO's post-bipolar dual-identity and dual-temporalisation depended, in particular, on the Russian Federation's non-confrontational, non-dialectical stance at the-then actuality, as well as its Otherness on the anticipatory horizon,

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At that point, the outwardliness of NATO's security community identity seems also to have undermined this ontological and temporal state-of-affairs of post-

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[2]For the texts of the Foreign Policy Concept, Military Doctrine and National Security Concept until then.

bipolarity. Being at first glance *sui-generis* security community policies, the NATO enlargement with its normative contents (Epstein 2005) and NATO members' "unipolar/unilateral" interventions seem to have constituted the main factors of a gradual destabilisation. These acts could also be interpreted as those of a well-defined Alliance, in particular by Moscow in its own identification and temporalisation that was parallel to NATO's.

NATO's waves of enlargement toward Eastern Europe and into Baltics held Russia at a distance, both in terms of consultation or Moscow's invitation into the process (see Simon 2008, pp. 93, 102-103). From the very early phases of the post-bipolarity, for example within the PfP, different outcomes for different actors seem to have been pre-posited, ranging from NATO membership to promotion of democratic/economic reforms, which were generally embraced by the member countries as means of balancing Russia with the West (see Adler and Greve 2009, Cottey 2018, pp. 61-65 but also Schimmelfennig 2003, Adler 2008 and Acharya 2004). For the Russian Federation, the PfP practically became a mechanism for pacification and limited cooperation. This function was further reinforced by a bilateral mechanism of inconsequential dialogue[3].

This apparently contradicted with Moscow's understanding of continuation of the non-dialectical relationship with the West, which required an "equal say" or *de facto* "veto right" in the matters of the near-abroad, in particular as regards the NATO enlargements (see Smith 2003, Smith 2006, Light 2009). The contradiction was extended to NATO interventions in Kosovo and later in Libya, which Russia categorically labelled as unilateral and illegitimate (see Petro 2017, Norris 2005). The Russian criticism, in reduced form, appears to have been on NATO's acting as a bipolarity-era alliance within the actuality of the security-community context (also see Braun 2008). "Legitimacy" controversially meant here consensus for such interventions in the UN Security Council (and the OSCE), itself a mechanism of bipolarity-era and setup, where Moscow had its (bipolarity-inherited) equal counterpart position (see Williams and Neumann 2000, German 2017).

Russia gradually reacted more substantially. A staged yet heavy-handed centralisation policy from the end of the millennium onward increased her inner coherence (see for example Selden 2016, pp. 102-107) in contradiction with her policies of normative adherence to the West immediately after the transition into post-bipolarity. The public opinion evolved, in parallel to the centralisation and economic recovery fuelled by rising oil/gas prices, toward a bipolarity-like anti-Westernism (see Rumer 2007, Petro 2018). Russia approached more and more to a dialectical position with NATO due to the inevitably "outwardly" nature of NATO's security-community policies. In this vein, the colour revolutions of 2003-2004 and then the GUAM initiative seem to have been the last pro-western occurrences in the near-abroad that did not face direct and substantial reaction from the Russian side.

Putin's famous warning addressed to the NATO-members at the 2007 Munich Security Conference arguably marks a turning point[4]. It signified Russia's adoption of a bipolar-like, confrontational posture *in actuality*, with consequences on NATO's dual-identity and dual-temporalisation. It seems to have significantly

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[3]The NATO-Russia Founding Act and then the NATO-Russia Council.
[4]http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034.

influenced the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit, when NATO members failed to reach a consensus in granting MAPs to Georgia and Ukraine (Arbuthnot 2008). NATO's actual security-community state's failure to "riposte" apparently encouraged Moscow to take further action the same year. As the NATO-aspirant Georgia intervened in the separatist region of South Ossetia, Russia directly took part in the conflict and defeated the Georgian forces. The NATO-*members*' reaction to the Russian intervention remained discursive, therefore inconsequential. In fact, the Russian act seems to have deterred NATO from the enlargement toward the "near-abroad" as the MAPs were to be rediscussed and possibly granted the same year, which did not happen (Kipiani 2015, Antonenko 2009). Moreover, the US initiated "Reset" with Russia in 2009, which appeared as *appeasement* in the light of the 2007 and 2008 developments (Hahn 2013, Lazarević 2009).

NATO's and its members' reaction to the Russian moves indicate reflexes aiming at re-adapting Russia to their double-identity and double-temporalisation rather than re-adapting themselves to Russia's increasingly bipolarity-like self-assertion. However, even the "Reset"s *positive* outcomes such as the facilitation of the new START or of the "coordination" in the Afghanistan operation (Deyermond 2013) seem to have reinforced the Russian understanding of being a *de facto* bipolar-type "equal counterpart" in actuality and of having preponderance in its "near-abroad".

Here if the latter part of the emerging state-of-affairs between NATO and its members on the one hand and Russia on the other was correct at the *regional* level, it did not extend beyond it toward globality, as was the case during the bipolarity. This was displayed when the "West" supported the "Arab Spring" in 2010 and NATO "unilaterally" intervened in Libya in 2011, which collapsed the Reset's apparent makeshift compromise (Perra 2016, Dannreuther 2015, O'Sullivan 2018) and continued the erosion of NATO's double-identification and temporalisation.

The Ukrainian crisis of 2014 constituted another milestone in the process. Ukraine had long been a theatre of friction between two demographically/linguistically *balanced* factions with pro-Western and pro-Russian inclinations (Van den Pijl 2018, pp. 38-41, Simon 2010, Wydra 2014). The friction had not caused disintegration, apparently due to the Russian pre-2007 and then to NATO's (and the EU's) post-2007 self-restraint. Yet the dissociation between the two sides as to their identifications and temporalisations in their relationship, as the Reset's collapse not only strongly indicated but also accelerated, seems to have brought the Ukrainian friction to a course of eruption. However the NATO MAP issue was frozen, the seemingly lesser yet meaningful issue of the choice between the EU Association Agreement and EAEU membership triggered the events. The Yanukovich government opted for the EAEU, the ensuing Euromaidan uprising suppressed the Yanukovich government. Russia immediately intervened in Lugansk and Donetsk and annexed Crimea in furtherance of her post-2007 course of action (see Kalb 2015, pp. 158-179, Van den Pijl 2018, pp. 69-86).

NATO *members* did react this time, not repeating the attempt to accommodate Russia to their self-identification and temporalisation through "appeasement", yet not entirely accommodating themselves to the emerging dialectic in the actuality either (also see Gardner 2016). Alliance identity began to be re-temporalised to the

actuality, yet not entirely replacing the *sui generis* security-community identity and temporalisation. NATO tried, voluntarily or involuntarily, to "co-temporalise" two different identities.

In line with the abovementioned, the consecutive NATO Summits of Wales 2014, Warsaw 2016 and Brussels 2018 re-actualised the mothballed-looking concepts and measures of collective defence (see Burton 2018, pp. 156-166, Larsen 2019). NATO took some initiatives regarding the force readiness and deployment, such as the Readiness Action Plan of the Wales Summit, the "enhanced security measures" with a "focus on the Eastern Flank", the "renewed emphasis on deterrence and collective defence" and the "reliance to US forces" of the Warsaw Summit as well as the conventional deterrence commitment "30/30/30 over 30" of the Brussels Summit (Larsen 2019, Heisbourg 2020, Ringsmose and Rynning 2017). Some additional measures were taken in the field of nuclear deterrence as well (see Larsen 2019). Still, face to Russia's rapid military modernisation programme, the reinforcement of the NATO-members on their contact-zones remained feeble (Giles 2017, Petersson 2019). The issue of granting MAPs to Ukraine and Georgia, already a matter of strong inner divergences, disappeared in the background, apparently *because* they had been targeted by Russia (Lanoszka 2017). The efficiency of the NATO-members' sanctions against Russia proved to be at best limited (see Kholodilin and Netšunajev 2019), also diminished by divergences among NATO-members (Stahl et al. 2016). Even the "spillover" of the Russian military activity toward the conflict zones of the Middle East, into Syria most prominently but also into Libya, could not be deterred. On the other hand, Russia's self re-temporalisation to a bipolar-like relationship with NATO and its members went on and was reflected increasingly in its official discourse[5].

Centrifugality and Friction: NATO's and its Members' Impasses in the Late Post-Bipolarity and the Ukrainian War

NATO's/NATO-members' apparent delay in re-identifying/ re-temporalising the entity face to obvious changes in the post-bipolar environment may be reduced to two mutually appresenting phenomena, expressible as centrifugality and friction. Centrifugality appears as regards the NATO-members' lack of unity in determining and pursuing policies related to the entity, which stems from post-bipolarity's flexibility in contrast to the characteristic alignment discipline of the bipolar era. NATO's double-identification and double-temporalisation, in particular the adoption of the characteristically supple *sui generis* security-community identity in the post-bipolar "actuality", validates centrifugality at ontological level. Subsequently, the phenomenon of friction appears between the two NATO identities as the alliance was being re-temporalised in the actuality, where the *sui generis* security-community is already temporalised, in connection with the centrifugal policies of the individual NATO members (also see Waltz 2000, de Wijk 1997, Garey 2020, pp. 6-7).

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[5] https://russiaeu.ru/userfiles/file/foreign_policy_concept_english.pdf; https://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf; https://www.rusemb.org.uk/in1/; https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029; https://www.rusemb.org.uk/rp_insight/.

The passage to the post-bipolarity had widened the state-actors' policy horizons, including these of the NATO-members, *relative* to the rigid bipolar dialectic, when common action was being debated. The *sui generis* security-community as the "actual" post-bipolar NATO identity amplified centrifugality as its reference to "Otherness" was blurred in comparison with the bipolar-type alliance. As such, NATO's or NATO-members' interventions, in planning and in implementation, presented inner disconcert at varying levels (see Sperling 2019, also Bellamy 2002). This phenomenon appeared also in NATO's enlargement process, despite the fact that enlargement proved to be more practicable/justifiable as that of a security-community (also see Adler 2008, Wallander 2000). Even as such, Russia's increasing tendency to retain her bipolar-identity in living actuality seems to have further amplified centrifugality within NATO, differentiating more "cautious" members from the others. France's and Germany's blockage of Georgian and Ukrainian MAPs constituted a particularly consequential event which exemplified the phenomenon. Among the subsequent examples, once may cite the inconsistent sanctioning of Russia and the weak support to Kiev, Tbilissi and Kishinev after 2014 (see Leigh 2019, also Moustakis and German 2009, Mikhelidze 2015).

The friction may be described on the basis of the continuation of the "new threats" that provided the *sui generis* security-community with "Otherness", when the "Other" of the alliance identity was becoming actual as well. During the period following 2007, NATO-as-security community did not disappear, nor was replaced in the actuality by the alliance-identity and its other entirely. What had been happening appeared rather as the alliance identity's gradual and in fact controversial co-actualisation with the security-community without a sort of "ontological – identitary-precedence" akin to their relationship during bipolarity. Webber's depiction of the Wales Summit of 2014 as "absorbed in its terms of reference (1990, 1999 and 2010) ranging from terrorism to piracy to cyber-attacks, Afghanistan, Balkans and Iraq... a damaging internal struggle to preserve a common front" is descriptive at that juncture (Webber 2016, see also Deni 2019).

Centrifugality, which is augmented by the *sui generis* security-community and which was amplifying friction, appeared to constitute the main obstacle to NATO's re-temporalisation. It expressed reduced coherence among the member States in attributing ontological precedence to the alliance-identity over the *sui generis* security-community identity in the actuality, at a time when the Russian Federation had no such parameters. As such, centrifugality, in combination with friction, offered a horizon of mutually paralysing co-actualisation of the two identities. On the other hand, effective progress in the current re-temporalisation of the alliance-identity through NATO's adaptation to its already emerged "Other", would mean the decrease of the centrifugality and of the friction, which in their turn would appresent further progress in the said re-temporalisation. This contingency is that of the security-community identity's regression to a function face to the self-assertion of Moscow as NATO's dialectical "Other".

What would mean Russia's ongoing aggression toward Ukraine[6], as the current peak of Russia's bipolar-like acts, in the abovementioned context of NATO's

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[6]As of mid-December 2023.

identity and temporalisation? Moscow had explained and continues to explain its current war not only on the basis of its bilateral discordances with Kiev but also on that of NATO's susceptible "anti-Russian" enlargement toward Ukraine and the Ukrainian regime's willingness to adhere[7]. In other words, the war was initiated by Moscow more as a Russo-Western confrontation than as an isolated, bilateral act. This gives the ontology of the current struggle as it is validated from the NATO side: So far, the entity's and its members' reaction included significant and continuous material aid to Ukraine, *relatively* robust and coherent political stance against Russia, more effective sanctions with less divergence among the NATO-members and determination in taking collective defence measures in contrast to the afterwards of the 2014 crisis[8], including the incorporation of Finland and of Sweden into the entity. Consequently, Russia failed to decapitate the Ukrainian government, to take Kiev or most of other important cities she targeted, her advance was stalled and she had to evacuate Kiev and Kharkov "fronts" as the Ukrainian side counterattacked. In other words, the developments on the battlefield initially validated and further encouraged the NATO identity's re-temporalisation and diminished both centrifugality and friction.

However, more recent developments in the war have apparently begun to erode, if not to reverse this directionality and re-increase centrifugality and friction. The Ukrainian counter-offensive failed to achieve breakthrough at the front. Furthermore, Russia's offensive capabilities have apparently not been suppressed, although the Muscovite army could not achieve a breakthrough either. This state-of-affairs is apparently becoming "exhausting" for part of the NATO-members', including the US' determination and coherence in helping Kiev in the prosecution of war, in contrast to their earlier and very vocal commitments and their so far significant material help. Not a Russian victory but the war of attrition has seemingly been reinvigorating centrifugality and friction in the form of increasingly questioning the continuation of the all important support to the Ukrainian war effort.

The discourse of a "diplomatic solution" is resurfacing again. This had meant at the very beginning of the war, when a Russian victory seemed to be imminent, a peace with Ukrainian concessions such as Kiev's constitutional neutrality and possible cessation of territory through plebiscites[9]. In the case of a halt or even decrease in NATO-members' aid to Ukraine, Kiev may be unable to prosecute a war of attrition against Russia and may have to yield to pressures of a "diplomatic solution" which would stem from the same actors.

The "diplomatic solution" with concessions to Russia means nothing short of a Russian *systemic* victory against NATO and NATO-members due to the very significance of the current event of war. It would be more consequential than Russia's total military victory over Ukrainian arms and elimination of the Kiev

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[7] https://mid.ru/en/press_service/spokesman/briefings/1800470/#4; https://mid.ru/en/press_service/spokesman/briefings/1800470/#11 ; https://tass.com/defense/1409813.
[8] https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_193719.htm.
[9] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/30/ukraine-offer-neutrality-meaning-constitution-russia-what-does-neutral-status-country-mean-how-would-it-work; https://news.sky.com/story/ukraine-war-zelenskyy-says-ukraine-is-willing-to-consider-declaring-neutrality-and-offer-security-guarantees-to-russia-12576688;https://www.ft.com/content/7b341e46-d375-4817-be67-802b7fa77ef1; https://www.newsweek.com/russia-claims-dispute-over-crimea-donbas-settled-ukraine-1693474.

regime since it would suppress the ground of the current sanctions, which are the most direct expression of NATO's/NATO members' reaction against Moscow. Russian understanding of and positions in the "near-abroad" would be validated over the countries of the region. Moscow, in furtherance of a process which had already progressed until the start of the Ukrainian war, would constitute a gravity centre, an alignment alternative for third countries that are unwilling to align with the "West", in particular for normative incompatibilities with it. Moscow's already existing alignments, in particular its *entente* with China, would probably gain a new momentum as well. In other words, whereas a Russian military victory would possibly decrease centrifugality and friction toward completing NATO's re-temporalisation to alliance, a "diplomatic solution" could work in the opposite direction.

Conclusion

It is possible to study IR entities, phenomena and events in their pre-theoretical, singular, intersubjective immediacy, avoiding the ontological and temporal complications of the current IR theorising. Phenomenology offers notions and a method to conduct such a study toward their description as they are "given", as a synthetic unity formed through appresentative links between its irreducible ontological and temporal elements. NATO, as an entity of the IR field, may be studied as such.

Within this framework, it appears that NATO, which was constituted as an alliance specific to the bipolarity, was adapted to the immediacy of the post-bipolar intersubjectivity through attribution of two identities that were separately temporalised. In the actuality of the early post-bipolar era, NATO appeared rather as a *sui generis*, "outwardly" security-community and as its original self, a bipolar-type rigid alliance on the anticipatory horizon. As long as the bipolarity-type dialectic continued to remain temporalised as future contingency and the non-bipolar/non-dialectic appearance of the interstate intersubjectivity constituted the actuality, the dual-identity remained valid and viable.

This duality of identity and temporalisation was gradually eroded by the "preserved" elements of the past dialectic, through their –also gradual- transformative re-temporalisation from the anticipatory horizon to the actuality, which gained momentum from 2007 onwards. Throughout events displayed by this progressive re-temporalisation of the interstate intersubjectivity, NATO faced serious impasses that have been delaying, if not preventing, its re-temporalisation in line with the changing intersubjectivity. These impasses stemmed from the very nature of the dual-identity/dual-temporalisation face to the erosion of their original post-bipolar setup, appearing as "centrifugality" among the constituents of the entity that prevented coherence and "friction" as related to the non-precedence between the two different identities that were being co-temporalised in the actuality.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine created not only an acute political/ security crisis but also an ontological/temporal one for NATO. However NATO's re-temporalisation as alliance was apparently accelerated, with reduced centrifugality and friction, another dynamic has appeared as the war was prolonged and the

prospects of a Ukrainian victory dimmed, once again increasing centrifugality and friction that could materialise as pressures for a "diplomatic solution" with Ukrainian concessions, which would suppress the ground of current sanctions against Moscow and validate Russian positions concerning the near-abroad at least, in relation with NATO and its members. The final picture as to the identity and temporalisation, therefore the validity and viability of the Western Alliance depends largely on the result of the current war.

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