

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL CHANGES OF THE PAST 30 YEARS

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Abstract

During the last 30 years the borders of the European countries suffered little changes compared to other periods, while the wars moved from a large-scale confrontation, to reduced/regional wars. Nevertheless, we live in a world where the ambition is the eradication of war. Thus, any military conflict is closely analyzed, starting from the causes to effects, actors involved and possible resolutions. In many cases, the resolutions of recent conflicts/wars are still unforeseeable. The perpetuation of wars (frozen conflicts or protracted wars) brought into attention the necessity of a multinational, objective involvement. Thus, one of the solutions, feature of the present times, is the involvement of international bodies, regardless if we are speaking about regional or global structures. In this environment, international organizations seem to play an important and relevant role. The aim of the research is to analyze and evaluate the impact and the role played by the international organizations in some of the most significant international disputes of present times in Europe, as well as their capacity to influence the outcome of the conflict depending on the means they possess and the actions they are entitled to take.

Keywords: international organizations, NATO, UN, OSCE, territorial change

Introduction

The international community has the pretention to have learned from the mistakes made in the past. However, the European continent – and not only – had to learn some harsh lessons in a hard way. The Two World Wars devastated the states socially, politically, and even those who were on the winning side seemed to enjoy a *victory a la Pirus*. Following the Second World War, Europe entered a quasi-stable phase where the disputes were mainly political and less territorial. However, after the end of the cold war, a power vacuum appeared once the communist regimes started to fall all across the continent. Thus, in many former federal constituted

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states, secessionist movements started to appear. Since the European states had in the back of their minds the consequences of any military conflict, each violent confrontation had been addressed in a timely fashionable manner. This research paper will try to shed light upon the reaction of the international community regarding three major events that took place in the European soil, with a focus on the actions taken and role played by the international organizations/structures: United Nations (UN), North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The events are going to be analyzed chronologically, starting with the war in Yugoslavia (Kosovo), continuing with the conflicts of South Caucasus (Georgia) and ending with the Crimean war.

Starting from the hypothesis that the international organizations are having the capacity to influence states behavior, I will analyze the three distinct wars mentioned earlier, that took place in Europe since the end of cold war. The basic assumption is that the international organizations are becoming more and more important when it comes to protracted wars or territorial changes in Europe. The focus of this research paper will be on the role of NATO, UN and OSCE in the process of redrawing the map of Europe during the last 30 years. As a theoretical tool, I will use the findings of Abbott and Snidal, who, in their article from 1998, are researching the problem of *Why States Act through Formal International Organizations*. Two features – centralization and independence - used by the two authors are going to guide the present analysis. *Centralization* is understood as “a concrete and stable organizational structure and an administrative apparatus managing collective activities”, while *independence* is seen as “the authority to act with a degree of autonomy and often with neutrality in defined spheres” (Abbott and Snidal, 1998, p. 9).

As a research method I used the case study, while the questions that guide my research are:

1. How did the international bodies became part of the resolution of the conflict?¹
2. At what point of the conflict the international bodies got involved?²
3. What kind of measures implemented the international organizations?³ Did any of these measures influenced the political, diplomatic or military behavior of the parties involved?

The paper is written from an analytic perspective and not a historical one. The aim of the paper is not be to present a comprehensive image of each of the three conflicts, but rather to analyze those important segments relevant to this research. The paper is structured in two main parts, with a conclusion section. The first part of

¹ On a voluntary basis or upon request from one of the parties involved.

² The organization was involved since the beginning or got to be part of it as the conflict worsened.

³ Military and non-military means.

the paper comprises the factual aspects of the case studies, while the second part is outlining the implications of the actions taken by the international organizations. The conclusion sections draws the main findings, but it is also opening the way for further research directions.

1. Territorial changes and international involvement

1.1. The Balkans - Kosovo War

The roots of the disputes between Kosovo and Serbia date back hundred years ago. During the past 30 years, the spark that brought flames to the Serbian-Kosovo relations lies between the willingness of Serb leadership to cut off any autonomous or separatist ambition of Kosovo and the full determination of the Kosovo leadership to gain its status as an independent state. Thus, in 1989 Slobodan Milosevic decided to strip off Kosovo of its preferential status as autonomous province of Serbia. In a public address to its people, the Yugoslav leader declared, “Every nation has a love which eternally warms its heart. For Serbia, it is Kosovo. That is why Kosovo will remain in Serbia.” (Silber & Little, 1995, p. 66) The declaration of Milosevic came on the eve of the Yugoslav crisis. One by one, the states that formed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia decided to declare their independence and secede from the Federation. With more or less military confrontation, by the mid-90s four out of six Republics became independent. For Serbia, Kosovo did not cease to represent a problem. Likewise, following the dismantle of Yugoslavia, Kosovo’s old ambition increased from autonomy to independence. The way to war was paved with completely opposed demands, making the solution even harder to achieve.

United Nations

The United Nations got involved in the Kosovo conflict early on the 90s. Through its various committees, the biggest international organizations searched for a solution. At first, the involvement took the form of international monitoring and *deterrence of an attack upon the civil population*⁴ (BBC⁵, 1995; United Nations,

⁴ The term *deterrence* and *safe area* was accepted after heated negotiations among the UN member states. The debate first arise during the incidents of the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srebrenica. While some delegates wanted to make UN presence a *safe haven* in the villages and cities where it was present, the European states and not only considered this aim as being too bolt and unrealistic. For the later ones, the mission of settling these kind of areas was over UN capacity (because, in case of an attack, UN had to protect the civilians by any means, including military force), its military capabilities being outnumbered and incapable compared to the parties involved, Bosnian and Serbs.

⁵ BBC (1995), The Death of Yugoslavia – A Safe Area. BBC Documentary Series 08:38-10:00, (retrieved from <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x849p8o>).

1993). Nevertheless, the trust in UN was at a low point due to the precedent settled in the case of Srebrenica in 1995 when despite the insurance of the UN representative, then French general Phelippe Marillon, the Bosnian Serbs executed thousands of Muslim men and boys of the village.

UN focused its efforts in Kosovo mainly using peaceful means, endorsing economic, military and diplomatic sanctions against Yugoslavia. In March 1998, UN Security Council called upon an arm embargo on Yugoslavia through the Resolution of the Council 1160. Further on, UN Security Council adopted three Resolutions 1199 (23 September 1998), 1203 (24 October 1998), and 1207 (17 November 1998). Resolution 1199 called upon the end of hostilities and observe a ceasefire. Resolution 1203 dealt with the need for the conflict to be resolved peacefully and the Kosovo region to receive autonomy together with a high-degree of self-administration. While Resolution 1207 addressed the imperative that all the parties involved in the Kosovo War and not only, to cooperate with the International Tribunal on investigating the war crimes. But the UN capacity to act was limited to these kind of actions, mostly consisting in public declarations. After the failed round of negotiations in Rambouillet, the international power of UN came to a dead end leaving the stage to other organizations such as NATO.

NATO

With the Dayton Accords of 1995, the Balkans hoped for peace. However, less than four years passed since the last NATO military mission in the area and North Atlantic planes took off again to hit Serbian military structures, with the aim of impending another aggression over the civil population in Kosovo and to prevent the spread of war to other territories of countries⁶. The bombing lasted for 78 days: from 24th of March until 10th of June 1999 targeting military infrastructures and dual-use buildings from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. Important to mention that NATO intervention in Serbia was authorized by UN Security Council Resolution only after the intervention, reason why the legitimacy of the bombing was frequently questioned (United Nations, 1999).

After the end of its air campaign, NATO became the main peacekeeping structure in Kosovo. The UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and the Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia empowered the international NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR). Among the main objectives of KFOR, still available to date, are the deterrence of any attempt,

⁶ CNN (1999). Transcript: Clinton addresses nation on Yugoslavia strike, (retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1999/03/25/clinton.transcript/>).

from both parts (Serbia or Kosovo), to renew the violent actions and the demilitarization of Kosovo Liberation Army (NATO, 2022).⁷

Throughout the years, the KFOR adapted to the new realities, and since the declaration of Kosovo independence in 2008, it embarked mainly in non-military operations to help to the long-term stability in the region. In 2009, Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) – settled through the Regulation of the UN Mission in Kosovo/UNMK – were to be dismissed and replaced by Kosovo Security Force (KSF). In this process, “NATO is responsible for supervising and supporting the stand-up and training of a multi-ethnic, professional and civilian controlled KSF.” (NATO, 2009).

NATO also provided humanitarian assistance to Kosovo through its Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) established at the level of the Alliance in June 1998 (NATO, 1998). Through EADCC, the Allies delivered humanitarian aid for refugees in Albania and Macedonia, but also financial support and security guarantees (Keating, 2001, p. 184).

OSCE

By 1997, the clashes between the Serbs and the Kosovars increased and became more and more violent. As a solution, in 1998, at the proposal of the US ambassador to the UN, Richard Holbrooke, the US and Russian representatives in Belgrade, created Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission (KDOM). The aim of KDOM was to monitor the situation in the field. Later on, Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) replaced KDOM. KVM comprised around 2000 people mainly responsible with monitoring the reduction of the Serbian forces, as agreed by Milosevic earlier that year. KVM was under the auspices of Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) having NATO air support (Judah, 2008, p. 83). KVM functioned from October 1998 until June 1999 and, besides monitoring the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1199, had the responsibilities to: a) report and recommend to the OSCE and UN measures necessary to be taken following the implementation of the UN SC Resolution, b) develop reliable relations with Yugoslav, Serbs and Kosovars; c) supervise elections in Kosovo (OSCE, n.d.).

Following KVM, OSCE established the Task Force for Kosovo for a short period, in July 1999, when the OSCE Mission in Kosovo took its place, to date. The tasks of the present OSCE Mission in Kosovo deals with a wide range of activities, from human rights and cultural heritage protection, to social monitoring and political dialogue between the parties (OSCEa, n.d.).

⁷ Among the objectives of KFOR are as well the maintenance of a secure environment, support for the international humanitarian aid and civil presence.

1.2. South Caucasus – Georgia Case

South Caucasus is a region well known for its ethnic diversity. As part of this region, since its independence in 1991, Georgia was dealing too, with a series of ethnic and territorial struggles. In August 2008 these struggles took the form of a military conflict. President Mikhail Saakashvili, a convinced pro-western politician, was fully determined to end the territorial disputes that lasted for years now bringing the two disputed regions – South Ossetia and Abkhazia – under Georgian authority. With the added ambition that on the long term Georgia will be part of EU and NATO, the leader from Tbilisi took action by launching a military action over South Ossetia on August 2008. However, this was not a state against a non-state actor because Russia soon stepped in, on 8th of August 2008, countering any Georgian attempt to exert authority over South Ossetia. The conflict lasted five days, causing human and material losses to all parts, but mainly to the Georgian part. Most importantly, the Russian offensive did not stop at the South Ossetia border with Georgia, but cut deep into the Georgian territory. The conflict spread to another disputed area, situated in the north-west of Georgia-Abkhazia (United Nations, 2008). The Russian armed forces arrived at about 30 km away from the capital Tbilisi raising concerns about Kremlin's intention over the region (Pruitt, 2018).

United Nations

UN was present in the area since the first signs of conflict in early 90s. Thus, in 1993 UN settled an Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) by Resolution 858. Ninety UN military and civil personnel were part of UNOMIG having as the main aim the supervision of the ceasefire agreement between Georgia and Abkhazia (United Nations, n.d.) initially signed in 1993. Year by year, the mandate of UNOMIG was prolonged. However, when the war breakout in August 2008, its area of activity was still limited to the Abkhaz area. Thus, the Observing Mission was unable to report on the security situation in South Ossetia. UNOMIG ceased to exist one year after the Russia-Georgian War, on 15th of June 2009 due to Moscow's veto a technical roll-over of the mission (United Nations, 2009).

NATO

Immediately after the Russian Federation engaged in a military offensive against Georgia, NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer issued a declaration calling for a ceasefire and diplomatic talks (NATO, 2008). The Alliance held an extraordinary meeting of the foreign minister on 19th of August, having on the agenda the situation in Georgia (NATOa, 2008). During the meeting, the foreign ministers raised the question of NATO-Russia relations established in 1997 through the NATO-Russia Council and decided to suspend politico-diplomatic contact via

this channel until Russian troops are pulled out of Georgian soil (John & Murphy, 2008). However, on 4th of April 2009 at the Summit in Strasbourg and Kehl, the Alliance decided to restore *practical and political cooperation* (NATO, 2020).

Considering the fact that in April 2008 NATO reiterated its policy of open doors for countries like Georgia and Ukraine, the Alliance had to demonstrate its credibility. At the meeting on August 19, countries representatives decided to establish the NATO-Georgia Commission based in Bucharest. Moreover, the Alliance adopted a series of measures to support Georgia by assessing “the damage caused by the military action and by helping restore critical services necessary for normal public life and economic activity.” (NATO, 2008a).

Georgia is member of NATO Partnership for Peace Program since 1994. This status implies that all countries must refrain from using military force and, in exchange, to resort to peaceful means in solving any territorial or political dispute with another country. Indirectly, NATO could have inflicted a certain pressure on Georgia through this tool. However, the reiteration of this aspect in the press release following the foreign ministers meeting would be tardive.

OSCE

Since November 1992, OSCE had a Monitoring Mission in Georgia aiming to report on the security situation on this country. The Mission tasks were:

- providing support to resolve the conflict in Georgia’s separatist region of Abkhazia, which was the responsibility of the UNOMIG;
- helping Georgia to establish and enforce a democratic state under the rule of law;
- promoting the respect of human rights.

OSCE made these efforts in co-ordination with other international organizations, such as the UN, the EU, and the Council of Europe (Stober, 2011, p. 205).

Prior the outbreak of war, OSCE aimed at deescalating the situation by mediating negotiations between South Ossetia and Georgia. However, the efforts were hindered mostly by South Ossetia, which beside the fact that refused any OSCE proposition, had also targeted OSCE monitors appointed in the region (Stober, 2011, p. 215). On the eve of the conflict, OSCE Monitoring Mission reported on the deterioration of the security situation, but the international community took no clear actions (Stober, 2011, p. 217).

OSCE was actively involved in securing a peace agreement between the parties since the beginning. However, Russia seemed to be highly critical regarding OSCE, and more open towards European Union negotiations, the presidency of EU of that year being assured by France (with Nicholas Sarkozy as president *de la Republique*). An agreement was perfected on 12th of August 2008 in Tblisi and on 19th of August, the OSCE Permanent Council of Vienna extended the Monitoring Mission by 100 members (OSCE, n.d.b). Their duty was to supervise the six-points

ceasefire agreement⁸ between Georgia and Russia (Government of Georgia, 2008). Beside the security and monitoring mission's programmes, OSCE provided economic assistance to the Georgia:

Steps were taken to redirect the activities of the OSCE-led Economic Rehabilitation Programme (ERP) into accessible areas affected by the recent conflict within the Shida Kartli Region. The transitional phase of the ERP was launched and 9 projects were successfully implemented between October 2008 and March 2009, benefitting a total of 329 farmers for 67 villages in the areas exposed to the August 2008 conflict (OSCE, n.d.b).

However, OSCE Monitoring Mission in Georgia formally ended its mandate in 21st of December 2008. The Mission continued its activities with a limited number of monitors until June 2009 based on a separate mandate (Stober, 2011, p. 203).

Despite the significant efforts made by OSCE, the activities of the Mission had little impact on the evolution of the security situation. The lack of means and its limited mandate made it hard to make a difference. Two nation-states were involved, and in the absence of a powerful instrument of its own, OSCE had to accept its limitations. Moreover, the critical attitude of some actors involved, (Russia, South Ossetia leadership) brought into attention the weaknesses of an international organization in front of individual interests of other actors.

1.3. Black Sea Region – Crimea case

Early in 2014, the relations between Russian Federation and Ukraine were on a downturn. Ukraine was aspiring to get closer to the European Union, while Russia expressed its discontent about this choice, considering Ukraine its own sphere of influence. The spark between Moscow and Kiev was the Ukrainian perspective to sign the Association Agreement (AA) with the EU. In 2013, the president of Ukraine – Viktor Yanukovich, known for his pro-Russian views – announced that Ukraine is ready to make the next step towards EU by signing the AA and strengthening the economic ties with the West⁹. The same year Russia started to use the economic pressure on Ukraine by imposing a series of embargos on Ukrainian products. Meanwhile, Moscow was also declaring that it is ready to intervene in the Ukrainian

⁸ The six points were: 1. The actors will not resort to the use of violence in the future; 2. The parties involved will end all hostilities; 3. The states will facilitate and grant access for humanitarian aid; 4. The Georgian armed forces will return to their bases; 5. The Russian armed forces will withdraw to the positions held before the commencement of hostilities in South Ossetia; 6. The start of opening discussions on the status, security and stability of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

⁹ Three years earlier, in 2010, the Parliament of Ukraine voted for closer cooperation with NATO.

regions where are living a significant number of Russian ethnics. Kremlin was invoking as the main reason, the fact that Kiev's latest choices in terms of foreign policy is affecting the Russian minority in those regions: the economy of the country is going to worsen, thus the welfare of the Russian ethnic is in danger (Walker, 2013).

As Yanukovych changed his plans of signing the AA with EU, following a secret meeting with the Russian part (Spiegel International, 2013), huge protests swept the country, the main demand of the population being Yanukovych resignation. On 22nd of February 2014, the Ukrainian people got what they asked for: their president flee the country immediately after he signed an agreement with the opposition parties. In this context, exploiting the situation (Kofman *et al.*, 2017), on 18th of March Russia, after a so-called referendum, officially annexed Crimean Peninsula¹⁰.

United Nations

UN held a Security Council session a day prior the Referendum Russia planned in Crimea. However, the outcome was clear before the voting session: Russia, through its veto power, blocked the Resolution, while China abstained (United Nations, March 15, 2014). The second option was a vote in the General Assembly. On 27th of March 2014 with *"100 in favour to 11 against, with 58 abstentions, the 193-member Assembly called on all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol on the basis of the 16 March referendum."* (United Nations, 2014a). Through resolution 68/262, UN General Assembly, without referring explicitly to Russia, was calling for a common response and shared position towards the territorial integrity of Ukraine (United Nations, Resolution 28/262, 2014). Since the first meeting of the General Assembly, UN held sessions every year, its member states reiterating their disagreement on the illegal annexation of Crimea.

NATO

In March 2014, NATO held three meetings *condemning* (NATO, 2014), *discussing* further security threats emerging from the situation created by Russia (NATO, 2014a) and rejecting Russian *illegal and illegitimate* referendum in Crimea, calling for a de-escalation of the situation and cessation of all military operation affecting Ukraine's territorial integrity (NATO, 2014b). Moreover, as in the case of the Russian aggression on Georgia, NATO decided to suspend practical civilian and

¹⁰ Preparation for this to happen were made during earlier that year, Russia preparing the terrain with military personnel and secret services, cutting the internet ties of the Peninsula with Ukraine and other measures.

military cooperation within NATO-Russia Council, but keep an open *dialogue* with Moscow on political and military matters (NATO, 2022a). In managing the crisis, NATO held discussions with both parties, Russia and Ukraine. However, the Alliance naturally chose the Ukrainian side strengthening the relations with Kiev. Concerned about the possible evolution of the situation, NATO “sent AWACs surveillance aircraft to southeast Europe to better observe the Russian offensive.” (Volker, 2014).

Ukraine was not part of NATO, consequently NATO – in accordance with its founding act – could do almost nothing to stop Moscow actions. The rapid deterioration of the security situation in the Black Sea Region generated a greater impact inside NATO than outside the Alliance. Thus, the Member States, short after the annexation of Crimea and breakout of war in Donbass, at Wales Summit (4-5 September 2014), shifted the Alliance’s strategic vision. The main change, motivated by the Russian aggression over Ukraine, consisted in reorienting the Alliance toward *defense and deterrence* through the adoption of Readiness Action Plan (RAP). At the level of the Alliance, RAP is considered “the most significant reinforcement of NATO’s collective defense since the end of the Cold War” (NATO, 2021). The most active states were those on the eastern flank (Baltic States, Poland and Romania). As a result, the Alliance decided to establish permanent presence, shifting the perspective from *reassurance* (inward oriented) towards *deterrence* (outward oriented) (Gressel, 2019).

OSCE

In March 2014, Kiev asked OSCE to appoint a special delegation formed by OSCE Member States representatives to visit the country. Based on the Vienna Document of 2011 (chapter III Risk Reduction), the delegation was supposed to hold voluntary meetings on the ground, aiming to remove concerns about a military action in the region (OSCE, 2015).

Immediately after Russia declared Crimea as its territory and war broke in Donbas, OSCE member states proposed a special OSCE monitoring mission in Ukraine. However, the understanding of the mission responsibilities was subject to debate between the member states. On one side, OSCE members, except Russia were seeing Crimea as part of Ukraine, thus the mission was supposed to operate on the Peninsula too. On the other side, Moscow rejected any prerogative of the mission over Crimea, reiterating the fact that the referendum stated clearly that Crimea was part of Russia since 18th of March 2014 (Umland, 2021, p. 7).

OSCE had its focus on the observatory and humanitarian dimension. Currently, the High Commissioner on National Minorities is searching for option to visit the Peninsula every year in its effort to monitor and take notice on the situation of minorities in the region (OSCE, 2015). For example, OSCE representative is

focusing on the Crimean Tatars that were reportedly victims of the Russian authorities (Sadovskaya and Pfeilschifter, 2020).

2. Implications

The cases presented above are as different as possible. A short analysis will bring out the various causes, actions and actors involved. However, the purpose of this research was not to provide another historical dimension to the already highly covered events. The focus is on the means and impact of the involvement of international organizations. For each case, I will attempt to answer to each question proposed at the beginning of this paper. Moreover, I will embark on the endeavor for a short analysis of the events, from the perspective of the international organizations.

The Balkans - Kosovo case

Main combatants: Yugoslavia vs Kosovo

1. How did the international bodies became part of the resolution of the conflict?

The Balkans were always a focus point for the international community. However, during the Yugoslav period the region was rather stable. The perspective of a possible destabilization appeared in the 80's when the power struggle within the Federation started. After the wish of its republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia) to become independent and the aggressive response from the leadership in Belgrade, the international organizations got involved in the area.

2. At what point of the conflict the international bodies got involved?

In the case of Kosovo the roots of international implication go back in the late 80's and early 90's when the first signs of political torment started to appear within Yugoslavia. However, the involvement was not even. While OSCE and UN were the first to step in mainly to keep under observation the security situation, NATO took a bold decision by acting unilaterally in bombing Serbia over the high probability that Belgrade will tolerate, and even order, an ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

3. What kind of measures implemented the international organizations? Did any of these measures influenced the political, diplomatic or military behavior of the parties involved?

Each international forum reacted in accordance with the instruments it had. On one hand, UN and OSCE provided expertise and worked as peacekeeping forces, observatory mission and humanitarian aid providers. On another hand, NATO, through its military capabilities and based on recent precedents (Bosnia), had a decisive approach: military action. On a hindsight, no other organization could have done this. However, one cannot argue that one action was more relevant/important than another. On short term, NATO's actions were decisive for stopping an imminent threat. On long term, UN, OSCE and NATO efforts combined were/are more relevant for the stabilization of the region.

As for the impact on the states, it is hard to assess that UN and OSCE resolutions had a real impact on deterring Belgrade from its actions. Nevertheless, the military bombing had a clear effect: Belgrade signed an agreement regarding Kosovo, ceasing all violent actions and accepting further international involvement in solving the status of the region, including special autonomy. In the case of Kosovo, the military power was the main deterrence and the reason of a drastic shift in Milosevic's policy. As far as it concerns the recognition of Kosovo as a distinctive political entity, the debate is much wider and many other questions are to be answered, but there is no doubt that Kosovo's road to independence was if not cleared, at least favored by the international organization's actions.

South Caucasus – Georgia Case

Main combatants: Georgia, South Ossetia armed structures, Russian Federation

1. How did the international bodies become part of the resolution of the conflict?

The dismantling of Soviet Union in early 90's brought to life many ethnic and territorial disputes of which the international organizations were aware of. The UN and OSCE appointed special monitoring missions since the 90s. However, their mandate was limited. The involvement of UN and OSCE was made on voluntary basis or upon request, mostly from the Georgian part. However, these organizations had a limited range of activities that could perform and this was because of the limited resources, but also because the parties involved were not open for a foreign presence on their soil, be it the presence of an international organization.

2. At what point of the conflict the international bodies got involved?

OSCE tried to mediate the conflict before it even started. However, the actors involved were not interested. After the five days war, Russia's preference of EU rather than OSCE, highly limited OSCE actions. As far as NATO is concerned, it did not become part of the conflict, but rather a complementary actor, without a direct impact.

3. What kind of measures implemented the international organizations? Did any of these measures influence the political, diplomatic or military behavior of the parties involved?

International organizations actions in the case of the Georgian conflict were limited to diplomatic, political, humanitarian and economic means. UN and NATO issued public statements on condemning Russian aggressiveness towards Georgia. NATO limited its cooperation with Moscow, while it strengthened the relation with Tbilisi.

A deeper look into the NATO-Georgia relations brings up the misperception of the Georgian leadership – especially Saakashvili¹¹ – on the possible reaction

¹¹ Saakashvili's decision to make a military move in South Ossetia appeared in the context of the newly independent Kosovo. The rapid recognition of Kosovo at the international level

coming from the Alliance. There have been a miscalculation about the willingness of the West to endorse Tbilisi with more than public declarations and diplomatic support.

OSCE was even more limited in action. Thus, not even the monitoring mission did not cover the entire combat area. OSCE Monitoring Mission was denied the access to South Ossetia and some part of Abkhazia. When Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent, neither one of the organization could take action beside condemning Russia's decision. OSCE limitations were even more visible when, despite the fact it was aware of the worsening of the situation few days before the war broke, it could do nothing to prevent or to deter it.

Black Sea Region – Crimean Peninsula

Main combatants: Ukraine vs Russian Federation

1. How did the international bodies became part of the resolution of the conflict?

OSCE and UN got involved in the dispute between Russia and Ukraine following the mounting tension between the two countries. On one side, considering the volatile security situation, the two international forums offered to supervise the ongoing crisis. On the other side, Ukraine, aware of the danger of being caught off guard by a Russian attack, asked for international presence on its soil.

2. At what point of the conflict the international bodies got involved?

The entire process of annexation of Crimean Peninsula lasted for about four weeks: military invasion, special operations of the secret services, isolation from Ukraine and formal proclamation of its incorporation into Russia after the referendum. During these activities, starting from early March, Ukraine's leadership summoned OSCE and UN to send special delegations that would deter possible Russian attacks. At the moment of the annexation the international organizations were informed about Russia's moves. However the range of actions they could take were not enough to change Moscow's plans.

3. What kind of measures implemented the international organizations? Did any of these measures influenced the political, diplomatic or military behavior of the parties involved?

Ever since Russia declared that it seized the Crimean Peninsula, UN issued a resolution on the matter. OSCE, based on Ukraine request, embarked on monitoring and reporting on the evolution of the security situation. However, all these measures were more than insufficient to change Moscow's plans. The Kremlin was ready to take the risk of international shaming than to lose the opportunity to take control over

sparked fear within the Georgian leadership, making it worry that its own disputed territories may embark on the path of independence.

Crimea, which is well known for its geostrategic relevance in the Black Sea. Prior the events in March 2014, Moscow perfected a deal with the Ukrainian leadership at that time, which stipulated that Russia will use the port of Sevastopol for another 25 years and, in exchange, Ukraine will purchase natural gas from Russia at a better price. The unexpected revolt of the Ukrainian people against Yanukovich may have sparked fear for Russia. The possibility that the new leadership of Kiev to revoke the agreements made with Yanukovich administration, made Russia act, despite international threats.

As far as NATO reaction, its territory was not threatened, and there were no ground for an out of area operation as it as the Kosovo case. However, if the annexation of Crimea did not trigger a harsh response of the Alliance in relation with Russia, it did had an impact inside the Alliance. The shift from reassurance to deterrence was a clear sign that the relations between east and west could not be based solely on cooperation and mutual understanding.

Conclusions

First, from the empirical perspective, the aim of this research paper was to analyze and evaluate the role of UN, NATO and OSCE in three major European conflicts that generated territorial changes during the last 30 years, starting from the hypothesis that international organizations are capable of influencing state behavior. Based on the questions proposed at the beginning I followed three perspectives: how did the international organizations got involved in the conflict (by their own initiative or upon request), at what point of the conflict and by what means. Regarding the last category, the paper envisions a dual approach: military and non-military means. For these three case studies, the *non-military* means did not work as a strong deterrent. Nevertheless, even though the rate of success based on this research is of one to two, it could not be concluded that the non-military means, used in any case, are not having any effect upon the targeted actor. The sticks and carrots of economic advantages are essential human rights violations, Hefner-Burton¹² argues (Hefner-Burton et al, 2008, p. 136) and in long-term situation, the non-military means can have a more advantageous effect than a military resolution.

Second, from the theoretical perspective, UN, NATO and OSCE are centralized and independent actors. There is no question that all three organizations listed above are meeting the *centralization* criteria. However, the *independence* feature must be regarded from multiple perspectives. For example, UN had the autonomy to condemn the Russian aggressions against Georgia and Ukraine, through the office of the Secretary General, but not through the Security Council – a structure

¹² The study shows that repressive states tend to accept and implement higher human rights standards in exchange for better economic deals.

guided by great power politics. In the case of Kosovo, UN undergone political, diplomatic and economic sanctions against Serbia, but lacked the military capacity that could deter Milosevic's administration to cease the offensive over Kosovo (even if, after NATO intervention, UN sent the peacekeeping force in the area). Leaving apart the debate on the legitimacy of the NATO bombing and the collateral casualties of these actions, NATO influenced radically Belgrade's policies. Thus, while NATO achieved political and military independence in order to act, in the second case, the political independence of UN was not enough for a solution because the organization did not possess the military *independence* (understood as capacity to act).

For the future research, a similar endeavor could be dedicated to the impact of international dynamics upon the international organizations. The fact that the state was considered the main and only relevant actor in world politics generated an abundance of research studies on measuring and evaluating the impact of international dynamics on each nation-state. However, less attention was attributed to the probable effects on other actors such as international organizations. In the cases presented above, NATO seemed to be one of the international organizations that went through a series of changes as a consequence of the international dynamics.

The paper presents mainly the first moments of each conflict and the immediate response of international organizations, without having an in depth evolution of the conflict across the years. The three cases presented are far from representing closed chapters in the history of the European Continent. In the future, it is expected that each international organization that was part – directly or indirectly – of these conflicts, to remain engaged and focused on possible resolutions.

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