RUSSIA'S POLICY ON SECESSIONISM IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT

RUSSIA'S POLICY ON SECESSIONISM
IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

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This dissertation examines Russia's policy on secessionism in Kosovo (Serbia), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia), and Crimea (Ukraine) in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It aims to compare and contrast Russia's stance on these different cases of secessionism that have been brought to the agenda of the UNSC. Contrary to the views of some experts who claim that Russia's references to issues concerning identity and international law during the debates on secessionism in the UNSC reflect Russia's commitment to the principles of international law and its support to the selected identities, this dissertation argues that Russia's positions on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence. This argument is supported by Russia's inconsistencies in its approach to international law and identity matters. To this end, firstly, the literature on international relations of ethnic conflicts and secessionism, and theories of International Relations is discussed. Secondly, the dissertation examines the evolution of secessionism in Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Crimea. Thirdly, it analyzes post-Soviet Russia's foreign and domestic policy on Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Crimea. Later, it discusses Russia's responses and policy choices concerning each case in the UNSC. The dissertation aims to identify the underlying determinants of Russia's 'varying' responses to secessionism. Studying Russia's position on secessionism in the UN in the post-Cold

War era is significant not only for understanding ‘Russia in the UN’ but also Russia’s broader foreign policy choices

Keywords: Russian Foreign Policy, Secessionism, United Nations Security Council, Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea

ÖZ

RUSYA'NIN BİRLEŞMİŞ MİLLETLER GÜVENLİK KONSEYİ'NDE AYRILIKÇILIĞA YÖNELİK SİYASETİ

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Bu tez Rusya'nın Kosova (Sırbistan), Abhazya ve Güney Osetya (Gürcistan), ve Kırım'daki (Ukrayna) ayrılıkçı hareketlere yönelik Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki (BMGK) siyasetini incelemektedir. Tezde BMGK gündemine getirilen bu farklı ayrılıkçı hareketlere karşı Rusya'nın tutumunun kıyaslanması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu çalışma bazı uzmanların öne sürdüğü gibi Rusya'nın ayrılıkçı hareketler üzerine BMGK'de yapılan tartışmalar sırasında kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili meselelere yaptığı göndermelerin Rusya'nın ilgili kimliklere olan desteğini ve uluslararası hukuk prensiplerine olan bağlılığını yansıtmadığını, aksine Rusya'nın kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili meselelere yaklaşımının esasen bölgesel güç ve etkisini arttırmaya yönelik pragmatik kaygılarına bağlı olarak şekillendiği fikrini savunmaktadır. Bu argüman Rusya'nın uluslararası hukuk ilkelerine ve kimlik meselelerine yaklaşımındaki tutarsızlıklarla desteklenmektedir. Bu bağlamda, ilk olarak etnik çatışmalar ve ayrılıkçı hareketlerin uluslararası ilişkiler boyutu ile Uluslararası İlişkiler teorileri literatürü tartışılmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Sovyet-sonrası Rusya'nın Kosova, Abhazya, Güney Osetya, ve Kırım'a yönelik dış ve iç politikası tartışılmaktadır. Sonrasında, Sovyet-sonrası Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler çatısı altında bu örneklere yönelik tepkisi ve politikaları incelenmektedir. Bu tez, Rusya'nın ayrılıkçı hareketlere ilişkin değişkenlik gösteren tepkilerinin altında yatan etkenleri belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Rusya'nın Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde ayrılıkçılık meselesine BMGK'deki yaklaşımının incelenmesi sadece

Rusya’nın Birleşmiş Milletler’deki siyasetini anlamak için değil aynı zamanda Rusya’nın daha geniş kapsamlı dış politika seçimlerini kavramak için de çok önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rus Dış Politikası, Ayrılıkçılık, Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi, Kosova, Abhazya, Güney Osetya, Kırım

To My Wife

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CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GU(U)AM	Georgia-Ukraine-(Uzbekistan)-Azerbaijan-Moldova group
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAF	Operation Allied Force
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self-Government
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The word 'secession', which has its roots in ancient Rome, means "permanent separation, usually from a nation-state" since the 19th century, when states started to define their territories and citizens more precisely.[1] The end of the Cold War, as Marcelo G. Kohen pointed out, "brought about new secessionist aspirations and the strengthening and re-awakening of existing or dormant separatist claims in nearly all regions of the world."[2] In the post-Cold War world, according to Peter Radan, states worry more about "internal rather than external threats to their security and territorial integrity. Most of these internal threats come from nationalist groups seeking to secede, by force if necessary, and establish their own independent states."[3]

Due to its importance and actuality, the issue of secession has proved to be one of the most widely discussed topics by scholars and policy-makers. In both the academic and political world, accordingly, debates and disagreements have revolved around issues concerning identity and international law, mainly self-defence, humanitarianism, territorial integrity, right of secession and self-determination.

Dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia led to the re-vitalization of prominent secessionist movements in their former territories.

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[1] Don H. Doyle, "Introduction: Union and Secession in the Family of Nations," in *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements*, ed. Don H. Doyle (Athens; Georgia: University of Georgia Press: 2010), 1.

[2] Marcelo G. Kohen, "Introduction" in *Secession: International Law Perspectives*, ed. Marcelo G. Kohen (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2.

[3] Peter Radan, *The Break-up of Yugoslavia and International Law* (London; New York: Routledge: 2002), 1.

International responses to the secessionist conflicts in these former entities have been discussed in various international organizations, particularly in the United Nations. The international dimension of these conflicts needs special examination, as international support and recognition (or lack of) have been decisive in the development and outcome of these secessionist movements.

1.1. Scope and Objective

This dissertation analyses Russia's policy on different cases of secessionism in UN member states in the post-Cold War period. It focuses on Russia's position and policy on the cases brought to the agenda of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), namely the secessionist movements in Kosovo (Serbia), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia) and Crimea (Ukraine). In this respect, after introducing the origins and evolution of secessionism in each case, this study discusses the impact of these conflicts on Russia's relations with Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and the West. It presents Russia's official position and arguments put forward in the UNSC for substantiating Russia's relevant policies in each case. Additionally, it refers to the speeches of Russian officials, such as Russian Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, members of the parliament, and to Russian official documents such as Presidential Decrees, Foreign Policy Concepts and National Security Concepts of Russia. Discussing Russian arguments and rhetoric, this dissertation aims to outline sources of Russia's responses to these secessionist cases, together with Russia's broader concerns and priorities with regard to each case. Examining Russia's position on secessionism in the UN in the post-Cold War era is significant not only for understanding 'Russia in the UN' but also Russia's broader foreign policy choices.

While Russia did not support secessionism in Kosovo and objected to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, it supported secessionist movements in both Abkhazia/South Ossetia and Crimea, and accepted their unilateral

declarations of independence in 2008 and 2014, respectively. In the case of Crimea, Russia not only supported Crimea's desire for secession but also annexed the peninsula. While presenting Russia's varying official position in these cases – no support, no recognition / support, recognition (annexation) – and arguments behind these policies, Russian representatives in the UNSC mainly referred to the similar normative and legal rules, particularly to issues related to identity and international law, such as self-defence, protection of co-ethnics, co-nationals, co-religionists abroad, human rights, humanitarianism, territorial integrity and self-determination, but Russia followed different policies in Kosovo, Abkhazia/South Ossetia and Crimea. This dissertation, considering this paradox in Russian policy, aims to identify the underlying determinants of Russia's varying responses to secessionism.

Contrary to the views of some experts who claim that Russia's references to issues concerning identity and international law during the debates on secessionism in the UNSC reflect Russia's commitment to the principles of international law and its support to the selected identities, this dissertation argues that Russia's positions on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence. This argument is supported by Russia's inconsistencies in its approach to international law and identity matters.

Russian representatives have tried to justify Russia's varying responses to secessionism and their particular policies in one case (e.g., its military actions in the cases of Abkhazia/ South Ossetia and Crimea) in terms of identity and principles of international laws, but they manipulated or ignored the same norms (e.g., the principle of territorial integrity, the right to self-determination) in the other case (or vice versa), considering Russia's national interests. Russia has strategically, instrumently and selectively employed issues and norms regarding identity and international law as a strategy and foreign policy tool for pursuing its interests. These arguments are supported by underlining Russia's inconsistencies in its approach to international law and identity matters.

The cases in this dissertation, namely Kosovo, Abkhazia/South Ossetia, Crimea, are selected according to three fundamental criteria, taking into account the objective and theoretical framework of the study. Firstly, all the conflicts in these regions are secessionist. As secessionist movements examined in this study also include separatism, and vice versa, this dissertation uses both terms interchangeably. Secondly, Russia has either been actively involved in or been a part of these conflicts itself, and followed varying policies, which this dissertation aims to examine. Thirdly, all three cases have been brought to the agenda of the UNSC and generated intensive discussions resulting in controversies particularly among the permanent members of the Council. This dissertation focuses on Russia's policy on secessionism in the UNSC, because the UN, as Panagiotou underlined, occupies a central role in Russian foreign policy:

> There has always been a link between Russia's foreign policy objectives and its attitude towards the United Nations (UN). In fact, throughout various phases of Soviet and Russian history, relations with the UN have mirrored important foreign policy priorities and were used as a means of pursuing and achieving these goals.[4]

The main purpose of this study is to analyze and explain the variation in Russia's responses to the secessionist movements in Kosovo, Abkhazia/South Ossetia, and Crimea. The findings of this research underline the difficulty of assessing a state's foreign policy behaviors as interest or norm based. For this assessment, this dissertation adopts a neoclassical realist framework, which aims to "bridge domestic and international politics and specifically to relate domestic structures to international structures."[5] Neoclassical realists maintain that only structural level explanations cannot account for the behavior of states and using classical realist

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[4] Ritsa A. Panagiotou, "The Centrality of the United Nations in Russian Foreign Policy," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 27, no: 2 (2011): 195.

[5] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 88.

insights bring individual and domestic level variables back to the analyses of state behavior.[6] In this regard, this research focuses on Russian leaders' beliefs about the international system, domestic constrains and motivations, firstly, for explaining Russia's varying policies with regard to Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Crimea, and secondly, for comparing Russia's policy on these regions under the leaderships of Yeltsin and Putin (Medvedev).

1.2. Literature Review

While there is no agreement among scholars concerning "the process of secession and the type of sovereignty (colonial or non-colonial) that was exercised by the previous state over the territory on which the new state is created," as Pavkovic and Cabestan underlined, there is almost an agreement on the outcome of secession, which is "a new state formed on a territory that was governed by another, already existing state prior to secession."[7] According to Doyle, "when a territory and its inhabitants *secede*, … they not only withdraw their allegiance to the nation but also … separate from it, abolish the former government, and set up a new independent state."[8] Coppieters also takes secession as "withdrawal from a state or society through the constitution of a new sovereign and independent state."[9] Crawford defined secession as "the creation of a State by the use or threat of force without the

[6] Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: 2005), 45.

[7] Aleksandar Pavkovic and Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "Secession and Separatism from a Comparative Perspective: An introduction," in *Secessionism and Separatism in Europe and Asia: To Have a State of One's Own*, eds. Jean-Pierre Cabestan and Aleksandar Pavkovic (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

[8] Don H. Doyle, "Introduction: Union and Secession in the Family of Nations," in *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements*, ed. Don H. Doyle (Athens; Georgia: University of Georgia Press: 2010), 2.

[9] Bruno Coppieters, "Introduction," in *Contextualizing Secession: Normative Studies in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Bruno Coppieters and Richard Sakwa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

consent of the former sovereign."[10] Kohen similarly pointed out that "the lack of consent of the predecessor State is the key element that characterizes a strict notion of secession."[11] Radan described secession as "the creation of a new state upon territory previously forming part of, or being a colonial entity of, an existing state."[12] Pavkovic and Cabestan, on the other hand, underlined that "secession can be achieved by peaceful means but that it requires an intentional act or acts of political and legal withdrawal of a territory from an existing state, a territory which is not … classified as non-self-governing territory, that is, as a colony."[13]

A seceded state, Radan argued, is "the *outcome* of a process. Secession cannot be said to have occurred until the process has been completed by the creation of a new state."[14] Concerning the process of secession, Kohen maintained that secession "always implies a complex series of claims and decisions, negotiations and/or struggle, which may – or may not – lead to the creation of a new State."[15] This leads us to the boundaries between separatism and secessionism. Separatism, according to Pavkovic and Cabestan, is "based on a political objective that aims to reduce the political and other powers of the central government of a state over a particular

[10] James Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 375.

[11] Marcelo G. Kohen, "Introduction," in *Secession: International Law Perspectives*, ed. Marcelo G. Kohen (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.

[12] Peter Radan, "Secession: A Word in Search of a Meaning," in *On the Way to Statehood, Secession and Globalisation*, eds. Aleksandar Pavkovic and Peter Radan (Aldershot, Hampshire; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 18.

[13] Aleksandar Pavkovic and Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "Secession and Separatism from a Comparative Perspective: An introduction," in *Secessionism and Separatism in Europe and Asia: To Have a State of One's Own*, eds. Jean-Pierre Cabestan and Aleksandar Pavkovic (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

[14] Peter Radan, "Secession: A Word in Search of a Meaning," in *On the Way to Statehood, Secession and Globalisation*, eds. Aleksandar Pavkovic and Peter Radan (Aldershot, Hampshire; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 19.

[15] Marcelo G. Kohen, "Introduction," in *Secession: International Law Perspectives*, ed. Marcelo G. Kohen (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 14.

territory and to transfer those powers to the population or elites representing the population of the territory in question."[16] Comparing secessionism and separatism, Wood underlined that separatism "may be expressed in demand for provincial rights or local or regional autonomy in certain spheres of decision-making. Secessionism … [is] a demand for formal withdrawal from a central political authority … [claiming] independent sovereign status."[17] According to Wood,

> Separatist movements can become secessionist, and secessionist movements can revert to being merely separatist. The same movement may embrace both adherents who are separatist and others who are secessionist, and movement leaders may blur the distinction for reasons of sheer uncertainty or conscious strategy. They may espouse separatist goals today in order to achieve secessionist goals tomorrow, and vice versa.[18]

Secessionism, accordingly, as Pavkovic and Cabestan claimed, "is the end point of separatism: it is a separatism that aims to remove all the sovereign powers of an existing state".[19] Concerning the fact that secessionist movements examined in this dissertation comprise separatism, and vice versa, this study employs both terms interchangeably.

Secessionist movements create great domestic struggles for the ruling authorities of states within which they operate. Secessionism also has international effects and

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[16] Aleksandar Pavkovic and Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "Secession and Separatism from a Comparative Perspective: An introduction," in *Secessionism and Separatism in Europe and Asia: To Have a State of One's Own*, eds. Jean-Pierre Cabestan and Aleksandar Pavkovic (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013): 1.

[17] John R. Wood, "Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 1 (March 1981): 110.

[18] John R. Wood, "Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 1 (March 1981): 110.

[19] Aleksandar Pavkovic and Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "Secession and Separatism from a Comparative Perspective: An introduction," in *Secessionism and Separatism in Europe and Asia: To Have a State of One's Own*, eds. Jean-Pierre Cabestan and Aleksandar Pavkovic (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 2.

results in international responses.[20] While commenting on the essence of secession, Kohen underlined the international involvement in this process. For Kohen, process of secession is "mostly conducted domestically, but international involvement – or at least concern – is more and more frequent."[21] Saideman discussed three sets of explanations concerning the international responses to ethnic conflicts, which are "the possible impact of norms, realist explanations, and arguments focused on domestic politics (either ethnic ties or sensitivity to casualties)."[22] Byman et al. offered various reasons for a state's support for insurgencies in other states. These reasons include a state's desire to increase its regional or local influence; to destabilize its rivals or enemies in its neighborhood; to change regimes in rival states; to take revenge by supporting the enemies of your enemy which supports insurgencies, influencing the opposition in another state to make sure that the opposition does not follow policies against its interests; to enhance its own internal security by supporting insurgents against its own insurgents; to increase the prestige of its own regime, especially for ambitions beyond its near neighborhood; to support co-religionists and co-ethnics; although rare, to obtain territory through irredentism.[23]

With regard to realist explanations, Saideman emphasized a state's calculations whether supporting separatism elsewhere will increase its security or not. According

[20] On the diffusion effects of civil conflicts, see Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "How Much War Will We See? Explaining the Prevalence of Civil War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 3 (June, 2002), 307-334; Kristen Skrede Gleditsch, *All International Politics is Local: The Diffusion of Conflict, Integration, and Democratization* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002). For peacekeeping, intervention and termination of civil wars, see Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security* 20, no. 4 (1996): 136-175; Patrick M. Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Interventions and Intrastate Conflict* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Richard Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 6 (November/December 1994): 20-33.

[21] Marcelo G. Kohen, "Introduction," in *Secession: International Law Perspectives*, ed. Marcelo G. Kohen (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 14.

[22] Stephen M. Saideman, "Overlooking the Obvious: Bringing International Politics Back into Ethnic Conflict Management," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002): 63.

[23] Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 23-38.

to the neorealist balancing behavior, as Saideman mentioned, "a state will support secessionist movements in those host states that threaten it, and oppose separatists in its allies."[24] Elaborating on the realist balance of power/balance of threat theory in terms of secession, Saideman pointed out

> A logical extension of balance of power/threat theory would be to expect states not only to engage in internal balancing (increasing one's level of armament) and external balancing (gaining allies), but also in efforts to weaken adversaries directly. A country putting down a rebellion must focus military, economic, and political resources that it might otherwise use against an external adversary. Further, if the supported group successfully secedes, then the adversary has less territory, less population, and probably diminished economic resources. Thus, supporting an ethnic group might critically weaken an enemy.[25]

Following realism, Byman et al. argued for the primacy of geopolitical concerns, particularly regional influence and strategic struggle, rather than ideology, ethnicity or religion, behind states' support for insurgencies. For Byman et al., states in many cases use ethnic or religious explanations for realpolitik goals.

> Although these less strategic rationales [ethnicity and religion] sometimes play an important role in regimes' decisions to back insurgencies, they are far-less-frequent motivators than those involving considerations of regional influence and strategic competition. Indeed, when ethnic kin or religious brethren do receive support, it is often done to further realpolitik ambitions as opposed to being an end itself. Ethnic and religious justifications are often mere window dressing.[26]

Heraclides underlined instrumental motives and restraints having an international character, which shape states' responses to secessionist movements. For Heraclides,

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[24] Stephen M. Saideman, *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 12.

[25] Stephen M. Saideman, "Overlooking the Obvious: Bringing International Politics Back into Ethnic Conflict Management," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 79-80.

[26] Daniel Byman et. al, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 23.

> Most important among instrumental motives and instrumental restraints were considerations of an international political nature, namely the international political configuration of the region, strategic gains, position of allies, great and middle powers and friends, and relations with the state (government) threatened by secession.[27]

With regard to the impact of norms and precedents on a state's policy on ethnic conflicts in other states, Saideman wrote,

> Some states may be bound by competing norms, so states may take different sides of a conflict, depending on to which norms states adhere. Two norms prescribe rather than proscribe intervention into ethnic conflicts – even at the expense of a state's sovereignty: the norm of self-determination and international law governing genocide. The right for people to choose who governs them challenges the right of states to govern themselves without external interference.[28]

Byman et al. pointed out the importance of domestic politics for states in deciding to support their co-ethnics. Accordingly, state authorities generally underline "their defense of ethnic brethren abroad to burnish their nationalist credentials with audiences at home. When co-ethnics are oppressed, killed, or displaced, governments are likely to come under tremendous pressure from sympathetic citizens to respond."[29] With regard to explanations focusing on domestic politics, which include ethnic issues and concerns about casualties, Saideman stated

> Instead of focusing on the international benefits of taking a side, the ethnic ties perspective focuses on either the demands of constituents or the manipulations of leaders. The argument can either be top-down or bottom-up. Regarding the former, politicians may engage their countries in ethnic conflicts elsewhere to highlight certain ethnic identities [which include race,

[27] Alexis Heraclides, *The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), 207.

[28] Stephen M. Saideman, "Overlooking the Obvious: Bringing International Politics Back into Ethnic Conflict Management," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 78.

[29] Daniel Byman at al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 37.

> language, religion, and kinship] that may favor their positions at home. Supporting a particular group abroad increases the salience of that identity at home. … On the other hand, the demands of the masses may push reluctant politicians into supporting a particular group abroad.[30]

Developing a theory of international relations and ethnic politics, Saideman offered

> … an explanation based on the interaction between ethnic ties and political competition, asserting that domestic political concerns drive the foreign policies of states toward ethnic conflicts. Starting with the assumption that the desire to gain and maintain political office motivates politicians, the argument follows that politicians care about the interests of their supporters. When it comes to ethnic conflicts in other states, the constituents of politicians are most likely to care about the plight of those with whom they share ethnic ties. Therefore, as long as politicians care about maintaining the support of these constituents, decisionmakers will support the combatants in ethnic conflicts elsewhere that share some sort of ethnic bond with their constituents.[31]

Various explanations for Russia's rejection of Kosovo's independence have been put forward. First group of explanations primarily argued that Russia's policy rests on power politics. President Putin, these explanations underline, has tried to reassert Russia's regional and international influence and debates over the status of Kosovo were carried out within the context of increasing disagreements between Russia and the West. The US and NATO policies in Kosovo in 1999 have also been influential in Russia's responses to the Kosovo issue.[32]

According to Blank and Kim, Russia, acting in an opportunistic way, aims to weaken the influence of NATO, the EU and the US in the Balkans. For Blank and Kim,

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[30] Stephen M. Saideman, "Overlooking the Obvious: Bringing International Politics Back into Ethnic Conflict Management," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002): 81.

[31] Stephen M. Saideman, *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 8.

[32] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 114.

> Moscow's larger geopolitical prospect is to forestall and prevent the integration of Europe and component parts like the western Balkans into a single, democratic model. It regards such trends as a mortal geostrategic and political blow to the modus operandi of mature Putinism as well as to its geopolitical ambitions of restoring some form of neoimperial authority in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In this struggle, energy resources and the confrontation of rival political models are Russia's weapons of choice.[33]

Second group of explanations point out the impact of Slavic and Orthodox solidarity between Russia and Serbia. Civilizational issues, particularly the Slavic and Orthodox solidarity, as Averre argued, were not so much decisive in Russian responses to the NATO air operation in Kosovo. In this respect, President Yeltsin underlined that the Kosovo crisis was more about the threat to the post-WWII security establishment than 'the fate of the Serbs'.[34] Antonenko also discussed the impact of Orthodoxy on the relationship between Russia and Serbia concerning the Kosovo issue. Acknowledging the growing impact of the Church on Russian politics, Antonenko, however, underlined that Russia has not utilized common religious faith principle in a consistent manner, by referring to tensions since 2006 between Russia and Georgia, which is also an Orthodox state. She added that in no public opinion poll Russian citizens attributed special importance to Serbia based on cultural similarities.[35]

Third group of explanations emphasize Russia's concerns about the principles of international law and international relations. Ker-Lindsay, for example, mentioned that Russia had "serious and legitimate concerns about the consequences of recognizing an independent Kosovo against the will of the Serbian Government.

[33] Stephen Blank and Younkyoo Kim, "Moscow versus Brussels: Rival Integration Projects in the Balkans," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (2014): 63.

[34] Derek Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West" *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 582.

[35] Oksana Antonenko, "Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo," *Survival* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 97.

After all, such a move that would be unprecedented in modern international affairs."[36] He further argued

> The stark reality is that, on the question of Kosovo, Russia's position was actually far more in tune with long-standing principles of international relations and international law than the position adopted by those states that were pushing for independence for purely practical reasons. In the debate between the legal 'constitutionalists' and the political 'pragmatists' in the international arena, Russia was the champion of the former position, whereas the United States led the latter camp. … many in the West did not understand that when it comes to matters of international law, and the authority of the UN, Moscow is not in fact a rogue actor. If anything, it is an arch-conservative. The uncomfortable truth, therefore, is that the Russian position on Kosovo was in fact the stance that the West would have adopted had it not injected itself into the mess and now needed to extricate itself.[37]

Russia's support to Serbia concerning Kosovo however, according to Petrovic, is conditional. It is conditional, he argued, as Russia supports legal settlement of ethnic and territorial conflicts within the Euro-Atlantic space, but when its interests are seriously threatened as in the case of Georgia, it can disregard the same principles just as some other states did with regard to Kosovo. Petrovic argued Russia has a different approach to the Kosovo issue than Serbia, that is Kosovo's independence from Serbia is acceptable, overlooking Serbia's consent, when certain legal conditions that Russia supports are met. Petrovic added that Russia's support to Serbia on Kosovo is also relative. Russia, pursuing a similar policy in Georgia, affirmed that if "adequate conditions are met, such as the attack of central authorities the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity can be made relative and even

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[36] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 114.

[37] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 115.

annulled, and the right of Abkhaz and Ossetian people to self-determination can be prioritized."[38]

Fourth group of explanations underline the domestic dynamics behind Russia's Kosovo policy. According to Ker-Lindsay, besides its worries about international law, Russian leadership had serious concerns regarding the public opinion in Russia. The Kosovo issue had repercussions on Russia's policies on other regions in the post-Soviet space. Russia, as Ker-Lindsay underlined, utilized the Kosovo precedent in August 2008 to undermine the territorial integrity of Georgia. With regard to Russian public opinion, Ker-Lindsay asked "If the Russian Government was seen to allow Kosovo to become independent due to pressure from the United States, how could it not then respond by recognizing the independence of South Ossetia, Abkhazia or Transdniestria?"[39]

Averre asked "Do we therefore interpret Moscow's position as a principled stand, or is Kosovo's independence an opportunity for an increasingly assertive Russia to stake out a distinctive position as part of a broader strategy of standing up to the West?"[40] His answer was

> …it is principle – albeit filtered through peculiar Russian perceptions of the international environment and the pressures of domestic politics – that has inspired, to a large extent, Moscow's approach to the Kosovo issue. Concern over the wider ramifications of overturning the fundamental rules of the international order and the potential for broader regional destabilization – as a result first of NATO's intervention, and latterly of the

[38] Zarko N. Petrovic, "Russian-Serbian Strategic Partnership: Scope and Content" in *Russia Serbia Relations at the beginning of XXI Century*, ed. Zarko N. Petrovic (Belgrad: ISAC Fund, 2010), 33

[39] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 115.

[40] Derek Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West" *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 589.

> West's acceptance of 'status before standards' in its dealings with the Kosovar leadership – has been genuine and in some respects justified.[41]

Most of the explanations of Russia's intervention in Georgia and its recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as Headley mentioned, emphasize geopolitical drives: "Russia is seeking to establish control over the former Soviet space, to punish Georgia for aiming to join NATO, and to strengthen its presence in a strategically important area (particularly in Abkhazia, which might provide an alternative base for the Black Sea Fleet)."[42]

According to Flikke and Godzimirski Russia views the international system from a realist point of view, based on a zero-sum game. They wrote,

> Moscow's policy can be interpreted as a result of Russia's realist reading of the international scene where a zero-sum power game is being played. When separatist conflicts are addressed from that angle, the most important issue becomes the question of power relations and ability to influence other countries, to prevent the situation from developing in a direction detrimental to national interests. The separatist movements are seen as manifestations of anarchy on the international stage, but they can also provide an opportunity to influence the situation in the countries concerned.[43]

Disputes concerning the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, according to Asmus, were not the real cause of the Russia-Georgia war in August 2008. The war started because, Asmus argued,

> … Georgia wanted to guarantee its future security and sovereignty and independence by aligning itself with the West, becoming a member of

[41] Derek Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West" *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 589.

[42] James Headley, "Is Russia Out of Step with European Norms? Assessing Russia's Relationship to European Identity, Values and Norms Through the Issue of Self-Determination," *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 3 (May 2012): 443-444.

[43] Geir Flikke and Jakub M. Godzimirski, *Words and Deeds: Russian Foreign Policy and Post-Soviet Secessionist Conflicts* (Oslo: NUPI, 2006), 104.

> NATO and eventually of the European Union as well – and Moscow was equally determined to prevent it from doing so and to keep it in a Russian sphere of influence. To that end, the Kremlin was willing to manipulate and exploit the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia to sabotage Georgian aspirations, undercut the democratically elected government of Mikheil Saakashvili to pursue regime change and rollback, and prevent what it saw as the encroachment of Western influence on its southern border.[44]

Antonenko also underlined Russia's concerns about and opposition to NATO and EU enlargement into the Black Sea region. In addition to these concerns, tensions between Russia and Georgia have increased as a result of Russian view that "the US is pursuing a deterrence policy towards it – by fomenting the so-called 'colour' revolutions' and by supporting GUAM and energy projects bypassing Russia."[45] Similarly, Flikke and Godzimirski underline that Russia regards Abkhazia and South Ossetia as "'geopolitical assets' that can be used to weaken Georgia and undermine the US presence and influence, in what is seen as a new chapter of the geopolitical Great Game."[46] Russia, according to them, utilized separatism "to maximize its geopolitical gains and retain some control in the areas that it defines as important for realization of the country's partly outdated strategy, which has remained rooted in an overly realist and geopolitical outlook on the 'outside world'."[47]

According to Blank, the causes behind the Russia-Georgia war are "Russian attempts to isolate Georgia and overthrow its government, as well as Moscow's forceful

[44] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 216-217.

[45] Oksana Antonenko, "Towards a Comprehensive Regional Security Framework in the Black Sea Region after the Russia-Georgia War," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no. 3, (September 2009): 263.

[46] Geir Flikke and Jakub M. Godzimirski, *Words and Deeds: Russian Foreign Policy and Post-Soviet Secessionist Conflicts* (Oslo: NUPI, 2006), 104.

[47] Geir Flikke and Jakub M. Godzimirski, *Words and Deeds: Russian Foreign Policy and Post-Soviet Secessionist Conflicts* (Oslo: NUPI, 2006), 109.

reaction to the NATO-EU decisions to recognize Kosovo's independence and to consider Georgia's application for a membership action plan (MAP) from NATO."[48]

Levesque, also underlining the Kosovo issue, argued that "Russia's actions leading to the war are directly related to the anticipated recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence of February 2008 by the US and a majority of NATO members."[49] Fabry, similarly, claimed that "Kosovo encouraged the aspirations of various secessionist entities and that it created a permissive environment for Russia to recognize two of them, South Ossetia and Abkhazia."[50] Nielsen discussed how Russia utilized the rhetoric of the West on the Kosovo issue for its goals in Georgia,

> Russia's leadership dexterously and adeptly deployed the West's rhetoric on Kosovo … in order to justify its own political and military actions. This says more about Russia's newly regained confidence and aptitude in international relations than about the similarities between Kosovo on the one hand, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the other.[51]

Blank and Kim pointed out that Russia does not accept the sovereignty and integrity of post-Soviet republics. For them, referring to President Putin, Russia-Georgia War in 2008 was "a planned war of aggression to dismember Georgia, using Abkhaz and South Ossetian separatists for this purpose."[52]

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[48] Stephen Blank "What Comes after the Russo-Georgian War? What's at Stake in the CIS," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 30, no.6 (2008): 385.

[49] Jacques Levesque, "Moscow's Evolving Partnership with Beijing: Countering Washington's Hegemony," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2013), 195.

[50] Mikulas Fabry, "The Contemporary Practice of State Recognition: Kosovo, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and their Aftermath," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no. 5, (September 2012): 671.

[51] Christian Axboe Nielsen, "The Kosovo precedent and the rhetorical deployment of former Yugoslav analogies in the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no. 1-2 (March-June 2009): 184.

[52] Stephen Blank and Younkyoo Kim, ""Ukraine Fatigue" and a New U.S. Agenda for Europe and Eurasia," *Orbis* 57, no. 4 (Autumn 2013): 601.

Russia's Georgia policy, according to Filippov, involved both traditional geopolitical and domestic 'diversionary' objectives. Filippov outlined Russia's two-dimensional goals in the following logic:

> The incumbent government in Russia benefits domestically from the political tensions with the West that the conflict with post-Soviet countries brings about. The increasingly conflictual relations with post-Soviet countries help the government to promote 'a virtual conflict' with the West over the area. The 'virtual conflict', in turn, provides an opportunity to isolate domestic politics from international influences without resorting to economic and informational isolation. In other words, the conflicts – one 'real' and another 'virtual' – help to combine both openness to the West, which is important for maintaining an open market economy, and the effective silencing of any Western critics, who still pose a danger in Russia's semi-democratic political system with its semi-restricted political competition. In the eyes of the domestic audience, the West turns into a biased actor, whose views are compromised and communications are received but discredited and discounted.[53]

German also pointed to the both international and domestics concerns of Russian leadership that structured Russia's Georgia policy.

> Russian efforts to influence events in Georgia and the country's development as an autonomous actor on the international stage can be seen as an extension of a desire to counterbalance US dominance. However, it is also important to remember that much of Moscow's posturing on the international stage is intended for domestic consumption. The Russian military action in Georgia has played well with the domestic audience and the popularity ratings of both Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev rose in the wake of the conflict.[54]

[53] Mikhail Filippov, "Diversionary Role of the Georgia-Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 10 (December 2009): 1844-1845.

[54] Tracey German, "David and Goliath: Georgia and Russia's Coercive Diplomacy," *Defence Studies* 9, no. 2 (June 2009): 237.

Allison discussed how Russia has instrumentally interpreted international law and norms, particularly the use of force, self-determination, sovereignty and recognition, for pursuing its regional interests. According to Allison,

> Russian interpretations of customary international law as well as norms related to the use of force have served as an instrument of state policy, rather than being rooted in any broader international consensus. The Russian discourse in this context about sovereignty, self-determination and the legitimacy of recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia as states appears similarly to be strongly influenced by political self-interest and Russian views about its entitlement within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region.[55]

Summers, in his review of Russia's legal justifications for its actions in Georgia, argued that Russia has seriously violated international law. The Georgian case shows, for Summers, "how states can construct spheres of influence in the UN era. Russia effectively established protectorates within the UN system of peacekeeping. … [I]t deconstructed statehood, removing and appropriating certain elements, such as population and government."[56]

Mearsheimer, arguing that the US and its allies in Europe have most of the responsibility for the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, underlined that the main reason behind the conflict is NATO enlargement, which aims "to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West. At the same time, the EU's expansion eastward and the West's backing of the pro-democracy movement in Ukraine – beginning with the Orange Revolution in 2004 – were critical elements, too."[57] Mearsheimer argued that Yanukovych's removal from office after a 'coup' was the

[55] Roy Allison, "The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation," *European Security* 18, no. 2, (June 2009): 173.

[56] James Summers, "Russia and Competing Spheres of Influence in the Case of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *International Law in a Multipolar World*, ed. Matthew Happold (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012), 113.

[57] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2014): 1.

final step for President Putin, so "he responded by taking Crimea, a peninsula he feared would host a NATO naval base, and working to destabilize Ukraine until it abandoned its efforts to join the West."[58]

Biersack and O'Lear focused on Russia's concerns on the issues related to energy and the Russian Black Sea Fleet. 'Narratives' presented by Russia, according to them, covered Russia's two other reasons for taking control of Crimea, namely "the Russian Black Sea Fleet and a significant area of maritime territory that belonged to Ukraine, which contains gas and oil reserves."[59] They emphasized, by annexing Crimea and acquiring the bases of the Black Sea Fleet, Russia can now enlarge its forces in the peninsula without approval of Ukraine. In addition to new bases, "Russia has now claimed much of Ukraine's Black Sea territory around Crimea. This includes potential deposits of natural gas and oil, which may be exploited in the future."[60]

Russia's Crimea policy, according to von Eggert, has been designed mainly for President Putin's domestic political goals. Russian policy, for von Eggert, "was a very domestic Russian affair, designed to give the people a new sense of imperial pride and, by extension, provide the Kremlin with a badly needed popularity boost."[61]

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[58] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2014): 1.

[59] John Biersack and Shannon O'Lear, "The Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation of Crimea: Narratives, Identity, Silences, and Energy," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55, no. 3 (2015): 263.

[60] John Biersack and Shannon O'Lear, "The Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation of Crimea: Narratives, Identity, Silences, and Energy," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55, no. 3 (2015): 263.

[61] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," World Affairs (September/October 2014): 50.

Müllerson argued that the crisis in Ukraine demonstrates how principles of international law and morality can be used for geopolitical goals.

> Ukraine's tragedy show that international law and morality are used mainly as covers in the geopolitical struggle. If the Cold War manifested the competition between two ideologies – capitalism and communism – today's main historical controversy is between the unipolar and multi-polar visions of the world. It is not ideological, it is geopolitical, where ideology, morality and law are used as tools and collaterals in the struggle for the configuration of tomorrow's world. It is also a struggle for the nature of international law.[62]

Saari went further by underlining Russia's acceptance of the West's norms and values only when they serve its interests. In this respect, he argued

> … Russia has been socialized to the practice of cooperation with European organizations, but it clearly has not been socialized to the norms and values of the organizations. Russia is willing to cooperate with European organizations and has many times called for even closer ties with them. However, it is only willing to do it on its own terms, which are based on its interests and not on shared values and identities.[63]

According to Müllerson, legal arguments do not bear significant importance in today's geopolitical disputes. They are only utilized for serving interests.

> Unfortunately, in the context of today's geopolitical conflicts, legal arguments, due to such slight and even frivolous attitudes towards international law (law is how we interpret it, our cause is just therefore what we do has nothing in common what you do, etc.) do not carry much weight.

[62] Rein Müllerson, "Ukraine: Victim of Geopolitics" *Chinese Journal of International Law* 13, no. 1 (2014), 134.

[63] Sinikukka Saari, "Russia's Creeping Challenge to European Norms: European Promotion of the Death Penalty in Russia," in *Russia's European Choice*, ed. Ted Hopf (New York; Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 120.

> At best (or worst), they give verbal ammunition to the current information warfare wherein the first victim, as always, has been the truth.[64]

1.3. Methodology

This study uses data derived from both primary and secondary sources. It extensively refers to official statements of Russian representatives in the UN Security Council, also of the Russian Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Ministers of Foreign Affairs; official foreign policy and national security documents of the Russian Federation; Presidential Decrees of Russia; and various United Nations documents. This research also draws on scholarly books, journal articles, reports and policy briefs produced by scholars, experts, research institutions and international missions. This study, additionally, makes use of information gathered from interviews conducted both in person and over e-mail with academics, experts, diplomats and UN personnel, during study visits made to New York and Washington between April and November 2015. This research analyses and compares the data gathered in these interviews with the official statements and policies of the Russian Federation.

1.4. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation has six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which explains the argument, theoretical framework, scope, objective, and research method of the dissertation. The second chapter discusses main theories of International Relations and their approaches for examining foreign policies of states, by outlining each theory's strengths and weaknesses. It focuses on the features of neoclassical realism, its contributions to the analysis of foreign policy and outlines the analytical framework used in this study.

[64] Rein Müllerson, "Ukraine: Victim of Geopolitics" *Chinese Journal of International Law* 13, no. 1 (2014), 137.

The third chapter focuses on the secessionist movement in Kosovo, firstly by introducing the origins and evolution of the conflict. Then it examines Russian foreign and domestic policy on Kosovo in the post-Cold war period, together with Russia's relations with Serbia and the West within the context of the Kosovo issue. Later, the chapter analyzes Russia's official position on Kosovo in the UN Security Council, particularly since 2008 when Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence. The last part of the chapter discusses the sources of Russia's Kosovo policy.

The fourth chapter discusses Abkhazian and South Ossetian secessionism in Georgia. After providing a historical account of these two conflicts, the chapter explores Russian foreign and domestic policy on these two regions, along with the developments in Russia's relations with Georgia and the West with regard to the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts. It later examines Russia's responses to these conflicts in the UN Security Council, principally since 2008 when Abkhazia and South Ossetia declared their independence and Russia recognized these two regions. Finally, the chapter analyzes the factors behind Russia's position on Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The fifth chapter focuses on the Crimean crisis in Ukraine. It firstly offers the background information on the roots and development of the crisis. Later, the chapter discusses Russian foreign and domestic policy with regard to Crimea, together with the impact of Crimea on Russia's relations with Ukraine and the West. Then it outlines Russia's Crimea policy in the UN Security Council since 2014, when the peninsula first declared its independence from Ukraine and then Russia annexed the region. Lastly, the chapter focuses on the main determinants of Russia's Crimea policy.

The sixth chapter is the conclusion. The chapter outlines the strengths of the analytical framework adapted in this study. It summaries the main arguments and findings of all chapters examining Russia's responses to the secessionist movements

in Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Crimea in the UN Security Council, in accordance with the overall argument of the dissertation that contrary to the claims that Russia's references to normative ideas and legal rules, particularly to issues concerning identity and international law during the debates on secessionism in the UNSC reflect its commitment to the principles of international law and its support to the selected identities, Russia's positions on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of the dissertation. In this regard, the chapter firstly introduces the main theories of International Relations, namely realist, liberal and constructivist theories. This dissertation adopts a neo-classical realist approach, in explaining Russia's policy on secessionist movements in Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Crimea.

2.2. Realist Theories of International Relations

In the following parts, the dissertation outlines the main assumptions of classical realism, neorealism, defensive-offensive realisms, and neo-classical realism, together with their strengths and weaknesses.

2.2.1. Classical Realism

While the writings of some early thinkers such as Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes lay the foundations of realism, its theoretical application to international relations goes back to the late 1930s. Edward H. Carr and Hans J. Morgenthau, using the term 'realism', developed the main assumptions of the realist tradition that opposed the 'idealistic' approaches to international relations throughout the interwar period (1919-1939).[65] Carr, in his book "The Twenty Years' Crisis" (1939) put forward his critiques of idealism. He argued that "a true science of international

[65] Martin Griffiths, Terry O'Callaghan, Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2008), 268.

politics" must focus on "how things actually are" rather than "how things should be." According to Carr, "the idealists' inability to distinguish aspiration from reality … made idealism an inappropriate perspective for either the study or conduct of international politics."[66] According to realists, the 'idealists' of the post-World War I period overlooked "the role of power, overestimated the degree to which human beings were rational, mistakenly believed that nation-states shared a set of common interests, and were overly passionate in their belief in the capacity of humankind to overcome … war."[67]

Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff summarized the main assumptions of classical realism as follows:

> (1) … the international system is based on states as the key actors; (2) … international politics is essentially conflictual, a struggle for power in an anarchic setting in which nation-states inevitably rely on their own capabilities to ensure their survival; (3) … states exist in a condition of legal sovereignty in which nevertheless there are gradations of capabilities, with greater and lesser states as actors; (4) … states are unitary actors and … domestic politics can be separated from foreign policy; (5) … states are rational actors characterized by a decision-making process leading to choices based on national interests; and (6) … power is the most important concept in explaining and predicting state behavior.[68]

According to classical realists, the "behavior of the state as a self-seeking egoist is understood to be merely a reflection of the characteristics of the people that comprise the state. It is human nature that explains why international politics is necessarily

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[66] John A. Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics: From Classical Realism to Neotraditionalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 35.

[67] Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 141-142.

[68] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 63-64.

power politics."[69] For classical realists, the continuous struggle of states "to increase their capabilities" is a result of "the flawed nature of humanity." They argue that the "human failings" explain "conflictual behavior" of states.[70] Morgenthau, on this point, underlined the importance of formulating policies taking into account human beings' inherent desire for power. This focus on the role of human nature on directing international politics is the major feature of classical realism.[71]

Morgenthau, in his book "Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace" (1948), offered six principles of political realism:

> 1. Realism is governed by 'objective laws', which have their roots in human nature.
> 2. The concept of national interest, defined in terms of power, is the most important foreign policy goal.
> 3. While 'interests defined in terms of power' are not subject to historical change, the exercise of power is fluid.
> 4. Universal morality cannot be used to judge the actions of states.
> 5. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.
> 6. The political sphere is distinct from economics and law, and international and domestic politics operate according to different principles.[72]

Morgenthau's realism has been criticized for various points. Kaufman, for example, argued that Morgenthau's separation of domestic and international politics and neglect of ideology's influence upon the international system limited his

[69] Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens, 6th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 103-104.

[70] Colin Elman, "Realism," in *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, ed. Martin Griffiths (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2007), 12.

[71] Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism and Facets of Power in International Relations," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Felix Berenskoetter and Michael J. Williams (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2007), 45-46.

[72] Martin Griffiths and Terry O'Callaghan, "Realism," in *An Introduction to International Relations: Australian Perspectives*, eds. Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke and Jim George (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 57.

comprehension with regard to the geopolitical, ideological and moral aspects of the struggle between the US and the Soviet Union. He also claimed that Morgenthau's approach to morality and man is faulty, as he has an extremely pessimistic opinion about human nature. In addition to Morgenthau's denial of ideology's impact on international politics, Kaufman also criticized his negligence of regime's influence on foreign policy. Morgenthau, he underlined, offered only three types of foreign policy, namely "status quo, prestige, and imperialism," by overlooking the interaction between "regime type, ideology, and external circumstances."[73] Kaufman, accordingly, offered his theoretical framework, which

> …integrates all three levels of analysis. The best approach envisages international politics as a three-level interaction in which systemic imperatives grounded in power and anarchy, the domestic characteristics of the key states in the system, and the predilections of decision makers in powerful states affect each other reciprocally. This approach promises to yield more modest, but useful generalizations about international politics than the grand, sweeping, but deficient and unrealistic realism of Hans J. Morgenthau.[74]

2.2.2. Neorealism

Kenneth Waltz in 1979 published his book "Theory of International Politics," in which he offered a new realist theory, called as "neo-realism" or "structural realism." Neorealism, as Rose mentioned, focuses on "the outcomes of state interactions, it is a theory of international politics; it includes some general assumptions about the motivations of individual states but does not purport to explain their behavior in great detail or in all cases."[75] In this respect, Waltz wrote,

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[73] Robert Kaufman, "Morgenthau's Unrealistic Realism," *Yale Journal of International Affairs* 1, no. 2 (Winter/Spring 2006): 25-32.

[74] Robert Kaufman, "Morgenthau's Unrealistic Realism," *Yale Journal of International Affairs* 1, no. 2 (Winter/Spring 2006): 38.

[75] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998), 145.

> A systems theory of international politics deals with the forces that are in play at the international, and not at the national, level. … An international-political theory does not imply or require a theory of foreign policy … Systems theories … are theories that explain how the organization of a realm acts as a constraining and disposing force on the interacting units within it. Such theories tell us about the forces the units are subject to. From them, we can infer some things about the expected behavior and fate of the units: … how they will have to compete with and adjust to one another if they are to survive and flourish. Systemic theories explain why different units behave similarly and, despite their variations, produce outcomes that fall within expected ranges. Conversely, theories at the unit level tell us why different units behave differently despite their similar placement in a system. A theory about foreign policy is a theory at the national level. It leads to expectations about the responses that dissimilar polities will make to external pressures. A theory of international politics bears on the foreign policies of nations while claiming to explain only certain aspects of them. It can tell us what international conditions national policies have to cope with.[76]

Waltz underlined that "the parts of international-political systems stand in relations of coordination. Formally, each is the equal of all the others. None is entitled to command; none is required to obey. International systems are decentralized and anarchic."[77] Waltz assumes that states "are unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination."[78] His neo-realist theory, therefore, has two main assumptions: "the international system is anarchical, in the sense that it lacks a central authority to impose order; and that in such a system states are primarily interested in their own survival."[79]

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[76] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1979), 17-72.

[77] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1979), 88.

[78] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1979), 118.

[79] Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations,* eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 190.

Waltz pointed out that "to achieve their objectives and maintain their security, units in a condition of anarchy … must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves. Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order."[80] States, therefore, have to be "concerned with their security, and obliged to regard other states as potential threats. They must continually adjust their stance in the world in accordance with their reading of the power of others and of their own power."[81]

States, according to Waltz, have to increase their power as much as possible for their survival. They also consider their relative power position in comparison to other states. Accordingly, search for power and conflict are permanent features of international relations. Under such conditions, Waltz argued, cooperation among states is very fragile, if possible at all.[82] Waltz underlined the significance of "the structure of the international system and its role as the primary determinant of state behavior."[83] Focusing on the international system level, Waltz paid little attention to the unit factors, as they are not included in his definition of structure.[84]

2.2.3. Defensive and Offensive Realisms

Waltz's writings have influenced other scholars to advance structural realist thinking, resulting in the emergence of defensive and offensive realism. Both defensive and

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[80] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1979), 111.

[81] Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: 2005), 42.

[82] Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 190.

[83] Steven L. Lamy, "Contemporary Mainstream Approaches: Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 183.

[84] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 85.

offensive realism share "the basic assumption that states' desire for security is compelled by the anarchic structure of the international system."[85] Defensive realists, taking "a benign view of anarchy" contend that "states seek security more than power."[86] For defensive realists, states do not try to maximize their relative power gains, but focus on minimizing their relative power losses. States' quest for survival, for defensive realists, is a result of their efforts to achieve security – e.g. by balancing against an opponent – rather than search for greater power.[87] Defensive realists, such as Stephen Van Evera, Stephen Walt, and Jack Snyder argued that "states attain security by maintaining their position within the system, so their tendency is towards achieving an appropriate amount of power, in balance with other states."[88] Defensive realists underline that "it is unwise for states to try to maximize their share of world power, because the system will punish them if they attempt to gain too much power. The pursuit of hegemony, they argue, is especially foolhardy."[89] Waltz, whose theory can been categorized as defensive realism, argued on this issue that "states seek power only in order to achieve security and will stop trying to achieve relative advantage over others because it will motivate others to join together in alliances against them."[90] According to defensive realists, "more power can lead to less security, therefore that the rational state has little incentive to seek additional power once it feels secure relative to other powers within the

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[85] Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: 2005), 44.

[86] Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 258.

[87] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 90.

[88] Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: 2005), 44-45.

[89] John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 78.

[90] Peter Sutch and Juanita Elias, *International Relations: The Basics* (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2007), 53.

system."[91] States, for defensive realists, "expand when they are forced to by their environment – when they are threatened owing to insecurity or shifts in relative capability, or by states with aggressive designs."[92]

Offensive realists, in contrast, argue that "states seek to achieve maximum gains in their power relative to other states to maintain a margin of security."[93] For offensive realists, the anarchical international system "pushes states to maximize their relative share of world power in order to make themselves more secure. The reasoning is that the more power and the stronger the state, the less likely it will be a target, since weaker powers will be reluctant to fight."[94] One of the most influential offensive realists, John Mearsheimer pointed out,

> States seek to survive under anarchy by maximizing their power relative to other states, in order to maintain the means for self-defense. Relative power, not absolute levels of power, matters most to states. Thus, states seek opportunities to weaken potential adversaries and improve their relative power position. They sometimes see aggression as the best way to accumulate more power at the expense of rivals.[95]

According to offensive realists, Mearsheimer underlined, status quo powers are uncommon in world politics as "the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals, and to take

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[91] Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: 2005), 42.

[92] Steven E. Lobell, "Threat Assessment, the State, and Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Model," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47.

[93] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th fifth ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 90.

[94] Steven E. Lobell, "Threat Assessment, the State, and Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Model," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47.

[95] John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (Summer 1990): 12.

advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs. A state's ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system."[96] These incentives include "expansionist and aggressive foreign policies, taking advantage of opportunities to gain more power, and weakening potential challengers through preventive wars or 'delaying tactics' to slow their ascent."[97] Offensive realists underline that we must focus on state's relative capabilities and its external environment – the factors that are transformed into foreign policy and outline a state's preferences to advance its interests – in order to account for its behaviors. Offensive realists do not regard domestic differences between states to be significant, because systemic pressures, for them, "make similarly situated states behave alike, regardless of their internal characteristics."[98]

2.2.4. Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism aims to "bridge domestic and international politics and specifically to relate domestic structures to international structures."[99] Neoclassical realists maintain that only structural level explanations cannot account for the behavior of states and using classical realist insights bring individual and domestic level variables back to the analyses of state behavior.[100] Scholars such as Randall Schweller, Fareed Zakaria and William Wohlforth put forward various intervening variables between the state and international results. By focusing on domestic and

[96] John J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 21.

[97] Steven E. Lobell, "Threat Assessment, the State, and Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Model," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 47-48.

[98] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998), 149.

[99] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 88.

[100] Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: 2005), 45.

individual level variables, neoclassical realism offers a distinct interpretation of states' power-seeking behavior.[101] Neoclassical realism, Schweller argued, "has attempted to place the rich but scattered ideas and untested assertions of early realist works within a more theoretically rigorous framework."[102] Gideon Rose, in his review article of the neoclassical realist works, explained that neoclassical realism

> … explicitly incorporates both external and internal variables, updating and systematizing certain insights drawn from classical realist thought. Its adherents argue that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities. This is why they are realist. They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical.[103]

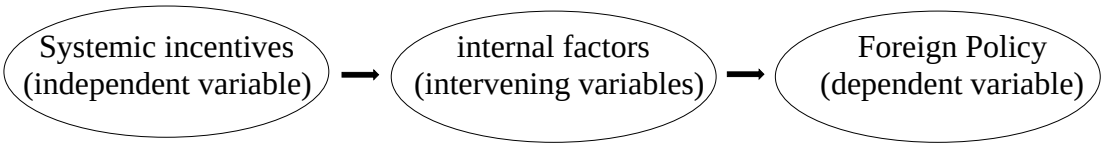

Figure 1 Causal Logic in Neoclassical Realism[104]

Neoclassical realism, as Taliaferro explained, emphasizes "the causal primacy of structural variables, chiefly the relative distribution of material power and anticipated power trends," in determining foreign policies of states. Systemic forces, he added,

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[101] Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism and Facets of Power in International Relations," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Felix Berenskoetter and Michael J. Williams (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2007), 46.

[102] Randall Schweller, "The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism," in *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*, eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003), 316.

[103] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998): 146.

[104] Adapted from Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998): 154.

"create incentives for all states to strive for greater efficiency in causing security for themselves."[105] Neoclassical realists agree with other realists that the characteristic of international politics is a constant struggle for power and international anarchy contributes to the persistent search for security and power. Neoclassical realists, however, contend that only through anarchy and relative distribution of power we cannot explain states' specific power-seeking behavior.[106] According to Neoclassical realists, Rose wrote,

> … systemic pressures and incentives may shape the broad contours and general direction of foreign policy without being strong or precise enough to de termine the specific details of state behavior. This means that the influence of systemic factors may often be more apparent from a distance than from up close – for example, in significantly limiting the menu of foreign policy choices considered by a state's leaders at a particular time, rather than inforcing the selection of one particular item on that menu over another.[107]

Neoclassical realism, therefore, underlines "the primacy of structural forces" but incorporates "intervening domestic and unit-level variables" to account for foreign policy decisions of states.[108] These first and second image variables include "domestic politics, internal extraction capacity and processes, state power and intentions, and leaders' perceptions of the relative distribution of capabilities and of

[105] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15. no. 3 (July-September 2006): 467.

[106] Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism and Facets of Power in International Relations," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Felix Berenskoetter and Michael J. Williams (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2007), 57.

[107] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998), 147.

[108] Steven E. Lobell, J.W. Taliaferro, N.M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Grand Strategy between the World Wars," in *The Challenge of Grand Strategy: The Great Powers and the Broken Balance between the World Wars*, eds. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Norrin M. Ripsman, Steven E. Lobell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 28.

the offense-defense balance."[109] "Domestic political institutions, the balance of domestic interests, strategic culture, and ideology" also affect a state's responses to international pressures, including its ability to pursue a particular policy and organize the necessary resources for implementing it.[110] Domestic processes, Schweller argued,

> act as transmission belts that channel, mediate and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces (primarily changes in relative power). Hence, states often react differently to similar systemic pressures and opportunities, and their response may be less motivated by systemic-level factors than domestic ones.[111]

Neoclassical realists define "elite calculations and perceptions of relative power and domestic constraints" as intervening variables between the international forces and foreign policies of states. Relative power defines the "parameters for how states … define their interests" and follow specific goals.[112] Neoclassical realists generally take material power as "the capabilities or resources, mainly military, with which

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[109] Randall Schweller, "The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism," in *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*, eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003), 317.

[110] Steven E. Lobell, J.W. Taliaferro, N.M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Grand Strategy between the World Wars," in *The Challenge of Grand Strategy: The Great Powers and the Broken Balance between the World Wars*, eds. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Norrin M. Ripsman, Steven E. Lobell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 33.

[111] Randall Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing" *International Security* 29, no: 2 (2004): 164.

[112] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, S.E. Lobell, N.M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 28. On elites' perceptions of relative power and intentions of other states, see Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, *Balancing Risks: Great Power Intervention in the Periphery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Jeffrey Taliaferro, "Power Politics and the Balance-of-Risk: Hypotheses on Great Power Intervention in the Periphery," *Political Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2004): 177-211; William Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perception during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1993); David M. Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty: Beliefs about Intentions and Rise of Great Powers," *Security Studies* 12, no. 1 (2002): 1-40; Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 107-146; Victor D. Cha, "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in East Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea," *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2000): 261-291.

states can influence one another. Power … is the actual capacity to raise armies, deploy navies, occupy territory, and exert various forms of pressure against other states."[113] Neoclassical realists, Rose underlined,

> ...argue that relative material power establishes the basic parameters of a country's foreign policy … Yet they point out that there is no immediate or perfect transmission belt linking material capabilities to foreign policy behavior. Foreign policy choices are made by actual political leaders and elites, and so it is their perceptions of relative power that matter, not simply relative quantities of physical resources or forces in being.[114]

Neoclassical realists underline the importance of leaders and elites' opinions of relative power, because, as Zakaria argued, "statesmen, not states, are the primary actors in international affairs, and their perceptions of shifts in power, rather than objective measures, are critical."[115] Taliaferro also emphasized that authorities of a state make foreign policy decisions on the basis of their "perceptions and calculations of relative power and other states' intentions. … over the short and medium terms, different states' foreign policies may not be objectively "efficient" or predictable based on an objective assessment of relative power."[116]

Taliaferro et al. referred to a two-level game that leaders encounter in formulating and executing a strategy: "on the one hand, they must respond to the external environment, but, on the other, they must extract and mobilize resources from domestic society, work through domestic institutions and maintain the support of key

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[113] William Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance, Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 4.

[114] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998), 146-147.

[115] Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 42.

[116] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (July-September 2006): 485.

stakeholders."[117] Schweller, criticizing balance-of-power theory's assumption that all states have similar extractive capacities, underlined "variations across time and space in elites' ability to mobilize domestic resources in pursuit of foreign-policy aims."[118] Taliaferro added that "even if leaders make "accurate" estimates of relative power and power trends, they do not always have complete access to the resources of their own societies to pursue foreign policy objectives."[119] Rose, accordingly, emphasized,

> Power analysis must therefore also examine the strength and structure of states relative to their societies, because these affect the proportion of national resources that can be allocated to foreign policy. This means that countries with comparable gross capabilities but different state structures are likely to act differently.[120]

Statesmen, Zakaria argued, "can exploit the power resources of their nation only as transmitted through the state structure: foreign policy is thus the product of state power."[121] Taking state power as a domestic variable in explanations of foreign policy, Zakaria wrote,

> Foreign policy is made not by the nation as a whole but by its government; consequently, what matters is state power, not national power. State power is that portion of national power the government can extract for its purposes and reflects the ease with which central decision-makers can achieve their ends. … capabilities shape intentions, but state structure limits the availability of national power. Thus the structure, scope, and capacity of the

[117] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, S.E. Lobell, N.M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 7.

[118] Randall Schweller, *Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 13.

[119] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (July-September 2006): 485-486.

[120] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, No. 1 (October 1998), 147.

[121] Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 42.

> state are crucial factors in explaining the process by which nations become increasingly active on the world stage.[122]

Taliaferro, on the other hand, identified "state institutions," "state-sponsored nationalism," and "statist or anti-statist ideology" as domestic variables that constitute the state power (an intervening variable), which is a state's ability to mobilize or extract societal resources, therefore its strategy of internal balancing.[123]

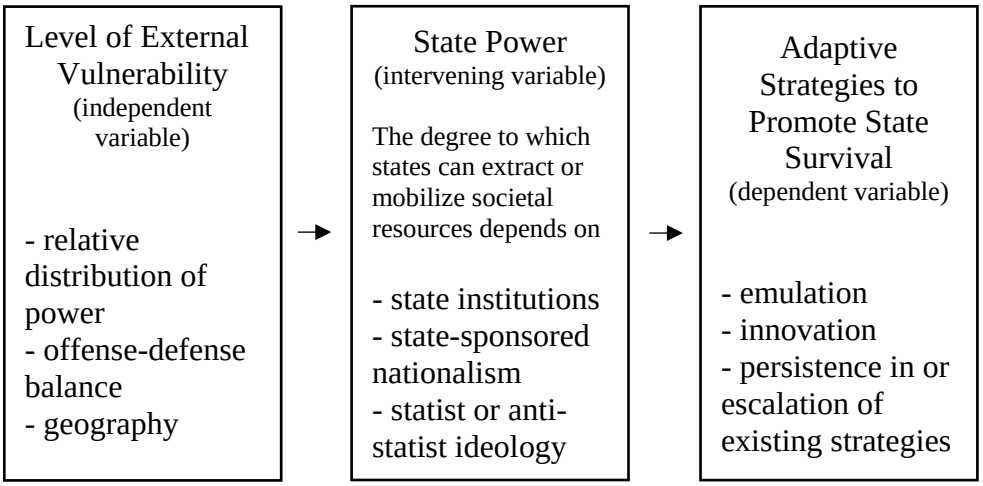

Figure 2 The Resource-Extractive State in Neoclassical Realism[124]

Schweller suggested four unit-level variables that constrain elites' decisions, namely elite consensus, elite cohesion, government or regime vulnerability and social cohesion. Elite consensus and elite cohesion, for Schweller, "primarily affect the state's *willingness* to balance, while government/regime vulnerability and social

[122] Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 9.

[123] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (July-September 2006): 467.

[124] Adapted from Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource- Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (July-September 2006): 486.

cohesion affect the state's *ability* to extract resources for this task. The combination of these four variables determines the degree of *state coherence*."[125]

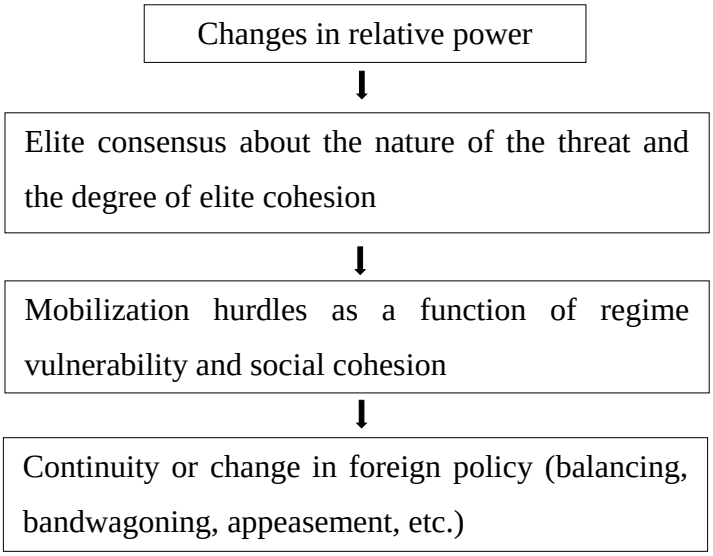

Figure 3 Causal Chain of Policy Adjustments to Changes in Relative Power[126]

2.3. Liberal Theories of International Relations

Neo-liberalism, often called as neo-liberal institutionalism, examines the role of institutions and regimes in promoting international cooperation. Institutions, according to Keohane, refer "to a general pattern or categorization of activity or to a particular human-constructed arrangement, formally or informally organized" that "involve persistent and connected sets of rules (formal or informal) that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations."[127] Krasner defined

[125] Randall Schweller, *Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 47.

[126] Adapted from Randall Schweller, *Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 63.

[127] Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," *International Studies Quarterly*, 32, no. 4 (December 1988): 383.

regimes as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations."[128] Keohane and Nye describe regimes as "networks of rules, norms, and procedures that regularize behavior and control its effects."[129] For neo-liberal institutionalists,

> … anarchy is mitigated by regimes and institutional cooperation which brings higher levels of regularity and predictability to international relations. Regimes constrain state behavior by formalizing the expectations of each party to an agreement where there is a shared interest. Institutions then assume the role of encouraging cooperative habits, monitoring compliance and sanctioning defectors. Regimes also enhance trust, continuity and stability in a world of ungoverned anarchy.[130]

Keohane defined international regimes and formal international organizations as such:

> *International regimes* are specific institutions involving states and/or transnational actors, which apply to particular issues in international relations. …. *Formal international organizations* are purposive institutions with explicit rules, specific assignments of roles to individuals and groups, and the capacity for action. Unlike international regimes, international organizations can engage in goal-directed activities stich as raising and spending money, promulgating policies, and making discretionary choices.[131]

Cooperation, Keohane argued, "can under some conditions develop on the basis of complementary interests, and that institutions, broadly defined, affect the patterns of

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[128] Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regime as Intervening Variables," *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 186.

[129] Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 4th ed. (Boston, MA: Longman, 2012), 16.

[130] Scott Burchill, "Liberalism," in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 65.

[131] Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," *International Studies Quarterly*, 32, no. 4 (December 1988): 384, note 2.

cooperation that emerge."[132] Institutions, according to neo-liberal institutionalism, may help policy-making and motivate cooperation at different levels – local, national and international. Institutions function "as a catalyst for coalition building among state and non-state actors."[133] Through membership in international institutions, Keohane and Nye argue, states can considerably extend their notions of self-interest for the sake of wider cooperation. While following the rules of these organizations, states are discouraged to pursue their narrow national interests.[134]

Neo-liberal institutionalism shares the basic assumptions of neo-realism "that states are the principle actors, that states act in accordance with their conception of national interests, that power remains an important variable, and that the structure of world politics is anarchic."[135] In examining international cooperation, neo-liberal institutionalism adopts

> … a state-centric perspective which, like structural realism, considers states to be unitary, rational, utility-maximizing actors who dominate global affairs. That is, states are treated as unified entities with particular, specifiable goals, rather than composites of many different domestic actors and competing interests. States are also assumed to make decisions based on a set of self-interested priorities and according to a strategic cost-to-benefit analysis of possible choices, reactions, and outcomes.[136]

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[132] Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 9.

[133] Steven L. Lamy, "Contemporary Mainstream Approaches: Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 192.

[134] Scott Burchill, "Liberalism," in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 64.

[135] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 68.

[136] Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "Neoliberalism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, eds. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 115.

Neo-liberal institutionalism has certain shortcomings. First, it does not pay sufficient attention to domestic politics. Neo-liberal institutionalists, taking states as unitary and rational actors, disregard the different domestic processes or institutional limits that leaders, bureaucrats and interest groups in various states encounter, and the resulting diverse interests and behaviors. Neo-liberal institutionalists, accordingly, argue that states all opt for cooperation, which stands as the best option, in case of a problem. However, as the interests, identities and behaviors of actors are based on domestic processes, there is no 'objective' best interests or most efficient action to be taken.[137] Second, while institutions can help states cooperate, states' cooperative behavior is still based on their individual decisions and self-interest.[138] As Mearsheimer, referring to realist criticisms, underlines that "the most powerful states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain their share of world power, or even increase it."[139] Mearsheimer added that,

> Realists maintain that institutions are basically a reflection of the distribution of power in the world. They are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behavior. Realists therefore believe that institutions are not an important cause of peace. They matter only on the margins.[140]

2.4. Constructivist Theories of International Relations

Constructivist approaches to international relations underline the intersubjective aspect of world politics. Constructivists argue that international relations is more

[137] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, S.E. Lobell, N.M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12-13.

[138] Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 120.

[139] John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1994/95): 13.

[140] John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1994/95): 7.

than just rational action of actors and their interaction conditioned by material restraints, as some realist scholars argue, or by institutional restraints at both the national and international levels, as some liberal internationalists argue. According to constructivists, interaction between states does not take place among stable national interests, but it forms and is formed by identities. Contrary to other approaches, social constructivism puts forward

> … a model of international interaction that explores the normative influence of fundamental institutional structures and the connection between normative changes and state identity and interests. At the same time, however, institutions themselves are constantly reproduced and, potentially, changed by the activities of states and other actors. Institutions and actors are mutually conditioning entities.[141]

Social constructivists, as Steans et al. mentioned,

> analyze the interplay between structure and agency in international politics; are interested in the role of ideas, norms and institutions in foreign policy making; argue for the importance of identity and culture in international politics; do not deny the role of interests in policy making, but try to understand how these interests are constructed.[142]

Wendt advanced his arguments based on the premises of neorealism, particularly the work of Waltz. Wendt, similar to Waltz, offered a "state-centric structural theory."[143] Wendt also pointed out that he agreed with the realist assumptions of Mearsheimer

> … that international politics is anarchic, and that states have offensive capabilities, cannot be 100 percent certain about others' intentions, wish to survive, and are rational. We even share two more: a commitment to states

[141] Martin Griffiths, Terry O'Callaghan, Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2008), 51.

[142] Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez and Imad El-Anis, *An Introduction to International Relations Theory: Perspectives and Themes*, 3rd ed. (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2010), 184.

[143] Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14.

> as units of analysis, and to the importance of systemic or "third image" theorizing.[144]

According to Wendt, in contrast to realists, "international relations are … socially constructed rather than transhistorically given. … structure does not exist apart from process, that is, the practices of actors. … self-help … is an institution developed and sustained through process."[145] In the words of Wendt,

> … self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure. There is no "logic" of anarchy apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process. Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. *Anarchy is what states make of it.*[146]

Constructivism focuses on "the importance of normative as well as material structures, on the role of identity in shaping political action and on the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures."[147] Wendt outlined the main claims of his structural theory of the international system as follows:

> (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective, rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important

[144] Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 72.

[145] Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14.

[146] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 394-395.

[147] Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 188.

> part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics.[148]

For constructivists, therefore, normative and ideational structures are as significant as the material structures in shaping the behavior of individuals or states. These structures are important, constructivists claim, as they outline the actors' social identities. These "systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values" have substantial effect on social and political action.[149] Wendt mentioned that in opposition to "neo-realists' desocialized view of [material] capabilities, constructivists argue that material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded."[150]

Unit-level constructivism, in contrast to systemic constructivism's focus on the international, examines "the relationship between domestic social and legal norms and the identities and interests of states."[151] Systemic approaches, according to Katzenstein, are insufficient because they do not pay the necessary attention to the effects of internal composition of states on their international behavior. Katzenstein in his studies, therefore, underlined "the domestic normative structure and how it influences state identity, interests, and policy."[152]

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[148] Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (June 1994): 385.

[149] Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 196.

[150] Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 73.

[151] Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burchill et al., 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 200.

[152] Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 223.

2.5. Conclusion

As Allison, with regard to Russia's Crimea policy, underlined,

> Analysis of Russian legal rhetoric reveals discursive strategies Russia is likely to pursue and diplomatic positions it may adopt in international forums. It also exposes central Russian grievances and, with careful interpretation, indicates certain Russian priorities in the crisis around Ukraine. Yet much of this language probably conceals or diverts attention from underlying Russian motivations, and it does not bring us closer to *explaining* Russia's belligerent conduct in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. To attempt this requires an analysis structured around different explanatory approaches.[153]

This dissertation, accordingly, adopts a neoclassical realist framework, which aims to "bridge domestic and international politics and specifically to relate domestic structures to international structures."[154] Neoclassical realists maintain that only structural level explanations cannot account for the behavior of states and using classical realist insights bring individual and domestic level variables back to the analyses of state behavior.[155] In this regard, this research focuses on Russian leaders' beliefs about the international system, domestic constrains and motivations, firstly, for explaining Russia's varying policies with regard to Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Crimea, and secondly, for comparing Russia's policy on these regions under the leaderships of Yeltsin and Putin (Medvedev).

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[153] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6, (November 2014): 1268.

[154] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 88.

[155] Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, third edition, (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: 2005), 45.

CHAPTER 3

KOSOVO

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines Russia's responses to the secessionist movement in Kosovo in the post-Cold War period. In this regard, the chapter firstly introduces the origins and development of secessionism in Kosovo. Secondly, it focuses on the Kosovo issue in Russian foreign and domestic policy, particularly its impact on Russia's relations with Serbia and the West. Thirdly, it analyzes Russia's official position and policy in UN Security Council on secessionism in Kosovo, especially during the 1999 NATO operation and Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008. Lastly, it discusses the sources, objectives and means of Russia's responses to the Kosovo issue. The chapter draws on the impact of both the international and regional pressures, and internal factors shaping Russian leadership's policies on Kosovo. The chapter concludes that geopolitical and strategic concerns of the Russian leadership, rather than their support for Slavic and orthodox identities within Kosovo and respect for the principles of international law, have been decisive in the formation on Russia's Kosovo policy.

3.2. Evolution of the Secessionist Movement in Kosovo

The struggle among Serbs and Albanians over Kosovo has an old history going back ages. Kosovo has important symbolic significance for both Serbs and Albanians, including religious aspects. Both sides have resorted to violent means to establish their dominance in the region, especially in the twentieth century.[156] The contemporary conflict concerning Kosovo is closely related to the Albanian question, which arose in the 19th century following the Balkan states' claims on Ottoman

[156] John Norris, *Collision Course: NATO, Russia, and Kosovo* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), xix.

Empire's European lands. Serbia captured most territories of Kosovo after the First Balkan War, which started in 1912 against the Ottomans. The Albanian leadership, in response to the war, proclaimed their independence in November 1912. The independence of Albania was recognized by European powers during the London Conference in 1913. The newly established Albania, however, comprised just half of Albanians inhabiting in the Balkans. A significant number of Albanians remained in the territories conquered by Serbia, mainly within Kosovo and western parts of Macedonia.[157]

Half of Albanians were once again separated from Albania because of the World War I. Albanians inhabiting within "southern Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia" were incorporated into the new "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes," which was later recalled as Yugoslavia in 1929.[158] Two political objectives have been influential among Albanians, who were separated from each other living in Albania or Yugoslavia: unification with Albania or establishment of a new independent state. Serbian policies that did not guarantee the political and civil rights of the Albanian population have only strengthened these objectives.[159]

During the Second World War, Kosovo was disintegrated into occupied territories. Italians controlled the biggest occupied territory.[160] Kosovo and western parts of

[157] Marie-Janine Calic, "Kosovo in the twentieth century: A historical account," in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention: Selective Indignation, Collective Action, and International Citizenship*, eds. Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), 19-20.

[158] Marie-Janine Calic, "Kosovo in the twentieth century: A historical account," in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention: Selective Indignation, Collective Action, and International Citizenship*, eds. Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), 20.

[159] Vjeran Pavlakovic and Sabrina Petra Ramet, "Albanian and Serb Rivalry in Kosovo: Realist and Universalist Perspectives on Sovereignty," in *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2004), 80.

[160] Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*, 4th ed. (Colorado: Westview Press, 2002), 312.

Macedonia fell under the Italian authority and were united with the Italian-controlled Albania, following the defeat of Yugoslavia by April 1941.[161] This unity of Kosovo and Albania was short-lived and continued between 1941 and 1943.[162] In 1943, Josip Tito reconstituted Yugoslavia on the model of a socialist federation. "The Albanian National Liberation Committee for Kosovo," in the meanwhile, proclaimed Kosovo's unification with Albania. "The Assembly of National Representatives of Kosovo" gathered in Prizren in 1945, however, opposed this declaration, and decided to make Kosovo a part of the federal Serbia.[163]

Under the leadership of Tito, Yugoslavia was structured as a federation consisting of six republics, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia.[164] The establishment of Yugoslavia was finalized in August 1945, when the Serbian Assembly issued the law on Serbia's division into administrative provinces. The law founded the autonomous region of Kosovo and Metohija. Three main reasons behind its creation were resolving the issue concerning Albanians' status living in Kosovo; moving forward with the unification of Albania with a communist federation under the authority of Yugoslavia; and establishing a balance between the non-Serbs and the Serbs in Yugoslavia.[165] Kosovo was given an autonomous region status in Serbia – named Kosmet after Kosovo and Metohija – by the Yugoslav constitution of 1946. In 1966, Kosovo was made an autonomous

[161] Christopher Cviic, "Review Article: Kosovo 1945-2005," *International Affairs* 81, no. 4 (2005): 851.

[162] Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 144.

[163] Marie-Janine Calic, "Kosovo in the twentieth century: A historical account," in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention: Selective Indignation, Collective Action, and International Citizenship*, eds. Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), 20-21.

[164] Richard C. Hall, "Yugoslavia," in *War in the Balkans: An Encyclopedic History from the Fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, ed. Richard C. Hall (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 339.

[165] Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 145.

province.[166] In 1974, the new Constitution in Yugoslavia provided the autonomous province of Kosovo with nearly all the privileges of other republics within Yugoslavia, such as direct representation within institutions of the federation.[167] The 1974 constitution offered Kosovo its "own judiciary, legislation and administration," which meant for the Kosovo Albanians the replacement of the nearly constant state of emergency with self-government. With the new constitution, the autonomous regions enjoyed the veto right in matters directly affecting them, and the leadership in Belgrade lost its absolute authority on the republican issues.[168] Tito wanted with the new constitution to change Kosovo into a federal unit having its own provincial government. The Albanian population, however, was not satisfied, as their ultimate goal was earning a republic status.[169] The Serbs within Kosovo, on the other hand, was critical of the Albanian leadership's "Albanization" policies. Despite the measures of the communists in Yugoslavia for limiting national ambitions, ideologies based on nationalism remained strong under the leadership of Tito era in whole Yugoslavia.[170]

Following Tito's death in 1980, politics within Yugoslavia centered upon Kosovo. The demonstrations of March 1981 in Kosovo were decisive. They began at the Pristina University, as a reaction to food quality and living standards at the university. Later the demonstrations escalated into Kosovo-wide riots, with the

[166] Marie-Janine Calic, "Kosovo in the twentieth century: A historical account," in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention: Selective Indignation, Collective Action, and International Citizenship*, eds. Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), 21.

[167] Babak Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West toward War in Kosovo* (Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 68.

[168] Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 197-198.

[169] Greg Campbell, *The Road to Kosovo: A Balkan Diary* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 152.

[170] Marie-Janine Calic, "Kosovo in the twentieth century: A historical account," in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention: Selective Indignation, Collective Action, and International Citizenship*, eds. Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), 21.

participation of "construction workers, metal workers, mine workers, high school students, administrators, teachers, and others."[171] While some protested Kosovo's economic and social standards, demands for a republic status for Kosovo and calls for unification with Albania were also made during the protests. The authorities in Serbia, underlining the demands for unification with Albania, represented the protests "as counter-revolutionary and guided by irredentists."[172] As a response, the military entered Kosovo. The suppression in Kosovo, leading to Albanian casualties, resulted in the radicalization of "some Albanians and a heavy security presence in the province."[173]

The demonstrations in 1981 transformed the course of developments both in Kosovo and in Yugoslavia. Firstly, many of the founders of "Kosovo Liberation Army" (KLA) were sent to prison during or after the 1981 events. This played a significant role in the radicalization targeting both Serbia and Yugoslavia. Secondly, Serbs in Kosovo had to face more hostility after 1981, because of the belief that Serbia had the actual power in Kosovo although the Albanian leadership was in charge. This perception encouraged more emigration among the Serbian population in Kosovo.[174] The Kosovo issue, by this way, became much more politicized within Serbia. Some Serbian intellectuals produced a memorandum in 1985, by which they claimed that

[171] Dale C. Tatum, *Genocide at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Darfur* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 119.

[172] Vjeran Pavlakovic and Sabrina Petra Ramet, "Albanian and Serb Rivalry in Kosovo: Realist and Universalist Perspectives on Sovereignty," in *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2004), 83.

[173] James Summers, "Kosovo: From Yugoslav Province to Disputed Independence," in *Kosovo: A Precedent? The Declaration of Independence, the Advisory Opinion and Implications for Statehood, Self-Determination and Minority Rights*, ed. James Summers (Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011), 9.

[174] Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58.

the Serb population in Kosovo were exposed to genocide committed by Albanians and Serbia had to reestablish its power in the region.[175]

Map 1 Kosovo[176]

Slobodan Milosevic, who would later become the president of Serbia, managed to utilize the issue of Serbs living in Kosovo for his own career. Milosevic was sent to Kosovo in April 1987 by then president of Serbia to deal with the problems of Kosovo Serbs. While Milosevic was in Kosovo Polje, he told the Serb demonstrators

[175] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans (*London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 10.

[176] Adapted from UN Map No. 4069 Rev. 6 (September 2011).

who were fighting with the predominantly Albanian police that 'No one should dare to beat you'. His speech was circulated many times on TV in Serbia and he would soon become a hero for the Serbs.[177]

Milosevic became the president of Serbia in May 1989. His real celebration was planned to be done during "the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo."[178] The commemoration for the battle occurred in June 1989, during which the victory of the Ottoman Empire against the Serbs, the Serbian kingdom's subsequent dissolution and the following centuries of Turkish rule were reminded. The event enhanced the feeling of victory among the Serbs and "Serbia's 'final return' to Kosovo" was underlined.[179] During the commemoration, Milosevic celebrated his election as president at the battleground called Gazimestan, before thousands of Serbs, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church in Serbia and other leaders of Yugoslavia. During his speech, Milosevic told the crowd that after six hundred years, Serbs are once again in battles, and indeed, armed battles are still possible.[180]

The strengthening of Milosevic in Yugoslavia worsened the relationship between Albanian and Serb populations of Kosovo. The Serbian authorities further limited the rights of Albanians in Kosovo from 1989 to 1990. Finally, in July 1990, the autonomous status of Kosovo was revoked.[181] In the meantime, Ibrahim Rugova became president in Kosovo getting 99.5 percent of the total vote in the presidential

[177] Dale C. Tatum, *Genocide at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Darfur* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 120.

[178] Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 3rd ed. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 163.

[179] Viktor Meier, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise*, trans. Sabrina P. Ramet (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 91.

[180] Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 67-68.

[181] John Norris, *Collision Course: NATO, Russia, and Kosovo* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), xx.

elections organized by "the Kosovo Assembly" in May 1991.[182] In a referendum conducted in Kosovo in September 1991, 99.87 percent voted for independence.[183] In September 1991, accordingly, Kosovo Albanians declared their independence. Albania recognized the independence of Kosovo in October 1991.[184] Their independence, however, was not recognized by international actors. "The Badinter Arbitration Committee," established by the EU, decided in 1992 that only "the six formal republics of Yugoslavia were states emerging from the collapse of the federation, and thus could be recognised."[185]

War started in Yugoslavia in 1991. Serbia had to deal with the wars in Croatia and Bosnia from 1991 to 1995, especially with the issue of refugees.[186] The war in Bosnia ended with the "Dayton Peace Accords" in 1995. While the Accords set the overall outline for peace in Bosnia, it did not address the Kosovo issue and did not change the conditions of Kosovo Albanians. This led to the radicalization of Albanians, who were recommended to be patient until the international community would find a solution on the Yugoslavia issue. Most of the Kosovo Albanians supposed that only through independence they could protect their rights.[187] Political violence within Kosovo grew considerably since 1997. The KLA organized attacks against Serbian police forces and officials, and Albanians who were accused of

[182] Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 226.

[183] Roland Rich, "Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union," *European Journal of International Law* 4 (1993): 61.

[184] James Summers, "Kosovo: From Yugoslav Province to Disputed Independence," in *Kosovo: A Precedent? The Declaration of Independence, the Advisory Opinion and Implications for Statehood, Self-Determination and Minority Rights*, ed. James Summers (Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011), 10.

[185] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 11.

[186] Janine N. Clark, *Serbia in the Shadow of Milosevic: The Legacy of Conflict in the Balkans* (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), 27-28.

[187] Ray Murphy, *UN Peacekeeping in Lebanon, Somalia and Kosovo: Operational and Legal Issues in Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 71.

working for the Serbian authorities. In 1998, Serbian forces organized a military attack to destroy KLA and the clash turned into a larger war.[188]

Following the rise of violence in Kosovo, the UN Security Council put an arms embargo against Yugoslavia. The Kosovo issue since then has generated intensive debates within the UN and the Contact Group (composed of "Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States"). In September 1998, the UNSC demanded a cease-fire and the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces located in the region. Clashes between KLA and the Yugoslav forces, however, further intensified. In response, by October 1998, NATO approved its possible air attacks in case Yugoslav forces continued their presence in Kosovo. After negotiations, which were initiated by Richard Holbrooke, the US Ambassador, Milosevic accepted a partial withdrawal of Yugoslav military forces and the deployment of international monitoring groups. NATO confirmed that it would launch air attacks if Milosevic breached the agreement. Although both sides were expected to stop their attacks, assaults made by both Kosovo Albanians and Serbs against high-profile people confirmed the difficulty of establishing peace in the region.[189]

As the cease-fire broke down, a peace conference was organized at Rambouillet by February 1999 under the leadership of the British and French Foreign Ministers. The conference did not achieve any results due to Belgrade's objection to the deployment of NATO forces on its land and the discontent of Kosovo Albanians about the timing of a referendum concerning Kosovo's status. Within two weeks, the Albanian leadership agreed to approve the agreement, while Belgrade still rejected to do so. NATO, as a response, started its air campaign towards Kosovo and the larger Serbia in March 1999. Finally, Milosevic was forced to accept the agreement and "a

[188] Marie-Janine Calic, "Kosovo in the twentieth century: A historical account," in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention: Selective Indignation, Collective Action, and International Citizenship*, eds. Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), 28.

[189] John Norris, *Collision Course: NATO, Russia, and Kosovo* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), xx-xxi.

Military-Technical Agreement" was concluded with NATO in June 1999. Accordingly, the air campaign ended, Yugoslav armed forces left Kosovo and Kosovo Force (KFOR) moved into the region.[190] UNMIK[191] was established by the UNSC Resolution 1244 in June 1999. With the establishment of UNMIK, the UN, together with "NATO, the OSCE and the EU," took the responsibility for Kosovo's population and territory.[192] Under UNSC Resolution 1244, the key tasks of UNMIK include:

> (a) Promoting the establishment, pending a final settlement, of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, taking full account of … the Rambouillet accords (S/1999/648);
> (b) Performing basic civilian administrative functions where and as long as required;
> (c) Organizing and overseeing the development of provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous self-government pending a political settlement, including the holding of elections;
> (d) Transferring, as these institutions are established, its administrative responsibilities while overseeing and supporting the consolidation of Kosovo's local provisional institutions and other peace-building activities;
> (e) Facilitating a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet accords (S/1999/648);
> (f) In a final stage, overseeing the transfer of authority from Kosovo's provisional institutions to institutions established under a political settlement;
> (g) Supporting the reconstruction of key infrastructure and other economic reconstruction;
> (h) Supporting, in coordination with international humanitarian organizations, humanitarian and disaster relief aid;
> (i) Maintaining civil law and order, including establishing local police forces and meanwhile through the deployment of international police personnel to serve in Kosovo;
> (j) Protecting and promoting human rights;

[190] Peter Siani-Davies, "Introduction: International intervention (and non-intervention) in the Balkans," in *International Intervention in the Balkans since* 1995, ed. Peter Siani-Davies (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 22.

[191] United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo.

[192] Tonny Brems Knudsen and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, "The Politics of International Trusteeship," in *Kosovo between War and Peace: Nationalism, Peacebuilding and International Trusteeship*, eds. Tonny Brems Knudsen and Carsten Bagge Laustsen (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 12.

(k) Assuring the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo.[193]

KFOR was deployed in Kosovo on 12 June 1999. In the beginning, KFOR consisted of around 50,000 troops from NATO, non-NATO and partner countries. In 2002, this number was cut to 39,000. With the improvement of security in Kosovo, the number of troops were first reduced to 26,000 and later to 17,500 in 2003.[194] According to the Resolution 1244, the responsibilities of KFOR consist of:

(a) Deterring renewed hostilities, maintaining and where necessary enforcing a ceasefire, and ensuring the withdrawal and preventing the return into Kosovo of Federal and Republic military, police and paramilitary forces, … ;
(b) Demilitarizing the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups … ;
(c) Establishing a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety, the international civil presence can operate, a transitional administration can be established, and humanitarian aid can be delivered;
(d) Ensuring public safety and order until the international civil presence can take responsibility for this task;
(e) Supervising demining until the international civil presence can, as appropriate, take over responsibility for this task;
(f) Supporting, as appropriate, and coordinating closely with the work of the international civil presence;
(g) Conducting border monitoring duties as required;
(h) Ensuring the protection and freedom of movement of itself, the international civil presence, and other international organizations;[195]

In May 2001, the UN declared a "Constitutional Framework" that established "the Provisional Self-Government in Kosovo." According to the agreement, "the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG)," namely "the assembly, the

[193] UN Security Council Resolution 1244, 10 June 1999, para. 11 (S/RES/1244).

[194] "NATO's role in Kosovo," NATO, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm

[195] UN Security Council Resolution 1244, 10 June 1999, para. 3 (S/RES/1244).

presidency, the executive and the judiciary" were granted extensive powers in various areas. "The Constitutional Framework," however, did not express any opinion concerning Kosovo's future status or a timetable for concerning this issue. Additionally, the agreement signed by then chair of UNMIK, Hans Haekkerup, and Serbia's then deputy prime minister, Nebojsa Covic, underlined that no decision would taken by UNMIK for deciding the final status of Kosovo. This agreement, as expected, was not welcomed by the leadership in Kosovo. For overcoming the discontent, the UN decided to signal that the resolution on Kosovo's future status could not be postponed constantly.[196] Accordingly, Michael Steiner, introduced some standards that had to be realized before any discussion on the region's status could be started, named as "standards before status" policy. The Albanian leadership criticized the policy, as they only aimed at independence.[197]

The 9/11 attacks and the subsequent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq moved international community's attention from Kosovo to the Middle East. The Kosovo issue lost its significance until the beginning of large-scale demonstrations in Kosovo in March 2004.[198] Provocative news argued that four boys from the Albanian community had been forced into river Ibar by Kosovo Serbs and three had lost their lives. Meanwhile, protests were taking place against UNMIK and the arrest of some KLA leadership based on suspected war crimes.[199] The fighting between Serbs and Albanians could be taken under control on 19 March 2005. This incident very

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[196] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 17-18.

[197] James Summers, "Kosovo: From Yugoslav Province to Disputed Independence," in *Kosovo: A Precedent? The Declaration of Independence, the Advisory Opinion and Implications for Statehood, Self-Determination and Minority Rights*, ed. James Summers (Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011), 34.

[198] James Ker-Lindsay, "Preventing the Emergence of Self-Determination as a Norm of Secession: An Assessment of the Kosovo 'Unique Case' Argument," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (July 2013): 845.

[199] Lene Kühle and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, "The Kosovo myth: nationalism and revenge," in *Kosovo between War and Peace: Nationalism, Peacebuilding and International Trusteeship*, eds. Tonny Brems Knudsen and Carsten Bagge Laustsen (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 31.

negatively influenced the relations among both the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo and Belgrade and Pristina. After the fighting, the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia was halted. UNMIK's and KFOR's reputation of was also damaged considerably, as there was no remarkable progress since five years concerning reconciliation between two groups.[200]

After the March 2004 events, it became obvious that Kosovo's current situation was not sustainable. Another violent event would even bring the breakdown of UNMIK. UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan, accordingly, demanded a Norwegian diplomat, Kai Eide, to examine the conflict in Kosovo.[201] Eide was asked to review UNMIK, particularly the progress concerning "Standards for Kosovo" and prepare a report on how to make progress with Kosovo's status. Eide, preparing a critical report on UNMIK's actions in Kosovo, warned that the credibility of the UN was decreasing and underlined that Kosovo could be offered a plan aimed at its incorporation into structures within the international arena. In October 2005, accordingly, General Secretary Annan, authorized by the UNSC, started a new process to resolve Kosovo's status.[202]

The Contact Group outlined some principles for discussions on Kosovo's status: no return to pre-1999 status quo; Kosovo would not be under direct authority of Belgrade once again; and Kosovo would not be divided or merged into any third country.[203] Once these principles were defined, the process for resolving Kosovo's status started and "the UN Secretary General Annan" demanded Martti Ahtisaari to

[200] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 20-21.

[201] Tim Judah, "Kosovo's Moment of Truth," *Survival* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2005-2006): 75.

[202] James Hughes, "Russia and the Secession of Kosovo: Power, Norms and the Failure of Multilateralism," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (July 2013): 1008-1009.

[203] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 103.

serve as a "Special Envoy" during the discussions between the parties.[204] Ahtisaari, working nearly one and a half years with delegations from Serbia and Kosovo, offered his report in March 2007, which recommended a status of independence that would be supervised internationally. In July 2007, the UNSC could not agree on a resolution needed for the implementation of Ahtisaari's suggestion, particularly because of Russia's objections. The new round of negotiations, started by the troika composed of diplomats from Russia, the US and the EU, also ended with failure in December 2007.[205] In December 2007, the Troika by a report underlined that despite six meetings between representatives from Serbia and Kosovo over four months, sides to the conflict could not overcome their differences concerning sovereignty.[206]

The proposal of Ahtisaari included "the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo" (EULEX), which would support and control the "rule of law sector" in Kosovo and get involved in case of necessity. EULEX's legal foundation is EU Council's Joint Action dated February 2008. EULEX is composed of EU and partner state specialists and officers in customs, police and judiciary, who are placed in institutions within Kosovo related to these areas. The main goal of EULEX is to control and guide these sectors in Kosovo and improve their services. The placement of EULEX in Kosovo began in December 2008, after long discussions concerning its duties and mandate. Serbia opposed EULEX with its planned structure and, together with Russia, called for the placement of EULEX under the UN's authority, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 1244. [207]

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[204] Gergana Noutcheva, *European Foreign Policy and the Challenges of Balkan Accession: Conditionality, Legitimacy and Compliance* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012), 76.

[205] Fabian Schmidt, "Kosovo – Post-Status Challenges to Governability," in *Is there an Albanian Question?*, ed. Judy Bat,t Chaillot Paper no. 107 (Paris: EUISS, January 2008), 27.

[206] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 106.

[207] Senad Sabovic, "Intervention and Independence in Kosovo: The EULEX Rule of Law Mission," in *European Union and Human Security: External Interventions and Missions*, eds. Mary Martin and Mary Kaldor (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010), 112-114.

Finally, in February 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence. Costa Rica recognized Kosovo on that day, while Albania, Afghanistan, Turkey, France, the US and the UK did so the following day. Most of states in Europe recognized Kosovo's declaration of independence within the following few weeks.[208] In addition to Serbia, some other countries, remarkably Spain, China and Russia refused to recognize Kosovo's independence.[209]

3.3. Russian Foreign and Domestic Policy on Kosovo

Russia has always been supportive of their Slav brothers in Serbia. Russia's support has been steady before the World War I and in the aftermath of Yugoslavia's dissolution, especially during the 1999 Kosovo crisis when NATO forces bombed Serbian targets in order to safeguard Kosovo Albanians.[210] Since the beginning of the crisis, Russia has rejected Western accusations against Milosevic's conduct. In general, elites in Russia overlooked or downplayed charges of violence committed by the Serbs. Russia, for instance, vetoed the UN draft resolution dated April 1999 that condemned the actions of the Yugoslav military and Serb forces against the Albanian population in Kosovo. Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov claimed that such accusations were aimed at justifying NATO's aggressive actions. He further argued that the refugee crisis in the region was not Serbia's fault; refugees were escaping from Kosovo not because of Serb forces but NATO bombings. Russia regularly tried to justify Serb policy in the conflict by discrediting Kosovo Albanians, by accusations focused on terrorism, drug trafficking and Islamic fundamentalism, and

[208] James Summers, "Kosovo: From Yugoslav Province to Disputed Independence," in *Kosovo: A Precedent? The Declaration of Independence, the Advisory Opinion and Implications for Statehood, Self-Determination and Minority Rights*, ed. James Summers (Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011), 40.

[209] Janine N. Clark, *Serbia in the Shadow of Milosevic: The Legacy of Conflict in the Balkans* (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), 142.

[210] Michael Johns, "Russia-European Union Relations after 2012: Good, Bad, Indifferent?," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 160.

underlining West's discrimination against the Serbs. NATO was accused of committing a 'genocide' in Kosovo, causing significant losses on the Serbian side.[211]

Russia's Kosovo policy during the conflict was based on not recognizing KLA as an actor in peace talks and assuming the role of a mediator for a solution. Following the talks between Presidents Yeltsin and Milosevic in June 1998, Milosevic accepted beginning negotiations with Albanians under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova, whom Russia regarded as the legitimate representative, and permitting a "Diplomatic Observer Mission" in Kosovo. Russia also worked in cooperation with the US and Contact Group states in the mission. By September 1998, Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton underlined the necessity of ending the violence, withdrawing the Serbian army, starting negotiations, easing the return of refugees, and increasing the international monitoring in the region.[212] President Yeltsin maintained that the peacekeeping task in Kosovo was not only a NATO issue and called for the incorporation of Russian forces to defend the Serb population. Russian forces, however, established their control over an airport in Kosovo and complicated NATO operations rather than cooperating.[213] While the Yugoslav troops were preparing to leave Kosovo and NATO forces were moving into the region, in June 1999, a group of Russian soldiers took control of the airport in Pristina. Although surrounded by British forces, the Russian forces in the airfield did not let NATO perform its planned duties. While the US delegation, which was trying to outline Russia's participation in KFOR, was focused on settling the issue in peaceful means, NATO

[211] David Mendeloff, "'Pernicious History' as a Cause of National Misperceptions: Russia and the 1999 Kosovo War," *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 1 (March 2008): 44-46.

[212] Stefan Wolff, "The Limits of Non-Military International Intervention: A Case Study of the Kosovo Conflict," in *Understanding the War in Kosovo*, eds. Florian Bieber and Zhidas Daskalovski (London; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 2003), 85-86.

[213] Michael Johns, "Russia-European Union Relations after 2012: Good, Bad, Indifferent?," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 160.

chiefs were considering using force against the Russian forces. Finally, an agreement on Russian involvement in Kosovo was reached in June 1999.[214]

For the Russian leadership, the NATO operation in Kosovo would finally bring the disintegration of Serbia and Serbia was isolated in Europe for this goal. For Russia, the US carried out the operation although none of NATO members were attacked and by bypassing the UNSC in order not to be forced to find a common ground with Russia concerning the conditions and boundaries of the intervention. All these confirmed, in Russian's opinion, their fears about NATO enlargement. Following the beginning of air strikes against Serbia, President Yeltsin warned about the threat of "a new World War" and ordered Russian warships to the region.[215] He supported Milosevic's offer on incorporating Yugoslavia into "the Russia-Belarus Union" and declared the recalibration of Russia's nuclear forces against NATO states participating in the air campaign. Additionally, Russia stopped its military and civilian dialogue and cooperation with NATO.[216]

Russia declared its support for Serbia, denounced NATO's operation and rejected any solution dictated on Serbia. Russia proposed a draft UNSC resolution demanding the termination of the operation that, Russia claimed, was against the UN charter. However, the draft resolution was rejected by the majority of the UNSC members. In April 1999, faced with an irreversible process, the Russian leadership decided that ending the war would be in its interests.[217] In an effort to secure an important position for Russia in the solution of the conflict, President Yeltsin appointed Viktor

[214] Andrew Felkay, *Yeltsin's Russia and the West* (Westport, CT: Preager Publishers, 2002), 206.

[215] Jacques Levesque, "Moscow's evolving partnership with Beijing: Countering Washington's hegemony," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 187.

[216] Lionel Ponsard, *Russia, NATO and Cooperative Security: Bridging the Gap* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2007), 74.

[217] Niels van Willigen, *Peacebuilding and International Administration: The cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 54.

Chernomyrdin as Russia's mediator on NATO-Serbia discussions.[218] Chernomyrdin proposed a peace deal that would guarantee refugees' return, provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance for Yugoslavia, restart discussions on Kosovo's status, withdraw some of the Yugoslav troops, retreat NATO forces from the border of Yugoslavia, and deploy peacekeepers including Russian soldiers with UN authorization. Milosevic stated that he would agree with a not strongly armed UN peacekeepers.[219] With the mediation of Russia, the US, and the Finnish President Ahtisaari, Milosevic agreed with the offered terms.[220] Accordingly, NATO air operations that started in March 1999 ended in June 1999. UN Security Council Resolution 1244, dated 10 June 1999, replaced Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo "with an interim international presence."[221]

NATO operation in Yugoslavia has significantly affected Russia's concerns with regard to its own security, its stand on security matters in the West and it remains to be main reason behind Russian resistance to the enlargement of NATO.[222] The operation was started shortly after "Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland" were accepted to NATO, and just before the alliance's new strategic concept, which did not define any geographical limitations with regard to its enlargement and extended NATO's area of responsibility beyond its members' territory.[223]

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[218] Jacques Levesque, "Moscow's evolving partnership with Beijing: Countering Washington's hegemony," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 187.

[219] John Norris, *Collision Course: NATO, Russia, and Kosovo* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), 59.

[220] Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 3rd ed. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 331.

[221] Elizabeth Chadwick, *Self-Determination in the Post-9/11 Era* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), 132.

[222] Zarko N. Petrovic, "Russian Vision of Security in Europe and Serbia," in *Russia Serbia Relations at the Beginning of XXI Century*, ed. Zarko N. Petrovic (Belgrad: ISAC Fund, 2010), 103.

[223] Derek Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West," *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 576.

After the Kosovo crisis, which damaged the trust and cooperation between Russia and NATO, Russian foreign policy once more aimed at limiting the losses. The crisis demonstrated Russia's economic dependence on the West, in particular on IMF and Western markets for its natural resources. The crisis also had a symbolic importance to Russia that it underlined Russia's limited transnational influence and geopolitical stalemate. Objection to NATO and support to the Serbs united people with different political backgrounds in Russia. NATO's 1999 operation contributed to the strengthening of anti-Western ideas among the political elite and most of the public.[224] Following Yevgeny Primakov's appointment as prime minister in 1998, Russia has aimed a stronger position in the Balkans. Russia's elites in the foreign policy sphere had consensus on the participation of Russia in the Balkan conflict, sharing particularly anti-American and in general anti-Western views regarding the conflicts in former Yugoslavia. This anti-Western attitude was shared by the leftists, rightists, most liberals and radical democrats, as indicated by nearly unanimous voting in the Duma on various resolutions and declarations concerning Kosovo by March 1999.[225]

NATO campaign in Yugoslavia, according to Russians, was the most powerful explanation for their pessimism about a Europe centered on NATO. The Kosovo issue, rather than NATO's enlargement, has consolidated anti-NATO stance of Russia. It was regarded as a proof for arguments on NATO's aggressiveness. Any belief that NATO would provide stability in Europe became irrelevant.[226] According to surveys conducted between March and June 1999 on public views on NATO attacks against Serbia, on average only 2 percent of the Russian population supported

[224] Sergei Medvedev, "Kosovo: A European *fin de siècle*," in *Mapping European Security after Kosovo*, eds. Peter van Ham and Sergei Medvedev (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 24-25.

[225] Ekaterina A. Stepanova, "Explaining Russia's Dissention on Kosovo," PONARS Policy Memo 57 (Carnegie Moscow Center, March 1999), 2.

[226] Vladimir Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 35, no. 2 (April-June 2000): 115-116.

NATO operations, whereas public support was 68 percent in the US, 67 percent in the United Kingdom, 61 percent in France, 45 percent in Italy, and 54 percent in Germany.[227]

The Kosovo conflict has also influenced Russian thinking on the global level. Russians were concerned that the international law and international order established on the UN were breaking down, which would have terrible results for Russia itself.[228] Analysts in Russia underlined that the international relations system was established on the authority of the UN and NATO was challenging the basis of this order by resorting to force without UN authorization. For Russia, the NATO operation in Kosovo was an act of aggression, as most of the international agreements condemn the use of force against a state. Russia particularly objected to a possible common practice in which NATO would use force against any state under the pretext of defending human rights.[229]

During the NATO intervention, the Russian leadership, comparing Kosovo with Chechnya, had also concerns that the Muslim populations in both Russia and "Commonwealth of Independent States" (CIS) would be encouraged by the Western support and follow Kosovo Albanians' suit. The common view in Russia believed that NATO started the conflict by its support to KLA with the aim of increasing its influence in the Balkan region. For the leadership in Russia, there were similar features between the Chechen terrorists and KLA: they were oppressing Slavic minorities; they developed after dissolution of multi-ethnic federations; and they resorted to terrorism for achieving their goals. Russians were concerned that Kosovo

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[227] Philip Everts and Pierangelo Isernia, *Public Opinion, Transatlantic Relations and the Use of Force* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York Palgrave Macmillan: 2015), 144.

[228] Vladimir Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 35, no. 2 (April-June 2000): 116.

[229] Vladimir Brovkin, "Discourse on NATO in Russia during the Kosovo War," 12, available at www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/brovkin.pdf

would become a precedent for other NATO operations in Russia and former Soviet states, especially in Azerbaijan and Georgia.[230]

Russia, accordingly, has tried to preserve the function of the UNSC and prevent the emergence of another international system permitting interference in domestic issues of a state, based on, for example, humanitarian arguments. Another concern has been about Russia's duties and position within the new international order. Russia has been worried whether or not it was regarded as belonging to the group of states making the core decisions in world politics. The events during and after the Kosovo crisis demonstrated how valid such doubts were and enhanced the sentiment in Russia that Russia was pushed aside in global developments.[231] The conflict in Kosovo showed that Russia was not a Great Power anymore; the West did not take into account Russian objections while formulating its policy; and Russia lacked any European allies except Serbia. These factors founded the basis of anti-Americanism in Russia.[232]

The conduct of the NATO operation in 1999 has also affected Russia's stance on Kosovo's bid for independence. According to Russia, who traditionally has a strong sympathy towards the Orthodox Serbia, Serbia was not mainly responsible for the Kosovo conflict. NATO operation and the subsequent solutions forced on Serbia, for Russia, were not fair and against Serbia. Russia accordingly opposed offering independence to Kosovo, without taking into account whether Serbian minorities

[230] T.V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 60-61.

[231] Vladimir Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 35, no. 2 (April-June 2000): 116.

[232] Vladimir Brovkin, "Discourse on NATO in Russia during the Kosovo War," 11, available at www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/brovkin.pdf

were enjoying the guarantees given in accordance with the UNSC Resolution 1244.[233]

During the discussions on Kosovo's status throughout 2007 and 2008, Russia's interests and policy towards the Balkans once again received significant attention in Serbia. Russia and Russian domestic model was hailed, and many in Serbia believed that they could depend on Russia. These attitudes and desires concerning Russia were rooted in the historical ethnic, religious and cultural affinity between two states. For Serbians, throughout the history Russia has been a protector having enough political and economic power for solving Serbia's problems.[234]

In February 2007, the UN Envoy Ahtisaari offered his resolution proposals to Serbia and Kosovo, which contained safeguarding of minorities, decentralization measures for the Kosovo government, safeguarding of Orthodox places, establishment of Kosovo forces, and offering Kosovo the right to join international institutions and use its national symbols. While Kosovo did not change its stance on independence, Serbia did so on the sovereignty issue. Ahtisaari, accordingly, presented his plan to UNSC. In May 2007, a UNSC draft resolution aimed at replacing Resolution 1244, approving the Ahtisaari Plan, and ending the UN administration in Kosovo. Russia rejected that draft resolution and its four times revised versions on the grounds that any resolution must be acceptable for both Serbia and Kosovo.[235] Following Ahtisaari's submission of proposals and his report on Kosovo's future status to the UN in March 2007, Serbia immediately criticized Ahtisaari of being unfair and asked for new discussions. The government in Russia, similar to Serbia, also demanded

[233] Oksana Antonenko, "Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo," *Survival* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 95.

[234] Zarko N. Petrovic, "Russia-Serbia Relations: Three Years' Result," in *Russia Serbia Relations at the Beginning of XXI Century*, ed. Zarko N. Petrovic (Belgrad: ISAC Fund, 2010), 5.

[235] Frances Trix, "Kosova: Resisting Expulsion and Striving for Independence," in *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 371.

more discussions on the issue. Foreign Minister Lavrov recommended Ahtisaari to leave his post for another mediator. He underlined Russia's support for Serbia and rejection of proposals that the Serbs would not accept because of both principles and "political, historical, and spiritual" reasons.[236]

Following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, Serbia has focused on delaying international recognitions and prioritizing the legal rather than the political aspects of the issue. In such an effort, Serbia particularly needed the support of Russia, which is a permanent member of the UNSC. Russia has managed to block the recognition of Kosovo's independence through its veto power by important international organizations, particularly the UN and "the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe" (OSCE). Russia has supported "the UN General Assembly Resolution" demanding an "advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice" (ICJ) on the legality of independence decision by Kosovo. In this period, Russia and Serbia have established very close dialogue and cooperation. In 2009, Serbia identified Russia as one of the cornerstones of its foreign policy. Russia and Serbia agreed to coordinate their foreign policy actions on issues important for both states. Accordingly, Serbia supported Russia's various UN and OSCE policies. During this period, both states termed their relations as strategic partnership.[237]

Russia utilizes its closeness and good image of both itself and its policies to enhance its place within Serbia. Russian institutions and media in Serbia assume the mission of developing this sense of closeness, Russia-Serbia relations and popularizing Russian stance on international developments. In this regard, Russian institutions and media, together with their Serbian ones, underline various subjects. Firstly, they support Russia's version of international issues, for example on the contemporary

[236] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 63.

[237] Zarko N. Petrovic, "Russia-Serbia Relations: Three Years' Result," in *Russia Serbia Relations at the Beginning of XXI Century*, ed. Zarko N. Petrovic (Belgrad: ISAC Fund, 2010), 6.

Ukraine crisis, or new analysis of history in line with Russia's interests with the aim of supporting the durable alliance between Russia and Serbia. Secondly, they try to disgrace Western institutions such as NATO and the EU, on the grounds that they ignore Serbia's interests and threaten stability in the world. Thirdly, they demonstrate Russia as the closest ally of Serbia, which always takes into consideration Serbia's interests, and as an ideal partner with a strong standing in the world, along with its prosperous economy and interesting culture. They also emphasize the common characteristics of both countries' history, particularly their collaboration during the world wars. Fourthly, they condemn pro-European aspirations of Serbia, arguing that the EU member countries frequently humiliate Serbia. Fifthly, they constantly remind of difficulties that the Serbs had to face because of their neighbors. Sixthly, they underline Serbia's economic dependence on Russia.[238]

Kosovo's future status became a highly contested issue in Russia's relations with the West, which became much tenser throughout President Putin's second presidential term. While the US, the EU and NATO supported independence of Kosovo, Russia together with Serbia insisted that Kosovo should stay within Serbia.[239] Recognition of Kosovo's independence declaration by most of the Western countries, particularly the US, ignoring Russian and Serbian rejection and Russia's efforts in the UNSC worsened the problems between Russia and the US. This recognition, according to Russia, affirmed its concerns that the US was marginalizing Russia by ignoring the international law, together with international organizations such the UN and OSCE.[240]

[238] Marta Szpala, "Russia in Serbia – Soft Power and Hard Interests," OSW Commentary Number 150 (2014): 3-5.

[239] Stuart D. Goldman, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," in *Russian-American Security*, eds. Petr Sidorov and Gregory J. Singh (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2010), 76.

[240] Predrag Simic, "Kosovo, Serbia and Russia," *Russian Analytical Digest* no. 39 (April 2008): 7.

Apart from US assistance for the independence of Kosovo and NATO operation in Serbia in 1999 without UN authorization, other significant issues, such as NATO enlargement, prospects of offering NATO membership to Georgia and Ukraine, the US "withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty)," its unwillingness to approve Russia's inclusion in "the World Trade Organization" were regarded by most Russians that the US has not regarded Russia as a real partner. The US invasion of Iraq and its ignorance of Russia's opposition only added to Russian concerns about the sincerity of Russia-US strategic partnership.[241]

Russia, together with China and some other countries, argued that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence and its recognition by some states would become a 'precedent' for future cases and threaten the international legal system. For Russians, Kosovo's declaration of independence damaged the essence of international relations and was an obvious breach of international law, particularly the UN Charter.[242] Nonetheless, states that recognized the independence of Kosovo claim the uniqueness of Kosovo's case, arguing "it is neither a precedent, nor even an application of the notion that, in exceptional circumstances, secession might be legitimate."[243] Their uniqueness arguments underlined the presence of the international administration in Kosovo since 1999; impossibility of Kosovo's reacquiring the autonomous status that it enjoyed under SFRY, following its dissolution and Serbia's emergence as the only remaining entity from that structure; the option offered by the Resolution 1244 for settling the conflict taking into account

[241] Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 100-101.

[242] Snezana Trifunovska, "The Impact of the 'Kosovo Precedent' on Self-Determination Struggles," in *Kosovo: A Precedent? The Declaration of Independence, the Advisory Opinion and Implications for Statehood, Self-Determination and Minority Rights*, ed. James Summers (Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011), 377.

[243] James Headley, "Is Russia Out of Step with European Norms? Assessing Russia's Relationship to European Identity, Values and Norms Through the Issue of Self-Determination," *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 3 (May 2012): 440.

the will of the Kosovo population; the exceptional conditions following the conflict in 1999.[244]

Russia rejected arguments that Kosovo's declaration of independence was unique, not simply because it opposed the region's independence but because such arguments were politically insulting for Russia. The US and influential members of the EU, believing they could successfully overlook international law and UNSC for their interests, underlined that other states could not repeat the Kosovo example.[245] Already in 2007, before Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, President Putin underlined that the Kosovo precedent would also be applied in the territory of the former Soviet Union:

> If we decide that in today's world the principle of a nation's right to self-determination is more important than the principle of territorial integrity, then we must apply this principle to all parts of the world and not only to regions where it suits our partners. In this case, the principle of self-determination should apply not just to the peoples living in the former Yugoslavia, but also to peoples, including the peoples of the Caucasus, in the post-Soviet area. We see no difference in the situations of one and the other. Whether in Yugoslavia or the post-Soviet area we saw the break up of Communist empires followed by ethnic conflict that has roots reaching far back into history. Violations and sometimes crimes were committed in both cases and in both cases we now have a situation of de-facto independent quasi-state formations. No one has been able to convince us of any difference in these respective situations, and so the rules applied should be universal.[246]

[244] Marc Weller, "Kosovo's Final Status," *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1242.

[245] James Ker-Lindsay, "Preventing the Emergence of Self-Determination as a Norm of Secession: An Assessment of the Kosovo 'Unique Case' Argument," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (July 2013): 853.

[246] President of Russia, "Press Conference following the end of the G8 Summit," last modified 8 June 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24322

Russia, having already notified that Kosovo's independence could be a precedent for other cases, finally recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence in August 2008 by referring to Kosovo.[247]

3.4. Russia's Policy on Secessionism in Kosovo in the UNSC

In the UN Security Council meeting held on 18 February 2008, just after Kosovo's declaration of independence, Ambassador Churkin explained Russia's concerns about the non-Albanian population in Kosovo that would reject the independence decision.

> We are particularly concerned about the situation in the Serb municipalities in Kosovo, above all in northern Mitroviça. We regard as categorically inadmissible and illegal any attempts by the international presences to take, in violation of their mandates under resolution 1244 (1999), repressive measures against non-Albanian minorities and their leaders in case of their expected non-compliance with the process of this Serbian province becoming sovereign.[248]

Ambassador Churkin, in the UN Security Council meeting held on 25 July 2008, pointed out, in Russia's view, the lack of tangible progress concerning the rights and security of minorities in Kosovo, together with "efforts forcibly to integrate the Kosovo Serbs into a quasi-independent State," and the negative effects of such policies on relations between communities, by referring to "the mistrust and inter-ethnic tensions in the province that led to clashes in northern Mitrovica."[249]

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[247] Stefan Wolff and Annemarie Peen Rodt, "Self-Determination after Kosovo," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (July 2013): 812.

[248] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5839th Meeting held on 18 February 2008 (S/PV.5839).

[249] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5944th Meeting held on 25 July 2008 (S/PV.5944).

In the UNSC meeting on 26 November 2008, Russian Representative, Igor Shcherba, argued that the Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence did not contribute to the solution of main problems in the region. He added that "there is still a high level of corruption and crime; there has been no improvement in the economic or social spheres; there has been no easing of the inter-ethnic tension, now subject to a new factor – friction and disagreements among the Kosovars themselves."[250] Shcherba warned that

> If these negative tendencies are not reversed … the situation in Kosovo could become a source of serious regional destabilization. Naturally, Russia would like to see some radical change for the better in all of the aforementioned areas, because it would be in the interests of all countries of the region and the international community as a whole.[251]

Ambassador Churkin, in the UN Security Council meeting on 23 March 2009, criticized that the main "concern for standards for minorities has been proactively replaced by priority concern for the status of the province."[252] He referred to the problems of minorities following Kosovo's declaration of independence, particularly to socio-economic problems, judiciary, democracy and refugee related issues.

> The year that has elapsed since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence has confirmed our concerns. It is clear that it will not be easy to extricate the province from its socio-economic collapse, but quasi-statehood has only exacerbated the problems. Unemployment is rising, economic indicators are stagnant, the province's internal integration links have been torn to shreds, and the social sphere remains a disaster. What is flourishing are lawlessness and criminals; the struggle for power has led to clan frictions and radicals are again raising their heads.

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[250] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6025th Meeting held on 26 November 2008 (S/PV.6025).

[251] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6025th Meeting held on 26 November 2008 (S/PV.6025).

[252] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6097th Meeting held on 23 March 2009 (S/PV.6097).

> It is especially lamentable that the task of strengthening Kosovo's multi-ethnic nature has been consigned to oblivion. Despite the implementation of so-called democratic laws, in practice the rights and security of Serbs and other national communities in the province are ignored. As a result, the number of returning Kosovo Serb refugees has decreased from that of previous years.[253]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 14 May 2012, Ambassador Churkin, reaffirmed Russia's concerns with regard to the guaranteed rights and security of minorities in Kosovo, including the return of Serb refugees and "internally displaced persons":

> The security situation in the district remains tense. There is still a high level of crime against national minorities, including instances of vandalism of Orthodox sanctuaries and the burglarizing of Kosovar Serbs' homes. The realities of illicit trade in weapons and in human beings, as well as drug smuggling, remain a serious problem for Kosovo. The status of internally displaced persons returning to Kosovo, including Serbs, is still unsatisfactory. There are many reasons for that, including the fact that the returnees are unsure of their personal safety.[254]

In the UNSC meeting on 21 August 2012, Ambassador Churkin referred to other problems faced by Kosovo Serbs, including daily and bureaucratic problems, and ethnically oriented murders, which, according to him, were not investigated appropriately by the Kosovo police and EULEX:

> A destabilizing factor is the activity of the Kosovar Albanian authorities who … are preventing the use of Serbian license plates, forcing Serbs to fill out State documents, including for citizenship in the so-called Republic of Kosovo, and to pay back taxes.

[253] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6097th Meeting held on 23 March 2009 (S/PV.6097).

[254] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6769th Meeting held on 14 May 2012 (S/PV.6769).

> … a dozen or so ethnically motivated killings took place over the past year. No appropriate investigation is being conducted by the Kosovo police or by the international presence, including the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX). Against that backdrop, Serbs are in constant fear for their lives. In the enclaves there are frequent cases of houses built for Serbs being set on fire, and of the distribution of flyers calling for reprisals and for Serbs to leave Kosovo.[255]

In the UN Security Council meeting held on 29 August 2014, Russian Representative Peter Iliichev reaffirmed Russia's discontent about abuses committed against Kosovo Serbs, including their property, refugees, "internally displaced persons," and argued for "ethnic cleansing by economic means." He referred to

> … the illegal and corrupt practice of usurping Serb property in the region, carried out by Kosovar authorities under the guise of privatization. Against the backdrop of problems related to the return of Serbian refugees and internally displaced persons and the restoration of their property rights, Pristina's actions deprive the remaining Serbs of their sources of livelihood. In essence, we are talking about a continuation of ethnic cleansing by economic means. In such circumstances, there can be no meaningful talk of progress in the process of the return of refugees or internally displaced persons.[256]

Ambassador Churkin, in the UNSC meeting on 4 December 2014, declared Russia's concerns over the investigation of "the Kosovo Liberation Army" based on crimes against Kosovo Serbs, including, according to him, ethnic cleansing, and asked for the punishment of perpetrators:

> We are concerned by the negative consequences of the political crisis in establishing the specialist court to investigate the allegations of crimes against humanity committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army during the armed conflict. The interim findings of the investigations conducted by the

[255] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6822nd Meeting held on 21 August 2012 (S/PV.6822).

[256] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7257th Meeting held on 29 August 2014 (S/PV.7257).

> Special Investigative Task Force … clearly point to a sufficient body of evidence corroborate reports of numerous murders, kidnappings, rapes, unlawful detentions, inhumane treatment and the desecration of churches, leading to the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of Serbs from southern and central Kosovo, as well as the trafficking in human organs. The perpetrators must be brought to account, irrespective of their current standing.[257]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 17 May 2010, Ambassador Churkin outlined Russia's concerns with regard to the religious and cultural sites of the Serb population in Kosovo, following the transfer of security responsibilities from NATO to the Kosovo Police:

> The situation with respect to protecting Serbian religious and cultural heritage is alarming. … the desecration of Serbian graveyards and cathedrals in Kosovo continues. In this context, we are especially concerned about NATO's transfer to the Kosovo police of responsibility for guarding important Serbian cultural sites, a transfer which has begun, and about the general trend towards reducing the numerical strength of the Kosovo Force.[258]

On 3 August 2010, Ambassador Churkin reminded Russia's discontent about the safeguarding of Serbian and Orthodox sites, especially about the "desecration" and "defilement" of such places. Outlining lack of financial resources for the restoration of these sites, he announced the decision of Russia to offer $2M "to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's voluntary trust fund in order to finance restoration efforts."[259]

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[257] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7327th Meeting held on 4 December 2014 (S/PV.7327).

[258] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6314th Meeting held on 17 May 2010 (S/PV.6314).

[259] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6367th Meeting held on 3 August 2010 (S/PV.6367).

Ambassador Churkin, in the UNSC meeting on 16 February 2011, reaffirmed that Russia shared the Serb leadership's and the church's worries about the protection of their religious and cultural sites by the Kosovo Police. He expressed Russia's warning that "those actions could create additional tensions over security in Kosovo, especially because further incidents of robbery and vandalism at Serbian holy sites."[260] In the UNSC meeting on 14 May 2012, he underlined that "international entities must also focus their attention on protecting Orthodox sanctuaries and people of the Orthodox faith" and argued that

> … the Kosovo Albanian population is unfavourably disposed to the adoption and implementation of legislation to protect Serbian cultural and religious artifacts. There is an obvious divide between the obligations of the Kosovo authorities and their implementation. Such acts could give rise to additional security tensions in Kosovo.[261]

Ambassador Churkin, in the UNSC meeting on 25 July 2008, stated Russia's concerns with regard to interests of the authorities in Kosovo on Orthodox holy sites in the region. He stated that "the ongoing wanton seizure of land in Kosovo is of the gravest concern. We are outraged by the sabotaging by the Kosovo authorities of the Decane municipality of the Special Representative's decisions regarding the land surrounding the Visoki Dečani monastery."[262] He repeated Russia's concerns in the UNSC meeting on 19 November 2015 by mentioning that "extremely alarming case is the legal entanglement of Kosovo/Albanian interests with the Orthodox monastery

[260] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6483rd Meeting held on 16 February 2011 (S/PV.6483).

[261] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6769th Meeting held on 14 May 2012 (S/PV.6769).

[262] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5944th Meeting held on 25 July 2008 (S/PV.5944).

of Visoki Dečani in an attempt to seize land belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church."[263]

Ambassador Churkin, in the UNSC meeting held on 10 May 2007, before the declaration of independence by Kosovo, assured Russia's support for Kosovo Serbs and explained Russia's position on status discussions by referring to "international norms and principles" "on the rights and status of minorities":

> The Russian Federation continues to believe that imposing any decision on the status of Kosovo would be counterproductive. … In accordance with norms and principles that are internationally recognized, including in Europe, concerning the rights and status of minorities, any decision on status must be supported by all the major ethnic communities in Kosovo, including, of course, Kosovo Serbs. The Security Council has emphasized on many occasions that any future decision on status must be acceptable to the entire population of the province.[264]

In the UNSC meeting held on 20 June 2008 after the unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo, Ambassador Churkin, noting that the resolution 1244 remained in force, underlined that "the Special Representative of the Secretary General" and UNMIK "must carry out the functions and responsibilities entrusted to them. These include ensuring that the rights and security of national minorities are preserved and achieving in the province the democratic standards established by the international community."[265]

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[263] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7563rd Meeting held on 19 November 2015 (S/PV.7563).

[264] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5673rd Meeting held on 10 May 2007 (S/PV.5673).

[265] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5917th Meeting held on 20 June 2008 (S/PV.5917).

Ambassador Churkin, in the UNSC meeting on 16 February 2011, referred to the shortcomings of elections held on in Kosovo and expressed his concerns about the success of "radical Kosovo Albanian parties" in the election:

> We cannot but take into account the fact that from the beginning, international monitoring organizations declined to certify the elections. Participation by the Serb community in the elections was limited. In northern Kosovo, Serbs essentially boycotted the event. Observers noted serious violations during the election process, including tampering with the electoral lists, the use of counterfeit ballots, multiple votes cast by the same people and bribery of voters. Also worrisome are the results achieved at the polls by radical Kosovo Albanian parties, in particular the Self-Determination Movement, which advocates for the creation of a greater Albania.[266]

Russian officials constantly underlined in their statements that any solution to the Kosovo issue should be acceptable to both Serbs and Albanians. Russia would accept Kosovo's independence as long as Serbia did so. They also noted that there should not be any timetables or hurry for status discussions.[267] In the UN Security Council meeting on 10 May 2007, Ambassador Churkin stated that Russia had a "constructive alternative" to the Ahtisaari proposal, which called for the nonstop implementation of the UNSC resolution 1244. He underlined that, for Russia, the status of Kosovo "must be resolved on the basis of a compromise between both parties. We must patiently continue the negotiation process while the standards are being implemented."[268] In explaining Russia's opposition to the Ahtisaari proposal, he referred to "the negative precedent" of separatism and its effect on regional and international order:

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[266] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6483rd Meeting held on 16 February 2011 (S/PV.6483).

[267] James Ker-Lindsay, "Kosovo, sovereignty and the subversion of UN authority," in *Kosovo, Intervention and Statebuilding: The international community and the transition to independence*, ed. Aidan Hehir (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010), 175.

[268] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5673rd Meeting held on 10 May 2007 (S/PV.5673).

> Adopting a plan based on that proposal would not only clearly set a negative precedent for international practice, but would also have dangerous consequences for regional and international stability: by rewarding separatism it would encourage that phenomenon in other regions, and could spark a chain reaction that would eventually affect regions throughout the world.[269]

In the UNSC meeting held on 25 July 2008 after Kosovo's declaration of independence, Ambassador Churkin reaffirmed Russian position on the Ahtisaari Plan and reconfiguration of UNMIK. He underlined for Russia the central role of the UN Security Council and its authorization for any decision concerning Kosovo, particularly UNMIK's reconfiguration:

> We reaffirm our position that UNMIK's reconfiguration is inadmissible without the Security Council's authorization. The Secretary-General has exceeded his authority in these circumstances by intruding into the Council's statutory prerogatives. Russia is concerned by attempts to destroy the format of the international presence in Kosovo established by the Security Council on the pretext that it purportedly does not correspond to altered realities. We discern behind such attempts an endeavour to legalize a structure for implementing the Ahtisaari Proposal that was not approved by the Security Council, but which would in actuality abet the unilateral establishment of the sovereignty of an unlawfully proclaimed construct.[270]

Ambassador Churkin, in the UNSC meeting on 3 August 2010, reaffirmed Russia's commitment to Resolution 1244 and support for maintaining UNMIK's power and obligations, particularly concerning the protections and rights of minorities in Kosovo, democratic principles, dialogue among communities, and international representation of the region:

> We are also convinced of the need for strict compliance with resolution 1244 (1999), which remains fully applicable and binding upon all as the

[269] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5673rd Meeting held on 10 May 2007 (S/PV.5673).

[270] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5944th Meeting held on 25 July 2008 (S/PV.5944).

> international legal basis for a Kosovo settlement and maintaining the security of the province. In that context, we fully support UNMIK's activities. As in the past, UNMIK continues to be the leading international civilian presence in the province. No one has the power to impede the powers entrusted to it, including with respect to upholding the rights and security of national minorities and fulfilling the international community's mandate of democratic standards in the province. The same applies to UNMIK's external representation functions in Pristina and regional international mechanisms. We note UNMIK's irreplaceable role in promoting inter-communal dialogue, first and foremost in the North of the province.[271]

Albanians in Kosovo declared independence on 17 February 2008. Following the declaration, Ambassador Churkin, in his "letter dated 17 February 2008" sent to "the President of the Security Council," requested an emergency meeting of the UNSC "in view of the dangerous situation with grave damaging consequences for peace and security in the Balkans, norms and principles of international law and, in particular, of the United Nations Charter."[272] Russia considered the declaration of independence "as illegal and an assault on Serbian sovereignty."[273] In the UN Security Council meeting held on 18 February 2008, Ambassador Churkin expressed Russia's non-recognition of Kosovo's independence and support for Serbia's territorial integrity, arguing that the decision was against "the norms and principles of international law." In this respect, Ambassador Churkin referred to international agreements and decisions on Kosovo, including UN Charter, "Contact Group accords," and decisions of the UN Security Council, in particular UNSC resolution 1244:

> The Russian Federation continues to recognize the Republic of Serbia within its internationally recognized borders. The 17 February declaration

[271] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6367th Meeting held on 3 August 2010 (S/PV.6367).

[272] UN Security Council, Letter dated 17 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/104).

[273] Henry H. Perritt, *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 217.

> by the local assembly of the Serbian province of Kosovo is a blatant breach of the norms and principles of international law – above all of the Charter of the United Nations – which undermines the foundations of the system of international relations. That illegal act is an open violation of the Republic of Serbia's sovereignty, the high-level Contact Group accords, Kosovo's Constitutional Framework, Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) – which is the basic document for the Kosovo settlement – and other relevant decisions of the Security Council.[274]

In the same meeting, Ambassador Churkin, in an effort to support Russia's stance on Kosovo through international law, argued that both the declaration of independence and its recognition are against "the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, which clearly specify the principles of inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity of States. The provisions allow changes to State frontiers only in accordance with international law and by peaceful means and by agreement."[275]

Since 2006, President Putin had signaled that recognition of the independence of Kosovo could result in similar Russian policy on the "frozen conflicts" in the post-Soviet region.[276] Similarly, Ambassador Churkin repeated his warnings on 'precedent' already made before Kosovo's declaration of independence, that "illegal acts of the Kosovo Albanian leadership and of those who support them set a dangerous precedent. They raise the risk of an escalation of tension and inter-ethnic violence in the province and destructive consequences for international relations that took decades to build."[277]

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[274] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5839th Meeting held on 18 February 2008 (S/PV.5839).

[275] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5839th Meeting held on 18 February 2008 (S/PV.5839).

[276] Jacques Levesque, "Moscow's evolving partnership with Beijing: Countering Washington's hegemony," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 195.

[277] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5839th Meeting held on 18 February 2008 (S/PV.5839).

In the UN Security Council meeting held on 26 November 2008, Russian Representative, Igor Shcherba, underlined the importance of a judicial solution to the Kosovo issue, and other separatist movements, in which the UN Security Council plays the main role in finding a compromise:

> The only way to remedy the situation is to return to the process of seeking a solution in the international judicial arena, in the interests of long-term stability in the Balkans and of shifting the numerous separatist tendencies throughout the world. Russia intends to continue insisting that the Security Council play a leading role in Kosovo, on the basis of compliance with the existing norms of international law, the United Nations Charter and decisions of the Security Council itself.[278]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 18 February 2008, Ambassador Churkin also underlined for Russia the centrality of UN Security Council for resolving the status issue of Kosovo, with "a decision that would fully comply with the norms of international law and be based on agreements between Belgrade and Pristina.[279] While emphasizing the significance of UNSC, Ambassador Churkin criticized that EULEX had been started without the authorization of the UNSC. For him, the essence of EULEX did not comply with the terms of the UNSC Resolution 1244 and other UNSC decisions concerning the international presence within Kosovo. EULEX, from his view, could not join this international presence as "UNMIK covers all of the space allocated by this resolution to the international civil presence."[280] In the UNSC meeting held on 20 June 2008, he repeated Russia's objections to efforts for transferring UNMIK's functions and property to EULEX, arguing that "any steps to bypass the Council would be a violation of the Charter" and the "attempt by former UNMIK leadership to reconfigure the mission by bypassing the Security

[278] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6025th Meeting held on 26 November 2008 (S/PV.6025).

[279] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5839th Meeting held on 18 February 2008 (S/PV.5839).

[280] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5839th Meeting held on 18 February 2008 (S/PV.5839).

Council has done damage to the prestige of the United Nations."[281] In the UNSC meeting on 25 July 2008, Ambassador Churkin, emphasizing the primacy of the UNSC for the resolution of the Kosovo issue, reassured Russia's support for the leadership in Serbia:

> … we advocate as essential further consultations by the Secretary-General both with the parties and with all interested members of the international community. We consider that it is important to take fullest possible advantage of the readiness of the Serbian leadership to engage in dialogue with the United Nations with a view to finding a formula for UNMIK reconfiguration that will be acceptable to Belgrade and that can be approved through a Security Council decision.[282]

In the UNSC meeting on 18 February 2008, Ambassador Churkin also underlined that "the Kosovo Force (KFOR)" "must comply strictly with their mandate in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), on the basis of which KFOR must assist UNMIK and the parties to implement – but not to breach – that resolution."[283] In the UNSC meeting held on 20 June 2008, he expressed Russia's concerns about NATO member states' efforts to incorporate KFOR into UNMIK. Although welcoming the role of KFOR in stabilizing the region, he argued that "if a decision is taken that NATO should be involved in the process of training the Kosovo security force, then NATO will have stepped beyond the mandate of the international military presence as approved by the Security Council."[284]

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[281] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5917th Meeting held on 20 June 2008 (S/PV.5917).

[282] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5944th Meeting held on 25 July 2008 (S/PV.5944).

[283] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5839th Meeting held on 18 February 2008 (S/PV.5839).

[284] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5917th Meeting held on 20 June 2008 (S/PV.5917).

On 22 July 2010, the ICJ gave its opinion concerning the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence, following the request of UN General Assembly by 8 October 2008.[285] In the summary of "the Advisory Opinion," it is noted

> The Court recalls its conclusions reached earlier, namely, "that the adoption of the declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 did not violate general international law, Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) or the Constitutional Framework". Finally, it concludes that "[c]onsequently the adoption of that declaration did not violate any applicable rule of international law."[286]

In the UN Security Council meeting held on 3 August 2010, Ambassador Churkin declared Russia's position on ICJ's opinion, by outlining the scope of the opinion and calling for an optimal solution for Kosovo:

> The Court issued an opinion only with regard to the declaration of Kosovo's independence, specifically noting that it did not consider the broader issue of Kosovo's right to unilaterally secede from Serbia. In its conclusions, the Court also did not address the consequences of the adoption of that document, including the issues of whether or not Kosovo is a State and whether its recognition by a number of countries is lawful. With that in mind, we believe it important for interested parties to begin a dialogue to develop a lawful, fair and effective settlement for Kosovo.[287]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 10 February 2014, Ambassador Churkin pointed out Russia's unchanged overall position on Kosovo, particularly on the issues of sovereignty, territorial integrity, "rule of law," ethnic-religious rights of

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[285] Elizabeth Chadwick, *Self-Determination in the Post-9/11 Era* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), 133.

[286] International Court of Justice, Summary of the Advisory Opinion (22 July 2010): 14, available at www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/141/16010.pdf

[287] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6367th Meeting held on 3 August 2010 (S/PV.6367).

minorities, reconciliation in Kosovo, validity of the resolution 1244, and mandate of UNMIK:

> Russia's position on Kosovo remains consistent. We support Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We believe that resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully in effect and is still the universally binding, international legal basis for a settlement of the Kosovo issue. The United Nations Mission is the main international presence in the province. No one is entitled to hinder the implementation of its mandate. We condemn the attempts to undermine the role of UNMIK, including those that took place during the November and December 2013 municipal elections. We call on UNMIK to fully and proactively carry out its mandate, and to focus, inter alia, on tackling challenges in such important areas as the rule of law, the protection of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, forging intercommunity dialogue and the protection of orthodox shrines and cultural buildings.[288]

In the following parts, this chapter discusses the literature on different explanations put forward for understanding Russia Kosovo policy, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses.

3.5. Sources of Russia's Policy on Secessionism in Kosovo

Among different explanations for Russia's Kosovo, this dissertation adopts an approach that underlines the significance of geopolitics and strategic objectives of Russia with regard to these regions. Contrary to the views of some experts who claim that Russia's references to issues concerning identity and international law during the debates on secessionism in Kosovo in the UNSC reflect its commitment to the principles of international law and its support to both Slavic and orthodox identities, this chapter argues that Russia's position on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence

[288] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7108th Meeting held on 10 February 2014 (S/PV.7108).

Various explanations for Russia's rejection of Kosovo's independence have been put forward. First group of explanations primarily argued that Russia's policy rests on power politics. President Putin, these explanations underline, has tried to reassert Russia's regional and international influence and debates over the status of Kosovo were carried out within the context of Russia's increasing disagreements with the West. The US and NATO policies in Kosovo in 1999 have also been influential in Russia's responses to the Kosovo issue.[289]

Second group of explanations point out the impact of "Slavic solidarity" between Russia and Serbia.[290] Civilizational issues, particularly the Slavic and Orthodox solidarity, as Averre argued, were not so much decisive in Russian responses to the NATO air operation in Kosovo. In this respect, President Yeltsin underlined that the Kosovo crisis was more about the threat to the post-WWII security establishment than "the fate of the Serbs."[291] Antonenko also discussed the impact of Orthodoxy on the relationship between Russia and Serbia concerning the Kosovo issue. Acknowledging the growing impact of the Church on Russian politics, Antonenko, however, underlined that Russia has not utilized common religious faith principle in a consistent manner, by referring to tensions since 2006 between Russia and Georgia, which is also an Orthodox state. She added that in no public opinion survey, Russian citizens attributed special importance to Serbia based on cultural similarities.[292] According to Sakwa, the Kosovo crisis in 1999 displayed the boundaries of Russia's regional and global influence, and "sympathy for the Serbs" has not been that influential in Russia's Kosovo policy:

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[289] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 114.

[290] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 114.

[291] Derek Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West," *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 582.

[292] Oksana Antonenko, "Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo," *Survival* vol. 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 97.

> The Kosovo crisis was for Russia a domestic crisis of the first order, revealing the limits of its authority on the world and regional stage while at the same time exposing the way that nearly a decade of reform had provoked anti-Western sentiments, something that the Soviet regime with its huge propaganda apparatus had been unable to do. Russian policy and public sentiment was motivated less by sympathy for the Serbs than by fear that the power imbalance in the post-Cold War order threatened the autonomy of less powerful states, among which Russia (together with China) now found itself.[293]

Third group of explanations emphasize Russia's concerns about the principles concerning international law and relations. Ker-Lindsay, for example, mentioned that Russia had "serious and legitimate concerns about the consequences of recognizing an independent Kosovo against the will of the Serbian Government. After all, such a move that would be unprecedented in modern international affairs."[294] He further argued

> The stark reality is that, on the question of Kosovo, Russia's position was actually far more in tune with long-standing principles of international relations and international law than the position adopted by those states that were pushing for independence for purely practical reasons. In the debate between the legal 'constitutionalists' and the political 'pragmatists' in the international arena, Russia was the champion of the former position, whereas the United States led the latter camp. … many in the West did not understand that when it comes to matters of international law, and the authority of the UN, Moscow is not in fact a rogue actor. If anything, it is an arch-conservative. The uncomfortable truth, therefore, is that the Russian position on Kosovo was in fact the stance that the West would have adopted had it not injected itself into the mess and now needed to extricate itself.[295]

[293] Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 414.

[294] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 114.

[295] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 115.

Russia's support to Serbia concerning Kosovo, according to Petrovic, is "conditional and relative." He underlined that Russia supports legal settlement of ethnic and territorial issues within the Euro-Atlantic space, but when its interests are really threatened as in the case of Georgia, it can disregard the same principles just as some other states did with regard to Kosovo. Petrovic argued Russia has a different approach to the Kosovo issue than Serbia. Kosovo's independence from Serbia is acceptable, overlooking Serbia's consent, when certain legal conditions that Russia supports are met. Petrovic added that Russia's support to Serbia on Kosovo is relative as well. Russia, pursuing a similar policy in Georgia, affirmed that if "adequate conditions are met, such as the attack of central authorities the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity can be made relative and even annulled, and the right of Abkhaz and Ossetian people to self-determination can be prioritized."[296]

Fourth group of explanations underline the domestic dynamics behind Russia's Kosovo policy. According to Ker-Lindsay, besides its worries about international law, Russian leadership had serious concerns regarding the public opinion in Russia. The Kosovo issue had repercussions on Russia's policies on other regions within the post-Soviet space. Russia, as Ker-Lindsay underlined, utilized the Kosovo precedent in August 2008 to undermine the territorial integrity of Georgia. With regard to Russian public opinion, Ker-Lindsay asked "If the Russian Government was seen to allow Kosovo to become independent due to pressure from the United States, how could it not then respond by recognizing the independence of South Ossetia, Abkhazia or Transdniestria?"[297]

NATO's Kosovo operation, which took place despite the Russian opposition, made Kosovo one of the issues in Russia's already existing geopolitical worries about

[296] Zarko N. Petrovic, "Russian-Serbian Strategic Partnership: Scope and Content," in *Russia Serbia Relations at the beginning of XXI Century*, ed. Zarko N. Petrovic (Belgrad: ISAC Fund, 2010), 33.

[297] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 115.

NATO. Since the NATO operation, Russia's geopolitical concerns with regard to the Kosovo issue have been decisive, especially during the discussions concerning the status of Kosovo.[298] Many in the Russian political elite regarded the operations of the Alliance within the Balkans, which lacked UN authorization, as the beginning of a new period of rivalry between Russia and the West, in which NATO has become a threat against Russia's European and global aspirations.[299] Following the Kosovo crisis, "the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation" was approved by President Putin in January 2000. The Concept included "the strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances, above all NATO's eastward expansion" as one of the main threats in the international arena and criticized

> attempts to create an international relations structure based on domination by developed Western countries in the international community, under US leadership and designed for unilateral solutions (primarily by the use of military force) to key issues in world politics in circumvention of the fundamental rules of international law.[300]

Similarly, the new "Foreign Policy Concept," approved by President Putin in June 2000, underlined the divergence of interests between Russia and NATO:

> NATO's present-day political and military guidelines do not coincide with security interests of the Russian Federation and occasionally directly contradict them. This primarily concerns the provisions of NATO's new strategic concept, which do not exclude the conduct of use-of-force operations outside of the zone of application of the Washington Treaty

[298] Alexandros Yannis, "The politics and geopolitics of the status of Kosovo: the circle is never round," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no: 1-2 (March-June 2009), 162.

[299] Oksana Antonenko, "Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo," *Survival* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 94.

[300] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation," last modified 10 January 2000, http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/589768

> without the sanction of the UN Security Council. Russia retains its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO.[301]

"The Foreign Policy Concept" of 2000, underlining that "Russia shall seek to achieve a multi-polar system of international relations that really reflects the diversity of the modem world with its great variety of interests," outlined new international challenges and threats to Russia's national interests:

> There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States. In solving principal questions of international security, the stakes are being placed on western institutions and forums of limited composition, and on weakening the role of the U.N. Security Council.[302]

President Putin reaffirmed Russia's concerns about NATO expansion at "the Munich Security Conference" in February 2007:

> NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact?[303]

President Putin repeated Russia's objections to a unipolar world at the conference, defining it as a "world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And at the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within this system, but also

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[301] The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (28 June 2000), available at http://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm

[302] The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (28 June 2000), available at http://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm

[303] President of Russia, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," last modified 10 February 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034

for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within."[304] He added that "unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions have not resolved any problems. Moreover, they have caused new human tragedies and created new centres of tension."[305]

Russia objected to the imposition of Kosovo's independence on Serbia and therefore legitimization of NATO's operation. Russia had reservations with regard to the changes in the existing international legal order, particularly on territorial integrity. Russia's support for this principle, however, as Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008 demonstrated, was not based so much on principles but on strategic calculations. These calculations were internal, especially related to the situation in Northern Caucasus; and geopolitical, concerning the international interventions supported by the West aimed at alienating Russia.[306] Russia regarded Kosovo's independence and its recognition by the West as another US move towards enhancing the "unipolar world," just like the NATO operation of 1999.[307]

Kosovo offered a very useful chance for Russia to return to the Balkans, complicate policies of the US and Europe, and possibly get concessions regarding other disputes.[308] President Putin in 2006 stated

[304] President of Russia, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," last modified 10 February 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034

[305] President of Russia, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," last modified 10 February 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034

[306] Alexandros Yannis, "The politics and geopolitics of the status of Kosovo: the circle is never round," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no: 1-2 (March-June 2009): 165.

[307] James Hughes, "Russia and the Secession of Kosovo: Power, Norms and the Failure of Multilateralism," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (July 2013): 1011.

[308] Alexandros Yannis, "The politics and geopolitics of the status of Kosovo: the circle is never round," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, No: 1-2 (March-June 2009): 167.

> If someone thinks that Kosovo can be granted full independence as a state, then why should the Abkhaz or the South-Ossetian peoples not also have the right to statehood? … I am not saying that Russia would immediately recognise Abkhazia or South Ossetia as independent states, but international life knows such precedents. I am not saying whether these precedents are a good or a bad thing, but in order to act fairly, in the interests of all people living on this or that territory, we need generally accepted, universal principles for resolving these problems.[309]

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia, as Hughes argued, has followed a foreign policy that focused on Russia's position in international organizations, for instance the UN, and supporting multilateralism for the management of international conflicts. This policy was based on "a strategic interaction to counterbalance and compensate for its weakness" rather than "a new sense of shared values."[310] Russian tendency for "multilateralism were and remain a strategic response to its structural weakness within the international system, not a normative commitment."[311]

3.6. Conclusion

Russia's Kosovo policy, as Antonenko argued, was based on Russia's political elite's domestic, regional and global interests and concerns.[312] Russian representatives in the UN Security Council referred to identity issues, norms and international law for substantiating Russia's objection to Kosovo's declaration of independence. Their arguments underlined humanitarian and human rights concerns, economic, social,

[309] President of Russia, "Transcript of the Press Conference for the Russian and Foreign Media," last modified 31 January 2006, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23412

[310] James Hughes, "Russia and the Secession of Kosovo: Power, Norms and the Failure of Multilateralism," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (July 2013): 993.

[311] James Hughes, "Russia and the Secession of Kosovo: Power, Norms and the Failure of Multilateralism," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (July 2013): 1013.

[312] Oksana Antonenko, "Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo," Survival 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 92.

and religious issues, international norms such as territorial integrity. However, as Antonenko underlined, while examining the impact of Orthodoxy on the relationship between Russia and Serbia concerning the Kosovo issue, Russia has not utilized common religious faith principle in a consistent manner, by referring to tensions since 2006 between Russia and Georgia, which is also an Orthodox state. She added that in no public opinion poll Russian citizens attributed special importance to Serbia based on cultural similarities.[313]

Russia's rejection of Kosovo's independence, therefore, rests on power politics. Russia, especially under President Putin, has tried to reassert Russia's regional and international influence and debates over the status of Kosovo were carried out within the context of increasing disagreements between Russia and the West. The US and NATO policies in Kosovo in 1999 have also been influential in Russia's responses to the Kosovo issue.[314]

[313] Oksana Antonenko, "Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo," *Survival* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 97.

[314] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 114.

CHAPTER 4

ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines Russia's responses to the secessionist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the post-Cold War period. In this regard, the chapter firstly introduces the origins and development of secessionism in these regions. Secondly, it focuses on the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Russian foreign and domestic policy, together with their impact on Russia's relations with Georgia and the West. Thirdly, it analyzes Russia's official position and policy in the UN Security Council on secessionism in these two regions, especially during after the declaration of independence by these regions in 2008. Lastly, it discusses the sources, objectives and means of Russia's responses to the Abkhazia and South Ossetia issue. The chapter focuses on the impact of both the international and regional pressures, and internal factors shaping Russian leadership's policies on these regions. The chapter concludes that geopolitical and strategic concerns of the Russian leadership, rather than their support for both ethnic and civil Russian identities within Georgia and respect for the principles of international law, have been decisive in the formation on Russia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia policy.

4.2. Evolution of the Secessionist Movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

The Caucasus has witnessed conflicts involving Russia since ages. The efforts of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union to keep the Caucasus under control demonstrate historical interests of Russians towards the region. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Ottoman and Persian empires managed to establish their control in the Caucasus. Russia obtained Christian parts of Georgia in 1783, under the role as eastern Christians' defender. Later, Russia annexed the Caucasus in 1801 and

established its authority over the whole region by 1878.[315] The origins of the present conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia/South Ossetia, as Welt argued, can be found in the 1917 Russian Revolution and the conditions of the subsequent civil war. The short era of Georgian independence between 1918-1921 formed the basis of the "ethnofederal" structure of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, in particular 'autonomous' governance units of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[316]

Map 2 Georgia[317]

[315] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 115.

[316] Cory Welt, "A Fateful Moment: Ethnic Autonomy and Revolutionary Violence in the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-21)," in *The Making of Modern Georgia, 1918-2012: The First Georgian Republic and Its Successors*, ed. Stephen F. Jones (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2014), 205.

[317] Adapted from UN Map No. 3780 Rev. 6 (September 2015).

4.2.1 Secessionism in Abkhazia

Abkhazia, following the fall of the Russian Empire, joined "the Union of United Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus" that was established in May 1917. In November 1917, an Abkhaz assembly founded "the Abkhazian People's Council" as the representative organ.[318] In November 1917, the Council issued a declaration demanding Abkhazians' self-determination. In 1918, "the Union of Mountain Peoples" was restructured as "the North Caucasian Republic," composed of Abkhazia and other territories.[319] In May 1918, Georgia declared its independence and in June occupied Abkhazia. Abkhazia had an autonomous region status inside Georgia according to the 1921 constitution, which did not go into effect because of the Red Army's invasion of Georgia. In March 1921, "the Abkhazian Soviet Socialist Republic" was established and recognized by the Revolutionary Committee in Georgia in May 1921.[320] In 1922, Abkhazia's status of "a Soviet Socialist Republic" was altered as 'treaty republic', and Abkhazia became a part of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. In December 1922, Abkhazia joined the newly established "Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic" together with Georgia. Finally, in 1931, Abkhazia's status was lowered to "an autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic" inside Georgia, which also stayed within the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic until its dissolution in 1936.[321]

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[318] Stanislav Lakoba, "History: 1917-1989," in *The Abkhazians: A Handbook*, ed. George Hewitt (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 89.

[319] Edward Mihalkanin, "The Abkhazians: A National Minority in Their Own Homeland," in *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2004), 144.

[320] George Hewitt, "Abkhazia and Georgia: Time for a Reassessment," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15, no.2 (Spring/Summer 2009): 186.

[321] Timothy K. Blauvelt, ""From Words to Action!" Nationality Policy in Soviet Abkhazia (1921–38)," in *The Making of Modern Georgia, 1918–2012: The First Georgian Republic and Its Successors*, ed. Stephen F. Jones (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2014), 234.

Under Joseph Stalin and Lavrenti Beria, the Soviet leadership reactivated forced resettlement and exile policies. Nestor Lakoba, who was an Abkhaz and headed the government in Abkhazia since 1922 until 1936, was killed following his refusal to implement Beria's plan of transferring peasants from western parts of Georgia into Abkhazia.[322] After 1936, "Georgianization" policy accelerated together with the purge of the Abkhazian intellectual and political class, resettlement of non-Abkhazians into the region, change of the graphical base of writing in Abkhaz to Georgian, renaming of Abkhazian place names by Georgian ones, and introduction of Georgian instead of Abkhaz as the language of teaching at schools.[323] Furthermore, publications and broadcasts in the Abkhaz language were suspended, and language schools of Abkhazians were replaced with the Georgian ones.[324]

The repression against Abkhazian people ended with the death of Stalin and Beria in 1953. The new political leadership of the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev, being critical of Stalin's regime, let the Abkhaz express their political and cultural both complaints and demands.[325] Accordingly, since the second half of the 1950s, newspapers, publications and radio broadcasts in Abkhazian language were restored. In addition, an original Abkhaz alphabet, instead of the forced Georgian version, was promoted and Abkhazians schools were restored.[326] On the political level, as a result

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[322] Edward Mihalkanin, "The Abkhazians: A National Minority in Their Own Homeland," in *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2004), 145.

[323] Stanislav Lakoba, "History: 1917-1989," in *The Abkhazians: A Handbook*, ed. George Hewitt (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 95.

[324] George Hewitt, "Abkhazia and Georgia: Time for a Reassessment," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15, no.2 (Spring/Summer 2009): 186.

[325] Arsène Saparov, *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2015), 152.

[326] Edward Mihalkanin, "The Abkhazians: A National Minority in Their Own Homeland," in *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2004), 145-146.

of the new de-Stalinization measures in Abkhazia, the number of Abkhaz working at various government levels increased significantly in comparison to their share in the total population. While by 1949 only 4 percent of first secretaries in cities and districts and 28 percent of party heads were Abkhaz, in 1978 these numbers grew to 37.5 and 45 percent respectively. Actually, contrary to the common practice in the Soviet Union, members of the native Abkhaz population held "the position of regional first *and* second party secretary from the late 1950s through to the early 1970s."[327]

Despite such improvements in the political and cultural spheres, in 1978, following the protests in Georgia concerning Georgian language's status, Abkhazians also voiced their demands to restore their previous status in 1921 or to unite with North Caucasus that was a part of Russia.[328] Nothing was done with regard to the status of Abkhazia, however Pedagogical Institute located in Sukhumi was changed into the Abkhaz State University, television broadcasts in Abkhazian started, and a resolution for economic and cultural development of Abkhazia was passed.[329] However, neither Georgians nor the Abkhaz were content with the measures of 1978. These policies led to concerns among Georgians, and they started transferring Georgians into Abkhazia, which in turn alarmed the Abkhaz.[330]

In 1988, "the Abkhazian People's Forum *Aidgylara* (Unity)" was established to push for Abkhazia's liberation from Georgia and its subordination to Russia. The Forum

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[327] Arsène Saparov, *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2015), 152.

[328] Frederik Coene, *The Caucasus: An introduction* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010), 149.

[329] Stanislav Lakoba, "History: 1917-1989," in *The Abkhazians: A Handbook*, ed. George Hewitt (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 98.

[330] Edward Mihalkanin, "The Abkhazians: A National Minority in Their Own Homeland," in *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnik (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2004), 146.

organized a demonstration in 1989, which called for the raise of Abkhazia's status to a union republic.[331] The Georgian nationalists opposed the Abkhaz mobilization and protested their request to be a union republic within the USSR. The mass demonstration led by the Abkhaz in March 1989 resulted in the one of the biggest protests by Georgians in the history of Tbilisi.[332] Demands of the protesters raised quickly and they started to ask for Georgia's independence. As a response, Georgian Communist Party leadership asked Soviet forces to take action by 9 April 1989. The Soviet army stopped the protests, causing deaths and injuries.[333]

Mikhail Gorbachev rejected approving the military operation of 9 April 1989 and the party leadership in Georgia was dismissed from office.[334] The new Communist Party authorities in Georgia accepted nationalist opposition's main requests, due to the impact of April 1989 events. In this regard, nationalist leaders were released from jail and Georgian was made obligatory in the public, which led to significant concerns in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In November 1989, the Supreme Soviet in Georgia announced that USSR laws that were against Georgia would not be respected. In March 1990, it proclaimed the sovereignty of Georgia, therefore annulling all treaties signed after 1921.[335] Georgia, finally, proclaimed its independence on 9 April 1991 and restored its former constitution of 1921, which did not refer to Abkhazia. The election of a nationalist, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, as president on 26 May 1991

[331] Ben Fowkes, *Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Communist World* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 140.

[332] Christoph Zürcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 121.

[333] Ben Fowkes, *Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Communist World* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 140.

[334] Henry E. Hale, *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 122.

[335] Christoph Zürcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 123.

escalated problems between Georgians and Abkhazians.[336] Gamsakhurdia, however, could stay in office until January 1992, when he was removed by the military coup carried out by a "coalition of former communist *nomenklatura*, paramilitary leaders and liberal intelligentsia."[337] Following Gamsakhurdia's removal from office, in March 1992, the Military Council requested Eduard Shevardnadze to come back to office. Shevardnadze's assuming of power, however, did not alter the demands of the Abkhaz.[338]

The civil war in Georgia complicated the situation in Abkhazia when Georgian paramilitary groups entered Abkhazia in their pursuit of pro-Gamsakhurdia forces. In response, in July 1992, the parliament in Abkhazia terminated the 1978-dated constitution, according to which Abkhazia had an autonomous republic status inside Georgia, and reassumed the constitution of 1925, according to which Abkhazia enjoyed a union republic status like Georgia.[339] War started in Abkhazia in August 1992, when the parliament in Georgia sent troops to Abkhazia to defend rail routes and rescue hostages held by Gamsakhurdia's supporters.[340] The authorities in Georgia rationalized their military operation by referring to the necessity of reestablishing order, defeating pro-Gamsakhurdia forces, and securing railway routes connecting Georgia, Russia and Armenia.[341] The Abkhaz forces recaptured Sukhumi

[336] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 113.

[337] Jonathan Wheatley, "Managing Ethnic Diversity in Georgia: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," *Central Asian Survey* 28, no: 2 (June 2009): 123.

[338] Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: The Cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 129.

[339] Julie A. George, *The Politics of Ethnic Separatism in Russia and Georgia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 116.

[340] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 113.

[341] Bruno Coppieters, "War and Secession: A Moral Analysis of the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict," in *Contextualizing Secession: Normative Studies in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Bruno Coppieters and Richard Sakwa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 194.

on 27 September 1993 and established control over the entire territory of Abkhazia by the end of September.[342] The end of the war was confirmed in 1994 by the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in the region. The UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) assumed the duty of mediating between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides.[343]

In the coming years, following the deployment of peacekeeping forces and UNOMIG in Abkhazia, the situation in the region remained mainly calm but unstable. Frequent violations of the ceasefire agreement of 1994 and restrictions on the movement of UNOMIG personnel took place.[344] Especially in 2001, serious tensions occurred in Abkhazia, including attacks of Abkhaz forces against the UNOMIG personnel.[345] Despite tensions, ceasefire measures were mostly preserved until 2008. On 8 August 2008, the war started between Georgia and Abkhazia/South Ossetia/Russia. The war continued 5 days, until the European Union negotiated a ceasefire agreement. In August 2008, Abkhazia's president, Sergei Bagapsh, made an appeal to Russia for its recognition of Abkhazia's independence. In response, President Medvedev issued the necessary decree for recognizing Abkhazia's independence.[346] Together with Russia, only Nicaragua, Nauru and Venezuela recognized Abkhazia's independence. Until now, other UN member states followed

[342] Jurij Anchabadze, "History: The Modern Period," in *The Abkhazians: A Handbook*, ed. George Hewitt (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 143.

[343] Tamara Pataraia and David Darchiashvili, "Security regime building in the South Caucasus," in *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc*, eds. Graeme P. Herd and Jennifer D. P. Moroney (Oxfordshire; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 153.

[344] "UNOMIG: United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia – Background," available at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unomig/background.html

[345] Norrie MacQueen, *Peacekeeping and the International System* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 175.

[346] Robert McCorquodale and Kristin Hausler, "Caucuses in the Caucasus: The Application of the Right of Self-Determination," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 36-37.

the request of the UN not to recognize Abkhazia's independence. Even CIS members acted hesitantly on recognizing Abkhazia.[347]

4.2.2 Secessionism in South Ossetia

The October Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent collapse of the Russian Empire laid the basis of confrontation between Georgians and South Ossetians. Tensions began with regard to the redistribution of land. The Ossetian farm workers captured land of their Georgian landlords and stopped paying taxes. This crisis, which had a both class and ethnic character, soon became an ethnic conflict where Ossetians looked for support from the Bolsheviks.[348] Ossetians revolted against Georgia, which was then independent, in 1918, 1919 and 1920. These uprisings were peasant-driven and received Bolsheviks' support from North Ossetia. The Menshevik government in Georgia crushed these revolts harshly, especially the one in 1920, when, according to the Ossetian claims, 5,000 were killed and around 20,000 were forced to escape to Russia. Menshevik government's rule over South Ossetia ended when the Red Army took control of Georgia in February 1921. In 1921, South Ossetia was included in "the Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic." In April 1922, South Ossetia was created as an autonomous oblast within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic.[349]

Until 1989, Georgians and South Ossetians had mainly positive relations. In 1989, tensions between these peoples started to escalate. South Ossetia, in response to

[347] Françoise Companjen and Abel Polese, "Subtle Line between Self-Defence and War: South Ossetia 2008," in *Conflict and Peace in Eurasia*, ed. Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 88.

[348] Arsène Saparov, *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2015), 86.

[349] Julian Birch, "The Georgian/South Ossetian Territorial and Boundary Dispute," in *Transcaucasian Boundaries*, eds. John F.R. Wright, Suzanne Goldenberg, Richard Schofield (London: UCL Press, 1996), 156.

nationalists' consolidation in Georgia, looked for secession and unification with North Ossetia, which was an autonomous republic within Russia.[350] Mobilization in South Ossetia started with the decision of "South Ossetian Regional Soviet" in November 1989 to raise South Ossetia's status from autonomous oblast to autonomous republic. This decision meant that South Ossetia would stay within Georgia however could possibly secede. The parliament in Georgia immediately canceled this decision and President Gamsakhurdia arranged a demonstration to be held in Tskhinvali. Demonstrators were stopped outside the city by rival demonstrators, leading to casualties.[351] In 1990, the regional Soviet in South Ossetia announced South Ossetia's status as an independent republic inside the Soviet Union. In October, Gamsakhurdia's Round Table bloc managed to win the majority in elections for the Supreme Soviet in Georgia, in which the political parties from South Ossetia were not allowed to participate. In December, the new Supreme Soviet in Georgia annulled South Ossetia's autonomous status.[352]

President Shevardnadze, in response to the aspirations of South Ossetia, sent armed forces to the area. South Ossetians, together with supporters from Russia, particularly North Ossetia, however managed to resist the Georgian army.[353] Clashes continued until the signing of an agreement in June 1992 in Sochi. The Sochi Agreement was signed by Gamsakhurdia's successor – Shevardnadze.[354] According to the agreement, a "Joint Control Commission," consisting of representatives of Russia, Georgia,

[350] Christoph Zürcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 124.

[351] Gerard Toal, "Russia's Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 49, no: 6 (2008): 676.

[352] Jonathan Wheatley, "Managing Ethnic Diversity in Georgia: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," *Central Asian Survey* 28, no: 2 (June 2009): 123.

[353] Charles King, "The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States," *World Politics* 53, no: 4 (July 2001): 534.

[354] Emmanuel Karagiannis, "The Russian Interventions in South Ossetia and Crimea Compared: Military Performance, Legitimacy and Goals," *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 3 (2014): 4.

South Ossetia, North Ossetia and OSCE was established to develop measures for conflict resolution.[355] In July, peacekeepers from Russia, Georgia and South Ossetia were stationed in the conflict zone to "supervise economic reconstruction, the return of refugees and a stage-by-stage resolution of the political dispute between Georgia and South Ossetia.[356]

Georgia and South Ossetia had relatively peaceful relations between 1993 and 2001. Georgia, under Shevardnadze, followed a more tolerant policy towards the regions than under Gamsakurdia's rule. In South Ossetia, Lyudvig Chibirov became South Ossetia's first president in 1996. Eduard Kokoity, having the support of both locals and Russia, defeated Chibirov in 2001 elections.[357] Politics in Georgia was transformed significantly following the Rose Revolution in November 2003. Mikheil Saakashvili, who replaced Shevardnadze, built his campaign on reestablishing Georgian influence over Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He strengthened the Georgian army in order to deal with these regions.[358] Politics of the new Georgian government under President Saakashvili and President Kokoity's leadership in South Ossetia enhanced the divisions between South Ossetia and Georgia. President Saakashivili believed that the South Ossetian issue could be solved only by brave action and economic measures.[359]

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[355] Klejda Mulaj, "International Actions and the Making and Unmaking of Unrecognized States," in *Unrecognized States in the International System*, eds. Nina Caspersen and Gareth Stansfield (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), 53.

[356] Margot Light, "Russia and Transcaucasia," in *Transcaucasian Boundaries*, eds. John F.R. Wright, Suzanne Goldenberg, Richard Schofield (London: UCL Press, 1996), 51.

[357] Gerard Toal, "Russia's Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 49, no. 6 (2008): 679.

[358] Ryan Maness and Brandon Valeriano, "Russia and the Near Abroad: Applying a Risk Barometer for War," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 25, no. 2 (2012): 145.

[359] Gerard Toal, "Russia's Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 49, no: 6 (2008): 679.

The conflict in South Ossetia revived just a couple of months after the Rose Revolution, following the new government's anti-smuggling operation in South Ossetia. The campaign aimed to increase state revenues, eliminate official participation in cross-border crime, and strengthen borders of the state.[360] Saakashvili administration, since its formation, focused on enhancing armed forces controlling transit routes and borders, and reducing regional politicians' powers in South Ossetia and Georgia. This latter goal was the main motivation behind the attempt to close the Ergneti market in 2004.[361] President Saakashvili's reform policies, especially those targeting illegal trade, resulted in increased dependence of South Ossetia on Russian and North Ossetia for revenues. Although Georgia benefited from the closure of the black-market in the beginning, limiting South Ossetia's income sources led to the worsening of ethnic relations in the region.[362]

The campaign against illegal trade during the summer of 2004 resulted in armed conflict, causing deaths and injuries. Consequently, worries and territorial divisions in the region deepened. President Kokoity managed to present the measures of the Georgian government as assaults not against crime but against Ossetians.[363] President Saakashvili proposed a peace plan in 2005, in which South Ossetia was offered considerable autonomy but within Georgia.[364] Rejecting this plan, President Kokoity presented his own plans on political dialogue, demilitarization, redevelopment of

[360] Cory Welt, "The Thawing of a Frozen Conflict: The Internal Security Dilemma and the 2004 Prelude to the Russo-Georgian War," *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no.1 (January 2010): 69.

[361] Stacy Closson, "Georgia-South Ossetia Networks of Profit: Challenges to Statebuilding," in *Statebuilding and State-Formation: The Political Sociology of Intervention*, ed. Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012), 82.

[362] Françoise Companjen and Abel Polese, "Subtle Line between Self-Defence and War: South Ossetia 2008," in *Conflict and Peace in Eurasia*, ed. Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 90.

[363] Gerard Toal, "Russia's Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 49, no.6 (2008): 680.

[364] Per Gahrton, *Georgia: Pawn in the New Great Game* (London; New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 62.

social and economic conditions, and the formation of an economic zone integrating South Ossetia and districts in North Ossetia and Georgia.[365]

Unrest increased in South Ossetia in 2006, when President Saakashvili created a provisional administration for villages populated by Georgians inside South Ossetia under the leadership of Dmitry Sanakoyev. In May 2007, roads connecting Georgian villages with Tskhinvali were blocked by South Ossetia. Control points were removed shortly after by South Ossetia, following Russia's demand, but these events worsened the already hostile situation.[366] Georgia, with an attempt to resume its control over South Ossetia, invaded the region in August 2008. The Russian army, however, defeated Georgian army not only in South Ossetia but also in Abkhazia.[367] President Kokoity, in August 2008, made an appeal to Russia for its recognition of South Ossetia's independence. President Medvedev, in response, issued the necessary decree for recognizing South Ossetia's independence by Russia.[368] Other than Russia, only Nicaragua, Nauru and Venezuela recognized South Ossetia's independence. Until now, other UN member states followed the request of the UN not to recognize. Even CIS members acted hesitantly on recognizing South Ossetia.[369]

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[365] George Hewitt, *Discordant Neighbours: A Reassessment of the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-South-Ossetian Conflicts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 208.

[366] Per Gahrton, *Georgia: Pawn in the New Great Game* (London; New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 62.

[367] Klejda Mulaj, "International Actions and the Making and Unmaking of Unrecognized States," in *Unrecognized States in the International System*, eds. Nina Caspersen and Gareth Stansfield (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), 53.

[368] Robert McCorquodale and Kristin Hausler, "Caucuses in the Caucasus: The Application of the Right of Self-Determination," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 36-37.

[369] Françoise Companjen and Abel Polese, "Subtle Line between Self-Defence and War: South Ossetia 2008," in *Conflict and Peace in Eurasia*, ed. Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 88.

4.3. Russian Foreign and Domestic Policy on Abkhazia and South Ossetia

4.3.1 The Yeltsin Period

In the post-Soviet space, the most important conflicts took place in the Caucasus, particularly the civil war in Georgia and armed conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Contrary to conflicts in Tajikistan and Transnistria, the Russian leadership believed that significant security, economic and political interests of Russia were endangered by these conflicts. The strategic location of these conflicts, especially their closeness to Russia's predominantly Muslim populated regions, such as North Caucasus, and Caspian energy routes, increased Russia's concerns. In the Russian perspective, the threat of fundamentalism in the Caucasus was more concrete and urgent than in other parts of the former Soviet Union.[370]

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian leadership respected the independence and integrity of Georgia. Initially, from August 1991 until March 1992, they did not take a particular position on the emerging Abkhaz conflict and let Georgia decide its policies. Those days, liberal and pro-western ideas were influential in the formation of Russian foreign policy, and discussions and policies overlooked the particular Abkhaz problem. In this period, the Russian leadership was discussing a solution for the conflict in South Ossetia. The outbreak of war in March 1992 in Transnistria led to discussions within Russia concerning Russia's policy on conflicts in the CIS. Before the war in Abkhazia, political elites in Russia were already discussing Russia's proper reaction to the conflict. While various foreign policy positions were proposed, nationalists suggested the most pronounced ideas. They proposed using armed forces against Georgia and supported Abkhaz separatism

[370] Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 82.

by their publications in the Russian media, speeches in the parliament, and visits to the region.[371]

Russia had an inconsistent approach to the conflict between Abkhazia and Georgia, due to the struggles in domestic politics and the presence of various political actors. Different considerations about the conflict existed within the Russian political elite. Foreign Minister of Russia, Andrei Kozyrev, and the adviser of President Yeltsin on nationality issues, Emil Pain, supported Shevardnadze's position.[372] Prominent political figures supporting Abkhazia included the communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, Ruslan Khasbulatov, then "Chairman of the Supreme Soviet," and Sergey Baburin, a nationalist member of the parliament, who headed the parliamentary discussions on the issue. For these politicians, Russia had to reestablish its regional influence and supporting Abkhazia could help this objective. They were also aware that the issue of Russia's policies towards the CIS could provide them political advantages against the incumbent government. More modest figures were also concerned about Russia's security related interests. Georgia was rejecting to join the CIS and Russia's share in the Black Sea Fleet was reducing.[373]

In September 1992, the Supreme Soviet in Russia hold the Georgian armed forces responsible for the crisis in Abkhazia, condemned Georgia's violent policies, requested the ending of entire military actions, the removal of military units from the region, and respect for human rights agreements. The Supreme Soviet issued another resolution on stopping the transfer of military equipment, weapons and ammunition to Georgia within the scope of Soviet army assets' division. Through the end of

[371] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 123.

[372] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Republic of Georgia: Conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 390-391.

[373] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 124.

1992, disagreements between the Supreme Soviet and President Yeltsin were deepening and each actor was following a different policy concerning the region, aimed at serving their own interests. The revival of clashes in Abkhazia concurred with the confrontation between Yeltsin and the parliament in Russia in September/October 1993.[374]

In May 1993, first negotiations to settle the conflict in Abkhazia started under the UN sponsorship and achieved a short-term cease-fire. Initially, Russia managed to persuade Georgia to participate in the CIS and established closer military affairs with it. Following the second negotiations, an agreement on a cease-fire, establishment of a cease-fire control mechanism including Russia, Georgia and Abkhazia, and deployment of a peacekeeping army and observers was signed in July 1993. According to the agreement, Georgian forces would be withdrawal from the region and a government in Abkhazia would be established. In September 1993, however, the Abkhazian armed forces reconquered Sukhumi and forced the Georgian population to leave the region. President Shevardnadze, accordingly, had to request Russia's assistance.[375]

The peacekeeping operation deployed in Abkhazia "remained purely Russian in political supervision, military command and reporting, as well as in personnel."[376] In exchange for Russia's support in dealing with the conflicts in Georgia and the installment of peacekeeping forces, President Shevardnadze changed his previous two policies. Georgia accepted to join the CIS and postponed the withdrawal of Russia's armed forces and closing of its bases. Russia, in this way, managed to

[374] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Republic of Georgia: Conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 391.

[375] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 135-136.

[376] Andrei Zagorski, "Multilateralism in Russian foreign policy approaches," in *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*, eds. Elana Wilson Rowe and Stina Torjesen (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2009), 55.

acquire its military existence in Georgia.[377] In October 1993, the decision on the installment of Russian bases in Georgia was approved and the agreement concerning the status of the bases was signed later in 1993.[378]

The Russian leadership believed that Russia needed to enhance its influence both in Georgia and in the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia. In this regard, Russia and Georgia signed "the bilateral Treaty on Friendship, Neighbourly Relations and Cooperation" in February 1994.[379] Additional agreements were also signed, including the establishment of five military bases for Russia, deployment of Russian forces along the Georgia-Turkey border, cooperation on trade and culture.[380] However, only after months they could agree on the structure of a new operation for establishing peace in the region. The new operation, following earlier arrangements, enjoyed further legitimacy because of the CIS involvement and backing of the UN. The operation began in June 1994 and around 3,000 Russian forces were deployed near river Enguri, which practically constituted a border. Authorities in Abkhazia regarded the presence of Russian forces as a protection for Abkhazia's secession, notwithstanding Russia's official support for Georgia's territorial integrity.[381]

In October 1994, following Georgia's signing of agreements concerning the CIS, President Yeltsin sent Russian forces to Abkhazia for protecting the Georgian railways. The existence of Russian peacekeeping forces and Russia's pivotal role in negotiating an agreement for the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict were ensured by

[377] Rick Fawn, "Russia's Reluctant Retreat from the Caucasus: Abkhazia, Georgia and the US after 11 September 2001," in *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Rick Fawn (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass: 2003), 131.

[378] Liana Jervalidze, *Georgia: Russian Foreign Energy Policy and Implications for Georgia's Energy Security* (London: GMB Publishing, 2006), 13.

[379] Pavel K. Baev, *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles* (Oslo: PRIO, 1996), 120.

[380] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 136.

[381] Pavel K. Baev, *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles* (Oslo: PRIO, 1996), 120.

consecutive peace discussions. In 1996, Russia's Georgia policy was criticized for its both excessive and minimal involvement. President Yeltsin, nevertheless, tried to secure Russia's regional interests by maintaining strong relations with Georgia. In 1996, President Shevardnadze managed to get the consent of other CIS members on imposing sanctions and blockade against Abkhazia. Russia-Georgia diplomatic relations started to be more dynamic.[382]

Problems started to emerge between Russia and Georgia in 1995-1996. Since 1995, the authorities in Georgia have requested from the Russian armed forces to guarantee refugees' return to conflict regions and reestablish territorial integrity of Georgia. The Georgian parliament blamed the Russian-led peacekeeping operation of defending separatism in Abkhazia. In 1995, President Shevardnadze underlined the possibility of Georgia's reversing its consent on the peacekeeping operation. He also laid down the reestablishment of Georgia's integrity as a condition for the ratification of military contracts between Russia and Georgia. In 1997, Georgia's efforts to revise the essence of Russia-Georgia relations and the agenda for the settlement of the conflict intensified considerably. President Shevardnadze underlined that Russia did not fulfil its responsibilities to Georgia concerning Abkhazia, particularly on territorial integrity. The parliament in Georgia, accordingly, did not ratify agreements about Russian bases and joint protection of borders. In addition, throughout 1997, Russian armed forces within Georgia had faced harassment. The failed assassination against President Shevardnadze in February 1998 worsened the relations between the two countries.[383]

The South Ossetian conflict had directly affected Russia. The opposition in Russia utilized the conflict against Yeltsin, criticizing him of not defending Russia's

[382] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 137.

[383] Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: The Cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 142-143.

regional interests. The opposition under the leadership of then "Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet Ruslan Khasbulatov" and then Vice President, Alexander Rutskoy, opposed Georgian policies in South Ossetia, hoping to weaken the Yeltsin leadership. In October 1991, "the Russian Supreme Soviet" denounced Georgia and requested Russia to impose strong sanctions on Georgia.[384] Khasbulatov charged the Georgian authorities with committing genocide in South Ossetia and supported the incorporation of the region into Russia. This demand, however, was officially rejected. The South Ossetian conflict directly affected North Ossetia's prospects for independence.[385] North Ossetia's intention to support South Ossetia endangered Russia's authority over the North Caucasus. The stability in North Ossetia was undermined and the region was hosting refugees escaping from the armed clashes in the south. Russia was concerned about any possible infighting with North Ossetians, who usually have been supportive of Russia.[386]

In order to stop the escalation of violence, in June 1992, President Shevardnadze and "the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of North Ossetia," Akhsarbek Galazov, decided to implement a cease-fire, establish a military observer group, and deploy a group of joint peacekeepers to settle the issue. These decisions formed the foundation of the Sochi Agreement signed by President Yeltsin and President Shevardnadze in June 1992, for resolving the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia.[387] Under

[384] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Republic of Georgia: Conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 365-367.

[385] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 127.

[386] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Republic of Georgia: Conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 365-366.

[387] John Mackinlay and Evgenii Sharov, "Russian peacekeeping operations in Georgia," in *Regional peacekeepers: The paradox of Russian peacekeeping*, eds. John Mackinlay and Peter Cross (Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 2003), 77.

the agreement, around 500 peacekeepers from Russia, together with troops from Georgia and Ossetia, were deployed in the region.[388]

Yeltsin, taking into account the domestic pressures, changed his strategies many times. Firstly, he overlooked President Gamsakhurdia's policies aimed at eliminating Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Later, he decisively opposed Gamsakhurdia, once the conflict threatened North Ossetia and triggered reaction. Likewise, President Yeltsin initially supported Shevardnadze but then opposed him. The growing Chechnya problem and the significance of North Ossetia's strategic alliance in fighting it necessitated opposing Georgia's South Ossetia policy. These concerns were also influential in the policy shifts.[389]

From 1991 to 1996, while ethnic and political factors had been influential, strategic issues were the main concern of most of the Russian political elite. Russia's first military engagement in Georgia took place when Russia lacked a coherent and centralized policy, and there were different actors with various objectives. Eventually, Russian policy with regard to conflicts in Georgia became consistent with an official strategy that focused on terminating the crisis and maintaining Georgia's territorial integrity. The uncertainty witnessed during the conflict underlined the significance of broader foreign policy notions for the formation of government policies. Nationalism based on pragmatism has been decisive in defining foreign policy objectives of Russia and directing its policy.[390]

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[388] James A. Green, "Passportisation, Peacekeepers and Proportionality," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 64.

[389] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Republic of Georgia: Conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 367.

[390] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 139.

Under President Yeltsin, Russian rhetoric on the Abkhazian issue has mostly been steady. Russia reaffirmed its support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and rejected Abkhazia's official independence. However, in practice, Russia has obviously supported the independence of Abkhazia since 1992 after the civil war. Russia's this attitude could be witnessed also in other issues, such as Russia's military forces and base within Georgia, and Russia's implementation of its peacekeeping duties.[391] Russia's policy towards Georgia, between October 1993 and June 1996, was based on the objectives that Russia must preserve its influence in the region, stop the fighting and maintain existing military relations with Georgia. The Russian government started to support Georgia officially, when Georgia agreed to make concessions that offered Russia larger political and military authority over Georgia.[392]

4.3.2 The Putin-Medvedev Period

Despite their strong historical and cultural connections, the relationship between Russia and Georgia had deteriorated significantly near the end of Shevardnadze's rule until the 2003 Rose Revolution. Russia consistently blamed Georgia of hosting Chechen terrorist and Georgia was worried about Russia's unwillingness to close its bases in Georgia, in accordance with an agreement signed in 1999. Russia also speeded up providing Russian passports in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which weakened Georgia's sovereignty in these regions. On the other hand, Russia was

[391] Bertil Nygren, "Russia's relations with Georgia under Putin: the impact of 11 September," in *Russia as a Great Power: Dimensions of Security under Putin*, eds. Jakob Hedenskog et al. (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2005), 159.

[392] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 139.

concerned about Georgia's NATO aspirations under Shevardnadze and its participation in the pipeline project of Baku-Ceyhan that would bypass Russia.[393]

Following the Rose Revolution and removal of Shevardnadze, Russia and Georgia had the chance to repair their relations. Newly elected Georgian President Saakashvili declared closer Georgia-Russia relations an urgent priority. He, contrary to President Shevardnadze, promised to help Russia in its fight against Chechen forces inhabiting in Georgia. Economic relations between Georgia and Russia also developed. Russia tried to reconsider the debts of Georgia, offered supplies and subsidies concerning energy, increased Russian investments, eased visa rules and followed a freer strategy on labor market. The most notable cooperation between Russia and Georgia was Russia's support in peacefully ending the May 2004 revolt in Adjara. Russia removed Aslan Abashidze from office and helped President Saakashvili consolidate Georgia's sovereignty. This development increased hopes that the two states could also collaborate on Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[394]

There were still some problematic issues between Russia and Georgia. While Georgia requested Russia to remove its military bases in Georgia, Russia overlooked the issue. Georgia's pro-Western leaning continued decisively. In April 2004, President Saakashvili declared his aspiration for Georgia's EU membership; NATO-Georgia relations proceeded; Baku-Ceyhan project was developing as scheduled; and resolving the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was compelling. Cooperative relations between Russia and Georgia ended in August 2004, following Georgia's aggressive reaction to the conflict in South Ossetia.[395]

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[393] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 309.

[394] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 309-310.

[395] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 310.

In response to Georgia's South Ossetia policy, Russia decided to suspend its dialogue with Georgia and stopped granting visas to Georgian citizens. In 2005, Russia reaffirmed that it could make preventive attacks against terrorists in Georgia. Georgian authorities, on the other hand, blamed Russia for helping separatists within Georgia; violating the airspace of Georgia; being involved in some bombings, and Russia's peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were considered as a threat to Georgia. In February 2006, the Georgian parliament issued a resolution on questioning the presence of Russian peacekeepers in these regions. In response, Russia banned the import of Georgian wine to Russia by March 2006 and closed its Georgian border in July 2006. Any hopes of cooperation between the two states was lost with the spy incident in September 2006.[396]

Following Georgia's arrest of four Russian agents, Russia stopped issuing visas for citizens of Georgia; called back Russian ambassador to Georgia, started evacuating families of its diplomatic personnel. After Georgia's declaration of prison punishments for Russian officers, Russia suspended withdrawal of its troops in Georgia; the Embassy of Georgia in Russia was surrounded by security forces; forces located in North Caucasus were positioned along the border between Russia and Georgia; Russia's Fleet in the Black Sea started exercises near the coast of Georgia; increased pressures on Georgian workers within Russia; cut entire transport and mailing connections with Georgia; businesses owned by Georgians were inspected by various offices, and several Georgians were deported from Russia.[397]

President Saakashvili utilized the stalemate for developing Georgia's relations with the West. Georgia's prospects of NATO membership continued. Georgia leadership announced in October 2007 their objective of terminating the peacekeeping mandate

[396] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 310-311.

[397] Andrei Illarionov, "The Russian Leadership's Preparation for War, 1999-2008," in *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, eds. Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 62-63.

of Russia with regard to Abkhazia. Kosovo's independence in February 2008 and Russia's removal of its sanctions against Abkhazia as a response complicated any prospects for normalization of relations between Russia and Georgia. Russia, besides lifting sanctions, strengthened its peacekeepers in Abkhazia. Meanwhile, ethnic Russians were appointed as prime minister, ministers of defense and security in South Ossetia. Abkhazia and South Ossetia were against Georgia's NATO membership and advocated unification with Russia. Moscow was not yet ready to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, however, Moscow established direct relations with both regions by President Putin's decree in April 2008. In June 2008, Russia ended the blockade of Georgia against Abkhazia and facilitated the transfer of more Russian armed forces into the region, by repairing the Abkhazian railway. These developments took place while armed conflicts between Georgia and Abkhazia/South Ossetia were intensifying.[398]

Ignorance of ceasefire and therefore violence by both Georgia and South Ossetia increased in June and July 2008. In July, the Georgian army attacked Tskhinvali and neighboring villages by artillery, arguing that the South Ossetian forces had used force first. Georgian attacks had continued until South Ossetia asked for Russia's help. While Foreign Minister Lavrov denounced attacks of Georgia as aggression, Georgia blamed Russia for having direct affairs with South Ossetia and Abkhazia and violating the airspace of Georgia. Georgia, additionally, declined to sign the agreement on non-use of force and requested the withdrawal of Russia's peacekeeping units from South Ossetia.[399] In August 2008, Georgia, with an attempt to resume its control over South Ossetia, attacked the region, killing 10 Russian soldiers from the peacekeeping unit and causing serious civilian losses.[400] In a

[398] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 311-312.

[399] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 312-313.

[400] Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 193.

counter attack, the Russian army defeated Georgian armed forces not only in South Ossetia but also in Abkhazia, and attacked targets within Georgia.[401] Following the war, in August 2008, President Kokoity of South Ossetia and President Bagapsh of Abkhazia made their appeals to Russia's Federation Council for Russia's recognition of these regions' independence. President Medvedev, in response, signed the necessary decrees for Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[402]

4.4. Russia's Policy on Secessionism in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the UNSC

Ambassador Churkin's rhetoric in the UN Security Council just after Russia's military operation in South Ossetia focused on international law for outlining Russia's policy on the issue.[403] Russian arguments for its military actions in 2008 centered mainly on self-defence. The self-defence claim referred to the safeguarding of two groups, namely peacekeepers of Russia deployed in South Ossetia and South Ossetians holding Russian passports.[404] Ambassador Churkin referred to "article 51 of the UN Charter,"[405] particularly to "the inherent right of individual or collective

[401] Klejda Mulaj, "International Actions and the Making and Unmaking of Unrecognized States," in *Unrecognized States in the International System*, eds. Nina Caspersen and Gareth Stansfield (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), 53.

[402] Robert McCorquodale and Kristin Hausler, "Caucuses in the Caucasus: The Application of the Right of Self-Determination," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 37.

[403] Christoph H. Stefes and Julie A. George, "The Battles after the Battle: International Law and the Russia-Georgia Conflict," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 163.

[404] James A. Green, "Passportisation, Peacekeepers and Proportionality," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 64.

[405] Roy Allison, "Russia resurgent? Moscow's campaign to 'coerce Georgia to peace'," *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1151.

self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations,"[406] in his "letter dated 11 August 2008 … addressed to the President of the Security Council":

> The scale of the attack against the servicemen of the Russian Federation deployed in the territory of Georgia on legitimate grounds, and against citizens of the Russian Federation, the number of deaths it caused as well as the statements by the political and military leadership of Georgia, which revealed the Georgian side's aggressive intentions, demonstrate that we are dealing with the illegal use of military force against the Russian Federation. In those circumstances, the Russian side had no choice but to use its inherent right to self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.[407]

Russian peacekeepers were deployed in South Ossetia in 1992, following the signing of a ceasefire agreement by Presidents Yeltsin and Shevardnadze.[408] During the discussions in the UN Security Council meeting on 8 August 2008, Ambassador Churkin condemned Georgia's actions against Russian peacekeepers by referring to the victims among the peacekeepers:

> Georgia's actions have also caused casualties among Russian peacekeepers. The situation has even reached the point where peacekeepers from the Georgian side have shot at Russian peacekeepers, with whom they are mandated to carry out their peacekeeping mission in the region. … We cannot tolerate a situation in which Russian citizens and peacekeepers, who have been risking their lives for years to keep the peace in the South Ossetian conflict zone, are suffering. The firepower of tanks, military combat vehicles and helicopters is being aimed directly at peacekeepers. As

[406] Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, available at http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html

[407] Letter dated 11 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/545).

[408] Margot Light, "Russia and Transcaucasia," in *Transcaucasian Boundaries*, eds. John F.R. Wright, Suzanne Goldenberg, Richard Schofield (London: UCL Press, 1996), 51.

> a result, more than 10 peacekeepers have died, and more than 30 have been injured.[409]

Before the 2008 war, Russia had supported South Ossetians by delivering "Russian passports and residency documents" in the region.[410] Russia's "passportisation of Abkhazians and South Ossetians" in Georgia has particularly caused controversies between Russia and Georgia, as this policy was implemented without Georgia's consent.[411] In an effort to legitimize Russian actions in South Ossetia, Ambassador Churkin referred to these Russian 'citizens' and, citing President Medvedev, expressed Russia's obligations for them as stated in the Russian constitution, Russian laws and international law:

> As Council members are aware, many of the people living in South Ossetia are citizens of the Russian Federation … the President of Russia instructed the Government to take urgent measures to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and other innocent civilians in desperate situations.
>
> The President of the Russian Federation today unambiguously emphasized that Russia will not allow the deaths of our compatriots to go unpunished, and that the lives and dignity of our citizens, wherever they are, will be protected, in accordance with the Constitution of Russia and in accordance with the laws of the Russian Federation and international law.[412]

Ambassador Churkin, outlining the attacks against the population in South Ossetia, and reports of 'ethnic cleansing', underlined that, for Russia, these attacks by the

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[409] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5952nd Meeting held on 8 August 2008 (S/PV.5952).

[410] Cory Welt, "The Thawing of a Frozen Conflict: The Internal Security Dilemma and the 2004 Prelude to the Russo-Georgian War," *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no.1 (January 2010): 77.

[411] Christoph H. Stefes and Julie A. George, "The Battles after the Battle: International Law and the Russia-Georgia Conflict," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 164.

[412] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5952nd Meeting held on 8 August 2008 (S/PV.5952).

Georgian side violated international law, particularly the responsibility to protect civilians in military operations:

> … Tbilisi is using heavy artillery and heavy materiel and, in essence, has launched an aggressive action against the people of South Ossetia. What is occurring is a massive bombardment of residential areas in Tskhinvali and in towns outside the South Ossetian zone of conflict. In Tskhinvali, schools, the university, the Ministry of Culture and the parliament have been set ablaze. … Targeted bombing has been carried out against a Russian convoy carrying humanitarian assistance, and there are reports of ethnic cleansing in villages in South Ossetia.
>
> This cannot be described as anything other than a gross violation of international law, in particular the obligation to protect civilians from dangers related to military operations. We must not forget that, in cases not covered by international agreements carrying international humanitarian law, civilians and combatants remain under the protection and the force of the principles of international law arising from customary practices, humanitarian principles and the requirements of public awareness.[413]

Ambassador Churkin, "in an attempt to appeal to a higher normative agenda and conjure up emotive images of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans,"[414] referred to 'genocide' taking place in South Ossetia, giving numbers of causalities in the UN Security Council meeting on 10 August 2008:

> What legal terms can be used to describe what has been done by the Georgian leadership? Can we use "ethnic cleansing", for example, when, over a number of days, nearly 30,000 of the 120,000 people of South Ossetia have become refugees who have fled to Russia: more than a quarter of the population. … Is that ethnic cleansing or is it not? Should we describe that as genocide or not? When out of that population of 120,000, 2,000 innocent civilians die on the first day, is that genocide or is it not? How

[413] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5952nd Meeting held on 8 August 2008 (S/PV.5952).

[414] Roy Allison, "Russia resurgent? Moscow's campaign to 'coerce Georgia to peace'," *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1152.

> many people, how many civilians must die before we describe it as genocide?[415]

Ambassador Churkin argued that Russia had to defend people who were under Russia's responsibility, including its citizens, in compliance with the existing agreements, particularly on the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia. He, criticizing former peacekeeping practices in the Balkans, underlined that Russia's mission aimed at preventing a humanitarian disaster:

> How should we in the international community react when, despite all the international agreements that exist – and let me recall that our peacekeepers are in South Ossetia in accordance with the Dagomys agreement of 1992, which was signed by Georgia and South Ossetia – they are attacking directly and are trying to annihilate civilians, most of whom are Russian citizens? What did they expect? Did they expect our peacekeepers to run away, as some peacekeepers ran away from Srebrenica? We could not allow that to happen. We could not leave the civilian population in South Ossetia in dire straits or leave our peacekeepers without protection.[416]

In an effort to underline humanitarian elements of Russia's mission in Georgia, Ambassador Churkin, in the UN Security Council meeting on 19 August 2008, compared Russia's humanitarian contributions with those of other states and international organizations, and argued that Russia had by far made the highest contribution.

> … with regard to the humanitarian situation, no one is undertaking a humanitarian operation as large as that of Russia in the conflict zone. Not one country or one humanitarian organization is doing as much as Russia, not only inside South Ossetia and Tskhinvali, which was effectively wiped off the face of the Earth by the Georgian aggression, but also in some Georgian areas that we have entered, such as the city of Gori, which is in close vicinity to South Ossetia and where our military has had to deal with

[415] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5953rd Meeting held on 10 August 2008 (S/PV.5953).

[416] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5953rd Meeting held on 10 August 2008 (S/PV.5953).

> massive stockpiles of discarded weapons. In recent days, we have fed the civilian population there and have called on the Georgian authorities to help the people of that city, who have been abandoned to their own fate. No one is doing anywhere near as much as Russia to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.[417]

In the UN Security Council meeting held on 10 August 2008, Ambassador Churkin offered another explanation for Russia's operation in Georgia, which underlined issues related to history and 'identity'. For justifying Russia's intentions and Georgia policy, he referred to Russia's historical ties and responsibilities to the Caucasus and its people, especially the relationship between the North and South Ossetia, and Georgian policies that targeted both the autonomy and the identities of Abkhazians and South Ossetians:

> … our intentions are very simple: they are rooted in history. History shows that Russia has very close ties to the many peoples of the Caucasus – peoples whose relations with each other, for centuries, have, unfortunately, been very difficult and, often, not friendly.
>
> But looking at the whole interconnected history of this issue, I should like to make the observation that north of South Ossetia lies North Ossetia, which is a republic of the Russian Federation. That is something that must be borne in mind. We have a deep sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the peoples of the Caucasus, and that applies … to the people of Georgia and to Georgia itself.
>
> …the intention of the Russian Federation in this case is to ensure that the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia not fear for their lives or for their identity. … we must also look further back into history. We must look back to a time when, in 1991, Georgia tried to deny Abkhazia and South Ossetia not only their autonomy but also their identity, by declaring them to be Georgian. When the Abkhaz and South Ossetians protested against that, Georgia responded with a military operation, which of course failed. … But

[417] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5961st Meeting held on 19 August 2008 (S/PV.5961).

> the solution lies not in a new operation – not in a repetition of the tragic mistake of 1991 – as we can see now.[418]

Ambassador Churkin argued, in the UN Security Council meeting held on 8 August 2008, that Georgia's actions in South Ossetia were against "the fundamental principle of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the non-use of force," the 1996 Memorandum about the Georgia-Ossetia conflict, which was signed also by OSCE, and the 1992 agreement between Russia and Georgia on the resolution of the conflict in Ossetia.[419]

Ambassador Churkin outlined Russian arguments for Russia's recognition of the declarations of independence by Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the UN Security Council meeting on 28 August 2008. In this regard, he referred to Russia's responsibility for the peoples of these two regions and historical basis of Georgia's aggressive policies:

> Russia has recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, aware of its responsibility for ensuring the survival of their brotherly peoples in the face of the aggressive and chauvinistic policy of Tbilisi. The basis of that policy was the motto proclaimed in 1989 by the then-President of Georgia, Mr. Gamsakhurdia: "Georgia for Georgians", which he tried to implement in 1992, having annulled the existence of entities on Georgian territory and having sent Georgian troops to attack Sukhumi and Tskhinvali in order to reinforce by force the reign of illegality that had already been established.[420]

Ambassador Churkin, referring to casualties among both Russian peacekeepers and Russian citizens in South Ossetia, and similar arrangements for Abkhazia, accused

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[418] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5953rd Meeting held on 10 August 2008 (S/PV.5953).

[419] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5952nd Meeting held on 8 August 2008 (S/PV.5952).

[420] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

President Saakashvili of ending Georgia's territorial integrity. According to Ambassador Churkin, President Saakashvili forced the peoples of these two regions to use their right to self-determination and declare independence.

> Through the aggressive attack on South Ossetia on the night of 8 August 2008, which caused numerous casualties, including among peacekeepers and other Russian citizens, as well as preparations for similar actions against Abkhazia, Saakashvili himself put an end to the territorial integrity of Georgia by using crude and blatant military force against people whom, in his own words, he wanted to see as part of his State. Saakashvili left them no other choice but to provide for their own security and to seek to exercise the right to self-determination as independent States.[421]

The Russian leadership, according to Russians, decided to send more armed forces to South Ossetia, following the appeal of South Ossetia to Russia for protection and the casualties among peacekeepers of Russia by 8 August 2008.[422] Ambassador Churkin similarly tried to substantiate Russia's decision of recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia by pointing out the appeal made by these two regions in this respect, by referring to international law, fundamental international agreements, and principles of self-determination and equality:

> In the light of the appeal of the South Ossetian and Abkhaz peoples, the parliaments and presidents of the two Republics, the views of the people of Russia and the positions of both chambers of Russia's Federal Assembly, the President of the Russian Federation took a decision on the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and on concluding with them treaties on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance. In adopting that decision, the Russian side has based itself on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and other fundamental international documents, including the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States. It is necessary to emphasize that, in accordance with the Declaration,

[421] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

[422] Christoph H. Stefes and Julie A. George, "The Battles after the Battle: International Law and the Russia-Georgia Conflict," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 167.

> every State must refrain from any violent actions that might deprive people of their right to self-determination, freedom and independence. The actions of States must also comply with the principles of equality and the self-determination of peoples. States must also have governments that represent all the people living on their territory. There can be no doubt that Saakashvili's regime in no way complies with those high standards established by the international community.
>
> So what were we supposed to do? Was South Ossetia supposed to ask NATO to intervene with force? Well, NATO was busy in Afghanistan and Kosovo and in Iraq American and NATO troops were busy, those troops could not be asked to help South Ossetia? So they asked Russia, because that is Russia's mission to show concern for the security and safety of the peoples of the Caucuses.[423]

With regard to criticisms against Russia concerning the principle of territorial integrity and UN Security Council's resolutions on this principle, Ambassador Churkin put forward Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence and its recognition by some members of the international community, despite the UNSC resolution 1244:

> … several other members of the Council have referred to the importance of complying with resolutions of the Security Council in relation to the principle of territorial integrity. Where, dear colleagues, were you when we – all of us – were discussing Kosovo? In November 2007, the Security Council adopted a resolution that reaffirmed the principle of the territorial integrity of the states of the former Yugoslavia. Why then did you not reaffirm that principle a few months later when the Ahtisaari plan was presented to the Security Council? What about respect for resolutions? And what about respect for resolution 1244 (1999), which clearly does not provide for the possibility of Kosovo unilaterally proclaiming its independence, since what happens in Kosovo is controlled by the United Nations and that situation still prevails there from the point of view of resolution 1244 (1999) – or for the possibility that the United Nations would recognize the independence of Kosovo in the event of a unilateral

[423] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

> proclamation? Where then was and where is your respect for international law in that case?[424]

According to Ambassador Churkin, the decision of recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia has much more historical and legal basis than recognizing Kosovo. In this respect, he underlined that peoples from Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia lived together under larger units, such as the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Concerning the historical and legal basis of Russia's recognition of Abkhazia, he mentioned that

> … after the creation of the independent Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia in December 1921, and recognition of its independence by the Revolutionary Committee of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia, Abkhazia and Georgia concluded a union agreement as an alliance between two equal entities. Thus, State and legal relations between them were established on the basis of a treaty.
>
> Many legal acts of the Georgia Soviet Socialist Republic were repealed in 1989 and 1990, when Georgia began the process of seeking independence and seceding from the Soviet Union, including those that joined Abkhazia and Georgia into a single State. In August 1990, Abkhazia responded by adopting a declaration on State sovereignty. In March 1991, acting in accordance with the laws of the Soviet Union as an autonomous Soviet republic under the Union's laws concerning the procedure for a republic's secession, Abkhazia participated in the referendum on the issue of preserving the Soviet Union. The majority of the Abkhaz population was in favour of retaining the Soviet Union and remaining a republic within the Union. When it achieved its independence, in 1991, Georgia proclaimed itself the successor State to the 1921 Democratic Republic of Georgia on the basis of a referendum in which Abkhazia did not participate, because it did not consider itself a part of Georgia. There were therefore two States on the territory of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic that were no longer connected to one another: Georgia, which declared its secession from the

[424] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

> Soviet Union as an independent State, and Abkhazia, which continued to be an integral part of the Soviet Union.[425]

With regard to the historical and legal basis of Russia's recognition of South Ossetia, Ambassador Churkin stated that

> … its inclusion in the Soviet Union, in the early 1920s, was the result of acts of violence by Georgia. South Ossetia's status as an autonomous republic of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic was imposed upon it against the will of its people. It was imposed unilaterally by a legislative act and decree of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. Essentially the same thing occurred as regards the law on secession from the Soviet Union. … in seceding from the Soviet Union, Georgia declared itself the successor State to the Democratic Republic of Georgia, which existed from 1918 to 1921. At the same time, South Ossetia was formally included within Georgia in 1922.[426]

In response to a question on Abkhazia's declaration of independence although only South Ossetia was attacked, Ambassador Churkin claimed that Georgia was planning to attack Abkhazia as well after South Ossetia. He argued the Abkhaz "did not want to sit around waiting until Georgia had finished with South Ossetia to come after them, given that Mr. Saakashvili had decided to resort to military adventure to settle his problems regarding the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.[427]

In the following parts, this chapter discusses the literature on different explanations put forward for understanding Russia policy on Abkhazia and South Ossetia, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses.

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[425] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

[426] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

[427] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

4.5. Sources of Russia's Policy on Secessionism in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Among different explanations for Russia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia policy, this dissertation adopts an approach that underlines the significance of geopolitics and strategic objectives of Russia with regard to these regions. Contrary to the views of some experts who claim that Russia's references to issues concerning identity and international law during the debates on secessionism in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the UNSC reflect its commitment to the principles of international law and its support to both ethnic and civil Russian identities, this chapter argues that Russia's position on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence.

4.5.1 Domestic Politics and Regime Consolidation

Russia's Georgia policy, according to Filippov, involved both geopolitical and domestic diversionary objectives. Filippov, arguing that the "importance of the calculus of domestic political processes in defining the foreign policy strategy has been steadily on the rise during the Putin reign,"[428] outlined Russia's two-dimensional goals in the following logic:

> The incumbent government in Russia benefits domestically from the political tensions with the West that the conflict with post-Soviet countries brings about. The increasingly conflictual relations with post-Soviet countries help the government to promote 'a virtual conflict' with the West over the area. The 'virtual conflict', in turn, provides an opportunity to isolate domestic politics from international influences without resorting to economic and informational isolation. In other words, the conflicts – one 'real' and another 'virtual' – help to combine both openness to the West, which is important for maintaining an open market economy, and the effective silencing of any Western critics, who still pose a danger in Russia's semi-democratic political system with its semi-restricted political competition. In the eyes of the domestic audience, the West turns into a

[428] Mikhail Filippov, "Diversionary Role of the Georgia-Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 10 (December 2009): 1845.

> biased actor, whose views are compromised and communications are received but discredited and discounted.[429]

German also underlined both international and domestics concerns of the Russian leadership that structured Russia's Georgia policy. According to German,

> Russian efforts to influence events in Georgia and the country's development as an autonomous actor on the international stage can be seen as an extension of a desire to counterbalance US dominance. However, it is also important to remember that much of Moscow's posturing on the international stage is intended for domestic consumption. The Russian military action in Georgia has played well with the domestic audience and the popularity ratings of both Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev rose in the wake of the conflict.[430]

4.5.2 Geopolitics and Russia's Strategic Goals

Disputes concerning the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, according to Asmus, were not the real cause of the Russia-Georgia war in August 2008. The war started because of, Asmus argued,

> … Tbilisi's desire to break free of what had been a quasi-colonial relationship with Moscow and its desire to become part of a democratic West. This war was fought because Georgia wanted to guarantee its future security and sovereignty and independence by aligning itself with the West, becoming a member of NATO and eventually of the European Union as well – and Moscow was equally determined to prevent it from doing so and to keep it in a Russian sphere of influence. To that end, the Kremlin was willing to manipulate and exploit the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia to sabotage Georgian aspirations, undercut the democratically elected government of Mikheil Saakashvili to pursue regime change and

[429] Mikhail Filippov, "Diversionary Role of the Georgia-Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 10 (December 2009): 1844-1845.

[430] Tracey German, "David and Goliath: Georgia and Russia's Coercive Diplomacy," *Defence Studies* 9, no. 2 (June 2009): 237.

> rollback, and prevent what it saw as the encroachment of Western influence on its southern border.[431]

In a similar vein, Tsygankov argued NATO's eastward enlargement and Russia's threat perception about NATO have been decisive in Russia's formulation of its Georgia policy. Tsygankov stated

> The West's geopolitical advances into what Russia has traditionally viewed as its sphere of interests and the desire expressed by the postrevolutionary Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO exacerbated Russia's sense of vulnerability and isolation by the West. Following the summit of NATO in Bucharest, Russia reiterated that it would do everything in its power to prevent expansion of the alliance and extension of its membership to Georgia and Ukraine. The so-called frozen conflicts were merely leverage in the Kremlin's hands, and until the war in the Caucasus in August 2008, the Kremlin had planned to keep them frozen until NATO bore out its plans to continue its march to the East. In the aftermath of the summit, to signal its dissatisfaction to Georgia, the Kremlin extended additional assistance to the secessionist South Ossetia and Abkhazia.[432]

Mearsheimer also underlined that Russia did not welcome but still accepted former enlargements of NATO, including the memberships of Poland and Baltic states. However, when NATO made it public that Ukraine and Georgia would be accepted to the alliance, Russia declared that decision not would be tolerated. Both Ukraine and Georgia bear significant importance for Russia due to their geographical proximity to Russia. For Mearsheimer, Russia's Georgia policy during the 2008 War was based mainly on Russia's objective of inhibiting Georgia's NATO membership

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[431] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 216-217.

[432] Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 193.

and its western integration.[433] Similarly, Antonenko emphasized Russia's concerns with regard to post-Soviet states' leaning toward western institutions:

> The more the smaller states sought to enhance their position in the region by appealing to other institutional actors such as the EU, the more intransigent Russia has been in opposing regional security cooperation, viewing it as a prelude to further NATO and EU enlargement or as an attempt to diminish Russia's 'historical influence' in the Eastern part of the Black Sea region.[434]

Realpolitik interests of Russia, Petrovic argued, have been influential in its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He underlined that in recognizing these regions Russia utilized the similar arguments put forward by some Western states. To this end, Russia, according to Petrovic, "relativized the principles referred to until that in relation to Kosovo. In addition, Russia continued relativizing both the international laws and the principles of Final Helsinki Act, which makes any further discussion related to Kosovo less consistent."[435]

Similarly, Flikke and Godzimirski underlined that Russia regards Abkhazia and South Ossetia as "'geopolitical assets' that can be used to weaken Georgia and undermine the US presence and influence, in what is seen as a new chapter of the geopolitical Great Game."[436] Russia, according to them, utilized separatism "to maximize its geopolitical gains and retain some control in the areas that it defines as important for realization of the country's partly outdated strategy, which has remained rooted in an overly realist and geopolitical outlook on the 'outside

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[433] John J. Mearsheimer, "Getting Ukraine Wrong," *New York Times*, 13 March 2014.

[434] Oksana Antonenko, "Towards a Comprehensive Regional Security Framework in the Black Sea Region after the Russia-Georgia War," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no. 3 (September 2009): 262.

[435] Zarko N. Petrovic, "Russian-Serbian Strategic Partnership: Scope and Content," in *Russia Serbia Relations at the beginning of XXI Century*, ed. Zarko N. Petrovic (Belgrad: ISAC Fund, 2010), 34.

[436] Geir Flikke and Jakub M. Godzimirski, *Words and Deeds: Russian Foreign Policy and Post-Soviet Secessionist Conflicts* (Oslo: NUPI, 2006), 104.

world'."[437] Blank and Kim pointed out that Russia does not respect post-Soviet states' sovereignty and integrity. For them, referring to President Putin, Russia-Georgia War in 2008 was "a planned war of aggression to dismember Georgia, using Abkhaz and South Ossetian separatists for this purpose."[438]

According to Blank, the causes behind the Russia-Georgia war are "Russian attempts to isolate Georgia and overthrow its government, as well as Moscow's forceful reaction to the NATO-EU decisions to recognize Kosovo's independence and to consider Georgia's application for a membership action plan (MAP) from NATO."[439] Levesque, also underlining the Kosovo issue, argued that "Russia's actions leading to the war are directly related to the anticipated recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence of February 2008 by the US and a majority of NATO members."[440] Fabry, similarly, claimed that "Kosovo encouraged the aspirations of various secessionist entities and that it created a permissive environment for Russia to recognize two of them, South Ossetia and Abkhazia."[441]

Russian representatives in the UN Security Council and the leadership in Russia, as Stefes and George outlined, put forward six justifications for Russia's actions during and after the August 2008 War with Georgia. These explanations underlined Russia's right of self-defence concerning its peacekeeping forces and citizens in Georgia,

[437] Geir Flikke and Jakub M. Godzimirski, *Words and Deeds: Russian Foreign Policy and Post-Soviet Secessionist Conflicts* (Oslo: NUPI, 2006), 109.

[438] Stephen Blank and Younkyoo Kim, ""Ukraine Fatigue" and a New U.S. Agenda for Europe and Eurasia," *Orbis* 57, no. 4 (Autumn 2013): 601.

[439] Stephen Blank, "What Comes after the Russo-Georgian War? What's at Stake in the CIS," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 30, no. 6 (2008): 385.

[440] Jacques Levesque, "Moscow's Evolving Partnership with Beijing: Countering Washington's Hegemony," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2013), 195.

[441] Mikulas Fabry, "The Contemporary Practice of State Recognition: Kosovo, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and their Aftermath," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no. 5 (September 2012): 671.

Russia's concerns that the US was controlling Georgia for enlarging its authority within Russia's area of influence, South Ossetia's appeal to Russia for military help, necessity to punish President Saakashvili's illegal actions, and Russia's regional power identity and role as the defender of region's stability. According to Stefes and George, these explanations demonstrate "how Russian actors sometimes legitimized international law and sometimes expressed motivations outside the realm of the international legal sphere."[442]

Allison discussed how Russia has instrumentally interpreted international law and norms, particularly "the use of force," "self-determination," "sovereignty," and recognition, for pursuing its regional interests. According to Allison,

> Russian interpretations of customary international law as well as norms related to the use of force have served as an instrument of state policy, rather than being rooted in any broader international consensus. The Russian discourse in this context about sovereignty, self-determination and the legitimacy of recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia as states appears similarly to be strongly influenced by political self-interest and Russian views about its entitlement within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region.[443]

Summers, in his review of Russia's legal justifications for its actions in Georgia, argued that Russia has seriously violated international law. The Georgian case shows, for Summers, "how states can construct spheres of influence in the UN era. Russia effectively established protectorates within the UN system of peacekeeping. … [I]t deconstructed statehood, removing and appropriating certain elements, such

[442] Christoph H. Stefes and Julie A. George, "The Battles after the Battle: International Law and the Russia-Georgia Conflict," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 164.

[443] Roy Allison, "The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation," *European Security* 18, no. 2 (June 2009): 173.

as population and government. This is not to say that this process conforms with international law. Indeed, serious violations have taken place."[444]

Ambassador Churkin, in the UN Security Council meetings on the situation in Georgia, argued that Russia's actions during 2008 were based on self-defence for peacekeeping forces of Russia, who were attacked by the Georgian forces. Allison, however, argued that this argumentation "offers grounds for Russian emergency assistance or evacuation of its peacekeepers from foreign soil, but not the scale of the Russian response, let alone the open-ended use of force."[445] Russia's military intervention exceeded the necessary scale in terms of its tactics and geography for protecting South Ossetians.[446] According to the report of "the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG),"

> … much of the Russian military action went far beyond the reasonable limits of defence. This holds true for all kinds of massive and extended military action ranging from the bombing of the upper Kodori Valley to the deployment of armored units to reach extensive parts of Georgia, to the setting up of military positions in and nearby major Georgian towns as well as to control major highways, and to the deployment of navy units on the Black Sea. All this cannot be regarded as even remotely commensurate with the threat to Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia.[447]

In explaining Russia's support Abkhazia, Ambassador Churkin claimed that Georgia was planning to attack Abkhazia as well after South Ossetia. He argued the Abkhaz

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[444] James Summers, "Russia and Competing Spheres of Influence in the Case of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *International Law in a Multipolar World*, ed. Matthew Happold (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012), 113.

[445] Roy Allison, "Russia resurgent? Moscow's campaign to 'coerce Georgia to peace'," *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1151.

[446] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, "The Georgia-Russia Crisis and the Responsibility to Protect: Background Note," (19 August 2008): 2, available at http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/the-georgia-russia-crisis-and-the-r2p-background-note.pdf

[447] Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) Report, Vol. 1 (September 2009): 24, available at http://www.caucasus-dialog.net/Caucasus-Dialog/Activities_&_Docs_files/IIFFMCG_Volume_I%20Kopie.pdf

"did not want to sit around waiting until Georgia had finished with South Ossetia to come after them, given that Mr. Saakashvili had decided to resort to military adventure to settle his problems regarding the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.[448] However, according to the IIFFMCG report,

> The military reaction of Russia went beyond the repulsion of the Georgian armed attack on the Russian bases and was thus not necessary. … Russian military support for the use of force by Abkhazia against Georgia cannot be justified in this context. The bombing of large parts of the upper Kodori Valley was in no relation to and potential threat for the Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia.[449]

Russia's other argument for legitimizing its military actions in South Ossetia, as expressed by Ambassador Churkin in the UNSC meetings, was that Russia acted to protect its citizens in South Ossetia. His references to Russia's right to protect its citizens abroad are questionable, as Russia first offered citizenship outside its borders and then intervened to protect them.[450] Russia has issued passports in South Ossetia and Abkhazia since the beginning of 1990s, however the policy of "manufacture of nationals" accelerated significantly in 2008. About 90 percent of South Ossetians had Russian passports by August 2008.[451] As stated in the IIFFMCG report, Georgian law does not recognize dual citizenship, therefore,

> The vast majority of purportedly naturalised persons from South Ossetia and Abkhazia are not Russian nationals in terms of international law. …

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[448] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5969th Meeting held on 28 August 2008 (S/PV.5969).

[449] Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) Report, Vol. 2 (September 2009): 274, available at http://www.caucasus-dialog.net/Caucasus-Dialog/Activities_&_Docs_files/IIFFMCG_Volume_II%20Kopie.pdf

[450] Roy Allison, "Russia resurgent? Moscow's campaign to 'coerce Georgia to peace'," *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1154.

[451] James A. Green, "Passportisation, Peacekeepers and Proportionality," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 66.

> Consequently, the persons living in South Ossetia and Abkhazia who had first become Georgian citizens after the dissolution of the Soviet Union continue to remain so irrespective of "passportisation" policies. They were still citizens of Georgia at the time of the armed conflict of August 2008, and in legal terms they remain so to this day unless they had renounced or lost their Georgian nationality in regular ways.[452]

In an effort to underline humanitarian elements of Russia's mission in Georgia, Ambassador Churkin, in the UN Security Council meeting on 19 August 2008, compared Russia's humanitarian contributions with those of other states and international organizations, and argued that Russia had by far made the highest contribution.[453] However, Russia's refusal of humanitarian objectives of the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 complicates Russia's humanitarian arguments for its actions in Georgia. Actually, most of Russian leadership's rhetoric about the conflict had referred to Kosovo in an attempt to compare Russia's policy in South Ossetia with the West's strategy in Kosovo.[454] Kosovo's uniqueness argument put forward by the West, as Asmus stated, was used by Russia to advance its interests. For Russians, the uniqueness of the Balkans would lead to uniqueness in other regions. Russia could also act freely in the Caucasus against the wishes of the West, just as the West did in the Balkans. Russia, accordingly, could target Georgia and managed to escalate the situation in Georgia that resulted in the August 2008 War. Georgia paid the price for the recognition of Kosovo's independence by the West.[455]

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[452] Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) Report, Vol. 1 (September 2009): 18 available at http://www.caucasus-dialog.net/Caucasus-Dialog/Activities_&_Docs_files/IIFFMCG_Volume_I%20Kopie.pdf

[453] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5961st Meeting held on 19 August 2008 (S/PV.5961).

[454] Christoph H. Stefes and Julie A. George, "The Battles after the Battle: International Law and the Russia-Georgia Conflict," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 168.

[455] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 88-89.

Allison also questioned the basis of Russia's claims that its operation in Georgia was sort of a humanitarian intervention. Firstly, he argued that the reaction of Russia was excessive as a humanitarian response, particularly when Russian armed forces entered far into Georgia. Secondly, Russia carried out its operations without the authorization of the UNSC, which it had formerly demanded for the intervention in Kosovo. Thirdly, it is highly questionable whether Russia has had real humanitarian concerns for the region during the post-Soviet era. During the previous years, the Russian leadership had demonstrated weak concern for the well-being of South Ossetians. Russia's overall policy towards the region has not been motivated by humanitarianism. During its 2008 operations in Georgia, Russia did not take meaningful steps against Georgian's displacement. Russian conduct in Chechnya in 1999 also raises doubts about Russia's respect for principles such as discrimination or proportionality during war.[456]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 10 August 2008, Ambassador Churkin referred to 'genocide' taking place in South Ossetia, arguing that during the first day of Georgia's attacks 2,000 civilians lost their lives in South Ossetia.[457] In this respect, Russia has sent numerous files to "the International Criminal Court" (ICC), which for Russia is qualified to investigate crimes such as genocide, crimes of war, and crimes committed against humanity. The chairman of Russia's Investigative Committee argued that there is full evidence of genocide committed by the authorities in Georgia, aimed at "the extermination of an ethnic group or a nation on the grounds of ethnicity or nationality."[458] However, the IIFFMCG report underlined,

[456] Roy Allison, "The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation," *European Security* 18, no. 2 (June 2009): 184.

[457] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 5953rd Meeting held on 10 August 2008 (S/PV.5953).

[458] Roy Allison, "The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation," *European Security* 18, no. 2 (June 2009): 183.

> After having carefully reviewed the facts in the light of the relevant law, the Mission concludes that to the best of its knowledge allegations of genocide committed by the Georgian side in the context of the August 2008 conflict and its aftermath are neither founded in law nor substantiated by factual evidence.[459]

> The number of casualties among the Ossetian civilian population turned out to be much lower than claimed at the beginning. Russian officials stated initially that about 2 000 civilians had been killed in South Ossetia by the Georgian forces, but later on the number of overall South Ossetian civilian losses of the August 2008 conflict was reduced to 162.[460]

4.6. Conclusion

Russian representatives in the UNSC, and the leadership in Russia, put forward six justifications for Russia's actions during and after the August 2008 War with Georgia. These explanations underlined Russia's right of self-defence for its peacekeepers and citizens in Georgia, Russia's concerns that the US was controlling Georgia for enlarging its 'empire' within Russia's area of influence, South Ossetia's appeal to Russia for military help, necessity to punish President Saakashvili's illegal actions, and Russia's regional power identity and role as the defender of region's stability. These explanations, Stefes and George underlined, demonstrate "how Russian actors sometimes legitimized international law and sometimes expressed motivations outside the realm of the international legal sphere."[461] This chapter concluded that Russia has instrumentally interpreted international law and norms,

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[459] Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) Report, Vol. 1 (September 2009): 27, available at http://www.caucasus-dialog.net/Caucasus-Dialog/Activities_&_Docs_files/IIFFMCG_Volume_I%20Kopie.pdf

[460] Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) Report, Vol. 1 (September 2009): 22, available at http://www.caucasus-dialog.net/Caucasus-Dialog/Activities_&_Docs_files/IIFFMCG_Volume_I%20Kopie.pdf

[461] Christoph H. Stefes and Julie A. George, "The Battles after the Battle: International Law and the Russia-Georgia Conflict," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 164.

particularly the use of force, self-determination, sovereignty and recognition, for pursuing its regional interests.[462]

[462] Roy Allison, "The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation," *European Security* 18, no. 2, (June 2009): 173.

CHAPTER 5

CRIMEA

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines Russia's responses to the secessionist movement in Crimea in the post-Cold War period. In this regard, the chapter firstly introduces the origins and development of secessionism in Crimea. Secondly, it focuses on the Crimea issue in Russian foreign and domestic policy, together with its impact on Russia's relations with Ukraine and the West. Thirdly, it analyzes Russia's official position and policy in UN Security Council on secessionism in Crimea, particularly since 2014 when the peninsula first declared its independence and then was annexed by Russia. Lastly, it discusses the sources, objectives and means of Russian responses to the Crimea issue. The chapter underlines the impact of both the international and regional pressures, and internal factors shaping Russian leadership's policies on Crimea. The chapter concludes that geopolitical and strategic concerns of the Russian leadership, rather than their support for both ethnic and civil Russian identities within Crimea and respect for the principles of international law, have been decisive in the formation on Russia's Crimea policy.

5.2. Evolution of the Secessionist Movement in Crimea

Historically, Crimea has been inhabited by various peoples, including Scythians, Greeks and Tatars. Tatars had authority over the region for centuries. The Golden Horde founded the Crimean Khanate in the 13th century, which managed to preserve its independence until it fell under the authority of the Ottomans in 1475. Under the Ottomans, the khanate still enjoyed considerable privileges and autonomy. In addition to the Ottomans, the Russian Empire was always interested in the peninsula,

due to its location in the Black Sea.[463] Crimea became a Russian land after the peace treaty of Iasi in 1792 that ended the Russo-Turkish War dated 1782-1791. The Ottoman Empire tried but failed to recapture Crimea during the Russo-Turkish War dated 1806-1812. Later, it once again aimed to regain the peninsula during the Crimean War dated 1853-1856. The Russian leadership, as a response, decided to deport most of the Crimean Tatar population of the region to distant parts of Russia, in case they would support the Ottomans in the war. Russia's colonizing policies in Crimea and the historical distrust among Crimean Tatars about the Russian leadership resulted in various Tatar emigrations during the second half of the 1800s.[464]

Between 1908 and 1912, initial organizations supporting Crimean Tatar ethnic nationalism were founded. These organizations, together with the underground organization *Vatan* (motherland), favored Turkey and Germany, had close relations with the Pan-Turkists in Turkey, and struggled for the independence of Crimea. During the First World War, Russia battled with Turkey and these nationalist organizations, particularly the *Milli Fırka* (National Party) that supported Pan-Turkism.[465]

After the 1917 February Revolution, many Tatar nationalists who were in exile came back to Crimea and together with other Crimeans established the Muslim Executive Committee in April 1917. While the Committee initially called for Tatars' cultural

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[463] Doris Wydra, "The Crimea Conundrum: The Tug of War between Russia and Ukraine on the Questions of Autonomy and Self-Determination," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 10, no.2 (2004): 112.

[464] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Crimean Republic: Rivalries for Control," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 87.

[465] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Crimean Republic: Rivalries for Control," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 88.

autonomy, since May, it started demanding territorial autonomy. In July, the National Party (*Milli Fırka*) was founded, which aimed the Russian Empire's reorganization according to federal principles. Crimean Tatars, similar to the Central Rada in Ukraine, changed their objective from simple autonomy to total independence. In this respect, in December 1917 Crimean Tatars established the *Kurultay* (assembly) in Crimea with its government.[466]

Map 3 Ukraine[467]

During 1917, the Central Rada in Ukraine and Crimean Tatar leadership had friendly relations, as the Rada supported their autonomy demands concerning culture and territory. Both the Ukrainian and Russian population in Crimea, conversely, were

[466] Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 510.

[467] Adapted from UN Map No. 3773 Rev. 6 (March 2014).

against the nationalist undertakings of Crimean Tatars. After Bolshevik's rise to power in Russia by November 1917, Soviets gained significant political influence in Crimea, particularly in Sevastopol. The Soviets also firmly opposed nationalist Tatars' objectives.[468] Following the Revolution in 1917, four opposing visions on the status of Crimea came forward. The Crimean Tatars aimed at national autonomy for Crimea; nationalists in Ukraine sought to include Crimea in an independent Ukraine; the Bolsheviks wanted to expand their control in the former Russian Empire; the White Russians tried to preserve Crimea as a base against the Bolsheviks. Crimea witnessed a very complex interaction among the supporters of these different objectives from 1917 to 1921.[469]

After assuming power, the Bolsheviks abolished the *Kurultay* and established a Soviet government in Crimea in January 1918. The Soviet government could manage to survive until the arrival of German forces in the peninsula in May 1918. The Germans, despite forcing the Bolsheviks out of Crimea, did not support the existing Tatar nationalist leadership and appointed a loyal Lithuanian Tatar military official, Suleiman Sulkevich. After the withdrawal of Germans from Ukraine in 1918, Crimea was controlled, firstly, by a liberal government favoring Russia, under Solomon Krym's leadership from the Kadet party, up to April 1919; secondly, by a Soviet Crimean Republic together with the *Milli Fırka*, up to June 1919; thirdly, by White Russian forces that had withdrawn to Crimea because of the Red Army. The Bolsheviks managed to retake control of Crimea in October 1920, when the White forces were forced out of the peninsula. Accusing the *Milli Fırka* of being anti-revolutionary, the Bolsheviks in Crimea affirmed their acceptance of the Soviet government's authority. Finally, in October 1921, the Soviet authorities in Moscow

[468] Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 511.

[469] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 84.

established "the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic," which was integrated into the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.[470]

During the Second World War, Nazi forces occupied Crimea for a year between 1942 and 1943. After the liberation of the peninsula, Stalin ordered the deportation of Crimean Tatars to Central Asia in May 1944, which resulted in the loss of around a hundred thousand people. After the deportation, authorities in Moscow annulled Crime's status of autonomous republic and made it a simple province in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. After the Second World War, ethnic Russians constituted more than 70 percent of the whole population in Crimea because of the deportation of Tatars and migration of Russians to the peninsula. In the first decade after the War, Ukrainians' share in the total population was about 20 percent.[471] In 1954, however, Crimea was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. That decision was disputed from the beginning, particularly as Russians were the majority in the peninsula.[472]

"The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union" decided in April 1956 to remove administrative control over the Crimean Tatars. They, however, were not allow to resettle in Crimea. After the decree, a movement struggling for Crimean Tatars' return to Crimea emerged. Finally, in 1967, with a new resolution the Presidium, restored Crimean Tatars' rights and formally enabled them to live in any part of the Soviet Union. However, local authorities at that time had the authority to give residence permits that were needed to settle in cities. This power helped authorities in Crimea to limit the number of Crimean Tatars returning to the peninsula. Around 3,000 people were permitted to return to Crimea after 1968 with a special program, which was stopped in 1978. Starting in 1978, local authorities

[470] Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 511.

[471] Serhy Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 121-122.

[472] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 13.

began to expel some Crimean Tatars out of the peninsula on the grounds of the passport regime. This decision led to heightened tensions in Crimea.[473]

Institutional legacies of the Soviet period, particularly the autonomous status that the peninsula held in different periods, and the handover of its jurisdiction from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954 shaped the political developments in Crimea both in and after the Soviet era.[474] Separatism in Crimea revived in 1989 because of national mobilization in Ukraine. Elites in Crimea looked for gaining back the autonomous status of the peninsula that was annulled in 1946 and tried to avoid Crimean Tatars' return to the region. In 1990, when Ukraine's independence became evident, most people in Crimea started to demand the return of the peninsula to Russia. In this respect, authorities in Crimea organized a referendum in January 1991, according to which 93 percent of participants wanted Crimea to regain its autonomous status within the Soviet Union. In February 1991, as a response, the Ukrainian leadership offered Crimea its autonomous status within Ukraine, together with a parliament and local authority on cultural and social issues.[475]

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, two main struggles for control have been decisive in Crimea. The first rivalry was between the authorities in Crimea and Crimean Tatars, who pressed for the acknowledgement of Crimean Tatars' rights concerning Crimea. The second struggle was between the pro-Russian authorities of Crimea, who supported Crimea's independence or its unification with Russia, and the

[473] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Crimean Republic: Rivalries for Control," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 93-94.

[474] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 83.

[475] Paul Kubicek, "Structure, Agency, and Secessionism in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet States," in *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements*, ed. Don H. Doyle (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 283.

leadership in Ukraine, who rejected separatism in Crimea and contended for keeping Crimea within Ukraine.[476]

In January 1991, the peninsula once more declared itself a republic, following a referendum with 93 percent in favor. This new republic stayed within Ukraine. In August 1991, the parliament in Ukraine announced its declaration of independence and that decision was approved by a countrywide referendum conducted in December 1991 by more than 90 percent of the vote in favor of independence. In Crimea, the support for Ukrainian independence was 54 percent.[477] Soon after, many in the peninsula supported the goal of independence for Crimea or uniting it with Russia. Accordingly, the parliament in Crimea declared independence in May 1992 and planned a referendum for this purpose. In response, the Ukrainian authorities, labeling these decisions as illegal, demanded the Crimean leadership stop their arrangements for separatism and looked for dialogue and solution. The Ukrainian Parliament in June 1922 accepted a law on defining power division between Kiev and Crimea, which offered Crimea considerable autonomy. Kiev also promised economic support to the peninsula. These measures were short-term solutions. In 1994, Yuri Meshkov, who supported separatism for Crimea, became the first president of the peninsula.[478]

Separatism in Crimea did not become successful. The parliament in Ukraine decided in March 1995 to nullify the constitution of Crimea and remove the post of presidency in Crimea. Crimea lacked military power to resist itself and Russia was reluctant to help militarily, despite the rhetoric of some Russian politicians. It

[476] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Crimean Republic: Rivalries for Control," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 84.

[477] Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 104-105.

[478] Paul Kubicek, "Structure, Agency, and Secessionism in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet States," in *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements*, ed. Don H. Doyle (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 284.

became evident that Crimea would not be united with Russia. Separatists in Crimea lacked support within Ukraine, as Russians and Ukrainians supported preserving the existing borders of Ukraine.[479] Although the separatist forces in the peninsula demanded the unification of Crimea with Russia until 1995, in 1998 a new constitution was accepted in Crimea that respected the sovereignty of Ukraine.[480]

Russian nationalists in the peninsula were sidelined between 1998 and 2002 by the Communist Party of Ukraine and centrists. While centrists headed the government, Communist Party of Ukraine controlled the parliament. In 2002 elections in Crimea for the parliament in Ukraine, Communist Party received most of the votes, while Russian nationalists were successful only in Sevastopol. This political setting changed with the 2006 elections. The Party of Regions managed to establish its control in Crimea, receiving majority of its votes from Crimea and regions in the east and south of Ukraine. Russian nationalists in the peninsula, who were marginalized from 1995 to 2005, gained strength following the unification of the Party of Regions with Russian Community in Crimea and Russian Bloc for the elections of 2006. The power of Russian nationalists and separatists increased when the Party of Regions formed an alliance with these forces in the election bloc of For Yanukovych! for the parliamentary elections in Crimea. Russian nationalists constituted third of the total 44 deputies from For Yanukovych!. Konstantin Zatulin, one of President Putin's advisers, negotiated the electoral bloc, including seats for preferred members of the Russian Bloc. In 2010 elections for the parliament in Crimea, with the support of state resources given by President Yanukovych, the Party of Regions managed to get the absolute majority. The Russian Bloc had eight of the total 17 deputies of For Yanukovych!. In the 2012 parliamentary elections, "the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists," which is a Russian nationalist organization, gathered most of its votes in Sevastopol and Crimea. The alliance between the Party of Regions and Russian

[479] Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 153.

[480] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2015), 6.

nationalists that was formed in 2006 eased the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014.[481]

Viktor Yanukovych, winning the Ukrainian presidential elections in 2010, initially supported the Association Agreement with the EU, despite opposing Ukraine's NATO membership. Indeed, as the new president, he paid his first visit to Brussels. Under President Yanukovych, negotiations on the Association Agreement continued.[482] Brussels, hoping to get Ukraine closer to the EU instead of Russia's proposed Eurasian Union, was expecting that President Yanukovych would sign the EU Association Agreement at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013. However, President Yanukovych, influenced by Russia's economic measures concerning trade and energy, refused to sign the agreement.[483] Domestic pressure units, such as civil society and democratic groups, requested the reconsideration of the decision concerning the Association Agreement. Following President Yanukovych's refusal to sign the agreement mass demonstrations, called EuroMaidan, started in Kiev in December 2013.[484] Domestic economic and political problems were also influential in the emergence of the protests. The demonstrations, directed by the opposition to President Yanukovych and assisted by the West, intensified extensively. Demonstrators were against President Yanukovych's domestic policies and supported a pro-European policy for Ukraine. President Yanukovych rejected conditions of the opposition and resorted to force for reestablishing order. Consequently, the level of violence and the risk of Ukraine's disintegration increased. Despite the efforts of some European leaders to mediate

[481] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2015), 268-269.

[482] Anders Aslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015), 43.

[483] Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Ukraine as a Cusp State: The politics of reform in the borderland between the EU and Russia," in *The Role, Position and Agency of Cusp States in International Relations*, eds. Marc Herzog and Philip Robins (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2014), 74.

[484] Oktay F. Tanrısever, "EU's Eastern Partners and the Vilnius Summit: Opportunities Seized and Missed," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (2014): 103.

between President Yanukovych and the opposition, the EU-mediated agreement became obsolete in February 2014. Subsequently, President Yanukovych fled to Russia.[485]

In response to all these developments, Russian forces isolated Crimea from Ukraine, neutralized Ukrainian forces in the peninsula, and assisted pro-Russian units to assume control of the parliament, government and the police force within Crimea. Russia also supported the holding of a referendum concerning the status of Crimea and campaigned for the unification of the peninsula with Russia.[486] The parliament in Crimea declared independence on 11 March 2014. In the referendum carried out on 16 March 2014, majority of the peninsula's population voted for the unification of Crimea with Russia. On 17 March 2014, the Supreme Council in Crimea announced Crimea's independence. Finally, the treaty incorporating Crimea and Sevastopol into Russia was signed on 18 March 2014 in Moscow.[487]

5.3. Russian Foreign and Domestic Policy on Crimea

5.3.1. The Yeltsin Period

Russia's objectives with regard to Crimea, particularly Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet, have been decisive in Russia-Ukraine relations since 1991.[488] First territorial assertions concerning Ukraine were put forward by the press secretary of Yeltsin

[485] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 284-285.

[486] Dmitri Trenin, *The Ukraine Crisis and the Resumption of Great-power Rivalry* (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 2014), 6.

[487] Peter Hilpold, "Ukraine, Crimea and New International Law: Balancing International Law with Arguments Drawn from History," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 14, no. 2 (2015): 244.

[488] Roman Wolczuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy, 1991-2000* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 28.

following Ukraine's independence declaration in 1991.[489] He argued that Russia enjoyed the right to amend its existing borders with the republics, which had not participated in the discussions concerning the new union treaty. On the other hand, Gavriil Popov, then mayor of Moscow, demanded referendums to be held in Crimea on the status of the peninsula.[490]

In January 1992, Ukrainian President Kravchuk declared the establishment of the Ukrainian military forces and Ukraine's Ministry of Defense prepared a loyalty oath to Ukraine for all forces, including the Black Sea Fleet. The oath was taken easily throughout Crimea, with the exception of the Black Sea Fleet. The commander of the fleet refused to obey the orders by Ukraine's Ministry of Defense. His decision heightened both political and public unrest about Ukraine's acquisition of the Black Sea fleet.[491] Independence of Ukraine and its results, in particular Ukraine's position concerning the Black Sea Fleet's division were not welcomed by some Russian officials. In January 1992, then chairman of the Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, Vladimir Lukin, proposed that Russia must discuss Ukraine's authority in Crimea in order to force Ukraine to abandon its rights on the Black Sea Fleet. Russian Parliament, in response, issued a resolution for investigating the conditions in 1954 under which Crimea was transferred to Ukraine.[492] These issues were discussed when President Yeltsin, the parliament, and leaders from regions and republics within Russia were formulating a new treaty on federalism for Russia, which was agreed upon in March 1992. The treaty, however, did not stake any claim to Sevastopol or

[489] Taras Kuzio, *The Crimea: Europe's Next Flashpoint?* (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2010), 17.

[490] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 222-223.

[491] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 223.

[492] Victor Zaborsky, "Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet in Russian-Ukrainian Relations," CSIA Discussion Paper 95-11 (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, September 1995), 13.

Crimea.[493]

In May 1992, the Parliament claimed that the 1954 transfer of the peninsula to Ukraine by the decision of the Soviet authorities was illegal.[494] According to the argument of the Russians, the transfer of the peninsula was against the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and legislative procedures in the Soviet Union. It claimed that in 1954, the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic had decided on the issue without the necessary minimum number and President Khrushchev, instead of the Supreme Soviet, finally decided on the issue. The mutual respect for territorial integrity between Russia and Ukraine established by the Russia-Ukraine treaty of 1990, therefore, was regarded as binding until the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This position was clearly different from Yeltsin's earlier view when the treaty was ratified. In response, the authorities in Ukraine affirmed that Crimea's status could not be negotiated. Russian parliament was accused of not respecting the Russia-Ukraine bilateral agreement of 1990, the CIS agreement and the Helsinki Final Act.[495]

Former Vice-President of Russia, Alexander Rutskoy, mentioned in February 1993 that the International Court of Justice must resolve the issue of Crimea's status, whether it should be a part of Ukraine or Russia. Leonid Smolyakov, Russian Ambassador in Ukraine, supporting that proposal announced that Crimeans had made 20,000 applications for acquiring citizenship of Russia and

[493] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 224.

[494] Roman Wolczuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy, 1991-2000* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 29.

[495] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 226-227.

Russia would support Crimea's any bid for independence.[496]

Yeltsin stayed away from the May 1992 dated decision of the Parliament, which questioned the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine. The Crimea issue was one of the disputes that started to split the Democratic Russia bloc that Yeltsin headed. Prominent democrats, for instance, Aleksandr Tsipko and Galina Starovoytova defended Ukraine's stance on the issue. Leading ministers, namely Valery Tishkov and Yegor Gaidar, did not question the territorial integrity of Ukraine. On the contrary, a leading moderate, the Foreign Minister of Russia, Andrei Kozyrev underlined Crimea's legitimate place in Russia. He, however, stressed that the parliament should not provoke a conflict between Russia and Ukraine over the Crimea issue. Nationalist politicians, particularly Vladimir Zhirinovsky, supported Russia's reaffirmation of its power and emphasized the importance of Crimea for Russia's great power status.[497]

Presidents Yeltsin and Kravchuk met in June 1992 to resolve the issue of Black Sea Fleet's division. In June 1993, they reached an agreement on dividing the Fleet on an equal basis, beginning from September 1993 and finishing in 1995. They did not reach an agreement on Sevastopol's status. However, officers of the Black Sea Fleet and the Parliament in Russia did not welcome the division arrangement. A larger number of officers rejected the agreement and opposed the division of the Fleet. Defence Minister of Russia, Pavel Grachev, defending their position called for the agreement's reconsideration and offered transforming the Fleet into a joint one.[498] Ukraine's increasing debts to Russia concerning energy have been decisive on the solution of the Fleet problem. In September 1993, as a compensation for its

[496] Victor Zaborsky, "Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet in Russian-Ukrainian Relations," CSIA Discussion Paper 95-11 (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, September 1995), 13.

[497] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 227.

[498] Victor Zaborsky, "Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet in Russian-Ukrainian Relations," CSIA Discussion Paper 95-11 (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, September 1995), 26.

debts, Ukraine agreed transferring to Russia 30 percent of its fleet and the nuclear weapons it had. [499]

Sevastopol's status was the core of the Crimea problem and constituted the uniqueness of the peninsula. Sevastopol, just as Leningrad and Moscow, had a special status of Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic jurisdiction since 1948, which it preserved after the 1954 transfer. Most of the political establishments formed in Sevastopol since 1992 had connections with the Black Sea Fleet's command units and were evidently pro-Russian in comparison to other organizations in Crimea. Some members of the Supreme Soviet of Crimea, city council of Sevastopol, and various committees of the Russian parliament arranged a campaign in the peninsula supporting unification with Russia. In December 1992, as a response, the parliament in Russia issued a resolution for questioning Sevastopol's status. Consequently, by a resolution dated July 1993, the parliament placed Sevastopol under the jurisdiction of Russia. Necessary changes in the constitution to incorporate Sevastopol into Russia were to be made. However, President Yeltsin and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stayed away from that resolution. Crimea was among other problems that resulted in the growing stalemate between President Yeltsin and the parliament, which led to the events of 1993.[500] In September 1993, the Congress of People's Deputies was annulled by President Yeltsin. The legislature, in response, impeached President Yeltsin. In October 1993, President Yeltsin introduced the new procedures concerning the election of the parliament. Following army's seizure of the parliament in October 1993, acting president Rutskoy and some leaders of the opposition were put under arrest.[501]

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[499] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 228.

[500] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 229-230.

[501] Grigorii V. Golosov, *Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2004), 28.

From 1991 to 1993, the debates on Russia's foreign policy direction took place mainly between two groups, namely Atlanticists and Eurasianists. The latter group, criticizing President Yeltsin, called for reaffirmation of Russia's authority in newly the independent republics – the near abroad – following the fall of the Soviet Union.[502] Since 1993, the Russian leadership, considering the criticisms, has paid more attention to Russia's interests, great power ambitions, and influence in the CIS region.[503] Following the electoral success of communists and nationalists in the Duma elections of 1993, President Yeltsin and the government started to focus on the issue of the Russian diaspora living in the former Soviet territory, including Crimea. Although President Yeltsin called for the safeguarding of Russians particularly in the Baltic region, he followed a conciliatory Ukraine policy.[504]

In Russia, various politicians with different political views continued to support Russia's ambitions concerning Crimea, including Yury Luzhkov, then mayor of Moscow, who was appointed by Yeltsin, and then chairman of the Duma, Ivan Rybkin. The consolidation of nationalists within the Duma, the Supreme Soviet of Crimea and presidency in Crimea in 1994, forced Presidents Yeltsin and Kravchuk to settle the disputes about Crimea, including the issue of the Black Sea Fleet. President Yeltsin's amendment of the Russian constitution in 1993, which placed foreign policy making under the president's power, had important effects also on Russia-Ukraine relations. President Yeltsin used his power to make Russia-Ukraine relations more stable and cooperative.[505]

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[502] F. Seth Singleton, "Russia and Asia: The Emergence of 'Normal Relations'?" in *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, ed. Roger E. Kanet and Alexander Kozhemiakin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 104.

[503] Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 44.

[504] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 232.

[505] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 232.

In January 1994, Russia, Ukraine, and the US signed a Statement that allowed Ukraine to handover all its nuclear armaments to Russia. The US also offered economic help and security assurances to Ukraine. In December 1994, these three states and Britain agreed upon the Budapest Memorandum, which underlined signatories' respect for Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.[506] However, following the worsening of economic crisis in Ukraine, pro-Russian nationalists in Crimea strengthened and established the presidential post in Crimea. In January 1994, Yuriy Meshkov, who was supportive of Russia, became the president of the peninsula.[507] His support to Russia and aspirations for the independence of Crimea not only worsened Simferopol's relations with Kiev, but also the relations between Russia and Ukraine.[508]

Meshkov revived Crimean demands on independence by May 1994. The parliament in Russia, in response, asked the parliament in Ukraine to negotiate the issue without resorting to force. Following Meshkov's reintroducing of the contested 1992 Constitution of Crimea, President Kravchuk appealed to international organizations, particularly the UN, to invalidate the demands and claims of authorities both in Russia and Crimea. The Duma in Russia, following Kiev's declaration of various laws of the authorities in Crimea as illegal in November 1994, issued another statement that a settlement between Ukraine and Crimea was essential for reaching an agreement between Russia and Ukraine on the Black Sea Fleet.[509]

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[506] Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 25.

[507] Anders Aslund, *How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009), 57.

[508] Victor Zaborsky, "Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet in Russian-Ukrainian Relations," CSIA Discussion Paper 95-11 (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, September 1995), 14.

[509] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 233.

Meshkov, however, could not get the support he expected from President Yeltsin, who had a battle in October 1993 with the nationalist and communist opposition in Russia, together with numerous Crimean volunteers. Meshkov was from that environment. Additionally, Russia was fighting the Chechen war since December 1994.[510] Meshkov, on the other hand, had excessive disputes with the parliament in Crimea, and finally dissolved it.[511] The parliament in Russia revitalized its nationalist arguments on Crimea as Meshkov began to lose his power in Crimea. In May 1994, Kiev coerced the parliament in Crimea to annul its independence decision. The Duma in Russia, as a response, annulled the decision on the transfer of the peninsula in 1954. However, Kiev was already increasing its authority in Crimea.[512]

In March 1995, the parliament in Ukraine decided to annul the constitution of the peninsula, remove the presidential post in the region, and establish national government's authority over the government in Crimea. While Crimea lacked the armed forces to struggle alone, Russia was reluctant to help by force, notwithstanding the rhetoric of some politicians in Russia.[513] The Duma in Russia opposed Kiev's policies in March 1995 and underlined their possible negative effects on the discussions about the Black Sea Fleet. In response to Crimean demands for more Russian involvement, President Yeltsin mentioned the necessity of dialogue between Kiev and Crimea, and Ukraine's compromise concerning the demands of the region. He underlined that the treaty of friendship between Russia and Ukraine would not be finalized until Kiev guaranteed the rights of the populations living in

[510] Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 105.

[511] Anders Aslund, *How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009), 57.

[512] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 233-234.

[513] Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 153.

Crimea.[514]

Despite that rhetoric, in June 1995, Presidents Yeltsin and Kuchma agreed on the division of the Black Sea fleet, while basing conditions were to be decided later. According to the agreement, Russia would acquire 81.7 percent, whereas Ukraine would get 18.3 percent of the fleet. Additionally, Sevastopol would host the primary naval base of Russia. Meanwhile, various members of the Russian parliament continued their nationalist stance on Crimea. The Duma in Russia tried to prevent this agreement by issuing laws in January and October 1996. In this effort, the parliament in Ukraine was requested to discuss the 1954 transfer, the division of the Black Sea fleet and Sevastopol's status. The Federation Council, joining these efforts, declared Sevastopol as another Russian city in December 1996. It also appealed to President Yeltsin for the suspension of additional decisions on the Black Sea fleet, and Crimea's and Sevastopol's status. Consolidating his power domestically following the 1996 Russian presidential elections, President Yeltsin managed to get rid of the nationalistic plans of the Duma and rejected these two decisions.[515]

In 1997, a new era of cooperation started between Russia and Ukraine. In May 1997, prime ministers of Russia and Ukraine, Viktor Chernomyrdin and Pavlo Lazarenko, concluded contracts concerning the basing, division, and monetary aspects of the fleet in the Black Sea. Accordingly, Russia leased the Sevastopol base up to 2017, with five-year extensions option.[516] Following this agreement, in May 1997, Presidents Yeltsin and Kuchma signed "the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership," which defined the essence of relations between

[514] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 234.

[515] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 234-235.

[516] Anders Aslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015), 67.

Russia and Ukraine, "based on mutual respect of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and the non-use of force."[517] Additionally, Russia lifted its various trade restrictions on Ukraine. These agreements between Russia and Ukraine were regarded as significant attainments of President Kuchma and the highest level of Russia-Ukraine relationship. Russia had reassured its respect for Ukraine's authority over Sevastopol and Crimea.[518]

"Russian-Ukrainian Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation" needed ratification of both the Russian and Ukrainian parliaments to become effective. While the parliament in Ukraine approved the treaty speedily, the Russian one postponed its ratification.[519] In Russia, the ratification of the treaty led to significant disagreements and divisions among politicians. While "the realist-statists, liberals and most neo-imperialists" were supportive of the treaty, "ethnic nationalists and part of the neo-imperialist group" were against approving the treaty. The later group included Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) under the leadership of Vladimir Zhirinovsky, Yury Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, Yury Luzhkov, the Russian All-People's Union under Sergei Baburin, and Alexander Lebed. Their main concern was the status of Crimea.[520]

Despite the treaty, relations between separatists in Crimea and nationalists in Russia continued. Meanwhile, President Kuchma steadily established better relations with the EU and NATO, at the expense of the CIS and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). He tried to develop cooperation between Ukraine and the US, making official visits to the US. In 1997, Ukraine and NATO reached an

[517] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 69.

[518] Anders Aslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015), 67.

[519] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 235.

[520] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 69.

agreement on "Distinctive Partnership."[521] This 'special partnership' between Ukraine and NATO and, especially, their joint military exercise near Crimea in the summer of 1997 increased Russia's worries with regard to western orientation of Ukraine.[522]

In October 1998, the Russian Duma by its declaration considered the new constitution in Crimea to be against the 1997 treaty between Russia and Ukraine. The declaration objected that the new constitution had identified only Ukrainian as the official language in Ukraine and called for the acceptance of Russian also as an official language. In addition, it argued that the peoples of the peninsula born until the 1954 transfer of the region to Ukraine must be regarded as citizens of Russia. It also opposed the classification of the Russian population within Ukraine as 'minority' and suggested replacing this label with "two national majorities."[523]

5.3.2. The Putin-Medvedev Period

Russia's Ukraine policy since 2004, as Tsygankov wrote, can be classified into three stages as follows: "the frozen ties with Yushchenko, 2004-2010," "the limited partnership with Yanukovych, 2010-2013," and "the confrontation, February-August 2014."[524] President Putin's foreign and domestic policy attitude has been clearly different from President Yeltsin's approach. While President Yeltsin chose to offer economic profits to his domestic opponents, President Putin aimed at centralizing

[521] Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 28.

[522] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 236.

[523] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 236-237.

[524] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 281-284.

power within Russia and reasserting Russia's great power status abroad. Accordingly, President Putin established a power hierarchy by reducing the powers of regional leaders and oppressing the opposition. He forced Ukraine, also other former Soviet states, to join the CIS mechanisms that are under Russia's authority. Because of this policy, since Putin's rise to power, Ukrainian authorities have faced increased difficulty in adjusting their policies towards Russia and the EU, and not dividing the population into anti-Russian and pro-Russian camps.[525]

In the Ukrainian Presidential elections of 2004, Viktor Yanukovych, who had the support of the regime, and Viktor Yushchenko, who was supported by nationalists and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, were the most powerful candidates. On 21 November 2004, following the disputed vote, Yanukovych was announced as the winner of the elections. President Putin immediately congratulated him. Tymoshenko, however, demanded the Ukrainian population to protest the elections results. On 22 November, large protests – known as the Orange Revolution – took place in Kiev and throughout Ukraine. In response, the Supreme Court in Ukraine decided to repeat the voting on 26 December, after which Yushchenko became president getting 52 percent of the total votes, whereas Yanukovych got 44.2 percent.[526]

The Orange Revolution did not lead to substantial alterations in domestic politics within Crimea. On the presidential voting on 21 November, Yanukovych managed to get around 81 percent of the votes in Crimea (in Sevastopol around 88 percent), while Yushchenko got around 14 percent in the peninsula (in Sevastopol around 7 percent). These results were confirmed when the Supreme Court in Ukraine annulled the results of the presidential elections, based on fraud benefiting Yanukovych. In the

[525] Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Ukraine as a Cusp State: The politics of reform in the borderland between the EU and Russia," in *The Role, Position and Agency of Cusp States in International Relations*, eds. Marc Herzog and Philip Robins (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2014), 69.

[526] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 51-52.

final voting on 26 December after Court's decision, Yanukovych got around 81 percent of the total votes in Crimea (in Sevastopol around 88 percent), whereas Yushchenko could get around 15 percent in Crimea (in Sevastopol only around 7 percent). Concerns in the peninsula that western parts of Ukraine under Yushchenko would rule the whole country and Yanukovych's electoral program that prioritized the development of Ukraine-Russia relations and the improvement of Russian language's status led to these results.[527]

Following the elections in 2004, President Yushchenko stated that supplementary agreements to the agreement on Russia's lease of the bases in Sevastopol, which expires in 2017, should be concluded, for instance, for adjusting Russian Fleet's usage of land. The existing agreement's main principles were likely to remain unchanged. The leadership in Russia adopted a cautious stance with their initial encounters with the new President Yushchenko, because of President Putin's apparent support to Yanukovych in the 2004 elections.[528]

President Yushchenko declared his aspiration for Ukraine's NATO membership. In 2005, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Borys Tarasyuk, expressed Ukraine's expectation to start NATO membership discussions in 2008. In 2006, Ukrainian Minister of Defence, Anatoliy Hrytsenko, stated that the goal of NATO membership remained unchanged in Ukraine's security and defense strategy. The US, on the other hand, expressed its support for post-Soviet states, including Ukraine and Georgia, which announced their commitment to become NATO members. The Russian leadership underlined that such developments were against Russia's national security. While in the first years of the 2000s, President Putin did not overemphasize Russia's objection NATO enlargement, mainly due to cooperation with the West

[527] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 263-264.

[528] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 270.

against terrorism, beginning in 2004 Russian strategy started to diverge from those of the West. Accordingly, Russia started to pressure former Soviet countries who looked for NATO membership. In 2006, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, stated that membership of Ukraine or Georgia in the alliance could result in significant geopolitical changes globally. Russia has focused on stopping NATO's further enlargement and was able to prevent Ukraine and Georgia from getting NATO membership action plans at the 2008 Bucharest summit.[529]

President Yushchenko's support to Georgia during and after the 2008 war also had negative impacts on Russian public's stance on Ukraine. By 2010, the number of pro-Ukrainian Russians has decreased by half in comparison to 2009 and has dropped under 25 percent. Negative thoughts about Ukraine have grown by nearly the same percentage. Additionally, the amount of negative replies (60 percent) about Ukraine have been more than positive ones (23 percent). In contrast, in the beginning of the 2000s, Russians used to see Ukraine as their most possible ally.[530]

The other tension in Russia-Ukraine relations revolved around energy trade. In 2005, Russia's Gazprom decided to stop gas transfers to Ukraine, until both sides reached an agreement on a lower price for both gas and its transit. Disagreements with regard to energy trade reaffirmed Russia's aspiration to enhance its regional political and economic influence. As Ukraine, together with Georgia and Moldova, started to challenge Russia and question the CIS, Russia wanted to protect its regional economic profits. Particularly, Russia sought to take control of the pipelines on the Ukrainian soil and share Ukraine's Naftogaz's ownership. By acquiring Naftogas stakes, Russia aimed at overcoming further disagreements on energy with Ukraine.

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[529] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 282.

[530] Andrei Andreev, "Russians' Views on Foreign Policy after the Caucasus Crisis," *Russian Politics and Law* 48, no. 6 (November-December 2010): 10-11.

However, Russia could not achieve this objective. Through the end of 2008, Russia once again stopped gas deliveries to Ukraine, also affecting Eastern Europe. In early 2009, Putin, as Russian Prime Minister, and Yulia Tymoshenko, as Ukrainian Prime Minister, negotiated a beneficial 10-year agreement for Russia.[531]

In brief, Russia and Ukraine could not become partners under President Yushchenko. The essence of Russia-Ukraine relations was unfolded when President Dmitry Medvedev postponed appointing Russia's new ambassador to Ukraine in 2009. He criticized President Yushchenko for his anti-Russian stance, particularly in issues such as the Black Sea Fleet of Russia located in Crimea, Russia-Georgia war of 2008, Ukraine's NATO aspirations, and Russia's energy supplies to Europe.[532]

After the presidential elections of 2010, Viktor Yanukovych assumed the presidency in Ukraine. Following his election, Russia-Ukraine relations developed significantly. Russia, contributing to Yanukovych's electoral success, managed to reverse the effects of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, which, in Russian view, was against Russia's interests and dangerous for the wider area. The anti-Russian government in Ukraine was changed with a new one that preferred closer relations with Russia. Accordingly, in 2010, Russia and Ukraine agreed to prolong Russian Black Sea Fleet's lease of bases in Sevastopol for additional 25 years in return for 30 percent discount in gas prices. In 2011, Putin, as prime minister of Russia, suggested establishing a Eurasian Union with members of the CIS, especially for enhancing relations with Russia's neighbors. Russia, offering additional energy discounts, officially asked Ukraine to take part in the Customs Union. While the deal concerning the Eurasian Union aimed at prohibiting Ukraine's membership in

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[531] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 283.

[532] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 283.

NATO, the offer on the Customs Union intended to preserve Russia's economic impact over Ukraine.[533]

The partnership between Russia and Ukraine, despite improved relations under the leadership of President Yanukovych, stayed limited. The leadership in Ukraine dropped former aspirations for membership in NATO and showed readiness to help Russia enhance its economic existence in Ukraine. However, President Yanukovych refused to sell Naftogas shares to Russia's Gazprom and did not accept participating in the Customs Union. Different from the course of Belarus and Kazakhstan, President Yanukovych wanted for Ukraine a special relationship format with the Customs Union, which would let Ukraine maintain its EU integration. In 2013, President Putin offered another price reduction in energy and promised $15 billion support to Ukraine, in order to persuade President Yanukovych. Accordingly, in November 2013, President Yanukovych postponed signing of the EU Association Agreement.[534]

Following President Yanukovych's refusal to sign the agreement, large demonstrations started in Kiev to protest the decision. Domestic economic and political problems were also influential in the emergence of the protests. The demonstrations, directed by the opposition to President Yanukovych and assisted by the West, intensified extensively. Demonstrators were against President Yanukovych's domestic policies and supported a pro-European policy for Ukraine. President Yanukovych rejected conditions of the opposition and resorted to force for reestablishing order. Consequently, the level of violence and the risk of Ukraine's disintegration increased. Despite the efforts of some European leaders to mediate between President Yanukovych and the opposition, the EU-mediated agreement

[533] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 284.

[534] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 284.

became obsolete in February 2014. Subsequently, President Yanukovych fled to Russia.[535]

Russia accused the West for the failure of the agreement and did not recognize the post-Yanukovych government in Ukraine. In response, Russia took control of Crimea, recognized the region's independence after a local referendum, and finally annexed the peninsula. Russia demanded changes in the Ukrainian constitution, safeguarding of Russian-speaking peoples, and reforms for Ukraine's decentralization from the new leadership in Ukraine. In addition, Russia offered different forms of support to protesters in eastern parts of Ukraine, who did not recognize new government's authority. Lastly, it reversed previous price reductions in energy trade and canceled its financial assistance to Ukraine.[536]

5.4. Russia's Policy on Secessionism in Crimea in the UNSC

In the UN Security Council meeting held on 1 March 2014, Russian representative, Ambassador Vitaly Churkin defended Russia's military intervention in Crimea on the grounds of the principle of self-defence. Ambassador Churkin argued that the arrival of people from Kiev to Crimea with the aim of changing the regional government as they did in Kiev and western Ukraine created serious concerns in Crimea.[537] In this regard, he cited Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov's following statement:

> On the night of 1 March, unknown armed people sent from Kiev attempted to storm the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Autonomous Republic of

[535] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 284-285.

[536] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 285.

[537] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7124th Meeting held on 1 March 2014 (S/PV.7124).

> Crimea. As a result of those perfidious provocations, there were casualties. The decisive action of self-defence groups prevented the attempt to overrun the Ministry. These developments confirm the aspirations of certain well-known political circles in Kiev to destabilize the situation on the peninsula. It is very irresponsible to stir up tensions in the Crimea, which is already very tense.[538]

In addition, Ambassador Churkin cited President Putin's demand submitted to the Russian Federation Council on the use of Russian armed forces on Ukraine's territory, which President Putin formulated with reference to threats against Russian citizens, compatriots and Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine:

> In connection with the extraordinary situation that has developed in Ukraine and the threat to citizens of the Russian Federation, our compatriots, the personnel of the military contingent of the Russian Federation Armed Forces deployed on the territory of Ukraine (Autonomous Republic of Crimea) in accordance with international agreement; pursuant to Article 102.1 (d) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, I hereby appeal to the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to use the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine until the social and political situation in that country is normalised.[539]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 3 March 2014, Ambassador Churkin underlined the attempts by popular self-defence units in Crimea to prevent developments in the region similar to those in Kiev. He pointed out the threats by 'ultranationalists':

> In a situation of ongoing threats of violence by against the security, lives and legitimate interests of Russians and all Russian-speaking peoples, popular self-defence brigades have been established. They have already put

[538] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7124th Meeting held on 1 March 2014 (S/PV.7124).

[539] "Vladimir Putin submitted appeal to the Federation Council," President of Russia, last modified March 1, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20353

> down attempts to take over administrative buildings in Crimea by force and to funnel weapons and ammunition into the peninsula.[540]

Ambassador Churkin, in the same meeting, referred to the power of rightist forces in Ukrainian politics, their sympathy with the ideas of Hitler, their stance on Russian citizens and ethnic Russians, and problems with regard to language rights, particularly the Russian language for enhancing Russia's self-defence argument and the following military operation in Crimea. With this purpose, Ambassador Churkin particularly drew an analogy between today's 'collaborators' with those of the World War II:

> …unfortunately the right-wing forces in Ukraine are very strong. They cannot stand Russian citizens or ethnic Russians. Let us recall how their leaders aligned with Bandera and Shukhevych, who fought under Hitler's banner against the Soviet Union's Red Army component of the anti-Hitler coalition. Those who share their ideology are unfortunately very close to the Ukrainian authorities; in fact, they carry them on their shoulders. Can one therefore not find it justifiable or imaginable that people living there would have concerns –millions of people, with 1.5 million of them in Crimea.[541]

In the UNSC meeting on 13 March 2014, Ambassador Churkin stated his concerns about the appointment of members of the Freedom Party for important government posts, including the Minister of Defence. He reminded that in December 2012, the European Parliament labeled the Freedom Party as "anti-Russian, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and counter to the fundamental values of the European Union."[542] Ambassador Churkin continued the Nazi analogy in the UN Security Council meeting held on 19 March 2014 for criticizing the Ukrainian authorities and

[540] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7125th Meeting held on 3 March 2014 (S/PV.7125).

[541] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7125th Meeting held on 3 March 2014 (S/PV.7125).

[542] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7134th Meeting held on 13 March 2014 (S/PV.7134).

underlining threats, even possible ethnic cleansing, against Russian-speaking and Russian populations in Ukraine:

> Who is in authority in Kyiv? Neo-Nazi slogans are heard, Nazi enforcers and their Bandera-loving storm-troopers are glorified, and calls are sent out for violence against Russian-speaking Ukrainians and Russians in general, with all the signs of ethnic cleansing, and for the armed overthrow of the legal authorities.[543]

With regard to the problems about language, Ambassador Churkin criticized a decision of the Ukrainian Parliament reducing language rights of minorities and underlined the demands aiming at limiting or banning the use of Russian. In his view, "victors wish to exploit the fruits of their victory to trample the rights and basic freedoms of the people."[544]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 1 March 2014, Ambassador Churkin tried to legitimize Russia's military operation in Crimea by referring to an appeal sent to President Putin by the Prime Minister of Crimea, Sergey Aksyonov (supported also by President Yanukovych) asking for Russian assistance to reestablish peace in Crimea.[545] Ambassador Churkin elaborated on the appeal made to Russia, therefore Russia's arguments concerning the legality of Russian operation in Crimea, in the UN Security Council meeting on 3 March 2014. Noting 'ultranationalist' threats against Russians and Russian-speaking population in both eastern and southern Ukraine and Crimea, Churkin presented Russia's assistance to Crimea as completely legitimate "under Russian law, given the extraordinary situation in Ukraine."[546] On

[543] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7144th Meeting held on 19 March 2014 (S/PV.7144).

[544] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7125th Meeting held on 3 March 2014 (S/PV.7125).

[545] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7124th Meeting held on 1 March 2014 (S/PV.7124).

[546] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7125th Meeting held on 3 March 2014 (S/PV.7125).

the deployment of Russian forced in Crimea, Churkin underlined that "the issue is one of defending our citizens and compatriots, as well as the most import human right – the right to life."[547] In the meeting, in an effort to support Russia's argument that Russia responded legitimately to a legitimate request, Ambassador Churkin also presented President Yanukovych's letter dated 1 March 2014 sent to President Putin calling for Russian military support:

> As the legitimately elected President of Ukraine, I wish to inform you that events in my country and capital have placed Ukraine on the brink of civil war. Chaos and anarchy reign throughout the country. The lives, security and rights of the people, particularly in the south-east and in Crimea, are under threat. Open acts of terror and violence are being committed under the influence of Western countries. People are being persecuted on the basis of their language and political beliefs. I therefore call on President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to use the armed forces of the Russian Federation to establish legitimacy, peace, law and order and stability in defence of the people of Ukraine.[548]

In the UN Security Council meeting on 15 March 2014, Ambassador Churkin outlined Russian arguments on the legitimacy of the referendum to be held in Crimea on 16 March 2014 concerning the status of the region. Russia vetoed the draft resolution (S/2014/189) that denied referendum's validity and called for the rejection of any change in the status of Crimea as a result of that referendum:

> … this referendum can have no validity, and cannot form the basis for any alteration of the status of Crimea; and calls upon all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize any alteration of the status of Crimea on the basis of this referendum and to refrain from any action or dealing that might be interpreted as recognizing any such altered status.[549]

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[547] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7125th Meeting held on 3 March 2014 (S/PV.7125).

[548] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7125th Meeting held on 3 March 2014 (S/PV.7125).

[549] UN Security Council, Draft Resolution 189, 15 March 2014 (S/2014/189).

While explaining Russia's veto decision on the draft resolution, Ambassador Churkin argued that the resolution was against the "basic principles of international law, the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, enshrined in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations."[550] He especially focused on the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and on its place in international law, by underlying that the "principle is confirmed in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and in a number of other decisions of the General Assembly, as well as the Helsinki Final Act of 1975."[551]

In the earlier UN Security Council meeting, held on 13 March 2014, Ambassador Churkin explained Russia's position on the issues of territorial integrity and self-determination in the case of Crimea. Emphasizing the importance of finding a balance between these two principles and noting the exceptionality of utilizing self-determination right through separation from a state, he argued for the legitimacy of self-determination in the Crimean example:

> However, in the case of Crimea, it obviously arose as a result of the legal vacuum created by the violent coup against the legitimate Government carried out by nationalist radicals in Kyiv, as well as by their direct threats to impose their order throughout the territory of Ukraine.[552]

With a further attempt to validate Russia's arguments for supporting Crimea's request for self-determination, in the UN Security Council meeting on 15 March 2014 Ambassador Churkin referred to historical, political and legal context in Crimea, claiming "generally agreed principles of international law are closely

[550] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7138th Meeting held on 15 March 2014 (S/PV.7138).

[551] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7138th Meeting held on 15 March 2014 (S/PV.7138).

[552] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7134th Meeting held on 13 March 2014 (S/PV.7134).

interlinked and that each should be considered in the light of the others, the relevant political context and historic specificities."[553] The context particular to Crimea, for him, included the unlawful transfer of Crimea to Ukraine, developments and illegal decisions with regard to the status of the region, failed attempts of self-determination, and the ignorance of the views of the people living in Crimea on region's future:

> The political, legal and historic backdrop of the events of today in Ukraine is extremely complicated. In that context, it is useful to recall that up until 1954, Crimea formed part of the Russian Federation. It was given to Ukraine in violation of the norms of that time under Soviet law and without taking into account the views of the people of Crimea, who nevertheless remained within a single State – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
>
> When the Soviet Union fell, Crimea automatically became part of Ukraine. The view of the people of Crimea was once again ignored. After the fall of the Soviet Union, for more than 20 years Crimea attempted to exercise its right to self-determination.
>
> In January 1991, a referendum was conducted in Crimea, resulting in the adoption of a law in Ukraine regarding the establishment of autonomous Crimea. In September 1991, the High Council of Crimea adopted a declaration on State sovereignty. In 1992, the constitution of Crimea was adopted, declaring Crimea an independent state within Ukraine. However, in 1995, through a decision of the Ukrainian authorities and the President of Ukraine, the constitution was annulled, without the agreement of the Crimean people.[554]

Following the unification of Russia and Crimea on 18 March 2014, in the UN Security Council meeting held on 19 March 2014, Ambassador Churkin tried to legitimize Russia's decision by referring to the principles of international law and the appeal made by the inhabitants of Crimea to Russia for unification:

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[553] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7138th Meeting held on 15 March 2014 (S/PV.7138).

[554] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7138th Meeting held on 15 March 2014 (S/PV.7138).

> In strict compliance with international law and democratic procedure, without outside interference and through a free referendum, the people of Crimea have fulfilled what is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and a great number of fundamental international legal documents – their right to self-determination. They turned to Russia with a request to welcome Crimea into the Russian Federation. Russia as a sovereign State agreed to the Crimean people's request [555]

In the following parts, this chapter discusses the literature on different explanations put forward for understanding Russia policy on Crimea, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses.

5.5. Sources of Russia's Policy on Secessionism in Crimea

Three general explanations, as Allison mentioned, are offered for understanding Russia's Crimea policy. The first group emphasizes geopolitics and strategic objectives of Russia, mainly in affirming its authority in the former Soviet space. Pertaining to neo-realist claims, this goal includes three core elements: keeping Ukraine out of the EU and NATO; regional motivations concerning pro-Western states within the CIS; and Crimea's strategic value. The second group underlines the influence of Russian identity on its policy, drawing on the premises of social constructivism. The third group highlights the impact of domestic politics and goals of regime consolidating on policymaking.[556]

In the following parts, this chapter discusses the literature on these explanations, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses. Among these different explanations for Russia's Crimea policy, this dissertation adopts an approach that underlines the significance of geopolitics and strategic objectives of Russia with regard to Crimea.

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[555] UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7144th Meeting held on 19 March 2014 (S/PV.7144).

[556] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November 2014): 1268-1269.

Contrary to the views of some experts who claim that Russia's references to issues concerning identity and international law during the debates on secessionism in Crimea in the UNSC reflect its commitment to the principles of international law and its support to both ethnic and civil Russian identities, this chapter argues that Russia's position on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence.

5.5.1 Ethnic, Imperial and Historical Identity of Russia

In Russia, as Tsygankov mentioned, the leading view on Ukraine underlines strong historical and cultural connections between the two nations. According to this view, these two mainly Slavic and Orthodox Christian peoples have together battled with common rivals since centuries and were a part of the same empire. Russians, considering Ukrainians as 'brothers', accuse the West of trying to undermine this cultural tie or to transform Ukraine's value system to a Western one. However, as Tsygankov underlined, while Ukrainians partly share this interpretation, the US and the EU reject it at all.[557]

President Putin's post-annexation speech in March 2014 is significant in showing how the leadership in Russia referred to various identities for substantiating Russia's actions with regard to the "eternal Russian" Crimea. In his speech, President Putin stated,

> In people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia. This is the location of ancient Chersonesus, where Prince Vladimir was baptised. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian empire are also in Crimea.

[557] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 287-288.

> This is also Sevastopol – a legendary city with an outstanding history, a fortress that serves as the birthplace of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Kurgan and Sapun Ridge. Each one of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolising Russian military glory and outstanding valour.[558]

Accounts of Russia's Crimea policy focused on identity, according to Allison, are not fully substantial. Allison underlined that Russian leadership's identification with both ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking populations, including compatriots in Ukraine was helpful for having the support of the Russian public for the operation in Crimea. Analyses focusing on Russia's identification policy, he added, do not offer notable explanations for Russia's such excessive actions, because those groups were not exposed to such an actual threat as Russia claimed.[559]

President Putin's nationalist rhetoric, Tsygankov argued, intends to appeal to critics rather than to realize their advices. Despite rhetoric, President Putin politically and ideologically has kept himself distanced from extreme views and organizations. He disappointed those who expected him to reunite Russia's historical lands. Russia, for example, did not recognize the referendums held in Donetsk and Lugansk, and these regions remain inside the territory of Ukraine. President Putin's main priority, as Tsygankov stated, was the protection of state's power and he exploited nationalism because of pressures from the US and Europe instead of internal pressures.[560] Tsygankov mentioned a comparable example from the Russian history,

> A meaningful historical parallel here might be Nicholas I's relations with Slavophiles during the Crimean War. Nicholas was sympathetic to the some of the Slavophiles' ideas, such as their vision of Russia as the only

[558] "Address by President of the Russian Federation," President of Russia, last modified 18 March 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603

[559] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November 2014): 1296.

[560] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 295.

> representative of "true" Europe. He also favored providing more support for pro-Russian revolutionaries in the Balkans. Nevertheless, the Tsar was not driven by those ideas in his actions toward the Ottoman Empire. He never endorsed the Slavophiles' urge to topple Constantinople and did not provide the full-fledged assistance expected by the Slavophiles for the Slav and Orthodox revolutionaries, just as Putin did not act on nationalist expectations by sending troops to eastern Ukraine.[561]

Social constructivist scholars, as Allison mentioned, would argue that concerns based on identity gradually influence the political framework where decisions are taken, and President Putin's cultural and social background, including his previous occupation in KGB under the Soviet Union, affect his overall attitude. Identity has also been influential on the developments in relations between Russia and Ukraine since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, as Allison argued, "it is difficult to argue that the broad discourse over Russian identity expressed in official comments on Ukraine explains specific policies taken by the Kremlin or their timing from February 2014."[562]

5.5.2 Domestic Politics and Regime Consolidation

A group of explanations on Russia's Crimea policy underlines the impact of internal politics and concerns of regime consolidation on policymaking. These diversionary explanations, as Tsygankov argued, reduce President Putin's decisions and actions to concerns with regard to "internal stability and regime consolidation. Supporters of the explanation link the Kremlin's recognition of the Crimean referendum and its

[561] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 295.

[562] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November 2014): 1282.

subsequent annexation to the country's domestic problems, especially growing political protest and stagnation of the economy."[563]

Russian leadership's domestic concerns, according to von Eggert, have been decisive in the formation of Russia's current Ukraine policy. President Putin's Crimea policy, he argued, "was a very domestic Russian affair, designed to give the people a new sense of imperial pride and, by extension, provide the Kremlin with a badly needed popularity boost."[564] For Kuchinsky, until the military response in Crimea, President Putin was gradually losing his popularity within Russia. Beginning in 2010, "prominent entertainers, political operatives, business leaders, politicians, and bureaucrats began to publicly criticize Putin's system, his top officials, and Putin himself. In the last four years, dissent has permeated almost all major elite groups in Russia."[565] Similarly, McFaul argued

> Russian foreign policy did not grow more aggressive in response to U.S. policies; it changed as a result of Russian internal political dynamics. The shift began when Putin and his regime came under attack for the first time ever. After Putin announced that he would run for a third presidential term, Russia held parliamentary elections in December 2011 that were just as fraudulent as previous elections. But this time, new technologies and social media – including smartphones with video cameras, Twitter, Facebook, and the Russian social network VKontakte – helped expose the government's wrongdoing and turn out protests on a scale not seen since the final months of the Soviet Union. Disapproval of voter fraud quickly morphed into discontent with Putin's return to the Kremlin. Some opposition leaders even called for revolutionary change.[566]

[563] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 295.

[564] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," *World Affairs* 177, no. 3 (September/October 2014): 50.

[565] George Kuchinsky, "Russia: Shifting Political Frontiers," *Comparative Strategy* 33, no. 3 (2014): 262.

[566] Michael McFaul, "Moscow's Choice," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6 (November/December 2014).

Russia's current policy towards Ukraine, according to von Eggert, therefore is based on President Putin's efforts to protect the current regime in Russia. The Orange Revolution in 2004, which von Eggert called as 'The first Maidan', alarmed the leadership in Russia that similar developments could take place in Russia. Russian authorities, in response, have focused on preventing such a situation in Russia.[567] The Ukrainian 'revolution' of 2014, according to Sakwa, took place against a "tutelary and kleptocratic rule" and significantly challenged the Russian system.[568] This fact, von Eggert argued, should be taken into account for understanding current Russian policy on Ukraine. In his view, therefore, "Russia's foreign and security policy is primarily a tool to defend the current regime and help it to stay in power with minimum international pressure as long as it wishes."[569]

Russia's 'opportunistic' response to the Crimea conflict, von Eggert argued, matches President Putin's current political agenda designed for "fostering the new national consensus based on anti-intellectualism and anti-Westernism and on giving Russia a new, stable, apparently organic identity. By achieving this, [he] strives to secure his own place in history among the likes of Peter the Great."[570] In order to maintain his legitimacy within Russia, President Putin, according to McFaul, "continued to need the United States as an adversary. He also genuinely believed that the United States represented a sinister force in world affairs."[571] Since 2000, according to von Eggert, the Russian state through channels under its control has pursued propaganda against the West and disseminated conspiracy theories focused on the main claim that the

[567] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," *World Affairs* 177, no. 3 (September/October 2014): 51.

[568] Richard Sakwa, "Questioning Control and Contestation in Late Putinite Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 2 (March 2015): 204.

[569] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," *World Affairs* 177, no. 3 (September/October 2014): 51.

[570] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," *World Affairs* 177, no.3 (September/October 2014): 53.

[571] Michael McFaul, "Moscow's Choice," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6 (November/December 2014).

West desires to occupy Russia and acquire its natural resources. The Russian leadership can preserve their rule and assets, gathered through Gazprom, Rosneft, exports of arms, production of diamond and gold, "only by struggling against anti-Russian notions of democracy, accountability, and transparency. Even mild political Westernization will put their power – and by extension, their control of the Russian economy – in severe doubt."[572] For that reason, von Eggert argued, "promoting cynicism and isolationism is an indispensable political and ideological tool for the Kremlin. Thus, gaining legitimacy of the political regime and personal popularity for Putin was a key factor in determining Moscow's response to the Ukrainian crisis."[573]

President Putin, for Kuchinsky had to response to the pro-western developments in Ukraine considering the perception of both his supporters and the opposition. "The annexation of Crimea and interference in other parts of Ukraine, accompanied by ratcheted up jingoistic television coverage, rallied Russians towards Putin and rapidly boosted his rating."[574] After Russia's Crimea operation, von Eggert also underlined, 'patriotism' eliminated anti-Kremlin sentiments, especially of the 2011-2012 protests in Russia.[575] While President Putin's popularity reached previous high levels of the 2000s, at most 50,000 people attended demonstrations organized in 2014 against Russia's Ukraine policy and Crimea's annexation by Russia.[576]

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[572] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," *World Affairs* 177, no. 3 (September/October 2014): 52.

[573] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," *World Affairs* 177, no. 3 (September/October 2014): 52-53.

[574] George Kuchinsky, "Russia: Shifting Political Frontiers," *Comparative Strategy* 33, no. 3 (2014): 270.

[575] Konstantin von Eggert, "All Politics are Local: Crimea Explained," *World Affairs* 177, no. 3 (September/October 2014): 52.

[576] Richard Sakwa, "Questioning Control and Contestation in Late Putinite Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 2 (March 2015): 196-197.

While Russia's annexation of Crimea certainly increased President Putin's domestic popularity, Allison underlined that the main concern behind this action was the consolidation of the current regime in Russia and suppressing the anti-Putin opposition rather than protecting the ethnic Russians or compatriots in Ukraine. For President Putin, the alleged connection between anti-Putin demonstrations in Russia in 2011/2012, previous revolutions in the CIS region and the Maidan was hard to tolerate. Accordingly, Allison argued, the Russian leadership aimed to minimize the political benefits of the new authorities in Ukraine, limit their foreign policy choices, and reverse their normative and political ideal. For President Putin, the overthrow of President Yanukovych and its results posed strategic and at the same time normative and political threats to his Eurasian integration plans, which aims to unite "a set of states with rigid, hierarchical political systems."[577]

The weaknesses of explanations based on domestic concerns, according to Tsygankov, are that they ignore the power structure established by President Putin, his view of the Crimea crisis, and economic power of Russia. According to Tsygankov, despite Russia have important domestic problems, President Putin's popularity was high even before the crisis and he did not need to enhance his internal approval. In this respect, Tsygankov wrote,

> By fall 2013, the Kremlin gained a new political confidence largely by locating what experts identified as Putin's conservative majority. By studying Russian reactions to the Anti-Magnitsky Act (Dima Yakovlev Law), the trial over Pussy Riot, and restrictions on the activities of protesters and NGOs, Putin's regime concluded that it had a sufficiently strong social base to avert destabilization. In December of the same year, Putin pardoned 20,000 prisoners, including members of Pussy Riot and his longtime critic, former oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Many of those charged for disturbances during protests in early 2012 were either released or received sentences lighter than expected. Russia's successful hosting of the Olympics further boosted domestic support for Putin. Despite the

[577] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November 2014): 1296-1297.

economic slowdown, the Kremlin did not feel especially weak, particularly in the context of then-ongoing crisis within the EU.[578]

5.5.3 Geopolitics and Russia's Strategic Goals

Explanations of Russia's Crimea policy focusing on geopolitics and strategic objectives of Russia underline Russia's efforts of keeping Ukraine out of the EU and NATO; its regional motivations concerning pro-Western states within the CIS; and Crimea's strategic value.[579]

Russian policy towards Ukraine, as Mearsheimer argued, is "motivated by the same geopolitical considerations that influence all great powers, including the United States."[580] For Mearsheimer, the root cause of the Ukraine crisis is the enlargement of NATO and the insistence of the US on freeing Ukraine from Russian influence and uniting it with the West. Russia did not welcome but still accepted former enlargements of NATO, including the memberships of Baltic States and Poland. However, when NATO made it public in 2008 that Ukraine and Georgia would be accepted to the alliance, Russia declared that decision not would be tolerated, as these two countries have significant importance for Russia due to their proximity. Actually, Russia's Georgia policy in the 2008 war was also based mainly on Russia's objective of inhibiting Georgia's NATO membership and its western integration.[581] In December 2014, President Putin reaffirmed his criticisms about NATO's expansion towards Russia in a news conference, for which 1259 journalists from both Russia and abroad were accredited. In the conference, President Putin stated,

[578] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 296.

[579] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November 2014): 1268-1269.

[580] John J. Mearsheimer, "Getting Ukraine Wrong," *New York Times*, 13 March 2014.

[581] John J. Mearsheimer, "Getting Ukraine Wrong," *New York Times*, 13 March 2014.

> Are we moving our forces to the borders of the United States or other countries? Who is moving NATO bases and other military infrastructure towards us? We aren't. Is anyone listening to us? Is anyone engaging in some dialogue with us about it? No. No dialogue at all. All we hear is "that's none of your business. Every country has the right to choose its way to ensure its own security." All right, but we have the right to do so too. Why can't we?[582]

Foreign Minister Lavrov, in an article for the journal Russia in Global Affairs, pointed out the missed changes for uniting Europe after the end of the Cold War. In this respect, he argued

> Unfortunately, our Western partners chose a different path to follow by expanding NATO eastward and moving the geopolitical space under their control closer to Russia's border. This is the root cause of the systemic problems that afflict Russia's relations with the United States and Europe. Interestingly, George Kennan, who is considered to be one of the authors of the American policy of containment towards the Soviet Union, at the end of his life described NATO's enlargement as a tragic mistake.[583]

In the same article, Foreign Minister Lavrov referred to the essence and effects of former Warsaw countries' memberships in NATO or the EU on their international and domestic politics. He wrote,

> If you take an unbiased look at the smaller European countries, which previously were part of the Warsaw Treaty, and are now members of the EU or NATO, it is clear that the issue was not about going from subjugation to freedom, which Western masterminds like to talk about, but rather a change of leadership. Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke about it not long ago. The representatives of these countries concede behind closed doors that they

[582] "News conference of Vladimir Putin," President of Russia, last modified 18 December 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250

[583] Sergey Lavrov, "Russia's Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective," *Russia in Global Affairs*, No. 2 (30 March 2016), http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Russias-Foreign-Policy-in-a-Historical-Perspective-18067

> can't take any significant decision without the green light from Washington or Brussels.[584]

Götz also presented a geopolitical explanation of Russia's Ukraine policy, which underlined the geographic position of Ukraine, increased involvement of the EU in Eastern Europe, and the new Ukrainian government's pro-western alignment. These dynamics encouraged Russia to adopt an aggressive Ukraine policy. Russia has focused on reestablishing some of its authority over Ukraine's foreign policy preferences and creating a pro-Russian space in eastern Ukraine.[585] In March 2014, President Putin expressed Russia's concerns with regard to the eastern parts of Ukraine in a meeting with representatives from media held particularly for the developments in Ukraine. In response to a question, President Putin stated,

> … we understand what worries the citizens of Ukraine, both Russian and Ukrainian, and the Russian-speaking population in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. It is this uncontrolled crime that worries them. Therefore, if we see such uncontrolled crime spreading to the eastern regions of the country, and if the people ask us for help, while we already have the official request from the legitimate President, we retain the right to use all available means to protect those people. We believe this would be absolutely legitimate. This is our last resort.[586]

MacFarlane and Menon underlined that since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has claimed to have special rights in its neighborhood. Under President Yeltsin, Russia did not have the necessary capacity to pursue its goals. Under President Putin, however, with the recovery of economy and the state, Russia's power started to match its objectives. In accordance with the aim of establishing

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[584] Sergey Lavrov, "Russia's Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective," *Russia in Global Affairs*, No. 2 (30 March 2016), http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Russias-Foreign-Policy-in-a-Historical-Perspective-18067

[585] Elias Götz, "It's Geopolitics, Stupid: Explaining Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Global Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2015): 3.

[586] "Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine," President of Russia, last modified 4 March 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/press_conferences/20366

Russia's control over the CIS region, Putin decided in 2011 to establish a Customs Union, which was an essential step for creating the Eurasian Union in 2015. The membership of Ukraine, considering its population and economy, was crucial for the success of the plan. The ignorance of Russian concerns at the Vilnius summit in November 2013, in which Ukraine and five other states would sign the EU Association Agreement, openly threatened Russia's regional aspirations.[587] President Putin underlined the importance of Ukraine for the Customs Union, in a meeting of state leaders of the Customs Union with representatives from the EU and the Ukrainian President. In the meeting, President Putin stated,

> Russia has always respected the sovereign choice of any nation to organise its political life and make all sorts of unions, both military and economic, and we will continue to do so. However, we hope that this will not be detrimental to other participants in international communication, and not at our cost. As you may know, Ukraine is deeply integrated into the CIS economic space. Alongside Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, it is actually an inseparable part of the largest economic complex in the world, which took ages, rather than years or decades, to create – and this is no exaggeration.[588]

The Russian leadership, as Tsygankov mentioned, attributes significant importance to Ukraine on geopolitical grounds. Ukraine safeguards Russia from possible interventions by the West and economically links Russia with Europe, particularly in terms of energy trade. Accordingly, Tsygankov wrote, "many in the Kremlin perceive the connection to Ukraine as the last pillar of Russia's stability and power that could not be undermined if Russia were to survive and preserve its sovereignty, independence, and authentic political culture."[589]

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[587] Neil MacFarlane and Anand Menon, "The EU and Ukraine," *Survival* 56, no. 3 (June-July 2014): 96-97.

[588] "Speech at the meeting of the Customs Union Heads of State with President of Ukraine and European Union representatives," President of Russia, last modified 26 August 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46494

[589] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 288.

Thomas argued for the central role of President Putin in directing Russian strategy towards Crimea. President Putin, for Thomas, utilizes separatism to regain former lands, preserve Russia's unconstrained capacity on natural resource production and sales, obtain more of these resources, and neutralize the influence of NATO and the EU. These goals, together with President Putin's "aggressive and competitive personality, guide Putin's political goals, which in Russia precede the implementation of its military's strategy. For that reason, the military's strategy is 'Putin-led'."[590]

Blank argued that Russia's annexation of Crimea demonstrates that for the Russian leadership, Russia can continue to survive only if it is an empire, which requires the weakening of both its neighbors' and former Warsaw states' sovereignty. This goal of reestablishing the empire necessitates war, as it unavoidably involves the Russian belief that it should constantly target the territorial integrity of its neighbors and diminish their sovereignty. This is necessary, as Russia not only aims to rebuild its empire, but also desires to achieve this goal in total freedom.[591] Russia, for Blank, cannot economically maintain an empire and its struggle in this respect threatens its periphery, which does not want or accept a Russian empire. Russia can create such a consent only by force, which makes war inevitable. It also should be noted, as Blank argued, "Russia … begins its national security policy from the standpoint of a presupposition of conflict with the rest of the world and conceives itself to be in a state of siege with other states, if not a formal state of war."[592]

Russia tried to legitimize its annexation of Crimea on the grounds that it safeguarded Russians and Russian speaking peoples of the peninsula. According to Götz,

[590] Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric – and Putin-Led," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28 (2015): 447.

[591] Stephen J. Blank, "From Eurasia with Love: Russian Security Threats and Western Challenges," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 8, no.2 (Summer 2014): 44-45.

[592] Stephen J. Blank, "From Eurasia with Love: Russian Security Threats and Western Challenges," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 47.

however, Russia's eventual motivation was geopolitical. Russia's main goal was to protect its naval bases located in Crimea. He argued that the speed of the annexation implies that it had been planned earlier. Following the takeover of Crimea, Russia affirmed its willingness to develop the bases and made plans of enlarging its fleet in the region. In this way, Russia can increase its authority in the Black Sea.[593] President Putin, in his 18 March 2014 dated address to the deputies of the State Duma, members of the Federation Council, heads of regions in Russia and representatives from the Russian civil society, pointed out Russia's concerns with regard to NATO and the status of Sevastopol. He stated,

> For all the internal processes within the organisation, NATO remains a military alliance, and we are against having a military alliance making itself at home right in our backyard or in our historic territory. I simply cannot imagine that we would travel to Sevastopol to visit NATO sailors. Of course, most of them are wonderful guys, but it would be better to have them come and visit us, be our guests, rather than the other way round.[594]

Sakwa also underlined the significance of Crimea for Russia, particularly its strategic importance. Russians were concerned that after the Euromaidan, they would be expelled from Sevastopol, which hosts the Black Sea Fleet. Sevastopol is important, as it also contains a large complex of airfields, navy yards and radars. Sakwa mentioned that although Ukraine's membership to NATO became a secondary issue and lost its urgency after the 2008 Bucharest summit, Russia was still concerned about the security related consequences of the EU Association Agreement. The opposition in Ukraine criticized the renewal of Russia's lease of the naval bases until 2042 and problematized Russia's basing rights until 2017. Losing the right to use bases in Crimea would be very destructive for Russia. Russia had been searching for other ports but no other option was similar to Sevastopol. Russia

[593] Elias Götz, "It's Geopolitics, Stupid: Explaining Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Global Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2015): 5.

[594] "Address by President of the Russian Federation," President of Russia, last modified 18 March 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603

also had to deal with the likelihood that the Sixth Fleet of the US would take over Sevastopol, which would mean for Russia both a strategic failure and a significant threat to its existence.[595] In this respect, President Putin in his address on 18 March 2014 stated,

> Let me note too that we have already heard declarations from Kiev about Ukraine soon joining NATO. What would this have meant for Crimea and Sevastopol in the future? It would have meant that NATO's navy would be right there in this city of Russia's military glory, and this would create not an illusory but a perfectly real threat to the whole of southern Russia. These are things that could have become reality were it not for the choice the Crimean people made, and I want to say thank you to them for this.[596]

Despite President Yanukovych's steps on reversing Ukraine's aspirations for membership in NATO and approval for the extension of Russia's lease agreement on bases in Crimea, the Russian leadership had concerns about his ambitions to enhance Ukraine's relations with the EU, which would result in Ukraine's NATO membership. Following the rise of the pro-Western forces in Ukraine under the leadership of Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the Russian leadership had grounds to be concerned about the renewal of Ukraine's NATO drive and annulment of the agreement that granted Russia's Black Sea Fleet the right to stay in Crimea for the next 25 years. President Putin, through Russia's intervention in Crimea, accepted that pressures based on energy trade and personal relations were not enough to maintain "Ukraine's neutral status and preserve the Russian fleet in the Black Sea."[597]

The crisis in Ukraine, according to Müllerson, demonstrated how morality and also international law are utilized for hiding geopolitical objectives. He underlined that

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[595] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 102.

[596] "Address by President of the Russian Federation," President of Russia, last modified 18 March 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603

[597] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2015): 292.

while the Cold War was a struggle of ideologies, today the struggle is "between the uni-polar and multi-polar visions of the world visions. It is not ideological, it is geopolitical, where ideology, morality and law are used as tools and collaterals in the struggle for the configuration of tomorrow's world."[598] In this respect Müllerson asked,

> Would the 16 March referendum have been possible without Russian forces being in the Crimea (and not quietly sitting in their bases which would have been a necessary requirement if Russia indeed had done everything to avoid interference in Ukrainian affairs)? In the case of the no answer, and in my opinion this would be the only possible answer, Russia would be in breach of international law. And this remains so notwithstanding that the huge majority of the Crimeans genuinely chose integration with Russia instead of staying with Ukraine. There is no doubt that most Crimeans, like most citizens of Russia, welcome the reunification of the Crimea with Russia. In that respect this all may even be seen as legitimate, though contrary to international law.[599]

Mearsheimer also argued that President Putin approaches the Ukraine crisis from a geopolitical, but not legal point of view. For Mearsheimer, President Putin's position can be accepted, as there is no global authority to provide protection for states against each other, and major powers pay special attention to threats, particularly close to their borders. In some cases, they response aggressively to potential threats. In such cases, "international law and human rights concerns take a back seat when vital security issues are at stake."[600]

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[598] Rein Müllerson, "Ukraine: Victim of Geopolitics," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 13, no. 1 (2014), 133.

[599] Rein Müllerson, "Ukraine: Victim of Geopolitics," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 13, no. 1 (2014), 140.

[600] John J. Mearsheimer, "Getting Ukraine Wrong," *New York Times*, 13 March 2014.

5.6. Conclusion

For justifying Russia's actions in Crimea in 2014, Russian representatives in the UN Security Council focused on identity issues and international norms and rules, such as the right of self-defence for the Russian Black Sea Fleet, and Russian and Russian speaking people in Crimea, Crimea's appeal to Russia for help, and right of self-determination. The crisis in Ukraine demonstrated how morality and also international law are utilized for hiding geopolitical objectives. Accounts of Russia's Crimea policy focused on identity, according to Allison, are not fully substantial. Russian leadership's identification with both ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking populations, including compatriots in Ukraine was helpful for having the support of the Russian public for the operation in Crimea. Analyses focusing on Russia's identification policy do not offer notable explanations for Russia's such excessive actions, because those groups were not exposed to such an actual threat as Russia claimed.[601] This chapter, accordingly, has argued that Russia's Crimea policy was based on geopolitics and strategic objectives of Russia.

[601] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November 2014): 1296.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has aimed to examine Russia's responses to secessionist movements in Kosovo (Serbia), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia), and Crimea (Ukraine) in the post-Cold War period. It focused on post-Soviet Russia's foreign and domestic policy towards these regions, and especially on Russia's policy in the UN Security Council on these secessionist movements since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in order to introduce the official Russian position and arguments behind its certain policies in each case; to analyze and evaluate these arguments; and to discuss the underlying factors behind Russia's responses to these cases.

The dissertation has argued that contrary to the views of some experts who claim that Russia's references to issues concerning identity and international law during the debates on secessionism in the UNSC reflect Russia's commitment to the principles of international law and its support to the selected identities, Russia's positions on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence.

Russia's rhetoric and arguments in the UN Security Council during the discussions on different cases of secessionist movements covered in this study have focused on the similar normative and legal rules, particularly on issues related to identity and international law, such as the principle of self-defence, protection of co-ethnics/nationals/religionists abroad, human rights, humanitarianism, territorial integrity and self-determination. Russian policy, however, have been different with regard to Kosovo from Abkhazia/South Ossetia and Crimea. While Russia did not support secessionism in Kosovo and objected to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, it supported secessionist movements in both Abkhazia/South Ossetia and Crimea, and accepted their unilateral declarations of independence in

2008 and 2014, respectively. In the case of Crimea, Russia not only supported Crimea's desire for secession but also annexed the peninsula.

Russia has followed inconsistent and incoherent policies towards the secessionist conflicts in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine. Russia has strategically, instrumently and selectively employed issues and norms regarding identity and international law, as a strategy and foreign policy tool, for enhancing its regional interests. Accordingly, this dissertation has argued that Russia's positions on identity issues and international law are driven mainly by its pragmatic concerns in order to enhance its regional power and influence.

These arguments have been supported by Russia's inconsistencies in its approach to international law and identity matters. Russian representatives have tried to justify Russia's varying responses to secessionism and their particular policies in one case (e.g., its military actions in the cases of Abkhazia/ South Ossetia and Crimea) in terms of identity issues and principles of international laws, but they manipulated or ignored the same norms (e.g., the principle of territorial integrity, the right to self-determination) in the other case (or vice versa), considering Russia's national interests.

The first chapter, as the introduction, explained the argument, theoretical framework, scope, objective, and research method of the dissertation. The second chapter discussed main theories of International Relations and their approaches for examining foreign policies of states, by outlining each theory's strengths and weaknesses. The main purpose of this study was to analyze and explain this variation in Russia's responses to these secessionist movements. The findings of this research underline the difficulty of assessing a state's foreign policy behaviors as interest or norm based. For this assessment, this dissertation has used a neoclassical realist framework. While the international system determines the boundaries of a state's foreign policy, it is also necessary to analyze how systemic pressures are translated

by states. In this regard, this research focused on Russian leaders' beliefs about the international system, domestic constrains and motivations, firstly, for explaining Russia's varying policies with regard to Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Crimea, and secondly, for comparing Russia's policy on these regions under the leaderships of Yeltsin and Putin (Medvedev).

The third chapter focused on the secessionist movement in Kosovo, firstly by introducing the origins and evolution of the conflict. Then it examined Russian foreign and domestic policy on Kosovo in the post-Cold war period, together with Russia's relations with Serbia and the West within the context of the Kosovo issue. Later, the chapter analyzed Russia's official position on Kosovo in the UN Security Council, particularly since 2008 when Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence. The last part of the chapter discussed the sources of Russia's Kosovo policy.

As discussed in the third chapter, Russia has always been supportive of Serbia. Russia's support has been steady before the World War I and in the aftermath of Yugoslavia's dissolution, especially during the 1999 Kosovo crisis when NATO forces bombed Serbian targets in order to protect Kosovo Albanians.[602] Since the beginning of the crisis, Russia has rejected Western accusations against Milosevic's conduct. In general, elites in Russia overlooked or downplayed charges of atrocities committed by the Serbs. Russia, for instance, vetoed the UN resolution dated April 1999 that condemned the actions of the Yugoslav army and Serb forces against Kosovo Albanians. Russia regularly tried to rationalize Serb policy in the conflict by discrediting Kosovo Albanians, by accusations focused on terrorism, drug trafficking and Islamic fundamentalism, and underlining West's discrimination against the

[602] Michael Johns, "Russia-European Union Relations after 2012: Good, Bad, Indifferent?" in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 160.

Serbs. NATO was accused of committing a 'genocide' causing significant human and material losses on the Serbian side.[603]

According to the Russian perspective, the US-led NATO war in Kosovo would finally bring the disintegration of Serbia and Serbia was isolated in Europe for this goal. For Russia, the US and NATO carried out the operation although none of the NATO members were under attack and by bypassing the UN Security Council in order not to be forced to find a common ground with Russia concerning the conditions and boundaries of the international intervention. All these confirmed, in Russian's opinion, their fears about NATO expansion.[604]

NATO operation in Yugoslavia has significantly affected Russian concerns with regard to its own security. It has influenced Russian approach to security matters in the West and remains to be main reason behind Russian resistance to NATO enlargement.[605] After the Kosovo crisis, which damaged the trust and cooperation between Russia and NATO, Russian foreign policy once more aimed at limiting the losses. The crisis demonstrated Russia's economic dependence on the West, in particular on IMF and Western markets for its natural resources. The war in Kosovo in 1999 had a symbolic importance to Russia that it underlined Russia's limited transnational influence and geopolitical stalemate. Objection to NATO and support to the Serbs united people with different political backgrounds in Russia. NATO's

[603] David Mendeloff, "'Pernicious History' as a Cause of National Misperceptions: Russia and the 1999 Kosovo War," *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 1 (March 2008): 44-46.

[604] Jacques Levesque, "Moscow's evolving partnership with Beijing: Countering Washington's hegemony," in *Russia after 2012: From Putin to Medvedev to Putin – Continuity, Change, or Revolution?*, eds. Joseph L. Black and Michael Johns (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 187.

[605] Zarko N. Petrovic, "Russian Vision of Security in Europe and Serbia," in *Russia Serbia Relations at the Beginning of XXI Century*, eds. Zarko N. Petrovic (Belgrad: ISAC Fund, 2010), 103.

1999 operation contributed to the strengthening of anti-Western ideas among the political elite and most of the population.[606]

The Kosovo conflict has also influenced Russian thinking on the global level. Russians were concerned that the international law and international order based on the UN were breaking down, which would have terrible results for Russia itself. Analysts in Russia underlined that the international relations system was based on the authority of the UN and NATO was challenging the basis of this order by resorting to force without UN authorization. For Russia, the NATO operation in Kosovo was an act of aggression, as most of the international agreements condemn the use of force against a state. Russia particularly objected to a possible common practice in which NATO would unilaterally use force against any state under the pretext of human rights.[607]

Russia, accordingly, has tried to preserve the function of the UN Security Council and prevent the emergence of a new international system permitting interference in domestic affairs of a state, based on, for example, humanitarian arguments. Another concern has been about Russia's role and position in the new international order. Russia has been worried whether or not Russia was regarded as belonging to the group of states making the core decisions in world politics. The events during and after the Kosovo crisis demonstrated how valid such doubts were and enhanced the sentiment in Russia that Russia was pushed aside in global developments.[608]

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[606] Sergei Medvedev, "Kosovo: A European *fin de siècle,"* in *Mapping European Security after Kosovo*, eds. Peter van Ham and Sergei Medvedev (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 24.

[607] Vladimir Brovkin, "Discourse on NATO in Russia during the Kosovo War," 12, available at www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/brovkin.pdf

[608] Vladimir Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 35, no. 2 (April-June 2000): 116.

Kosovo's future status became a highly contested issue in Russia's relations with the West, which became much tenser during President Putin's second term. While the US, NATO and the EU supported independence of Kosovo, Russia together with Serbia insisted that Kosovo should stay within Serbia.[609] Recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration independence by most of the Western states, particularly the US, ignoring Russian and Serbian opposition and Russia's efforts in the UN Security Council depended the problems between Russia and the US. This recognition, according to Russia, affirmed its concerns that the US was marginalizing Russia by disregarding the international law, the UN and OSCE.[610]

As noted in the third chapter, Russian representatives in the UN Security Council referred to norms and international law for substantiating Russia's objection to Kosovo's declaration of indendepedence. Their arguments underlined humanitarian and human rights concerns, economic, social, and religious issues, international norms such as terroritorial integrity. The chapter concluded that Russia's rejection of Kosovo's independence rests on power politics. Russia, especially under President Putin, has tried to reassert Russia's regional and international influence and debates over the status of Kosovo were carried out within the context of increasing disagreements between Russia and the West. The US and NATO policies in Kosovo in 1999 have also been influential in Russia's responses to the Kosovo issue.[611]

The fourth chapter discussed Abkhazian and South Ossetian secessionism in Georgia. After providing a historical account of these two conflicts, the chapter examined post-Soviet Russia's foreign and domestic policy on these two regions, along with the developments in Russia's relations with Georgia and the West with

[609] Stuart D. Goldman, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," in *Russian-American Security*, eds. Petr Sidorov and Gregory J. Singh (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2010), 76.

[610] Predrag Simic, "Kosovo, Serbia and Russia," *Russian Analytical Digest* No. 39 (April 2008): 7.

[611] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 114.

regard to the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts. It later examined Russia's responses to these conflicts in the UN Security Council, principally since 2008 when Abkhazia and South Ossetia declared their independence and Russia recognized these two regions. Finally, the chapter analyzed the factors behind Russia's policy on Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

As explained in the fourth chapter, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian leadership initially supported the independence and territorial integrity of Georgia. From August 1991 until March 1992, they did not take a particular position on the emerging Abkhaz conflict and let Georgia decide its policies. Those days, liberal and western ideas were influential in the formation of the Russian foreign policy, and discussions and policies overlooked the particular Abkhaz problem. In this period, the Russian leadership was discussing a solution for the conflict in South Ossetia.[612] Following the Georgia-Abkhazia war in August 1992, the discussions on the issue intensified. Russia had an inconsistent approach to the conflict, due to the struggles in domestic politics and mix of various political actors. Different considerations about the conflict existed within the Russian political elite. Through the end of 1992, disagreements between the Supreme Soviet and President Yeltsin were deepening and each actor was following a different policy concerning the region, aimed at serving their own interests. The revival of clashes in Abkhazia concurred with the confrontation between Yeltsin and the Parliament in September/October 1993.[613]

Yeltsin, taking into account the domestic pressures, changed his strategies many times. Firstly, he overlooked President Gamsakhurdia's policies aimed at eliminating Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Later he decisively opposed Gamsakhurdia, when the

[612] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 123.

[613] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Republic of Georgia: Conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 391.

conflict threatened North Ossetia and triggered reaction within Russia. Likewise, President Yeltsin initially supported Shevardnadze but then opposed him. The growing Chechnya problem and the significance of North Ossetia's strategic alliance in fighting it necessitated opposing Georgia's South Ossetia policy. These concerns had also been influential in the policy shifts.[614]

Under President Yeltsin, Russian rhetoric on the Abkhazian issue had mostly been steady. Russia reaffirmed its support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and rejected Abkhazia's official independence. However, in practice, Russia has obviously supported the independence of Abkhazia since 1992 after the civil war. Russia's this attitude could be witnessed also in other issues, such as Russia's military bases and forces located in Georgia, and Russia's implementation of its peacekeeping duties.[615]

From 1991 to 1996, while ethnic and political factors had been influential, strategic issues were the main concern of most of the Russian political elite. Russia's first military engagement in Georgia took place when Russia lacked a coherent and centralized policy, and there were different actors with various objectives. Eventually, Russian actions with regard to conflicts in Georgia became consistent with an official strategy that focused on terminating the conflict and maintaining Georgia's territorial integrity. The uncertainty witnessed during the crisis underlined the significance of broader foreign policy notions in government's policy formation. Nationalism based on pragmatism has been decisive in defining the objectives and directing the policy. Russian policy towards Georgia, between October 1993 and June 1996, was based on the objectives that Russia must preserve its influence in the region, stop the war and maintain existing military relations with Georgia. The

[614] Edward Ozhiganov, "The Republic of Georgia: Conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," in *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, eds. Alexei Arbatov et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 367.

[615] Bertil Nygren, "Russia's relations with Georgia under Putin: the impact of 11 September," in *Russia as a Great Power: Dimensions of Security under Putin*, eds. Jakob Hedenskog et al. (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2005), 159.

Russian government started to support Georgia officially, when Georgia had agreed to make concessions that offered Russia larger political and military authority over Georgia.[616]

The relationship between Russia and Georgia had deteriorated significantly near the end of Shevardnadze's rule before the Rose Revolution of 2003. Russia blamed Georgia of hosting Chechen terrorists and Georgia was worried about Russia's unwillingness to close its bases in Georgia. Russia speeded up providing Russian passports in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which weakened Georgia's sovereignty in these regions. On the other hand, Russia was concerned about Georgia's NATO aspirations under Shevardnadze and its participation in the Baku-Ceylan pipeline that would bypass Russia. Following the Rose Revolution and removal of Shevardnadze, Russia and Georgia had the chance to repair their relations. Newly elected Georgian President Saakashvili declared better and closer relations with Russia an urgent priority. There were hopes that the two states could also collaborate on Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[617]

There were still problems between Russia and Georgia. While Georgia requested Russia to remove its military bases in Georgia, Russia overlooked the issue. Georgia's pro-West leaning continued decisively. In April 2004, President Saakashvili declared his aspiration for Georgia's EU membership; NATO-Georgia relations continued; Baku-Ceyhan project was developing as scheduled; and resolving the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was compelling. Cooperative relations between Russia and Georgia ended in August 2004, following Georgia's aggressive reaction to the conflict in South Ossetia. In response to Georgia's South Ossetia policy, Russia decided to suspend its dialogue with Georgia and stopped

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[616] Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 139.

[617] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 309-310.

granting visas to Georgian citizens. In 2005, Russia reaffirmed that it could make preventive attacks against terrorists in Georgia. Georgian authorities, on the other hand, criticized Russia for supporting separatists in Georgia and Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were considered as a threat to Georgia. In February 2006, the Georgian parliament issued a resolution on questioning the presence of Russian peacekeepers in these regions. In response, Russia banned the import of Georgian wine to Russia in March 2006 and closed its Georgian border in July 2006. Any hopes of cooperation between the two states was lost with the spy scandal in September 2006. Following Georgia's arrest of four Russian agents, Russia suspended withdrawal of its troops in Georgia, cut entire transport and mailing connections with Georgia, Georgian companies running in Russia were inspected, and several Georgians were deported from Russia. Gazprom considered increasing the gas price and suspending deliveries. President Saakashvili utilized the stalemate for developing Georgia's relations with the West. Georgia's prospects of NATO membership continued. Georgia announced in October 2007 its objective of ending the peacekeeping mandate of Russia in Abkhazia. Kosovo's independence in February 2008 and Russia's removal of sanctions against Abkhazia as a response complicated any prospects for normalization of relations. These developments took place while armed hostilities between Georgia and Abkhazia/South Ossetia were intensifying.[618] Following the war in August 2008 between Russia and Georgia, President Kokoity of South Ossetia and President Bagapsh of Abkhazia made their appeals to the Federation Council of Russia for Russia's recognition of these regions' independence. President Medvedev, in response, issued the decree recognizing the independence of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia by Russia.[619]

[618] Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, "Duelling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 310-312.

[619] Robert McCorquodale and Kristin Hausler, "Caucuses in the Caucasus: The Application of the Right of Self-Determination," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 37.

As noted in the fourth chapter, Russian representatives in the UN Security Council, and the leadership in Russia, put forward six justifications for Russia's actions during and after the August 2008 War with Georgia. These explanations underlined Russia's right of self-defence for its peacekeepers and citizens in Georgia, Russia's concerns that the US was controlling Georgia for enlarging its 'empire' within Russia's area of influence, South Ossetia's appeal to Russia for military help, necessity to punish President Saakashvili's illegal actions, and Russia's regional power identity and role as the defender of region's stability. According to Stefes and George, these explanations demonstrate "how Russian actors sometimes legitimized international law and sometimes expressed motivations outside the realm of the international legal sphere."[620] This chapter concluded that Russia has instrumentally interpreted international law and norms, particularly the use of force, self-determination, sovereignty and recognition, for pursuing its regional interests.[621]

The fifth chapter focused on the Crimean crisis in Ukraine. It firstly offered the background information on the roots and development of the crisis. Later, the chapter discussed post-Soviet Russian foreign and domestic policy with regard to Crimea, together with the impact of Crimea on Russia's relations with Ukraine and the West. Then it outlined Russia's Crimea policy in the UN Security Council since 2014, when the peninsula first declared its independence from Ukraine and then Russia annexed the region. Lastly, the chapter focused on the main determinants of Russia's Crimea policy.

As explained in the fifth chapter, Russia's objectives with regard to Crimea, particularly Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet, have been decisive in Russia-

[620] Christoph H. Stefes and Julie A. George, "The Battles after the Battle: International Law and the Russia-Georgia Conflict," in *Conflict in the Caucasus: Implications for International Legal Order*, eds. James A. Green and Christopher P. M. Waters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 164.

[621] Roy Allison, "The Russian Case for Military Intervention in Georgia: International Law, Norms and Political Calculation," *European Security* 18, no. 2 (June 2009): 173.

Ukraine relations since 1991.[622] The opposition in Russia, which developed in 1992, criticized President Yeltsin of not defending the interests of Russians living in independent republics – the near abroad – following the fall of the Soviet Union.[623] The Russian leadership, considering the criticisms, paid more attention to Russia's national interests, great power ambitions, and influence in the CIS.[624] Following the electoral victory of communists and nationalists in the December 1993 Duma elections, President Yeltsin and the government gave emphasis to the issue of the Russian diaspora in the near abroad, including Crimea. Although President Yeltsin underlined the protection of Russians particularly in the Baltic region, he followed a conciliatory policy concerning Ukraine. President Yeltsin's amendment of the Russian constitution in 1993, which placed foreign policy under the president's power, had important effects also on Russia-Ukraine relations. President Yeltsin used his power to make Russia-Ukraine relations more stabilize and cooperative.[625]

In 1997, a new era of cooperation prevailed relations between Russia and Ukraine. In May 1997, the Russian and Ukrainian prime ministers signed agreements concerning the division, basing and financial details of the Black Sea Fleet.[626] Following this agreement, on 31 May 1997, Presidents Yeltsin and Kuchma signed the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership, which clarified the basis of Russia-Ukraine relations, established on the principles of

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[622] Roman Wolczuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy, 1991-2000* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 28.

[623] F. Seth Singleton, "Russia and Asia: The Emergence of 'Normal Relations'?" in *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, ed. Roger E. Kanet and Alexander Kozhemiakin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 104.

[624] Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 44.

[625] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 232.

[626] Anders Aslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*, (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015), 67.

mutual respect for territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders, and non-use of force.[627] Russia had reassured its recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty in Crimea and Sevastopol.[628]

Despite the treaty, relations between separatist in Crimea and Russian nationalists continued. Meanwhile, President Kuchma gradually established closer relationships with the EU and NATO, at the expense of the CIS and the CSTO. He tried to develop cooperation between the US and Ukraine, exchanging visits with US President Bill Clinton. In 1997, Ukraine and NATO signed an agreement on 'Distinctive Partnership'.[629] This 'special' partnership between Ukraine and NATO and, especially, the joint military exercise near Crimea in August 1997 increased Russia's concerns with regard to Ukraine's 'western' orientation.[630]

President Putin's foreign and domestic policy approach has been clearly different from President Yeltsin's. While President Yeltsin chose to offer economic profits to his political opponents, President Putin aimed at centralizing political power within Russia and reasserting Russia's great power status abroad. Accordingly, President Putin established a power hierarchy by reducing the powers of regional leaders and weakening political opposition. He pressured Ukraine, also other former Soviet states, to join Russian-led CIS mechanisms. Because of this policy, since Putin's rise to power, Ukrainian authorities face increased difficulty in adjusting their policies

[627] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 69.

[628] Anders Aslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*, (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015), 67.

[629] Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 28.

[630] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 236.

towards Russia and the EU, and not dividing the population into pro-Russian and anti-Russian camps.[631]

In the Ukrainian Presidential elections of November 2004, Yanukovych was announced as the winner of the elections. President Putin immediately congratulated him. Tymoshenko, however, asked the Ukrainian population to protest the elections results. On 22 November, large protests – known as the Orange Revolution – took place in Kiev and throughout Ukraine. In response, the Supreme Court in Ukraine decided a new round of vote to take place on 26 December, in which Yushchenko managed to get 52 percent of the votes.[632]

The leadership in Russia adopted a cautious stance with their initial encounters with the new President Yushchenko, because of President Putin's apparent support for Yanukovych in the 2004 elections. Following the elections, President Yushchenko stated that supplementary agreements to the agreement on the lease of the bases in Sevastopol, which expires in 2017, should be concluded for adjusting Russian Fleet's use of land.[633] President Yushchenko also declared his aspiration for Ukraine's NATO membership. While in the first years of the 2000s, President Putin did not overemphasize Russia's objection NATO enlargement, mainly due to cooperation with the West against terrorism, beginning in 2004 Russian foreign policy started to diverge from the West. Russia started to pressure former Soviet countries who looked for NATO membership. In short, Russia could not establish a partnership with President Yushchenko. The essence of Russia-Ukraine relations was unfolded when President Medvedev postponed appointing Russia's new ambassador to

[631] Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Ukraine as a Cusp State: The politics of reform in the borderland between the EU and Russia," in *The Role, Position and Agency of Cusp States in International Relations*, eds. Marc Herzog and Philip Robins (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2014), 69.

[632] Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 51-52.

[633] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 270.

Ukraine in 2009. He criticized President Yushchenko for his anti-Russian stance, particularly in the issues such as the Black Sea Fleet of Russia, Russia-Georgia war of 2008, Ukraine's NATO aspirations, and Russian gas supplies to Europe.[634]

After the presidential elections of 2010, Yanukovych became the new President of Ukraine. Following his election, Russia-Ukraine relations developed significantly. Accordingly, Russia and Ukraine agreed to prolong Russian Black Sea Fleet's lease of bases in Sevastopol for additional 25 years in return for 30 percent reduction in gas prices. The partnership between Russia and Ukraine, despite improved relations under President Yanukovych, stayed limited. The leadership in Ukraine dropped former aspirations for NATO membership and showed readiness to help Russia enhance its economic existence in Ukraine. However, President Yanukovych refused to sell Naftogas shares to Gazprom and did not accept participating in the Customs Union. He wanted a special relationship format with the Customs Union, which would let Ukraine maintain its EU integration. In October 2013, President Putin offered a reduction in gas prices and promised $15 billion aid to Ukraine, in order to persuade President Yanukovych. Accordingly, at the EU summit in November 2013, President Yanukovych postponed signing of the EU Association Agreement. Following President Yanukovych's refusal to sign the agreement mass demonstrations started in Kiev to protest the decision. Demonstrators were against President Yanukovych's domestic policies and supported a pro-European policy for Ukraine. President Yanukovych rejected conditions of the opposition and resorted to force for restoring order. Consequently, the level of protests and violence increased. Finally, President Yanukovych fled to Russia. Russia did not recognize the new Ukrainian government. Russia took control of Crimea, recognized its independence after a referendum, and finally annexed the peninsula.[635]

[634] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4, (2015): 282-283.

[635] Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4, (2015): 284-285.

As noted in the fifth chapter, in order to justify Russia's actions in Crimea in 2014, Russian representatives in the UN Security Council focused on international norms and rules, such as the right of self-defence for the Russian Black Sea Fleet, and Russian and Russian speaking peoples in Crimea, Crimea's appeal to Russia for help, and the right of self-determination. This chapter has argued that Russia's Crimea policy was based on geopolitics and strategic objectives of Russia, mainly in affirming its authority in the former Soviet space. These objectives included three core elements: keeping Ukraine out of the EU and NATO; regional motivations concerning pro-Western states within the CIS; Crimea's strategic value.[636]

[636] Roy Allison, "Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6, (November 2014): 1268-1269.

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TURKISH SUMMARY

RUSYA'NIN BİRLEŞMİŞ MİLLETLER GÜVENLİK KONSEYİ'NDE AYRILIKÇILIĞA YÖNELİK SİYASETİ

Bu tez Rusya'nın Kosova (Sırbistan), Abhazya ve Güney Osetya (Gürcistan), ve Kırım'daki (Ukrayna) ayrılıkçı hareketlere yönelik Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde 1999'dan sonraki siyasetini incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nin gündemine getirilen bu farklı ayrılıkçı hareketlere karşı Rusya'nın tutumunun kıyaslanması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, ilk olarak etnik çatışmalar ve ayrılıkçı hareketlerin uluslararası ilişkiler boyutu ile Uluslararası İlişkiler teorileri literatürü tartışılmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Sovyet-sonrası Rusya'nın Kosova, Abhazya, Güney Osetya, ve Kırım'a yönelik dış ve iç politikası tartışılmaktadır. Sonrasında, Sovyet-sonrası Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler çatısı altında bu bölgelere yönelik tutum ve politikaları incelenmektedir. Bu tez, Rusya'nın ayrılıkçı hareketlere ilişkin değişkenlik gösteren tepkilerinin altında yatan etkenleri belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Rusya'nın Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde ayrılıkçılık meselesine Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki yaklaşımının incelenmesi sadece Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler'deki siyasetini anlamak için değil aynı zamanda Rusya'nın daha geniş kapsamlı dış politika seçimlerini kavramak için de çok önemlidir.

Bu çalışma bazı uzmanların öne sürdüğü gibi Rusya'nın ayrılıkçı hareketler üzerine Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde yapılan tartışmalar sırasında kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili meselelere yaptığı göndermelerin Rusya'nın ilgili kimliklere olan desteğini ve uluslararası hukuk prensiplerine olan bağlılığını yansıtmadığını, aksine Rusya'nın kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili meselelere yaklaşımının esasen bölgesel güç ve etkisini arttırmaya yönelik pragmatik kaygılarına bağlı olarak şekillendiği fikrini savunmaktadır. Bu argüman Rusya'nın

uluslararası hukuk ilkelerine ve kimlik meselelerine yaklaşımındaki tutarsızlıklarla desteklenmektedir.

Bu çalışmada birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan faydalanılmıştır. Özellikle Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki temsilcilerinin Kosova, Abhazya, Güney Osetya ve Kırım meseleleri hakkında gerçekleştirilmiş toplantılardaki resmi söylem ve argümanlarına atıflar yapılmaktadır. Bu belgeler dışında Rusya Devlet Başkanları, Başbakanları, Dışişleri Bakanları ve bazı bürokratlarının açıklamalarına yer verilmiştir. Bunlar dışında, Rusya'nın çeşitli dış politika ve milli güvenlik belgelerinden, Başkanlık kararnamelerinden ve türlü Birleşmiş Milletler belgelerinden de faydalanılmıştır. Bu tezde ayrıca çeşitli akademisyenler, uzmanlar, araştırma merkezleri ve uluslararası misyonlar tarafından üretilmiş akademik kitaplar, kitap bölümleri, makaleler, raporlar, iç ve dış siyasetine dair analitik değerlendirmeler kullanılmıştır. Bu kaynaklara ek olarak, Nisan-Kasım 2015 tarihleri arasında Amerika'nın New York ve Washington şehirlerinde akademisyenler, uzmanlar, diplomatlar ve Birleşmiş Milletler personeli ile gerçekleştirilen mülakatlardan tezin konusuyla ilgili farklı görüş ve değerlendirmeler elde edilmiştir. Bu veriler Rusya temsilcilerinin resmi söylemleri ile karşılaştırılmıştır.

Rusya Kosova'daki ayrılıkçı harekete destek vermemiş ve Kosova'nın 2008'de tek taraflı olarak ilan ettiği bağımsızlık ilanını reddetmiş. Fakat Rusya bu politikasıyla çelişen bir yaklaşımla, Abhazya, Güney Osetya ve Kırım'daki ayrılıkçı hareketleri desteklemiş, Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'nın 2008'de, Kırım'ın ise 2014'de tek taraflı olarak ilan ettikleri bağımsızlıklarını tanımıştır. Kırım örneğinde, Rusya bu bölgenin ayrılıkçılığa yönelik politikalarını desteklemekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda bölgeyi ilhak ederek topraklarına katmıştır. Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki temsilcileri, Rusya'nın bu bölgelere yönelik değişkenlik gösteren siyasetini [destek vermemek, bağımsızlığı tanımamak/ destek vermek, bağımsızlığı tanımak (ilhak etmek)] temellendirmeye çalışırken temel olarak benzer normatif ve hukuk kurallarına, özellikle kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili meselelere vurgu yapmışlardır. Rus temsilcilerin kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili değindikleri

başlıca konular şunlar olmuştur: meşru müdafaa, bir ülkenin sınırları dışındaki soydaş ve dindaşlarını koruması, insan hakları, demokrasi, insanı müdahale, güç kullanımının yasak olması, toprak bütünlüğü ve özerklik. Rus temsilciler bu benzer konulara değinerek Rusya'nın ilgili siyasetini savunmaya çalışırken, Rusya Kosova, Abhazya, Güney Osetya, ve Kırım'da farklı politikalar izlemiştir.

Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki temsilcileri, Rusya'nın ayrılıkçılık meselesiyle ilgili takip etmiş olduğu değişken politikaları ve ayrıca yukarıda belirtilen her bir bölgeye yönelik özel stratejisini meşrulaştırmak için kimlik ve uluslararası hukuk meselelerini stratejik ve seçici bir yaklaşımla Rusya'nın bölgesel gücünü arttırmak için birer araç olarak kullanmıştır. Bu düşünceden hareketle, bu tez Rusya'nın kimlik ve uluslararası hukuka pragmatik bir açıdan yaklaştığını savunmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, Rusya'nın Kosova, Abhazya, Güney Osetya ve Kırım'daki ayrılıkçı hareketlere yönelik Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki siyasetini incelemek ve bu ayrılıkçı hareketlere ilişkin Rusya'nın değişkenlik gösteren tepkilerinin altında yatan etkenleri belirlemek için Uluslararası İlişkiler teorilerinden Neoklasik Realist yaklaşım kullanılmaktadır. Bu yaklaşıma göre devletlerin dış politikalarını anlayabilmek için uluslararası sistem kaynaklı baskıların yanı sıra, bu baskıların devletler tarafından nasıl algılandığının da araştırılması gerekmektedir. Uluslararası yapı Rusya'nın bu üç bölgeye yönelik siyasetini belirlese de, Rusya'daki karar alıcıların, özellikle de devlet başkanlarının uluslararası yapıyı değerlendirme şekilleri, Rusya içinden kaynaklanan çeşitli engel ve aynı zamanda teşvikler, Rusya'nın Kosova, Abhazya, Güney Osetya ve Kırım politikalarını etkilemiştir.

Bu tez altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Tezin birinci bölümü olan giriş kısmında bu çalışmanın argümanı, teorik altyapısı, kapsamı, amacı ve tezde kullanılan araştırma metodu anlatılmıştır. Giriş bölümünden sonraki ikinci bölümde temel Uluslararası İlişkiler teorileri ve bu teorilerin ülkelerin dış politikalarını açıklarken kullandıkları

yaklaşımlar, her teorinin güçlü ve zayıf olduğu yönleri de ele alınarak açıklanmıştır. Bu bağlamda tezde kullanılan "Neoklasik Realist" Uluslararası İlişkiler yaklaşımının temel özelliklerine, bu yaklaşımın dış politika analizi çalışmalarına olan katkılarına ve bu çalışmada kullanılan analitik altyapıya odaklanılmıştır.

Üçüncü bölümde Kosova'daki ayrılıkçılık incelemektedir. Bu bağlamda, öncelikle Kosova'da ortaya çıkan ayrılıkçı hareketin kökleri ve gelişimi anlatılmaktadır. Sonrasında Rusya'nın Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Kosova'ya yönelik iç ve dış siyaseti incelenmektedir. Ayrıca Rusya'nın Sırbistan ve Batılı ülkelerle olan ilişkileri Kosova meselesi bağlamında tartışılmaktadır. Ardından, Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde Kosova'ya yönelik resmi siyaseti, özellikle Kosova'nın 2008'de tek taraflı olarak bağımsızlığını ilan etmesinden sonraki dönemde irdelenmektedir. Üçüncü bölümün sonunda Rusya'nın Kosova siyasetinin kaynakları belirlenmektedir.

Üçüncü bölümde belirtildiği üzere, Rusya'nın Sırbistan'a olan desteği hem Birinci Dünya Savaşı öncesinde hem de Yugoslavya'nın dağılmasını izleyen dönemde, özellikle de NATO güçlerinin Kosova'daki Arnavut nüfusu korumak amacıyla Sırbistan hedeflerini vurduğu 1999 Kosova krizi boyunca daimi olmuştur. Krizin başından beri Rusya Batı'nın Miloseviç'e yönelik suçlamalarını reddetmiştir. Genel olarak, Rusya'daki elitler Sırplara Kosova'da gerçekleştirilen acımasızlıklarla ilgili yöneltilen suçlamaları görmezden gelmiş veya önemsememişlerdir. Bu anlamda, Rusya Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nin Yugoslav ordusu ve Sırp güçlerinin Kosovalı Arnavutlara karşı eylemlerini kınayan Nisan 1999 tarihli kararını veto etmiştir. Rusya, Sırpların Kosova krizi boyunca ki eylem ve siyasetini makul göstermek için düzenli olarak Kosova'daki Arnavut nüfusu terörizm, uyuşturucu ticareti ve köktendinciliğe dayalı suçlamalarla kötüleme yoluna gitmiştir. Rusya bu amaçla ayrıca Batı'nın Sırplara ayrımcılık yaptığı görüşünü öne çıkarmaya çalışmıştır. NATO'yu Sırplara karşı önemli insani ve maddi kayıplara neden olan 'soykırım' yapmakla suçlamıştır.

Rusya'daki hâkim görüşe göre, Amerika'nın liderliğinde gerçekleştirilen NATO'nun Kosova operasyonu Sırbistan'ın dağılmasını amaçlamaktaydı. Sırbistan tam da bu amaçla Avrupa'dan izole edilmişti. Rusya, Amerika ve NATO'nun bu operasyonu hiçbir NATO üyesi devlet tehdit altında olmadığı halde gerçekleştirildiğini belirtmiş ve bu uluslararası müdahalenin koşul ve sınırları konusunda Rusya ile ortak bir zemin bulma zorunluluğunda kalmamak için bu süreçte Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nin pas geçildiği fikrini savunmuştur. Tüm bu gelişmeler, Rusya açısından NATO genişlemesiyle ilgili kaygılarını doğrulamıştır.

NATO'nun Kosova operasyonu Rusya'nın kendi güvenliğiyle ilgili kaygılarını önemli ölçüde etkilemiştir. Bu operasyon Rusya'nın Batı'daki güvenlik meselelerine yaklaşımı etkilemiş ve Rusya'nın NATO genişlemesine karşı oluşunun temel nedeni olmaya devam etmektedir. Rusya ve NATO arasındaki güven ve işbirliğine zarar veren NATO operasyonundan sonra Rus Dış Politikası bir kez daha ülkenin kayıplarını azaltmaya odaklanmıştır. Kosova krizi Rusya'nın ekonomik olarak Batı'ya olan bağımlılığını, özellikle de IMF yardımlarının ve Rusya doğal kaynakları için batı pazarlarının önemini göstermiştir. Kosova'daki çatışma Rusya'nın sınırlı bir ulus-ötesi etkiye sahip olduğunu ve ülkenin içinde bulunduğu jeostratejik çıkmazı ortaya çıkarması açısından sembolik bir değere de sahiptir. NATO karşıtlığı ve Sırplara verilen destek Rusya'daki farklı siyasi geçmişlere sahip insanların bir araya gelmesini sağlamıştır. NATO operasyonu Rusya'da siyasi elit ve halkın büyük bir bölümündeki Amerika karşıtlığının güçlenmesine neden olmuştur.

Kosova krizi ayrıca Rusya'nın küresel düzeydeki fikirlerini de etkilemiştir. Ruslar Birleşmiş Milletler'e dayalı olarak kurulan uluslararası hukuk ve uluslararası düzenin Rusya için çok kötü sonuçlar doğuracak şekilde çökmeye başladığı konusunda kaygılar duyuyorlardı. Rusya'daki uzmanlar uluslararası sistemin Birleşmiş Milletler'in egemenliğine dayandığını ve NATO'nun Birleşmiş Milletler'in onayı olmadan güç kullanmak yoluyla bu düzenin temellerini hedef aldığını vurgulamışlardır. Rusya, NATO'nun Kosova operasyonunu, birçok uluslararası anlaşmanın herhangi bir devlete karşı güç kullanımını kınamasından hareketle, bir

saldırı eylemi olarak yorumlamıştır. Rusya özellikle insan hakları söylemiyle NATO'nun herhangi bir devlete müdahale edebileceği bir uygulamanın ortaya çıkmasına karşı çıkmıştır.

Bu amaçla Rusya Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nin işlev ve etkinliğini korumaya çalışmış ve insani argümanlar kullanılarak herhangi bir devletin iç işlerine müdahaleyi mümkün kılan yeni bir uluslararası sistemin ortaya çıkışını engellemeye çalışmıştır. Rusya'daki bir başka endişe de Rusya'nın yeni uluslararası düzendeki rolü ve konumu üzerine olmuştur. Rusya dünya siyasetini belirleyen ana kararları alan ülkeler grubunun bir üyesi olarak kabul edilip edilmediği konusunda kaygı duymaktaydı. Kosova krizi öncesi ve sonrasındaki gelişmeler Rusya'nın bu kaygılarının ne kadar gerçek olduğunu göstermiş ve Rusya'nın küresel gelişmeler konusunda kenara itildiğine dair Rusya'daki mevcut düşünceyi kuvvetlendirmiştir.

Kosova'nın uluslararası statüsü, özellikle Putin'in ikinci başkanlık döneminde daha da gergin hala gelen Rusya-Batı ilişkilerinde oldukça tartışma yaratan bir mesele olmuştur. Amerika, NATO ve Avrupa Birliği Kosova'nın bağımsızlığını savunurken, Rusya Sırbistan'la beraber Kosova'nın Sırbistan'a bağlı kalması konusunda ısrarcı olmuştur. Kosova'nın bağımsızlığının, Rusya ve Sırbistan'ın karşı çıkmalarına ve Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki çabalarına rağmen batılı ülkelerin birçoğu tarafından, özellikle de Amerika tarafından tanınması Rusya ve Amerika arasındaki sorunların derinleşmesine neden olmuştur. Ruslar için, Kosova'nın bağımsızlığının tanınması, Amerika'nın uluslararası hukuku, Birleşmiş Milletleri ve AGİT'i hiçe sayarak Rusya'yı önemsizleştirdiği şeklindeki kaygıları doğrulamıştır.

Tezin üçüncü bölümünde belirtildiği gibi, Rusya'nın Kosova'nın bağımsızlığına karşı oluşunu temellendirebilmek için Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki Rus temsilciler kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili meselelere göndermeler yapmışlardır. Temsilciler öne sürdükleri argüman ve açıklamalarda Kosova'daki Sırp

nüfusla ilgili insani ve insan haklarıyla ilgili kaygıları, ekonomik, sosyal ve dinle ilgili meseleleri, ayrıca Kosova'nın bağımsızlık ilanının toprak bütünlüğü gibi uluslararası prensiplere aykırı olduğu şeklindeki görüşleri öne çıkarmışlardır. Bu bölüm Rusya'nın Kosova'nın bağımsızlığına karşı oluşunun temel olarak güç siyasetine dayalı değerlendirmelere bağlı olduğunu sonucuna varmıştır. Rusya, özellikle Putin'in başkanlığı döneminde, bölgesel ve uluslararası etkisini artırmaya çalışmış ve Kosova'nın siyasi statüsüyle ilgili tartışmalar Rusya ile batı arasındaki fikir ayrılıklarının arttığı bir ortamda sürdürülmüştür. Amerika ve NATO'nun 1999 yılındaki Kosova politikaları da Rusya'nın Kosova meselesine yaklaşımını etkilemiştir.

Tezin dördüncü bölümü Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'daki ayrılıkçı hareketleri incelemektedir. Öncelikle bu iki bölgedeki ayrılıkçılığın tarihsel gelişimi tartışıldıktan sonra, Sovyet-sonrası Rusya'nın Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'ya yönelik iç ve dış politikaları anlatılmaktadır. Ayrıca Rusya'nın Gürcistan ve batıyla olan ilişkilerinde bu bölgelere bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan gelişmelere de değinilmektedir. Sonrasında, Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde Abhazya ve Güney Osetya ile ilgili resmi siyaseti, özellikle bu iki bölgenin 2008'de bağımsızlıklarını ilan etmeleri ve Rusya tarafından tanınmalarından sonraki dönemde irdelenmektedir. Son olarak, Rusya'nın Abhazya ve Güney Osetya siyaseti belirleyen unsurlar belirlenmektedir.

Dördüncü bölümde anlatıldığı üzere, Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra Rusya'daki yöneticiler ilk önce Gürcistan'ın bağımsızlığını ve toprak bütünlüğünü desteklediler. Ağustos 1991-Mart 1992 tarihleri arasında, ortaya çıkan Abhazya sorununa yönelik özel bir tutum takınmadılar ve Gürcistan'ın bu meselede kendi siyasetini takip etmesine izin verdiler. O tarihlerde Rus dış politikasının belirlenmesinde liberal ve batıcı fikirler etkin bir rol oynamaktaydı ve yapılan tartışma ve izlenen politikalar Abhazya sorununu göz ardı etmekteydi. Bu süreçte, Rus yöneticiler Güney Osetya'daki sorunun çözümüne yönelik fikirleri tartışmaktaydı. Ağustos 1992'de başlayan Gürcistan-Abhazya savaşından sonra, bu

mesele üzerindeki tartışmalar yoğunlaştı. Fakat Rusya'nın Abhazya'ya yönelik yaklaşımı, iç siyasetteki mücadeleler ve birçok siyasi aktörün varlığına bağlı olarak tutarsız olmuştur. Dönemin Rus siyasi elitleri arasında Abhazya meselesiyle ilgili farklı görüşler mevcuttu. 1992'nın sonlarına doğru Başkan Yeltsin ve Yüksek Sovyet arasındaki anlaşmazlıklar artmakta ve iki taraf da kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda bölgeye yönelik farklı politikalar takip etmekteydi. Abhazya'daki çatışmaların çoğalması Yeltsin ve Parlamento arasında Eylül/Ekim 1993'de ortaya çıkan ihtilafla aynı zamana denk gelmişti.

Başkan Yeltsin iç siyaset baskılarını dikkate alarak Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'ya yönelik stratejilerini birçok kere değiştirdi. İlk olarak, Başkan Yeltsin, Başkan Gamsakhurdia'nın bu iki bölgeyi bertaraf etmeye yönelik politikalarını görmezden gelmişti. Sonrasında, Güney Osetya'daki krizin Kuzey Osetya'yı da etkilemeye başlaması ve Rusya'nın içinde tepkilere neden olmasını takiben, Başkan Yeltsin Başkan Gamsakhurdia'nın ilgili politikalarına karşı çıkmaya başladı. Çeçenistan'daki sorunların artmaya başlaması ve Kuzey Osetya'nın sergileyeceği işbirliğinin bu sorunların çözümde çok önemli oluşu Gürcistan'ın Güney Osetya siyasetine karşı olmayı gerekli kıldı. Rusya'nın bu kaygıları da bölgeye yönelik izlenen politikalardaki değişimlerde etkin olmuştur.

Başkan Yeltsin döneminde, Rusya'nın Abhazya meselesiyle ilgili söylemi büyük çoğunlukla tutarlı olmuştur. Rusya Gürcistan'ın toprak bütünlüğüne olan desteğini sıkça tekrarlamış ve Abhazya'nın resmi olarak bağımsız olmasını reddetmiştir. Fakat gerçekte, 1992'deki sivil savaştan beri Rusya açık bir şekilde Abhazya'nın bağımsızlığını desteklemiştir. Rusya'nın bu tutumu, Gürcistan'daki Rus askeri üsleri ve silahlı kuvvetleriyle ilgili sorunlarda veya barışı koruma görevlerini yerine getirmesine bağlı ortaya çıkan sıkıntılarda da gözlemlenebilir.

1991'den 1996 yılına kadar, Rusya'daki siyasi elitlerin kaygılarını belirleyen faktörler içinde etnik ve siyasi olanlar etkili olmuş olsa da, asıl belirleyici olan

stratejik meseleler olmuştur. Rusya Gürcistan'daki ilk askeri müdahalesini henüz tutarlı ve merkezileştirilmiş bir politikası yokken ve farklı amaçlara sahip birçok aktörün var olduğu bir iç siyaset ortamında yapmıştır. Sonunda, Rusya'nın Gürcistan'daki sorunlara yönelik davranışları, ilgili çatışmaları bitirmek ve Gürcistan'ın toprak bütünlüğünü korumaya odaklanmış resmi bir stratejiyle beraber daha tutarlı bir hâl almıştır. Bu krizler süresince gözlemlenen belirsizlikler devlet politikalarının oluşturulmasında kapsamlı dış politika fikirlerinin önemini göstermiştir. Ekim 1993'den Haziran 1996'ya kadarki süreçte Rusya'nın Gürcistan politikası temel olarak Rusya'nın bölgedeki etkinliğini koruma, çatışmaları durdurma ve Gürcistan'la olan mevcut askeri ilişkileri devam ettirme hedeflerine dayanmaktaydı. Gürcistan'ın Rusya'ya kendi üzerinde daha fazla siyasi ve askeri etki kurmasını sağlayacak imtiyazlar vermesinden sonra Rusya hükümeti resmi olarak Gürcistan'ı desteklemeye başladı.

Rusya-Gürcistan ilişkileri 2003 Gül devriminden önce Şevardnadze yönetiminin sonlarına doğru ciddi bir şekilde bozuldu. Rusya Gürcistan'ı Çeçen teröristlere ev sahipliği yapmakla suçluyordu ve Gürcistan ise Rusya'nın topraklarındaki askeri üsleri kapatmakta isteksiz davranmasından kaygılanıyordu. Rusya, Gürcistan'ın Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'daki egemenliğini zayıflamasına neden olan Rus pasaportlarının dağıtımını hızlandırdı. Diğer taraftan Rusya, Şevardnadze yönetimindeki Gürcistan'ın NATO üyesi olma isteğinden ve Rusya'yı devre dışı bırakacak olan Bakü-Ceyhan boru hattı projesine katılmasından kaygılanıyordu. Gül Devrimi ve Şevardnadze'nin görevden uzaklaşması sonrasında Rusya ve Gürcistan ilişkilerini düzeltme imkânı buldular. Yeni devlet başkanı Saakaşvili Rusya'yla daha iyi ve yakın ilişkiler kurulmasının acil bir öncelik olduğunu belirtti. İki ülkenin Abhazya ve Güney Osetya meseleleri üzerine işbirliği yapabileceği umuluyordu.

Fakat iki ülke arasında çeşit anlaşmazlıklar devam etmekteydi. Gürcistan Rusya'dan topraklarındaki askeri üslerini kapatmasını isterken Rusya bu meseleyi yavaştan alıyordu. Gürcistan'ın batıya yönelmesi kararlı bir şekilde devam etti. Nisan 2004'te Başkan Saakaşvili Gürcistan'ın NATO üyeliği konusundaki isteğini ilan etti. NATO-

Gürcistan arasındaki ilişkiler devam ediyordu. Bakü-Ceyhan projesi planlandığı şekilde sürdürülüyordu. Abhazya ve Güney Osetya sorununun çözümü zor bir hal almıştı. Rusya-Gürcistan arasındaki işbirliği Gürcistan'ın Ağustos 2004'te Güney Osetya'da gerçekleştirdiği müdahale sonrasında bozuldu. Karşılık olarak Rusya Gürcistan'la olan tüm diyaloğunu kesti ve Gürcistan vatandaşlarına vize vermeyi durdurdu. 2005'te Rusya Gürcistan'daki teröristlere karşı önleyici saldırılarda bulunabileceğini tekrarladı. Diğer taraftan Gürcistan yönetimi de Rusya'yı Gürcistan'daki ayrılıkçı hareketlere destek vermekle suçluyordu ve Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'daki Rusya'nın barışı koruma güçlerini bir tehdit olarak algılanıyordu. Bu bağlamda, Gürcistan parlamentosu Şubat 2006'da bu bölgelerdeki Rus kuvvetlerinin durumunu sorgulayan bir karar çıkardı. Rusya karşılık vermek için Gürcü şarabının Rusya'ya ithalatını yasakladı ve Gürcistan'la olan sınırını kapattı. İki ülke arasında tekrardan işbirliğini kurma hayalleri Eylül 2006'daki ajan krizi ile son buldu. Gürcistan'ın dört Rus ajanını yakalaması sonrasında, Rusya Gürcistan'daki askerlerini geri çekmeyi durdurdu, Gürcistan'la olan her türlü ulaşım ve haberleşmeyi kesti, Rusya'da faaliyet gösteren Gürcistan şirketleri çok sıkı denetlemelere tabi tuttu ve birçok Gürcüyü Rusya'dan sınır dışı etti. Ayrıca Gazprom Rus gazının fiyatını arttırmayı ve gaz sevkiyatını durdurmayı değerlendirdi.

Başkan Saakaşvili Rusya'yla yaşanan sıkıntıları batıyla olan ilişkileri geliştirmek için kullandı. Gürcistan'ın NATO üyeliği konusundaki isteği devam ediyordu. Gürcistan Ekim 2007'de Rusya'nın Abhazya'daki barışı koruma görevini sonlandırmak istediğini ilan etti. Kosova'nın 2008 bağımsızlığını ilan etmesi ve Rusya'nın Abhazya'ya karşı uyguladığı yaptırımları kaldırması iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin normale dönmesini zorlaştırdı. Tüm bu gelişmeler Gürcistan ve Abhazya/Güney Osetya arasındaki silahlı çatışmaların çoğaldığı bir dönemde gerçekleşiyordu. Rusya ve Gürcistan arasındaki Ağustos 2008 savaşından sonra Rusya Abhazya ve Güney Osetya bölgelerinin bağımsızlıklarını tanıdı.

Tezin dördüncü bölümde belirtildiği gibi, Rusya yönetimi ve Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki temsilcileri Rusya'nın Ağustos 2008 savaşı öncesi

ve sonrasındaki eylemlerini temellendirmek için altı gerekçenin altını çizmişlerdir. Bu gerekçeler açıklanırken Rusya'nın Gürcistan'daki barışı koruma kuvvetlerine ve Rusya vatandaşlarına yönelik öz savunma hakkına, Amerika'nın Gürcistan'ı Rusya'nın etki alanındaki coğrafyaya girebilmek için kullandığı şeklindeki Rusya'daki kaygıya, Güney Osetya'nın Rusya'dan askeri yardım isteğinde bulunmuş olmasına, Başkan Saakaşvili'nin kanunsuz eylemlerinin cezalandırılması gerekliliğine, Rusya'nın bölgesel bir güç oluşuna ve bölgedeki istikrarı koruma görevine odaklanmışlardır. Bu bölüm Rusya'nın kimlik meselesini ve uluslararası hukuku, özellikle güç kullanımı, egemenlik, halkaların kendi kaderlerini tâyin hakkı, ve uluslararası tanınma gibi kavramları kendi bölgesel çıkarları için araç olarak kullandığı sonucuna varmıştır.

Tezin beşinci bölümü Kırım meselesine odaklanmaktadır. Bu bölümde öncelikle Kırım sorunun tarihsel kökleri ve gelişimi incelenmektedir. Ardından Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Rusya'nın Kırım'a yönelik iç ve dış politikası tartışılmaktadır. Ayrıca Kırım meselesi ışığında Rusya'nın Ukrayna ve batıyla olan ilişkileri de ele alınmaktadır. Bu bölümde, Rusya'nın Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde Kırım ile ilgili resmi siyaseti, özellikle bölgenin 2014'de bağımsızlığını ilan etmesi ve Rusya tarafından ilhak edilmesinden sonraki dönemde irdelenmektedir. Son olarak, Rusya'nın Kırım siyaseti belirleyen unsurlar belirlenmektedir.

Beşinci bölümde tartışıldığı gibi, 1991'den itibaren Rusya'nın Kırım'la ilgili, özellikle de Sivastopol şehri ve Karadeniz filosuna yönelik amaçları Rusyave Ukrayna arasındaki ilişkilerde belirleyici olmuştur. Rusya'da ortaya çıkan iç muhalefet Başkan Yeltsin'i Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra ortaya çıkan devletlerdeki Rus nüfusun haklarını yeteri kadar korumamakla eleştiriyordu. Rusya yönetimi bu eleştirileri dikkate alarak Rusya'nın ulusal çıkarlarına, büyük güç olarak kalma ihtiraslarına ve Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu coğrafyasındaki etkisine daha fazla önem vermeye başladı. 1993 Duma seçimlerinde milliyetçi ve komünist adayların başarılı olmasından sonra Başkan Yeltsin ve hükümeti Rus diasporası meselesine odaklanmaya başladı. Başkan Yeltsin Baltık bölgesindeki Rusların

korunmasının önemi vurgularken, Ukrayna'ya yönelik daha uzlaşmacı bir yaklaşım sergilemiştir. Başkan Yeltsin'in Rusya anayasasını 1993'te değiştirerek dış politikayı başkanın yetkisi altına alması Rusya-Ukrayna ilişkilerini önemli bir şekilde etkilemiştir. Başkan Yeltsin siyasi gücünü iki ülke arasındaki işbirliğini arttırmak ve ilişkileri daha istikrarlı yapmak için kullanmıştır.

1997'de Rusya-Ukrayna arasında yeni bir işbirliği dönemi başlamıştır. Mayıs 1997'de iki ülkenin başbakanları Karadeniz filosunun paylaşımı ve kullanım ücretleriyle ilgili bir takım anlaşmalar imzaladılar. Bu anlaşma sonrasında, Başkan Yeltsin ve Başkan Kuçma karşılıklı olarak toprak bütünlüğüne saygı, mevcut sınırların dokunulmazlığı ve güç kullanımının yasaklanması gibi prensipler üzerine inşa edilen Rusya-Ukrayna ilişkilerinin temelini oluşturan 1997 tarihli Dostluk, İşbirliği ve Ortaklık Anlaşmasını imzaladılar. Böylece, Rusya Ukrayna'nın Kırım ve Sivastopol'deki egemenliğini tanıdığını teyit etti.

Bu anlaşmaya rağmen, Rusya'daki milliyetçiler ve Kırım'daki ayrılıkçılar arasındaki ilişkiler devam etmiştir. Bu arada, Başkan Kuçma kademeli olarak Ukrayna'nın Avrupa Birliği ve NATO ile olan ilişkilerini geliştirmeye başlamıştır. Amerika ve Ukrayna arasındaki ilişkileri ikili ziyaretler yaparak geliştirmeye çalışmıştır. 1997'de Ukrayna ve NATO 'özel ortaklık' anlaşmasını imzalamışlardır. Bu özel ortaklık, özellikle de 1997 yazında Kırım yakınlarında gerçekleştirilen NATO-Ukrayna ortak tatbikatı Rusya'nın Ukrayna'nın batıya yönelişiyle ilgili kaygılarını arttırmıştır.

Başkan Putin'in iç ve dış siyasete yaklaşımı Başkan Yeltsin'den çok farklı olmuştur. Başkan Yeltsin siyasi rakiplerine ekonomik çıkarlar sunmayı tercih ederken, Başkan Putin Rusya'daki siyasi gücü merkezileştirmeyi ve Rusya'nın tekrardan büyük bir güç olmasını amaçlamıştır. Bu amaçla, Rusya'daki bölgesel yöneticilerin ve muhalefetin güçlerini azaltarak iç siyasette bir güç hiyerarşisi oluşturmuştur. Ukrayna ve diğer eski Sovyet ülkelerini Rusya'nın egemen olduğu Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu yapılarına dâhil olmaya zorlamıştır. Bu politikalar sonucu,

özellikle Putin'in başkan olduğu dönemlerde, Ukrayna'daki yönetimler ülkelerinin Rusya ve Avrupa Birliği'ne yönelik politikalarını belirlerken ve bu süreçte Ukrayna halkını Rusya taraftarlığı ve karşıtlığı üzerinden bölmemek için çok zorlanmışlardır.

Ukrayna'da gerçekleştirilen Kasım 2004 başkanlık seçimlerinden sonra Yanukoviç ilk önce seçimin kazananı olarak duyurulmuştu. Başkan Putin de kendisini hemen tebrik etmiştir. Fakat Yuliya Timoşenko Ukrayna halkından seçim sonuçlarını kabul etmemelerini ve protesto etmelerini istedi. Böylece Ukrayna'da Turuncu Devrim başlamış oldu ve başkanlık seçiminin tekrar edilmesine karar verildi. Tekrarlanan seçimlerde Viktor Yuşçenko oyların yaklaşık % 52'sini alarak başkan seçildi.

Rusya yönetimi Başkan Yuşçenko ile olan ilk münasebetlerinde, Başkan Putin'in Yanukoviç'a olan açık desteğinden dolayı temkinli olmayı tercih etti. Seçimlerden sonra Başkan Yuşçenko Rusya'nın 2017'de sona erecek olan Sivastopol'deki üstleri kiralama anlaşmasına bazı ek anlaşmaların yapılması gerektiğini vurguladı. Ayrıca Ukrayna'nın NATO üyeliği konusundaki kararlılığını bildirdi. Başkan Putin 2000'li yılların başında temel olarak teröre karşı batıyla yapılan işbirliği nedeniyle NATO genişlemesine karşı aşırı tepkiler vermekten kaçınıyordu. Fakat 2004 itibariyle Rusya batıdan uzaklaşmaya başladı. Rusya NATO üyesi olmaya çalışan eski Sovyet ülkeleri üzerinde baskılar kurmaya başladı. Kısaca, Rusya Başkan Yuşçenko yönetimindeki Ukrayna ile işine yarayacak bir ortaklık kurmayı başaramadı. Bu dönemdeki Rusya-Ukrayna ilişkilerinin kötü durumu 2009 yılında Başkan Medvedev'in Rusya'nın Ukrayna büyükelçisini atama işlemini geciktirmesiyle iyice ortaya çıkmıştır. Başkan Medvedev, Başkan Yuşçenko'yu özellikle Karadeniz filosu, 2008 Rus-Gürcü savaşı, Ukrayna'nın NATO hedefleri ve Rusya'nın Avrupa'ya gaz sevkiyatı meselelerindeki Rusya karşıtı tutumundan dolayı eleştirmiştir.

2010 yılında gerçekleştirilen Ukrayna başkanlık seçimlerinden Yanukoviç zaferle çıkmayı başardı. Başkan Yanukoviç döneminde Rusya-Ukrayna ilişkileri çok önemli ölçüde gelişti. Bu bağlamda, iki ülke Rus gazına %30 indirim yapılması karşılığında

Rusya'nın Karadeniz filosunun Sivastopol'deki üsleri 25 yıl daha kiralaması konusunda anlaşmaya vardılar. Gelişen ilişkilere rağmen iki ülke arasındaki ortaklık sınırlı bir düzeyde kaldı. Ukrayna yönetimi önceki yönetimlerin NATO hedeflerinden vazgeçti ve Rusya'nın ekonomik olarak Ukrayna'da etkin olmasına yardım etme konusunda hazır olduklarını gösterdi. Fakat Başkan Yanukoviç Ukrayna'nın gaz şirketi olan Naftogas'ın hisselerini Gazprom'a satmayı kabul etmedi ve Rusya'nın önerdiği gümrük birliğine girmeyi istemedi. Ukrayna'nın Avrupa Birliği ile olan ilişkilerini devam ettirmesini sağlayacak şekilde Gümrük birliğiyle özel bir ilişki kurulmasını talep etti. Ekim 2013'te, Başkan Putin Başkan Yanukoviç'i ikna edebilmek için gaz fiyatlarında ek indirimler yapma ve Ukrayna'ya 15 milyon dolar tutarında yardım gönderme sözü verdi. Böylece Kasım 2013'te gerçekleştirilen Avrupa Birliği zirvesinde Başkan Yanukoviç Avrupa Birliği ile Ortaklık Anlaşması'nı imzalamaktan vazgeçti. Bu karardan sonra Kiev'de kararı protesto etmek için gösteriler başladı. Göstericiler Başkan Yanukoviç'in izlediği iç siyasete karşılardı ve Ukrayna'nın Avrupa yanlısı politikalar takip etmesini savunuyorlardı. Başkan Yanukoviç'in protestocuların isteklerini reddederek düzeni tekrar kurmak için şiddete başvurması durumun daha da kötüye gitmesine neden oldu. Gösteriler sonunda Başkan Yanukoviç görevini bırakarak Rusya'ya kaçtı. Ukrayna'daki yeni yönetimi tanımayan Rusya, önce Kırım'ın bağımsızlığını kabul etti ve sonrasında bölgeyi kendi topraklarına kattı.

Tezin beşinci bölümünde belirtildiği gibi, Rusya'nın 2014'deki Kırım siyasetini haklı göstermek ve temellendirebilmek için Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki Rus temsilciler kimlik ve uluslararası hukukla ilgili meselelere göndermeler yapmışlardır. Bu bağlamda, Rus diplomatlar açıklamalarında Rusya'nın Karadeniz filosundaki personele, Kırım'daki Rus vatandaşlarına ve Rusça konuşan halklara yönelik öz savunma hakkının olduğunu, Kırım'ın Rusya'dan yardım talebinde bulunduğunu, ayrıca uluslararası hukukta halkların kendi kaderlerini tâyin etme haklarının bulunduğu gibi çeşitli uluslararası prensipleri vurgulamışlardır. Bu bölümde, Rusya'nın eski Sovyet coğrafyasına yönelik jeopolitik ve stratejik hedeflerinin Kırım siyasetini şekillendiği savunulmuştur. Bu hedefler temel olarak

Ukrayna'yı NATO ve Avrupa Birliği'nden uzak tutmayı, Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu coğrafyasındaki batı yanlısı ülkeleri kontrol altına almayı, ve Kırım'ın stratejik önemini kapsamaktadır.

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