Ontological Security of International Organizations: Why Did Post-Cold War NATO Decide to Intervene "Out-of-Area"?

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ABSTRACT

This thesis represents a conceptualization exercise that sought to answer the question of whether it is possible to speak in security terms with respect to such entities of international relations as international organizations; whether international organizations can be regarded as the referent objects of security. This question has been provoked by the recent developments in the discipline of security studies that strives to "deepen" and "broaden" the concept of security so that it is no longer exclusively focused on states as referent objects and military power as threat. I have stayed on the course of this enterprise and accordingly I have developed an argument that with the help of the ontological security concept even international organizations can be seen as entities with security problems. This argument has been developed in three stages. First, I have conceived of international organization's identity through the purpose it fulfils. Second, this entailed the conclusion that stable purpose renders international organization ontologically secure and *vice verse*; absent or unstable purpose renders it ontologically insecure or in other words "anxious". In the third stage, I have made an inquiry into the nature of the behavior of the ontologically insecure organization through the combination of Jenifer Mitzen's exogenous ("role identity") and Brent J. Steele's endogenous ("intrinsic identity") accounts about identity formation. Accordingly, I have argued the behavior of ontologically insecure international organization is first and foremost identity not interest driven behavior. These propositions were then put against the case of the post-Cold War NATO.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims at answering theoretically provoked question of whether it is possible to speak in security terms with respect to such entities of international relations as international organizations; whether it is possible to conceive of international organizations as of the referent objects of security. This question has been provoked by the recent developments in the security studies. The end of the Cold War, that significantly and profoundly changed the structure of international environment, also prompted the change in the way scholars theorize about security. Those theoretical approaches that assumed dominance during the Cold War have been put under intensive scrutiny and their timeless wisdom has been fundamentally questioned.[1] In the realm of the security studies this so called "critical turn" meant moving away from traditional, mostly realist and neorealist, metatheoretical assumptions. As far as the ontological assumptions are concerned, numerous security scholars were keen to re-conceptualize, redefine or even to abandon those deeply rooted, statists, state-centric and military oriented notions of security. Epistemologically, this turn entailed partial or complete giving-up on the possibility of objectively getting to know the world "as it is".[2]

This opposition to the traditional notions of security, which were unable to respond adequately to the changing conditions of the international environment, signaled that the discipline was soon to enter a new and fruitful momentum. *What is security? Who, where and how has the right to "speak" security? What or who is the referent object of the security?* These are just some of the significant old and new questions that have been raised. Various scholars

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[1] Richard Wyn Jones, *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1999): 74.

[2] In this respect it is also worth noting, that the label "security studies"[2] has only recently gained wider recognition as a signifier of the discipline, and as such has been aimed at replacing such labels as "national security studies" and "strategic studies" that are intrinsically burdened with state and military centrism. See: Richard W. Jones, *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1999).

gave different answers, thus reminding us that security perhaps is an "essentially contested concept"[3]. Accordingly, as Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams note, these attempts to develop broader conceptions of security with greater theoretical sophistication, methodological meticulousness and empirical orientation require the discipline not to be straitjacketed yet again by the imposition of the new "inclusion" and "exclusion" criteria or by the quest for the universal and definitive answers.[4] And indeed, from the constructivist interpretations that started gaining prominence in the late 1980`s to the critical approaches that blossomed through the 1990`s, various answers were offered that encouraged the disciplinary debate.[5]

This new course in the development of the discipline is known as the process of broadening (What is a threat?) and deepening (What is threatened?) of security.[6] And as already mentioned, its task is to escape the pitfall of the traditional approaches, the "fetishization of state"[7] as the ultimate referent of the security and placing only military issues onto the security agenda. Consequently a number of different referents of security have been proposed. For some security theorists, most notably Ken Booth, individuals[8] should be given a privileged position, others prefer society and particularly civil society[9] or even ethno-national and religious identities[10]. There exist also a number of theorists who do not opt for just one referent of

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[3] Walther B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56, (1956): 167-198.

[4] Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, ed. *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases.* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1997): VII.

[5] Paul D Williams, ed. *Security Studies: an Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008): 59-94 .

[6] Krause and Williams, *Critical Security Studies*, 230.

[7] Wyn Jones, *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory* 76

[8] See: Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4, (1991): 313–326.

[9] See: Christian Reus–Smit, "Realist and Resistance Utopias: Community, Security and Political Action in the New Europe," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21, no. 1, (1992): 1–28.

[10] See: Ole Weaver et al., *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in* Europe (London: Pinter, 1993).

security. Rather they believe that there are "different referents at different times, in different locations, and in relation to the different issue areas".[11]

I continue in the course of these endeavors by arguing that with the help of the ontological security concept even international organizations can be perceived as entities with security concerns.[12] The ontological security approach itself represents one of the relatively recent attempts to enter into this "business" of widening and deepening the concept of security. When compared to the traditional notion of security, this approach does not do much on the "deepening axis", thus it mostly accepts the state as the ultimate referent of security. On the "widening axis" it offers an interesting new outlook on the behavior of the state in the face of the threat that is not conceptualized in the military, or for that matter in the material, terms. While traditional realist and neorealist approaches to the international relations and security studies have operationalized with only one motivational assumption about the states – the states are primarily concerned with their own survival[13]- the ontological security approach, without questioning this fundamental neorealist assumption, asserts that states pursue social action not only to serve their survival needs but also their self-identity needs.[14] The state thus wants

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[11] See: Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

[12] To have a better understanding of the place of this approach within the discipline, in this thesis it will regard as the part of the critical security studies. However, the understanding of the "critical" will be borrowed from the Krause and Williams, who use label critical as the so called "small-C" in order to gather under one umbrella all those theoretical approaches that do not fit into the mainstream of the discipline and which experiment with the different culture and the logic of inquiry. Thus, the adjective "critical" is not used as the label of the certain kind of the theories but as the orientation towards and the position within the broader context of the discipline of security studies. See: [12] Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, ed. *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases.* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1997).

[13] "*Survival is a prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have...the survival motive is taken as the ground of action in a world where the security of states is not assured.*" See: Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979): 92; "*The survival is the primary goal of great powers...states can and do pursue other goals, of course, but security is their most important objective.*" See: John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers Politic* (New York: Norton, 2001): 31.

[14] See: Brent J Steel, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self Identity and the IR State* (New York: Routledge, 2008): 5.

something more than just to survive; it wants to "protect the vision of who it is"[15]. It is security of the self, of identity, not of the body.[16] This kind of security is important because it enables the state to realize the sense of agency. As argued by Antony Giddens, in order to be able to "go on" an agent has to be able to tell a reasonably consistent story about where it came from and where it is going.[17]

By choosing international organizations as the new referent of this kind of security, this thesis moves the concept of ontological security upwards on the "deepening axis". In this way it is argued that such international relations` entities like international organizations can deal with security problems that however are not in any relation with the outside threats but with its ability to continue to exist as "such and such" entity, to continue to exist as the instance of international organization. In order to back up this argument I offer the following proposition. International organizations derive their identity from the objectives and purposes they are set to perform. Thus, clear objectives and purposes provide international organization with ontological security. Conversely, absence of clear purpose will render it ontological insecure. Should this happen, international organization will either disappear or embark on ontological security seeking. The focus of this thesis is precisely of the process of "ontological security seeking" and its purpose is to demonstrate that different behavior can be observed when the international organization is ontologically secure from when it is ontologically insecure.

Additionally, there also exists empirical reason for engaging in this kind of enterprise. A vast number of international organizations such as OUN, NATO, OSCE, WTO and IMF, were in

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[15] Ibid., 5.

[16] Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity ant the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 3, (March 2006): 344.

[17] Antony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991): 35-36.

actuality developed after the Second World War with the purpose of containing the possible new conflict and dealing with the post-war stabilization needs. The end of the Cold War took these organizations by surprise, and it meant that they had to adapt quickly to the significantly different background of the international relations. All over again they had to answer the question of their purpose and find new means of legitimating their very existence. Accordingly, in order to make my argument concrete I will put my theoretical assumptions against the behavior of the post-Cold War North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Special attention will be given to the NATO`s "out-area-interventions" in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. In this way a following empirical puzzle will be addressed. During almost fifty years of the Cold War NATO forces were not involved in a single military engagement, although a clear threat on the part of Soviet Union existed. Contrary, after the end of the Cold War it undertook a number of military actions (e.g. intervention in Kosovo, Golf of Aden and Afghanistan) even though one cannot say with the certainty what threatens present-day NATO, what is its *raison d'être*.

It should, however, be noted that this thesis represents first and foremost an exercise in conceptualization, and in that respect it will primarily seek to achieve the highest possible level of theoretical coherence which than can logically account for the important international relations phenomena, and that as such it makes contribution to the existing trends within security studies literature.

This study will consist of the following parts. In the first chapter, I clarify the meaning of the ontological security concept once imported in the international relations and security studies. At the same time, this chapter offers a thorough overview of the ontological security literature since it is organized in such a way that, by moving from the author to the author, it reveilles how the concept has been developed within the discipline. In the second chapter, I offer a new

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theoretical framework that connects ontological security and international organizations. I do this by conceptualizing international organization's identity through the purpose it fulfills, and thus through the role it assumes in the international system. Further, I combine partly opposing approaches of the two most prominent ontological security scholars, Jennifer Mitzen and Brent J. Steele, in order to explain the behavior of the ontologically insecure international organization. This entails bringing together Mitzen's assertion that the identity of the state is exogenously created, thus conceptualized as "role identity" and Steele's idea of endogenously constructed identity or "intrinsic identity". In the third and last chapter, this theoretical framework is tested against the case of the post-Cold War NATO. In conclusion, I briefly summarize my findings and elaborate on possible further implications and conceptual difficulties of this kind of theorizing.

CHAPTER 1: ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

Ontological security found its place within international relations and security theory as a result of the interdisciplinary work. In that respect, all international relations theorists who engage with this concept borrow heavily from sociology, or more precisely from British sociologist Antony Giddens. In his 1991 book *Modernity and Self-Identity*[18] he uses the ontological security concept to refer to:

> A sense of continuity and order in events, including those not directly within the perceptual environment of the individual.[19]

As such, the concept entails a close connection with the individual's self –identity in the sense that it represents its need to see itself as one, unchanging and continuous person in time.[20] Giddens posits that this is done thorough the ability of human beings to reflexively monitor their day-to-day activities. In other words, at any given time they should be able to interpret discursively the reasons and the nature of their behavior. Or as Giddens puts it, "to be a human being is to know, virtually all of the time, in terms of some description or another, both what one is doing and why one is doing it".[21] However, if the individual's basic trust that the social environment will produce and reproduce itself as expected is disrupted in any way, that individual will experience an "existential anxiety" which consists in its inability to continue to grasp the reality in a cognitive way. Due to the overwhelming feeling of chaos, that individuals sense of agency will also be compromised.

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[18] Antony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).
[19] Ibid., 243.
[20] Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no.3 (2006): 342.
[21] Antony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 35.

However, once "imported" into the international relations and security theory, theorists did not "agree" upon one possible way of further conceptualization and operationalization of the ontological security approach. Each of the few theorists that engage with this concept offer a slightly different interpretation. Some confront the concept directly, such as Brent Steele, Jennifer Mitzen, Catarina Kinnvall and Ayse Zarakol, some just mention it along the way as Jef Huysmans, Alexander Wendt and Bill McSweeny. Some theorize at the level of individuals or make a move towards social groups as Kinnvall, and some scale the level of analyses further up and theorize about the concept with respect to states, as Mitzen and Steele do. I will elaborate on these differences in more detail below, where I briefly summarize what ontological security means in the realm of international relations and security studies theory.

Huysmans was the first to introduce the concept of ontological security into security studies in his seminal 1998 article.[22] However, he does not account for the concept directly, but rather uses it as the part of his attempt to untangle the meaning of security. Most of the theorists assert that security is a derived, in itself meaningless concept that as a realm of study cannot be self-referential.[23] As such security is always studied in relations with questions whose or what kind of security. Huysmans, on the other hand, approaches security separately, without adding any adjectives to it (e.g. 'state security', 'societal security', 'environmental security', etc.) and accordingly develops a concept of security as a "thick signifier".[24] His main argument is that security, no matter of what kind, organizes social reality in the particular way. On that point he further asserts that the purpose of this ordering function of security is to mediate relation

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[22] Jef Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean? : From Concept to Thick Signifier," *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 2 (1998): 226-255.

[23] Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, ed., *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1997), ix.

[24] See: Jef Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean?," 231-234.

between life and death, because "security practices are practices of survival"[25]. This direction of theorizing leads Huysmans to differentiate between two types of security: "daily security" and "ontological security".[26] This distinction, in turn, is elicited from the distinction he makes between enemies and strangers.[27]

When it comes to death, humans posses limited ability of reflexion. For that reason, death will forever stay an "ultimate undetermined"[28] that causes lingering fear of the unknown and of the uncertainty. However, this epistemological fear is countered by the process of "objectifying death"[29], the creation of an object about which we can develop a "true" knowledge. In this way the fear of the unknown is translated into a fear of the concrete enemy which then can be countered on a day to day basis. Thus, "daily security" consists of "trying to postpone death by countering objectified threats".[30] "Ontological security", on the other hand, has to do with the ability to perform the function of "objectifying death", of transforming strangers (which defy categorization and ordering) into enemies (which are known, categorized and as such part of the order). On the whole, "ontological security" mediates order and chaos, while "daily security" mediates friends and enemies.[31]

Wendt also touches upon ontological security by giving it place in his list of "five material needs" that all individuals posses. However, Wendt's approach is very much problematic. As pointed out by Steele, it is unclear how "stable expectations about the natural

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[25] Ibid., 234.
[26] Ibid., 242-243.
[27] Ibid., 241.
[28] Ibid., 238.
[29] Ibid., 235.
[30] Ibid., 242.
[31] Ibid., 242.

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and especially the social world"[32], which is the way Wendt defines ontological security, can be listed as a material need. [33]

Further, Kinnvall uses the concept of ontological (in)security to make an inquiry into how the process of globalization renders different individuals and groups insecure and existentially uncertain when it comes to their identities.[34] She observes that the main defense mechanism against those insecurities is approaching the groups with the amplified religious and national characteristics. Kinnvall proposes that the reason behind this kind of behavior is in the fact that these two types of identities are considered to be especially powerful providers of the stories and beliefs that convey a picture of security and "home", and thus render individuals and groups ontologically secure.[35]

Mitzen and Steele are two security studies' scholars that most directly confront the concept of ontological security.[36] Their starting positions are much the same: they both scale-up the level of analyses from individuals to states and they both use the concept to argue that states' behavior is not motivated, as realist assume, only by the need to survive physically but also to serve their self-identity need. On this point it is important to stress that they see their work more as supplementing than countering realist accounts. Thus, Steele's work can almost be labeled as "identity realism" since he argues that self-identity needs render moral and humanitarian policies

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[32] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 131.

[33] Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self, Identity and the IR State* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 57.

[34] Catarina Kinnvall, "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security," *Political Psychology* 25, no. 5 (2004): 714-767.

[35] Ibid., 763.

[36] See: Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no.3 (2006): 341-370; Jennifer Mitzen, "Anchoring Europe's Civilizing Identity: Habits, Capabilities and Ontological Security," *Journal of Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (March 2006): 270-285; Brent J Steele, "Ideas That Were Really Never in Our Possession: Torture Honor and US Identity," *International Relations* 22, (2008): 243-261; Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self, Identity and the IR State* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

as rational, "self-help" politics.[37] As far as Mitzen is concerned she posits that "physical security is *not the only kind* of security that states seek" (emphasis added), making it clear that she does not reject core realist assumptions. Thus, for both Steele and Mitzen, the ontological security signifies "security of the self, not of the body".[38] However, they differ significantly in their conceptualizations of how this type of security is achieved.

Whether ontological security is provided through the factors exogenous to the social interaction (first and second image) or to the ones that are endogenous to it (third image) is the core question upon which Mitzen and Steele's approaches part their company. Steele uses the concept of ontological security to make sense of the three forms of state behavior: moral, humanitarian and honor-driven.[39] He starts off by noting that traditional international relations have largely ignored possibility that these kinds of normative concerns of states can be internally generated. In other words states do not embark on humanitarian or moral behavior because this kind of behavior is intersubjectivity constructed or universally moral, but because its serves states' self-identity needs and in turn provide them with ontological security.[40] Simplified, Steele's argument would be that altruist is not altruist because of strong feeling of other-regardlessness or empathy, but because that particular person, identity wise, wants to be seen as an altruist. Accordingly, Steele does not give much attention to the social interaction, but focuses on such concepts as "biographical narratives", "critical situation" and "shame".[41] Consistent self-conceptions sustained through the narratives are thus central to Steele's notion of ontological

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[37] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 45.
[38] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 344.
[39] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,*2.
[40] Ibid., 25-48.
[41] Ibid., 10-13.

security or in his words "the ability of the narrative to organize the self is integral to any understanding of ontological security"[42]

Subsequently, Steele uses these theoretical accounts to explore three empirical cases: (1) British neutrality in the American Civil War, (2) Belgium and World War I, (3) NATO's Kosovo intervention. In the case of Britain neutrality and NATO's Kosovo intervention he attempts to build an argument for the claim that "the material capabilities of actors are a factor in "shame" production".[43] Simply put, feeling that it have had capabilities to intervene in disasters in Somalia, Haiti and Rwanda, the United States experience "shame" which prompts them to engage in the humanitarian operation in Kosovo in order to do what it failed to do previously. [44] In the case of the Belgium, Steele uses another concept imbued with identity markers- the "honor". He uses it to explain why in 1914 Belgium decided to sacrifice the physical legitimacy of state to satisfy its ontological security needs, thus once again pointing out that state behavior is motivated by much more than its mere wish to survive and more importantly, sometimes goes against it.[45]

Mitzen, on the other hand puts greater emphasis on the social interaction as the generating power behind the ontological security. She strongly opposes the realists assumptions, accepted by Steele, that state's type (identity) is self-organized and "given by nature" rather than constituted through social interaction. Her theoretical accounts come out of the empirical puzzle presented by the security dilemma, with the special references to the Cold War and the relationship between Israel–Palestine after Oslo. If states are really security-seekers, as defense realists claim, why are they unable of communicating their true types (identities) during the long

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[42] Ibid., 58.
[43] Ibid., 14.
[44] Ibid., 114-147.
[45] Ibid., 14.

period of engagement in the security dilemma. Further, how are we supposing to conceive of these states as security-seekers if they constantly display aggressive behavior? As part of the response to these questions, Mitzen posits that this "realist types" are just an "aspirations" or "possible selves", cognitive conceptions of what the state would like to be if the conditions were perfect.[46] But since conditions are never perfect, states identities become dependent on social interaction, presumably with other states, and more precisely on the type of the roles state perform within those social relationships.[47] Types or state identities are thus intersubjective both on the level of knowledge and on the level of practice.[48] This is so because states do not have final word in determining whether they are security-seeker or power-seeker but need acknowledgment of the others who infer type from the state's behavior and see it as fulfillment of the particular role.

For all these reasons, rather than speaking about "biographical narratives", "shame" and "honour", Mitzen opts for "routinization", "attachment", "stable cognitive environment" and "capacity for agency". Thus, though the internally held state's identity did not get fulfillment thorough the particular social interaction state is not left without benefits for its ontological security. Any longstanding relationship with significant other, such as the security dilemma, leads to the "routinized" relationship. This routinization means that "states got invested in socially recognized identities"[49], that they got attached to it. The main reason is the need for the stable, cognitive environment that provides behavioral certainty by ensuring that things will unfold tomorrow as they did today. [50] In this way an action-identity dynamics of state is

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[46] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 355.
[47] Ibid., 354, 357.
[48] Ibid., 357-358.
[49] Ibid., 359.
[50] Ibid., 342.

preserved. [51] It is able to "go-on" as one, continuous person in time able to answer Giddens's two questions mentioned above: what one is doing and why one is doing it. With these accounts, much like Steele, Mitzen reaches the conclusion that ontological security can conflict and even be prioritized in relation with physical security, because even harmful relationship can provide ontological security.

Bearing in mind all the finesse of the ontological security concept when theorized in international relations and security studies, but drawing mostly on Mitzen's and Steele's accounts, this thesis develops two themes in the following chapter. First, in order to make the case for the claim that it is possible to regard international organizations as the referents of security, ontological security concept is scaled-up from the level of states to the level of international organizations. Second, by finding *via media* between Steele's socially independent and Mitzen's socially dependant process of identity construction, a theoretical framework is build that should help shed light on the models and patterns of behavior of those international organizations that find themselves detached from the changed international environment, due to the fact that the primary reason of their formation has seized to exist.

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[51] Ibid., 345.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND MAIN CONCEPTS

In this chapter an attempt will be made to adapt the concept of ontological security to international organizations as a new referent object of this type of security. With this task in mind, the primary goal of this thesis is to add to a growing literature of critical security studies which strives to re-conceptualize and redefine the concept of security through its "widening" (What is a threat?) and "deepening" (What is threatened?). The ontological security approach by itself represents a move on the broadening axis of this endeavor. It does this by indicating, in contrast to the assumptions of traditional approaches to security, that it is possible to use the language of security when referring to the phenomena that are different from physical security endangered sole by military means. That being said, ontological security theorists deal with what is known as *the security of the Self, not of the body*."[52] As elaborated in the first chapter, it is the security of the identity, inasmuch as this identity provides an actor with "a sense of continuity and order in events." [53] However, the ontological security concept, once transferred from sociology to security studies, does not move much on the widening axis. Those theorists who deal with it most directly opt exclusively for the state as the referent and thereby invest quite a deal of effort in finding the most suitable strategy for scaling the concept upwards, from the individual to the state level.[54]

This thesis, on the other hand, starts from the theoretically provoked question of whether it is possible to speak in security terms with regards to such entity of international relations as international organizations; whether it is possible to makes yet another move on the widening

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[52] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 344.
[53] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 243.
[54] See: Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no.3 (2006): 341-370; Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self, Identity and the IR State* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

axis. By utilizing the concept of ontological security a case is made for the affirmative answer to this question. I argue that with the help of the concept of ontological security even international organizations can be seen as entities with security problems of particular kind. Accordingly, this chapter comprises of an attempt to develop a comprehensive theoretical framework aimed at backing up this assertion. With this in mind, this study should first and foremost be conceived of as conceptualization exercise that seeks to achieve theoretical coherence and "account logically for the existing phenomena."[55]

Additionally, there also exists empirical reason for engaging in this kind of enterprise. A vast number of international organizations which are indispensable actors of the contemporary international relations, such as OUN, NATO, OSCE, WTO and IMF, were in actuality developed after the Second World War with the purpose of containing the possible new conflict and dealing with the post-war stabilization needs. The end of the Cold War took these organizations by surprise, and it meant that they had to adapt quickly to the significantly different background of the international relations. All over again they had to answer the question of their purpose and find new means of legitimating their very existence. In the security language which will be utilized here, the situation they found themselves in can be described as "ontological insecurity", meaning that these organizations were not able to continue as their old selves but were forced to provide a new set of "mission statements"[56] corresponding to new international settings. Taking this empirical problematic into consideration, the aim of this thesis acquires further clarification. It is an attempt at making an inquiry into the conditions that render international organization ontologically secure or insecure, with special focus being put on the nature of behavior exhibited in the periods of their ontological insecurity.

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[55] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 344.
[56] David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after the Dayton* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 18.

Furthermore, even though this study is primarily conceived of as adding to critical security studies and as such does not engage in competitive theory testing with those theories that exclusively deal with international organizations, a few clarifying comments with regards to those theories have to be made. First, by using the ontological security approach I do not propose, in Martha Finnemore words, that other theories, namely organizational and institutional theory, are wrong as much as they are incomplete.[57] Thus the ontological security approach should be seen as a supplementary approach that offers different perspective and sheds new light on the behavioral aspect of the international organizations in the face of the changed conditions of the international environment. Next and connected to the first, although a substantial amount of studies have dealt with the adaptability of these organizations, it can be noted that the focus was predominantly on the question "why" (Why do this organizations still exist?; Why were they able to adapt?), rather than on the question "how" did the process of adaptation unfolded and what were the driving forces behind it.[58] This is where the ontological security approach steps in.

As an illustration, organizational theories suggest that rather than concentrating exclusively on the interests of the member states, when studying international organizations, attention should be paid to the interest of the officials working within those organizations.[59] Or in the words of Gayl Ness and Steven Branch:

> Organizations are comprised of individuals and groups who attempt to fulfill their own goals...Most organizations (thus) willingly modify or abandon stated goals if doing so enhances their ability to survive and prosper.[60]

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[57] Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 27.

[58] See: Celeste A. Wallander, " Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War," *International Organizations* 54, no. 4 (Autumn, 2000): 705-735.

[59] Robert B. McCall, "NATO's Persistence after the Cold War," *International Organization* 50, no. 3 (summer, 1996): 456.

[60] Gayl D Ness and Steven R. Brechin, "Bridging the Gap: International Organizations as Organizations," *International Organizations* 43, (1988): 264.

Accordingly, the behavior of international organizations, which are created during the Cold War era, in the pos-Cold War period should be seen as fulfilment of international organization bureaucratic interests.

International institutions theories, on the other hand, deal with these issues by drawing mostly on the regime and neoliberal institutionalist theory.[61] Their core proposition is that once created regimes bring benefits to their members that can outlive original purpose of their creation. Faced with the changed international condition members will find that maintaining the regime is less costly than creating the entirely new one.[62] Thus, the old regimes are expected to be adapted to the new needs of the changed international environment.

However, none of these approaches is sufficient enough for the explanation of the actual process of international organization "adaptation". From the perspective of organizational theory, it would be hard to answer how it was possible for the bureaucracy of, for example NATO, to involve this organization in the rather costly humanitarian and out-of area interventions, just so that they can keep their jobs. Would not the smaller scale interventions and operations be sufficient? On the other hand, the obvious limit of the institutionalist theories, as Steve Weber point out, is that it is unable of telling us which institutions' mechanisms will ultimately be utilized- only that member states will turn to existing institutions as a first step.[63]

Ontological security approach, by contrast, makes an inquiry into the processual side of the behavior of international organization in the changed conditions of international environment by seeing it, for the most part, as being driven by the identity needs, regardless of organization's bureaucracy or member states interests (though it is not argued that such interests do not exist or

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[61] McCall, "NATO's Persistence after the Cold War," 461.

[62] Robert 0. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1989), 15.

[63] Steve Weber, "Shaping the postwar balance of power: Multilateralism in NATO," *International Organization* 46, (1992): 675-677.

that all behavior of international organizations is driven by identity needs). This point will become especially salient in the third chapter, where it will be argued that the narratives and actions adopted by those organizations are, by their nature, especially suited tools for the fulfillment of the identity needs.

The rest of this chapter will proceed as follows. First, a strategy for elevating the concept of ontological security from the level of states to the level of international organizations is presented. Next, theoretical propositions are offered on how international organizations and ontological security can be put together in order to shed new light on the behavioral aspect of these organizations. This is done through the development of the following concepts: purpose, identity, crises and anxiety. Special attention is given to the concepts of "intrinsic" and "role identity". In the last part, methods that will be used in the case study of this research are elaborated.

2.1. Level of Analyses: From Individuals to States Than All the Way to International Organization

In his seminal article, Alexander Wendt examines the phenomenon that is almost ubiquitous within the international relations and security studies.[64] This phenomenon consists of tendency of scholars within these fields to accept the notion that "states are people too"[65]. Wendt notes:

> In a field in which almost everything is contested, this seems to be one thing on which almost all of us agree.[66]

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[64] Alexander Wendt, "The State as a Person in International Theory," *Review of International Studies* 30, (2008): 289-316.
[65] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 215.
[66] Wendt, "The State as a Person in International Theory," 286.

However, even though almost everybody accepts it, it is not an easy job to justify this "individual-to-collective ascription."[67] Accordingly, scholars have proposed a multitude of different strategies for the task.

As already stressed, international relations and security theory borrowed the concept of ontological security from Giddens, who used it in the field of social psychology in order to understand the behavior of the individuals. In this obvious case of transferring the concept from one field to another, meant IR theorists dealing with the ontological security concept, inevitably needed to readdressed and justify the move. They needed to explain how it is possible that almost the same assumptions account equally for the individuals and for the states.

Mitzen and Steele have offered different approaches to this problem of the personified state. Mitzen starts off with the often used "everyone does it" strategy but then posits that "the fact that everyone else treats states as people, however, does not justify me doing so."[68] That is why she supplements this approach with two more important defenses: (1) the ontological security of states satisfies the ontological security of its members (individuals); (2) assumptions made on the micro level help account for the macro-level patterns.[69] Steele, on the other hand, draws on Antony Lang's and English School approach to this problem and adopts the idea of "agents as states"[70]. This means that he regards state agents as the embodiment of the state, or in his words "because they represent their states, state agents are the state."[71] Steele than goes on to emphasize the importance of narratives. They are constitutive of state identity, because they provide coherence to the "Self", and in that way create what is known as a "person" of state.

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[67] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 15.
[68] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 352.
[69] Ibid., 352.
[70] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 19.
[71] Ibid., 18.

Hence, the role of state agents is to collect the history of a nation-state as well as its current actions into one such narrative.

Meanwhile, international organizations have been subjected to a different kind of debate. The core of this debate is not whether "international organizations are people too"; instead scholars have been debating whether they are an "empathy shells"- empty arenas within which, as realists assume, power play between states is continued, or whether they have "life of their own" – meaning that they are "organic entities"[72], emancipated from their creators (states), that interact with their environment with the significant amount of autonomy.[73] This thesis, however, will not engage in this debate substantively, but accepts the following logical proposition. To theorize about international organizations as entities that are themselves capable of experiencing ontological security or insecurity rather than seeing it just as a means by which member state satisfy their ontological security needs, entails accepting the latter, "life on their own" logic to the functioning of international organizations. However, it should be held in mind that for the purposes of this paper more important than the question *who* constitutes international organizations is the question *how* do these institutions behave in the case of the changed conditions of international environment?

On that point and in order to adapt ontological security approach to international organizations, the following theoretical assumptions have to be made. Speaking strictly in ontological terms, one should determine the primary categories of the things that exist, of the entities that are being studied. With regards to international organizations it is here proposed that *purpose* is the necessary and primary ontological category of international organizations. This is

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[72] Sungjoon Cho, " Toward an Identity Theory of International Organizations," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law)* 101, (March 2007): 160.
[73] Michael N Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations," *International Organization* 53, (1999): 699.

not to say that other features and categories, especially those that are being continuously debated about within discipline such as the ones presented above, are not of importance. They are, but for the purposes of this conceptualization they will be regarded as "accidental" and "additional". Accordingly, for the international organizations purpose is the rationale behind its existence. Put in a more blunt way, this would mean that international environmental organization is conceived as such firstly because, on the international and global level, it fulfills the purpose of dealing with environmental issues, irrespective of the question who is the constitutive and driving force behind its actions, states or autonomous international organization agents. By the same token, and especially important for the operationalization of ontological security on this level of analyses, in this study *purpose* will be regarded as the main constituent of international organization identity. To illustrate this point with the same example, international environmental organization is labeled as such because its purpose is to engage with environmental issues.

In the rest of this chapter more will be said about ontological security concept when put together with international organizations. However, same as with states this opens up the problem of ascribing individual traits to collective entity. It is however not my wish to open up yet another debate that would entail justification of personification of international organization. Instead, the approach that already exists in discussion about the same problem with respect to states will be adopted. Wendt puts it like this:

> The concept of state personhood is a *useful instrument* for organizing experience and building theory, but does not refer to anything with ontological standing in its own right.[74]

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[74] Wendt, "The State as a Person in International Theory," 290.

Accordingly, in this paper an instrumental justification for the use of the concept developed with regards to one entity and its application to the entirely different one is adopted, not because this strategy is without problems, but because it enables theoretical fruitfulness.

2.2. Ontological Security and International Organizations: Via Media Between Mitzen and Steele

2.2.1. Purpose, Identity and International Environment

It is so far clear that the identity and ontological security go hand in hand, regardless whether we talk about individuals or states. This is also true for the international organization. The question, however, is how can we conceive of the international organization identity. In the previous section some hints have been given about the relationship between purposes and identity. In this section further conceptual clarifications are offered.

As Steele points out, it is possible to distinguish between two general ways of theorizing about identity within international relations theory.[75] The first assumes the primacy of the collective "which engulfs or shapes the Self", meaning that the identity of the actor is constructed by the role he assumes within a collective. The other one is so called "Self-Other nexus" where the Self is shaped with regards to the oppositional Other. However, for the purposes of his conceptualization of ontological security, Steele proposes a third possible way of conceiving about identity formation (of states). This is identity as intentionally and rationally constituted by the agent itself as the part of the self-help behavior, regardless of the environment, social interaction or the significant Other.[76]

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[75] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 26.
[76] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations.*

When approaching the question of international organizations' identity, this paper opts for the dependency of the identity on the "collective" or more precisely on the international environment, thus for the first approach presented by Steele.[77] Environment is essential for the formation and behavior of the international organizations. As Wendt puts it "actors do not have a self prior to interaction with an other"[78] and that "the meanings in terms of which action is organized arise out of interaction."[79]Accordingly, the following is posited here. The international organization is formed with the purpose to serve the needs of the international environments. It has to be "called into the existence by the nurturing environment."[80] The international environment is critical for the identity formation of international organization because it creates challenges and opportunities, to which international organization, as a purposive entity, is a response. Fulfilling this required purpose, or put in the terms of how Mitzen conceives of ontological security, performing a particular role is in itself telling of the international organization identity. To continue with the same example, if there is an international environmental issue that needs dealing with, it is likely that international environmental organization will be formed. Thus, in an identity terms this organization will be referred to as an environmental not a trade organization and as long as there are external environmental challenges that need addressing it is justified to assume that this organization will maintain that particular kind of identity. From these accounts the following conclusion arises: if ontological security is the security of the Self conceived as the stability of the identity, than this kind of uninterrupted relationship between international organizational and international environment renders that organization ontologically secure.

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[77] See: Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 27.

[78] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," International Organization46, (1992): 402.

[79] Ibid., 403.

[80] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 39.

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2.2.2. Identity Crises and Anxiety

The above, almost commonsensical accounts, necessarily entail the reverse logic. Changed conditions of the external environment will, perhaps only for the brief period but nevertheless, cause the identity crisis and by the same token ontological insecurity of the international organization at question. Here is, however, very important to note the following. If pushed to its end, the logic would perhaps be that with the change of international environment that can also consist of the disappearance of the external challenges that influenced the formation of the international organization, rather than experiencing identity crises it is more likely that the organization will size to exist. Empirically, as we have seen, this is not a necessary outcome and NATO is especially telling in that respect. That is why this thesis makes an inquiry into the first possible outcome, the one in which international organizations outlives the conditions that existed at the time of their creation, and with the help of ontological security approach strives to explain the process of adaptation of these organization to the new conditions.

Additionally, this brings up one more important distinction that needs to be recognized, that between what ontological security means with respect to states and what it means with respect to international organizations. While for the states ontological security, as the security of the Self, and physical security, as the security of the body, can easily be separated, for the international organizations they are closely connected. Changes in the external environment which makes previous purposes of the organization redundant significantly damage its identity but can also question its very physical existence. Thus the securities of the *self* and of the *body* are closely interlinked when international organizations are discussed.

I now turn to two important concepts: critical situation and anxiety. In brief, "critical situation"[81] represents a change in the external environment within which international organization performs its functions. In the ontological security terms, this kind of situation will render international organization unable to continue as an "old self" because routines and "biographical narratives"[82] that were once part of its everyday life will not cohere anymore with the external conditions of the international environment. This new environment is most likely to appear, as it was initially the case with the immediate post-Cold War world, as a "chaotic condition" in which, as Huysmans notes, there are no certainties anymore and where "uncertainty itself has become the primary threat."[83] This will become a sign of organization's ontologically insecurity or anxiety (these two terms will be used interchangeably) and in order to restore the stability of identity that no longer exists, international organization is likely to start exhibiting a new and different kind of behavior. And it is precisely the nature of this behavior that is of the primary concern for this study.

As far as the anxiety is concerned, as Giddens points out, and many before him, this state should be distinguished from the fear. While fear represents a response to a specific objectified threat, anxiety has no such object. It is a diffuse and free-floating "feeling" that, in relation to ontological security, can be best described by Huysmans' assertions. Anxiety is the experience that actualizes itself when an agent is overwhelmed by the uncertainty of the external conditions and when he has not yet ordered pieces of this external environment in such a way that it would allow to him to get by with sufficient amount of predictability. Thus anxiety is the state that precedes ontological security, if ontological security is understood in Huysmans' terms as

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[81] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 12-13.

[82] See: Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 10-12; and Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 243.

[83] Jef Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean? : From Concept to Thick Signifier," *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 2 (1998): 240.

mediation of chaos, or the ability of successfully categorizing "strangers" as either "friends" or "enemies".[84] Ontological security in this respect plays a role of anxiety-controlling mechanism, and when anxious, an agent (international organization) is expected to invest a sufficient amount of energy in order to reach ontological security.

Accordingly, anxious behavior equals process of ontological security seeking, and since it is as Kierkegaard points out an "elemental dread" that plays out through "the struggle of being against non-being,"[85] the anxious behavior may seem as "compulsive" and perhaps even "phobic". In a struggle to order things in such a way that it is again clear what issues, enemies, dangers and threats need addressing, in order for them to be constitutive of the new purpose of the international organization and at the same time, of its identity, some actions and some narratives will be more successful and some less. While addressing the limited ability of the post-Cold War era international actors to construct relatively stable friend/enemy mediation, Huysmans notes the problematic of the frequent collapse of the "daily security" into the "ontological security".[86] In addition, this thesis also notes the falling back into the state of anxiety. In the next section, a further inquiry into the process of ontological security seeking of international organizations is made by finding the *via media* between Mitzen's and Steele's accounts about ontological security.

2.2.3. From "Intrinsic" to "Role" Identity: Between Mitzen and Steele

The main source of contention between two most prominent ontological security theorists, Mitzen and Steele, is whether state's identity is constructed endogenously or exogenously, and thus whether ontological security is dependent or independent from social

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[84] Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean?," 242.
[85] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 48.
[86] Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean?," 243.

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interaction. Mitzen opts for the former approach. Accordingly, she asserts that the identity, or as she refers to it a "type" of state, is entirely dependent on the routinized social interaction between states. Even though state may have self-identity conception, this conception is just a "fantasy identity" that rarely gets fulfillment in the interaction with other state. That is why, Mitzen asserts that the true identity of state should be derived from the role state assumes in the interaction with other states. Especially so because states tend to hold on to these roles, to develop attachments that in turn provide them with behavioral certainty and thus with ontological security.[87] This is true both for cooperative and conflictual interactions among states. Steele, on the other hand, advocates "individualistic" approach to state identity construction and ontological security.[88] He thus pays special attention to so called "biographical narrative" which is defined as "the story or stories by which self-identity is reflexively understood, both by the individual concerns and by others"[89]. These narratives are expressions of states internally generated self-identity conceptions and needs from which social action proceeds.[90] Hence, narratives give life to routinized foreign policy action, not the other way around.

Even though, it has been argued in this study that the identity of the international organization, and in turn its ontological security, is dependent on the social context, meaning international environment, I argue that in the case of ontologically insecure and anxious international organization the rules somewhat change. To understand how, I proposed that the combination of Mitzen's and Steele's approaches is made, similar to that made by Ayse Zarakol.[91] While examining Turkish reluctance to apologize for the Armenian genocide and

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[87] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics."
[88] Ayse Zarakol, "Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan," *International Relations* 24, no. 1 (2010): 3.
[89] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 243.
[90] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 2-3.
[91] Zarakol, "Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes," 2-23.

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Japanese discomfort over WWII atrocities, he posits that in order to determine whether ontological security is socially dependant or intrinsically generated the characteristics of the particular context must be taken into an account. Therefore, Zarakol argues that due to "uneven expansion of international society"[92] intersubjective pressures will matter more than pressures from within for those states that are late incorporated into this society.[93]

I accept this context dependant notion of the sources of ontological security. Accordingly, this study claims that in the circumstances when international organization outlives its original *raison d'être*, when it survives for non-purposive reasons and generally "feels" detached from the changed conditions of the international environment it becomes forced to generate its identity internally in order to justify its own existence as an instance of international organization. In this respect special attention has to be given to the following concepts, all inherent to the Steele's theorizing about ontological security: "biographical narratives"[94], "possible self or aspiration"[95], "discursive consciousness"[96], "intrinsic identity"[97], "capability for ordering"[98] and "inside construction of person"[99].

In the rest of this study a term "intrinsic identity" will be used as the all-encompassing label for this self-organized identity. Also it should be stressed that the purpose of this kind of identity is to create a seamless linkage between doing (action and practice) and being (identity and knowledge).[100] This kind of identity, expressed in the certain kind of narrative, offers the

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[92] Ibid., 3.
[93] Ibid., 9-16.
[94] . Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 10; and Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* 243.
[95] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 355; and Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 44-48.
[96] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,*36.
[97] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 355.
[98] Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean?," 241.
[99] Wendt, "The State as a Person in International Theory," 293.
[100] Felix Ciută, "The End(s) of NATO: Security Strategic Action and Narrative Transformation," *Comparative Security Policy* 23, no.1, (2002): 35-62

interpretation of organizational history, its old and new purpose and achievements. It gives meaning to the international organization in order to enable it to "go on" as a usual, agentic self. This kind of identity is independent from the social interactions and they are not necessarily recognized by the others. They are just "aspiration"[101] or narratives that constitute of so called "practice of talking".[102]

However, for the international organization this is the "artificial way" of identity generation. The relationship between "being" and "doing" as well as between "identity" and "action" is of the specific kind for this kind of international relations entity. [103] Because fulfilling a purpose is an essential ontological component of the international organization, it is what makes certain international entity an instance of what we know as international organization, "intrinsic identity" becomes insufficient enough element for the justification of the prolonged existence of certain organizations. That is why it is necessarily to go back to Mitzen approach and borrow the category of "role identity." This role identity is a perpetuated behavior that systematically connects ends with the means. It is a necessary shift from "practice of talking" to the "practice of doing".[104]

In the final analyses, while for the ontologically secure international organization identity is entirely socially dependant since it is a result of the uncontested role that it performs in the international environment that, for the ontologically insecure organization a specific kind of process starts unfolding. International organization must first resort to the internal and self-organizing generation of identity, the one that is detached from any uncontested purpose, but

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[101] Ibid., 355.

[102] Trine Flockhart, "Towards a Strong NATO Narrative: From a "Practice of Talking" to a "Practice of Doing, " *Working Paper Series , Danish Institute for International Studies* , (2010) http://stockholm.sgir.eu/uploads/Flockhart%20NATO%20Practices.pdf (accessed December 05, 2010)

[103] Ibid, working paper.
[104] Ibid, working paper.

since the primary ontological characteristic of the organization consists of fulfilling the purpose with tangible results the organization becomes compelled to act. Ontological security seeking thus becomes a difficult process of "fine-tuning" between "intrinsic identity" and "role identity", where both of these identities can either reinforce or undermine one another. The aim is to reach the equilibrium where, as Mitzen notes, internally held identity matches externally recognized roles.[105]

In this chapter I have made an attempt of further developing the concept of ontological security by using the international organizations as the referent of this type of security. Thus the concept has been moved on the so-called widening axis through its scaling from the level of state further up, to level of international organizations. In this way I have shown that even international organizations can be theorized as international relations entities with security problems. Thus, even though the concept reveals something new about the behavior of states, it is also very helpful tool beyond this dominant state-centric orientation. It enables us to look deeper into the patterns of behavior of those organizations that survive for non-purposive reasons and succeeded in transcendenting international environment for which needs they were formed. Labeled as ontologically insecure organizations, as proposed in this theoretical framework, they should start exhibiting a particular kind of behavior. Rather than to admire their ability to adapt (and some of them really manage to do so), their activities are perceived as signs of anxious behavior. Therefore that this behavior is first and foremost conceived as identity not interest driven behavior. Equally important, ontological security's version of agent-structure problem[106] has, on this level of theorizing, been resolved through the combination of Mitzen's and Steel's approaches, as demonstrated above. In order to further clarify these assertions and to put my

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[105] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 359.
[106] Zarakol, "Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes," 6.

theoretical framework to a test, I now turn to the examination of the post-Cold War NATO. I find that it is a particularity suitable case considering the salience of the fact that it lost its Cold Ward purpose and have not yet fully manage to establish a new and uncontested one.

2.3. Methodology

In order to adequately apply the concept of ontological security to the case of post-Cold War NATO three concepts in particular need empirical "filling": anxiety, NATO`s "interstice identity" and "role identity". For this task I have used two methods: content analyses and limited scale process tracing method, due to space and time restrictions.

With the help of content analyses I have examined a textual content[107] of thirty five speeches of NATO officials delivered in the period from 1990 to 2010, three NATO's strategic concepts (from 1991 and 1999), 2010 recommendations of the group of experts on a new strategic concept and various other NATO documents and declarations. Speeches were retrieved from the NATO *Speeches & transcripts* databases and least one speech from each year in this time period has been examined. Due to the time restrictions, I have examined mostly speeches of the general character that I consider to be representative of the discourse of particular time period.

For tracing the signs of "anxiety" I have looked for the following words: "uncertainty", "unpredictability", "change", "complexity". They should indicate the inability of NATO to cognitively order its external environment. When tracing NATO's "intrinsic identity", I looked for all those parts that either give explicit definition or depiction of the organization or those that

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[107] See: Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis, Newsletter of APSA, Spring 2004, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 21. .

touch upon the purpose of organization. In this way I have identified NATO`s vision of itself and how it changed over time.

I than processes tracing[108] analysis for the exploration of the chain of invents (incorporating the adoption of the above mentioned documents) that lead to the NATO`s "out-of-area" interventions: in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. With this concept I have "specified initial conditions and specific outcomes"[109]. That is to say, I have trace how adopting particular document, leads to the particular discourse of NATO officials and NATO member states leaders, and how this further induces particular NATO operation. This method thus reveilles a causal mechanism of support between NATO's "intrinsic identity" into the "role identity".

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[108] Method understood as presented in: Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997): 70.

[109] Jeffrey T. Checkel, *'Process Tracing' in: Qualitative Methods in International Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 115.

CHAPTER 3: CASE STUDY: POST-COLD WAR NATO AND ONTOLOGICAL (IN)SECURITY

In this chapter, a theoretical propositions made in the second chapter will be put against the case of the post-Cold War NATO. In this way it should be further highlighted that, when considering ontological security with regards to international institutions, a contention that exists among scholars about whether identity pressures are endogenously (Steele) or exogenously (Mitzen) constructed can be resolved in the following way. To conceive of international organization as ontologically secure means that there exists a challenge in the international environment that is constitutive of the purpose of that organization and in turn of its identity. This entails the conclusion that international organization's identity is constituted exogenously, thus supporting Mitzen's approach which puts more emphasis on the so called "role identity".

However, the developments in the post-Cold War period, meaning the survival of many international organizations that had been created for the purposes of previous era, demonstrate that there can come to a disruption between the purpose of international organization and the needs of international environment. In this kind of situation, which I describe as ontological insecurity, the behavior of international organization corresponds more to Steele's notions, in a sense that organization now has to generate identity from within itself rather than in relation with external environment. However, because of the specific ontological nature of international organization that requires it to perform particular purpose with tangible, problem-solving results this newly formed "intrinsic identity" has to be actualized as a "role identity" in a sense that an organization must begin to *do* something, not just to *exist*. In this way, instead of interpreting this behavior as the result of the needs of international environment, or of someone's specific interest

(member states or international organization's bureaucracy) it is in this study interpreted as an instance of identity driven behavior.

NATO is especially good case for making this point clear. It is a case of international organization whose loss of primary purpose is hard to deny due to the fact that it is a military alliance that lost it major opponent. Therefore, the rest of this chapter follows NATO's post-Cold War search for the ontological security through mapping the following instances of its behavior: the loss of its purpose, the "feeling" of being overwhelmed by the new and cognitively unfamiliar environment and the specific interplay between its "intrinsic" and "role identity" that this new situation triggers.

This is done through the analyses of thirty five speeches delivered in the period between 1990 and 2010, as well as of declaration and strategies that NATO adopted in the same time period.[110] I also take a closer look at so called "out-of-area" interventions that the Alliance undertook during these post-Cold War years, with special attention to operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. First, I briefly discuss the NATO's loss of primary purpose and its implication when looked at from ontological security perspective. Second, an insight is made into the way NATO depicts it external environment. The purpose of this endeavor is to show its, over the years lingering, inability to grasp, define and order pieces of external environment in a comprehensive way that would allow it to develop a routinized pattern of behavior with respect to one clear purpose and that would in turn render it ontologically secure. In the third section, by using the process tracing method of a small scale given the space limitations of this thesis, it will be demonstrated how the complicated relationship between "being" and "doing" has prompted NATO to, in order to achieve ontological security, supplements its "intrinsic identity" with the

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[110] See: *The Alliance`s New Strategic Concept*, 7 November 1991; *The Alliance`s Strategic Concept,* 24 April 1999; NATO 2020: Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement. Analyses and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010.

"role identity", through the engagement in the significant number of "out-of-area" operations, which was not the characteristic of its usual behavior. The purpose of this part is to show, in processual terms, the reinforcing and the undermining effect of the interplay between "intrinsic" and "role" identity for the ontological security of NATO.

3.1. Post-Cold War NATO Without Purpose

It is by now widely recognized that, when put against other historical examples of alliances, there is nothing "traditional" or "classical" about NATO.[111] There exists no historical example of the alliance with such a high level of institutionalization, or of the alliance that has been described with such an amount of value imbued adjectives. For instance, Celeste A. Wallander prefers defining NATO not as an alliance but as a "political security community of countries with common values and democratic institutions."[112] Nevertheless, it is impossible and in fact misleading to separate NATO from the context of the Cold War and from the challenges that this specific international system put in front of Western countries. From its inception throughout the Cold War one thing was constant: the threat posed by Soviet Union. The primacy of this threat as NATO's *raison d'être* has even been revisited a number of times by the NATO officials in the post-Cold War years. Reflecting with the distance of six years in 1995, Secretary General Manfred Wörner asserted that "NATO was established primary to protect the Western democracies from a expansionist Soviet Union that seemed determined to spread its influence through subversion, political intimidation and the threat of military force. "[113]

This kind of "uninterrupted" relationship between the Alliance and its external environment rendered it ontologically secure. Meaning that through the longstanding purpose,

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[111] Thies, *Why NATO Endures*, 88.
[112] Wallander, "NATO'a Price," 2.
[113] Willy Claes, 1995b.

which was a result of the existence of the concrete and worthy opponent, NATO's identity was solidified. Thus identity wise it was not just a defense organization, but a defense organization against clear and uncontested threat. NATO was "tucked away" in a familiar cognitive environment knowing precisely how to act on the day to day basis. This, in Mitzen's terms "basic trust system", created a special pattern of NATO's behavior. It became "overly concerned with maintaining stability and avoiding change"[114]. With the outside existing definer of its purpose, and thus of its identity, NATO could have afforded to be just a "talking shop"[115] that for forty years was mostly concentrated on drawing and redrawing plans for operations against one enemy. But the pattern of this behavior has changed with the end of the Cold War in such a way that, as Trine Flockhart notes, NATO shifted its practices from "talking" to "doing".[116] It engaged in a multitude of actions : from the process of enlargement to the interventions in former Yugoslavia, operations in Afghanistan and recent involvement in Libya.[117] How can we explain this shift?

By relying on the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter, it is here argued that once a cognitively familiar environment of the Cold War ceased to exist, NATO became an "anxious", ontologically insecure organization. In other words, without clear purpose in the new world, it started experiencing an "identity crisis". This state of NATO is widely recognized within the literature.[118] It is also recognized by NATO's officials and in their

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[114] Flockhart, "Towards a Strong NATO Narrative," working paper.
[115] Ibid., working paper.
[116] Ibid., working paper.
[117] The simmilar point is made by Trine Flockhart in Flockhart "Towards a Strong NATO Narrative," working paper.
[118] See: Helene Sjursen, "On the Identity of NATO," *International Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2004): 687-703.For overviews of the NATO-in-crisis literature see: Wallace Thies, ''Crises and the Study of Alliance Politics,'' Armed Forces and Society 15 (Spring 1989): 349–369; Elizabeth Pond, Beyond the Wall: Germany's Road to Reunification (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1993): 276–278; Wallace Thies, ''The 'Demise' of NATO: A Post-Mortem,'' Parameters 20 (June 1990): 17–30; Lawrence Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United* (Westport, CT: Praeger,2004): 151–155.

speeches following accounts can often be traced. "Today it is fashionable to speak of an "identity crisis" of the Alliance, because the security environment that gave birth to NATO, and with which it had lived for forty years, has suddenly gone", said Manfred Wörner in his 1990 speech.[119] Immediately however, these notions are followed by praise of NATO's remarkable adaptability. [120] "Successful" involvement in a series of operations serves as the evidence of this and should also signify that the crisis has been successfully overcome. This study by contrast, argues that rather than describing it as adaptability, NATO's post-Cold War behavior should be depicted as *anxiety*. This is so because the multitude of operations that NATO engaged with after the Cold War, are seen as the signs of its weakness and part of ontological security seeking process rather than of its strength.[121]

Now that it is established that it is hard to conceive of post-Cold War NATO as of purposive and ontologically secure international organization, I turn to examination of the way NATO has depicted it international environment over the years. The frequent recurrence of the words such as "uncertainty", "unpredictability", "change" and "complexity" is taken as a clue that supports my anxiety argument because it is telling of the organization's inability to cognitively grasp the international environment, to know with certainty, as it did in the Cold War period from which direction the threats are coming and how adequately to respond to them.

3.2. How NATO Perceives Its Own Environment?

In Huysmans terms, now that NATO is left without old enemy to fight, its ability to order, to "fix social relations into a symbolic and institutional order" has been put to a test. On that point, instead of examining how NATO deals with "new enemies" the focus should be

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[119] Speech: Manfred Wörner, 1990b.
[120] For more detail see: Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability," 705-735.
[121] Flockhart, "Towards a Strong NATO Narrative," working paper.

shifted to the examination of how it mediates relations with "strangers".[122] Huysmans then goes on to note that there is an acute problem of the security agencies (be it states or international organizations) in the post-Cold War that are unable of hierarchizing threats.[123] Unable to construct a stable friend-enemy mediation everyday life is always on the brink of slipping into a chaos. I chose to label this ongoing struggle as an anxiety (or ontological insecurity) and thorough the examination of the NATO official speeches and documents, adopted in the period from 1990 to 2010, the support is offered for this type of claims about the state of post-Cold War NATO.

Starting from the 1990 London Declaration, that signified the beginning of the transformation of NATO, all the way to the recommendations of the group of experts for the new strategic concept (NATO 2020) adopted in 2010, the Alliance keeps on depicting its environment by such nouns as "uncertainty", "unpredictability", "change", "complexity".[124] One would expect that after the twenty years since the collapse of the Cold War, the Alliance would manage to order the pieces of its reality in a more stable and comprehensive way, however this did not happen. Even though the level of uncertainty has not been constant, as will be shown in the next section, the recurrence of this kind of discourse is striking and it is indicative of the NATO's "existential anxiety".

Even though no declaration, strategic concept or speech examined for the purposes of this research fails to acknowledge the beginning of the new and promising era after the half century of tensions the big "but" always appears. In London Declaration it is immediately stressed that

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[122] Concepts of enemies and strangers are taken from Huysmans and they have been explained in the first chapter. See: Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean?" 226-255.
[123] Ibid., 226-255.
[124] See: *The Alliance`s New Strategic Concept*, 7 November 1991; *The Alliance`s Strategic Concept,* 24 April 1999; NATO 2020: Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement. Analyses and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010.

"No one, however, can be certain of the future"[125]. The First Strategic Concept after the Cold War, adopted in 1991, restates this in more detail and posits that "the risks to allied security that remain are *multi-faced* and *multi-directional* which makes them hard to predict and asses".[126] By gradually moving towards the 1999 Strategic Concept it can be tracked within the speeches of NATO officials that the involvements in Bosnia war, generally perceived as successful, have enabled NATO to acquire a certain level of cognitive mastery over the external environment. The uncertainty and unpredictability have been transformed into the concrete "enemy" embodied in the barbarian nationalism followed by ethnic conflicts. For these reasons, in the speeches examined from 1991 to 1999 the "crises management" and "peacekeeping", and NATO responses to these new risks, become prioritized NATO tasks and they appear as the second or third priority on the agenda.[127] Nonetheless, 1999 Strategic Concept sends the 20th century off by revisiting the decade long problematic of lingering uncertainty. It is asserted that "The security of the alliance remains subject to a wide variety of military and non-military risks which are *multi-directional* and often *difficult to predict*".[128] A decade into a new century, though terrorism has taken a central stage on the global security agenda, group of experts with the task of giving recommendations for the new strategic concept for NATO begins their document with the following sentence. "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization enters the second decade of the twenty-first century as an essential source of stability in an *uncertain* and *unpredictable* world."[129]

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[125] See: *Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance ("The London Declaration"),* July 05-06, 1990.

[126] *The Alliance`s New Strategic Concept*, 7 November 1991.

[127] See: Speeches delivered between 1991-1999, examined for the purposes of this thesis.

[128] See: *The Alliance`s Strategic Concept,* 24 April 1999.

[129] See: NATO 2020: Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement. Analyses and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010.

3.3. From "Intrinsic Identity" to "Role Identity"

From the ontological security approach follows the claim that it is not possible to develop behavioral routines and thus behavioral certainty in the conditions that appear to be constantly changing. Lack of certainty hampers the ability of the international entity, in this case of NATO, to continue as the old agentic "self" because "tomorrow" may not correspond with what "self" was made for. With the old purpose gone, NATO has to find a "new self" in the "new world". However, the trouble is double for NATO. The "new" world appears to be fluid, uncertain and constantly changing. Hence, NATO has to come up with the way of existing as a "person that constantly changes". However ontological security imperatives pull this entity in a different direction. In order to know how to act it has to have a stable conception of the Self. It needs, as Giddens and Steele assert, a "biographical narrative" as an expression of the identity that connects past and future actions and enables entity to continue to exist as "a whole, continuous person in time, as being rather than constantly changing"[130].

However, since the identity of international organization is highly dependent on the purpose it fulfils in the international environment, as it has already been argued throughout this study, the lack of that purpose forces the organization to generate identity internally. The construction of this so-called "intrinsic identity" connected with the imperative of historical continuity of identity is an interesting one when one takes a closer look at NATO. In the post-Cold War NATO the forefront of its identity narrative has been taken by the assertions that it perhaps was never just a military alliance held together by a sense of a common external threat, but first and foremost a community of liberal and democratic values. "Community of values" and "community of destiny" discourse as the most solid foundation

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[130] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 342.

of the NATO identity that existed from its inception thus enables it to reflect on itself as "whole continuous person in time". Huysmans puts it like this: "The affirmation of an Atlantic civilization transformed from a ritualistic confirmation of values into a key aspect of the security strategy of NATO."[131] Not one strategy, declaration or document examined for this research fails to mention this as the starting point that makes NATO and all its subsequent actions intelligible. In his speeches delivered between 1990 and 1994, Secretary General at the time, Manfred Wörner frequently repeated that:

> From the outset it has always been a community of destiny and forum for nations that are joined together by common values, convictions and basic interests- a political alliance thus, but equipped by military means. [132]

Javier Solana, who was in the position of Secretary General from 1995 to 199, continues in the same manner:

> In 1949, the drafters of the Washington treaty envisaged the Atlantic Alliance as the cornerstone of a broader community of European and North American democracies- a community based on common values rather than common fear.[133]

From this representation of its own identity logically follows the conclusion that the purpose of the Alliance remains very much the same as during the Cold War – the purpose of the Alliance is the *defense* of its members and of their respective values. But what is striking here is that the post-Cold War *defense* activities of NATO have in fact become *offensive* in nature.[134] The Alliance has become more dynamic than ever. It started the process of enlargement, it engaged into so-called "out-of-area" operations and interventions in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Golf of Aden and most recently Libya.

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[131] Huysmans . "Shape-Shifting NATO," 616.
[132] Speech: Manfred Wörner, 1990b, but the similar accounts can be found in all speeches from 1990 to 1994 examined for the purposes of this thesis.
[133] Speech: Javier Solana, 1996b.
[134] The term offensive is used here to highlight the proactive behavior of NATO, not as value imbued term.

The ontological security approach can perhaps shed a new light on this seeming paradox. It shows that if international organization wishes to continue to exist as such international relations entity, it must in a tangible sense fulfill the purpose for which it claims to exist. In the absence of the clear and uncontested outside threat, this means that it must support its "intrinsic identity", in NATO's case its defense identity, which is just an aspiration, with "role identity" which gives a tangible content and concrete meaning to the purpose conceptualize as defense. As Mitzen puts it, "identity is a dynamic process from which action flows and in turn sustains identity".[135] Thus, due to the ontological security imperatives, the word *defense* has for NATO changed its meaning from "we will never strike first" to the offensive and proactive engagement aimed at preventing threats that my come as a result of the unpredictable nature of the post-Cold War world. This is perhaps best put by Javier Solana:

> Today, we tend to judge institutions more by what they can actually achieve than by what they represent.[136]

However the ontological security seeking is not a linear process in which once "intrinsic identity" is confirmed through any kind of role play things are, ontologically security wise, resolved for the international organization. Rather, as pointed out in the second chapter, it is a process that starts with construction of "intrinsic identity" but unfolds through the interplay of "intrinsic" and "role identity" where, depending on the success of the performed role, overall identity and ontological security of international organization are undermined or reinforced.[137] Ontological security seeking is thus a process of fine-tuning, of finding the right measure of "doing" that will support "being". Accordingly, the operations that NATO undertakes are

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[135] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 344.

[136] Speech: Javier Solana, 1998a.

[137] See: Trine Flockhart, "Towards a Strong NATO Narrative: From a "Practice of Talking" to a "Practice of Doing," *Working Paper Series , Danish Institute for International Studies*, (2010) http://stockholm.sgir.eu/uploads/Flockhart%20NATO%20Practices.pdf (accessed December 05, 2010)

mutually dependant in such a way that if previous operation resulted in the higher level of ontological security (or lower level of ontological insecurity) the next operations will be handled with more confidence, and *vice versa*. Thus, I now turn to tracking of this process. The attention is on the Alliances recent "out-of-area" operations: the war in Bosnia, intervention in Kosovo crisis and the involvement in Afghanistan. The process of enlargement, which takes up a significant portion of recent NATO's activities, is in general taken as the "success story" that reinforces its identity, and as such will not be further examined here.[138]

NATO's first post-Cold War operation was the one in Bosnia. Its role in this conflict was first aimed at supporting arms and economic embargo against at the time Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, through the Operation Sharp Guard. Later, after Srebrenica massacre in 1995, NATO engaged in the open bombing campaign known as Operation Deliberate Force.[139] These operations helped bring the Bosnian war to an end, and after successful Dayton Peace Agreement, NATO deployed peacekeeping forces.[140]

When looked at through the ontological security lens, these operations come through as the logical extension of the new "*offensive defensive*" identity that NATO adopted in the post-Cold War. It was an offensive operation since it was not provoked by the direct attack on one of the Alliance's member states, but conceived in defense terms as a preventive operation against uncertain consequences of potential spill-over effect. At the same time, this operation contains an important reference to history, necessary for presenting NATO as the "same continuous person in time". It supports the idea that assumed the forefront of NATO identity discourse – that it is a "community of values and destiny". In that respect it is helpful to borrow Ole Waevers

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[138] Ibid., working paper.
[139] Tony Weymouth and Stanley Henig, *Kosovo crisis: the last American war in Europe? (* New York: Reuters, 2001): 186.
[140] The name of this forces shifted from IFOR (The Implementation Force) to SFOR (Stabilization Force) .

argument. He posits that Europe's, and I would add NATO's, post-Cold War "Other" was in fact its own past of ethnic violence rather than any concrete enemy such as "the Russia", "Islamic fundamentalism" or even the Balkans.[141] Accordingly, this "community of values" was not going to allow for this past to become its future. Thus, from the ontological security perspective the Alliance's engagements in Bosnia were more than anything else its way of affirming a particular kind of identity, rather than performing a role of a defender against concrete threat.

The success that the Alliance achieved in the conflict in Bosnia had a positive, reinforcing effect on its ontological security. It managed to categorize at least one type of threat, it knew from which direction it was coming and how to fight it. Accordingly, when in 1995 Javier Solana became Secretary General an increasingly self-confident rhetoric is noticeable and two general themes can be distinguished. The first one is that of a success, predominantly connected with the achievements in Bosnia.[142] The other one is the approaching 21st century. The success in Bosnia provided NATO with the "feeling" of cognitive mastery over its environment and, with confidence that followed, it was going to shape this new century, not be overwhelmed by it. Solana describes it like this:

> In short, the NATO of today can legitimately be called a "new" NATO- a NATO that has moved from safeguarding security to actively promoting and widening it.[143]

At this stage NATO experienced a high level of congruence between its "intrinsic identity" and "role identity" which rendered it far from being irrelevant. Rather it began conceiving of

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[141] Ole Wæver, "Insecurity, Security, and asecurity in the West European non-War community," In Security Communities, ed. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 90.
[142] See speeches examined for this paper in the period from 1995 to 1999.
[143] 1997, 5

itself as the most important and indispensable builder of the European security architecture.[144]

By the 1997 the Alliances agenda was full:

> 1997 has been a most extraordinary year for the Alliance. Within just a few months, we invited new members into our Alliance, established a new relationship with Russia and Ukraine, enhanced the partnership for peace, created the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, gave more visibility to the Mediterranean dialogue, and made progress on NATO's internal adaptation. ... It showed the world that the North Atlantic Alliance is as determined and dynamic as ever...So the transatlantic link is not just in good shape, it is shaping history. We have a real chance to make the 21st century a much better one for Europe than this 20th century we are now leaving behind.[145]

With this new role and rhetoric that reveals high level of self-confidence one could have perhaps predicted that the next security risk was going to be handled with even stronger determination in order for this new "intrinsic" identity to be further reinforced.

In 1999 NATO got involved in yet another Balkan crisis: Kosovo. Even though it had deep historical roots, the recent crisis developed slowly from the beginning of the 1990's when Slobodan Milosevic revoked the Kosovo autonomy within, at the time, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Kosovo Albanians, who comprise majority of its citizens, started rebelling against this decision. In the second half of the 1990's, not long after the end of the war in Bosnia, the conflict between Serbs and Albanians started gaining the contours of yet another ethnic cleansing on the part of Serbia. After the 1999 Rambouillet negotiations between Albanians and Serbs fell through, NATO was set to intervene, in what was termed "humanitarian crises" due to the massive human rights violation. Between 24 March and 11 June 1999 NATO embarked on its first broad-scale, out-of-area military action which entailed both the bombing campaign called

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[144] See speeches: Manfred Wörner, 1990a; Javier Solana, 1996b; Javier Solana,1996c; Javier Solana, 1998a; George Robertson, 2002.
[145] Speech: Javier Solana, 1997a.

Operation Allied Force and humanitarian aid to refugees from Kosovo. The Alliance also established KFOR, a ground military mission for which it gained a United Nations mandate.[146]

If looked at through the ontological security approach three things can be singled out with respect to this NATO's intervention. First, as Steele[147] notes, prevailing materialist-informed approaches to international relations cannot easily explain it because it is hard to claim that member states have traditional security interests in saving ethnic Albanians.[148] This is especially true for the United States and on that point Tomas Friedman has asserted the following:

> But you need only ask your Congressmen to find Kosovo on a map and watch the blank stare that comes back at you – to appreciate how unimportant Kosovo is to any vital American interest.[149]

Second, imbued primarily with moral and emotional accounts about humanitarianism that deemed urgent action, the need for the authorization of the use of military force by the international low was suspended. NATO thus started bombing campaign against FR Yugoslavia without the green light from the United Nations Security Council, even though the North Atlantic Treaty explicitly obliges it to "refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations".[150]

Finally, as pointed out by Huysmans, all of a sudden NATO emerged as the humanitarian agency operating in the humanitarian field already taken by such organizations as UNHCR.[151] It

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[146] Andrew J. Bacevich and Cohen, Eliot A, *War over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 223.
[147] Steele dealt with Kosovo crisis on the state level of analyses, see: Steel, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 114-147.
[148] Ibid., 114.
[149] Thomas Friedman, New York Times, 04.06.1999.
[150] The North Atlantic Treaty, April 4, 1949.
[151] Huysmans, "Shape-Shifting NATO," 599-618.

engaged in such actions as building refugee camps, coordinating humanitarian actions, offering protection to people, airlifting them away from the region, etc.[152]

How is it then possible to account for the fact that NATO was ready to start a large scale military operation when its members did not have immediate national or strategic interest in it, but which nevertheless compelled them to break international law and to enter the field that it did not traditionally belong to? Ontological security approach can offer the following answer. Motivation for this intervention is perhaps the result of the previous Balkan "success story", to which NATO developed a certain level of "attachment" because it rendered it agentic and in control of its own environment. The high level of NATO's self-esteem was expressed in the belief that "the transatlantic link is not just in the good shape; it is shaping history"[153] meant that breaking rules for the noble cause is the legitimate move. The Alliance's choice to be a part of the humanitarian endeavor is also not a random one. As vaguely mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis, those in search of ontological security are likely to resort to actions that have strong emotional, value and moral aspect. It is thus not surprising that NATO, which longs for stable identity, becomes a part of this kind of operation, much like, as Kinnvall notices, people feeling ontologically insecure in the increasingly global world resort to groups with strong nationalistic and religious characteristics.[154]

As a digression, but nevertheless important for the understanding of ontological security approach, it should be pointed out that this explanation is also a part of the explanation why, in case of humanitarian crises, NATO sometimes intervenes but sometimes does not. There exist a significant number of regions around the world where hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and displaced. It is enough to mention the cases of East Timor, Ethiopia or Rwanda,

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[152] Ibid., 603.
[153] Speech: Javier Solana, 1998b.
[154] Kinnvall, "Globalization and Religious Nationalism," 714-767.

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yet the Alliance's humanitarian concerns are not evoked. This indicates two things. First, that NATO does not recognize humanitarian crises as the universal need of the international system upon which its new purpose can be constituted. Thus the motivation for Kosovo intervention must be elsewhere, which brings us to the second point. If looked at through the ontological security lens, this intervention can be seen as the product of the previous successful interplay between "intrinsic identity" and "role identity" and of the opened possibility for the further reinforcement of identity in much the same way. In that respect it is indicative that NATO officials rarely failed to speak about Kosovo, without mentioning the case of Bosnia.

The congruence that existed between NATO's "intrinsic "and "role" identity prior to Kosovo operations, was no longer there before engagements in Afghanistan. Kosovo intervention was a "role identity" play that did not deliver when it comes to further reinforcement of NATO's ontological security. An overly confident approach to the Kosovo case, that caused breaching of the few international rules along the way, encountered severe criticism that undermined NATO's legitimacy and damaged its self-perception. The paradox of humanitarianism by military means has taken its toll and it could have been expected that from Kosovo onwards NATO would keep a lower profile.[155]

NATO engagements in the Afghanistan were prompted by the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States and they signified a major event for NATO. For the first time in its history article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty was invoked. The article posits that an armed attack against one or more European or North America countries, parties of the Treaty, will be considered as an attack against them all.[156] On the 4 October 2001 NATO indeed confirmed that

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[155] Huysmans, "Shape-Shifting NATO," 605-608.
[156] The North Atlantic Treaty, April 4, 1949, Article 5.

these attacks can be subsumed under the Treaty.[157] However, Georg W. Bush declined the offers of help and decided to go into Afghanistan with so called "coalition of the willing".[158] Nevertheless, NATO did get involved in the operations in Afghanistan by assuming responsibility for ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in August 2003.[159] This was its first deployment outside of the North Atlantic area. Initially the operation was supposed to be concentrated only in the area around Kabul, but soon it spread throughout Afghanistan where NATO engaged in the intense combat actions. [160]

The fact that the Alliance did not react upon the historical invocation of article 5, in ontological and identity terms, opens up very important question: What is NATO for if not for what it was originally made? Clearly it was the United States and not questionable engagements in Kosovo crisis that prevented it from doing so, but both of these factors played an important role in the way NATO continued to behave once it become a player in Afghanistan. Without another full scale "success story" that can feed new narrative and allow for the intervention on the basis of familiar attachment, with the environment that seems to be escaping the cognitive grasp again the Alliance signified a new cycle of the low level of ontological security (or higher level of ontological insecurity). If one takes even a vague look at the post 9/11 speeches held by the Alliance officials, instead of 1990's rhetoric of the confident and strong NATO that confronts and changes history, a new episode the overwhelming "feelings" towards external environment is encountered:

> Since 11 September, our world has been rendered unfamiliar. The mundane has become dangerous. Who can ever look up again at an airliner or go to work in a

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[157] *NATO Update: Invocation of Article 5 Confirmed*, October 2, 2001.

[159] Renee De Nevers, "NATO's International Security Role in the Terrorist Era," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 40-50.
[160] ISAF Chronology, Accessed: Internet 17/05/2011
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/57772.htm

high-rise office building without, at the back of their mind, recalling the horrific images of the World Trade Center?[161]

NATO was once again detached from the familiar situation and it once again "experienced" disorientation. Further analyses of Lord Robertson speeches demonstrate this clearly. In the year 2001 his rhetoric fluctuated between positioning NATO in the center of the fight against terrorism and clearly distancing it from this central position. Nevertheless, terrorism has become the theme number one in all post 9/11 speeches examined for this thesis.[162] And this was clearly a major shift from the previous discourses about NATO's purpose, where terrorism was barely mentioned.

On the whole, more than twenty years has passed since NATO embarked on a mission of establishing its uncontested and stable identity. However, this process was a rollercoaster in which high levels of confidence were soon substituted with recurring crises. As the follow up to the engagements in Afghanistan from which, as Flochart claims a dominant picture that emerged was that of failure, in 2010 a group of experts offers recommendations for the new NATO strategic concept. In it an interesting accounts are offered in the beginning paragraph of the section titled "Vision and Purposes":

> Compared to its first decades, NATO between 2010 and 2020 is likely to appear less often on the central stage of global affairs. Instead, it will be cast in the *variety of roles*, sometimes as a leader, at other times in a supporting capacity sharing the spotlight with partners and friends.[163]

From these lines, two things can be read. First, the attempts of establishing ontological security through the assertive approach full of confidence clearly did not pay off so NATO decides to assume a more low profile position. However, and this is the second point, it promises

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[161] Speech: Lord Robertson, 2001.
[162] See speeches examined for this thesis: from 2001to 2010.
[163] NATO 2020: Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement. Analyses and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010.

to be in the "variety of roles" and in that way announces the continuation of ontological security struggles and anxious behavior which is a characteristic of an organization without clear and uncontested purpose.

CONCLUSION

This thesis was a conceptualization exercise that sought to answer the question of whether it is possible to speak in security terms with respect to such entities of international relations as international organizations; whether international organizations can be regarded as the referent objects of security. This question has been provoked by the recent developments in the discipline of security studies that strives to "deepen" and "broaden" the concept of security so that it is no longer exclusively focused on states as referent objects and military power as threat. I have stayed on the course of this enterprise and accordingly I have developed an argument that with the help of the ontological security concept even international organizations can be seen as entities with security problems.

The argument for this claim has been constructed in three stages. First, I have posited that the primary ontological characteristic of the international organization is the purpose it fulfills. In turn, this purpose is the response to the challenges existing in the international environment. On this point I have further argued that if purpose is the primary ontological characteristic of the international organizations it must be constitutive of its identity. Accordingly, uninterrupted relationship between international organization's purpose and challenges in the international environment render that organization ontologically secure.

In the second stage, I note that this is not always the case and that many post-Cold War organizations have in facet lost their original purposes since they were created for the needs of the different era. The loss of purpose should thus prompt the ontological insecurity of these international organizations and cause them to feel "anxious" as they most likely would not be able to cognitively grasp all the pieces of the new and overwhelming world.

In the third stage, through the combination of Mitzen's exogenous and Steele's endogenous accounts about identity formation I have made an inquiry into a theoretically possible model of behavior of the ontologically insecure international organization. This has been done by regarding the behavior of the ontologically insecure organization the interplay between "intrinsic identity", to which ontologically insecure organization resorts first an which has nothing to do with the need of the external environment, and "role identity", a concrete organization's actions which in tangible way reinforces or undermines its "intrinsic identity". Accordingly, I have argued that in this kind of situation, international organization's behavior is first and foremost driven by identity and ontological security needs rather than by the interests of member states or organization's bureaucracy.

These theoretical assertions were then put against the case of the post-Cold War NATO, for which I accept the claim that it has survived for non-purposive reasons. Through the analyses of its strategic concepts, its highest officials' speeches, as well as of its so-called "out of area" operations, I have in fact detected signs of ontologically insecure behavior. From the "anxiety" expressed in the way NATO depicts its external environment with such nouns as "uncertainty", "unpredictability", "change", "complexity", all the way to unraveling the change in the meaning of the concept of *defense,* from "we will never strike first" to preventive but offensive behavior, as the result of the interplay between "intrinsic" and "role identity".

However, this way of theorizing is not without difficulties. Since it opts for the "black-boxing" of the international organizations and relies only on the outside visible results of its behavior, motives of this behavior may be wrongly seen as the result of organization's identity needs rather than of some other interest. Telling in this respect is the fact that Steele looks at the Alliance's Kosovo intervention as the consequence of ontological insecurity of member states

rather than of NATO itself.[164] Thus the general problem of ontological security theorized with respect to international organization comes out of the general difficulty connected with theorizing about international organizations: can they have unproblematic and single self-conceptions. In this respect, further research is needed. The one that would make more detail inquiry into the dynamic of the international organizations, both on the matter of their "intrinsic identity" as well as its "role identity" and especially on the connection between the two. What has been done in this thesis is limited in scale and insufficient for any general conclusion.

Exploration of other international organizations would in this respect be of immense value for the theoretical propositions made in this thesis. Perhaps, with the help of ontological security approach, that recognizes the existence of identity-driven behavior; new light can be shed on the recent phenomenon of more and more organizations, even though this is not their primary purpose, getting involved into the business of democracy promotion through state-building and post-conflict reconstruction. Although usually comprising of the same member states, these organization tend to compete when it comes to these kinds of enterprises. Perhaps there is something especially rewording in being the democracy spreader.

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[164] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 114-147.

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