

# WZB

Berlin Social Science Center



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How do states act in international security organiza-  
tions?**

**Discussion Paper**

SP IV 2020–104

August 2020

**WZB Berlin Social Science Center**

Research Area

**International Politics and Law**

Research Unit

**Global Governance**

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WZB Berlin Social Science Center (2020)

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Abstract

**ORDERS, PUPOSES, AND TASKS:  
How Do States Act in International Security Organizations?**

by Jelena Cupac

IR scholars have paid significant attention to the question of *why* states act through international organizations (IOs). However, they have been less interested in detailing *how* states do it. The reason, I argue, is the assumption that action is explained once an actor's motives to engage in it are specified. However, as practice theory suggests, this assumption is mistaken. The manner in which an action is performed often has little to do with actors' motives. By scrutinizing international security organizations (ISOs), the article thus asks: How do states act inside ISOs? The article argues that they do it by using the language of the international security order, ISOs purposes vis-à-vis that order, and corresponding tasks. Importantly, it proposes that this manner of performance derives from the imperative of states to aggregate, using language, an ISO into an agent in world politics. The CSCE/OSCE's post-Cold War evolution is used as an illustrative case. The case shows that member states indeed perpetually envelope their demands in the language of the European order, the CSCE/OSCE purpose concerning that order and its tasks. The conclusion summarizes the articles' theoretical implications and invites scholars to explore *how*-questions of manner relating to IOs active in different issue areas.

*Keywords: International Organizations, International Security Organizations, OSCE, security order, organizational purposes*

Zusammenfassung

**Ordnungen, Zweck und Aufgaben:  
Wie handeln Staaten in internationalen Sicherheitsorganisationen?**

von Jelena Cupać

Forschende in den Internationalen Beziehungen haben der Frage, warum Staaten durch internationale Organisationen (IOs) handeln, große Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Sie waren jedoch weniger daran interessiert im Detail zu erläutern, wie Staaten dies tun. Der Grund dafür ist, so argumentiere ich, die Annahme, dass eine Handlung erst erklärt wird, sobald die Motive eines Akteurs spezifiziert sind. Aber, wie die Praxistheorie nahe legt, ist diese Annahme unzutreffend. Die Art und Weise wie eine Handlung ausgeführt wird hat oft wenig mit den Motiven der Akteure zu tun. Ausgehend von der Untersuchung internationaler Sicherheitsorganisationen (ISOs) fragt der Artikel daher: Wie handeln Staaten innerhalb von ISOs? Der Artikel argumentiert, dass sie sich der Sprache der internationalen Sicherheitsordnung, der Zweck der ISOs *vis-à-vis* dieser Ordnung und der damit verbundenen Aufgaben bedienen. Insbesondere führt der Artikel an, dass sich diese Handlungsweise aus dem Imperativ der Staaten ergibt, eine ISO unter Verwendung von Sprache zu einem Akteur in der Weltpolitik zu aggregieren. Die Entwicklung der KSZE/OSZE nach dem Kalten Krieg wird hierbei als Beispiel angeführt. Der Fall zeigt, dass die Mitgliedstaaten ihre Forderungen in der Tat fortwährend in der Sprache der europäischen Ordnung, des KSZE/OSZE-Zwecks in Bezug auf diese Ordnung und ihrer Aufgaben formulieren. Die Schlussfolgerung fasst die theoretischen Implikationen des Artikels abschließend zusammen und soll als Anregung für Forschende dienen, die Frage nach dem Wie auch im Hinblick auf IOs aus anderen Themenbereichen zu untersuchen.

*Stichworte: Internationale Organisationen, Internationale Sicherheitsorganisationen, OSZE, Sicherheitsordnung, organisatorische Zwecke*

## 1. Introduction

Why states act through international organizations (IOs), how they act inside these organizations, and why they act the way they do are three different questions. International relations scholars have proposed answers to the former question, but have largely failed to engage explicitly with the latter two. I argue that the reason for this is an often-made assumption that we have explained an action once we have specified an actor's motive for engaging in it. But, this assumption is flawed. *Why* an action is performed, *how* an action is performed, and *why* it is performed in a particular way are not necessarily connected. An example should clarify this point. If a person goes to a farmer's market every Saturday, we can ask *why* they do it— 'to buy fresh vegetables.' We can also ask *how* they do it— 'by taking the longest route between their house and the market'—as well as *why* they do it in that particular way— 'because they are used to that route.' As can be seen, the answers to the latter two questions have little to do with the person's motive to buy vegetables. They derived from entirely different considerations.

With this in mind, this paper tackles the how-question—How do states act inside formal IOs? —along with why questions of manner—Why do they act in that particular way? The paper focuses on one type of IOs in particular: international security organizations (ISOs). These organizations are selected as a hard case concerning the relationship between the motives for engaging in an action and the manner in which that action is performed. Given that cooperation imbalances in ISOs can produce serious security costs for participating states, one would expect these states to be particularly vocal about their motives, interests, and expected gains. Yet, even in these organizations, states rarely speak openly about their selfish motivations. Instead, as will be shown below, they envelope these motives, interests, and expectations into the language of international security orders, ISO purposes, and corresponding tasks.

The paper argues that the use of this kind of language is one possible answer to the question of how states act inside ISOs. Furthermore, the paper proposes that the use of this type of language results from the 'awareness' of states that, when acting inside ISOs, they are not just pursuing their individual and collective gains, but

are doing so by simultaneously aggregating, through language, an ISO into an agent in world politics. Historically, states have formed ISOs such as the UN, NATO, and the OSCE to build, reinforce, or transcend international and regional security orders. States talking about the security order (how it is or how it should be), an ISO's purpose *vis-à-vis* that order, and tasks that will accomplish those purposes are thus primary ways states engage with one another when meeting in these organizations.

Drawing on insights from practice theory, the theory of communicative behaviour, and business literature, I will elaborate on each of these assertions in more detail below. First, however, a caveat is in order. By talking about ISOs 'as agents in world politics,' the paper is not interested in theorizing whether these organizations are independent and authoritative entities, which is a topic that has already been covered by the principle-agent (PA) approach to IOs and the sociological institutionalist studies of international bureaucracy.<sup>1</sup> The paper is, first and foremost, interested in the practice of imputing 'actorness' into a collective agent—a phenomenon that has gained almost no attention concerning IOs, but is well-known in studies about the 'state as a person.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For PA see: Daniel L. Nielson and Michael J. Tierney, 'Delegation to International Organizations: Agency Theory and World Bank Environmental Reform', *International Organization*, 57(2), 2003, pp. 241-76.; Darren G. Hawkins, David A. Lake, Daniel L. Nielson and Michael J. Tierney (eds.), *Delegation and Agency in International Organization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).; Barbara Koremenos, 'When, What, and Why Do States Choose to Delegate', *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 71, 2008, pp. 151-92.; Lisbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, 'Delegation and Pooling in International Organizations', *Review of International Organizations*, 10(3), 2015, pp. 305-28. For sociological institutionalism see: Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations', *International Organization*, 53(4), 1999, pp. 699-732.; Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).; Michael N. Barnett and Liv Coleman, 'Designing Police: Interpol and the Study of Change in International Organizations', *International Studies Quarterly*, 49(4), 2005, pp. 593-619.; Lise Morjé Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008).; Catherine Weaver, *Hypocrisy Trap: The World Bank and the Poverty of Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).; Frank Biermann, *Managers of Global Change: The Influence of International Environmental Bureaucracies* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009).; Tana Johnson and Johannes Urpelainen, 'International Bureaucrats and the Formation of Intergovernmental Organizations: Institutional Design Discretion Sweetens the Pot', *International Organization*, 68(1), 2014, pp. 177-209.

<sup>2</sup> See: Erik Ringmar, 'On the Ontological Status of the State', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2(4), 1996, pp. 439-66.; Colin Wight, 'State Agency: Social Action without Human Activity?', *Review of International Studies*, 30(2), 2004, pp. 269-80.; Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006).; Alexander Wendt, 'The State as a Person in International Theory', *Review of International Studies*, 30(2), 2004, pp. 289-316.

The article is split into three sections. In the first section, I justify the paper's aim by scrutinizing the existing IO literature and by paying special attention to the difference between *why* questions of motives, *how* questions of manner, and *why* questions of manner. In the second section, I develop my argument about how the imperative to aggregate ISOs into agents in world politics prompts states to act in such a way that their self-serving interests and demands are enveloped into the language of order, ISOs purposes, and corresponding tasks. In the last section, I illustrate these insights with a case study; namely, the post-Cold War development of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), known since 1994 as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

## **2. The existing literature: why-questions of motives vs. how questions of manner**

There is no shortage of literature on why states act through IOs. Liberal and contractual institutionalists, both adopting rationalist paradigm, have been particularly interested in this issue. Liberal institutionalists emphasize that, in the context of anarchy, states create and join IOs because IOs enable them to resolve coordination and collaboration problems requiring collective action. IOs do this by, among other things, providing and improving information, reducing transaction costs, enabling intergovernmental bargaining, and raising the costs of agreement violation.<sup>3</sup> To account for how IOs provide all these benefits, contractual institutionalists zero in on these or-

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<sup>3</sup> Robert O. Keohane, 'International Institutions: Two Approaches', *International Studies Quarterly*, 32(4), 1988, pp. 379-96.; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, 2nd ed. (Palo Alto: Princeton University Press, 2005).; Robert O. Keohane and Lisa Martin, 'The Promise of Institutional Theory', *International security*, 20(1), 1995, pp. 39-51.; Lisa L. Martin, *Coercive Cooperation: Explaining Multilateral Economic Sanctions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).; Geoffrey Garrett and Barry R. Weingast, 'Ideas, Interests, and Institutions: Constructing the Ec's Internal Market', in Judith and Robert O. Keohane (eds.) *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).; Judith L. Goldstein, Miles Kahler, Robert O. Keohane and Anne-Marie Slaughter, *Legalization and World Politics* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001).; Randall L. Schweller and David Priess, 'A Tale of Two Realisms: Expanding the Institutions Debate', *Mershon International Studies Review*, 41(1), 1997, pp. 1-32.; Beth V. Yarbrough and Robert M. Yarbrough, *Cooperation and Governance in International Trade: The Strategic Organizational Approach* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

ganizations' functional attributes (centralization and independence)<sup>4</sup> and on their design features (membership, the scope of issues covered, centralization of tasks, rules for controlling an IO, and flexibility of its arrangements)<sup>5</sup>. Other rationalist arguments concerning state participation in IOs include: raising the visibility of non-compliance<sup>6</sup>; mitigating the implications of power asymmetries<sup>7</sup>; facilitating democratic transition<sup>8</sup>; and institutionalizing already existing generalized trust among states.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to rationalists who emphasize problem-solving features of IOs, sociological institutionalists are much more interested in these organizations' community-building and community-representing aspects.<sup>10</sup> While not denying that instrumental and efficiency-enhancing needs play a part in states' reasons for acting through IOs, these scholars emphasize that IOs act as an institutional expression of their community's standards of legitimacy and appropriateness.<sup>11</sup> For this reason,

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<sup>4</sup> Keneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, 'Why States Act through Formal International Organizations', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 42(1), 1998, pp. 3-32.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Koremenos,, Charles Lipson and Duncan Snidal, 'The Rational Design of International Institutions', *International Organization*, 55(4), 2001, pp. 761-99.; Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson, and Duncan Snidal, 'Rational Design: Looking Back to Move Forward', *International Organization*, 55(4), 2001, pp. 1051-82.; Charles Lipson, 'Why Are Some International Agreements Informal?', *International Organization*, 45(4), 1991, pp. 495-538.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 73-74.

<sup>7</sup> John G Ikenberry, 'Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order', *International Security*, 23(3), 1999, pp. 43-78.; John G. Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Jon C. Pevehouse, *Democracy from Above: Regional Organizations and Democratization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jon C. Pevehouse and Bruce Russett, 'Democratic International Governmental Organizations Promote Peace', *International Organization*, 60(4), 2006, pp. 969-1000.; Edward D. Mansfield and Jon C. Pevehouse, 'Democratization and International Organizations', *International Organization*, 60(1), 2006, pp. 137-67.

<sup>9</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, 'Before Hegemony: Generalized Trust and the Creation and Design of International Security Organizations', *International Organization*, 65(2), 2011, pp. 243-73.

<sup>10</sup> Keneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, 'Why States Act through Formal International Organizations', p. 24.; Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Treating International Institutions as Social Environments', *International Studies Quarterly*, 45(4), 2001, pp. 487-515.; Alexandra Gheciu, 'Security Institutions as Agents of Socialization? Nato and the "New Europe"', *International Organization*, 59(4), 2005, pp. 973-1012.; Jeffrey T. Checkel, *International Institutions and Socialization in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> For example, see: Steven Weber, 'Origins of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development', *International Organization*, 48(1), 1994, pp. 1-38.; Peter J. Katzenstein, 'United

sociological institutionalists often focus on IOs as producers and diffusers of norms and rules.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike the question of why states act through IOs, the questions of how they do it and why they do it in a particular way has not attracted explicit scholarly attention. Scholars tackle these questions indirectly by listing all the practices IOs enable states to do: to bargain, to issue rules and norms, to resolve disputes, and so forth. However, these practices are, first and foremost, seen as the derivatives of the *why* question: Why do states form IOs? Answer: to facilitate bargaining, to issue rules and norms, to resolve disputes, and so forth. The type of *how*-question I have in mind in this article is the *how*-question of manner: the manner in which bargaining is performed, the manner in which rules and norms are issued, the manner in which disputes are resolved. My understanding of manner is practice theoretical.<sup>13</sup> It refers to the performative routines and rules of everyday doing such as how agents in the practice describe the world, how they handle certain objects, or even how they move their bodies.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the paper is not interested in the game theoretical underpinnings of bargaining but rather in the type of performed language and the instruments bargaining entails (e.g. documents), as well as in the reasons this type of performance became dominant.

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Germany in an Integrating Europe', *Current History*, 96(608), 1997, pp. 116-23.; Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, 'The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations.

<sup>12</sup> For example, see: Martha Finnemore, 'International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy', *International Organization*, 47(4), 1993, pp. 565-97.; Martha Finnemore, 'Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism', *International Organizations*, 50(2), 1996, pp. 325-47.; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, 52(4), 1998, pp. 887-917.

<sup>13</sup> See: Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, 'International Practices', *International Theory*, 3(1), 2011, pp. 1-36.; Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (eds.), *International Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).; Iver B. Neumann, 'Returning Practice to Linguistic Turn: The Case of Diplomacy', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 31(3), 2002, pp. 627-51.; Vincent Pouliot, 'The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities', *International Organization*, 62(2), 2008, pp. 257-88.; Vincent Pouliot and Jérémie Cornut, 'Practice Theory and the Study of Diplomacy: A Research Agenda', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 50(3), 2015, pp. 297-315.; Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger, *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).; Ted Hopf, 'The Logic of Habit in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 16(4), 2010, pp. 539-61.

<sup>14</sup> Andreas Reckwitz, 'Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5(2), 2002, p. 250.

*How*-questions of manner cannot be derived from *why*-questions of motives. An example in the introduction illustrates well why this is the case, but few additional reasons can also be added. As practice scholars emphasize, a motive can be enacted in multiple different ways. This means that the relationship between motives and enactments is puzzling rather than logically necessary.<sup>15</sup> Sources of performative routines and rules of social practices often have little to do with (immediate) interests, preferences, and identities of actors. They might simply derive from habit, culture, or some other social consideration, including the idea of acting rationally. Accordingly, while pursuing their individual or collective goals, social actors can rarely do what they like. More often, they have to learn to pursue these goals while navigating (pre-existing) performative rules of a social practice. I argue that, in IOs, one of the most important sources of the performative rules derives from the imperative of member states to aggregate an IO into an agent in world politics. When pursuing their individual interests, preferences, and identities, states are thus under constant pressure to couch their demands in terms of an IO's purpose in the international arena.

Broadly speaking, the paper argues that IOs affect states. However, it should not be overlooked that the question of IOs power in this regard has been a widely debated question. Sociological institutionalists argue that they do. They maintain that these organizations facilitate socialization, persuasion, and identification, seen as processes through which states come to adopt such values and practices as rationalism, bureaucracy, and the market economy.<sup>16</sup> On their part, liberal institutionalists accept that IOs affect states to a degree but are not ready to go so far as to argue that IOs can change state preferences, interests, and identities.<sup>17</sup> They insist that IOs only change circumstances under which states act, such that they can trust each other more and become more willing to cooperate. The aim of this paper is not to take sides

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<sup>15</sup> For a similar argument see: Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, 'International Practices'; Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (eds.), *International Practices*; Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger, *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives*; Vincent Pouliot, 'The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities'.

<sup>16</sup> Martha Finnemore, 'International Organizations as Teachers of Norms'; Martha Finnemore, 'Norms, Culture, and World Politics'.

<sup>17</sup> For an exception see: Celeste A. Wallander, *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies: German-Russian Cooperation after the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

between these two positions. Rather, the aim is to suggest one more way in which IOs can be said to be affecting states. The difference, however, is in the focus. While sociological and liberal institutionalists focus on how IOs affect state interests, identities, and mutual trust, I focus on the performative rules they adhere to when acting in the organizational context.

### **3. How states act inside international security organizations and why they act in such a way?**

Multilateral diplomacy can be one answer to the question of how states act through IOs; it would also be a correct answer, at least according to the volumes and volumes of literature. However, this literature has one important blind spot: it mostly treats the organizational context of multilateral diplomacy as just that, a context. Apart from acknowledging that different types of IOs facilitate diplomatic game differently diplomacy scholars rarely observe that states also must reflect on how the results of their negotiations will reflect on an ISO as a whole.<sup>18</sup> In contrast to them, I argue that states are 'aware' that they are not just trying to achieve individually or mutually beneficial agreements, but are also trying to aggregate an organization into an agent in world politics. Put simply, states behaviour changes depending on whether they are expected to say 'We have decided' or 'the IO decided.' I have made this point as a general observation about IOs, but it also applies to ISOs. There too, states must aggregate an organization into an agent in world politics while pursuing individual, common, and collective goals. If permanent five members of the Security Council met outside of this organizational context, they would likely use self-interested language more readily than inside of the Security Council where all their decisions must ultimately be presented as the decisions of the Security Council itself. By observing that ISOs have a special relationship with the international security order, I propose that

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<sup>18</sup> For example, see: Katharina P. Coleman, 'Locating Norm Diplomacy: Venue Change in International Norm Negotiations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19(1), 2013, pp. 163-86.; Brigid Starkey, Mark A. Boyer and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, *Negotiating a Complex World: An Introduction to International Negotiation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).; Geoff R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (Berlin: Springer, 2015).; Johan Kaufmann, *Conference Diplomacy: An Introductory Analysis* (Berlin: Springer, 2016).; Ronald Walker, *Multilateral Conferences: Purposeful International Negotiation* (Berlin: Springer, 2004).

states do the aggregation by predominantly using the language of the security order, ISO purpose *vis-à-vis* that order, and by crafting corresponding ISO tasks. I discuss each of these in turn. In doing so, I answer both the question of how states act inside ISOs and why they act the way they do.

### **3.1 The language of the international security order**

Today's most important ISOs were created either in the aftermath of great wars or amid tense geostrategic relations. For example, the UN was created after World War II with the aim of ensuring the peaceful working of the international community, NATO was established in the early years of the Cold War as an alliance protecting Western democracies, and the CSCE/OSCE was introduced when Cold War tensions needed to be diffused. Thus, ISOs have a special relationship with the international security order.<sup>19</sup> In the most general sense, they uphold a global and regional peaceful order by defining private disputes in terms of community-wide dangers; and, they do this by issuing rules, norms, and principles. Sovereignty, human rights, and democracy, and other principles have featured prominently in this endeavour. Throughout the years, all three ISOs mentioned above have defined a peaceful order either as an order of sovereign states or as an order of democratic states protecting their citizens' human rights. These ordering links have then allowed them to interpret violent breaches of these principles as threats to international peace and security as a whole.

I argue that this relationship between ISOs and the international security order puts boundaries on the appropriate conduct of states within these organizations. While all ISO member states are aware of their own and their counterparts' selfish goals, the imperative to aggregate an ISO into an agent that can act within and upon the international security order constrains their freedom to use explicitly self-serving language in their conduct. Instead, they are expected to utter their demands in the language of the security order. For example, if China wishes to propose, oppose, or support a UN Security Council resolution about Kosovo, it is expected to justify its decision based on sovereignty as the foremost principle of the international security

order and the UN as its guardian, rather than in terms of its concern for the status of Taiwan. Even more compelling evidence of the prevailing use of order language in ISOs are the documents states issue on behalf of these organizations. ISO documents never contain explicitly self-serving language. Instead, they are a collection of security concepts, rules, and principles by which states agree on a particular notion of the international security order. Through these documents, states specify whose security an ISO should consider (that of individuals, states, or societies) and what kinds of threats (military, political, societal, or environmental) should concern it.

That states avoid using self-serving language in international relations is not a novel insight. The phenomenon has already been observed in a rich body of literature concerned with communicative behaviours.<sup>20</sup> The notion of rhetorical action is particularly prominent in this regard.<sup>21</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig defines rhetorical action as the strategic use of norm-based arguments by states aimed at justifying their interests, preferences, and identities via appeals to a community's shared ideas.<sup>22</sup> Seeking to explain the European Union's expansion to Central and Eastern Europe, Schimmelfennig argues that the main purpose of such action was to argumentatively entrap the opponent, and thus bring about a desired outcome.<sup>23</sup> By examining the debate on the reform of the Security Council, Matthew Stephen identifies one more type of

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<sup>19</sup> For a similar argument see: Craig N. Murphy, *International Organization and Industrial Change: Global Governance since 1815* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

<sup>20</sup> See: Thomas Risse, "Let's Argue!": Communicative Action in World Politics', *International Organization*, 54(1), 2000, pp. 1-39.; Nicole Deitelhoff and Harald Müller, 'Theoretical Paradise—Empirically Lost? Arguing with Habermas', *Review of International Studies*, 31(1), 2005, pp. 167-79.; Lee J.M. Seymour, 'Let's Bullshit! Arguing, Bargaining, and Dissembling over Darfur', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20(3), 2014, pp. 571-95.; Nicole Deitelhoff, 'The Discursive Process of Legalization: Charting Islands of Persuasion in the Icc Case', *International Organization*, 63(1), 2009, pp. 33-65.; Nicole Deitelhoff and Harald Müller, 'Theoretical Paradise—Empirically Lost? Arguing with Habermas', *Review of International Studies*, 31(1), 2005, pp. 167-79.

<sup>21</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig, 'The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union', *International Organization*, 55(1), 2001, pp. 47-80.; Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).; Frank Schimmelfennig, 'Rhetorisches Handeln in Der Internationalen Politik', *Zeitschrift für internationale Beziehungen*, 4(2), 1997, pp. 219-54.; Ian Hurd, 'The Strategic Use of Liberal Internationalism: Libya and the UN Sanctions, 1992-2003', *International Organization* 59(3), 2005, pp. 495-526.

<sup>22</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig, 'The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union', *International Organization*, 55(1), 2001, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig, 'The Community Trap'.

'camouflage' language states use in IOs—indirect speech.<sup>24</sup> Indirect speech, Stephen posits, is the use of one kind of illocutionary act to communicate another—examples include politeness, euphemism, innuendo, metaphors, and doublespeak.<sup>25</sup> The purpose of indirect speech is the communication of one's interests and preferences such that they are not seen as direct commands, requests, or criticism.<sup>26</sup> In essence, indirect speech serves to minimize social frictions and preserves social relations.

The use of order language by states in ISOs might be a case of rhetorical action and indirect speech. By using this language states might very well be seeking to argumentatively entrap their opponents or mitigate frictions that self-serving language would likely produce. However, it should not be overlooked that the use of order language is not something that states choose. When they act inside ISOs, they have to use it. For this reason, I argue that rhetorical action and indirect speech should be understood as tactics within the 'game' of ISO aggregation, rather than as sources of the rules of that game. Accordingly, while agreeing on a particular conception of order and ISO's purpose within such order is the game's ultimate aim, states play this game not by engaging in an abstract discussion about the order and ISO purpose but by making sure that this order serves their individual purposes as best as possible; rhetorical action and indirect speech being tactics they employ towards that end. Finally, I do not argue that states never employ self-serving language in ISOs. In fact, such language is frequently used. Donald Trump's recent public scold of NATO allies about the unfair distribution of security costs is a good example. Nonetheless, self-serving language is an exception rather than a rule in ISOs.

### **3.2 The purpose of international security organizations**

States do not aggregate ISOs into agents in world politics only by using the language of international security order. They also do it by specifying ISOs purposes. Business

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew D. Stephen, "Can You Pass the Salt?" The Legitimacy of International Institutions and Indirect Speech', *European Journal of International Relations*, 21(4), 2015, pp. 768-92.

<sup>25</sup> See also: Samuel Gyasi Obeng, 'Language and Politics: Indirectness in Political Discourse', *Discourse and Society*, 8(1), 1997, pp. 49-83.; Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak and James J. Lee, 'The Logic of Indirect Speech', *Proceedings of the National Academy of sciences*, 105(3), 2008, pp. 833-38.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew D. Stephen, "Can You Pass the Salt?", p.774.

literature can help us understand what this means. This literature observed that companies do not like to present themselves, nor to be seen, as existing only to make money. Instead, company leaders work hard on specifying companies' mission, vision, and identity without reference to lucrative motives.<sup>27</sup> For example, Facebook states that its mission is 'to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together.'<sup>28</sup> Although statements like this might sound hypocritical, business literature nonetheless sees the corporate mission, vision, and identity statements as essential in determining the overall direction of a company, defining shared expectations, and motivating and inspiring their staff.<sup>29</sup> In other words, this literature sees these statements as the main tool for aggregating companies into unified agents with a clearly stated purpose.

If states wish to turn ISOs into unified agents in world politics, they too must specify the purpose of these organizations, irrespective of their individual motives for acting through them.

However, unlike business scholars, IR scholars have largely overlooked this organizational dynamic. When it comes to aggregation of collective actors, IR scholars have been much more insightful when dealing with nations and states.<sup>30</sup> They recognize that these collective entities need something akin to autobiographical narratives to tell them who they are and how they should act. Some even go so far as to argue that these narratives are how nations and states are brought to life and made possible.<sup>31</sup> In other words, these collective actors do not even exist as actors before they are nar-

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<sup>27</sup> For example, see: Lance Leuthesser and Chiranjeev Kohli, 'Corporate Identity: The Role of Mission Statements', *Business Horizons*, 40(3), 1997, pp. 59-67.; Barbara Bartkus, Myron Glassman and Bruce R. McAfee, 'Mission Statements: Are They Smoke and Mirrors?', *Business Horizons*, 43(6), 2000, p. 23.; Farhad Analoui and Azhdar Karami, 'Ceos and Development of the Meaningful Mission Statement', *Corporate Governance: The international journal of business in society*, 2(3), 2002, pp. 13-20.

<sup>28</sup> Source: <<https://investor.fb.com/resources/default.aspx>> (17 February 2019).

<sup>29</sup> Neil H. Snyder and Michelle Graves, 'Leadership and Vision', *Business Horizons*, 37(1), 1994, pp. 1-7.

<sup>30</sup> See: Erik Ringmar, 'On the Ontological Status of the State'; Colin Wight, 'State Agency'; Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations*; Alexander Wendt, 'The State as a Person in International Theory'; Anthony F. Lang, *Agency and Ethics: The Politics of Military Intervention* (New York: SUNY press, 2002); Felix Berenskötter, 'Parameters of a National Biography', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20(1), 2014, pp. 262-88.

<sup>31</sup> Erik Ringmar, 'On the Ontological Status of the State'.

rated as such. I argue that this applies to ISOs too. A good indication is the wealth of personified language used in their documents: 'NATO *will deter and defend* against any threat of aggression,' 'the OSCE *is a promoter* of the notion of comprehensive and indivisible security,' 'the United Nations *will maintain* international peace.'

But how do states define an ISO's purpose? This is where the relationship between ISOs and international security order comes into play once more. The security order in an ISOs environment can be more or less established. For example, during the Cold War, bipolarity meant that the order was in place. Although the relations among groups of states were tense, a certain level of predictability and stability nonetheless existed. However, immediately after the Cold War, this was no longer the case. While the change was largely seen as positive, the lack of a clearly discernible security order rendered many state leaders anxious. With this in mind, I argue that states define an ISO's purpose depending on what needs to be *done* with the security order. If the order already exists, they are likely to define an ISO as *a reinforcer* of that order. However, if the desired order is not yet there, then they are likely to define an ISO as *a builder* of a new order. As the example of the Cold War shows, it can also happen that the order is established, but that at some point states find it overly strained. In this case, they might employ an ISO as *a transcender* of that order. However, strained relations do not always mean states will try to do something about them. If this happens, an ISO will merely *reflect* the external order as states struggle or even fail to aggregate it into an active agent.

### **3.3 The tasks of international security organizations**

ISO aggregation does not end with states advancing a particular notion of the international order and assigning an ISO its purpose. States must also specify concrete tasks for an ISO to perform. These tasks, of course, do not arise in a vacuum. Rather, they are inextricably tied to member states conception of the security orders and the ISO's purpose they designate. For example, if states see democracy as a crucial element of a peaceful order and label an ISO as a builder of that order, then that ISO is likely to develop organizational bodies and practices for monitoring and assisting its members' democratization processes. With all this in mind, I argue that irrespective of their individual interests and motivations, by choosing to act through ISOs, states are

expected to act in such a way that their actions ultimately contribute to the aggregation of an ISO into an agent in world politics. Specifically, states do this in three ways: they use the language of international security orders; they define an ISO's purpose with respect to the conception of the security order they advance; and they specify tasks that will accomplish those purposes.

To show how this practice unfolds, in the next section I scrutinize the CSCE/OSCE's development between 1989 and 2010. Arguably, the OSCE is not the most representative ISO. Compared to, for example, NATO and the UN, it has played a modest role in global security governance. For this article, however, the OSCE is a fitting illustrative case as the conception of order and purpose its member states advanced, varied substantially over the past three decades: with it building, reflecting, and transcending the European security order. This has not been the case with other ISOs. They have had different transformative patterns, but only the OSCE captures most of the above-theorized models.

In my scrutiny of the OSCE, I focus on forums in which member states meet (summits and ministerial meetings) and on materials they thereby produce (e.g., declarations, resolutions, and agreements).<sup>32</sup> My aim is to show that, pressured by the imperative to aggregate the OSCE as an agent in European security, state practices in these forums consist of: negotiating and advancing a specific conception of the European security order, delineating the OSCE's purpose *vis-à-vis* that order, and crafting particular tasks for achieving that purpose. Importantly, I opt for a historical approach. This approach allows me not only to show that negotiating orders, purposes, and tasks are the routine way in which states act in ISO but also to demonstrate that *why*-questions about motives and *how*-questions about manner are indeed irreducible to one another. Arguably, the story of the OSCE's evolution can be told from the perspective of member states changing motives, interests, and geostrategic constellations. However, my research shows that these considerations rarely translate into

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<sup>32</sup> For this purpose, I have retrieved 144 documents from the archives of the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat where I was a Researcher in Residence in March, October, and November 2013. Retrieved documents include outcome documents of six CSCE/OSCE summits held between 1990 and 2010, outcome documents of nineteen CSCE/OSCE ministerial meetings held between 1991 and 2009, and speeches, statements, draft documents, proposals, and non-papers issued before or after these summits and ministerials. The full list of documents is available upon request.

states using self-serving language. Instead, states have always presented their demands in the language of the European security order and the OSCE's purposes and tasks. Given that the aim of this paper is to show how states act in ISOs and why they act in that way, rather than how they individually accommodate to given performative practices, the following illustration will not refer to underlying individual state interests and preferences in a systematic way.

## **4. The post-Cold War evolution of the CSCE/OSCE**

### **4.1 The tasks of international security organizations**

The Cold War division of Europe started to wane in 1989. The Continent was transforming profoundly and, importantly, without conflict. Although this meant that Europeans were starting to trust each other more, there was still a lot of anxiety about their future relations. To mitigate this anxiety, they chose the CSCE as their principle negotiating framework. They thus met in Paris in 1990, thereby adopting the famous Charter of Paris for a New Europe. While the reality of the victorious West underpinned the Charter, the actual text of the Charter did not refer to winners and losers. It mentioned neither its members' historical nor their future individual interests and preferences. Instead, it enveloped these considerations into a text that was only about a new conception of European order and a new idea of the CSCE's purpose in that order.

The Charter, however, was not only a product of the Paris Summit but also of the two other high-level CSCE meetings: the 1990 Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension and the 1990 Vienna preparatory meeting. These meetings were all about the reinterpretation of the CSCE's existing normative catalogue in light of the Western values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and also about turning the CSCE into a *builder* of an order grounded in these values. In these meetings too, the Western character of these values was rarely, if ever, mentioned. Instead, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law were largely discussed as ordering principles in their own right.

The work of member states in these meetings consisted primarily of advancing new ordering links. In the 'Democratic Manifesto,' the Copenhagen Conference's

final document, they thus asserted that only regimes that adhere to pluralistic democracy and the rule of law could ensure the full respect for human rights.<sup>33</sup> This ordering link was reaffirmed in Vienna and Paris, with one more link being added: between democratic regimes and a peaceful order in Europe. For a better sense of how this ordering practice unfolded, it is instructive to look at how the states gradually manipulated language to reach the final ordering link. In a non-paper circulated in Vienna by Austria and Poland, democracy and the rule of law were first said to be merely the 'sound basis'<sup>34</sup> for a peaceful order in Europe. In the second draft, they became its 'prerequisite'<sup>35</sup>; and in the Charter of Paris, they were inscribed as the order's 'indispensable'<sup>36</sup> elements. Lastly, by asserting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as the 'bedrock on which' the CSCE 'will seek to *construct* the new Europe,'<sup>37</sup> member states aggregated CSCE into a novel type of agent, one to which they could then add specific tasks. The most important of these was the Office for Free Elections, tasked with facilitating an exchange of information on member states' elections.

Overall, in early 1990s, the CSCE was being turned into a fully-fledged international organization via the process of security order negotiations, a clearly defined purpose, and the establishment of concrete tasks. This was, however, only the beginning. As states continued to reshuffle security concepts for ordering purposes and to aggregate the CSCE into a builder of the new Europe, new organizational bodies and practices emerged. Accordingly, before the CSCE summit in Helsinki in 1992, member state held four meetings: The Meeting of Experts on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes in La Valetta and four ministerial meetings in Berlin, Moscow, and Prague. During each

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<sup>33</sup> CSCE, *Document of the Copenhagen Meeting*, Conference on the CSCE's Human Dimension, Copenhagen, 1990.

<sup>34</sup> CSCE, *Functions, Procedures, and Other Modalities of the Council for European Cooperation, a non-paper submitted by Austria and Poland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Summit preparatory meeting, Vienna, 1990.

<sup>35</sup> CSCE, *Functions, Procedures, and Other Modalities of the Council for European Cooperation. Second draft of the non-paper submitted by Austria and Poland*, Paris Summit preparatory meeting, Vienna, 1990.

<sup>36</sup> CSCE, *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Summit, Paris, 1990.

<sup>37</sup> CSCE, *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Summit, Paris, 1990.

of these meetings, using the language of order, they made a new link between security principles, thereby also creating new tasks for the CSCE.

As the emphasis on democracy and human rights after the Cold War prompted states to adopt a less rigid understanding of the principle of state sovereignty, an opportunity opened for revisiting some of the CSCE's earlier tasks; in particular, of its notion of the peaceful settlement of disputes (PSD). In La Valletta, CSCE experts thus reached a ground-breaking agreement on 'the mandatory involvement of a third party when a dispute cannot be settled by other peaceful means.'<sup>38</sup> They proposed PSD mechanisms such as good offices, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement.

The following ministerial meeting was held in Moscow in 1991 under the CSCE's human dimension framework. While in previous meetings they asserted that human rights could flourish only in democracies, in Moscow, they went a step further by arguing that the human dimension issues were no longer just a matter of internal state affairs but also a matter of legitimate international concern. They were strikingly explicit about it:

The participating States emphasize that issues relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern, as respect for these rights and freedoms constitutes one of the foundations of the international order. They categorically and irrevocably declare that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> CSCE, *Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Meeting of Experts on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes*, La Valletta, 1991.

<sup>39</sup> CSCE, *Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Additional Ministerial Meeting*, Moscow, 1991.

This shift allowed them to assign new tasks to the CSCE. Through the so-called Moscow Mechanisms, the CSCE could now engage in information gathering, good offices, mediation, and fact-finding.<sup>40</sup>

The 1992 meeting of CSCE ministers in Prague can be seen as the culmination of all the previous trends. First, by using assertive language ministers made it clear that the human dimension matters are both sources of peace and sources of conflict for the European security order. The following quote illustrates this: 'The objective of the CSCE [is] to prevent conflict and consolidate peace through eliminating the root cause of tension, by attaining in particular full respect for human rights.'<sup>41</sup> It is also illustrative that in their final document ministers failed to mention the word sovereignty, while they mentioned human rights six times and democracy eleven times. Secondly, to this notion of security order, they attached the notion of the CSCE as the order builder. They therefore asserted that the CSCE had an especially significant role 'in fostering democratic development and fully integrating participating states into the network of shared CSCE values and norms.'<sup>42</sup> This combination of the conception of order and the CSCE's purpose prompted a further redesign of the organization. Most prominently, the Office for Free Elections was renamed the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and its mandate expanded to include the Moscow Mechanisms.<sup>43</sup>

Aggregating the CSCE into a builder of Europe's new order premised on the values of democracy, human rights, and the free market was coming to a close with the Helsinki Summit and the Stockholm and Rome ministerial meetings. Document headings such as 'Shaping New Europe – The Role of the CSCE' and 'CSCE and the New Europe - Our Security is Indivisible,' while typical for the early 1990s, were to become few and far between. The notion of order, OSCE's purpose, and its tasks were entering a new phase as underlying interests of member state started to shift and distrust

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<sup>40</sup> CSCE, *Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE*, Additional Ministerial Meeting, Moscow, 1991.

<sup>41</sup> CSCE, *Summary of Conclusions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Prague, 1992.

<sup>42</sup> CSCE, *Summary of Conclusions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Prague, 1992

<sup>43</sup> CSCE, *Document on Further Development of CSCE Institutions and Structures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Prague, 1992.

among them grew. Yet, as will be shown below, these diverging positions almost never translated into a self-serving language. Rather, despite disagreement, within the OSCE framework member states always conducted (more or less successfully) a 'business' of organizational aggregation, requiring them to envelop all their considerations into the language of European order, the OSCE's purpose vis-à-vis that order, and the tasks it entails.

## **4.2 Reflecting international security order: the OSCE in the late 1990s**

In 1994, NATO announced plans to expand its membership to Central and Eastern Europe. The announcement upset Russia, which saw it as a direct security threat and as a move that would inevitably shrink its influence over European security. In an attempt to 'soften the blow,' Russia suggested this new reality be discussed within the OSCE. Other member states accepted the initiative agreeing to frame the talks as negotiations on a 'Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century.'<sup>44</sup> The negotiations took five years, culminating in the 1999 Istanbul Summit with the adoption of the Charter for European Security.<sup>45</sup> Just as the paper's theoretical framework argues, despite member states confronting each other with substantial security concerns and aspirations, at no point in the negotiations did they resort to an explicitly self-interested language. Instead, they made sure to always present these concerns and aspirations in the language of a European order, OSCE's purpose in this order, and its corresponding tasks.

Accordingly, the concepts member states evoked as constitutive of the European order during the negotiations *reflected* either their opposition to NATO's expansion or their support for it. Russia thus consistently put emphasis on the OSCE's principle of comprehensive, co-operative, and indivisible security. This allowed it to argue for the creation of a common security space in Europe and for the OSCE as its institutional focal point. In contrast, Western and most Eastern European states maintained that

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<sup>44</sup> See in: CSCE, *Budapest Document: Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era*, 4<sup>th</sup> OSCE Summit, Budapest, 1994.

<sup>45</sup> OSCE, *Charter for European Security*, 6<sup>th</sup> OSCE Summit, Istanbul, 1999.

each state has the right to belong to a security arrangement of their choice. They also made sure to emphasize that NATO's expansion did not contradict the idea of a 'Europe whole and free,' given that it was based on the OSCE's principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. In addition, they saw the OSCE not as a leading European security organization but as the site of coordination among 'reinforcing and interlocking institutions.'<sup>46</sup>

Over the course of the negotiations, the cleavage between the two sides broadened further. The issue of the European security order and the OSCE's role in it became tied to the question of so-called 'joint co-operative action.'<sup>47</sup> The main point of contention was whether the OSCE should be allowed to act as a reinforcer of member states' commitments, including of those they made in the OSCE's human rights dimension. While the West was in favour, Russia strongly objected.<sup>48</sup> The debate concerning the OSCE's purpose was then moved to the context of negotiations of the so-called Platform for Co-operative Security. The Platform was imagined as a framework within which the OSCE would engage with other security institutions. But here too, agreement between member states was nowhere in sight. While the West argued that the platform would turn the OSCE into a 'uniquely placed' forum for security cooperation,<sup>49</sup> Russia insisted the OSCE already played 'a *central role* as the inclusive and

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<sup>46</sup> To trace how this debate developed see: László Kovács, *Statement by the Delegation Hungary* (Ref.MC/26/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.; Bjorn Tore Godal, *Statement by the Delegation Norway* (Ref.MC/30/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.; Povilas Gylys, *Intervention by the Delegation Lithuanian* (Ref.MC/32/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.; Pavel Bratinka, *Statement by the Delegation Czech Republic* (Ref.MC/39/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.; Andrzej Towpik, *Statement by the Delegation Poland* (Ref.MC/43/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.; Strobe Talbot, *Intervention by the Delegation USA* (Ref.MC/47/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.; Hans Van Mierlo, *Speech by the Delegation Kingdom of Netherlands* (Ref.MC/54/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.; Andrzej Towpik, *Statement by the Delegation Poland* (Ref.MC/64/95), 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Budapest, 1995.

<sup>47</sup> OSCE, *Lisbon Document* (SUM.DOC/1/10/Corr.1\*), 5<sup>th</sup> OSCE Summit, Lisbon, 1996.

<sup>48</sup> OSCE Chairmen-in-Office, *Proposal – Security Model: OSCE Platform for Cooperative Security* (Ref.PC.SMC/173/97), Vienna, 1997.; OSCE, *Proposal by the Delegation Switzerland of measures in case of non-compliance with OSCE commitments at the OSCE Security Model Committee (SMC)* (Ref.PC.SMC/368/97), Vienna, 1997.; OSCE Chairmen-in-Office, *Aide Memoire: Identification of building blocks which could possibly be Included in a Charter for European Security* (Ref.PC.SMC/374/97), Vienna, 1997.

<sup>49</sup> OSCE, *Statement of the Delegation Russian Federation* (Ref.PC.SMC/5/97), Vienna, 1997.

comprehensive organization for consultation, decision-making and co-operation in maintaining peace and stability in Europe.’<sup>50</sup>

As this short overview demonstrates, the OSCE documents adopted between 1995 and 1998 lacked coherence. They merely *reflected* member states diverging positions on what concepts should be constitutive of Europe’s order and what purpose the OSCE should play in it. In other words, while member states were endeavouring to aggregate the OSCE into an agent in European politics, they were not very successful. However, despite disagreement, self-interested language never surfaced. Member states never stopped with the aggregation ‘business,’ they merely translated their diverging positions into preferences for different security principles and concepts. Accordingly, while in the early 1990s references to the concepts of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law marginalized the concept of sovereignty, in the second half of the 1990s sovereignty had a comeback. This was largely a concession to Russia in exchange for acknowledging Western and Eastern Europe’s preference for the right of states to belong to security structures and arrangements of their choice.

The Charter for European Security that was adopted in 1999 as the culmination of the negotiations that started in 1994 is also best described as a collection of concepts reflecting divergent positions of OSCE member states. As a result, when compared to the early 1990s,<sup>51</sup> the OSCE’s institutional development slowed down significantly in this period. Security concepts could not be translated easily into the OSCE’s specific tasks given that member states could not agree on one notion of European security order and the OSCE’s purpose in it. Therefore, despite discussing for almost five years an establishment of ‘joint cooperative measures’ in cases of a clash among states or internal breakdown of law and order, states were only able to agree to give assistance to states when they request it. In this context of diverging preferences and interests, the participating states also failed to agree on advancing the OSCE’s role in peacekeeping, eventually deciding to leave the question open for further discussion while allowing the organization to engage in peacekeeping ‘on a case-

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<sup>50</sup> OSCE, *Statement of the Delegation Russian Federation* (Ref.PC.SMC/5/97), Vienna, 1997, (*emphasis added*).

by-case basis and by consensus.<sup>52</sup> Overall, only two organizational innovations were introduced via the Charter for European Security. One is Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT), whose mandate, despite the somewhat pompous name, was limited to a loosely defined expert assistance to the participating states in civilian and police matters.<sup>53</sup> The other is the Preparatory Committee, an open-ended committee under the direction of the Permanent Council which was expected to meet in an informal format with the purpose of keeping the dialogue between the OSCE's participating states as constant and open as possible.<sup>54</sup>

### **4.3 Transcending international security order: the OSCE between 2008 and 2010**

Between 1999 and 2008, the OSCE was, to use the words of its Chairmen-in-Office, in an 'introspective episode,' an episode that made it 'anaemic, if not stagnant.'<sup>55</sup> Essentially, the organization suffered a decade-long standstill. Between 1999 and 2008, the majority of its Council of Ministers meetings ended without a final declaration and, importantly, not one summit meeting took place, while in the 1990s summits were organized every two years. The reason for the standstill was increasingly tense relations between the member states. Russia remained frustrated with NATO's eastward expansion, and it was getting increasingly anxious about its military interventions and the plans to put a missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic.<sup>56</sup> In contrast, Western states were concerned with Russia's increased military assertiveness displayed in its war with Georgia in 2008.

In an attempt to transcend these overly tense relations, in 2009 the two sides agreed to embark on the so-called Corfu Process within the OSCE. The institutional

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<sup>51</sup> Cupać 2016

<sup>52</sup> OSCE, *Charter for European Security*, 6<sup>th</sup> OSCE Summit, Istanbul, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> OSCE, *Istanbul Document*, 6<sup>th</sup> OSCE Summit, Istanbul, 1999.

<sup>54</sup> OSCE, *Istanbul Document*, 6<sup>th</sup> OSCE Summit, Istanbul, 1999.

<sup>55</sup> OSCE, *Press release*, OSCE's Belgian Chairmanship, Brussels 2006. Available at: <[www.osce.org/node/59582](http://www.osce.org/node/59582)> (23 February 2019).

<sup>56</sup> Dmitry Medvedev, Speech delivered at the meeting with German political, parliamentary and civic leaders, 5 Jun 2008. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/320> (23 February 2019).

context once more meant that self-interested language be substituted with the language of order, the OSCE purpose, and its specific tasks. Accordingly, the Corfu Process was framed as negotiations about the three Rs—Reconfirm, Review, and Reinvigorate.<sup>57</sup> Member states essentially aimed to re-examine the meaning of the OSCE's longstanding concept of comprehensive, co-operative, and indivisible security for the European order. Accordingly, imbuing the OSCE with the purpose of enabling member states transcend their overly strained relations went hand in hand with making the OSCE itself agentic with respect to a particular notion of the European order. Illustrative of this are the speeches of OSCE's Chairmen-in-Office at the time, Greek representative Dora Bakoyannis. She observed that 'the loss of trust has been enormous' and that high-level dialogue on European security order was 'much needed and long overdue.'<sup>58</sup> She also emphasized that the OSCE should allow participating states to 'rise above the blame game' and provide them with a 'targeted impetus to the dialogue on European security.'<sup>59</sup>

But the Corfu Process proved to be much more difficult than anticipated. Russia, the West, and most Eastern European states confronted each other with significantly different interpretations of the relationship between the OSCE's principle of comprehensive, co-operative, and indivisible security and the European order. Referring to the OSCE's three security 'baskets'—politico-military, human, and economic basket—Russia insisted that erosion was occurring only in the politico-military one.<sup>60</sup> What its representative had in mind when advancing this argument was NATO's geographical, functional, and military expansion. As a result, during the Corfu Process, Russia chose to emphasize security concepts from the sovereignty family as those that should be constitutive of the European order; namely, the respect for sov-

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<sup>57</sup> OSCE, *Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Corfu Process: Reconfirm, Review, Reinvigorate Security and Co-operation from Vancouver to Vladivostok* (Ref. MC/DOC/1/09), 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Athens, 2009.

<sup>58</sup> OSCE, *Chair's opening remarks at the plenary session of the Corfu informal meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the future of European Security*, Corfu, 2009.

<sup>59</sup> OSCE, *Chair's opening remarks at the plenary session of the Corfu informal meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the future of European Security*, Corfu, 2009.; OSCE, *Chair's concluding statements to the press at the Corfu informal meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the future of European Security*, Corfu, 2009.

ereignty and territorial integrity, independence of states, non-interference in states internal affairs, and the right of people to determine their own fate.<sup>61</sup>

For their part, the Western, Central, and Eastern European states insisted that NATO's practices were not in conflict with the OSCE's principle of co-operative, comprehensive, and indivisible security. They maintained this position not only because the OSCE's documents affirm the fundamental right of the participating states to freely choose or change their security arrangements (including treaties or alliances) but also because NATO had been designed to strengthen an order of democratic states in Europe. Accordingly, these states contended that the violations of the OSCE's principle of co-operative, comprehensive, and indivisible security were coming primarily from the erosions in the second (human) and third (economic) basket.<sup>62</sup> More precisely, the principle, according to them, was being violated due to the difficulties of certain OSCE states to adhere to the basic standards of democratic governance and respect for human rights, the protracted conflicts, border disputes, ethnic conflicts and shared security challenges such as energy security, illegal migration, and human trafficking.<sup>63</sup>

Unsurprisingly, member states' diverging positions concerning the meaning of the concept of co-operative, comprehensive, and indivisible security for the European order meant that there was little space for translating the concept into the organizational tasks. The situation was made worse by the fact that assigning the OSCE with the transcending purpose did not yield the expected results. The tense relations among states were not eased in any significant way, at least not to the point that the OSCE could be imbued with a new purpose *vis-à-vis* European security order. The proof of this is the fact that although the Corfu process culminated in the adoption of the *Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards a Security Community*, there was no

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<sup>60</sup> OSCE, *Address by Mr. Sergey Lavrov*, Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, 2009.

<sup>61</sup> OSCE, *Address by Mr. Sergey Lavrov*, Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, 2009.

<sup>62</sup> OSCE, *Speech of the OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut*, delivered at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy, Vienna, 2010.

<sup>63</sup> OSCE, *Speech of the OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut*, delivered at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy, Vienna, 2010.

evidence the OSCE was transformed in any notable way.<sup>64</sup> The Corfu Process was essentially an end in itself. It helped break, for a brief period, ten years of low engagement between OSCE member states, but not much more than that.

## 5. Conclusion

IR scholars have done much theoretical work to understand why states act through IOs. However, they have invested far less effort to understand how states act inside these organizations and why they act in particular ways. In this article, I have thus focused on the latter questions. My starting premise was that *why*-questions of motives and *how*-questions of manner cannot be reduced to one another. Put differently, there is no necessary connection between motives for acting and the manner of acting given that one motive can be enacted in numerous different ways, as well as that performative rules of practices can derive from sources unrelated to actor's interests and motives.

I focused on ISOs, a type of IOs in which individual motives of states are thought to be particularly salient considering the costs of poorly managed state security. Yet, I have shown that, even in these organizations, states do not behave in an openly self-serving manner. Instead, most of the time they camouflage motives that prompted them to act through ISOs in a language of the international security order, the ISO's purposes, and corresponding organizational tasks. I have proposed that states behave in this manner because, when acting through ISOs, they are aware that they are not just in the business of fulfilling their individual goals, but also in the business of aggregating an ISO into an agent in world politics. To demonstrate these points, I have tracked the OSCE's development since the end of the Cold War. I have thereby shown that interests, motives, demands, and concerns of member states were rarely openly expressed. Instead, they have always been enveloped into the language of the European Security order and the CSCE/OSCE's purpose relating to that order. This empirical investigation yielded some potentially significant theoretical insights

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<sup>64</sup> OSCE, *Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards a Security Community*, 7th OSCE Summit, Astana, 2010.

for furthered research; a significant one being that the agency of ISOs is not a stable but a variable category.

One of the most debated questions in IR has been the question of the extent to which international organizations matter. For realists, they do not matter; for liberal institutionalists and constructivists, they do. However, my approach suggests that this question should not be answered dichotomously. When in the early 1990s the CSCE/OSCE was set up as a builder of the European security order it was highly 'agentic,' and thus consequential. However, when in the late 1990s and early 2000s it started to reflect its members' increasingly tense relations, its consequentiality diminished substantially. Member states were able to make the OSCE important again in the late 2010s when they turned it into an arena for transcending their differences, but this episode was short lived. It should be added here that ISOs that are tasked with reinforcing the international security order are also highly consequential. But, the post-Cold War CSCE/OSCE never entered this state, hence the gap in my empirical analysis. A good example would be NATO during the Cold War, as it was indispensable in maintaining the order among Western democratic states. In sum, while states continually strive to aggregate ISOs into unified agents in world politics, they are not always successful. Or, as I have already indicated, the agency of ISOs is a variable not a constant. This perspective might shed light on the current state of ISOs which are largely perceived to be experiencing a crisis. Accordingly, using the theoretical language of this paper, this crisis can be understood as these ISOs' reflective phase rendering them less agentic than in previous decades.

The last question I want to address is the extent to which my theoretical assertions are generalizable. The *how*-questions of manner are usually domain specific, hence answering them by scrutinizing one type of IOs does not necessarily make them valid for the other types. That being said, I nonetheless hold that most IOs require aggregation into agents in world politics. While for ISOs this practice entails the constant concern of states for the international security order, an ISO purpose, and specific tasks for achieving this purpose - this need not be the case for other IOs. A further theoretical and empirical investigation would therefore be necessary to investigate this subject.

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