

# **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: BEYOND THE MISSION STATEMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Each international cooperating body is founded with a certain idea of what it is supposed to achieve. Sometimes, however, the body persists even after the mission has been fulfilled.

At the point of reaching the primary goal, there are two options: to continue cooperation, or to dissolve the body. This thesis offers a comparative case study of three organizations which cooperate internationally: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Visegrad Four (V4), and The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). While the ECSC disbanded after its founding treaty expired, NATO and the V4 reinvented themselves after having reached their primary objectives. Using document analysis, this thesis seeks to evaluate the role of three factors which can influence this process: the size and influence of its bureaucracy, the presence of threat, and possible alternatives to the existing form of cooperation. Adopting a historical institutionalism framework this thesis assesses how best to understand when cooperation continues or when it ceases to exist when the original mandate is fulfilled.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

As Europe battled the migration crisis of 2015, a different view on how it should be handled emerged in the European Union (EU). While some countries, such as Germany, promoted opening the borders for migrants, other countries opposed such move. One of the most prominent opposing countries were the countries of the Visegrad Four (V4). As their position on the issue was unified, in the media they were often grouped under the name of V4 countries.

The V4 was founded in 1991, with its main goals being democratization, eradicating the socialist system and eventual membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU. The V4 has met all these goals by 2004, yet it is still a persistent cooperating body. As the original mandate was fulfilled, this suggests that the V4 must have reinvented itself into a body with different aims and goals. However, it is not the only one to do so. One of the most well-known examples is NATO, which also met its original goals but continues to cooperate to this day. To contrast, other established forms of cooperation, such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), fulfill their mandate and then expire. This thesis aims to evaluate the factors which contribute to these two different outcomes. Why and how do some cooperating bodies reinvent themselves with a new purpose after having met their original goal, while others expire and are dismantled?

This research is topical not only because the V4 has attracted so much international attention in the past few years thanks to their unified stance on European issues. In a world of increasing globalization and transnationalization, cooperation among states is ever growing. However, while the topic of how international cooperating bodies come to be is

well-researched, there is not much research on why, when, and how they dissolve (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2018, p. 2). This is a gap to which my research can contribute.

This paper is organized as follows. The following section presents a literature review. The underlying theory of historical institutionalism and its assumptions are explained afterwards. The section after theory shows how examined concepts are operationalized and sheds light on the employed methodology – comparative case study, as well as methods of data collection and analysis. Three analytical sections follow in the following order: NATO, the V4, ECSC. Each case offers an introduction to the cooperating body, analysis of the three concepts, and a conclusion on the case. The last chapter provides a final comprehensive conclusion and ties everything together.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

When studying the puzzle of when international cooperating bodies maintain themselves and when they cease to exist, scholars agree that there is a gap in our understanding of the factors which influence these two outcomes. Scholarly literature on the topic of organizational dissolution is scarce (McCalla, 1996, p. 450; Fernandez, 2008, p. 113; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2018, p. 2).

There is a large variety of forms that international cooperating bodies can have, such as international governmental organizations, informal alliances, non-profit organizations etc. Each of these forms' longevity can be influenced by different factors (Leeds and Savun, 2007, p. 1130). Hager et. al (1996, p. 977) and Fernandez (2008, p. 125)

argue that dissolution due to mission fulfillment or a set termination date is mainly particular to non-profit organizations. Although most international organizations do not have a termination date (Ameratisinghe, 2009, p. 466), directions for premature dissolution are included in the official documents if they do (Schermers and Blokker, 2011, p. 1050; Klabbers, 2012, p. 331-2).

While termination does not equal failure, since some cooperating bodies are only founded for a single, time limited purpose (Hager et. al, 1996, p. 977; Fernandez, 2008, p. 124), Das and Teng (2000, p. 77) write that premature dissolution is a sign of instability, which is always undesirable. Another source of instability resulting in the body's disbandment can be the fact that the body only exists for a short time and lacks expertise (p. 77).

Over time, bodies accumulate knowledge and expertise, which is then harder to abandon (Hager et. al, 1996, p. 978; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2018, p. 5,9). This knowledge is accumulated via bureaucratic procedures. Formal procedures include, for instance, gathering knowledge in databases. On the other hand, examples of informal procedures are interpersonal communication and private documentation. In order to function efficiently, bureaucrats must share their respective knowledge to contribute to aggregate knowledge of their body (Mayer, 2014, p. 4; Hardt, 2017, p. 121). Besides the accumulation of knowledge, bureaucrats can also be influential in policy outcomes. As they have a degree of autonomy, they can exercise authority over member states. In other words, the internal composition of bureaucratic officials can be detrimental in deciding on their international cooperating body's actions (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004, p. 17-29; Dijkstra, 2015, p. 131).

Bureaucracies are created by member states of cooperating bodies, which outsource their responsibilities to bureaucracies in order to achieve greater “neutrality, expertise, continuity, and efficiency” (Dijkstra, 2015, p. 130).

Occasionally, scholarly literature arrives at two conflicting outcomes, such as in the case of evaluating threat. Duffield (1994-95, p. 764) states that alliances founded with the aim to collectively resist a threat tend to dissolve once the threat disappears. To the contrary, Leeds and Savun (2007, p. 1120-1) found that military alliances usually maintain themselves even after the elimination of the threat. My thesis also focuses on the concept of threat to contribute to this debate.

Finally, full dissolution of an international cooperating body is a rare occasion (Klabbers, 2012, p. 325). Besides dissolution, other forms of cooperation termination are merging with another body and redefining the body for a new purpose (Das and Teng, 2000, p. 90). My work helps to shed light on the factors influencing these outcomes, as this field of literature is not developed strongly.

## **THEORY**

The broad theory used to support this research is institutionalism, more specifically the school of historical institutionalism. The literature on this theory usually employs the terms “organizations” or “international organizations (IOs),” nonetheless, its assumptions are applicable to all established and reoccurring forms of cooperation. Following this practice, in this chapter, these terms refer to all sorts of such cooperation. As this thesis focuses on

reinvention, or its absence, of established forms of cooperation, it seeks to engage with the original goals and how those evolved, making historical institutionalism a suitable approach in this case.

Historical institutionalism (HI) examines how systems are “embedded in historical development and their socioeconomic and cultural present (Peters, 2012, p. 3).” HI assumes that choices that were made at the time of the foundation of the organization in question serve as a point of departure and determine subsequent actions of the organization (p. 20). This process is called path dependence. It is assumed that the initial choices will have a continuing influence on the organization in the future until a strong force intervenes (Peters, 2012, p. 70-2; Rixen and Viola, 2016, p. 12). The stability is ascribed to self-reinforcing. Most actors, instead of carefully evaluating every single decision to determine the most favorable outcome like in the school of rational choice institutionalism (Peters, 2012, p. 20), tend to stick to defined rules and known procedures. Within HI, political actors are not perceived to be “rational maximizers,” but rather “rule-following satisficers” (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, p. 7-8). Another reason why institutions stick to path dependence is that the costs of path change are high (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p. 39; Rixen and Viola, 2016, p. 7). Resources have been invested in the creation of the organization and knowledge has been generated. However, these are context-specific and therefore not easily transferable to any other institutional setting. Such sunk costs deter institutions from changing their path (Genschel, 1997, p. 47).

Although HI is well-suited to explain stability and persistence of institutions via path dependence, it can also explain change (Peters, 2012, p. 77; Lowndes and Roberts,

2013, p. 111). In this context, change refers to any deviation from the original path defined at the founding point. It does not necessarily have to entail a complete restructuring of an organization. Alterations to an organization's mission is also perceived as a change even if this ideological shift does not result in changes to the organizational structure (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, p. 16-7). Some of the new scholarship even departs from the stability/change dichotomy and interprets such events as "institutional development" (Rixen and Viola, 2016, p. 3). Traditionally, HI assumes that institutions find themselves in long periods of stability which are interrupted by so called critical junctures or punctuated equilibria (Peters, 2012, p. 77; Rixen and Viola, 2016, p. 12). They are defined as exogenous in nature and stand for dramatic changes in the socioeconomic, political or geopolitical external environment (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, p. 15; Haunschild and Chandler, 2008, p. 631-2; Peters, 2012, p. 83; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p. 114-5; Rixen and Viola, 2016, p. 12). In the context of this paper, each of the examined cases has been subjected to changes in external geopolitical environment. Critical junctures are the points of time when the original mandates have been mostly fulfilled or lost their urgency. In the case of NATO, the Soviet threat disappeared. For the V4 countries the critical juncture was the 2004 Eastern enlargement of the EU. ECSC's founding treaty expired in 2002 when the EU was becoming ever more integrated and war between Western European states, which the ECSC aimed to prevent, was virtually unthinkable. These are exogenous forces and crises in a way, which prompted a "what now" question, requiring the organizations to either dissolve or reinvent themselves.

Even if we accept the critical juncture in these cases as being of exogenous nature, the endogenous factors cannot be diminished. While some of the historical institutionalists recognize that change can emanate from within (Haunschild and Chandler, 2008, p. 633), HI is sometimes criticized for neglecting the interaction between endogenous and exogenous sources (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p. 40; Rixen and Viola, 2016, p. 15). This lacuna in HI is rather large. My paper partially attempts to contribute to exploring the interaction. Social sciences in general and political science specifically are fields where the environment is malleable and can and is being changed by actors (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, p. 26). In other words, even if a change is prompted by exogenous forces, it is up to the endogenous ones, the officials and the bureaucracies within organizations to decide how to respond to it. Therefore, this paper also examines, among others, the role of bureaucracies in reinventing IOs thus tying the exogenous and endogenous forces together.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design applied to this thesis is a comparative case study. Comparing cases can be especially helpful when establishing a theory derived from observation. Even though my thesis offers a correlational rather than a causal hypothesis, it still examines a set of factors and their impact on a given outcome. Comparing cases with different outcomes yields best results in terms of external validity.

## **CASE SELECTION**

The initial motivation behind this research was the behavior of the V4 during the migration crisis, which prompted the question – how come the V4 still exists? In order to examine factors that affect reinvention of established forms of international cooperation, the next example became NATO, as the longest surviving military-political alliance in European history (Perlmutter, 2000, p. 129). Finally, to study why some international cooperating bodies cease cooperation, a case with a different outcome was chosen. The ECSC was a European cooperation project, which was legally disbanded as scheduled, in 2002.

## **METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Document analysis is used in the analytical chapters and it consists of several kinds of documents. As for primary sources, official documents from the examined cooperating bodies were studied. These include official websites of NATO and the V4, from which documents such as mission statements, official declarations, speeches, yearly reports, and presidential programs were sourced. The ECSC does not have its own website, therefore primary sources mainly come from the European Economic and Social Committee's (EESC) website and include speeches and official documents. These primary sources are supported by secondary sources: academic literature and online articles from the media. I also reached out to EESC via its official contact form to get more information on the ECSC's incorporation, but received no answer.

## **OPERATIONALIZATION OF THEORY**

### **BUREAUCRACY**

International organizations and virtually any form of established international cooperation essentially consist of bureaucracies, which are an embodiment of rational-legal authority. They shape the IOs as social actors and decide on their purpose. Although historical institutionalism generally neglects the role of internal stimuli in change of established patterns of cooperation, bureaucrats can shape the outcome of situations and policies and therefore should not be disregarded (Adler, 2008, p. 209, Pertusot, 2011, p. 13-4, Mayer, 2014, p. 16). As they often have knowledge regarding the cooperating body, they might want to be kept around in order not to lose it. Moreover, bureaucrats create institutional capabilities and can “establish themselves as important actors in administrative and political processes” which, in a path dependent way, shapes political outcomes (Mayer, 2014, p. 9). When analyzing the size and power of bureaucracy it is assumed that a particularly strong and well-equipped staff has the power to change the direction of the cooperating body (Johnson, 2010, p. 15-7).

### **THREAT**

According to HI, we expect that an established form of international cooperation will prevail in accordance with path dependence, unless there is a strong disruption, mostly of external origin. The concept of threat in this paper therefore assumes that in case there is an existential threat or is likely to emerge in the medium to long run, the incentives to

maintain cooperation can be heightened. As already stated, changes in established cooperative alliances induce costs, making alliances reluctant to change in the first place, especially in times of insecurity. Should there be a possibility of an existential threat, or any threat balancing the current equilibrium, cooperation will also continue to protect the members from punctuations of the equilibrium, which can have unpredictable consequences. In short, it is assumed here that known frameworks for cooperation and knowledge gained from it positively affect the participants' feeling of security within the alliance. Therefore, a presence of threat, or an expectation of its emergence can intensify the feeling of security gained from the established cooperation, which adds to the incentives to maintain it.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

HI assumes that states will usually maintain cooperation, unless the external environment changes drastically. The concept of alternatives examines whether, at the time of mission fulfillment, there are any attractive alternative alliances. It considers the geopolitical conditions at the given time. According to HI, actors are strategic and will only abandon their established, path-dependent alliance for one which is significantly better suited to achieve their goals (Hay and Wincott, 1998, p. 954-6; Dijkstra, 2015, p. 131; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2018, p. 8).

## **ANALYSIS**

The three following chapters present analyses of the three case studies: NATO, V4 and the ECSC. Each chapter provides an introduction, where the characteristics and the original mission of the alliances are outlined, then some information about when the mission was fulfilled and how the attainment of the original goals changed the organization. The analysis for each case consists of evaluating the three concepts: bureaucracy, threat, and alternatives. Each chapter ends with a brief conclusion on the case.

### **THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established by 12 founding members who all signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1949 in Washington D.C. It started as a military alliance of Western states against the Eastern Bloc. After the fall of communism and the Soviet Union in 1989-1991, NATO transformed into a military-political alliance and allowed former Eastern Bloc countries to join.

### **BEFORE MISSION FULFILLMENT**

The original mission of NATO was to contain communism, halt Soviet expansion, and protect the signatories from a possible attack from the Soviet Union (NATO, 1965, p. 5-8, 11). Although it was clear who the treaty was directed against, the Soviet Union was never explicitly mentioned in the founding document. Directly naming an enemy could have been

interpreted as an act of aggression. Instead, NATO claimed to be have been founded “for the preservation of peace and security.” Article 5 presents the concept of collective security – if one of the signatory states is attacked, all others are required to help. Therefore, whichever NATO country the Soviets would attack, it would automatically lead to a war with the United States (Daalder and Goldgeier, 2006, p. 112). NATO and American involvement in Europe also had a general purpose of stabilizing the old continent by preventing any one European country from dominating it and possibly causing a conflict (p. 105-6). NATO’s first Secretary General, Lord Ismay described the aim of NATO to be: “to keep the Soviet Union out, Americans in, and the Germans down (Perlmutter, 2000, p. 129).”

### **AFTER MISSION FULFILLMENT**

NATO’s mission was fulfilled in the 1990s. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 sparked a series of revolutions in the Eastern Bloc, until the Soviet Union finally formally dissolved in 1991. As a response, NATO published The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept in November 1991. The principle to safeguard the freedom and security of the signatories remained unchanged. In article 24, NATO stated that, for the time being, the aims were best reached by using political means. Hence, NATO transformed into a political alliance (Perlmutter, 2000, p. 133).

## ANALYSIS

### BUREAUCRACY

At the end of the 1980s, NATO enjoyed a sizeable bureaucracy. The structure of the alliance is divided in two main branches – civil and military. Each consists of international staff working at the headquarters and tens of directorates and committees based in NATO member states (NATO Organization, 2019). The total number of full-time employed staff at NATO's headquarters in 1989 was 2660 (Nato Information Service, 1989, p. 51). In addition to the dedicated staff, many people involved in NATO have overlapping membership of other institutions, too. Secretary General Wörner called for the exploitation of this link using unbureaucratic contacts among them. "Where their areas of competence overlap, we need practical understandings but not new institutions" (NATO, 1990, p. 156). The personal networks developed within the alliance were considered unique (Bertram, 1995, p. 65).

"In the field of policy making, however, the latitude for such an autonomous role for NATO's bureaucracy has been rather limited. The final responsibility for decision making within the alliance always rests with the member states. NATO remains an intergovernmental organization (Megens, 1998, p. 93)."

The quote above shows that the position of NATO's bureaucracy was secondary to the member states, as the organizational character of NATO requires. Therefore, the main impulse on whether to sustain NATO or abandon it would have to come from the member

states – which it did, as states expressed their wish to maintain cooperation (Daffield, 1994-1995, p. 782).

## **THREAT**

In the years that the original Soviet nuclear threat was diminishing, there were no other direct security threats to NATO's members. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, it seemed that NATO might lose its purpose (McCalla, 1996, p. 445-6). However, when deciding on the fate of NATO, potential future threats were considered, which were used to justify the continuation of the alliance.

### *Revisionist Russia*

The first type of threat is the so called classical threat (Borinski, 2003, p. 107). This refers to a conventional threat. In the 1990s, Russia was the only country with military and nuclear arsenal comparable to that of NATO. It was expected that Russia may not be satisfied with the post-Cold War world order, resulting in the adoption of revisionist policies and striving for greater regional influence once it recovers from the fall of the Soviet Union. Some argued that the continuation and expansion of NATO to the east could deter Russia from this behavior in the future (Ball, 1998, p. 53).

### *Revanchist Germany*

The second type of threat to NATO member states was rather internal. In the process of German unification, debates were held about the allegiance of the country. Integrating it in NATO guaranteed that it would not pose a threat to other European states by revanchist behavior (Perlmutter, 2000, p. 129). Even Secretary General Wörner echoed this sentiment (NATO, 1990, p. 146). Although there were few, if any, concrete reasons to foresee such events, given the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was not completely unnatural for countries to be slightly mistrustful of the future intentions of the newly unified country. German integration in NATO made its power controllable and thus provided reassurance to member states (Zakaria, 1990, p. A27; Duffield, 1994-1995, p. 773-4; Ball, 1998, p. 52)

### *Destabilization*

The last source of threat arose from the instable conditions of regime change in the former Eastern Bloc and Western peripheries, as described by Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces Central Europe, General Henning von Sandrart (Gittings, 1990, p. 15). Secretary General Wörner pointed out the stability NATO can bring in the period of “international turbulence” (NATO, 1990, p. 78). In case NATO disbanded or refused to expand, some feared the emergence of unilateral security measures and ad hoc coalitions with nationalist security policies (Ball, 1998, p. 56-7; Borinski, 2002, p. 110). Maintaining the alliance was thus seen as a protection of stability.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)*

CSCE was founded in 1973 and had 34 members as of November 1990. While the foci of CSCE, as the name implies, and NATO were similar, there were doubts that the former was a credible alternative of the latter. Duffield (1994-1995, p. 779-80) and Art (1998, p. 400) state that the decision process of CSCE would be more rigid and cumbersome due to equality of all participating states and their varied interests, which would impede the effectivity of decision-making. Moreover, no CSCE member would be able to offer as strong of a military capacity and security guarantee equivalent to that of the United States. Skepticism was also shared by then NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner, who also cited the diversity (NATO, 1990, p. 159) and inability to enforce sanctions (NATO 1990, p. 245) as problematic. While CSCE was seen as a suitable enhancement of security, it did not have the capabilities to substitute NATO fully.

### *Western European Union (WEU) / European Community (EC)*

Similarly to the CSCE, none of these predecessors of the European Union were doubted to have the potential to improve the political and defense unity in Europe. However, neither of them was able to serve the role of internal balancer, like the United States (NATO, 1990, p. 224; Duffield, 1994-1995, p. 781).

### **NATO: CONTINUITY AMIDST CHANGE**

To summarize, NATO enjoyed a sizeable and well-connected bureaucracy and willingness of member states to continue cooperation after the fall of the Soviet Union. The main driving factor behind their decision to continue their international cooperation seems to be the lack of alternatives that may be able to replace NATO fully. US military capabilities were unmatched by those of the European states. In order to secure the best protection, in case a threat was to arise in the future, European states agreed to maintain NATO and turn it into a political alliance which would spread and safeguard freedom and democracy. Moreover, NATO was “the only institutional link the US had with Europe (Gittings, 1990, p. 15). Disbanding NATO would refute the original mission – to keep the Soviet Union out, Americans in, and Germans down. The lack of alternatives and a looming possible threat in the future contributed to path dependence and helped sustain the cooperation.

### **THE VISEGRAD FOUR (V4)**

The Visegrad Four (V4), also known as the Visegrad Group started as the Visegrad Three (V3): an informal alliance of three Central European countries: Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. As of 1993 Czechoslovakia split into two countries, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, and the V3 became the V4. Out of the international cooperating bodies examined in this paper, the V4 is the loosest one, and can be labeled an international collaboration, as its rules are not legally binding. The V4 countries claim to share values, history, culture, and geographical space (History of the Visegrad Group, n.d.). After

decades of being satellites of the Soviet Union, they decided to cooperate more closely with the intention of rejoining the West by becoming members of NATO and the EU (Lukášek, 2010, p. 46). The group was founded in 1991 with a reference to a Visegrad congress of 1335, where the kings of Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland met to discuss mutual cooperation and friendship (History of the Visegrad Group, n.d.). The V4 operates on a governmental level. As established in the 1999 Contents of Visegrad Cooperation, there are five levels which meet separately. Prime Ministers, Secretaries of Foreign Affairs, and Visegrad Coordinators meet twice a year (Contents of Visegrad Cooperation, 1999). V4 countries hold rotating yearly presidencies, which are changed in June/July. The order of presidencies is: Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic (Annex to the Content of Visegrad Cooperation, 2002). The V4 is not the only active regional grouping in the EU. Other examples are the Baltic Council, the Nordic Council, and the Benelux.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER ORIGINAL GOAL FULFILLMENT**

### **PRE 2004 DECLARATIONS**

In the period between the foundation of the Group in 1991 and EU accession in May 2004, cooperation within the V4 was slowly but steadily intensifying and becoming more specific. The signatory states saw cooperation within the Group as an important step towards European integration. The main goals included the creation of ties with European institutions, establishing friendly relations among the countries, improving economic cooperation, and developing transport infrastructure. The ultimate goal was to join the EU

and NATO (Dangerfield, 2008, p. 631). In May 1999 the Contents of Visegrad Cooperation, which specified the fields of cooperation, were approved. Their range is rather extensive, most notably including foreign and internal affairs, transportation, culture, education, science, and environment (Contents of Visegrad Cooperation, 1999).

### **POST 2004 DECLARATIONS**

After the countries' accession in the EU, the Koměříž Declaration of 2004 established that cooperation would continue and that the V4 would focus on regional activities and strengthening the identity of the region. The members also expressed their willingness to share their knowledge with third countries aspiring to join the EU. In 2011, the Bratislava Declaration was adopted on the 20th anniversary of the V4. The Prime Ministers evaluated the Group as having been successful and they committed to new goals – enhancing V4 competitiveness and visibility in the EU, emphasizing European energy security, promoting transport development in the region, contributing towards European ambitions of countries of Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership, and supporting and advocating strategic security cooperation between the EU and NATO (Koměříž Declaration, 2004; Bratislava Declaration, 2011).

### **PATTERNS OF COOPERATION**

Even though the official V4 documentation sounds ambitious, sometimes plans and cooperation existed only on paper. A notable period of inhibited cooperation was 1993-8,

when newly independent Slovakia struggled with an authoritarian leader Vladimír Mečiar, which discouraged other V4 members from close associations with it. The Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) also launched in this time period, which made especially the Czech Republic perceive it as a next step of the V4. Even though the V4 did not engage in as much cooperation collectively, there were still bilateral forms of cooperation, most notably between Poland and Hungary. In the end, however, the countries realized that their chances to join the West are better if they cooperate, rather than if they stand against one another (Dangerfield, 2008, p. 640-3). Resuming previously inhibited cooperation is an example of using the V4 mainly as a tool of pursuing one's own goals when the chances of success are higher if cooperating with the other countries. A similar trend can be observed in increased cooperation since the 2015 migration crisis, which is outlined in the sections below. In addition to that, V4 members are not obliged to, and do not, act in unison. For example, although all countries opposed the mandatory migrant quota in 2015, Slovakia eventually gave in and accepted its 16 assigned refugees. The other countries refused the migrants and were referred to the Court of Justice of the EU (Zachová et al., 2018).

## **ANALYSIS**

### **BUREAUCRACY**

The V4 has no official bureaucratic body. It solely operates on the governmental level.

Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Visegrad co-ordinators, and other

government representatives meet regularly. The V4 only operates one institution – the International Visegrad Fund (IVF), established in 1999. As of 2018, IVF consists of the Conference of Ministers on Foreign Affairs, Council of Ambassadors, and the Secretariat. The latter, however, only has 11 staff members (The Visegrad Fund, n.d.). Bureaucracy in the traditional sense (e.g. non-elective officials) did not play a role when deciding on V4's future after the fulfillment of its original mission. Therefore, in the absence of a sizeable bureaucracy, attention must be paid to the motivation of the governmental bodies to continue cooperation. The Koměříž Declaration of 2004 states that the main goals of returning to Europe have been fulfilled, but there are new challenges and opportunities ahead. The parties agreed to consult and cooperate on issues of common interest at the EU level. A possible explanation is that “the dominant form of decision making in the EU (...) is governed by the rule of qualified majority voting” (Törö et al., 2014, p. 373). Having agreed to common positions helps the V4 leaders to strengthen their voice in Brussels. Groupings of smaller states in the EU are not uncommon. A “new Hanseatic league” is the most recent form of cooperation of smaller EU states to challenge collectively the dominance of strong states, such as France and Germany. It shows that smaller states can indeed impose their weight in the EU (Khan, 2018).

## **THREAT**

There was no immediate existential or conventional threat to the countries of the V4, which would incentivize cooperation. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the countries possibly worried whether they would be accepted as fully equal partners in the EU, and not like

second-class citizens (Buckley and Foy, 2016). A notable example of such treatment came from France in 2003 when president Jacques Chirac lashed out to candidate countries, including the V4, about their support for the US stance on Iraq. He said that the countries “missed a good opportunity to shut up” (Thomas, 2003) and that, once in the EU, they will have to comply with its rules and political stances. Media in the V4 expressed that EU countries should be equal, and that EU membership does not mean subordination to larger states (Chirac Sparks “New Europe” Ire, 2003). Such an event could have shown the V4 that even when in the EU, they will be labelled as the newcomers which could strengthen their incentives to maintain cooperation, as unity makes strength. Somewhat unequal treatment in the eyes of the V4 continued even after these member states’ accession to the EU, when the majority of old member states were reluctant to open their job markets for workers from the newly accessed countries. The V4 saw this restriction to be politically motivated and unfair (Smyth, 2006, p. 9). A more recent example occurred in 2017, when Prime Ministers of the V4 countries accused the EU of “blackmail and diktat” over the quota on migrants (Euractiv.com with AFP, 2017).

Increased cooperation in the presence of threat has also been observed in the recent years. When analyzing the missions of V4’s annual presidency programs, published since 2000/01, there are some observable trends. Before Poland’s 2004/05 presidency, the programs focused on sending a message to the West that the V4 is a capable region. 2004/05-2011/12 programs most often stressed regional cooperation, cooperation at EU level to pursue common interests, enhancing regional identity, bringing V4 citizens closer together, advocating further integration via the Eastern Partnership Program and in Western

Balkans, and improving the economic competitiveness of the region. Overall, the missions were written in an optimistic manner. A change in tone became apparent in the Polish presidency program of 2012/13, which identified the financial and identity crises in Europe as challenging and called for deepening unity. The tone of presidential programs has become ever more urgent in the subsequent years. Until the present one, they cite current crises; the Ukrainian crisis, migration crisis, and Brexit as signs that cooperation within the V4 and within the EU is crucially important (2014/2015 Slovak Presidency; 2015/2016 Czech Presidency; 2016/2017 Polish Presidency; 2017/2018 Hungarian Presidency). The concept of threat seems to be a strong motivator and an explaining factor behind V4 cooperation.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

At the beginning of the 1990s, there were few, if any, alternative forms of international cooperation in which these countries could work together to attain their goals. Dangerfield (2008, p. 637) states that there were no alternatives whatsoever. Zbigniew Brzeziński in 1991 went so far as to state that the V4 countries are the only post-Soviet countries that are likely to transform their political and economic systems in the foreseeable future (Jagodziński, 2006, p. 24). The V4 states were the first post-Soviet countries to apply for associate membership of the EC, which they obtained in December 1991 (Jessop, 1995, p. 687). Other former Warsaw Pact countries did not progress towards EC as quickly. In February 1991, when the V4 was founded, independence of the Baltic states was not yet recognized by the Soviet Union whereas Slovenia, another geographically and culturally

close partner, was still a part of Yugoslavia. Moreover, these countries are small in size and population, unlike the three founding states of the V4 were. Considering that Romania and Bulgaria could not have hoped for EU accession as of 2004 due to their poor economic performances, there were no other countries to create a lasting cooperation with than the V4 ones (Dangerfield, 2004, p. 314).

Around the time of EU accession, there were attempts to cooperate with other countries, mainly Austria and Slovenia. However, these collaborations were issue driven and did not result in anything permanent (Törö et al., 2014, p. 369). The Bratislava Declaration of 2011 reaffirms this point and states that the group is open to cooperation with third countries through the V4+ format (The Bratislava Declaration, 2011).

### **THE V4: PROTECTING MUTUAL INTERESTS**

The persistence of the V4 can be explained by political interest in maintaining it, the newly found role as a protection from the threat of being treated unequally by stronger and larger EU members, and by the fact that the cooperation seemed beneficial and there were no alternative venues for cooperation as strong as the V4. Although the ultimate goal of joining NATO and the EU was fulfilled, the established cooperation is also used to enhance regional development and cooperation. Seeing that V4 has been calling for greater unity in times of crises in the past years shows that threat is a strong motivator behind the continuation of the alliance.

### **THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY (ECSC)**

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established with the Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, also known as the Treaty of Paris, on 18 April 1951 by Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. The Treaty entered into force as of 23 July 1952 and was signed to last for 50 years. The ECSC was a supranational institution and was legally disbanded on 23 July 2002. The fact that the founding Treaty of ECSC was time limited plays a crucial role in its dissolution. Together with the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), the ECSC was one of the three communities on which the EU was built. Unlike ECSC, neither one of the other two communities had an expiration date specified in their treaties and neither of them were dissolved. EURATOM continues to this day. The EEC was renamed the European Community (EC) in 1993 and was incorporated into the EU by the Lisbon Treaty of 2009. The ECSC is the only community that did not survive.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **BUREAUCRACY**

ECSC's institutions counted over 130 staff members in the 1950s (The institutions of the European Coal and Steel Community 18 April 1951, n.d.). Over the years, the EU pillar

institutions became more intertwined. In 1967, the Merger Treaty came into effect and combined executive bodies of the pillar institutions into a single structure.

The Consultative Committee (CC), was the last remaining institution of the ECSC in 2002. Afterwards, the CC was incorporated into the EESC, ensuring that CC's knowledge would not be lost (Muñoz and Valls, 2016, p. 3). This move was explicitly appreciated by the CC's President, Enrico Gibellieri (Expiry of the ECSC Treaty: The symposium at the EESC on "The History and Future of the European Union" is "the first contribution to the emergence of a culture of memory, so necessary to Europe", 2002). 30 ECSC staff members became delegates of EESC's Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCIC). These people have therefore not lost their jobs and were able to continue working in the field (European Economic and Social Committee, 2002). Although there were some concerns, especially regarding the discontinuation or not guaranteed continuation of some social measures, the CC expressed a general satisfaction with the efforts made to preserve the achievements of ECSC after its dissolution (Resolution of the ECSC Consultative Committee on the legacy of the ECSC, 2002).

Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that the ECSC bureaucrats' power over EC institutions is limited, as nation states also play an important role. The EU is not a purely supranational organization – it is a blend between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism. It means that member states retain a certain degree of national sovereignty (Moravcsik, 2002, p. 606; Bashtannyk, 2014, p. 173-4). The ECSC was a supranational institution and Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, who proposed it and drafted its treaty, expected it to support a federal form of integration. Nevertheless, this was

against the will of the member states, who wanted to maintain their sovereignty and consider national interests as well, making the ECSC far less ambitious than the founders hoped it would be (Alter and Steinberg, 2007, p. 3). There was a trend of reducing supranationalism in 1954, with new institutions, such as the EEC, given less powers over the member states than the ECSC (p. 6). What gave the member states the incentive to use the ECSC and grant powers to EEC's Commission was precisely that the ECSC Treaty was time limited. Therefore, the authority of national states could not have been eroded permanently as long as the Treaty expired as scheduled (p. 11). This shows once again how significant it was that the ECSC Treaty was established for a limited period of time.

### **THREAT**

Threat played a crucial role in the formation of the ECSC and the EU in general. The 1950 Schuman Declaration, in which the creation of ECSC was mentioned for the first time, explicitly stated the need to unite European countries as to prevent another war. Coal and steel were traditionally used to manufacture weapons of war. The main perceived source of potential threat at this time was considered to be the ancient rivalry between France and Germany – the pooling resources of would make war between them materially impossible. The lack of European unity was seen as a factor enabling wars and the ECSC was to be the institution to inspire greater cooperation in other areas and to kick start European integration, which would bring peace as well as economic prosperity (The Schumann Declaration). This turned out to be correct and the EU even received the Nobel Peace Prize

in 2012 “for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe” (The Nobel Peace Prize 2012).

In 2002, when the ECSC Treaty expired, the concept of threat was much less salient than in the 1950s. Due to extensive integration of many areas, enlargement of the EU and its many reforms, departing from cooperation in any field was unthinkable. Furthermore, as there were other venues, such as the EC, for the ECSC to continue, there were no threats to EU’s peace or existence.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Due to the already mentioned extensive integration of the EU in 2002 when the ECSC Treaty expired, ceasing cooperation as such was unthinkable, but the exact venue could change. It was obvious that cooperation in the coal and steel sector would continue, from which two options derived. The first option was to amend the ECSC Treaty and prolong it. The second option was to let the ECSC legally dissolve and integrate its activities in other EU institutions. However, there were no reasons to continue ECSC formally. Times have changed and a separately organized cooperation in this area was no longer the priority – the EU was preoccupied with greater integration. In the words of 2002 European Commission president Romano Prodi: “the Coal and Steel Community was a great political project. Integration is an even greater political project” (SPEECH/02/354 A destiny henceforward shared, 2002). The coal and steel issue was no longer of crucial importance – more integration was needed in areas such as security and defense, economic policy, and foreign

policy (Prodi, 2002). A strong motivation to dedicate attention to these areas was the fact that the EU interacted with its people in 2002 and representatives conveyed the expectations of the public regarding the future of the EU that they want to see. Finally, the institutional framework of the EU ensured that ECSC's mission continues in an integrated body.

### **THE ECSC: A SCHEDULED DISSOLUTION**

Based on this analysis, it is apparent that the ECSC did not actually disband, but evolved and dissolved into other EU institutions. The two strongest factors which allowed for the ECSC to blend in were bureaucracy and alternatives. As the CC was integrated in the EESC, its bureaucrats kept their jobs and knowledge gained from 50 years of ECSC's existence was not lost. The alternative form of cooperation – merging the ECSC with EESC not only provided a framework in which ECSC's mission would continue, but took it one step further – to greater cooperation and greater integration, which was ECSC's ultimate goal. The success of the ECSC and the European project is also demonstrated by the fact that they started as a response to the threat of yet another war in Europe. In 50 years' time, such threat was highly unlikely. To conclude, the ECSC was legally disbanded because there was no reason to maintain it as a separate institution due to interest in other, newer, and more pressing affairs.

## **FINAL CONCLUSION**

To summarize, this thesis sought to examine factors which influence whether international cooperation ceases to exist upon original mission fulfillment, or whether such an organizational body reinvents itself for a new purpose. The study examined bureaucracy, threat, and alternatives, factors derived as important following the theory of historical institutionalism. Three case studies were presented: NATO, the V4 and the ECSC.

Bureaucracy is an important factor contributing to path dependence. As staff gains knowledge and expertise about the cooperating body and creates interpersonal networks, it becomes increasingly less attractive to abandon the cooperation if one is to maintain these networks. However, even if an organization, like the ECSC dies, its bureaucracy can be incorporated into its successors, should there be any. This simplifies the process as bureaucrats are not as likely to hold strong opposition against dissolution, if they can keep their jobs and if what they worked for is not lost. In some cases, such as in NATO and the ECSC, member states have the final say in whether cooperation should continue, and in what form. To the contrary, the V4 does not have its own staff and operates exclusively on the governmental level. In this case, the bureaucrats cannot lobby but other factors foster continuity. Therefore, while bureaucracy is an important factor, it is sometimes only secondary to member states, depending on the organizational structure of the body in question. However, member states may have less reason to oppose dismantling of the organizational body if bureaucratic staff with their knowledge and interpersonal networks can be kept.

Threat proved to be a very salient concept, strongly present in all three examined cases at some point of their existence. Threat is likely the most salient and significant factor which influences motivations to cooperate. The exact type of threat does not seem to be decisive. Conventional military threat lay at the foundation of NATO and fears of it returning at some point in a distant future combined with the absence of an alternative venue incentivized further cooperation and thus NATO's reinvention. The ECSC was also founded because of a threat. The common market of coal and steel aimed at eliminating the possibility of war between France and Germany. However, thanks to progress in integration, such threat was unthinkable at the time the original ECSC mandate expired, which likely lowered the motivations to maintain the ECSC. The V4 dealt with a different type of threat. The countries had reasons to doubt whether they would be perceived as equal members of the EU by the older and larger states. Considering the qualified majority voting at EU level, it is beneficial for the V4 countries to coordinate positions to achieve their own goals. Regional groups are not unheard of in the EU precisely because of this strategy. Even if the threat that was present at the body's foundation is diminished at the time of mission fulfillment, path dependence fosters maintaining the cooperation for possible future threats and using the venue to achieve other goals, such as continued cooperation and keeping the staff's knowledge and interpersonal networks.

Finally, alternatives should also not be neglected. The difference between the survival of NATO and the V4, and the dissolution of the ECSC can be traced back to alternatives. There were no other bodies that the V4 countries or NATO countries could join or morph into that would bring them the same or greater benefits than the existing

ones. In the case of NATO, access to US' military might and budget were invaluable to Europeans who did not have such capabilities. There was no European body which could grant the same degree of protection, so the US were needed. As already mentioned, the concept of threat proved to be a strong motivator, and abandoning NATO would not be beneficial for its members. Similarly, when the V4 was founded, the few countries seemed to be the most aspiring candidates for EU membership and were among the larger countries that were granted membership in the first wave of Eastern enlargement, with other post-communist countries not being ready for it yet. As the V4 accumulated knowledge, there were no incentives to abandon the body and/or create a new one with other states. Nonetheless, this was not the case for the ECSC. Due to a significant progress in European integration, new organizational structures of the EU and the change in priorities and important issues resulted in the existence of ample other bodies and thus no need for a special organizational body for coal and steel only. There was a better alternative – maintaining cooperation in this field, but as a part of the EESC. There were no significant losses from this move.

To conclude, all concepts, and threat most importantly, can help us understand what drives international cooperation to reinvent itself or to die after having fulfilled their mission. A recipe for continued cooperation based on these factors can be described as: strong bureaucratic links, presence of threat, and no better alternatives which would ensure greater benefits. To contrast, a recipe for disbandment requires: small bureaucracy which can eventually be incorporated in larger bodies, absence of threat, and better, more productive or beneficial, existing alternatives. In order to escape path dependence, having a

treaty for a limited time period fosters the disbandment of cooperation as well. Nonetheless, this paper also showed that we sometimes perceive cooperating bodies to be founded for only one purpose, and then we wonder why reinvention happened. Therefore, what we can perceive as reinvention, can simply be an evolution of the body in question. International cooperating bodies grow and evolve and a change in their direction should not be unexpected.

In terms of implications, this research contributes to the underdeveloped field of literature concerned with disbanding international cooperating bodies. Further studies may choose to adopt my concepts and apply them to other organizations in order to obtain more results, which would confirm or refute my conclusions and help generalize them. At the same time, examining these concepts in detailed individual studies using interviews with relevant officials who were present at negotiations regarding the future of the body can yield results that speak about causality rather than correlation.

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