



**ORIGINAL PAPER**

**Racing Crimea: On Intervention, Realism and Liberalization  
as Steering Analysis of Russia**

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**Abstract**

The aim of the research is to study the intervention of Russia in the Crimea Peninsula by using the theoretical framework of liberalizing and realistic theory of the international relations. The result of the research is to understand theses of which theories explain the intervention of Russia in Crimea. Two methods are used in the paper. First, the data collected through structured questionnaire with some connoisseurs of law and international relations in Kosovo. Second, the data collected from academic literature regarding to the realistic and liberalizing theory of international relations. Conclusion of the paper is that, the theses of realistic theory explain the intervention of Russia in the Crimea and not the theses of liberal theory.

**Keywords:** Russia, Crimea, intervention, realistic, liberalizing.

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### **Introduction**

The theses of realistic theory presented in the current Article will explain the intervention of Russia in the Crimea and they will not represent the theses of liberal theory. Furthermore, the current research paper, it will be structured in two parts. In the first part, we will examine the review of existing literature.

*In the second part*, we will make the presentation of the data collected through structured questionnaire with cognitive of law and international relations in Kosovo. In the end, are the conclusions of the paper and bibliography.

### **Methodology**

The methodology of paper addresses hypotheses, variables and methods of data collection. Hypotheses and variables of this paper are: a. The theses of realistic theory of the international relations explain the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea. Independent variable are the theses of realistic theory of the international relations, while the dependent variable is “explanation of the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea; b. The theses of the liberal international relations theory does not explain the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea.

To the second hypothesis, we have a case of exclusionary variable (or negative) in which case, the independent variables theses of liberal theory of the international relations” do not explain the dependent variable intervention of the Russian Federation in the Crimea.

After the variables, we will take into account the methods which are used. In this paper, several methods are used: a. data collected through structured questionnaire with some connoisseurs of law and international relations in Kosovo; b. data collected from academic literature regarding the realistic and liberalizing theory of international relations.

### **Literature Review**

Within the literature review we will first analyze the layout of the problem: the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea. And then we will present the main theses of liberal and realistic theory of the international relations.

### **Presentation of the problem**

Presentation of the problem refers to the Crimean Peninsula. Crimea is a multiethnic region populated by a majority ethnic Russian, Ukrainian and Tatar. Crimea was known in ancient times as Tauris (Tavrida in Russian), home to the tribes who took Iphigenia prisoner in Euripides' play *Iphigenia in Tauris*. For centuries the Crimean Peninsula, which occupies a strategically important location on the Black Sea and has arable land, has been fought over by various outside forces. Crimea until separation, has been administered by the Ukraine and has the status of “Autonomous Republic” (Sasse, 2014).

The origin of the problem refers to the revolution of February of this year, in which case, President Viktor Yanukovich, traditional ally of Russia, was overthrown after comprehensive popular protests against the regime of political thereof; which followed the election of the President and the Interim Government.

Ukraine's new authorities were recognized as legal and legitimate by the United States and European Union member states. While the Russian Federation, described this as a punch-state and demanded reinstatement of the former – President Yanukovich, as

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the only legitimate leader of Ukraine. Moreover, Russians hailed as punch – state supported by the U.S. and other Western European countries. Advisor to President Putin, Sergey Glazyev, stated that, “According to our sources, the U.S. has spent twenty (20) million dollars per week for financing the opposition and the rebels, including weapons” (Press Tv, 2014).

After these dramatic political developments, pro – Russian forces within the state administration of Ukraine, helped and pushed by Russia, and with the support of local residents Russian, began blackmailing, occupation and siege of the state administration facilities of Ukraine in Crimea. These developments culminated in the organization and holding of a referendum in the Crimea, by supporters of the idea of joining the Russian Federation. According to official results, ninety-seven (97%) voted for reunification with Russia. On 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 the Crimean parliament declared independence from Ukraine and sought union with the Russian Federation. On the same day, the President of the Russian Federation, formally signed the decree “On recognition of the Crimea as an independent and sovereign state” (Myers, 2014).

On 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 the Russian Federation and the Crimea signed a “Treaty of Accession of the Crimea in the Russian Federation” (Dahlburg, 2014). In the series of the Crimean crisis, “pro-Russian militants have also won the eastern part of Ukraine” (Smale et. al., 2014); on the other hand, Russia denied such a news.

On the other hand, authorities in Ukraine have declared that “They will never recognize the annexation of the Crimea by the Russia” (Smith and Gumushian. Accessed data: 08.04.2016). On 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 the UN General Assembly approved the non-binding resolution which declared as “void referendum in the Crimea and Crimean involvement within the Russian Federation” (Charbboneau, 2014). Also, the President of the United States of America (hereinafter: the U.S.), Barack Obama, has stated that “Neither the U.S. nor at any European country have no interest in checking Ukraine” (Warren, 2014). For U.S. President Obama, “The fact that Russia has a deep history with Ukraine, it doesn’t mean that it has right to determine the future of Ukraine” (Warren, 2014).

President Barack Obama joined the new leader of Ukraine in emphasizing that the United States stands with the country in its simmering conflict with Russia, and that a diplomatic resolution to the crisis in Crimea is the best way forward. With Russian troops controlling the Crimea region of Ukraine and Crimea preparing to vote on a referendum to split from Ukraine, Obama said the new government in Kiev remains open to negotiations with Moscow “that could lead to a different arrangement for the Crimean region, but that is not something that could be done with a gun pointed at you” (Nicks, 2014). Also, NATO member states decided to “Suspended cooperation with Russia” (Croft and Siebold, 2014). German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said, “Future NATO relations with Russia will depend, among other things, whether Russia has begun withdrawing troops from the Ukrainian border” (Croft and Siebold, 2014). The annexation of Crimea by Russia was followed with the removal of many foreign investorëve located in Crimea, as is the case with Mc Donald's.

**Theoretical framework: realistic and liberal theory**

The main thesis of realistic and liberal theory of international relations which explain the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea are several.

Initially, the thesis of the realistic theory are: first, the state is a key actor in international relations, and others (such as international organizations) can, in certain circumstances to exert influence.

And, states have interests and they are led by these interests, respectively these interests dominate their behavior; second, “Realism recognizes and accepts not only the central role of power in all types of policies, but also the limitations that it recognizes or the way it can become self-destructive” (Dunne et al., 2001: 67); third “States act in the circumstances of the anarchic international system that lacks the central mechanisms of the obligation” (Dunne et al., 2001: 67).

On the other hand, the thesis of liberal theory are: first, the international system isn't anarchic; UN exists and the whole structure of institutions and transnational organization. Liberals “propose establishing new principles in international relations and based on them a new structure in international relations” (Reka, 2010: 10; Dojçi, 1994: 147); second, the trade promotes interdependence in relations between countries in avoiding wars and conflicts. John Milli thought, “... it is trade that makes the war unnecessary, strengthening and multiplying the personal interests which act in natural contrary to the war” (Stumpf: 345-350; Wessels et al., 2004: 240). Mill was a strong believer in freedom, especially of speech and of thought. He defended freedom on two grounds. First, he argued, society's utility would be maximized if each person was free to make his or her own choices. Second, Mill believed that freedom was required for each person's development as a whole person; third, international relations explained from the viewpoint of diplomacy and common values (Van de Haar, 2009).

Liberalism holds that state preferences, rather than state capabilities, are the primary determinant of state behavior. These theses constitute the theoretical framework.

**Analysis of results**

Explaining the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea by the corner of liberal and realistic theory of international relations was the subject of a structured questionnaire conducted by experts of law and international relations in Kosovo.

The reason why we focused on Kosovo is that the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, in the speech held in the context of Russia's intervention in Crimea said, “We will have conditions for free and fair elections. Look, for example people in Kosovo who are allowed to vote, then why should deny it to the people of Crimea”. Initially we will see data analysis, and then we will discuss for findings.

**Analysis of data collected through structured questionnaire**

Initially, we will present the results of data collected through a structured questionnaire. Data result we have settled on the following four tables.

The first table presents the main characteristics of respondents.

The second table presents the respondents' level of knowledge about the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea.

The third table presents the main research content. And the fourth table presents comments from respondents about content and research.

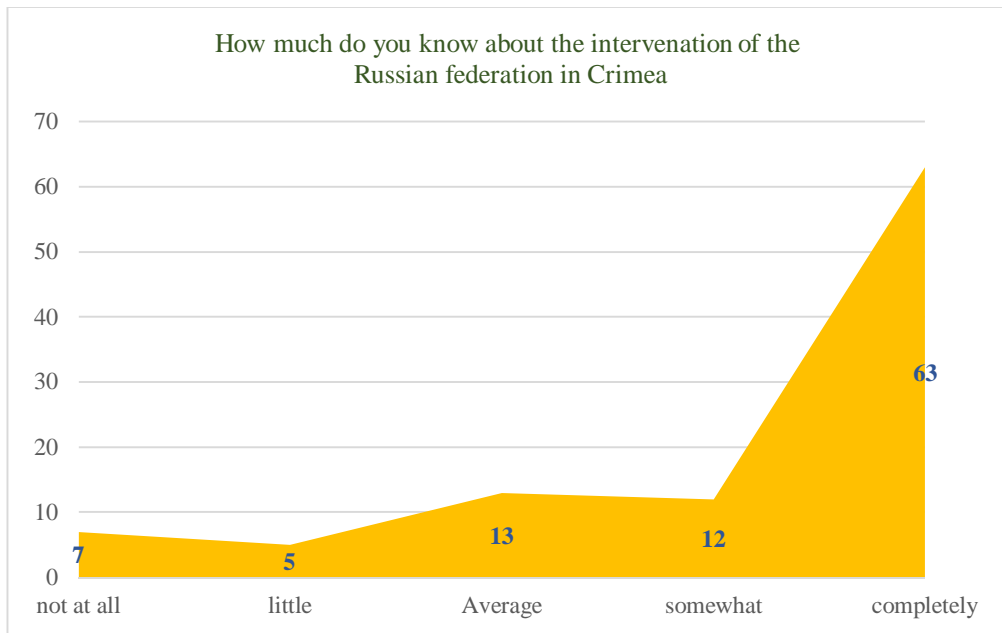
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**Table 1.** Details of respondents who have participated in research

Data for respondents							
Age		Gender		Education		Ethnicity	
Variable	Number	Variable	Number	Variable	Number	Variable	Number
15 – 21	24	M	67	low	0	Albanian	86
22 – 34	56	F	33	average	11	Serbian	0
35 – 44	20		0	high	89	Bosnian	9
45 – 54	0		0		0	Turkish	5
55 – 64	0		0		0	Others	0
65 +	0		0		0		0

Source: Data collected by the authors

**Chart 1:** How much do you know about the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea



Source: Data collected by the authors

The content of questions:

**Question 1 (Q1):** Has the Russian President Vladimir Putin compared the situation in Crimea with that in Kosovo, saying that the island’s citizens have the right to self-determination similarly as Albanians in Kosovo?

**Question 2 (Q2):** Has Russia's president said that he respects the right of Kosovo Albanians to self-determination?

**Question 3 (Q3):** If indeed the President of Russia respects the right of Albanians in Kosovo for self-determination, then do you think that so far Russia had to recognize the independence of Kosovo?

**Question 4 (Q4):** Or do you think this statement of Putin (respects the right of Albanians in Kosovo for self-determination) is his disingenuous ploy to legitimize the intervention of Russia in the Crimea?

**Question 5 (Q5):** Did the Russian president said that Russia's intervention in Crimea does not constitute a violation of international law?

**Question 6 (Q6):** Comparing the right of Crimean citizens for self-determination, Putin noted the assessment of International Court of Justice according to which Kosovo's declaration of independence was not unilateral and was in accordance with international law. Do you think the referendum held in the Crimea for secession from Ukraine and union with Russia is in accordance to international law?

**Question 7 (Q7):** Do you think the intervention of Russia in Crimea is really done to ensure the right of self-determination to the citizens of Crimea?

**Question 8 (Q8):** Or is it done to ensure the annexation of Crimea by Russia?

At the end of the questionnaire has been an open question for comments of respondents regarding the content and survey. Five of the respondents provided comments.

**Table 2.** The research results through structured questionnaire

The research results through structured questionnaire								
Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Answer								
I completely agree	6	61	88	81	13	0	1	67
I agree	11	6	12	6	18	4	2	22
I do not know	3	2	0	0	22	7	3	11
I disagree	24	4	0	0	14	9	53	0
Strongly disagree	56	27	0	13	33	80	41	0

Source: Data collected by the authors

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**Table 3.** Comments from respondents

In the last question of the structured questionnaire, "Do you have any additional comments?", five respondents provided comments.	
<b>The first respondent</b>	The annexation of Crimea is done purposely. Russia's goal is known to exit in the warm seas of Europe, this is the historical purpose. Taking into account the project of TAP and Southstream, this is part of preventing the extension of the TAP gas pipeline with the aim of bringing Southstream network that would make Serbia as a distribution point for Russian natural gas for this part of Europe. Now is the time to stop Russia in achieving this goal.
<b>The second respondent</b>	I think that the tendency of the Russian President to compare the case of Kosovo with Crimea is unsustainable taking into account the circumstances in which Kosovo has passed.
<b>The third respondent</b>	I think that should be looked as if Crimea was Russian territory earlier, to see if there is right now to join with Russia. If we put parallel with Kosovo, Kosovo since 1913 has been occupied by the Kingdom Serbo - Croatian - Slovenian, while historically has not previously been part of this now-defunct state.
<b>The fourth respondent</b>	After that, the paper is treated within two positivist theories of MN, in addition to the field survey coverage of international law, has been well taken up some questions in political and diplomatic connotation.
<b>The fifth respondent</b>	Russia's action in Crimea is not legitimate because it is made through force.

Source: Data collected by the authors

### Discussion of findings

From the analysis of realistic and liberal theories and responses received through structured questionnaire with cognitive of law and international relations in Kosovo, we see that the theses of realistic theory explain the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea and not liberal theory theses. There are three main arguments supporting this view.

First, as realistic theory thinkers claim in the case of the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea was highlighted that the state remains a key actor in international relations and not individuals or international organizations. "Deep concern" of Ban Ki Moon and his assessment that "There are moments in history like this in the Crimea that may make the situation out of control" does not influenced in non-intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea (Salem, Walker and Harding, 2014).

When it comes to the actions of the Russian Federation in Eastern Europe and the Euro-Asia, in the context of the absence of a global central authority, some authors call it as: "post – new world order" (Reka, 2010: 32). Thus, "... negotiations of US – Russian for

nuclear arms reduction and clashes between them for (not) the construction of U.S. antimissile system in Europe, just as recall the bipolar race of the Cold War period, which was considered to have ended two decades ago” (Reka, 2010: 32). Besides these two factors, even “NATO, according to Moscow (especially with maneuvers in the North Atlantic Alliance in Georgia), was that “the logic of confrontation is restore from the period of the cold war, while the EU with the launch of the new policy, the Eastern partnership, which was considered to be against the interests of the Russian state” (Reka, 2010: 32). As reaction, “Russia signed in Moscow with two former - Georgia's breakaway provinces: Abkhazia and South Ossetia “agreement for the protection of state borders”, against which had reacted NATO, on charges of destabilization of the region of South Caucasus from Moscow” (Reka, 2010: 33). The thought of professor Blerim Reka argued by assertion of Deputy Secretary-General of NATO, Alexander Vershbow, according to which “Russia is now an enemy, not a partner” in the context of the crisis in Ukraine. In addition, in an effort to extend geopolitical influence in this region, “the European Commission recommended the liberalization of visas for citizens of Moldova” (Radio Free Europe, 2014).

Also, the answer given by respondents on the fifth question (5) and the sixth (6) argue the opinion that, the intervention of the Russian Federation in the Crimea is not driven by liberal theory thesis, but the thesis of realism. Thus, on the fifth question (5), “Russian President said that Russia's intervention in Crimea does not constitute a violation of international law?”, respondents gave different answer, but most of them thirty-three (33) stated that, 'I do not agree at all'; although thirteen (13) of them stated that “I agree completely”. While on the sixth question (6), “Do you think that even referendum held in the Crimea for secession from Ukraine and union with Russia is in accordance with international law?”, Most of respondents eighty (80) answered that, “I do not agree at all”, what means that the referendum held in Crimea is not in accordance with international law.

Second, as realistic theory thinkers claim, in the case of the intervention of the Russian Federation in the Crimea, states in foreign policy guided by national interests, and not by commercial interests as liberal theory thinkers claim. Respectively, the trade is in the function of national interest of the state. For example, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, had offered Ukraine “15 billion worth of government bond and lowering the price of gas” (Isachenkov and Danilova, 2014). Help of the Russian Federation was not sincere, but was offered to support pro Russian political regime; when this regimen was changed not only aid was not realized, but the Russian Federation, called the meeting to discuss economic cooperation with Ukraine and “For gas price rise” (Radio the voice of Rusia, 2014).

Not only this, but the goal of the Russian Federation to maintain influence in Ukraine refers to what some authors call as "geopolitical energetic transistors” (Reka, 2010: 75). So, “Why, for example are so important Ukraine, Georgia or Armenia? Why Turkey? Or, after all why the Balkans, which has no energy resources?” (Reka, 2010: 75). This is because the “transit of energy was as important as the production. In energetic geopolitics they are inseparable parts of a system” (Reka, 2010: 75). In this sense, “Control of energetic transition road was as important as that of energetic producers” (Reka, 2010: 75). Even go so far in this direction as it is thought that, “... the wars in former Yugoslavia and in Kosovo also was war consequence for trajectory control of not started gas pipeline AMB, respectively, of the clash of energetic interests between Western (then-AMBO, now NABUCCO) and Russia (respectively South Stream gas pipeline)” (Reka, 2010: 75).



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Also, the data collected from respondents argue the opinion that, the intervention of the Russian Federation in the Crimea is driven by the interest of the annexation of the Crimea. Thus, the seventh question (7), “Do you think the intervention of Russia in the Crimea is really done to ensure the right of self-determination for the citizens of Crimea?”, Most of respondents fifty-three (53) stated that, “I Disagree”, forty-one (41) stated that, “I do not agree at all”; while one (1) stated that, “I completely agree”. While in the eighth question (8), “Or it is made to ensure the annexation of the Crimea from Russia?”, sixty-seven (67) respondents stated that, “I agree completely”, twenty-two (22) stated that, “I Agree”, and eleven (11) said “I do not know”.

The third, as realistic theory thinkers claim, in the case of the intervention of the Russian Federation in the Crimea, was highlighted that the international system is anarchic, and there isn't a superior transnational authority that would make decisions and ensure the implementation of those decisions, as liberal theory thinkers claim with the occasion of creation of the international organizations. Despite calls and statements for non-intervention in Crimea, Russian Federation intervened allowing the referendum and the annexation of the Crimea. Will the Russian Federation intervene in Crimea, if Ukraine would possess a military power balanced with Russia? Or, if Ukraina want a member of NATO?

Under the influence of these ideas, President Obama said, “The U.S. Army is superior to the power of Russia”, a statement which was not taken very seriously considering Obama's policy not to deploy “missile defense system in Poland”. So there is no doubt that the international system is anarchic, and the only occasion when this system becomes superior to the states is when the self-states, especially the five (5) permanent members of the Security Council of the UN, make such. Hypocrisy of the Russian Federation in this case lies in the fact that while on the one hand, the Russian Federation ignores the calls of international organizations, other countries and humanitarian organizations not to intervene in the Crimea, therefore, ignores the rule and international structures, on the other hand, President Putin refers to the case of the Kosovo and the International Court assessment proving to justify intervention in the Crimea.

This fact is proved by the answers of the respondents given to the first question (1), second (2), third (3) and fourth (4). On the first question (1), “Russian President Vladimir Putin has compared the situation in Crimea with it in Kosovo, saying that the island's citizens have the right on self-determination similarly as Albanians in Kosovo?”, Most respondents disagreed with this statement. Fifty-six (56) of them stated that, “I do not agree at all”, while twenty-four (24) of them stated that, “I do not agree”. In the second question (2), “Russian President said that he respects the right of Kosovo Albanians to self-determination?”, Respondents have distributed response. Twenty-seven (27) of them stated that, “I agree completely”, while sixty-one (61) stated that, “I do not agree at all”. In the third question (3), “If indeed the President of Russia respects the right of Albanians in Kosovo for self-determination, then do you think that so far Russia had to recognize the independence of Kosovo?”, Eighty-eight (88) respondents answered that, “I agree completely”, twelve (12) respondents answered that, “I agree”. In the following question (4), “Or do you think this statement by Putin (respects the right of Albanians in Kosovo for self-determination) is his disingenuous ploy to legitimize the intervention of Russia in the Crimea?”, Eighty-one (81) respondents answered that, “I agree completely”, six (6) responded that, “I agree”, while thirteen (13) answered that, “I do not agree at all”.

So, by the findings of this study confirmed the hypothesis of the paper that the thesis of realist theory explain the intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea and not liberal theory theses.

### **Conclusions**

*Thesis of realistic theory explain the intervention of the Russian Federation in the Crimea and not the liberal theory theses.* Intervention of the Russian Federation in Crimea argued that the state remains a key actor in international relations, states are guided by its national interests in foreign policy and international system is anarchic.

Although international relations are developed in the nineteenth 21<sup>th</sup> century and many issues emerged from traditional theoretical paradigms, nevertheless, like Hans Morgenthau thought, theses of realistic theory remain absolute to bring “Rule and understanding of many phenomena, which in the other circumstances are expounded and nonsense” (Morgenthau, 1993).

By the opinion of the author of the paper realistic theory remains absolute to explain the actions of the Russian Federation in Crimea, especially the logic of action of its current president, Vladimir Putin. Putin recognizes only the logic of force. Putin was encouraged by soft course of Americans toward Russia, which justified, the need of the U.S. for alliance with Russia against Iran, or to Syria now. Washington's access, that summed up in the principle that, Europe remains the strategic points for Washington, but the Euro-Asia, primarily Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. Security of Eastern European in front of Russia was not questioned, but equally the alliance of U.S. - Russia against Iran, encouraged President Putin to return as conqueror and hegemon in Crimea. The only logic that Putin understands is the logic of force and balancing that offers the realistic theory. Putin still believes that the return home of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula to Moscow's control would forever remain an important chapter in Russia's history.

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