

# **STABLE PEACE THROUGH SECURITY COMMUNITIES?**

## **STEPS TOWARDS THEORY-BUILDING**

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### The Research Puzzle

What makes security relations stable and, therefore, conducive to permanent peace?

When and why is the peace in a region so stable that the outbreak of a major war is unlikely or perhaps even inconceivable? There are essentially two ways to answer these questions; either a given system must possess necessary structural prerequisites of stability, or the social and cognitive conditions of stability must be embedded in the relations among the key actors.

The structural model has three different variants. The focus on the imbalance of power, and especially the preponderance of the offensive capacity, assumes that the lack of balance fosters both offensive and defensive expansionism and undermines the political management of disputes. Thus, the offense-defense balance reinforces the foundations of peace. Conversely, the evolution of mutual, binding economic ties promotes stable peace, in particular if the countries in the region are ruled by liberal-internationalist coalitions that have mutual interests in free trade and economic growth (Solingen 1998, 64-71). Finally, collective security can mitigate mutual military competition and, ultimately, eliminate international anarchy. Stable peace can be achieved by the mutual commitment to defend each other against any aggression.

All these approaches to stable peace have their merits and one may even doubt whether a robust theory of stable peace can be constructed without them. They all suffer, however, from the neglect of a societal perspective; the actors do not react only to objective external conditions, they also draw upon intangible resources such as knowledge, trust, and predictability. Trust may

be ephemeral, but it can be institutionalized to build social order. In fact, a stable society largely works through institutions that also define who is included and who is excluded; for example, who can and cannot be trusted (Williams 1997, 291-94).

Trust and predictability as aspects of stable peace are considered in the societal theories of security, such as those of security communities. By its very nature, these theories pay major attention to the definition and construction of social reality and the ways in which it shapes the relevant actors and the relations among them. Therefore, it can be called a societal approach to stable peace.

The materialist and societal approaches to security do not need to be opposed, but they can be complementary as the structure can be internalized. Thus, for instance, an offense-defense balance or free trade can build up confidence and predictability. The reverse relationship works differently, though, as perceptions and expectations alone cannot alter material realities. Yet, it can be argued that trust, predictability, and other social variables are key ingredients of the stable peace because they ultimately define the choices made by actors in various material contexts. For instance, the impact of the offense-defense balance on policy outcomes depends critically on the nature of information and degree of confidence between the actors.

The distinction between materialist and societal thinking goes to the very heart of security studies. The materialist approach sees security as a result of the specific configuration of observable factors; e.g., the distribution of economic and military power or the nature of political systems. The societal approach is not oblivious of these structural factors, but puts more emphasis on the political participation and social transformations and, in that sense, the social construction of security.

The primacy of the “external” reality in materialist models leads to the view that security has to be maintained by the threat of and resort to enforcement actions, while the “internal” nature of reality in societal models stresses more the relevance of mutual norms and their self-enforcement. What guarantees that a security arrangement is durable and credible? Is the restraint due to deterrence the main source of security or are there other, internalized guarantees of stable peace hinging on predictability and trust?

Deterrence obviously contributes to predictability, but it does not, *per se*, create trust. The existence of trust requires at least some identification with the other because without such association actors would be self-contained and devoid of any common basis. Identity can, thus, become a positive, although inadequate factor of peace; too much identification and trust without appropriate safeguards can lead to a moral hazard. This discussion harks back to the basic nature of international relations; the societal approach is accepted by those who see anarchy permitting not only self-help, stressed by the materialists, but also other-help in which purely egoistic interests are transcended.

This chapter explores the possibility that a security community, both as an institution and as a societal practice, can contribute significantly to stable peace and become almost synonymous with it. Conventional research on military alliances and other security organizations has paid hardly any attention to security communities despite the fact that the concept has existed at least for half a century. It has, therefore, remained largely non-integrated with the “mainstream” theories of international relations.

The realist, material definition of security completely neglects the role of perceptions, identities, and even structural societal factors. The realist approach purports to be rational, but often a major gap remains between the structural logic and its decisional consequences, as

decisions simply cannot be derived from structures alone. The constructivist approach suffers from a similar problem; the impact of identities on decision-making is, as a rule, poorly defined. The focus on identities alone hardly makes possible to predict specific choices made by the actors. To put the matter otherwise, neither balancing of power or common bonds of identity is adequate in accounting for security decisions.

For constructivists, the balance of power is not “real,” but a particular speech act, a way to talk about interstate relations. In a political discourse, governments divide the other governments into friends and foes and define relations with them in power-political terms. Constructivists argue that the focus on “objective” military capabilities and threats reflect the victory of positivist and instrumentalist thinking. It transforms social facts, such as military capabilities, into “objects of knowledge, control and management” (Williams 1998, 215). For them peace and war are constructed meanings and social practices, not analytical concepts or properties of social systems (see Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 24) .

The materialists or the rationalists do not usually focus on norms, but if they do so, the premise is that the norms work primarily through the manipulation of the incentives of actors and thus constrain their behavior. The constraints are due either to the internalization of cost-benefit calculations, or to the existence of an external enforcement mechanism to produce compliance with the relevant norms.

Constructivists, on the other hand, claim that norms are shared understandings that constitute actor identities and interests. They agree with the rationalists that norms create incentives and opportunity costs, but suggest that their influence goes deeper. The existence and influence of norms mean that the agents and the environment interact; international relations are therefore socially contingent. The rationalist and constructivist approaches are often considered

mutually exclusive, although some argue that they can be synthesized with each other (Checkel 1997). At a minimum, they can be considered complementary to each other; for instance, constructivism and game theory are said to share some common assumptions (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996, 39).

The objective understanding of security appears to be close to the rationalist paradigm, while constructivism stresses the subjective or inter-subjective aspects of security. It has been rightly pointed out that it is neither politically or analytically helpful to define security entirely in objectivist-rationalist terms. Taken to extremes, such an approach leads to the situation in which concepts such as security are fetched from outside politics and are supposed to have universal validity (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 29-31). However, this does not mean that security should be defined entirely in inter-subjective terms. There is always a complex interplay between subjective and objective elements of security.

In this chapter I make an effort to specify the material-societal relationship as a step towards the development of a theory of security communities. The material and societal elements of security meet in the concept of trust that has inter-subjective and institutional foundations, but which at the same time can be linked with essential factors, such as economic interdependence and military confidence. In fact, the existence of a durable security community requires both objective and subjective elements of security that together, then, constitute a necessary precondition for such a community.

### Defining The Security Community

The notion of “security” in the concept of security community is problematic. It can be interpreted in more or less demanding senses. In the more demanding sense “security” means

peace, and security community thus a peace community. Following this line of thinking, Karl Deutsch and others point out that a pluralistic security community requires that “the keeping of the peace among the participating units was the main political goal overshadowing all others” (Deutsch et al. 1957, 31). For this reason, as for instance Ole Wæver (1998, 71) notes, the pluralistic security community is a “non-war community” (see also Adler and Barnett 1998b, 34-35).

Technically, the concept of security community has two elements: security and community. In defining security I adopt the Deutschian perspective as to the definition of stable peace primarily in terms of the absence of physical violence. There are, surely, also non-military threats to security, but their inclusion in the definition of the security community would mean that even if stable peace prevails in a region, but it is plagued, for instance, by an economic crisis or environmental degradation, it cannot be called a security community. The adoption of the broad definition of security would unduly raise the threshold of the security community by bringing in secondary, non-military concerns.

For this reason, I define security in a rather restrictive manner as a *low past, present, and future probability of using serious coercive force between or within nations*. Coercion can be both military and economic in nature as both of them can inflict major damage and pain on the targeted people. Peace is broken, and the security community unrealized in the region, if people are subjected to physical destruction and suffering. In other words, peace and security mean, ultimately, freedom from coercion and its threats.

Compared with more radical uses of the concept, my definition is rather conventional. It considers only serious coercive military and economic threats to the existence and freedom of relevant individual or collective actors. Empirically, the degree of security in a system can be

assessed through the frequency and intensity of the (unilateral) use of military or economic force. If, in addition, there is also a broad subjective and inter-subjective consensus in a region that the probability of military and economic coercion is low, then it can be said to be secure.

The rationalist paradigm considers, as a rule, only external threats to security, although there has been a recent trend towards applying the concept to internal conflicts as well. In particular, there has been an effort to transfer the model of security dilemma from inter-state to inter-ethnic or inter-societal relations (Posen 1993; Snyder and Jervis 1999; and Roe 1999). On the other hand, it is true, as Robert Mandel (1994, 21-23) suggests, that internal threats, however serious, need a different "conceptual toolkit" than the analysis of external threats to security.

One possible solution, in particular in the periphery, is to equate security with the state-building process, as a "subaltern realist" (Ayoob 1997) has suggested. Then, the establishment of public order through state-making would become the defining aspect of security. This approach does not yet solve the problem of how safe public spaces within nations are linked with secure and peaceful inter-state relations. This problem can be addressed by the following simple typology that divides both inter-state and inter-societal relations into secure and insecure types, in which security is defined by the amount and intensity of physical violence and coercion.

[Table 6.1 about here]

Type One meets both requirements of a security community, while Types Three and Four clearly violate them. From the standpoint of the definition of the security community, Type Two is most problematic; can we speak of a security community if civil wars rage within countries? My answer tends to be in the negative, although it may make sense to distinguish between a comprehensive security community (when both an inter-state and inter-societal peace prevail) and the inter-state security community (Type Two above).

According to Ayoob (1997, 135-37), a comprehensive security community can be best achieved when “territorial satiation, societal cohesion, and political stability” prevail within states as is the case in most industrialized countries. The absence of these internal traits, i.e., effective statehood, often leads, in turn, also to inter-state violence. This view tends to lead to the conclusion that the inter-state security dilemma is less due to the uncertainty of the state actors about the defensive vs. offensive intentions by the others. Rather, it is related to the prevalence of malign and predatory motives of the governments trying to stabilize their internal and external position.

### Trust and Community

The concept of community can be defined both in constructivist and rationalist terms. A constructivist definition would probably state that a community refers to a human collectivity that is constituted by shared norms and understandings among its members. Due to common values, identities, and goals, they feel solidarity with each other. Communities can be even "virtual", linked by communication media, but usually they are attached to a particular locale.<sup>2</sup> The glue holding the communities together is the collective identity formation and, more specifically shared values, identities, and meanings. Collective identity establishes patterns of diffuse reciprocity manifested in the mutual responsiveness among the members of the community (Deutsch et al. 1957, 129-33; Adler and Barnett 1998b, 30-33, 47-48; see also Williams 1998).

The rationalist approach would build the definition of community on the concept of interest. The members of a community try to control resources that are of value to them. As no member can usually obtain the control over all relevant resources, he engages in transactions with other members. The aim is to make sure that his access to resources improves or that the

remaining resources are not used against him. Transactions that trade resources and interests in a regulated framework create a social system and perhaps even a community.

The next question is whether it is possible to bring values, rules, and interests together in a definition of community. How are these phenomena related to each other? One way of trying to integrate them is to rely on the concept of trust that is one way to deal with the problem of risk in decision-making. In the rationalist framework, the placing of trust is a wager in which the outcome is not guaranteed, but involves an element of risk. However, once trust is placed there are incentives to convert the asymmetric relationship into one of symmetric trust (Coleman 1990, 98-99, 177-80). Over time, the relationships of mutual confidence may develop into “a culture of trust” that becomes a contextual property shaping the behavior of actors (Kegley and Raymond 1990, 258-60).

In a more abstract vein, it may be argued that a trusting relationship shapes identities, reinforces norms, and helps to overcome diverging interests of the members. Conversely, common identities and norm compliance obviously contribute to increasing trust and help to resolve interest conflicts. The existence of a community presupposes that its members have reasons to trust the other members to comply with the common norms and behave in an expected way.

As mentioned above, in international relations trust is a contextual property and has an important function to "underwrite the capacity of a system to function peacefully and to bond its members in agreements" (Kegley and Raymond 1990, 248). Common identity means, in turn, cognitive proximity and facilitates, together with trust, cooperation in spite of uncertainties. In fact, “trust and identity are reciprocal and reinforcing” and help to create a security community (Adler and Barnett 1998b, 45-48).

The insertion of the concept of trust in the definition of community seems to take it back to the constructivist court.<sup>3</sup> The situation is more complicated than that, though. Trust is not only shaped by common identities and cultural values, but its placing usually involves also a proper calculation of potential risks. We do not only trust because of a certain measure of common identity, but also try to obtain safeguards against the cheating by the other side. In the rationalist account, the placement of trust is based on the maximization of the expected utility under risk. The notion of expected utility contains, in and of itself, the idea that the trustworthiness of the other actor is limited, so that potential risks are involved at least until the relationship becomes more fully institutionalized (Coleman 1990, 97-108).

However, in addition to the utility calculations, trust is also based on experience, loyalty, and bonding; i.e., there is an ideational and historical element in it. Trust is a combination of experience about the past and hope about the future. Various safeguards against the betrayal of trust and the exploitation of underlying vulnerabilities strengthen the relationship, but may, as signals of suspicions, undermine confidence. The focus on safeguards tends to place more emphasis on the role of norms and their enforcement than shared values and meanings in defining trust.

Combining material and subjective elements of security, we can define a security community as a collective arrangement in which its members have reasons to trust that the use of military and economic coercion in their mutual relations is unlikely. Trust, as the key element of the security community, can be further divided into predictability and assurance. Predictability emanating from trust gives rise to expectations of consistent behavior, while assurances (or safeguards) reduce the probability of deviant action and its damage.

The definition adopted above should be compared with the pioneering work of Karl W. Deutsch and his associates, which still provides the best point of departure for further studies on security communities. In pluralistic security communities, as opposed to the amalgamated ones, the units retain their sovereignty, but develop a sense of community and institutions that are able to create long-term, dependable expectations of peaceful change. This means that conflicts are expected to be resolved without the resort to large-scale physical force (Deutsch et al. 1957, 5-7).

Deutsch's definition of security does not explicitly utilize the concept of trust, although it surfaces in a couple of places in his analysis. He thinks, for example, that trustworthiness improves the mutual predictability of behavior, especially if it is grounded in deeper feelings of commonality than the mere familiarity. Trust also contributes to mutual responsiveness, although the latter is more contingent on the density of communications (Deutsch et al. 1957, 56-58, 129-30). In sum, Deutsch seems to consider trust mostly as a precondition for better predictability of the actors' behavior and, thus, as an aspect of expectations rather than as a synonym or a dimension of security.

Adler and Barnett (1998b, 38) are more specific about the role of trust in the security community. For them mutual trust and collective identity are necessary conditions of dependable expectations of peaceful change and, thus, of the security community. They also draw attention to structures (power and knowledge) and processes (transactions, organizations, and social learning), which are conducive to the development of mutual trust and collective identity. Peaceful change is the critical concept also in their theory of security community.

In my own definition mutual trust that the serious use of coercion is unlikely is a key element. It is consistent with Deutsch's idea that trust is primarily connected with the predictability of behavior. Predictability is, in turn, closely linked with expectations about the

peaceful nature of change, which are at the heart of the security community. The other aspect of trust is assurance that expectations are, indeed, dependable. There should be a "real assurance," as Deutsch says, that trust and predictability do not break down and that war ensues.

Ole Wæver (1995b: 218-19) suggests that a security community can experience "security rivalries" (as is the case in the Franco-German relationship within the European Union). This stance follows logically from his view that in the EU, the state model still dominates and national identities differ; as a result, the West European security community is not yet full-fledged. Wæver himself rejects the community approach to European security in favor of a concert-based system because it considers the power element, while the security-community theory does not specify the mechanisms by which war is ruled out (Wæver 1995b: 214-15, 226-30).

It goes without saying that members of the security community can have mutual political disagreements and even rivalries. On the other hand, it should also be clear that if states threaten each other militarily, they do not belong to the same security community. This murky area concerns "security dilemmas" and "security rivalries." If they are defined, as they should be, as a potential condition for using military force, then most "dilemmas" and "rivalries" are incompatible with the idea of the security community. The issue is obviously complicated by the fact that "dilemma" and "rivalry" refers to different types of security problems; the former concerns primarily the collective-action problem, while the latter refers to more direct inter-state confrontations.

The opposite problem is revealed in the criticism that the concept of security community is redundant with the concept of peace. To be empirically meaningful, research in the field should be able to identify cases in which dependable expectations of peace by the community members have broken down and coercion has ensued. On the other hand, there may be security orders that

witnessed the absence of war between its members, without the existence of any community between them. Does this mean, for instance, that a hegemonic or balance-of-power system cannot be a security community? Obviously, they can be a non-war community, but not necessarily a peace community

If the emphasis is only on the (inter)subjective aspects of community, identities and bonding then expectations and predictability are pushed to the background. As a result, "shared identity ... is a necessary condition for a pluralistic security community" (Adler 1997a, 263).

Such an emphasis on identity means that the strategic aspects of behavior in the security community are downgraded. It is assumed that actors are endogenously shaped by and react to norms and identities constituting them. They are expected to draw upon common identities as resources rather than calculate instrumentally whether their expectations about the future cooperation are dependable and assurances real enough to warrant reliance on the other states.

Conversely, the proponents of rational choice focus on a strategic setting in which actors decide among different options on the basis of their preferences, beliefs, and available information (Lake and Powell 1999). In this regard, a key difference between constructivism and rationalism appears to be that the latter stresses more the uncertainty and instability of a given situation in which the use of force is, therefore, often a ready option. Constructivism is biased to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which common identities and the expectation of peace reinforce each other and make the use of force unlikely.

### Internal Wars and Security

In previous studies security communities have been defined primarily in the context of inter-state relations, while intra-state conditions, even civil wars, have been largely excluded.

Thus, Arie Kacowicz (1994 and 1998) considers South America and West Africa incipient or potential security communities, even though many of their members have been suffering from internal turmoil and violence. For instance, the breakdown of public order in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the multiple cross-border links between their devastating civil wars, or the links between Nigeria's internal political situation and its military actions in West Africa make one wonder whether a security community can exist in such a region.

Kacowicz contends that members of coherent security communities are usually democracies that are, for a number of reasons, better in keeping peace; they tend to be economically developed and mature states in which domestic institutional constraints limit their resort to military force. Liberal democracies are also likely to accept the territorial status quo and the international normative order; hence, they do not try to impose changes on the environment by the force of weapons. Yet, if the region in which inter-state wars have been absent comprises mostly non-democratic states, the zone tends to be one of negative peace (Kacowicz 1995 and 1998).

This seems to suggest that non-democracies shun positive cooperation and are at best able to avoid wars in their mutual relations. Provided that the security community is defined as a non-war community, this solution does not yet make the theory redundant with the theory of democratic peace as also non-democratic countries can live in stable peace with each other. Karl Deutsch largely agrees with this conclusion in observing that a consensus on “main values” would be sufficient to create a pluralistic security community. Differences in political and economic values do not need to undermine such a community provided that its members do not “develop a militant missionary attitude” (Deutsch et al. 1957, 123-25).

Similarly, Adler and Barnett (1998b, 40-41) conclude that liberalism promotes a civil society with transnational ties and, in that way, a security community, but they also seem to acknowledge that there are other paths to such a community. Security communities have a territorial dimension, but their “cognitive space” can also be shared by non-contiguous actors if their identity ties are strong enough (Adler 1997a, 250-55).

The key conclusion seems to be that countries governed by democratic, liberal-internationalist coalitions have usually cooperative and peaceful relations with one another, while statist-nationalist coalitions are more prone to external and internal conflicts (Solingen 1998). However, non-democracies are not destined to external aggression or internal war, but they can also live in peace and be members of a security community. However, the probability of external war and internal instability is higher in their case than of liberal democracies whose security communities are, therefore, more mature.

Common sense suggests that a region can be a security community only if its members are also internally at peace and face only a low probability of civil war. Thus, the absence of the inter-state war is not a sufficient condition for the existence of a security community. In addition, its members must be also internally in peace at least to such an extent that the domestic instability does not spill over to other countries of the region. In other words, the existence of a security community presupposes that security externalities created by countries of a particular region are predominantly positive in nature (see Table 6.1). The spread of negative security externalities across borders is inconsistent with the idea of the security community (see Lake 1997, 48-57).

Negative cross-border externalities may not lead to inter-state wars or internal wars in other countries, but they often destabilize the entire region and stymie expectations of peaceful change. Therefore, a region in which states are internally violent and unstable can hardly be

meaningfully called a security community. For example, it is unwarranted to consider West Africa a zone of peace; not even in the negative sense of the peace concept. Its devastating civil wars have produced so much refugees, arms trafficking, smuggling, and other "externalities" that the region will need a long time to build a stable political and economic environment.

In summary, the existence of a pluralistic security community should require that the probability of violence is low both in the external and internal relations of its member states. Thus, peace and security have both an extra- and intra-state dimension that are conceptually distinct, but must empirically co-exist if a region is to be regarded as a security community.

Obviously, political and economic liberalism is a strong candidate to account for the emergence of robust security communities for the very simple reason that it is both internally and externally peaceful. The connection is not, however one-to-one as there are (semi-)democratic countries that have suffered from large-scale violence (e.g. Colombia, India, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom). In general, it has been observed that all efficient governments, and not just the democratic ones, are able to avert internal violence (Benson and Kugler 1998). This casts doubt on the argument that liberal democracy and its commitment to external peace can alone define the existence of a mature security community. Internal peace must be also one of its defining characteristics especially if internal instability threatens to have negative security externalities.

### The Constructivist Challenge

The general Deutschian emphasis on communication networks, leading to trust, social learning, and institution building as paths to security communities have been recently adopted by constructivist scholars (Adler and Barnett 1996, 63-72; Adler and Barnett 1998b; and especially

Adler 1997b). They see the creation of security communities as the formation of "cognitive regions" whose borders are defined by the intensity of shared understandings and common identities.

Identity is the key element of a cognitive region; shared self-definitions create internalized norms that allow people from different countries to know each other better and thus respond more effectively to the concerns of the others. Social learning, especially if coupled with positive functional processes, contributes in a critical manner to the emergence of security communities and the norms upholding them. States as social actors tend to behave according to the international norms that the shared values and identities have constituted (Adler 1997a, 264-65; Adler and Barnett 1998b, 44-45).

The critical argument in the constructivist approach is that changes in state identity affect the national security interests or policies of states. In that way the configurations of state identities affect also security communities and other international security arrangements. Thus, a military alliance or other security coalition reflects, in the first place, the difference or commonality of its members' values and identities (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996, 60-63).

The constructivist approach to international security studies has some obvious merits. It suggests that norms as collective expectations recognize and validate particular identities of actors and thus "constitute" them. International normative expectations shape domestic interests and policies, and thus the identities of the national actors. Yet, the choices made by national actors impact on the international structures. The effort to explicitly bridge the domestic and international systems is perhaps the main merit of the constructivist approach.

The constructivist approach assumes that security communities are, as a rule, built by states, especially liberal ones, sharing similar identities. Methodologically, the focus on common identities and norms created by social interaction makes them endogenous to the state and lead, as noted above, to overemphasize the harmony of social relations (Mercer 1995, 233-36). Moreover, the constructivist interpretation can fall in the trap of tautology; common identities help to establish a security community whose existence, i.e. the absence of war, proves that the participants share common identities. To express the matter otherwise, we are in trouble if the common identity is considered a necessary precondition for the emergence of a security community, while its existence is in turn regarded as an indicator of the shared identity and meanings.

To some authors, security as a socially constructed concept has a meaning only in a given discursive and structural context that cannot be generalized to other contexts. In other words, an issue becomes a security problem when it has been named as such, "securitized." In this reasoning, insecurity is a situation in which a threat has been identified by a "securitizing actor," but no successful response has been taken to eliminate or manage it (Wæver 1995a: 54-57; Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998: 40-42).

The constructivist approach to security makes sense to the extent that an issue is hardly a security problem, unless it has been defined as such by the actors and/or referents. If the problem is widely perceived as a threat, a shared understanding may emerge and lead to common action. Constructivism is inadequate, however, in dealing with the responses to security threats. For instance, the constructivist framework of security studies developed by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998) has hardly a word to say about the instruments by which the security threats can be dealt with. Obviously, they think that the choice of instruments depends on which issues are

“securitized” and how it happens, but this does not help much. In general, the constructivist approach to security seems to be unable to theorize about the role of military power and its use.

The tautological trap is also lurking in the language of "constitutive processes" that refer to "a set of processes whereby the specific identities of the acting units in a system are built up or altered" (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996, 66). If the pluralistic security community is defined in terms of a dependable expectation of peaceful change, then this expectation creates a norm that is supposed, in turn, to define the identity and interests of the participating states. The result is a methodological loop that cannot fail.

Emanuel Adler seems to avoid this pitfall by suggesting that security communities "rest on shared practical knowledge of the peaceful resolution of conflicts." He points out that the practice of peaceful conflict resolution is more widespread among liberal states that have well-developed civic cultures. Therefore, due to their capacity for conflict resolution, liberal cognitive regions either already are or are likely to become security communities, because such capacity reduces the risk and expectation of war. (Adler 1997, 257-59; see also Adler and Barnett 1996, 76-77; and Adler and Barnett 1998b, 33-34).

Here the tautological trap is partly avoided as the intervening capacity of conflict resolution decides whether a common identity can be converted into a security community or not. However, if this capacity is considered solely as an attribute of liberal states, one falls in the trap of being redundant with the democratic peace. The possibility should also be allowed that non-democratic states could avoid mutual conflicts because they, either separately or together, have adequate conflict resolution capabilities as well. Whether this is the case or not is an empirical and not a definitional issue.

## Two Hard Cases

This section discusses briefly two "hard" cases to show that the relationship between identity and security community is not as simple as sometimes suggested. In so doing, I intend to challenge some of the recent constructivist scholarship. These hard case studies are based on the hypotheses that (a) a common identity and shared understandings may have other motivations than peace- and community-building; (b) the progress towards a security community can be released by external changes rather than by the redefinition of identities; and (c) what looks like an identity and security community may not be one. The two cases examined in this section are the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Baltic countries.

### ASEAN

ASEAN is often considered at least a nascent pluralistic security community; its members have a common identity that stresses restraint, non-confrontation, and consultation. Moreover, the members of ASEAN, especially its original core, have not been involved in a serious conflict since the 1963-66 *Konfrontasi* between Indonesia and Malaysia. This is quite remarkable, especially in view of the tumultuous post-independence period in the 1950s and the 1960s. By stressing the evolution of their common identity, norms, and the general "ASEAN Way" of solidarity, the Association has been seen moving towards a pluralistic security community.

It is not difficult to find counter-arguments to the assumption that ASEAN is a security community. Its member states, especially Malaysia, continue to have territorial disputes with other members, though most of them are not very serious. They have been also converting their economic resources into large-scale arms acquisitions that have tipped the balance in favor of offensive weapons. However, these weapons are seldom targeted specifically at other members of

ASEAN; they are more an insurance against the uncertainties of the post-Cold War era and the potential instrument for the territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the rise of China (Collins 1999: 99-106).

These counter-arguments do not necessarily make much of a dent, however, since the advocates of ASEAN as a community of common identity and security acknowledge that it has far from perfected these features yet (Acharya 1998: 214-18). On the positive side it has been stressed that ASEAN's conflict resolution capacity has withstood the test of practice and proved to be able to avoid violent conflicts and keep peace in the region (Caballero-Anthony 1998).

Without denying the gradual rise of the "ASEAN Way" one has to place it in a larger historical and political context. The institutionalization of ASEAN has been mostly spurred by external challenges. The declaration on a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) was adopted in 1971 in the aftermath of Nixon's opening to China and responded to regional uncertainties created by it. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) of 1976 was intended, in turn, to create a new code of regional conduct after the collapse of South Vietnam. Finally, the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1995 was motivated by the need to provide a new, broader multilateral forum to deal with the uncertainties of the post-Cold War world.

The ASEAN model puts a heavy premium on the national sovereignty of the member states and the security autonomy of the region as a whole. These twin principles are manifested in the emphasis on the non-interference in the internal affairs and keeping the extra-regional powers at arm's length. This notwithstanding the general principles of national sovereignty and regional autonomy have served important common interests, such as regime security and the containment

of its opposition the domestic repression of the opposition (Leifer 1996, 11-16; Khong 1997, 326-37; and Narine 1998, 196-204).<sup>4</sup>

Consultations, solidarity, and restrained behavior are not necessarily indications of a common identity, not at least a positive one. They rather reflect the commitment of the ASEAN leaders not to interfere in or even comment on the internal affairs of other states. This has permitted the leaders to continue their non-democratic rule at home, undisturbed by the political pressures by the neighboring states. In reality, "solidarity" has meant the mutual acceptance of the primacy of regime security in the region. Thus, while common identity may exist, it is used as a means to other, more sinister objectives than to promote peace; it can be an excuse for the domestic policies pursued rather than a constitutive factor. For instance, ASEAN's central role in the international response to Vietnam's invasion to Cambodia propped up both its own unity and international profile, but also legitimated the internal practices of its members (Narine 1998, 204-208).

In summary, while a measure of common identity has emerged in ASEAN, the lack of democratic traditions and practices has failed to make it a "liberal cognitive region" leading to a pluralistic security community. Regional consensus on procedures to promote sovereignty and regime safety obviously creates common, though partial, identities among the national elites. Such an elite consensus should not be, however, confused with widespread popular identities that are needed to create a pluralistic security community. In summary, while a measure of common identity has emerged in ASEAN, the lack of democratic traditions and practices has failed to make it a "liberal cognitive region," leading to a pluralistic security community.

Recently, the essence of the "ASEAN Way" has been challenged by several new developments. Its enlargement to include also Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Burma is based on

the rationale of countering the spread of the Chinese influence, but also to expand the “ASEAN Way” and the regional security system to the Asian continent. The enlargement has, however, created entirely new problems. The increasing political and ethnic diversity of the member states and their historical divergences reduce further any regional identity that may have existed in the original ASEAN.

Moreover, the human-rights violations and the political instability in Burma and Cambodia, together with the extra-regional pressures and intra-regional promises to deal with these problems, are challenging some key principles of the “ASEAN Way”. This concerns in particular the almost absolute respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. In the new situation the debate has already started within ASEAN on the possible use of “constructive intervention” and “flexible engagement” to reform the political systems of Burma and Cambodia (Collins 1999, 106-13; Henderson 1999, 24-26, 33-40, and 48-55).

Cooperation in the ASEAN framework may have progressed far enough that the risk of interstate warfare in the region has disappeared for good (Caballero-Anthony 1998). If this is the case, the “ASEAN Way” has shown one possible route to a security community. Yet, this does not mean that Southeast Asia is yet a secure region. Internal violence continues within many of its member states and the economic and environmental crises are creating new transnational security threats, including migration and irregular economic activities. Moreover, ASEAN has turned out to be incapable to respond in any meaningful way to the regional financial crisis and the Indonesian political transition prompted by it (Henderson 1999, 40-48). Thus, even if ASEAN would formally qualify as a nascent security community, the dated methods and limited impact of

its inter-governmental cooperation show that such a community is inadequate to deliver more comprehensive peace and security.

### The Baltic Sea region

During the Cold War, the Baltic Sea region was a security complex in which two military alliances and neutral countries met each other. However, the Soviet Union was much more strongly present in the Baltic system than the United States, while Germany's policy was restrained. Moscow considered the Baltic Sea *mare nostrum* and, having occupied the three Baltic countries in 1940, it did not give them a chance for political self-realization. Yet, these countries, especially Estonia, retained much of their North European identity, but were unable to express it in the conditions of the Cold War.

Once the Soviet constraint had been lifted, the Baltic countries started a frantic search for membership in NATO and the European Union. However, the Western powers have been reluctant to make a security commitment to the Baltic region because of the fear of unintended or even perverse consequences of such a move for themselves. Therefore, no robust regional security organization has been set up to cover the entire Baltic Sea region. It remains a network of cooperative security ties that does not involve robust institutions or firm commitments (Knudsen 1999; and Väyrynen 1999, 204-207).

It can be also argued that the common identity of the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians is much due to their common aversion to being subjugated to Russia. From this follows their common interest to seek counterbalance to Russia in NATO and the European Union. Empirical research indicates that the Baltic people identify primarily with Germany, the Nordic countries, and to a somewhat lesser degree with the United States, rather than with each other. They also

seem ready to defect from mutual cooperation if an opportunity opens up to promote unilaterally one's own interests.

Thus, the Baltic identity has been, at least in part, defined to meet the Western expectations and, at the same time, distinguish itself from Russia and its sphere of influence rather than to create a Baltic community from inside. The Baltic security goals are pursued primarily by the economic, political, and military integration with NATO and the European Union. In other words, the definition of the Baltic identity seems to reflect more these interests than drive policy in their own right (Möttölä 1998; Väyrynen 1998; and Väyrynen 1999).

A puzzle for the constructivist theory is that the common identity of the Balts, and perhaps identities in general, seem to have only a secondary place in the search of security. In other words, identities facilitate and justify it rather than constitute and define security. Surely, the constitution of the Baltic identity is consistent with the orientation of the practical politics of security and integration by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. However, rather than identity defining interests, the process seems to be reversed. The Baltic countries primary interest is in the acquisition of positive security guarantees ("safeguards") from NATO against Russia and, for political and material reasons, a full membership in the European Union. They refer to a common Baltic identity when it is useful to do so, but seldom independently of these goals.

In what sense do the Baltic countries form a security community? Despite some territorial and economic disputes, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are not expected to become involved in war with each other. To the contrary, they have set up various common military institutions to improve training and inter-operability (with NATO) of their limited forces. Neither there is a slightest fear of war with any of the Western powers. In that sense, the Baltic countries are a part of the extensive Euro-Atlantic security community. On the other hand, the expectation of a

military conflict with Russia is excluded neither from the governmental policies nor the popular imagination. With Russia, one can think, at best, one can think of a security regime, embedded in the institutions and actions of the OSCE. This hints to the need to explore the role of external actors in the emergence of security communities.

### External Actors

Security communities are defined by a set of mutual expectations among its members about the peaceful character of social change. This approach tends to focus on the "inside" of the security community and pay less attention to its relations with the external environment. However, in the real life, the outside environment has an impact on the security community and it can, in turn, influence that environment. The focus on the "inside" can possibly be defended by saying that everything is endogenous, i.e. identities, values, and meanings are social and, therefore, structured independently of state boundaries. Therefore, in "cognitive regions" the external and the internal have a different meaning than in "territorial regions" where the focus on the external is more appropriate.

Deutsch and his associates consider only briefly the external military threat as a cause for the establishment of a security community. They are ambivalent about the effects of the external threat. The positive effects are, at best, transitory and the outside pressure may even prevent or slow down the process of community-building (Deutsch et al. 1957, 156-57). Their point of departure seems to be that the security community has to be built from within, autonomously of the external environment.

In ASEAN, China and Vietnam have been perceived as the main threats, but these perceptions have changed over time and have not been shared equally by all members. Yet, the

fear of external destabilization of the national “resilience” has been a major motivation to exclude the outside powers from the region and promote its internal, elite-driven cooperation. Obviously, these motives cannot be easily separated from domestic concerns, but it is equally clear that external factors cannot be neglected in the explanation of the development of the “ASEAN Way.” Yet, the members of ASEAN have been seldom able to formulate a joint policy towards extra-regional problems. Most recently, they have been split by the East Timor crisis (Chongkittavorn 1999).

In the Baltic region, the impact of external actors has been even stronger than in Southeast Asia. The potential threat of Russia has no doubt pushed the Baltic countries to closer cooperation with each other and NATO than what would have been the case in its absence. They have been able to formulate a rather consistent policy towards NATO and, with differing national nuances, towards Russia. The Baltic countries and the West form a security community, but it is more shaped by norms, values, and expectations than by common institutions and defense commitments. This reflects the Western effort to accommodate Russia rather than challenge it, at least in the regions that were previously parts of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the security community between the Baltic countries and the West is “loosely-coupled” rather than a “tightly-coupled” organization of mutual aid (Adler and Barnett 1998b, 30).

Thus, Russia as an external actor has been able to stymie, or at least slow down, the efforts of the Baltic countries to join NATO. This means that we face an interesting discrepancy here. In the constructivist sense of values and identities, there seems to be a mutual security community between the Baltic countries and the West. However, in the *Realpolitik* sense, a security arrangement against external threats does not exist as NATO has been unwilling to extend security guarantees to Baltic countries. In other words, a security community does not

necessarily contain commitments to defend the country against external risks; the community of identity is not the same thing as the community of protection. Neither does the security community necessarily assure joint policies by its members towards external actors or issues.

These observations suggest that the focus of the constructivist analysis on identities and values may underestimate the role of action in international security relations. After all, the peaceful settlement of disputes and safeguards against the use of physical force can only result from political action. Such action is also needed to convince the non-members of the security communities that their interests are taken into account in the process. Otherwise, they may turn against the community project and damage it by their reactions.

#### Conclusion: Security Communities and Stable Peace

If stable peace is defined by the lack of anticipation of major violence between or within states involved, then it necessarily comes close to the concept of security community. In fact, stable peace is a key characteristic of a security community. It has been suggested, though, that there are differences between them in the methods by which peace is maintained. Stable peace is due to reciprocal and consensual cooperation that has decided, for instance, to keep territorial disputes off the political agenda, while peace in a security community is internalized by common identities, values, and norms and is, thus, more institutionalized (Kacowicz 1998, 10-11).

This distinction would justify the observation that security communities are “value communities” and produce stable peace by sharing identities and meanings. Yet, stable peace in a broader sense can be achieved also by other means, such as the balance or the concert of power. This distinction is not trivial and deserves some further discussion.

This chapter started with a discussion of two models of security that were dubbed as material (or rational) and societal (or constructivist). It was noted that the former regards security as a result of the configuration of external factors, while the latter sees it as endogenously constructed.

The theorists of security community clearly support the constructivist approach that leads to stress common identities and values as a necessary condition for creating secure peace. This approach has also tended to consider liberal values and policies as the essential features of a security community. Recently, its supporters have expanded the model in two different directions. First, the possibility has been allowed, although somewhat vaguely, that also other common values than the liberal ones can provide a basis for the security community. Empirical evidence indicates, though, that the opportunities opened by this extension are quite limited. Second, the security-community theorists have paid attention to material factors, such as transactions and technology, which can augment institutions and knowledge as bases of the security community. However, in the empirical work only limited attention has been paid to the material conditions of security communities (Adler and Barnett 1998a and 1998b).

The stable-peace theorists have adopted a broader-range of methodological approaches, but have not excluded the cognitive models informing the security-community theorists. In fact, they often trace stable peace to such cognitive processes as trust and learning, though more from the perspective of political processes than identity formation. Stable-peace theorists often ground their explanation in various versions of the democratic-peace theory; in that respect there are links with “cognitive liberalism.” In fact, it seems that stable-peace theorists have under-specified their explanatory models by not going more boldly beyond the liberal-democratic framework of analysis to which the security-community theorists are, to a large extent, confined.

This study adopted trust as the key concept to define a security community. It can be even be considered as a common denominator of the security-community and stable-peace theories. Trust is obviously generated by the strengthening of norms and institutions, social learning, and the construction of common identities. The case studies of ASEAN and the Baltic region indicate that their member states have enough confidence that war between them is unlikely, so that they might qualify as potential security communities. However, the same cases hint that this trust cannot be generalized beyond the narrow focus on war avoidance. There is only limited mutual trust that effective and positive common positions can be formulated to non-military regional and many extra-regional problems as well.

The sharing of values, norms, and identities is clearly conducive to the formation of security (i.e. non-war) communities and can help to interpret their emergence. However, norms and identities are not sufficient to account for the (in)capacity to deal effectively with broader political and economic issues. The constructivist approach has also difficulties to address adequately the problem of responses to security threats, as well as the problem of action in general. Obviously, other theories are needed to account for the political, military, and economic dynamics that contribute to stable peace in the regional and global contexts. Security community remains an important, perhaps the most central aspect of stable peace, but is unable to cover it in the entirety.

*Table 1: Inter-State and Inter-Societal Security*

Inter-societal relations		
	Secure	Insecure
Secure	1. Peaceful international and national society	2. Nationally contained civil wars
Inter-state relations		
Insecure	3. Coherent states fighting International wars	4. "State of nature": international and national Anarchy

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## Notes

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2. It is interesting that the most comprehensive reader on the constructivist approaches to security does not contain any systematic discussion of neither community nor security community. See Katzenstein 1996.
3. Again it is interesting that the subject index of Katzenstein (1996) does not even contain the concept of trust. Earlier works of Adler (1997a, 254-55) only briefly mentioned it.
4. In the two first decades of ASEAN's existence, its member states cooperated in repressing the ethnic and ideological uprisings to such an extent that one can speak of coordinated counter-insurgency and state terrorism that purported to prop up regional and domestic stability. See Väyrynen 1988: 175-85.