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Regional security community : European Union in action

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REGIONAL SECURITY COMMUNITY: EUROPEAN UNION IN ACTION

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the possibility of the new global international system, basing on the constructivistic interpretation of the "pluralistic security community" concept by K.W. Deutsch. Major tendencies in the international politics, which led to the securitization of the international agenda, are analyzed. The main attention is paid to the European Union as a regional security community. The conceptual backgrounds of European security area are analyzed through the process of EU development and political behaviour. An idea of regional security communities' synergy as a new political order in the international relation is proposed.

Key words

regional security community, international conflicts, social construction of peace behaviour, EU integration

One of the most important aspects of the current international system is its transitional nature, which affects not only the principles of international actors' cooperation, but also social knowledge of international politics, which has been determined by bipolar confrontation of national sovereignties and power politics. At the same time, it should be stressed that international conflicts still remain numerous, contributing to a number of problem like terrorism, humanitarian crises, cross-border crime, etc. Accordingly, the need for new peaceful measures, forms of social relations, as well as new international actors, which would pursue these goals, still stays relevant in our time.

Nowadays, we may predict a few different models of the future international system based on different principles of organization. These include those formed on the basis of: institutional arrangements of universal organizations such as the UN; exclusive values, ideas or powers of certain state and non-state social units;

cooperation in providing security or human rights protection; distribution of actors' individual values, etc. Nevertheless, the unifying factor of such predictions could be outlined – the integration of international actors around certain values, principles or problems that form a permanent practice of close interaction and set the groundwork for a global society.

Theorizing around the formation of a global society will certainly lead to the understanding that currently a theoretical model or construct needs yet to be achieved. However, the transitional nature of the modern international system suggests that a global society will be partly created on the basis of current values as well as current participators. Moreover, according to P. Wallenstein[1], until the project "global society" is accomplished, actors will be able to choose in which cultural and value-based field they wish to operate.

The proposed assumption denies the traditional realistic vision of the anarchistic international system with multiple (often opposite) values shared by major global powers. On the contrary, the main idea of a global society (and a global community as the highest form of social integration) lies in the integrative potential of common values that are shared by all participants. The other key issue of the global society construction is an active development of regional integrative communities, which are demonstrating their power to spread globally or to form a "global synergy". Such issues will be analyzed further in more detail, providing an overview of several directions of the possible international system of the future. However prior to that theorizing, there is a need for an estimation of the prerequisites of the transformation of the international system.

Since the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), international relations have been traditionally shaped by the principle of sovereignty, which relies on the execution of power by the state authorities in particular territories. Today, sovereignty issues are crucial in the subject of the organization of the international system. The critics of the continuation of the "Westphalian era" politics emphasize that nation-states are unable to provide effective management of their societies in the present globalized world. J.-F. Rischard, in particular, notes that "obsolete territorial instincts" limit modern states, while non-state actors are deprived of identity, which in globalization conditions is rather restrictive[2]. According to the scientist, any cosmetic reform of the international system will not be able

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[1] P. Wallenstein, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System*, London–Thousand Oaks–New Delhi 2002, p. 264.

[2] J.-F. Rischard, *High Noon: 20 Global Problems, 20 Years To Solve Them*, New York 2003, pp. 166–167.

to bring the desired changes. Thus, all elements of the former "Westphalia" are doomed to elimination: sovereignty, territorial integrity, and power politics.

As a result, international institutions such as "the right of ethnic groups to self-determination" and "humanitarian intervention" are now in opposition to the international institutions associated with sovereignty. In particular, M. Glennon believes that in constructing a new world order, global society must abandon the destructive ideas of equality of states, since the perception of states as equal prevents the perception of certain social organizations and individuals as equal[3].

Doubts about the sustainability of the principle of sovereignty are often produced by international agreements in which sovereignty is delegated to supranational authorities or entities within the state. The best example of the first case is the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, as well as the idea of the EU as a "state of states". There is an assumption that the European economy will be in "half-stagnation" as long as Europe does not overcome the syndrome of the nation-state, which is the heritage of the "Westphalian era".

The second case is the "principle of subsidiarity", according to which problems should be referred to the lowest level at which there are opportunities to address them. Moreover, international organizations, which are the product of delegation of sovereignty in the contemporary international relations, limit the power of state actors through active use of such principles as human rights or preventing the "failed state" situation.

Thus, it could be assumed that today the principle of sovereignty, de facto remaining a key role in the system of social knowledge and political dialog, actually lost its primary organizational function that was implemented in the "Westphalian era" of international relations. Nowadays, the understanding of sovereignty is gradually shifting from "traditional state monopoly on the use of force" to the category of "social security rights, their identity and autonomy"[4].

In such context, security issues in the evaluative aspect have a significant integrative potential for the international community. As a universal category, focused on the sharing of common values and knowledge, it is widely implemented at different levels (global, regional, national, collective, local, personal, etc.) and wide range of areas (political, military, economic, environmental, cultural,

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[3] M.J. Glennon, *Why the Security Council Failed*, "Foreign Affairs" 2003, No. 3, Vol. 82, pp. 16–35.

[4] J. Habermas, *Citizenship and National Identity* [in:] *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, Cambridge 1996, p. 500.

informational, etc.). Early stage of this principle consolidating as a system parameter could observed today (e.g. NATO, CFSP EU).

The United Nations could be considered to be the main example of such co-operation on the global arena. It mainly focuses on the issues of human rights, massive refugee flows, legal methods of resolving armed conflicts, and prevention of economic and environmental crises. Providing a broad institutional arrangements, UN nonetheless does not constitute a fully recognized institutional basis to be considered an international system, but rather forms a network of interconnected actors. International cooperation is ensured mainly by leading developed countries and it includes a number of international organizations (EU, NATO, ASEAN, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Bank Group, etc.), private initiative groups and associations, religious communities, etc.

Thus, the perception of a highly dependent cooperation of international actors on different institutional levels promotes social knowledge that widens universal understanding of the international community through the concept of security, cooperation, and democracy. A major drawback, however, lies in the length of the universalization of the social understanding of the global security and integration processes that contribute to it. At the same time, the more social units will disseminate the above principles in their practice, the faster a transformation of modern transitional system will be completed.

Conventionally, a new international system can be characterized as a "security community" based on the idealistic basis of global security through which actors construct their identity and interests[5]. International actors can assess conflict risk and determine what actions may be appropriate in a particular situation. In mature models of security-based communities, international institutions, principles, and rules form a common feeling of identity, which applies to all members of this community[6].

Today we may observe formation of regional and local security communities by the local governments, the development of which can be considered in the light of the processes of social learning and norms construction. In such communities states learn to treat one another differently from the states that do not belong to

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[5] K.W. Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, Princeton 1957, pp. 5–6; O. Wæver, *Insecurity, Security and Asecurity in the West European Non-War Community* [in:] *Security Communities*, E. Adler, M. Barnett (eds.), Cambridge 1998, pp. 69–118; *Security Communities*, E. Adler, M. Barnett (eds.), Cambridge 1998, p. 7.

[6] A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge 1999, p. 341.

their community. This ensures a common understanding of their community as a unity of shared ideas and values.

The global security community in the early stage of formation will be associated with the state's membership in the United Nations or the United Nations will be considered an important forum for its functioning. If the global scale shall not be reached, a network of existing associations of international actors that are oriented on specific values, tasks, and norms and based in different regions would form the fundamental elements of the future system. Some may have a higher degree of integration and focus on the UN (e.g. soft-power democracies). An alternative is a community formed on the principles and values that promote certain actors or groups of actors (e.g. Pax Americana or Pax Sinica).

There is an another understanding of the global community – as based on cooperation at the regional and sub-regional levels. It includes an even smaller number of international subjects with different regional and social attitudes and it is directly derived from the concept of a "pluralistic security community" developed by K. Deutsch[7]. Such type of international system describes a situation of close collaboration of actors, where they retain their independence and do not resort to violence to resolve disputes existing between them.

Thus, this type of security community requires the existence of shared values, mutual responsibility, and common institutions. Interestingly, institutional construction is not deemed necessary. Concept of K. Deutsch can be used to describe a region where states are independent, have no ambition of forming an union, but continue to collaborate.

One of the best examples of regional security communities is the Euro-Atlantic community, where some states joined the NATO while others are left outside. Nevertheless, all members traditionally share a common practice of resolving conflicts without the usage of force[8]. A revealing example is the EU, where this concept is realized in a more centralized and institutionalized way.

In these examples the concept of a regional security community shows that shared values apply to narrow groups of social structures and their perceived value became much more important than in the case of the global community[9]. Regional security communities are formed primarily by neighbouring countries,

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[7] K.W. Deutsch, op.cit., p. 30.
[8] K.W. Deutsch, op.cit., pp. 35–38.
[9] B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, London 1997, pp. 21–23.

sub-components in the global system. They involve sharing of experiences in peaceful resolutions of disputes between members, which leads to the formation of joint mechanisms to manage conflicts. These associations are usually based on democratic values, although they may be more authoritarian, as in case of the ASEAN.

The concept of regional security communities is very promising in terms of analyzing international politics. It suggests that values and behavioural changes within individual subjects affect their attitude towards the outside world. This is especially important for large countries, where the effects of internal changes, such as revolution, social transformation, etc. could be observed. In this context, sharing common values can lead to a unified understanding of international processes, including international conflicts.

Countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization embody these trends. Today, they place NATO in the centre of the structures of the international community, along with many other like-minded nations. Such "conglomerate" could include not only Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Argentina, but also modern Brazil, Chile, and South Africa, and in the nearest future, perhaps, the Philippines, Nigeria, Thailand, and South Korea.

However, significant limitations of this model lay in the regional specificity of security communities that today hamper their formation as a system-wide construct. In this aspect, the development of four advanced regional communities – in Europe, Southeast Asia, Middle East, and America – allows to identify some modern potentials for conflict. African community, in spite of a long institutional process, is essentially at the beginning of political socialization, and Australia and Oceania are situated between European and American security identities.

Evolutionary trends of the European security community could be the best illustrated through the development of the Western European Union (WEU), which can be clearly identified as security community[10]. It was an intergovernmental organization, established on the basis of the Treaty of Brussels on cooperation in the economic, social, and cultural areas of 1948 signed by Belgium, UK, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and France; its main focus was ensuring collective security.

Under the Amsterdam Treaty, the WEU became "an integral part of the EU" and it was given an integral role in giving the EU an independent defence capability. In particular, the Western European Union played a key role in the

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[10] E. Adler, *Europe's New Security Order: A Pluralistic Security Community* [in:] *The Future of European Security*, B. Crawford (ed.), Berkeley 1994, p. 298.

implementation of the first Petersberg tasks in the Balkans. In March 2010 the EU announced the plans to end the activities of the WEU, and on June 30, 2011, it officially ceased to exist. However, in fact, it continues to function with the exception of institutional arrangements.

It should be stressed that the safety of the community is not a just question of specific institutes or institutions, but also of generally recognized identity, built on a basis of the common past. Western European security community was characterized by different levels of government that overlapped. It was also characterized by a number of governmental and non-governmental transactions of cross-border nature. This, in turn, led to the creation of a European identity that is independent from national identity (or a combination of identities) and national loyalty. Thus, at the evaluative level, a social perception was formed that being a good citizen of the United Kingdom also means being a good citizen of the EU, so that the laws, values, and interests of these two social organizations are extremely interconnected and independent of time or particular situations[11]. In order to be a Frenchman it is also required to be an European, but that does not mean that French and German identities, while both European, are similar. The European experience reminds us of the benefits that can be obtained from theorizing and rejecting the rationalist logic of realism.

It is interesting to note that European institutions, including NATO and the EU, when considered apart from the idea of security community reproduce the realistic approach at the regional level. The EU Association Agreement can be blamed for setting a high bar for Central and Eastern Europe, and NATO is sometimes accused of simply moving "the heritage of Iron Curtain" to the east[12]. However, we should not forget that security communities are somewhat broader than "pure" international institutions, and their identities and interests are qualitatively different from those held by the state[13].

In this sense, we can state that European institutions now operate outside of their Western European core. OSCE promotes shared values and interests in the European, and, to some extent, also the Asian region; EU and NATO (through

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[11] A.J. Bellamy, *Security Communities and their Neighbours Regional Fortresses or Global Integrators?*, London 2004, p. 86

[12] O. Wæver, *Insecurity, Security and Asecurity in the West European Non-War Community* [in:] *Security Communities*, E. Adler, M. Barnett (eds.), Cambridge 1998, p. 90.

[13] J. Habermas, *Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe*, "Praxis International" 1991, No. 1, Vol. 12, pp. 1–19.

PfP) deliberately created and contribute to the development of diversified, but epistemic social organizations outside the European continent[14].

European security community through the functioning of the WEU managed to avoid rendering the realistic principles by creating a complex network of institutes and space for the promotion of common institutions and norms. It became possible due to the convergence around the European idea. Even during a conflict, international culture of the Cold War period, the intellectual elite, the religious communities, and other non-governmental entities in the socialist and capitalist Europe actively supported the idea of shared values and interests[15]. As a result, we cannot unambiguously determine the basic elements of European security community nowadays, what is a proof of its' high level of organization as a single "organism". Not surprisingly, the example of the European security community has become widely used as a model for other regional social-political constructs.

Today, the EU is an institutional guarantee for the functioning and development of the European regional security community, which is a classic example of a "pluralistic community" that is not only regulated by the government, but based on common values and norms. It is important to emphasize that it is in the "mature" stage of development, as capable to export policies and the interaction models of its members to other actors (e.g. the Neighbourhood Policy). In addition, the European community is deeply integrated, due to the "totality" of cooperation among member states on various levels and in various fields. As a result, the EU can be defined as "deeply integrated mature pluralistic security community"[16].

The EU as a regional security community has considerable potential to spread, creating the so-called "European area of peace"[17]. This is due to the fact that the member states and their citizens turned out to be able to transform the centuries-old conflict relations in the universally recognized norms and

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[14] P. Haas, *Introduction: Epistemic Communities*, "International Organization" 1992, No. 1, Vol. 46, pp. 1–35.

[15] N.J. Rengger, *European Communities in a Neo-Medieval Global Polity* [in:] *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security and Community*, M. Kelstrup, M.C. Williams (eds.), London 2000, p. 51–52.

[16] V. Laporte, *The European Union – an Expending Security Community?*, "EU Diplomacy Papers" 2012, No. 6, p. 4, http://www.coleurope.eu/sites/default/files/research-paper/edp_6_2012_laporte.pdf.

[17] E. Kavalski, *Extending the European Security Community: Constructing Peace in the Balkans*, London 2008, p. 4.

principles, continuing to align them with the help of institutional mechanisms. Karl Deutsch defines such phenomenon as "interdependent social expectations of peaceful change"[18]. The Uppsala University Armed Conflict Dataset (PRIO) in 2012 named only one conflict in the post-Cold War security community within the EU: between the Great Britain and the IRA troops in 1998[19].

As an effective security community, the EU identifies itself as an active player in the European area, convinced that it should spread among its' neighbours the "practice of peaceful interaction". Basing on the idea that the European integration project was constructed to prevent conflict[20], the geographical expansion of the EU should be estimated as a way for realization of the abovementioned task across the continent. However, strict guidelines for this approach should be formulated. The idea that the EU behaves in accordance with the altruistic reasons in relation to its' neighbours, as it is stated in the official rhetoric of the EU, ignores the fact that the principles of security are deeply ingrained in the mindset of member countries[21]. In addition, the EU pays more attention to the development of peaceful interaction through a model of "centralized network", where the EU is the centre of the spread of norms of "correct" behaviour. This trend is evident particularly in regional initiatives where the EU is not involved, but demonstrates a desire to maintain control over the distribution of security cooperation of other countries.

An alternative explanation is the claim that the EU increases the borders of security community only for its' own benefit in order to expand the scope of its activities and influence, inherent to any pluralistic institutional formation. This vision is partially supported by the basic documents of the EU, including the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003, in which it is stated that: "It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed. Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict (…) pose problems for Europe"[22]. In this aspect I. Meners characterizes the EU as a "normative power of idealistic character, with

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[18] K.W. Deutsch, op.cit., p. 5.

[19] UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2012, 1946–2011, http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/118/118670_codebook_ucdp_prio-armed-conflict-dataset-v4_2012.pdf.

[20] O. Wæver, op.cit., p. 90.

[21] K. Smith, *Enlargement and European Order* [in:] *International Relations and the European Union*, C. Hill, M. Smith (eds.), Oxford 2005, p. 271.

[22] *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy*, European Council, Brussels 2003, p. 7.

common principles and intentions to resist the former Westphalian order"[23]. Thus, the main task for the security community lays in the maximum spread of their norms and values that establish its' "meaning of existence". According to J. Nye, the EU – as a symbol of European unification – carries a significant degree of legitimacy as a source of "soft power"[24].

The formation of an "European security area" has always been central in the ambitions of the "founding fathers" of the European integration projects. However, further expansion of the European security community certainly would be accompanied with the expansion of the EU borders, which today it is a considerable challenge due to different social, political, economical, cultural, etc. environments of candidate countries, including Turkey, Balkan States, and Ukraine. Thus, the EU as an architect of the European security community will have to continue its activities for a long period of time.

On the other hand, today the expansion through integration is rightly considered to be the most effective mechanism of resolving conflicts and a foundation of peaceful co-operation between social and political entities. Moreover, these two elements should be seen as complementary and mutually ensuring. Avoidance of deep integration leads to inhibition of formation and promotion of common values and norms, as well as curbs the expansion of frontiers; what is more, "locking in itself" basically limits "the main security purpose" of the EU. This issue was addressed by the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003: "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history. (…) Successive enlargements are making a reality of the vision of a united and peaceful continent"[25].

Summing up the issues of regional security communities, it should be emphasized that they have great potential for shaping the future of the international system. A global security community would minimize the risk of international conflicts, since it would be based on the principles of a common identity of actors, common values and norms, and a broad interpretation of security. As it was emphasized, a global security community would be more standardized than the current international life. Moreover, it would be different from the sum of regional communities, disrupting the synergistic effect.

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[23] I. Manners, *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?*, "Journal of Common Market Studies" 2002, No. 2, Vol. 40, p. 239.

[24] J. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York 2004, p. 77.

[25] *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, op.cit., p. 1.

Current relations between the member states of the EU – the main architect of European regional security community – are an example of a long-term restructuring of difficult relations by identifying common interests and establishing universal norms, which proves the viability and effectiveness of such a model. In this process, social learning and non-conflict practice play the key role, transforming the Hobbesian vision of "the natural state of eternal war" in international relations into the Kantian vision of interdependence of security and importance of social communication in political structures. This social knowledge could be used in practice by applying the concept of "security community" of K. Deutsch and the experience of the EU as the key player in regional security community on the European continent.