

Collective security communities: a new global order among chaos and coherence?

(The governance of international security through a constructivist lens)

After the end of cold war and the bipolar system the world experienced 25 years of mutation toward a new world order, that cannot be defined yet. The American hegemony, called unipolar world at the beginning, has not been balanced by any other great power in this time (the famous balance of power, the main assumption of realism has not been realized yet). The international system has been moving towards something new that has been difficult to define. Sometimes scholars (like Ian Bremmer¹) defined it “zero-polar” world, others (like Richard Haas²), “no-polar world”, others (like Fareed Zakaria³) multipolar world. We don’t know where we are going towards, but what we know is that the future of the world order will have to deal with national security issues in a new way with respect to the old Balance of Power and Collective Defense systems.

This paper builds on the concept of ‘security communities’, first introduced by Karl Deutsch in the 1950s, arguing that **‘Collective Security Communities’ will play an important role, even if not an exclusive one, in shaping the future global order.** The birth of several potential Collective Security Communities in the last two decades, in particular in Asia, **demonstrates that socialization is increasing in global regions** even if we don’t know if also among regions. The paper therefore uses the constructivist framework, in particular the communitarian approach of Emanuel Adler, to **analyze regional security communities in formation around the globe**, from the more integrated as the Organization of American States (or OAS) to the more pluralistic as the Association of the South East Asian Nations (or ASEAN), from the more established like the EU to the more *in fieri* as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (or SCO) explaining **how through international community of practices and shared knowledge the international system is mutating, with a cooperative regional trend counteracting the also present**

¹ Bremmer, Ian. *Every Nation for Itself: What Happens When No One Leads the World*. Portfolio Trade, 2013

² Haas, Richard. *The age of nonpolarity*. Foreign Affairs, May/June 2008.

³ Zakaria, Fareed. *The Post American world*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2009

forces of hegemony and rivalry. The **main question for the future** will be to understand if these Collective Security Communities will socialize enough to increase the trust and the interdependence among them, creating the world security community that UN was unable to build, or on the contrary they will represent blocks one against the other, recreating the rivalry of an anarchic world.

This analysis is not based on an **idealist** view, that dreams of a world government to avoid the anarchy of international system, even if ethical and moral issues towards a new world order will be more and more important in the chaos of the post-bipolar era and the “new globalization” (after older types of globalization like the Silk Road or the European colonization of the Americas). Neither is it based on a neoliberal **institutionalist** view, even if it is important to take into account the power of international institutions and norms, in encouraging cooperation and shaping global order. Instead it uses a **constructivist** lens that sees the presence of a plurality of forces, not only rational politics, power or systemic forces, but values, identities and social processes that represent transnational immaterial forces able to influence the way states relates among them and shape the world order. It is close in some way to the English School, which focuses on the norms of society of states but admits balancing behavior (like neorealists) as we are still living in an “anarchical society”.

The paper uses a **constructivist approach** because it believes that rationalist theories are more useful when they are combined with constructivist elements, like the importance of shared knowledge, social practices and identities. Analyzing the role that communities and collective identities, and in this case Collective Security Communities, play in international relations can help our theoretical and empirical understanding of world politics. We could say that to Liberalism, Constructivism adds consideration of the effects identities have on both formal and informal institutions; to Realism, it adds consideration of the effects of ideational rather than material structures (for example the effects of identity on actor interests); and to Idealism it adds considerations that ideas can be studied both as a ‘result’ and as a ‘prescription’. Obviously all that is immaterial cannot be quantified so it is difficult to enter in the human mind (and especially in the mind of social scientists that struggle to follow the colleagues of natural sciences on the field of quantification) but if we want to overcome the positivism that lead only to determinism, and the

rationalism that lead only to materiality, we need the social sciences to open to new models of thinking, as current complexity and chaos are requiring.

Introduction

By and large two elements influence the decision making of the states in their foreign policy for security arrangements: the **individual interest and the collective interest**. Balancing these two interests is the difficult task of modern states, which have to build a new world order and at the same time maintain and possibly increase their power for the national interest.

In a multilateral international system, as the one we are living today, we have many **global challenges that require global strategies for collective interest**. Current and future global trends (that can become also global threats) could affect the decision making of the states towards collective and cooperative security approaches, counteracting the still present self-interested isolated hegemonic vision of security, typical of the past bipolar or unipolar worlds. For example the current trend of the international system towards polycentrism and redistribution of power seems to do that, but also the military trend towards wars fought with terrorist actions and proxy wars instead of traditional wars require more cooperative and collective approaches to security. These trends seems to help the international system in its current mutation not only to shift the definition of security but also to shift the way states relate to create security and global order. As there cannot be a way for the state to escape the world and leave in an isolated cave. There is a need for cooperation and coordination.

The **self-interest** of the sovereign states is surely still present, as we still live in an anarchic international system (even if Alexander Wendt reminds us that ‘anarchy is what states make of it’⁴) and nation states have to exercise self-help to reach their national security (at least in order to guarantee survival and progress). But self-interest in a globalized world, is becoming more and more entangled with **global and collective interest**, and the level of this interrelation is what also may influence the states in their

⁴ Wendt, Alexander, *Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics*, International Organization, Vol. 46, No. 2, Spring, 1992.

decisions today. This doesn't mean that states are not rational anymore, on the contrary it is because they are *also* rational actors that they can understand that today often 'our' interest and the interest of the 'rest' are overlapping and this is something that they have to take into account in their decision making. So cooperation will increase and collective interest will be more important in the future. Diplomacy will flank power politics and it is already doing that if we look at the diplomatic approach that the US and the West in general are using in cases like Iran, Ukraine and Syria.

Does this mean that **competition among states will be replaced by collaboration and convergence in the future as some scholars argue?**⁵ Not necessarily because if 'clash of civilization' is not considered anymore a valid narrative in international relations, its opposite view, the global natural convergence towards a world government⁶, is neither convincing so much as states will still compete and conflict among them in the near future, in particular among global regions, for resources and power. The point though is how we will deal with future conflicts, with a communitarian approach or with an individual one? With collective defense or collective security? With international institutions or with informal alliances for 'good enough global governance' as someone argues?⁷ I believe that multilateral and collective approaches could represent one of the main strategies for the future world order. Therefore **the most important question to ask is how the self and collective interest are formed**. This is the crucial issue because it is the process of this formation that make states prioritize one or the other interest and so one or the other order, as this paper argues.

We know that in international relations **the agents and the system influence each other** as the interests and goals of the agents are influenced by the structure of the system and vice versa. But besides this the **interests of the agents are also influenced by their culture, their history, their identity** (just

⁵ Mahbubani Kishore, *The Great Convergence: Asia, The West And The Logic Of One World*, Public Affairs, 2013

⁶ Wendt, Alexander, *Why a world state is inevitable: teleology and the logic of anarchy*, University of Chicago, January 2003.

⁷ Stewart, Patrick, *The unruled world. The case for good enough global governance*, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 93, N. 1, Jan/Feb 2014.

look at the importance of ontological security for the states⁸) and also by the relationships that these agents have among themselves. In the past there was not much socialization among the agents of the international system (interpreted mainly as nation states) because these agents were living in a quite isolated world economically and politically (if we except the diplomatic exchanges that for centuries states had among them) and when they had deeper interactions they often went to conflict and war for their self-interest. But nowadays the nation states are more and more interrelated, they live in 'epistemic communities'⁹, communities with meanings, and so they influence each other like human beings do. This interaction actually shifts gradually, even if slowly, their preferences and interests towards more cooperative approaches because the constant and repeated contact can reduce mistrust and fears typical of isolation (see the *Iterated Prisoner Dilemma* theory for example¹⁰). Besides this as now we live in an issue driven international system more than a structure driven one (as some security studies argues¹¹) the national interest can be closer to the global interest and so cooperative and collective security will have more space of action.

Therefore this paper, following the constructivist approach, argues that being states a reflection of human beings they may have fears and mistrust typical of human nature (as realists argue) but they also share their fears and their knowledge through socialization, practices and habits, creating a common knowledge and understanding that influence their decision making. So, together with theorists

⁸ The ontological security is the security of the self. As individuals have a need of continuity, order and meaning in regard to their own life (Giddens, 1999) also states have this need besides physical security. This also influence the perceptions and interests of the states (look for example at Russia attitude or North Korea now that they feel their ontological security threatened by their decline). See Jennifer Mitzen, *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma*, European Journal of International Relations, vol. 12 no. 3, September 2006

⁹ Epistemic communities are networks of professionals that influence policy makers on different issues and play a role in IR in advocating for policy innovation across countries and so for cooperation. See: Adler, Emanuel, *The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control*, International Organization. Vol. 46, N. 1, MIT Press, Winter, 1992. I use this definition for the communities of states too, as states are becoming more and more social actors facilitating the construction of new shared knowledge, practices and also new epistemologies among them.

¹⁰ Axelrod, Robert, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Basic Books, 1984. In the Iterated Prisoner Dilemma the repetition of the meetings and so the creation of a shadow of the future make actors cooperate more, overcoming the Prisoner Dilemma and so also create more stable security regimes.

¹¹ Buzan Barry, Hansen Lene, *The evolution of international security studies*, Cambridge UP, 2009.

like Emanuel Adler, we can say that besides material power and structures also shared knowledge and practices influence states preferences, in both agents behaviors and systemic outcomes¹², in particular towards the construction of modern 'Collective Security Communities'.

Collective security communities: security arrangements for highly socialized states

Security arrangements among states can take mainly two paths: a 'collective defense' path (in some way more similar to the old alliances of the Balance of Power) and a 'collective security' path (with more regional or global institutions)¹³. In the collective defense approach the member states protect each other from an external threat: if one state is attacked the other members will use the force to defend it (NATO, with its article 5, is a clear example of collective defense regime). Collective security instead see the states stand for a shared goal that is to solve the future conflicts peacefully and following all the same rules, so if one of the states resort to violence the others will act to protect themselves from the internal threat.

Collective security is an idea with a long history (already the Peace of Westphalia was influenced by this concept, also at the base of Kantian 'perpetual peace') but its realization has not been easy until now and instead quite problematic, also because, as this paper argues, of the low level of socialization among states in the past. The failure of the League of Nations is there to demonstrate it and also the difficult work done by the UN in the 70 years of its existence. Actually after the end of the Cold War there were hopes that requirements for collective security would have better satisfied by the UN and the UN would no longer be paralyzed by the bi-polarity¹⁴. Unfortunately in last twenty five years the veto power has still blocked the UN efficiency as even if Cold War was not there anymore, rivalry was still present at the UN Security Council. Besides this the UN reflect a world that is not there anymore, and the West, that is holding the power in the UN and in the other international institutions born after WWII (namely IMF and WB), is not

¹² Adler, Emanuel, *Communitarian International Relations*, Routledge, 2005.

¹³ Arnodl Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, John Hopkins Press, 1962.

¹⁴ Andrew Bennet and Joseph Lepgold, *Reinventing Collective Security after the Cold War and the Gulf Conflict*, Political Science Quarterly, N. 2, summer 1993.

willing to redistribute that power to the new rising powers of the world from the Global South, blocking in this way the possibility of a more balanced world order.

But the most important problem is that the more countries agree to the sets of rules of a collective security agreement like the UN, the greater is the legitimacy of the organization and its actions, but at the same time the efficacy of the institution is difficult to be realized with greater numbers of actors, **which is why collective security may work better in specific regions, through “Collective Security Communities” (CSC) than globally, through a collective security universal institution like UN with the difficulties that we saw.**

But how CSC are formed and how their practices can evolve through the socialization of their member states? Adler and Barnett, in their famous book¹⁵, argued that ‘security communities’ can exist at the international level and that states in these communities can develop a pacific disposition towards international relations. In particular **they define a security community as ‘a transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change’** – where peaceful change means ‘neither the expectation of nor the preparation for organized violence as a means to settle interstate disputes’¹⁶.

The first to talk about security communities was Karl Deutsch in 1957¹⁷. The Czech political scientist defined a security community giving the example of the North-Atlantic area, where states have come to the agreement that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of “peaceful change”. Differently from the concept of security community coined by Deutsch (who considered the transactions as the most important indicator of regional integration) **Adler and Barnett based their concept on constructivist theory and so on shared identities, values and meanings that build reciprocal long-term interest.** As we know constructivism believes that structures, including international structures, are made of material as well as normative forces, therefore are socially constructed, are made of

¹⁵ Adler, Emanuel and Barnett, Michael, *Security Communities*, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 30, 34.

¹⁷ Deutsch, Karl W. et al, *Political community and the North Atlantic area; international organization in the light of historical experience*, Princeton University Press, 1957.

shared knowledge and practices, and so in our “international anarchical society” (as the definition of Hedley Bull¹⁸), even anarchy “is what we make of it”¹⁹. Therefore we construct our reality based on our experiences and socialization and not only on material power or rational thinking. Adler and Pouliot argues that socialization happens through practices that create a shared knowledge and international practices are “competent performances”²⁰, not only actions but actions based on competences, repeated with some regularity in a learning process that increase those shared competences.

The critic of realism to constructivism is exactly related with this as realism doesn’t believe that socialization really exist among states and if it exists has no effects on their preferences. Mearsheimer for example believes that even institutions are a reflection of the distribution of power, based on self-interested calculations and not an important cause of peace.²¹ The issue though is that realists principally look at historical records (as for mostly of their assumptions) and they have flaws and shortcomings in foreseeing future events that can be different from the past. For example the inability of explaining realities like globalization and its consequent socialization, not so much common in the past, clearly shows their limits and the risk of self-fulfilling prophecies as the Thomas theorem teaches us²².

Going back to the concept of security communities we can say that their presence not necessarily excludes the presence of the other security arrangements that exist in the current international system: the Balance of Power or the collective defense system. Actually, as again Adler explains²³, they can also coexist: in Eastern Europe signs of BOP showing its face again are evident with the recent actions of

¹⁸ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, Columbia UP, NYC: 1977/2002

¹⁹ Alexander Wendt, *Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, International Organization, Vol. 46, N. 2 Spring 1992.

²⁰ Emanuel Adler and Vincent Puliot, *International Practices*, International Theory, 2011, 3:1, 1-36

²¹ John Mearsheimer, The false promise of international institutions, International Security, 1994/1995, Vol. 19, N. 3, pp. 5-49

²² Thomas theorem is a theory of sociology formulated in 1928 according to which “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences”. It stays at the base of Thomas Merton’s concept of self-fulfilling prophecies.

²³ Emanuel Adler and Patricia Greve, *When security community meets balance of power: overlapping regional mechanisms of security governance*, Review of International Studies, Vol 35, supplement 1, February 2009, p. 59-84

Russia²⁴, but the presence of a security community like the EU is also evident and so the two things can overlap. The same in East Asia where inter-states security challenges are serious and where power balancing and cooperative security coexist as we see from balancing measures of Japan or China and at the same time the presence of ASEAN working on collective security²⁵.

Adler and Barnett described also the **typical evolution of a security community from nascent to ascendant to mature**, where a nascent security community meets the basic expectations of peaceful change, an ascendant one has increasingly dense networks and new institutions, while a mature security community is also characterized by some “collective security” mechanisms and supranational or transnational elements (in particular in the so defined “tightly-coupled” security communities, respect to the “loosely-coupled”²⁶). In this paper therefore a “mature tightly-coupled” security community will be defined a “Collective Security Community” (CSC) while other security communities like ASEAN or OAS cannot be defined yet “mature tightly-coupled” security communities and so CSCs already formed.

But how do states arrive to form security communities according to Adler and Barnett? First of all there has to be some causes, which push states to form alliances, what they define “**precipitating conditions**” like an external threat, economic, migration or demographic changes etc. Then, when the states start to coordinate for mutual advantage through regular contacts (platforms, summits etc.) with a ‘voice opportunity’ for all the members, they start to develop “mutual trust and collective identity”. This because the states increase the knowledge they have of each other’s intentions but also each other’s *interpretation of reality* and so they start to share these interpretations building a collective identity. Finally, through shared knowledge states create common norms that have to be respected as they build legitimacy for the

²⁴ France and Germany few years ago wanted to avoid the entrance of Ukraine in NATO in order to maintain the balance of power within Europe and between Europe and Russia, as reported by Adler and Greve (2009), but today the battle for Ukraine seems to make clear that both Russia and EU wants to control this crucial pivot state.

²⁵ Katsumata Hiro, *East Asian Regional Security Governance: Bilateral Hard Balancing and ASEAN’s Informal Cooperative Security*, paper presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention, 2010.

²⁶ Adler, Emanuel and Barnett, Michael, *Security Communities*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, P. 56

community. And with them the “expectation of peaceful change” is created and the security community born²⁷.

So if this is the case we can see how the process of socialization stays at the base of the creation of these communities as there is no shared knowledge and construction of common norms if there is no socialization before. **A groundbreaking consequence of this reasoning is that if CSC exist today, as they exist, we can fairly say that socialization, before anarchy, is the primary feature of the international system as otherwise these communities should not even exist.** Obviously there are states that, for their history, culture or geopolitical position, socialize more and others that socialize less, but they all in some way do socialize, in particular today in a globalized world. So anarchy is what reduces the natural socialization of the states not the opposite way around, as in non-anarchic systems, namely nation states systems, socialization of domestic actors have its plain space, while the lack of a world government in the international system doesn’t allow the states to connect and associate more among themselves.

Socialization is natural because the states are expression also of individuals, not only of structures, and as such they reflect the human behaviors and needs, among which also belonging and integration. So we could define states as mainly social entities more than material ones, like human beings are mainly social animals, before than material ones (they exist in relation to others more than alone) and their different ability to ‘participate’ is what affect their final decisions in their relations. From this assumption originates also the fact that if states are allowed to socialize more, in regional forums, meeting, councils etc., the level of trust increase and as collective security is based on trust (as clearly the ‘security dilemma’ demonstrates) if socialization rise the trust, it rise also the possibility of collective security. Therefore CSCs as such works as “learning communities” building a virtuous circle that shape identities towards more socialization, trust, cooperation and so the reinforcement of the CSCs themselves.

Collective security communities: new regional orders around the world?

²⁷ Adler, Emanuel and Barnett, Michael, *Security Communities*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, P. 38

But what are some examples of CSC around the world? The first examples that comes to mind when we talk about CSC is the EU. The case **of the EU** remains the most important example of regional CSC and, with its Common Security and Defense Policy and the Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defense, it finds itself at an advanced stage of collective security. We could say that it represent the “mature stage” in the Adler and Barnett definition, with a “tightly-coupled” CSC but also is developing towards something even stronger, as a supranational organism. The EU obviously has a level of socialization and shared knowledge very high, with common institutions but also common identity and shared values: with the passing of time since WWII from a “community of practices” it became a “community of habit”, as Ted Hopf²⁸ would have said. So we can affirm that the EU is the CSC *par excellence*. But the EU would have never reached this stage if it was not for its process of integration among so many different countries. Hard power and NATO presence would have been not enough for this CSC to born without the forces of socialization.

ASEAN the “Association of Southeast Asian Nations” and OAS the “Organization of American States” are also other interesting cases where socialization has been very important. Still far from having the level of institutionalization and integration of EU, nevertheless ASEAN is a political and economic organization of ten countries, representing 5 religions and not only one like the EU, that try to increase economic growth, social progress, but also protection of regional peace and stability. While some scholar like Katzenstein argue²⁹, the fact of not having a strong sense of collective identity made the multilateralism in Southeast Asia more difficult than in Europe, others like Acharya³⁰ say that ASEAN can in reality be a real model of CSC, being more multilateral than the EU model. Therefore notwithstanding the fact that ASEAN faces serious challenges (not least to decide if accept membership of China, same problem of the

²⁸ On the concepts of communities of practices and habits see: Hopf, Ted, The logic of habit in International Relations, *European Journal of International Relations*, December 2010 16, 539-561, p. 539

²⁹ Hemmer, Christopher and Katzenstein, Peter J. *Why is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism*. *International Organization* 56, 3, Summer 2002, pp. 575–607

³⁰ Acharya, Amitav. *Constructing a security community in Southeast Asia*. Routledge, 2001. Acharya, Amitav. *The making of Southeast Asia: IR of a region*. Cornell, 2013.

EU with Turkey or Ukraine) the fact remain that this association represent an ascendant (having increasingly dense networks and institutions) CSC.

There are two important features in ASEAN: first it born not based on an external threat but on an internal one: the threat of intrastate conflicts, civil wars and rebellions caused by autonomist and communist movements in the states of Southeast Asia, as Acharya explains in his interesting book³¹. Secondly ASEAN was created by states that were not liberal democracies like in the EU, and so the foundational interest was not the economic integration but the goal of creating a regional social community, the so called “ASEAN way”, making of it an interesting cased of an ‘imagined community’ before than a community based on interdependence and transactions. Even if, as Acharya argues, after three decades of progress in promoting peaceful intra-regional relations, ASEAN today is in need to reinvent itself because of many challenges, it is still one of the most important regional organizations and one of the most evident CSC in the developing world.

The OAS instead, could be defined as a cased of mature CSC, given that fact that it adopted a system of collective security, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, already in 1947, it has a “Secretariat of Multidimensional Security” among its institutions, and it has a level of economic integration that is quite strong. But what makes an OAS a mature CSC is also the fact of having a quite clear shared identity among all the Latin American countries (finally not so different neither from Canada and the US) that makes the expectation of peaceful resolution of conflict a very solid and reliable assumption among the states.

Among the CSCs in the making instead, we could see the case of **NATO**, that in the last 25 years, and in particular in the last few years, seemed to transform itself from a system of ‘collective defense’ to an organization more related with ‘collective security’, especially through partnerships with external states and with cooperative security approaches³². The NATO now has a partnership framework that is not

³¹ Acharya, Amitav, *Constructing a security community in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, 2001

³² Since 2010 NATO adopted a Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security of its Members with Collective Defense, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security as its three pillars. Cooperative Security is based on the fact that partnerships can be done with states that not necessarily wants to join in the future, but just want to develop a

connected to a regional or thematic area but is adaptable to individual requests for cooperation: if a potential partner share the ideas and principles of liberty, democracy and rule of law, should be welcomed to participate even if is not inside the NATO collective defense system. So the NATO today is a hybrid that demonstrates that collective security communities are in expansion, with new complex and overlapping systems and regimes that could not be classified easily as in the past³³.

Besides the sharing of ideas or principles, like in the case of democratic principles for joining the NATO partnership, socialization is also fundamental for the states to choose if joining or not a collective security community. In fact if a state doesn't have any type of socialization (take the example of North Korea, one of the closest states in the world) it will have difficulty to take part of a collective security community, on the contrary, states that tend to socialize more, will build a shared knowledge, habits and practices that will make them more keen to take part to these communities (take the example of the Eastern European states that after the end of Cold War created the Partnership for Peace with NATO and later entered in the organization as full members³⁴). Today though, with the case of Ukraine, it seems that power politics and the old style of BOP is back to the top for the NATO community and so it seems that the trend towards collective security for this organization is stopped until further transformations.

But besides these oldest ore the newest attempts of CSCs there has been also a birth of several potential CSCs in the last two decades, in particular in Asia. From the Collective Security Treaty Organization/CSTO to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization/SCO, to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia/CICA, there is in trend showing that **socialization is increasing in global regions** even if not necessary among regions. The **CSTO** for example, is an intergovernmental military alliance born in 1992 from six post-Soviet states belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent

relationship with NATO. NATO has currently 41 partners, among which states in East (Japan, South Korea) and Southeast (Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines and ASEAN) Asia and has looked also for cooperative approaches with non-partner states like Russia (even the events in Ukraine seems to demonstrate the failure of this attempt).

³³ See on this: Karp, Regina, *Military capabilities and the evolution of the transatlantic security community*, UI papers, #3, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, May 2014

³⁴ Emanuel Adler, *The Spread of Security Communities: Communities of Practice, Self-Restraint, and NATO's Post—Cold War Transformation*, European Journal of International Relations June 2008 vol. 14 no. 2 195-230.

States and the current members are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan with Afghanistan and Serbia as observers. The CSTO charter establishes the obligation to abstain from the use or threat of force while aggression against one member would be perceived as an aggression against all (similar to NATO art. 5). The **SCO** instead is also a political and economic, besides military, organization founded in 2001 between China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It is primarily centered on its member security-related concerns, often describing the main threats as terrorism, separatism and extremism. Obviously we could see these organizations as a result of regional integration already present during Soviet Union and the risk is that these groups could use more a “collective defense” than a “collective security” approach, with a defense from an external enemy like for example NATO. But it is a sign anyway that the regional socialization is present and gives fruits towards security communities.

The **CICA** instead, that is an inter-governmental forum for enhancing cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia, indicates that socialization for security reasons exist beyond the ex-Soviet Union republics, as its members go from Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Qatar, Israel in Middle East to India, China, South Korea, Cambodia, Thailand etc. in Asia, with the US, the UN, the Arab League and the OSCE among the observers. We could argue that this is a ‘conference’ and not an ‘organization’ but the level of institutionalization of an association is relative when we think about shared knowledge, values and principles. Another Asian association is the Asia Cooperation Dialogue/**ACD**, an intergovernmental organization created in 2002 to promote Asian cooperation in order to integrate separate regional organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC³⁵ and the Gulf Cooperation Council. This association is not so much oriented towards security being more related with development but if you look for “peace and prosperity” as in the chart of this association sooner or later you will have to talk about security.

As we can see the cases exposed have different level of accomplishment in their CSC “identity”. We could follow as said the taxonomy of Adler and Barnett, or, to follow another classification, the one of

³⁵ To read about the results of SAARC in areas like fight against terrorism and nuclear proliferation and the potential of this association to contribute to security in South Asia see: Michael Arndt, *Sovereignty vs. Security: SAARC and its Role in the Regional Security Architecture in South Asia*. Harvard Asia Quarterly Summer 2013, Vol. VX, No.2: 37-45

Andrej Tuscisny³⁶, who differentiate between “interstate security communities” (where war between states is unlikely) and “comprehensive security community” (where both interstate conflicts and civil wars are unlikely and probably the only case would be the EU). Whatever definition we follow the important thing for the argument of this paper is that around the globe there is a formations of CSCs in process and it is something to take into account if we want to deeply understand the complexities around the foundation of a new world order. This doesn’t mean that the old BOP is not in place anymore (as Carol Weaver argued for example, even security communities, in order to endure, need to be based on balanced multipolarity³⁷). But it means that socialization is increasing, at least ‘inside regions’.

The problem for the future is to see if **these new CSCs would become potential elements of a global collective security community or on the opposite regional blocks one against the other in a new cold war, challenging stability instead of increasing it**. Actually the Asian multilateral organizations that I presented could have potential conflicts among themselves but at the same time China has a big and sometimes dominant role in them and the US is not a member. China could challenge the existing world order through them, may be slowly building a new world order as someone suggests talking about a Pax Sinica³⁸. But some other scholars argue that future possible CSCs could extend not only ‘inside regions’ but ‘among regions’, between China and ASEAN for example³⁹, if China will be able to do what the US has done in the past with the EU, that is protection and development (ASEAN has a partnership with China and other Asian countries⁴⁰); or between US and East Asia, if the Trans-Pacific Partnership will represent

³⁶ Tuscisny, Andrej (2007). “Security Communities and Their Values: Taking Masses Seriously”, *International Political Science Review* 28 (4): 425–449

³⁷ Weaver, Carol, *The Politics of the Black Sea Region: EU neighbourhood, conflict zone or future security community?*, Ashgate Publishing, 2013. Weaver argued that the Black Sea needed a balanced multipolarity in order not to become a conflict zone and the last events in Crimea showed that he was right.

³⁸ Pax Sinica, *The Economist*, September 20 2014. From:

<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/docview/1564164421/839EBEEE86964C95PQ/34?accountid=12967>

³⁹ Mahbubani, Kishore, *High trust needed in China-ASEAN ties*, *Global Times*, 3-4-2014. From:

<http://www.mahbubani.net/articles%20by%20dean/High%20trust%20needed%20in%20China-ASEAN%20ties.pdf>

⁴⁰ ASEAN has a ‘Defense Ministers Meeting Plus’ with the 10-members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus eight more countries (the US, Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Russia)

See on this: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2013/08/30/ASEAN-Defense-Ministers-Meeting-Plus-ends-joint-declaration-signed/UPI-18761377857943/#ixzz2r59XpFHR

the embryo of a deeper union (like the CEE has been for the EU). But still the two main powers, US and China would be on opposite formations, unless their bilateral relation will build enough trust and cooperation in the next decades to avoid the risk of major conflict, as some forums are trying to foster and stimulate⁴¹. At the end of the day, as Adler and Barnett says, “trust can best be understood as believing despite uncertainty”⁴² but we don’t know if the CSCs will be able to cooperate among themselves, creating finally the universal CSC that the UN was unable to build or will clash among them. The hope comes from the fact that at some point the regional CSCs will overlap with some global organizations (like the G20 for example) and this will require to choose between cooperation and rivalry.

⁴¹ *Building US-China trust through next generation people, platforms and programs*, USC Anneberg and The school of international studies of Peking University, April 2014.

⁴² Adler, Emanuel and Barnett, Michael, *Security Communities*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 46.

Conclusions

In our current globalized world, with complexity and interdependence as main features of the international system and uncertainty and unpredictability as characteristics of human actions, we need to use different theories and paradigms to increase our ability to understand, explain and prevent future security issues. Power should not be a monopoly only of realism, institutionalism could also explain ideas formation, and constructivism should be able to understand security dilemmas. What is important today is the combination of the IR theories to get different perspectives and understand complexity also in security studies. The crucial contribution that new critical and constructivist theories can give is to help to understand that security is a “derivative” concept, as it derives from our peculiar, cultural, historical and psychological understanding and so not only power, geography, rationality or anarchy matters but culture, identities, ideas and practices that allow to interpret those elements too.

This paper argued that socialization is one of this complex dynamics, difficult to measure and quantify but still present and impacting, that explain how shared knowledge and common practices creates new preferences for the states, and so may shift their decision making towards more collective interest and less self-interest, increasing the possibility for Collective Security Communities around the world. The paper also suggested that further research should be oriented towards the interrelation among theories and should concentrate in particular on the socialization of states, that is what shift and modify ideas, preferences and needs, understanding the identification between states and individuals not only with more cultural studies or cognitive psychology but also with new approaches outside “rational thinking”, in order to have more explanatory and predictive power in international relations and security studies.

We don't know what will be the future world order but what we know is that will have to be more inclusive if it wants to reach stability with security for all. The globalization that we are living today doesn't seem to go toward the “clash of civilizations”, as per Huntington definition, even if neither toward the

“convergence of civilizations”⁴³ as per Mahbubani definition. The proliferation of CSCs have to be studied more to understand what contribution this proliferation will give to the new world order in formation.

Appendix

I want to end the paper with a question for future research regarding **Middle East**: in the future could be possible to contemplate even a CSC also for the region that is considered the less adapt to it, being it a region where mistrust develop among religious cleavages and unresolved interstate and intrastate conflicts? It could seem a dream but also for Europe we could not think that it would have enjoyed the longest time of peace of its history at the beginning of last century. The Middle East have not had until now the total wars that Europe had last century (and we hope that it will never have them) but in the long run common threats (like today ISIS and future ones) could maybe represent the cement for such now unthinkable regional order to happen. Any type of internal or external threat would help a CSC to born, at the beginning just as an alliance probably, or a collective defense system, like NATO for Europe, but then with the time security communities increase their level of shared rules, shared ideas and identities, and so finally are able to build a CSC. Actually many security communities born because interstate violence had recently started⁴⁴, or otherwise some intrastate conflict or type of domestic instability had affected the expectations for the future (like for ASEAN or GCC that were built for confronting domestic instabilities). Therefore, given the situation now in the Middle East, after Arab Spring and the internal instability in many countries, from Libya to Egypt, from Syria to Iraq, we could not be so far away from the starting of a strategic cooperation also in the Middle East. At the end of the day the two moments of major shift in state identity and new regional ‘*associationism*’ came after WWII and Cold War, so may be the Arab Spring, or another impacting event, could represent a catalyst of change, a shock towards a systemic shift for new associations and so new starting of security communities.

⁴³ Actually an interesting UN initiative called “UN Alliance of Civilizations” seems to aim to the second direction, but it is not a path without challenges

⁴⁴ See on this the many cases exposed in Adler E. and Barnett M., *Security Communities*, Cambridge UP, 1998

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