

REVISITING SECURITY COMMUNITIES AFTER THE COLD WAR : THE CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

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History shows that ‘security, whether defined narrowly or widely, is a scarce commodity’.¹ Therefore, it is generally observed that in face of security threat perceptions, states feel the necessity to combine their efforts to strengthen their own security by acting together. This brings us to the concept of collective security, which has been widely debated in the literature of international relations, both in practice and in theory, during which scholars have attempted to provide several formulations to ensure collective security, in the context of international relations theory.

This articles revolves around the concept of security communities, as one of the aforementioned formulations. It will focus on the concept in view of theoretical perspectives, in which the constructivist approach will be the main emphasis, with a view to assessing the viability of security communities at the global level² in the post-Cold War context.

The study, which aspires to examine the theoretical and empirical viability of security communities at global level in view of constructivist approach, is in fact three-fold.

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¹ J.C. Garnett, ‘Introduction: Conflict and Security in the new world order’, in M.J. Davis, ed., *Security Issues in the Post-Cold War*, (Edward Elgar, London, 1996), p.10.

² Related studies generally argue for the existence of regional formations in different parts of the world that can be regarded as security communities. Yet, there is no such community at the global level encompassing all members of the international community. The UN can be the only candidate, though it could not be utilized in this manner so far.

First, the concept of security communities will be examined. In this context, its origins as well as the reasons why it has been revisited in the post-Cold War era will be highlighted.

Following this, the study will focus on a theoretical assessment in which constructivism will be reviewed with a view to evaluating whether it is the most appropriate theoretical approach to apply to the concept of security communities. Prior to the assessment of its theoretical applicability for security communities, a general review of constructivism will be made. While doing so, the constructivist approach will be looked on in a comparative manner within *mainstream scholarship*³. As constructivism is indeed not a monolithic approach, the study will only focus on conventional constructivism, which is generally argued to be the most appropriate version for such a comparative analysis. Naturally, this theoretical discussion between constructivism and other approaches will be carried out to the extent it relates to security studies and thus security communities.

In the last part of the study, the paper will attempt to produce some arguments as to the question of whether security communities at the global level are now more likely to emerge in view of developments in theory and practice in the post-Cold War context. While doing so, the main emphasis will be on whether constructivism as theoretical framework is sufficient enough alone to account for the viability of security communities at global level or only complementary to the mainstream scholarship in the field of security studies.

The concept of security communities

The concept of security communities is an attempt to find a remedy for the insecurity of states in international arena. It is thus related to the concept of collective security, in the sense that security communities aim to provide collective security for members.

³ By 'mainstream scholarship', the paper refers to theoretical approaches that have dominated international relations throughout history since the Cold War, i.e. (neo) realists, liberalists (neoliberalist institutionalism), which work on the basis of positivist/rationalist parameters. See K. Krause, 'Critical Theory and Security Studies', in *Cooperation and Conflict*, 1998, Vol.33(3), pp.298-333; also J. Fearon and A. Wendt, 'Rationalism v. Constructivism', in W. Carlsnaes (et al), *Handbook of International Relations*, (Sage, London, 2002), pp. 52-73.

The concept of security community was always more celebrated than investigated. Initially proposed in the early 1950s by Richard Van Wagenen, it was not until the pioneering 1957 study by Karl Deutsch and his associates that this concept received its first full theoretical and empirical treatment. Deutsch defined the security community as a group of states that had become integrated to the point at which there is 'real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way'.⁴ In short, he claimed that those states that dwell in a security community had created not simply a stable order but, in fact, a stable peace.

Deutsch formulated two varieties of security communities: amalgamated and pluralistic. While both have dependable expectations of peaceful change, the former exists when states formally unify, whereas, in the latter, states retain their sovereignty.

However, despite its potential theoretical and practical importance, the concept of security community never generated a robust research agenda. A number of reasons can account for this. First of all, the time was not ripe for it. In the Cold War, any talk of a community of states seemed hopelessly romantic and vividly discordant against the backdrop of the severe conditions of the time and the prospects of a nuclear war. As argued, the Cold War was an era of 'survival'⁵. In such an era, far-fetched amalgamated security community ideas were overshadowed by other integrationist approaches, such as neo-functionalism at the regional level, as the European integration process gradually emerged. On the other hand, the idea of pluralistic security communities to be formed by sovereign states seemed to have failed due to the shortcomings of the UN, which was seen as the only possible organization to form such community at the global level.

The second reason was the dominance of the realist paradigms in the realm of international relations theories. The rigid stance of the realists against the concept of such communities, seen as being unrealistic both in the theoretical and practical senses, set this concept aside from general theoretical debates studying the absence of war and stable peace.

⁴ E. Adler and M. Barnett ed., *Security Communities*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.6.

⁵ Krause, op.cit., p.301.

Another reason, as argued by Adler, is related to the weakness of the concept itself as developed by Deutsch. He argues that Deutsch's conceptualisation security communities contained various theoretical, conceptual, and methodological problems that undoubtedly scared off future applications.⁶

The concept became fashionable again in the post-Cold War era. It is argued that Deutsch's observations for a security community seemed particularly relevant when the Cold War ended. With this peaceful end, policymakers were tempted to offer various statements on and blueprints for engineering a more peaceful and stable international order.⁷ This was normal. Ends of wars have almost always invited a flurry commentary on the past and hopeful speculation about the future world. But, what was unexpected is that statesmen and politicians were referring to the importance of social forces and values nearly identical to those remarked upon by Deutsch - the development of shared understandings, transnational values and transaction flows to encourage community building and to conceptualize the possibility of peace.⁸ Similarly, these have found their reflections in the field of theory. So, the revisiting of the concept of security communities can be attributed both to changing approaches of states in the post-Cold War and to corresponding developments in international relations theory that focus on the role of identity, norms, and the social basis of global politics.

In this context, Adler and his associates took up the concept with special emphasis on these developments. He attempted better to identify the conditions under which security communities are likely to emerge. His focus was on pluralistic security communities, because this is the form that is theoretically and empirically closest to the developments that currently unfolding in international politics and international relations theory.⁹ Adler refined the concept in the sense that he moulded it with more cognitive elements such as shared practices, identification of common self-images¹⁰. In the book entitled *Security Communities*, he approaches the concept of security community as a community of sovereign states agreeing on the unbearable destructiveness of modern war and on political, economic, social and moral values consistent with democracy, the rule of law and economic reform, to provide their

⁶ Adler, op.cit, p.8.

⁷ *ibid.*, p.3.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*, p.5.

¹⁰ Krause, op.cit, p.315.

collective security through a process in which member states come together on the basis of shared values and identities. He therefore defines it as such that ‘security communities are socially constructed because shared meanings, constituted by interaction, engender collective identities. They are dependent on communication, discourse, and interpretation, as well as on material environments’.¹¹

Identity is the key element of a cognitive region. Shared self-definitions create internalised norms that allow people from different countries to know each other better and thus respond more effectively to common concerns. Social learning, especially coupled with positive functional processes, contributes to the emergence of security communities, as states tend to behave according to norms that shared values and identities have constituted.¹²

What constitutes the security community is therefore the mutual responsiveness developed out of answers to the questions of ‘who am I?’ and ‘who is the other?’. In other words, it is the collective identity, which lays the ground for a security community. The importance of identities can be summarized as follows: common identities help to establish a security whose existence, i.e. the collective security, proves that members share common identities.

In view of the foregoing, one can easily understand that collective identities and shared values as well as shared understandings as regards threat perceptions are of significant importance for the creation of a security community. Therefore, the next step in this study is related to the issue of which theoretical approach can best account for such concepts as identity etc, and thus for the theoretical explanation of security communities. In this context, constructivism will be focused on in the following chapter.

¹¹ E. Adler, ‘Imagined (Security) Communities: Cognitive Regions in International Relations’, *Millennium: Journal of International Relations*, 1997, vol.26 (2), p.258.

¹² E. Adler, ‘Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 1997, vol.3 (3), pp.264-265.

Constructivism

The term ‘constructivism’ was initially introduced by Onuf. In simple terms, it means ‘people and societies construct, or constitute, each other’.¹³ It has two core assumptions. First, the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material. Second, these structures shape actor’s identities and interests, not just their behaviour.¹⁴ Constructivism takes the world to be emergent and constituted both by knowledge and material factors. Far from denying a reality to the material world, constructivists claim that how the material world shapes, changes, and affects human interaction, and is affected by it, depends on prior and changing epistemic and normative interpretations of the material world.¹⁵ Based on this, it is argued that constructivism uniquely brings an understanding of world politics to theories.¹⁶

Constructivism is not monolithic. It basically comes in two forms, though under different labels: ‘modernists and postmodernists’, ‘problem solving and critical’ or ‘conventional and critical’. Indeed, constructivism is part of critical theory, but it has its own distinctions that make it a unique approach in IR theory.

Constructivism shares many of the foundational elements of critical theory. Yet, it still resolves some issues by adopting rules of conduct and conventions like mainstream approaches, rather than following critical theory all the way up the post-modern critical path.¹⁷

Constructivism is critical in the sense that it aims to recover the individual and shared meanings that motivate actors to do what they do. For both constructivists and critical

¹³ N. Onuf, *World of Our Making : Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International relations*, (University of South Carolina Press, 1989) p.38.

¹⁴ A.Wendt, ‘Constructing International Politics’, *International Security*, 1995, vol.20 (1), pp.71-81.

¹⁵ Adler, op.cit, in note 4, p.13.

¹⁶ T.Hopf, ‘The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory’, *International Security*, summer 1998, vol.23 (1), p.172.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.181.

theorists, the world is socially constructed. Both suggest that international politics- the actors, institutions, power, structure, anarchy, etc.- is not ontologically fixed or eternal, but historically contingent across time and space. They do not take for granted the ontological assumptions held as to international politics.

In sum, to the degree that constructivism creates an epistemological distance between itself and its origins in critical theory, it differs from critical theory and this form of constructivism is defined as “conventional”. This *conventional constructivism* (hereinafter to be referred to as constructivism) is a collection of principles distilled from critical social theory but without the latter’s more consistent theoretical and epistemological follow-through.¹⁸

Constructivism emerged as an approach to break the stalemate that the mainstream debate ended in. Its critiques of mainstream scholarship focus on what it takes for granted or ignores. Constructivism studies the sources and the content of state interests and preferences, which are postulated, and it emphasizes the ideational and social side of international politics, which is ignored by the mainstream scholarship.

Constructivism in its conventional form offers alternative understanding of a number of central themes in IR theory, including the meaning of anarchy and balance of power, the relationship between state identity and interest, an elaboration of power, and the prospects for change in world politics. They both share fundamental concerns with the role of structure in world politics, the effects of anarchy on state behaviour, the definition of state interest, the nature of power, and the prospects for change. Yet, they disagree fundamentally on each concern.¹⁹ For example, in contrast to the mainstream approaches, anarchy in the constructivist approach has a multiple meaning for different actors, based on their own communities of inter-subjective understandings and practices. Similarly, for constructivism, identity is an empirical question to be theorized within a historical context, whereas mainstream approaches assume that all units of global politics have only one meaningful identity, that of self-interested states. Furthermore, the concept of power is only material in

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.180.

the understanding of mainstream approaches while it is also discursive for constructivism in the sense it is shaped by knowledge, ideas, culture, ideology and language.

In view of this comparison, one can argue that there are four main contexts, i.e. identity, norms, culture and institution, which make constructivism distinct from the mainstream scholarship.

The emphasis on values and norms by the constructivist approach is sometimes criticized for being related to idealist scholarship. But, the main focus of both approaches is fundamentally different. While idealism concerns ‘what ought to be’²⁰, constructivism is about *how things are constructed*. Unlike idealism, which takes the world only as it can be imagined, constructivism accepts that not all statements have the same epistemic value and that there is consequently some foundation for knowledge²¹.

Constructivism can also trace its origins to the ‘English School’. This school, which interprets IR as being social and historical, and which stresses the existence of an international society driven by norms and identity, played a role in promoting constructivist ideas. Similarly, the ‘Copenhagen School’, which is formed by a proponent of the English School, Barry Buzan, with Weaver, is also considered to have played a role in the evolution of constructivism. Both emphasize the importance of identity-building and shared norms.²²

Thus, in brief, the following can be said about constructivism. It is neither pessimist nor optimist (idealist), objectivist or subjectivist, materialist or normative, but stands somewhere between them. It challenges both the material and rational precepts of the mainstream scholarship. It attempts to address the neglected issues and to question the taken-for-granted assumptions.

Constructivism is welcomed in the sense that it represents a bridge between the extremes: positivist/rationalist based mainstream theories and radical interpretive critical theories. While the former brand is contested with its positivist/rationalist underpinnings, neglect of domestic and discursive explanations in international relations and with its

²⁰ A.Eralp, *Theory in International Relations: Three Major Debates*, (unpublished article), p.5.

²¹ E.Adler, ‘Constructivism and International relations’ in W. Carlsnaes op. cit. p.95.

²² *ibid.*, p.101.

shortcomings to explain change, the latter is disputed with its heavy reliance on discursive side of international politics and lack of a research program with empirical records. Constructivism, albeit drawing from both theoretical traditions, seizes the *middle ground* between them. Adler explains this in the following lines: Constructivism is interested in understanding how the material, subjective and intersubjective worlds interact in the construction of reality, and, rather than focusing exclusively on how structures constitute agent's identities and interests, also seeks to explain how individual agents socially construct these structures in the first place.²³ Thus, it is also argued that constructivism is a product of the third debate in the sense that it is related to the confluence of diverse anti-positivistic philosophical and sociological trends²⁴. Yet, constructivism is not exempt from severe criticism as to its theoretical nature. General criticism is that constructivism is an approach not a theory due to its methodological difficulties emanating from subjectivism or as colloquially presented the 'anything goes' argument²⁵. For that reason, some call it 'at best, a theory of process, not substantive outcome, if it is a theory.'²⁶

But the famous 'theatre on fire' scenario of Arnold Wolfers²⁷ seems to underline the value of constructivism to explain the unexplained by the mainstream scholarship. The scenario is a fire where all run for the exits. But absent knowledge of social practices or constitutive norms, structure, even in this seemingly over-determined circumstances, is still indeterminate. Even in a theatre with just one door, who goes first? Are they the strongest or the disabled, the women or children, or is it just a mad dash? Determining the outcome will require knowing more about the situation than about the distribution of material power or the structure of authority. Thus, one will need to know about the norms, culture, institutions, social practices and identities that constitute the actors and the structure alike.

²³ Adler, op.cit., in note 12, p.330.

²⁴ Adler, op.cit., in note 21, p.98.

²⁵ Krause, op.cit, p.319.

²⁶ Hopf, op.cit, p.196.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.173.

Relevance of constructivism in security studies.

Security studies has been slow to accept critical challenges such as constructivism. It is generally observed that under the mainstream approaches it is still treated as the theoretically improvised cousin to the sturdy children of international relations.²⁸

A comparison of constructivism with mainstream scholarship is needed to understand how they see security studies. In this attempt, Krause offers a workable methodology.²⁹ According to this, threat *perception* is the primary variable in understanding how the concept of security is taken into consideration. In doing so, emphasis is on how the critical approaches, i.e. constructivism, correspond to the central claims of the security studies agenda of the mainstream approaches. These claims are as follows: Threats arise naturally from the material capabilities of possible opponents in a self-help world of sovereign states; the object of security is the state and the security dilemma can be ameliorated but not transcended. To assess these central claims in relation to the constructivist approach, the construction of threats and appropriate responses to these threats, construction of object(s) of security and the evaluation of the possibility for transformation of security dilemma, are focused on.

Such a comparison reveals important differences between constructivism and mainstream approaches. First, whereas threats to security are taken for granted; in other words, they are considered as ‘given’ by mainstream scholars, the constructivist approach assumes that threats are constructed in the light of many factors, involving history, culture, ideologies, communication etc. By this distinction, we see here a theoretical clash between the two scholarships: while the mainstream approaches its work on the assumption that there is one objective and knowable world, constructivist scholars pay more attention to epistemology and focus on how things in world affairs are constructed, since the world is not objectively knowable³⁰.

Second, as regards the object of security, the constructivist approach questions how the object of security is constructed according to threat perceptions, in contrast to the

²⁸ Krause, op.cit, p.330.

²⁹ See *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.302.

basic assumption of mainstream approaches that the object is primarily state. Here, the argument that discourses of threat are constitutive of the object to be secured relates to the question of how such threats are identified.

In view of these comparisons, one can draw the main methodological difference between the two approaches. This is related to 'how' and 'why' questions³¹. Mainstream approaches are concerned with explaining why particular decisions resulting in specific courses of actions were made, while the constructivist one focuses on how threat perceptions, the object of security, are socially constructed. Thus, the mainstream mode of scholarship is *explanatory* and the constructivist one is related to *understanding*. 'How' questions help to understand the nature of threat, the object of security and the possibilities of transformation of security dilemma. But, mainstream scholars explain them without questioning how they are constructed. Despite this important distinction, it also is argued that these two modes of 'how' and 'why' are not irrelevant but are in fact related.³² Understanding (constructivist approach) precedes, accompanies, and closes and thus envelops explanation. In return, explanation (mainstream ones) develops understanding analytically.

In view of the foregoing comparison, one can clearly see that for both scholarships, national interests, threat perceptions, power etc are important determining factors for states' foreign and thus security policies. However, constructivism additionally shows that they are socially constructed with a view to identity and culture.

Constructivism and the concept of security communities

It is argued that that mainstream scholars are generally not comfortable with the notion of communities, and particularly with that of security communities³³. In the understanding of mainstream scholars, although states might engage in the occasional act of security co-operation, anarchy ultimately and decisively causes them to seek advantage over their neighbours, and to act in a self-interested and self-help manner. The idea that actors can share values, norms, and symbols that provide a social identity, engage in various interactions

³¹ *ibid.*, p.317.

³² *ibid.*, p.318.

³³ Adler, *op.cit.*, in note 4, p.3.

myriad spheres that reflect long-term interest, diffuse reciprocity, and trust, strikes fear in their hearts.³⁴

Theoretical evaluation of the concept of security communities can be made according to all present theoretical approaches that explain the absence of war, which security communities aim for. Along this theoretical spectrum, realism lies at one end, and constructivism on the other.

Realist paradigms assume that the structure of international politics is defined by the distribution of power and thus a highly asocial environment. Neo-realist and realist theories stress the notion that while war does not take place all the time it is always expected. If war does not occur, it is because balances-of-power, alliances, hegemonies and deterrence are able to prevent it, though only temporarily. By beginning with the assumptions of anarchy and that states are driven by self-interest as defined by military security, neo-realists hold that the absence of war can only be temporary and is solely attributable to material considerations.³⁵

Neo-liberal institutionalism focuses on how states construct institutions to encourage cooperation and to further their mutual interest in survival. In this way, their approach seem to be close to constructivists. However, their commitment to how self-interested actors construct institutions to enhance cooperation prevents them from considering fully how a community might be forged through shared identities rather than through pre-given interests and binding contracts alone, or how interstate and transnational interactions can alter state identities and interests.³⁶ Indeed, these are covered by the constructivist approach.

The fact that the security community and its aim of peaceful change might be established through the institutionalisation of mutual identification, transnational values, intersubjective understandings and shared identities, shows the relevance of constructivism in formulating the concept of security communities. Constructivism, with its focus on constitutive norms and identities in shaping state interests and policies, allows for the

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.10.

³⁶ *ibid.*,p.11.

possibility that under the proper conditions, actors can generate shared identities and norms that are tied to a stable peace. Thus, it is argued that security communities can be better understood with the premises of constructivism. It is because constructivism, which recognizes the importance of knowledge for transforming international structures and security politics, is best suited to taking seriously how international community can shape security politics and create the conditions for a stable peace.

In the consideration of security communities, some reflection is also found of idealism. In fact, Adler, too, acknowledges that the study of security communities offers also a blend of idealism, in the sense that it recognizes state interests but also envisions the possibility of progress and a promise for institutions in helping states to overcome their worst tendencies.³⁷ Yet, idealism on the other hand lacks the necessary basic for the understanding of the world. Idealism assumes that there is one ideal peace that can be attained through such institutions. But, in reality, there is no such peace. Security communities do not work for one ideal peace, but in fact aim to create one through social construction of shared values and collective identities.

Thus, one can clearly argue that constructivism is still the best-suited approach to account for the concept of security communities. In fact, Adler even argues that long before the emergence of constructivism, Karl Deutsch and his associate, Ernst Haas, anticipated constructivism in the work of security communities. 'Deutsch was not a constructivist - constructivism had yet to make its way from sociology to political science - and favored a positivist epistemology. But, his sociological approach, which emphasized social transactions and social communication, had an indelible influence on later developments in constructivism'.³⁸

As can be seen above, the identity formation is of great significance both for constructivism and for security communities. Therefore, it is useful to briefly focus on how it is treated in IR theories.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.14.

³⁸ Adler, *op.cit.*, in note 21, p.99.

Identification is accepted as a social concept.³⁹ The process of identity formation is of a kind that develops within a social unit. ‘Any identification requires a distinction just as any distinction necessitates some identification’.⁴⁰ This brings us to the dichotomy of the self/other. The self is identified in relation to its position vis-à-vis the other⁴¹. In other words, all identities exist only with their otherness. Without the other, the self actually cannot know either itself or the world because meaning is created in discourse where consciousness meets.⁴²

Identification is of an exclusionary nature for the non-identified. In other words, in the identification of a group of people as a community, this unit is externalised or disassociated from the values, myths, symbols, attitudes and mores of those (non-identified) with whom the unit does not identify itself⁴³.

It is also argued that the existence or the perception of threats from the other inevitably strengthens the identity of the self.⁴⁴ The formation of the self is inextricably intertwined with the formation of its others and a failure to regard the others in their own right must necessarily have repercussions for the formation of the self.⁴⁵

The identity issue entered into IR full fledged with the critical theories, such as constructivism. However, mainstream approaches also acknowledge identity. But, what differs from the constructivist approach is that it presumes to know *a priori* what the self-being is defined. State as unit is assumed to have a single identity, across time and space whereas constructivism assumes that the selves, or identities, of states are variable, they likely depend on historical, cultural, political and social context⁴⁶. In this sense one can see that constructivism helps better to explain security communities that are constitutive of collective

³⁹ A. N. Yurdusev, ‘Avrupa Kimliğinin Oluşumu ve Türk Kimliği’ in Atilla Eralp ed., *Türkiye ve Avrupa*, (İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, 1997) p.18.

⁴⁰ A.N. Yurdusev, *International Relations and the Philosophy of History: a Civilizational Approach*, (Mac Millan, London, forthcoming), p.105.

⁴¹ Krause, op.cit., p.312..

⁴² I.B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other*, (Manchester University Press, 1999), P.13.

⁴³ Yurdusev, op.cit., in note 40, p.107.

⁴⁴ Yurdusev, , op.cit., in note 39, p.21.

⁴⁵ Neuman, op.cit., p.35.

⁴⁶ Hopf, op.cit., p.176.

identities. Security communities are forms of collective identity that exclude each other on the basis of their distinctiveness.

Security communities in the post Cold War context

Realism was the dominant IR theoretical tradition throughout the Cold War. It depicts international affairs as a struggle for power among self-interested states and is generally pessimistic about the prospects for eliminating conflict and war.⁴⁷ Realism dominated in the Cold War years because it provided simple but powerful explanations for war, alliances, imperialism, obstacles to cooperation and other international phenomena.

The main arguments of realism can be summarized as follows: international relations are shaped by actors that are nation-states (unit of analysis); actors are 'rational' and try to maximize their wants (interests) in an objectively knowable world. Yet, national desires are infinite, whereas the resources for obtaining them are strictly limited (power-interest dichotomy). Therefore, states could minimize costs and maximize utility if they pursue their national interests in accordance with their power capabilities in the international system.⁴⁸

Realism is not a single theory, of course, and realist thought evolved considerably throughout the Cold War. As time passed, in which the world witnessed new phenomena and developments, the field of international relations theory, too, observed new approaches to better account for these developments in world affairs, such as decision-making analysis, systemic discussions, behavioralism, structuralism and neo-realism. As argued, they did not change the main core of realist premises but only improved them⁴⁹ For instance, behavioralism did not attack the fundamental assumptions of realism, but challenged traditionalist realist methods to make it more scientific/data oriented.⁵⁰ Neo-realism introduced new actors in addition to the nation-state without challenging the dominance of the latter. It gave emphasis also economic issues besides the issues of high-politics such as security and military concerns, with a view to transnational firms and thus to increasing

⁴⁷ S.M. Walt, 'International Relations: One World, Many Theories', *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1998, p.2, www.findarticles.com

⁴⁸ See Eralp in note 20, and also A. Eralp, 'Uluslararası İlişkiler Disiplininin Oluşumu: İdealizm-Realizm Tartışması' in A.Eralp ed., *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik*, (İletişim, İstanbul, 2001), pp.57-89.

⁴⁹ Walt, op.cit., p.2.

⁵⁰ Eralp, op.cit., in note 20, p.8.

interdependence among states.⁵¹ Structuralist introduced the concept of structure as a level of analysis.⁵²

It is even argued that neo-liberalist institutionalism, which gained importance in the Cold War years starting from the early 1970s, accepted many realist assumptions, notably the anarchic nature of the international system, while contesting its conclusions and giving emphasis to the fact that states can still cooperate even in conditions of anarchy. Still, this approach has drawn increasing criticism for its failure to break more radically with realist assumptions⁵³.

A general review of the foregoing seems to suggest that realism has continued to be the main understanding throughout the Cold War, though its assumptions have increasingly been improved/refined by the new approaches in time. Together with these approaches, all rationalist based like realism, the Cold War can be seen as an era of the mainstream scholarship.

The intellectual dominance of realist paradigms is even characterized by the assertion of one scholar that ‘realism was the dominant discourse from about the start of the late medieval period in 1300 to at least 1989’.⁵⁴ The theoretical implications of the end of the Cold War may be summarized as such: the increasing critics of mainstream approaches of IR on the basis of their predictive failure to anticipate the events leading to the demise of the Eastern Bloc.

The end of the Cold War, which had been the symbol of division in Europe for almost half a century, was marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall on 3 October 1989. The fall of the wall meant also the collapse of the ideological walls dividing Europe for so many years. Within a short span of time, one-party communist states disappeared throughout Central and Eastern Europe, new independent states were established in the republics of the

⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp.11-14.

⁵² *ibid.*, p.18.

⁵³ See A. Hyde-Price, ‘Beware the Jabberwock: Security Studies in the 20th Century’ in H. Gartner (et al) *Europe’s New Security Challenges*, (Lynne Rienner, London, 2001).

⁵⁴ Krause, *op.cit.*, p.303, (This quotation was attributed to Mersheimer, in his article ‘The False Promise of International Institutions’ published in *International Security*, 1995, vol.19 (3), pp.5-49).

former Soviet Union that then ceased to exist and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved in 1991. With these changes, it was obvious that the global threats, such as big scale nuclear and conventional military attacks had become almost obsolete.

The end of the Cold War, brought about by the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the dissolution of the USSR, even raised questions about the necessity of NATO, as military alliances normally dissolve once the common enemy has been defeated. However, time attested to the contrary, with the rise of non-conventional and asymmetric security threats⁵⁵. In this regard, it is argued that the end of the Cold War has put new security issues beside the long-standing fear of a nuclear war between the two superpowers and their preparations for large-scale conventional wars. These consist of a wide range of risks varying from international terrorism, ethnic conflicts and religious fundamentalism through organized crime, drug trafficking, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to mass migrations, environmental disasters, poverty etc.

These threats to international security are not purely new phenomena. However, what is new in this sense is the effect of globalisation on these threats. Today, in a world where things have increasingly become more transboundary and interdependent, owing to the effects of globalisation, as in the domino theory, any incidents in a country or in region, be it a terrorist act or an ethnic conflict, pose threats on other areas. As the corollary to this, such threats that transcend borders happen to affect security more rapidly, more severely in an ever-expanding magnitude with spill-over effects. These threats inevitably necessitate collective responds as they affect almost all states in one way or another.

In such an environment, Europe in particular (and the world in general) has witnessed several hot conflicts and wars in just one decade in the post-Cold War era, which totalled more than seen in the whole course of the Cold War years. The European continent, which had been free from wars since the end of World War II, once again became a continent of conflict and death with the wars that erupted in its midst (in the territories of the former Yugoslavia) along with wars nearby (the Caucasus and the Middle East). Because of these

⁵⁵ Asymmetric threat is defined as a threat that can cause harm in bigger magnitude than its size. See S. Erkem, '11 Eylül 2001: Terrorizmin Yeni Miladi', *Stratejik Analiz*, Sayı 18, Ekim 2001. Asymmetric threat is also defined as a threat that does not follow the rules of fair warfare including surprise attacks, as well as warfare with weapons used in an unconventional manner. See [www.rand.org/news links/terrorism.ntml](http://www.rand.org/news_links/terrorism.ntml).

conflicts, one can argue that the basic premises of mainstream scholarship, such as anarchical setting, power politics based on national interests, etc., are still present in world affairs. True, mainstream scholarship failed to anticipate the end of the Cold War, but the world order which has replaced the Cold War era still seems to prove its validity. States act in pursuit of the preservation of their interests and of the protection of their security in the face of both conventional and non-conventional security threats. However, the main question is here how they gather support from other states for such policies, and how legitimacy is attained for them. In fact, transboundary effects of such security threats help states to gather the support of like-minded states and act in the form of collective security against such threats.

Collective security regimes in history, i.e. the Concert of Europe, the League of Nations and the United Nations, have all failed to provide an efficient collective security arrangement to prevent wars and defuse hot conflicts, and were not, therefore, security communities in the global sense. Although in the case of the UN, one can argue that it helped in preventing world wars since the second World War, the reason for the absence of such a global war was in fact not the UN but the balance of terror between the two opposing military blocs based on mutual nuclear deterrence. Why then did they fail to form a security community at the global level? This can be explained with reference to the importance of identity-building for the creation of such communities. Here, it can be argued that those security regimes could not establish a collective identity against a common threat. In other words, the 'selves' in these organizations did not come together against a common 'other'.

In the Cold War era, the 'other' was the East for the West and vice versa, although members of both blocs remained in the same global security regime, the UN. Therefore, their stay in the UN was not due to the creation of a common identity but was of necessity. In the post-Cold War era, although one of the blocs disappeared, it was evident that at least the old leader of the East, i.e. Russia, and the US, together with the rest of the western bloc, continued to regard each other as the 'other'. This was because they could not create a collective identity (self), as they could not define a common threat (other) either.

In this context, one can argue that the September 11 terrorist attacks have provided a conducive atmosphere for the creation of a new 'other', i.e. common enemy. This

was 'terrorism'.⁵⁶ In the post-September 11 era, almost all states seem to have found a new 'other', terrorism, against which they are still identifying themselves. Particularly, in the summit meetings that took place in 2002 between the Russian Federation with the US, NATO and the EU respectively, this new understanding has been clearly underlined by stating that terrorism is the common enemy of them all. NATO allies even invoked article 5 of the Washington Treaty – a collective defence mechanism - for necessary operations against those held responsible for the terrorist attacks of September 11. Thus, it can be argued that states at present are gradually coming together to develop a common collective identity in opposition to a commonly perceived security threat, the 'other'. This is terrorism in particular along with other non-conventional security threats of an asymmetric nature, such as WMDs (weapons of mass destruction), religious fundamentalism, and extreme nationalism. The presence of such a 'common enemy' that has been already condemned by almost all states, being members of the UN, no doubt constitutes an important opportunity to facilitate the creation of a security community at the global level in the future.

All this argumentation clearly reflects the relevance of constructivism in understanding the developments towards a new collective identity of states better to provide collective security. The central issue in the post-Cold War era is how different groups conceive their identities and interests. In the absence of a constructivist explanation of identity-formation, it would be hard to contemplate both the present issues in the field of security studies and the viability of a security community. Although power is not irrelevant, constructivism emphasizes how ideas and identities are created, how they evolve and how they shape the way states understand and respond to their situations. As argued, fragmentation and pluralism are the essential characteristics of the theoretical enterprise today. Compared to just 20 years ago, there is a greatly expanded menu of theoretical offerings.⁵⁷ Thus, one can conclude that in the present world order, in which the basic premises of the mainstream scholarship are still present, constructivism complements them, with its emphasis on the importance of collective identities and shared values in collective security attempts in general and in the creation of security communities in particular.

⁵⁶ Although there is no one common definition of terrorism and its forms, at least as a phenomenon it is condemned by all states. The nature and content of terrorism indeed is subject to a separate study which falls beyond the scope of this paper.

⁵⁷ Walt, *op.cit.*, p.10.

Conclusion

The concept of security communities, first developed by Karl Deutsch in the theoretical sense, is related to creating a community by which its members strengthen their own security through collective security. Although Deutsch formulated two versions of security communities, this article has focused solely on the version of pluralistic security communities, which refers to a community building on the basis of preservation of its member states' sovereignty, i.e. as a form of inter-governmentalism, instead of integration of states. In the post-Cold War context, Adler has developed this concept with special emphasis on the role of identity building, in the sense that collective identities of the members of a security community against a commonly perceived enemy/ security threat are essential for its existence. In other words, in a security community, states perceiving common threats construct collective identities against a commonly perceived/identified enemy, which in turn help overcome security dilemma. In this regard, the comparison between constructivism in its conventional form and mainstream scholarships strongly suggests that the former approach is well-suited to account for these essentials of a security community, as it focuses on how identities are constructed.

International relations theory in the post-Cold War era has undergone an important transformation. Critical approaches like constructivism attacked directly the underlying positivist precepts of mainstream IR theory. They were inward looking, concerned primarily with undermining the very foundations of dominant discourses of IR theory. In this respect, they served a valuable purpose of fracturing and destabilizing the positivist/rationalist hegemony, which can be seen as a necessary first step in the pursuit of establishing a new perspective in world politics. On the other hand, the end of the Cold War brought new interest in the search for ideational, normative and cultural explanations for state behaviour in the international system, as the theoretical problematic of mainstream scholarship became increasingly emphasised by scholars.

The end of the Cold War played an important role in legitimating constructivist approaches because mainstream approaches failed to anticipate this event, and had some troubles explaining it. Yet, developments in the post-Cold War era have also clearly indicated that the core premises of mainstream scholarship, such as the anarchical setting,

the power struggle of states in pursuit of their national interests, are still present, as wars and hot conflicts in the world continue to abound. Similarly, practical realism exists in the sense of how diplomats and statesmen approach issues in their work.

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Morgenthau had stated that ‘human beings lived in a brutish war-like situation’,⁵⁸ and this led realists to argue that men pursue their own interests. This is true. Here, constructivism comes in and rightfully clarifies that interests are not identical nor taken for granted, but are constructed according to the culture, norms and identities of the state in question. Constructivism thus functions on the premises of mainstream scholarship but complements them with societal premises stressing the importance of norms, identity, and culture in shaping international relations and acts therein.

In this context, the post- September 11 era seems to be conducive for theoretical debates on the viability of security communities. This is because states today tend to come together at the global level and form a collective identity against a commonly perceived security threat, i.e. terrorism, and its use of weapons of mass destruction. Perhaps, this is the first time all members of the international community and particularly the Russian Federation, and the US, i.e. ‘selves’, seem to have joined in a collective identity against a common enemy, ‘the other’. In this regard, without rejecting the basic premises of the mainstream scholarship, conventional constructivism provides useful theoretical insights for further studies on the viability of a possible security community in which its members secure themselves against the common enemy, terrorism.

Each of these competing theoretical approaches captures important aspects of world politics. It is argued that ‘the complete diplomat of the future should remain cognizant of realism’s emphasis on the inescapable role of power, help liberalism’s awareness of domestic forces in mind and reflect on constructivist vision of change [and its focus on identity-building] as necessary’.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Eralp, op.cit., in note 20, p.3.

⁵⁹ Walt, op.cit., p.11. (The author of this article adds the phrase in parenthesis.)

It is clearly understood that the end of the Cold War encompasses an entire class of events, which are almost impossible to capture by a single theory. As Walt says, the world still awaits article X to bring out one unique theory to fully cover the post-Cold War theoretical debates. While waiting, one can see that constructivism at least in its conventional form, complementing the mainstream scholarship, serves as a theoretical tool to provide some useful explanations of the present international system with particular emphasis on collective security.