Patricia Becker

ILLIBERAL SECURITY COMMUNITIES - A revised concept and the empirical example of ASEAN

Seminar paper

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FB Politik- und Sozialwissenschaften

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ILLIBERAL SECURITY COMMUNITIES:

A REVISED CONCEPT OF SECURITY COMMUNITIES AND THE EMPIRICAL EXAMPLE OF ASEAN

Patricia M. Becker

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1. Introduction

The here to be presented idea that also a regions merely consisting of illiberal states might follow the path of peace via the building of a security community is all but uncontested. When I presented the concept of illiberal security communities for the first time[1], people felt deeply uncomfortable with it. There were two main reasons for the obvious disapproval. Either the theorem was refused because of its notion of *community* or due to its *illiberal* component.

The first group of opponents can be labelled as adherents of the (neo-) realist school. They reject the mere idea of inter-state communities ? a concept that goes far beyond self-interest driven (counter-) alliances which, for realists, represent the only possibility of international cooperation. This quite fundamental critique targets primarily the basic concept of security communities that was first developed by Karl W. Deutsch and his colleagues in 1957[2], and which served as 'row material' for the here presented, modified version. The Deutschian theorem of security communities challenges the realist paradigm in two respects. Firstly, it negates the axiomatic relationship between anarchy and war, and refuses moreover the inevitability of the war prone security dilemma, which conceptualises international relations as an inherently belligerent, vicious circle of arms races and power accumulation[3]. Secondly, by stressing the notion of *community*, the Deutschian analysis incorporates the by realists ignored 'societal' factors - such as loyalty, collective identity and the power of communication in creating trust - as being conductive to a stable peace among community members[4].

The second, more diverse group of critics could be roughly regrouped under the liberal tent. Irrespective of the metatheoretical tradition – whether rationalist or constructivist – and of the distinct theory they adhere[5], they share several basic

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[1] In the course of the summer term 2004 I presented a draft of the theoretical part of this paper to the Colloquium of the Centre for Transatlantic Foreign and Security Policy Studies, Free University of Berlin.

[2] Even though the very first notion of security communities was introduced by Richard van Wagenen in the early 1950s, it is noncontentious that Karl W. Deutsch is the 'father' of this concept. Deutsch and his associates were the first in developing a comprehensive theoretical framework of it that was furthermore empirically applied, Deutsch: 1957. For a short overview see Adler/Barnett 1998: 6-9.

[3] Hertz 1950: 157.

[4] Deutsch 1968: 272f.

[5] The theoretical scope would range from the 'classical' liberalism and neoliberalism over neoliberal institutionalism on the one side to constructivist institutionalists and liberalists on the other side.

assumptions, which, on the one hand, fully converge with the idea of security communities but which are on the other hand irreconcilable with the concept of *illiberal* security communities as it will be presented here. Accordingly, they accept the principal possibility that a group of states may turn into a security community. That is following Deutsch - when they become integrated to a point where they hold dependable expectations of peaceful change coupled with the development of a 'we-feeling', which render the use of force within this group even less likely.[6] However, having internalised the theorem of democratic peace[7], these scholars refuse the modified version, which claims that also groups of illiberal states can become a security community and therefore benefit from a stable regional peace. Yet, the mentioned scholars reserve this way to peace for democratic states of the industrialised west. Especially those, adhering to a rationalist variety of liberalism stress that what is (in their view) leading to a security community - above all economic interdependence and pluralistic domestic systems allowing their societies to become interdependent as well – is lacking in third world regions hosting mostly illiberal states. Amazingly, even constructivist liberals could not imagine that the same processes they see as responsible for the emergence of a democratic security community might also lead to illiberal counterparts. Following Adler's argumentation, they put down that security communities do not develop because members share just any kind of values but because they exactly share liberal values. Thus, constructivist liberals refuse the mere idea of *illiberal* security communities as well.

Whereas the objections of these two camps were gapping as regards contents, both fully converged with a further point of critique which fundamentally questioned the here to be presented concept. The audience agreed in doubting the relevance of a however natured theorem of illiberal security communities with regard to both the theoretical and empirical aspect.

This brings me to the reason for which I bored the favourably disposed reader almost two pages with my critics without having revealed my own concept. It is for better disclose my puzzle and the relevance of the following approach as well as its empirical application on the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN). The purpose of this article is namely, to challenge the three above mentioned points of critique. I will proceed in the following way. At the first place, the article briefly lines out the ill-fated

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[6] Deutsch et al 1957: 5.

[7] FN democratic peace