Research Article

Security Communities in Crisis: Crisis Constitution, Struggles and Temporality

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Abstract

How do we approach a security community in crisis? This article theorises crisis dynamics in and on security communities. How do security communities evolve during crises, and how can we best approach such crises analytically? Responding to a lack of focus and knowledge of crisis dynamics in the literature on security communities, this article develops a methodological model to study security communities in crisis. I argue that the study of security communities in crisis could evolve around four analytical categories: processes of constituting crisis and power struggles and the temporal aspects of social action concerning situatedness and imaginaries. This move allows IR theory to rethink the dynamics of security communities in crisis beyond the endurance/decay binary and provide for more process-oriented and context-sensitive empirical work. By way of illustrating the empirical saliency of the article, I use examples from the Brexit process.

Keywords

How do we approach a security community in crisis? Different accounts of crisis have become the *modus operandi* in discourses about a European integration project threatened both from the outside and the inside, with the United Kingdom's (UK) exit from the European Union (EU) a notable example of threats from within (Riddervold, Trondal and Newsome 2021). Brexit was not only a first major instance of formal disintegration in the EU (Rosamond 2016; Schimmelfennig 2018; Leruth Gänzle and Trondal 2019), but it was also a crisis in and on the European security community (Svendsen and Adler-Nissen 2019; Mitzen 2018; Duke 2019). Addressing the attendees at the 2018 Munich Security Conference, then UK Prime Minister Theresa May urged nations to come together because 'as we look at the world today we are … facing profound challenges to the global order: to peace, prosperity, to the rules-based system that underpins our very way of life' (May 2018). At the same time, she was engaged in the process of taking her country out of its institutionally binding cooperation with the EU, arguably a necessary feature of a matured and tightly coupled security community (Adler and Barnett 1998). The Brexit process certainly constituted a crisis for the European security community. Yet, few would argue that Europe, including the EU-UK relationship, as the Brexit dust was slowly settling was not a security community characterised by expectations of peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Responding to this observation, the article theorises crisis dynamics in and on security communities. How do security communities evolve during crises? And how can we best approach such crises analytically? The thrust of the argument in the article is the claim that the security community literature lacks concepts for studying community dynamics in crisis. This is due to a tendency to reify the community on the basis of shared norms rather than to use concepts that help in grasping social dynamics and processes that pull in *several* directions, including towards endurance and/or decay (for notable exceptions see Mattern 2005; Greve 2018). Attending to this problem, I develop an international political sociology approach to the study of security communities in crisis that emphasise four analytical categories: processes of constituting crisis and power struggles, and the temporal aspects of social action concerning situatedness and imaginaries. Drawing on insights from the field of International Political Sociology (IPS), the article approaches security-community dynamics in times of crisis in a way that is sensitive to relations and processes that unfold within the social structure of a tightly knit community.

The remainder of the article will proceed in three steps. I first discuss the security community literature and its treatment of crisis. In doing so I focus specifically on the community of practice literature within the practice turn, evaluating pitfalls and promises in its theorisation of order and crisis at the intersection between constructivism and poststructuralism. Here, I find that in as much as the literature is situated in social theory, we need to move our understanding of security community dynamics further if we want to understand their crisis dynamics. Second, responding to the limitations in the existing literature, I develop an analytical model where the dynamics of security communities in crisis play out across four analytical categories. Methodologically open yet conceptually clarified, these analytical categories can account for a wide range of processes operationalised for future work on security communities in crisis.

SECURITY COMMUNITIES AND CRISIS DYNAMICS

This first section engages the literature on security communities and considers how it conceptualises their dynamics in crisis. The concept of security community was initially brought into IR by Karl Deutsch and his colleagues (Deutsch, Burrell, Kann, Lee, et al. 1957), and re-introduced by Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett in the 1990s (Adler and Barnett 1998). Their hypothesis was that there existed community among states in the international system in how they came to share a sense of 'we-ness'. Their focus then was on shared identity in how 'values, norms, and symbols … provide a social identity … that reflect long-term interest, diffuse reciprocity, and trust' (Adler and Barnett 1998: 3).

Haugevik (2014: 37) has noted how their definition concerns the *why* and *how* security communities emerge and the potential for inter-state friendship that emerge as they mature. Adler and Barnett's development of the concept thus had a positive take on community dynamics geared towards order, or prospects for stable peace. Koschut (2016: 2), the prime theorist of security community *disintegration*, notes how Adler and Barnett's only remark on counter forces within communities would be the antithesis to their own; namely that what builds them up can also break them down.

The groundwork made by Adler and Barnett was well situated within IR constructivism in how their work concerned the role of common identity (sense of 'we-ness') as a variable determining the possibility for peaceful change. However, the security community agenda was quickly picked up in the evolution of the practice turn that in its treatment of security communities came to be situated somewhat in between North American norm-centred constructivism and the poststructuralist tradition with its basis in European philosophy (Pouliot 2004). Turning to thinking about security communities in practice meant expecting peaceful change not as a function of shared identity and a sense of 'we-ness', but in how state representatives and diplomats – in the (micro)sociological sense – secured peaceful change in and through how they 'did' international diplomacy in the everyday (Pouliot 2008; Adler 2008). Central to this reconceptualisation of security communities towards the community of practice literature (see Wenger 1998) was Adler's former student in Toronto, Vincent Pouliot (2010, 2008, 2007). Developing a *logic of practicality*, Pouliot took interest in the mundane operation of social life and how the social world is acted in and on in a pre-reflexive manner, prior to the logics of consequence, appropriateness and arguing. When the way of solving problems peacefully constituted the modus operandi of the daily operation of diplomacy then, security community existed. As such, the diplomatic institution in world politics came to stand for peace.

Despite these insights, or perhaps because of the specific social constructivist route that the security community literature has taken, there is a striking scarcity of studies on security communities in crisis. Surely, this is partly an effect of the normative preferences embodied in intellectual efforts to study security communities. Included in this is a theoretical propensity to privilege order over disorder. Consider the above-mentioned practice turn in studies of security communities: Its proponents have had a central focus on ordering through the engagement with the work of Pierre Bourdieu and on how repeated action that is considered socially meaningful structure social life at large (Adler and Pouliot 2011). Pouliot has been claiming to be theorising inductively before abstracting away (Pouliot 2010, 2007), making practice theory part of the current stream of micro-moves in IR theory (Solomon and Steele 2017). In terms of security communities, Adler 'theorised security communities as forming through a bottom-up process, where citizens from different countries came to realise that their values and hence their destinies were shared' (Adler 1997, quoted in Buzan and Hansen 2009: 198). It is perhaps this 'progressive bias' (Koschut 2016: viii), well situated in the liberal tradition and the optimism of the 1990s, that has complicated the practice theorists' relationship with international order as a condition and function in and of security communities.

Practice theorists are interested in the mundane, everyday doings that structure social life. In approaching practices then, Bueger and Mireanu (2015: 119) argue that scholars in security studies are engaged in 'a project of proximity and close engagement with the flow and the infrastructures of the everyday and the mundane, and those discriminated by security practices.' However, at the same time they 'emphasize situated understanding and unmask the apparent stability of social systems' (Adler-Nissen 2016: 92). Unmasking this apparent stability is perhaps what Pouliot (2014: 238) refers to when claiming that practices can 'be abstracted away from local contexts in the form of social mechanisms that can travel across cases'. It is on this basis that despite the lack of such accounts, practice approaches to security communities sell their potential to provide different, thicker, descriptions (see Geertz 1973) of dynamics in micro-practices, including within security communities. Practice theorists explore how security communities emerge, exist

and endure in and through *practice* (see Pouliot 2010; Mérand and Rayroux 2016; Kavalski 2007; Græger 2016; Bremberg 2015; Bremberg, Sonnsjö and Mobjörk 2019; Bicchi 2011; Bicchi and Bremberg 2016). It is on this basis that I would argue that scholars of security communities of practice have a troubled relationship with the question of order; it predetermines the object of analysis, it arguably stems from the preoccupation with mundane everyday activities (mostly of diplomats or other elites), neglect of struggles over legitimate claims to authority, as well as the structural conditions within which these struggles take place (Martin-Mazé 2017).

Another challenge is linked to the endurance/decay binary in security communities. Adler and Barnett's take on security communities and the practice orientation of the 2000s finds the root of community in different mechanisms (identity and practice) but they share a focus on the centripetal, i.e. what makes communities emerge and endure. What lacks is a way of engaging security community dynamics in crisis that brings our attention to social forces that push and pull. Adler-Nissen (2015) has distinguished between 'ordering' and 'disordering' practices. 'Ordering' 'focuses on how practices become organizing of social life, it is interested in how people and groups of people become recognized as more or less competent than others through particular classifications, distinctions and categories of understanding'. On the contrary, the 'disordering' perspective 'does not require recognition of competent behaviour or social capital' and 'focuses on subordinate and ordinary people and their experiences of broader power relationships' (Adler-Nissen 2016: 92-93). However, security communities are ontologically speaking fluid social facts that are emergent and they *may* or *may not* change over time. In crisis, processes are driven by both logics of integration and logics of fragmentation (Goddard and Nexon 2016: 5). As such, what holds international orders together or not is determined by processes of ordering and disordering practices, and their interaction. Together, they are the determinants of security community dynamics in times of crisis and their relational and processual interaction in social struggles determine whether they endure or wane.

Patricia Greve (2018: 831), combining the security community literature with ontological security, argues that we should consider ontological security in security communities in terms of a 'process of routinization as an ongoing, political process that is characterized by struggles for recognition'. In the spirit of Hirschman's exit, voice and loyalty, she argues that responses in struggles for recognition of distinctiveness may be adoption, reform, recalcitrance/denial or exit. This orientation moves us closer to appreciating the dynamics of security communities in crisis. Yet a political sociology of security communities in crisis responds to the normative bias and reification of community on a basis of reflexivity – with a view to recognize the practice of constituting security community crisis as a practical and scholarly endeavour.

Security communities are not static, but constantly evolving and negotiated social facts (Koschut 2016). As such, they are collective achievements. This is well established in the literature, but the article advances an approach to security communities in crisis highlighting how shared norms and practices are not placeholders for very real, political struggles between the states that constitute the community. Consequently, preserving security communities is dependent on ordering practices that can only be grasped if theoretical concepts are sensitive to them. These dynamics of security communities extend well beyond Brexit, but it is a paradigmatic case to illustrate the critical promise in considering security communities in this particular way. In fact, security communities are always in a state of struggle.

TOWARDS A POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF SECURITY COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

International Political Sociology (IPS) has been emergent in IR for some time as materialised with the 2007 establishment of a section and journal associated with the International Studies Association (ISA) in addition to sub-field specific handbooks (Guillaume and Bilgin 2016; Bigo and Walker 2007; Basaran et. al. 2017). Common to IPS approaches is an ontological commitment to relations and processes with a common aim towards:

> avoiding considering social entities or concepts as substances, … epistemologically avoiding reifying social entities or phenomena into static units and, on the contrary, integrating the idea of change throughout one's conceptualisation of the social world (Guillaume 2007: 742).[1]

As such, ontologically speaking, everything is in flux. Orders are indeterminate, but they are nonetheless orders, socially produced and reproduced (Cox 1981). The same goes for security communities. The use of concepts like international order, security community and crisis needs to acknowledge the openness of social facts to avoid reifying them. In IPS, this is tied to reflexivity in how static, theoretically derived concepts becomes part of the very constitution of power relations through the reification of concepts, often due to lack of reflexivity (Levine 2016). As such, security communities should not be approached in terms of a snapshot at any point in time, but it needs to be carved out through historisation and denaturalisation of the constitution of things (Guzzini 2016; Guillaume 2007). Approaching the dynamics of security communities in crisis requires recognizing that 'processes of exclusion are intrinsic to international society' (Adler-Nissen 2011: 327). Borders delineating social in- or outsiderness are not apprehended in their fixity, but in how practices of bordering make possible different forms of dynamics (Hofius 2016). Importantly, the relational and process-oriented ontology of IPS does not disqualify the study of security communities. Rather, it approaches them with a sensitivity towards the considerations above. What are the centrifugal and centripetal forces that make or undo specific security communities that are in crisis and how do these forces interact? And how can reflexivity be built into the way in which answers to these questions are pursued?

With a particular view to the 'complex assemblage of the big and the small in international politics', de Goede argues that IPS is characterised by:

> 1) a focus on practice, including mundane routines and little technicalities that are no longer understood as mere detail, but that are granted constitutive power; (2) an attentiveness to temporality by emphasizing the shifting and the mobile (over the ordered and the continuous); and (3) an attitude of critique. (de Goede 2016: 356-357)

Two studies that are close to providing fully fledged IPS approaches to security community crisis should be mentioned here. One is Janice Bailly Mattern's (2005) study of identity and 'representational force' in the 1956 Suez Crisis. The other is Trine Villumsen Berling's (2015) study of the reconfiguration of the European field of security following the collapse of the Soviet Union. She draws exclusively on Bourdieu but admits that her study 'sides with a more classically sociologically oriented take on already existing structures and the limits to constructing entirely novel realities that these social structures may entail', labelling it Luhmaninan in how she 'studies different systems clashing and creating irritation in the codes that structure the systems' (Berling 2015: 5).

How, then, do we approach security communities in crisis on the basis of the limitations presented above and the possibilities provided with an IPS approach? I will in the following develop an analytical model by using illustrations from the Brexit process. What social forces demand attention in understanding the dynamics of security community crisis? How can we move towards approaching them in a way that is relational and process-oriented, reflexive and avoids reifying community? I suggest that we take those steps by

approaching security community in dynamics in crisis through the constitution of the crisis itself, power political struggles, and the temporality of social action. The former two regards the very constitution of crisis and its interaction with power politics. The second pertains to how agency and practices stem from shared and situated ways of being and how such historically situated structures manifest themselves as imaginaries of the future.

Constituting Crisis

The first element in the analytical model is perhaps banal, but no less important: crises are constituted in and through practice. An international political sociology approach to crisis dynamics would ask how crisis becomes constituted in the first place. Here, the Copenhagen School and its securitisation theory is relevant. Within this school of thought, the constitution of crisis would be tied to 'speech acts', i.e. words *do* things in the world. They make worlds and crises through how 'who can "do" or "speak" security successfully, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effects' (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 27) structures social reality at large. Other modes of constituting crisis in practice would include actions of a material nature, such as establishing a crisis management team within an organisation to handle the crisis.

In the Brexit crisis, national narratives were central in the constitution of the crisis, especially from Europe (the EU27). The narrative was not one of nationalism, rather a postmodern critique against the potential disaster a hard or no-deal Brexit would be for the UK who were accused of turning in on itself and what had been but ended years ago. The constitution of Brexit as crisis in and of itself as such had an important temporal aspect: the EU claimed to be representing the future and any subversive moves from the UK in the direction of 'old empire' would worsen the crisis.

When an issue is securitised, 'states are able to move them outside the remit of democratic decision-making and into the realm of emergency powers, all in the name of survival itself' (Ahmed 2011: 350). The Brexit crisis furthermore saw a double constitution of crisis. For one, it was the pan-European discourse in which the very exiting of the UK itself posed a threat to the stability to the European order. Of all the parts of the EU and UK relationship, security was also one where the need to cooperate in the face of mutual threats and interest was most prominent. This legitimated an approach to the negotiations that diverted from the 'hard' stance of the Leave-supporters in the UK. What is more, the Brexit related conversation and debate about the security community drew on the external 'belt of insecurity' that was surrounding Europe with the instability in the south and east and an increasingly assertive Russia.[2] As such, the constitution of the Brexit crisis saw references both to the Brexit in and of itself and the external environment beyond the borders of Europe, the UK included. Importantly, both securitisations called for measures to secure the endurance of the security community, despite the institutional integration that was inevitably going to happen.

Furthermore, the way in which Brexit was initiated domestically has been interpreted both as how a politically opportunist elite were able to constitute the community as a crisis of sovereignty and as how the referendum allowed the masses speak out against the crisis of neoliberalism and its contribution to alienation and increasing inequalities. In relation to all the examples above, we may sum up that an IPS approach to security community crisis does not objectify a crisis as such, but rather ask how it is constituted, by whom, and with what legitimisation. What follows from this, is an attention to the power political struggles over meaning between agents as the crisis is being constituted and enacted upon.

Power Struggles

A concern with relations of power lies at the heart of the inquiry in IPS. This is pivotal considering the relational ontology from which such studies depart, and the attitude of critique already mentioned. In relation to security communities, Mattern (2005a, 2001)

has shown how power operates within those communities in the form of representational force. Representational force refers to 'a nonphysical but nevertheless coercive form of power that is exercised through language' (Mattern 2005b). In her study, representational force among other things pertained to the United States disciplining of its friend and ally UK during the Suez crisis. A central implication is that one should not naively adopt definitions of community from its everyday use. Rather, we acknowledge that security communities are infused with power relations that structure their dynamics in times of crisis, and this is intimately tied to the struggles that go into constituting and managing crises in security communities.

In a conciliatory outreach to the IR discipline, Goddard and Nexon (2016: 4) has called for a turn to 'the politics of collective mobilization in the context of the struggle for influence among political communities'. This sits neatly in the IPS approach to the dynamics of security communities in crisis. Their research program draws on three key arguments: First, 'it treats the centrality of states to power politics as variable' (Goddard and Nexon 2016: 5). This is also the case with security communities. The scope for inquiry and the decisive dynamics when they are in crisis are empirical and not limited to the state as such, but states are the constitutive actors of them and primary actors within them. Goddard and Nexon (2016: 5) also argue that 'non-military instruments matter a great deal for power politics'. Security community dynamics (remember they are non-war communities) are in fact cases where there is absence of force, except for representational force, or other symbolically existing forms of power and domination (see Barnett and Duvall 2005; Adler-Nissen 2013). Rather, the socially embedded and processual element of the kind of crisis we are theorising call for wider definitions of power, often in connection to language and symbolic power that produce identities and social practices. Finally, they reject that anarchy is the key driver of power politics (Goddard and Nexon 2016: 6). Instead, power political mobilisation among polities constructs, re-produces and challenges the community over time.

The Brexit crisis in the European security was certainly defined by struggles, both domestically and in Europe. The UK process to find nationally acceptable compromises was very much a power political struggle, and so was also the negotiations that took place between the UK and the EU between 2017 and 2020 (Martill and Staiger 2021). Understanding the apparent 'orderliness' of the practice that unfolded in the negotiations and how contestation played out and agreement was found requires taking serious the collective mobilisation among the parties involved in the crisis, namely polities struggling from within the security community to constitute the 'proper' Brexit (the crisis) in order to produce desired outcomes (see Svendsen 2020). The power struggles to constitute crises plays out against a context however, and the next sections turn to the temporal aspects of situatedness and imaginaries in and on these struggles.
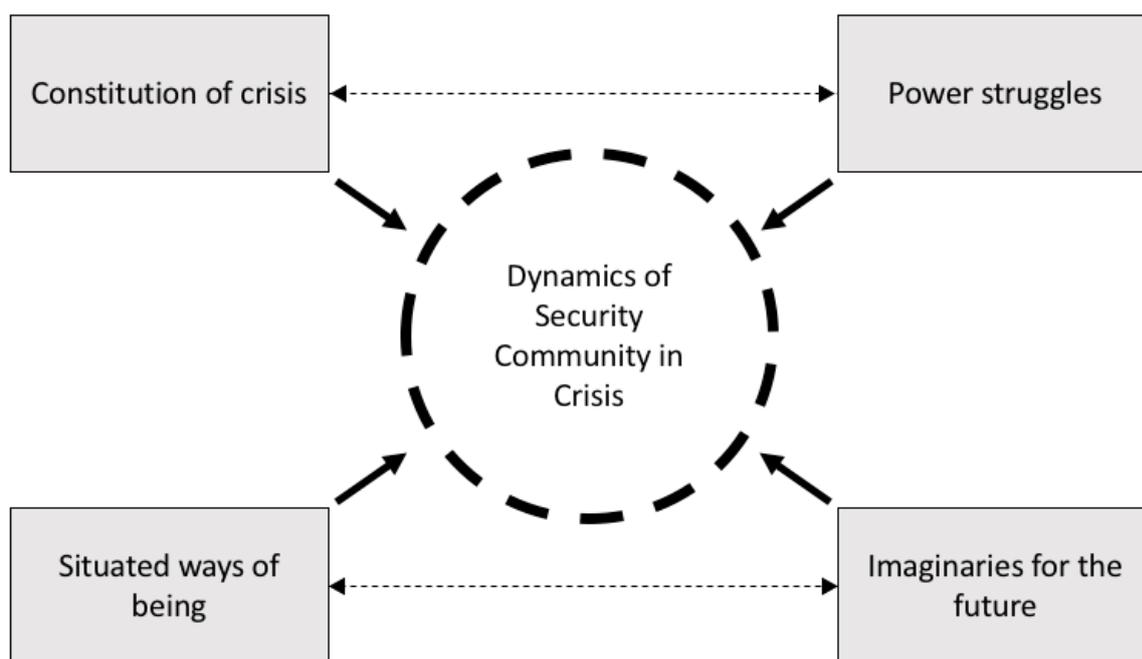
Situatedness

Both researchers of and practitioners in security communities are situated. Feminist IR scholars have been influential in bringing to the fore the situatedness of science and knowledge production (Haraway 1988). They have done so because 'International relations (IR) scholarship is situated in a theoretical, academic, and global context in which power is both visible and invisible, often concealed by the structures that normalize potentially oppressive practices and values' (Ackerly and True 2008: 693). These insights are important, and they are more often than not underscored by researchers approaching international politics from an IPS perspective. Simultaneously, these insights should not be turned only upon ourselves. Practitioners of international relations, i.e. the agents of world politics from state representatives to indigenous people, are situated in ways that structure their view of the world and their actions. Thus, reflexivity in IPS is not only self-referential, but with an aim to produce knowledge about the social relations and processes that make up international relations.

How then, do practitioners' situatedness come into play when security communities are in crisis? For one, situatedness is an agential trait, something in which every single human in any particular field is enmeshed, but it is also something that streamlines and forms the basis for intersubjectively shared forms of knowledge that disposes communities to appear homogeneous, including the naturalization of the very notion of community itself. In a security community in crisis, everyone with stakes in it are at the outset situated inside of it. Consider how, in the early days after the Brexit referendum, European federalist Guy Verhofstadt and UK Prime Minister Theresa May engaged the security aspect of Brexit in remarkably a similar way. They represented two poles in the process, the UK with its desire to get out of the Union's sovereignty-strangling grip and the vision of something of a European federal state, but their comments on European security in relation to Brexit were strikingly similar (Verhofstadt 2017; May 2017). Despite the apparent distance between the two, emphasising their situatedness brings to the fore how May's representations were situated a more nationally oriented discourse, but in terms of managing the security order, they were both referring to Europe as one polity that were more capable of providing security in a context were no country alone could provide security for themselves (May 2018; EU 2016, 2003). As such, understanding the apparent 'orderliness' of the security community crisis demands asking about who speaks, where they speak from and to what audiences.

The spatial boundary between May and Verhofstadt, London and Brussels, was also one of ambiguity because as much as both May and Brexiteers in rural England shared their British nationality, May was situated also in a multilateral space where isolation was unthinkable as was evident with the 'Global Britain' policy of her administration. IPS approaches to security community crisis thus cannot overlook the dynamics of transnational diplomatic fields of struggle (Svendsen 2020). As such, asking questions about situatedness allows questioning of 'from where' agents with stakes in the security community speak when they, in this particular case, engage in boundary-drawing and ordering of the security community during crisis. This furthermore allows for analysis and explanation when crisis does not lead to fragmentation, or even disintegration.

Figure 1: Dynamics of security community in crisis

The situatedness of agents in and on security communities in crisis is also a structuring force in the temporal sense: people have socio-cultural backgrounds that form their very

being as subjects and determine their scope conditions for action and practices. This is also a structural issue. In the context of a 'Brussels-bubble' around Rond-point Schuman it might be understandable that the British discourse of sovereignty in the Brexit debate and negotiations were considered reactionary and backwards. However, considering the British discourses of national identity and historical narrative one would not be surprised to see the British government's position on Brexit. This is only one example, but it shows how the positions and visions of actors in security community crises is structured by how and where they are situated. Based on these dispositional considerations regarding social agency and practice, we can now move to the other temporal aspect in our theorisation of security community dynamics during crisis: the role of imaginaries.

Imaginaries

In connection to the situated and dispositional ways in which human agency is premised, so does ideas and representations of the future, individually and collectively shared, by drawing people towards certain ends. As such, we have seen in IR a move towards theories of time (Solomon, 2014; Hutchings, 2008; Hom and Steele, 2010; Berenskoetter, 2011) in addition to operationalisation of how to study the 'time factor' (Neumann and Øverland, 2004; Meyer, 2011; Ekengren, 2010).

Berenskoetter (2011) has argued that the future plays an important role in drawing people towards certain ends and suggested that we turn our attention towards *dystopian* and *utopian* visions. The latter point should not be totalised in IPS as there is no need to close off methodologies, but he was right when claiming the neglect of the future in IR theory is a 'sloppy habit permeating much of IR, namely the tendency to conflate the impossibility of knowing what others currently think, or social contingency, and the impossibility of knowing the future as such, or temporal contingency' (Berenskoetter 2011: 650). The way that the future takes centre stage in international politics should not be considered lightly and understanding the dynamics of security communities in crisis involves inquiring into what futures agents involved in the crisis envision the future.

It is not the imaginary and the dispositional in binary opposition that constitute the temporality of agency. Rather, it is the ontologically indivisible relationship between them that is of interest in an IPS account of security community dynamics in times of crisis. This is well established in sociology, where agency is thought of as a:

> temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment). (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 963)

As such, IPS approaches to security communities in crisis asks questions about the how representations of the future are conditioned by particular pasts, or dispositions, and how these temporal elements of social life play into the constitution of crisis.

The Brexit crisis saw the future as the primary rationalising category at the forefront of the debate. In essence, the negotiation of Brexit was always about envisioning particular futures and coming to terms with one that all parties could meaningfully envision. In terms of the European security community, one of practical existence and transnationally established material security and defence structures, the process saw few envisioning disorder or the waning of the security community. If anything, the visions expressed in the UK position paper on the future partnership between the EU and the UK in security and defence cooperation (UK Government 2017) had striking similarities to the European Commission's own visionary white paper on the same issue on behalf of the EU at 27 (European Commission 2017). In the broader Brexit process, the constant threat of a cliff

edge hard Brexit was mobilised in order to reach an agreement, which eventually was found, limiting the potentially devastating effects that Brexit could have for the European security community.

CONCLUSION

This article has developed an approach to study security communities in crisis. In doing so, I have suggested a focus on four analytical categories: processes of constituting crisis and power struggles, and the temporal aspects of social action concerning situatedness and imaginaries. The benefit of so doing is that it allows for an appreciation of security communities in a process-oriented and context sensitive way. This possibly enables future empirical work that can account for the intertwined relationship between ordering and disordering practices as security communities encounter situations that calls into question their stability. Importantly, the article has illustrated how the international political sociology approach and the four categories developed here fulfils the social theoretical promises of the security community literature, relying on the practices that unfold as a crisis emerges rather than by a pre-determined adherence to (also pre-determined) norms.

Importantly, the dimensions developed herein are broad enough not to close down the object of study methodologically, whilst preserving some general features of an IPS approach to community dynamics during crisis. The ideal-typical nature of the analytical categories does not insinuate boundary drawing. Rather, they should be considered open avenues towards which IPS approaches can explore different ordering and disordering processes in the context of security communities in crisis. The main aim of the article has been to develop the methodological typology, and the Brexit case was used mainly to illustrate the empirical saliency of the categories. Yet, by way of conclusion the model contributes to an understanding of the process that explains Brexit as unfolding against a struggle between national and international discourses, and shared dispositional structures and imaginaries for the future. In terms of outcome, the Brexit crisis weakened some of the institutional and practical structures of the European security community, whereas others were continued with the new agreement and a continually stated need for a good future relationship after Brexit. Coming to that conclusion require an open-ended and process-oriented approach.

The European security community is part of a complex set of relations of which the EU is one component. The community is indeed an empirically established social fact, and as such we cannot understand its existence as fixed. This is also the value of an IPS take on security communities in crisis as we approach it in and through social processes of struggle that structure the path(s) they take. The point that stands and invite further empirical work is that in a constant social process of making, security communities are subject to ordering and disordering forces that become particularly visible during crises and determine the processes that unfold.

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ENDNOTES

[1] In fact, the fear of reification of structure, particularly of the state (see Neumann 2004), motivated also Pouliot's theorisation of security communities (Pouliot 2010: 88).

[2] This term was used by an Ambassador to the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) during an interview in Brussels in November 2017.

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