



Robert Schuman

Identity, Societal Security and Regional Integration in Europe

Markus Thiel



Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series
Vol. 7 No. 6
April 2007

Published with the support of the EU Commission.

The Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series

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Miami - Florida European Union Center
University of Miami
1000 Memorial Drive
101 Ferré Building
Coral Gables, FL 33124-2231
Phone: 305-284-3266
Fax: (305) 284 4406
E-Mail: jroy@miami.edu
Web: www.miami.edu/eucenter

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IDENTITY, SOCIETAL SECURITY, AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN EUROPE*

Markus Thiel*

Introduction

An observer of current European politics may almost automatically assume that the regional integration process in Europe, led successfully by the European Union (EU) and reinforced by other organizations, has resulted in the weakening of national identities and the pacifying of potential identity-related conflicts in the area. A closer look, however, reveals that the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) in particular are still being caught in various security dilemmas ranging from the traditional military-related spheres to more subtle yet similarly destructive societal security issues with the potential to produce ethnic conflicts, even civil wars. The explanatory theoretical framework behind ‘societal security’ is fairly new and thus, often underestimated in the relative pacified European and Eurasian regions; yet, it presents a particular challenge to the multiethnic and fragile democracies there. In this paper, I compare the major international organizations present in the field (EU, NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe) and examine if there exists, at a minimum, a normative concern for minority rights and the promotion of societal security and secondly, what kind of institutional mechanisms and responses these organizations developed to attain these goals.

Setting the agenda: collective identities and societal security

Identity as a focus of international politics has become increasingly important with the harmonizing pressures of a globalized world and the expansion of international civil and human rights recognizing the right for self-expression. While identities exist on an individual as well as collective level, only the latter is of significance here since it leads to the virtuous cycles of emancipation and possibly, vicious ones of self-determination, often labeled ‘identity politics’. In its simplest definition, the main referent in this paper along with the state, a national group, can be understood as a result of an identity securing social system. As such, a nation represents a prime example of a collective identity.

To further clarify the often undifferentiated terminology about nations, Bloom proposes a national identification theory which states that “in order to achieve psychological security, every individual possesses an inherent drive to internalize – to identify with – the behavior, mores and attitudes of significant figures in her/his social environment [...] i.e. people actively seek to enhance and protect identity”.¹ This has, he argues, significant implications for national identity

* Paper presented at “The European Union, Fifty Years after the Treaty of Rome” conference, University of Miami, March 26, 2007, under the co-sponsorship of the Miami-European Union Center

* Markus Thiel, PhD in International Studies/University of Miami, is visiting professor in the Department of Political Science at Florida International University. He worked previously for the EU-Socrates/Erasmus program at the University of Applied Sciences in Munich/Germany. His research interests include transnational identities and comparative regional integration. He recently published the article “Europe as a model for regional security” in the *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* (Taiwan, 2006), a book chapter on “European Identity and the Challenge of Enlargement”, in: Joaquín Roy and Roberto Domínguez (eds) *Towards the Completion of Europe: Analysis and Perspectives of the New EU enlargement* (Coral Gables, FL: EU Center/Jean Monnet Chair, 2006) and several online papers for various research centers.

¹ Bloom, William. *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 16.

and its security, which both develop along the same lines of protection and benefits for its members.

The ontological backdrop for questions relating to collective identities and/or societal security is found in the constructivist or culturalist schools², both of which recognize the strength of collective belief systems but differ on the extent of changeability of these self-ascribed perceptions in that the latter sees ethnic security dilemmas between groups as most problematic whereas the former recognizes the malleability of the conflict-generating perceptions between groups. This distinction is important because it constraints to what extent societal security conflicts can be modified, reduced or securitized – which is where organizations such as the OSCE possess a comparative advantage and vantage point as their approach most closely mirrors the mechanisms by which societal security can be attained. Social Constructivism thus points to the fluidity and socially constructed nature of security, which results in the Wendt's modified axiom that 'security is what states or nations make of it'.

Another contributing strand of thought comes from the field of critical security studies³, which focuses on the subjectivity of the term 'security' and its changing character from a potentially threatening 'securitization' to a pacifying 'desecuritization', depending upon the context in which it is sought. The Copenhagen School neatly fits into this theoretical school, emphasizing not only the changing nature of security but also calling for renewed attention to communities and the role identity plays for the attainment of security. While I do certainly adhere to the main tenets of the Copenhagen School, I disassociate myself from some of the deconstructive claims made about the importance of traditional, i.e. military security because of the inherent interplay between the various aspects of security.

Returning to the referent question, according to sociologist Melucci, collective identity can be defined as "an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their actions as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their actions takes place"⁴. This quite political definition raises questions about equal rights for all members of a multiethnic state's society in which competing collectives claim their rights, especially the right to exist autonomously and the right to be recognized as such. The former point needs to be taken seriously because collectivities tend to have a so-called 'in-group bias', which puts their own group above others and is otherwise referred to as the 'us versus them' or 'self-other' differentiation.⁵ It also emphasizes the co-constitutive character of both, individual and collective identity. Recognizing the fundamental difference between nations and states, the terminology above calls attention to the potential frictions between multiple national minorities or between a national minority and a majority state government.

Collective Identities are varyingly classified and extend beyond the classic national – European dichotomy. Ichijo and Spohn, for example, sketch five basic constitutive dimensions of collective identities in Europe, which are: Ethnic-territorial, religious-cultural, socio-economic, political-legal and lastly, political-military functions.⁶ All of these identitive aspects ought to be intact to ideally promote and maintain the societal security of a collective group.

The existence of national minorities raises two essential questions: to what degree of self-governance do these communities aspire to and, of particular significance for this analysis, how then can multiple nations coexist in previously defined territorial states? These aspects of collective identities produce a need for the protection of ethnic minorities within states,

² Roe, Paul. *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma*. Routledge: New York, 2005, p. 47. Kolodziej, Edward. *Security and International Relations*, Cambridge University Press: New York, 2005.

³ Booth, Ken (ed). *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*. Lynne Rienner: Boulder, 2005.

⁴ Melucci, cited in: Guibernau, Montserrat. *Nationalisms. The Nation-State and Nationalism in the 20th Century*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, p. 75.

⁵ Neumann, Iver B. *Uses of the Other: The East in European Identity Formation*, University of Minnesota Press: Chicago, 1998.

⁶ Spohn, Willfried & Ichijo, Atsuko, ed. *Entangled Identities. Nations and Europe*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2005.

particularly in states that are as multi-ethnically constituted as the Central- and Eastern European ones. There has always been a theoretical distinction between the more civic oriented nationalisms that developed in Western Europe (e.g. France), as opposed to the ethnic-cultural nationalisms which became predominant in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Germany, Hungary) and have continued to create friction for the past century after the end of integrating empires such as the Austro-Hungarian or the Ottoman ones.

Societal security as one of the expanded notions of security refers to the security of collective groups in relations to other communities or the institutions of the state in which they reside. Security is not so much about security *between* states but between societies (often within states).⁷ As such, it consists not only of an expansion of security, but it is also a move away from the state-centric view to other reference points such as ethnic minority groups, eventually proposing a duality of state *and* societal security. Threats to societal security then constitute perceptions and/or actions that inhibit the expression of a national groups' identity, be it through their culture, language, religion or any other form of self-expression.⁸ Formed out of the insecurities over ethnic and national identities that come in conflict with other resident (majority) groups or the state government in which they are located, these issues have become more significant in relation to those over state sovereignty in contemporary Europe, with the break-up and ensuing civil war in former Yugoslavia as the prime example of societal insecurity. With ever more states calling for autonomy and even declaring independence, questions of citizenship add to the multifaceted problems in group-to-group relations.

Societal security concerns mainly the relations of minorities and groups within a society or nation, and as such can be distinguished from other forms of security, such as human security, in that the latter refers to general living conditions of individuals and collectives while societal security emphasizes the relations between these groups. Societal issues are by nature collective, thereby referring to the rights associated with freedom of expression and association, use of language and native education, religious expression and participation in the state's policy-making process.

The Copenhagen School, which first publicized the expanded notions of security, added to the traditional military aspects others such as political, economic and environmental ones – all of which can affect societies in their security.⁹ They view societal security not only as a matter of the security of the affected minority group, but of the state government as well. But if, as Waever claims, the main goal for each affected party is to desecuritize, i.e. to preventatively avoid the triggering of tensions between minorities and the state,¹⁰ it remains unclear how such measures could be implemented by minorities that don't have the power or resources to do so. It is this power differential that leads me to believe that state governments have to assume primary responsibility for the (de)securitization of minority rights. However, it might not always be in the interests of both to securitize the bilateral relationship because it might actually lead to power shifts from one side to the other, or to foreign attention to this issue.

In addition, Buzan, Waever and de Wilde provide a three-pronged classification of societal security threats, consisting of migration, horizontal and vertical competition, the former referring to demographic changes caused by (im)migration and the latter two specifying competitive pressures from dominant groups or from integration processes respectively.¹¹ While we find a distinction in the literature pertaining to minorities between the traditional national

⁷ Buzan, Barry, in: Waever, Ole, Buzan, Barry, Kelstrup, M. and Lemaitre, P. *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, London: Pinter, 1993, p. 2.

⁸ Roe, Ibid, p. 42.

⁹ Buzan, Barry, Waever, Ole and De Wilde, Jan, *Security: a new framework for analysis*, Lynne Rienner: Boulder, 1998,

¹⁰ Roe, Paul. "Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 279-294.

¹¹ Buzan, Barry et al, Ibid, p. 121.

groups and the so-called 'new' minorities arising as (im)migration populations, this paper is largely concerned with the previous ones, since the latter group is usually not sufficiently recognized as a single entity.

With regards to the overall security situation in CEECs, the diminishing of traditional politico- military conflict in most of these countries almost automatically led to the (re)emergence of societal security issues. Many of these countries are, at a basic level, pacified and integrated in a complex security-democracy web through organizations such as NATO, the EU and the OSCE. In addition, some NGO's, such as, for example, the Project on Ethnic Relations, work closely on conflict prevention with the IGO's in the region. However, the economic and particularly, social conditions in most of these countries are still problematic and not sufficiently securitized. It ought to be clear that such an environment, while not anarchic, still causes enough insecurity to perceive other identity groups or the majority in government as a threat to societal peace and integrity. In sum, identity politics and the link between identity and (societal) security has moved to the forefront of European security theories: "one of the central themes of contemporary discourse on European security is the importance of identity".¹²

The promotion of minority rights as keystone for societal security

Minority rights have come to be regarded as a fundamental component of the international human rights regime; hence they are important for the international relations of Europe and cannot solely be considered a state's internal prerogative anymore.¹³ How can then be national minorities reconciled with the majorities and/or the governments of the state they live in? Even more so, can one reasonably expect that these collective groups uphold and promote their collective identities in a manner compatible with the state's objectives? The preceding questions touch upon the core of societal security matters and goes beyond the basic rights of freedom of expression, association and the freedom from discrimination.

Historically, nations and states – particularly in Central and Eastern Europe - have rarely coincided; rather, nations had to continuously fight for their own territory (such as in the Polish case), they were subject to a redrawing of the boundaries and a forced move (which affected many ethnic Germans in the region), or they were left within another, potentially hostile state after the reconfiguration of states (as occurred to many ethnic Hungarians that found themselves in Slovakia and Rumania). At the same time, there were a few positive examples of territorial partition as in the Czech & Slovak cases; however, in this case two nations of roughly equal size were present. The promotion of minority rights is particularly important where there has been a long-standing historical conflict in existence leading to 'ancient hatreds', such as in the case between the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians.¹⁴

Recent historical developments such as the dissolution of the USSR and the ensuing breakup of the Balkan region continues to motivate national minorities and exert pressure on the governing state (or the partisan neighbor) in which these are located, with varying effects on domestic political stability and the final outcome. Divergent examples of this ongoing phenomenon include Montenegro's peaceful secession and Kosovo's long-standing but contentious attempt to do so. In general, though, territorial integrity is still regarded as a fundament of international law, which makes the resolving of minority conflicts and affirmation of societal security in pre-existing states even more important.

The state as one of the main referent points for the maintenance of societal security is in most cases agent as well as referent of (de-)securitization. Societies might attempt to act against threats by either taking certain measures themselves or by somehow moving the threat onto the

¹² Hyde-Price, Adrian and Aggestam, A. (eds). *Security and Identity in Europe: Exploring the new agenda*, London: Macmillan, 2000, p. 23.

¹³ OSCE Geneva Report, 1991.

¹⁴ Hearn, Jonathan. *Rethinking Nationalism*. Palgrave: New York, 2006, p. 174.

state's agenda.¹⁵ If the state fails to provide security (which would constitute a case of 'negative' challenge to societal security) or actively discriminates against a minority group (representing a 'positive' societal security threat), for example in the case of the Albanian 'minority' in Kosovo, the collective group might take action to defend themselves against 'outside' threats. In that respect, 'security' is much more than just the absence of war; rather, it is the provision of stability and protection by the state. For the sake of definitional clarity, 'the state' should be specified here as the acting elites governing the state institutions and 'national minorities' as mainly ethnic minorities who aim at a certain degree of cultural self-expression, territorial autonomy and political participation (in contrast to religious or nomadic minorities).¹⁶

However, not every case is as dramatic: the threat can often materialize in rather subtle terms, e.g. by not recognizing linguistic or educational demands for the cultural autonomy of minorities, or by simply ignoring any calls for participation and representation at the governmental level as occurred in the case of the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia or Romania. Since security and subjectivity are closely linked, minorities tend to be more cautious and assertive about the protection of (their) civil rights and easily perceive themselves as in need of special protection – a demand that poses additional demands on governments. As previously mentioned, at times societal insecurity can arise from another national group within a weak state, which intimidates or negates another national group's demands for autonomy or cultural expression. But then again, the constitution of a state government is crucial as a functional state should be able to constrain or mitigate such issues. Causes of such conflicts also do not always need to constitute a direct threat posed at the society itself; often, conflicts are about the territory that national minorities inhabit and so intrinsically are part of their collective identity.

Here, the question how to judge the competing claims about securing collective identities becomes significant. In minority-majority or related conflicts, who or how started the conflict, and what can be done to alleviate societal insecurity and ethnic strife?¹⁷ This is where some of the organizations analyzed below, particularly the EU and the OSCE, come into play by utilizing a neutral expert, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and applying so-called 'Confidence-Building Measures' to enhance the prospects for a peaceful co-existence of national minorities and majorities in any given state.

One of the major ironies of the work of many security-related organizations is that when their activities are successful, they don't receive much public attention. Only where a conflict escalates, the media and the international community take notice. In a similar paradoxical manner, the inability of a state to guarantee total security to its citizens is theorized as the success of the projected need of governments for the attainment of such a security: "the inability of the state project of security to succeed is the guarantor of the state's continued success as an impelling identity"¹⁸ In this respect it is essential to be aware that the power of a state government can be a provider of societal security to one's minority and a threat to another.

Another important aspect that needs to be taken into account is the regionalization of ethnic minority groups in Central and Eastern European Countries. It seems unclear, however, in how far the regionalism of these populations can be positively viewed as an alternative form of creating a societal security for themselves without creating a conflict within a given state, or if it rather precipitates the secession by gaining transnational strength & obtaining partisan external

¹⁵ Roe, Ibid, p. 51.

¹⁶ For a good overview of the array of questions relating to conditions for societal security, ranging from media perceptions to housing access, see: Mudde, Cas (ed). *Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe*. Routledge: New York, 2005, Appendix 2.

¹⁷ Bilgin, Pinar. "Individual and Societal Dimensions of Security", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, 2003, p. 213.

¹⁸ Campbell, David. *Writing Security*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1998, p. 12.

support.¹⁹ If latter should apply, as the aspirations of the Hungarian or Albanian minorities show, it actually exacerbates regional security by drawing in several states.

The role of the European Union (EU) in the promotion of societal security

The EU as Europe's most significant conglomerate of democracies has always had a regard for minority rights and the promotion of human and societal security more generally, but it reemphasized these objectives in the Copenhagen Declaration, which eventually became known as the prerequisites for Union membership.²⁰ Its 'soft' security agenda, focusing in addition to the traditional politico-military aspects on newer and more comprehensive ones such as energy security, environmental security and non-military, diplomatic interventions in crisis regions, in addition to its broad enlargement objective of 'desecuritization by integration', certainly distinguishes the Union from all other organizations in Europe.

In my view, one of the Union's most intriguing yet underrated strategies regarding the promotion of societal security lies in the gradual deemphasizing of national governance structures and the coinciding strengthening of (Euro-)regions, thereby reducing the conflict potential between national minorities and state governments. In addition, the EU's comprehensive integration process covering economic, political and social issues and the monitoring through the Commission engulf EU member states in a complex network of interrelated states bound to the liberal-democratic legally expressed human and minority rights norms that have emerged as one of the most progressive ones in existence. A so-called 'minority clause' was also inserted in the draft Constitution for Europe.²¹ It is argued that if the Balkans would have received EU-accession prospects earlier, we might not have witnessed the civil wars in the successor states of Yugoslavia due to the EU's moderating integration effects.²²

Yet not all states in Europe are member states of the Union, thus some are exempt from the above mentioned membership obligations, with the EU concentrating mainly on the upholding of minority rights in the accession countries through annual assessments. This could mean that, in fact, any preclusion of membership of these states will likely have a negative impact on the maintenance of human and minority rights, which is why concepts such as the EU's 'absorption capacity' have become a highly sensitive matter of debate. Both of the above factors make the EU the most significant 'soft' security provider among its member states, but also spell out the Union's biggest disadvantage over institutions such as the OSCE: it includes only countries that are in the European (geographic) or membership realm. The prospect of membership is frequently used as an incentive for the upholding of minority rights - as in mutual Greek-Albanian relations- , but has been a slowing constraint on potential accession countries such as Turkey and its treatment of the Kurdish minority there.

Another issue that needs to be regarded concerns the scrutiny with which the EU has influenced and monitored minority rights in new member states, e.g. in Slovakia (and Romania, Croatia etc). In this multinational state, more than 500,000 ethnic Hungarians live in the south and southeast, accounting for about 10 percent of Slovakia's population. The demands of the vocal Hungarian minority for municipal electoral representation and linguistic emancipation has only improved with legislation passed in accordance with the EU's accession progress reports and the OSCE's HCNM pushing for a more balanced administrative reform process before the 2004

¹⁹ Buzan, Barry and Waever, Ole, *Regions and Powers*. Cambridge University Press: New York, 2005, p. 356.

²⁰ European Union Council Conclusions, http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/72921.pdf, Copenhagen 1993, accessed February 9, 2007.

²¹ Upon recommendation of the OSCE HCNM, Article I-2.

²² Serfaty, Simon. "The EU and Eurasia: a bounded security role in a greater Europe", in: Sperling, James, Kay, Sean and Papacosma, Victor (eds). *Limiting institutions? The Challenge of Eurasian security governance*. Manchester University Press: New York, 2003, p. 240.

accession— though without specifically mention the discrimination still existing there.²³ But societal security in this EU member state remains to this day fragile and tensions between the Hungarian minority and the Slovak majority are continuously present as evidenced when the governing party coalition of Social Democrats and Slovak National Party warned of independence for Serbia's disputed province of Kosovo because it could spark secession of Slovakia's ethnic Hungarians.²⁴

The EU actively seeks the expertise of the OSCE in many minority rights cases, and has delegated the judgment on a state's minority policies to the HCNM.²⁵ This makes sense as far as both organizations have a similar constructive-engagement approach and all EU members states being OSCE ones as well, but it results in limited oversight for the organization to independently monitor accession candidates in Central and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the EU contributes financially and seconds personnel to election observation missions of the OSCE.²⁶ In yet another example of the cooperation between both organizations and the implicit EU approach of securitization through integration, the "overwhelming majority" of EU states backs Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE in 2009, although a decision on this has been put on hold because the U.S. and some EU states are concerned on human rights grounds. Many in the Union believe Kazakhstan's bid would promote reforms in the country.²⁷ The EU and the OSCE seem to prefer, particular in its dealings with the more remote Central Asian states, an 'engagement first, reform later' approach that likely overlooks and potentially contradicts the societal security needs of oppressed minorities in these states.

Overall, the EU seems to apply in both, its proclamations as well as policies, general normative standards that do prohibit discrimination against minorities in member states, though the organization does not spell out specific objectives for the maintenance or even promotion of minority rights. Rather, most of the Union's policies regarding societal security issues are subsumed under human rights and issues of national minorities are not explicitly mentioned there – or only under reference to the OSCE's activities. As such, the EU certainly possesses the most comprehensive 'soft' security agenda relating to human rights and societal security, but it is limited in that its influence is largely based upon the membership incentive and its reliance on the OSCE.

Other regional security provider – NATO, the OSCE and the Council of Europe,

Comparisons between the various security-related institutions in Europe are usually focused on the traditional military-aspects.²⁸ Although I concentrate in this paper on the OSCE as an instrument for the attainment of societal security, the consideration of other actors in the region provides an overview of the task-splitting – and the missed opportunities – these IGO's have in common.

One of the similarities that these organizations below share is the discrepancy between states and the intergovernmental organizations that arise out of the multilevel governance system,

²³ Biro, Anna-Maria and Kovacs, Petra (eds). *Diversity in Action. Local public management of multi-ethnic communities in Central and Eastern Europe*. Open Society Institute: Budapest, 2001, p. 289; Mudde, Ibid, p. 223.

²⁴ Sources Say, European Union-Internal Newsletter, January 17, 2007.

²⁵ Ilcheva, Maria. "Preparing for new minorities. EU influence on national minority protection in Romania and Slovenia", in: Joaquín Roy and Roberto Domínguez (eds) *Towards the Completion of Europe: Analysis and Perspectives of the New EU enlargement* (Coral Gables, FL: EU Center/Jean Monnet Chair, 2006).

²⁶ EU Commission, External Relations website, http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/osce/index.htm, February 22, 2007.

²⁷ Radio Free Europe Press Service, http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl/2006/06-10-05_rferl.html, February 18, 2007.

²⁸ Meiers, Franz-Josef. "Die NATO Response Force" und die "European Rapid Reaction Force": Kooperationspartner oder Konkurrenten?, in: Johannes Varvick (ed). *Die Beziehung zwischen NATO und EU. Partnerschaft oder Rivalitaet?*, Opladen: Germany, 2005, p. 119- 138.

particularly the reporting requirements for ethnic conflicts. So, for example, do (inter-)national estimates of minority populations in the countries as well as their actual number often diverge, either because they are downplayed by governments or not adequately counted in the process. In a related matter, there is a great discrepancy between national and intergovernmental minority rights laws and on the other hand, the reality faced by minorities.²⁹ This fact alone represents a substantive problem in the societal relations within states as it contributes to the assumption that societal threats are not necessarily only perceived by national minorities but can be substantiated by the detrimental conditions they find themselves in.

In the following section, I will survey the other main actors in the field, their involvement regarding societal security and compare their effectiveness in maintaining and promoting it.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

In the OSCE, societal security issues are mostly dealt within the so-called ‘human’ dimension, which is why I concentrate solely on this particular area of OSCE action. In the larger context of security studies, the objective of the OSCE lies in the creation of a pan-European security community, i.e. a group of people or states sharing a minimum level of common understandings about the peaceful coexistence and settlement of disputes. With 56 member states, the organization is certainly the largest of all IGO’s in the region, extending from the Atlantic to Central Asia.

The promotion and stabilization of societal security can be assessed under the OSCE’s activities surrounding ‘the human dimension’. In contrast to the politico-military and the economic-environmental activities, these refer specifically to the inclusion and integration of citizens and in a broader context, human right issues.³⁰ The OSCE focuses on aspects related to human and societal security, most prominent among these are electoral monitoring processes, followed by the assistance to national minorities and the supervision of rule of law, freedom of media etc. Because of the consensual nature of conflict prevention in the participating member states, military options remain very limited and thus, conflict-prevention measures and democracy promotion are primary goals of the organization.

The basis of the OSCE’s operations is formed by various declarations pertaining to minority rights, ranging from the founding Helsinki Final Act in 1975 to the more advanced normative prescriptions found in the Copenhagen Document of 1990.³¹ The centrality of preserving a state’s authority and at the same time, reconciling the expectations of a collective identity group is the single most important post-cold War development occupying the organization. To this end, the main OSCE strategies in pursuing the goals of conflict prevention and the improvement of human and societal security are coordinated by two central institutions within the organization: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Both institutions were added long after the coming into existence of the CSCE/OSCE, in 1990 and 1992, respectively, representing an improved organizational adaptation to the post cold-war environment in Europe.

As the name ODIHR expresses, its main functions are the establishment of democratic institutions and as a more recent focus, the upholding of Human Rights. In the past, ODIHR assistance aimed at strengthening the organizational capacity of political minority groups, training of these groups in relations to the government or the media, and the fostering of participation in public life as well as legislative reform to enable civil rights for all citizens of the member states

²⁹ Meijknecht, Anna. *Minority Protection: Standards and Reality. Implementation of the Council of Europe Standards*. The Hague: Asser Press, 2004.

³⁰ OSCE, <http://www.osce.org/activities/18805.html>, February 23, 2007.

³¹ CSCE Helsinki Final Act, http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044_en.pdf; OSCE Copenhagen Document, http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/1990/06/13992_en.pdf; accessed February 9, 2007.

irrespective of ethnic belonging.³² It is there that policy recommendations aimed at the state governments and monitoring of societal issues within member states become relevant.

The ODIHR's two-fold approach of establishing democratic governance institutions observing the law while at the same time recognizing the need for the protection of minorities makes sense because in many cases, law enforcement- or legal institutions are contributing to the discrimination of the above mentioned populations. While these groups remain an important focus of the OSCE's institutions, in this paper they will be subordinate to the national minorities that continue to have significant issues with the majorities and/or governments in their states. The Roma population of the various OSCE member states in CEECs continues to be such an ethnic minority group which is regularly discriminated against, even by state's police-forces.³³

In the 1990s, the main procedure in the human dimension area was a step-by-step approach in which the participating states could bring forth a matter or complaint which then would be resolved by holding bilateral meetings and/or establishing an expert mission in the region to gain local expertise and promote dialogue and cooperation. These missions would submit then a report to the OSCE, which in turn would decide on further actions. As of 2006, there are 17 active missions or offices working predominantly in CEECs. This standard mechanism exists in addition to the annual implementation review conferences, which posteriori exerted supervisory functions over the most pressing issues in the member states.³⁴

Conflict prevention via OSCE field operations and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) will remain an important OSCE task in the future. The current HCNM, Rolf Ekeus, a Swedish diplomat, was elected at the 8th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in 2000. The High Commissioner exemplifies the work related to societal security in the CEECs. As such, the HCNM develops and oversees the monitoring of policy strategies in the member states relating to minority protection, such as, for example, guidelines for the participation of national minorities in elections or freedom from discrimination. Similarly important for minority rights are educational rights and the use of language and media, as they are part of the OSCE's strategy to implement Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) which increase trust in the governmental authorities and channel the activities of national minorities. In addition, he is authorized to attend crises regions at his will and directly communicate with the affected populations, in order to find a suitable solution or relay a warning back to the OSCE Council, often with the recommendation to set up an OSCE mission or office. These generally work complementarily in that the office provides the needed country expertise and the HCNM the political clout to convince minority and governmental elites to cooperate on societal security issues.³⁵

The nature of the work of the HCNM, his confidentiality and freedom in using the appropriate steps of action, makes an analysis of his work more difficult, particularly since he, as representative of an intergovernmental institution, has to be aware of his neutral stance vis-à-vis governments and national minorities. At least on paper, there is an evolution in the adding of tasks throughout the annual OSCE summits recognizable, e.g. through the recently advocated establishment of a code-of-conduct for law enforcement agencies with regards to ethnic profiling and the emphasis on multi-ethnic broadcasting opportunities under the aegis of the HCNM.³⁶ However, the very same report spells out theoretical declaration after declaration about the

³² George, Bruce and McGee, Anthony, "The OSCE's approach to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation", in: Mason, David and Meernik, James (eds.), *Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Post-War societies*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

³³ U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Report, 2002, p. 63.

³⁴ Preece, Jennifer. *National Minorities and the European Nation-State System*, Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998, pp. 147-149.

³⁵ Hoppmann, Terrence, *Ibid*, p. 151-2.

³⁶ OSCE Human Dimension Commitments Report, 2005, http://www.osce.org/publications/odihhr/2005/09/16237_440_en.pdf, p. 54.

various rights that national minorities are entitled to, with no reference as to how these commitments can be achieved or even measured.

In an illustration of this disconnect, the Moldovan experience of the OSCE over the separatist Eastern region of Transnistria causes ongoing tensions. In 1992, the unilateral secession of Transnistria caused violent conflicts between both nations, and the establishment of an OSCE mission in 1993 in Chisinau (and subsequently in Tiraspol, the capital of the self-proclaimed Transnistrian Republic) resulted in little more than keeping the status quo of a delicate ceasefire. While Moldova is part of the European Neighborhood Policy framework of the EU, there is currently no realistic membership perspective. This would certainly be the optimal outcome, however, the Transnistrian conflict may well stand in-between the EU's expectations for improvement and the Moldovan government's insistence on the territorial integrity of its country with Russia supporting the breakaway region, thereby precluding any kind of final settlement.

In sum, the OSCE is certainly the organization with the best functional expertise in societal security issues, albeit with limited means to enforce it or pressure for actions that would support its stance. In relation to the other two aspects of the OSCE's work, the human rights dimension certainly seems to have become more significant in the post-cold war period, as the quote by the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov at the 2006 OSCE Council meeting shows: "Against the background of the situation in the first and second baskets, the lack of balance in the work of the OSCE is showing clearly. Its absolute 'center of gravity' has been shifted towards the humanitarian and human rights sphere".³⁷

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

As the most important traditional security provider in Europe, NATO does not directly deal with the promotion of societal security issues. Its strength lies in its military capability and, under U.S. leadership, efficacy and application of force to achieve regional security. The NATO actions against the nationalist government of Serbia in the 1995 and then again, in 1998/99 during the Kosovo crisis, come to mind as prime examples of its securitizing potential.

The organization still acknowledges the precariousness of minority conflicts but sees the cooperation with and support of more relevant IGO's such as the EU, the OSCE or the COE to be the most effective way of approaching such matters. Generally, NATO is the organization 'of last resort', when all previous efforts by the other players have failed. This implies that NATO is a delimiting factor in the development of peace-enforcing activities for all other IGO's in the field, be it the EU or the OSCE. There have been plenty of suggestions in the past by U.S. leaders confirming the required primacy of NATO in the area of European (military) security.

The organization's focus on military enforcement makes it also less useful for the solution of political and societal tensions that might not necessarily be violent or militarily expressed. In that regard, NATO lacks basic treaty provisions as well as functional agencies to maintain and promote societal security. Its security focus remains largely on interstate relationships and hard security solutions, and even the case of Bosnia was, while analytically stemming from a societal security crisis, reacted upon through a military mission that emphasized traditional military security aspects.

NATO is frequently invoked as a security provider for the CEECs, but in the initial period after the end of communist rule, these states turned to the OSCE and the EU, particularly since many of them they were already OSCE members during the Cold War. Because of its organizational structure, NATO is also branded as an U.S.-led collective security alliance that is still considered with significant scepticism and distrust by Russia, a major regional intervening power in Eastern Europe. Here, the OSCE seems to possess a comparative advantage due to the

³⁷ Lavrov, Sergey, at the meeting of the OSCE Council of Ministers, BBC Monitoring Service, December 4, 2006.

universal participation of all states in the region, including Russia.³⁸ At the same time, Russia's participation in the OSCE has led to some unresolved conflicts that reflect the East-West disparity in the organization such as the Moldova-Transdniestria conflict. NATO, while an important regional military security provider, does neither contain normative prescriptions for societal concerns in its declarations and publications, nor specific strategies for their attainment and/or promotion.

The Council of Europe (CoE)

The CoE, the oldest pan-European civil rights organization founded in 1946, has only limited impact on the satisfactory securitization of minority issues in Central- and Eastern Europe. During the Cold War, the CoE issued largely cautious statements, referring to the anti-discrimination clause spelled out by the European Court of Human Rights and so exemplified the negligent attitude of many IGO's during the Cold War.³⁹ After 1991, its member states became signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the organization's major human rights treaty besides the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which spells out wide-ranging minority rights but fails to define what a 'national minority' constitutes.⁴⁰ With 27 of its 46 members now also part of the more influential EU, the Council has lost much of its clout and struggles to redefine its role.

The Council's main tasks are the promotion of democracy and human rights, particularly as they relate to cultural expression such as language and native education in Russia and other former Soviet republics, where the EU has only a limited impact. In fact, the CoE cooperates closely with the Union in areas where there is some overlap, e.g. in the development of the Stability Pact for the Balkan countries.

As far as strategies and institutional accountability are concerned, in comparison to the OSCE, the Council is less institutionalized and offers solely framework recommendations for the upholding of minority rights which are left open to the participating states to implement.⁴¹ In addition, the CoE has the individual states reporting on their performance on the organization's Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which will then be relayed to the Secretary General of the CoE.⁴² Once a country is admitted and adopted the Framework Conventions, it is left unsupervised by the organization, i.e. without regular monitoring reports.⁴³ An independent monitoring body supervising the implementation of these regulations is also not in place exempt provisions for a 'follow-up' with the member states, thus making the CoE rather ineffective in the societal securitization of these countries..

Conclusion and Synopsis

The opinions about the effectiveness of the IGO's examined above vary significantly. While some may emphasize the actual performance and evaluate the organizations upon their factual

³⁸ Hopmann, Terrence. "The OSCE role in Eurasian security", in: Sperling, James, Kay, Sean and Papacosma, Victor (eds). *Limiting institutions? The Challenge of Eurasian security governance*. Manchester University Press: New York, 2003, pp. 146-7.

³⁹ Preece, Jennifer. *National Minorities and the European Nation-State System*, Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998, p. 115-118.

⁴⁰ Activities Report of the Council of Europe in the field of the Protection of National Minorities 2005, [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/4_INTERGOVERNMENTAL_CO-OPERATION_\(DH-MIN\)/2_Documents/PDF_DH-MIN\(2005\)003_CoE_minorities_activities_overview_ang.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/4_INTERGOVERNMENTAL_CO-OPERATION_(DH-MIN)/2_Documents/PDF_DH-MIN(2005)003_CoE_minorities_activities_overview_ang.pdf), February 18, 2007.

⁴¹ Council of Europe, Human Rights & National Minorities Section, http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/1_GENERAL_PRESENTATION/Overview_new_E.asp#TopOfPage, accessed January 27, 2007.

⁴² Preece, Ibid, p. 159.

⁴³ Hoppmann, Terrence, Ibid, p. 148.

record and achievements, others might point out that the existence and cooperation of the EU, the OSCE and the CoE already signifies an important step in the encouragement and attainment of societal security in Europe. I acknowledge the latter but believe that these organizations need to not only be measured by their normative concern for societal security, but also by their institutional strategic responses. Should we then take the absence of more violent conflict – if one takes into account the many national minorities in CEECs - as evidence of the performance of these organizations?

In a larger theoretical IR context, NATO's approach of securing minorities through traditional military intervention signifies a classic neo-realist approach. The EU, in its emphasis on linking economic and political integration with the reinforcement of democratic institutions and procedures falls into the liberal category, while the OSCE and CoE primarily act according to a constructivist outlook by creating norms and standards for the desecuritization of minority conflicts in the member states. This is where the OSCE can be most effective, as its preventive engagement with minorities and state governments works according to constructivist notions of redefining societal threats and desecuritizing potential threats, and the EU as the most powerful supplier of membership incentives and behavioral norms on a wide range of issues can be considered the most comprehensive 'soft' security provider.

Societal security in Europe can best be achieved when these interlocking institutions cooperate closely. To mention a negative example, it is evident that some state leaders, particularly if not bound to EU or CoE obligations, simply pay lip service to the human and minority rights provisions stated in the OSCE while maintaining a nationalist or autocratic regime, e.g. in Serbia, Russia and many Central Asian member states.

One possible option for all the organizations is to lower the admittedly high standards for membership, as has been shown in the Slovakian EU membership, and therefore conform to the reality of ethnic and cultural discrimination in the face of the often slow improvements in intersocietal relations⁴⁴, thus integrating member states in the hope of 'socializing' them over time into the adequate standards instead of pretending that these governments fulfill their expectations. While this option could be beneficial and certainly a more realistic adjustment to the realities of societal securitization, it also goes against the norm-building standards that IGO's and international law aim to promote. I doubt that societal security can be achieved or even maintained with the adoption or pursuit of lower minority rights standards.

A comprehensive overview of these organizations needs to include the constraints set by historical developments as well as by external powers. As much as the EU, the CoE and the OSCE work towards developing common norms of toleration, democratic governance and civil rights, religious-historical grievances, as in the Serbian-Croat-Bosnian case or intrinsic pressures for secession, as in the Kosovo case, overpower the institutional influence these organizations have. In addition, regional powers, i.e. countries such as Russia, often externally intervene in already conflict-laden areas to tip the balance in the minority-majority relationship, as happened in the Transdniestrian case where Russia continuously manipulated the Moldovan government and thereby made any resolution impossible.⁴⁵ While NATO and the EU have practically no influence over Russia's actions, the latter continues to be the 900-pound gorilla in the OSCE's negotiation chamber in Vienna.

What conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of IGOs in the field of societal security? Would it be preferable to reform and strengthen the OSCE as the functional organization with the most expertise and strategies in the field, or would an enhancement of effectiveness consist in an improved coordination between the major agencies, each one sticking to their traditional pursuit of 'soft' and 'hard' security issues? It appears that there exists already a well-working cooperation between most of the organizations in the field, particularly between the

⁴⁴ Meijknecht, *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁴⁵ Vladimir Socor, "Double-cross on the Road to Maastricht". *Wall Street Journal Europe*, November 21, 2003.

CoE, the EU and the OSCE. The CoE and the EU and their member states contribute financially and with personnel to the OSCE, the OSCE delivers the much-needed expertise through the HCNM and political reach through its extensive membership. Regional integration, if broadly understood as the development of common policies by various actors, i.e. the IGOs in the region, serves the cause of societal security promotion the best. However, a narrow concept of regional integration, with each organization focusing on its own limited objectives, strategies and achievements will be much less effective.

Finally, it is important to note that the short time frame since the end of the Cold War resulted in a big challenge for these organizations to internally adapt to the new world order, whereas national minorities found it easier to mobilize since they saw this as 'their' moment to push for autonomy and in few cases, secession. Over the course of this analysis it has become evident that there is still much to be improved in the effectiveness of these organizations, but simultaneously the potential for societal security might best be maximized by the concurring achievements of democratization and the upholding of the rule of law by the various organizations in the region.