Interaction of Factors Constructing Regional Security Complexes

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Introduction. Security in international relations can be analysed at different levels. But at regional level it is probably the most appropriate to analyse actors whose impact does not spread to the global level and issues which are region specific. This level also allows closer analysis of particular issues, including threats – as they are often region specific and, in general, threats overcome smaller geographical distances easier and faster.

In international relations theory regions usually are understood as parts of international system (as subsystems) that are bounded by geography and other common patterns according to the specific context, for example, political integration, cooperation among states, language, religion, history, etc. Probably the best known theoretical approach of analysis of security at regional level is regional security complex theory, originally developed by Barry Buzan. However, even with its further development, complete clarity over weight of factors that construct regional security complexes has not been reached.

The aim, materials and methods. The aim of this article is to explore interaction of factors that construct regional security complexes.

The article has been elaborated using qualitative research methods. It is based on different sources, mainly on literature of regional security complex theory and scientific articles on theoretical and empirical aspects of regional security complexes.

Results and conclusions. Initially, "classical" security complex theory defined security complex as "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another" [Buzan, 1983: 106]. To trace complexes, historically developed "complex patterns of alignment and enmity" and links (factors) that tie complexes together – geographical, political, strategic, historical, economic, cultural [Buzan, 1983: 105−106] – were underlined. Later, patterns of amity and enmity, also interdependence among states were underlined, and, in addition, role of other factors like cultural and racial ties (patterns) and economic factors were highlighted [Buzan, 1991: 190, 193, 196, 197, 202].

Later, the theory was reformulated to include wider understanding of security and actors, and another concept of the so-called "Copenhagen School" – "securitization" – was included. In general terms, according to the initial conceptualization of securitization, an issue becomes a security issue because with an act of speech something is presented as existentially threatened and, accordingly, it is moved outside the borders of normal politics [Buzan et al., 1998: 23–26]. The reformulated definition defines security complex as "a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another" [Buzan et al., 1998: 201]. However, most of the links, ties, patterns mentioned above were not excluded. Accordingly, it is unclear to what extent regional security complexes are determined by securitization and desecuritization and/or other factors (including links, ties, patterns mentioned above). Lack of clarity leaves space for different interpretations and applications of the theory.

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